# Understanding the Prevalence and Impact of Maltreatment of Child Labourers: A Mixed-Method Analysis in the Context of Rural Bangladesh

By

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACE: | Adverse Childhood Experience |
| ADB: | Asian Development Bank |
| AIFS: | Australian Institute of Family Studies |
| APA: | American Psychological Association |
| BBS: | Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics |
| BDT: | Bangladeshi Taka |
| BEF: | Bangladesh Employers' Federation |
| BML: | Bio-Medical Library |
| BSAF: | Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum |
| CDLs: | Child Domestic Labourers |
| CEM: | Child Emotional Maltreatment |
| CFA: | Confirmatory Factor Analysis |
| CFI: | Comparative Fit Index |
| CMIN/DF: | Minimum Discrepancy Function by Degrees of Freedom |
| CN: | Child Neglect |
| CPM: | Child Physical Maltreatment |
| CRIN: | Child Rights International Organisation |
| CRGA: | Child Rights Governance Assembly |
| DSM: | Diagnostic and Statistical Manual |
| EFA: | Exploratory Factor Analysis |
| EM: | Psychological (Emotional) Maltreatment |
| FAO: | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FLSA: | Fair Labour Standard Act |
| GM: | Global March |
| HRW: | Human Rights Watch |
| ICAST: | The IPSCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool |
| ILO: | International Labour Organization |
| IPEC: | International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour |
| ISPCAN: | International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect |
| JBI: | Joanna Briggs Institute |
| JVQ: | Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire |
| KMO: | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin |
| KII: | Key Informant Interview |

| | |
|---|---|
| MDG: | Millennium Development Goals |
| NGOs: | Non-Government Organisations |
| NRC: | National Research Council |
| PCFI: | Parsimony Comparative Fit Index |
| PM: | Physical Maltreatment |
| PRISMA: | Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Reviews |
| PSC: | Paediatric Symptom Checklist |
| PSTD: | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| RMSEA: | Root Means Square Error of Approximation |
| SDG: | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SDQ: | Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire |
| UK: | United Kingdom |
| UN: | United Nations |
| UNESCO: | The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF: | United Nations International Children's Fund |
| USA: | United States of America |
| WB: | World Bank |
| WHO: | World Health Organization |
| WIEGO: | Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing |
| Y-PSC: | Youth-reported Paediatric Symptom Checklist |
| YI-4R: | Youth's (Self Report) Inventory-4R |
| VIF: | Variance Inflation Factor |

# OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

| | |
|---|---|
| Child: | The Children Act 2013 (Bangladesh) defines child as a person under the age of 18 years. |
| Child labour: | The employment of children who are under the legal age limit. |
| Working children: | Children who are in employment and working at least 1 hour per day. |
| Hazardous child labour: | Work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions that may result in death or injury to a child due to a lack of adequate safety and health standards and working conditions. |
| Hazardous orders: | List of hazardous work or sectors. |
| Informal sector: | Unregistered working area and/or small unincorporated private enterprises set without any structured legal systems. |
| Child maltreatment: | Abuse (physical, psychological, sexual, or other types of exploitation) and neglect of children under the age of 18 years. |
| Child labour maltreatment: | Intentional abuse and neglect of children aged below 18 years who are working. |
| Economic activity: | Indicates input, processing and output of products or services. |
| Haor: | A wetland ecosystem that is characterised by a shallow depression in the shape of a bowl or saucer. |
| Zila: | Administrative district in Bangladesh. |
| Upazila: | Administrative subdistrict in Bangladesh. |
| Ontogenic: | The biological development of an individual. |

# ABSTRACT


**Introduction**

Child maltreatment and child labour are global health concerns that adversely affect millions of children. In recent years, child labour has increased across the globe. These children are largely rural residents and are employed in agricultural and domestic sectors. Many of these children are physically and emotionally maltreated in these two informal labour markets. Notably, child labour research has focused primarily on economic issues and occupational injuries, while intentional maltreatment of child labourers has been largely overlooked. It is argued that child labourers are more susceptible to maltreatment than other child groups. The determinants of child labour maltreatment are different from those associated with general child maltreatment. While child labour itself poses a number of social and health hazards, it is believed that their experiences of maltreatment, such as physical and emotional maltreatment, neglect and financial exploitation both at home and at work, aggravate the dangers these children endure. This study sought to investigate the prevalence, risk factors and psychosocial effects of maltreatment of child labourers in the agricultural and domestic sectors of Bangladesh.

**Methods**

The study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design involving both qualitative and quantitative methods guided by the philosophical underpinning of Belsky's ecological model. Findings were analysed in parallel. In the qualitative component of the study design, 17 key informants with expertise in child protection were interviewed. Thematic analysis was performed using NVivo 12. The quantitative study included a survey of 300 respondents (child labourers, parents and employers) using three different structured questionnaires. The study used item scales from the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect and Paediatric Symptom Checklist instruments. To analyse survey data, both factor analysis and multiple linear regression were performed using SPSS, STATA and R programs.

**Results**

The integrated results indicated that the majority of child labourers have been maltreated psychologically. The key experts believed that neglect was as similarly prevalent as psychological abuse, while the quantitative results showed that physical maltreatment was the second most prevalent form of child labour maltreatment. Approximately half of all child labourers were financially exploited. Additionally, the key experts asserted that the true extent of child labour maltreatment remained unknown.

In terms of risk factors, extended working hours, low wages, living arrangements and health challenges of child labourers were identified as significant contributors to their exposure to maltreatment. A child labourer's risk of being maltreated is also related to their parents' income and employment status, land ownership and parental experience of maltreatment during childhood.

Finally, the psychosocial screening revealed that both physically and psychologically victimised child labourers resulted in internalised and attentional problems.

**Conclusion**

The thesis outlines a number of suggestions to alleviate the high rate of maltreatment of child labourers. Primarily, adequate research should be conducted to fill the gaps in this field. Various programs that promote social safety nets and awareness should be initiated. In Bangladesh, existing child rights legislation should place a stronger emphasis on the vulnerability of children working in informal labour markets.

# DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis:

1. does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university

2. and the research within will not be submitted for any other future degree or diploma without the permission of Flinders University

3. to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed:

Date: 07th April 2023

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# LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS PUBLISHED AND UNDER REVIEW DURING PHD CANDIDATURE

Ahad, M. A., Parry, Y. K., & Willis, E. (2020). Spillover trends of child labor during the coronavirus crisis-An unnoticed wake-up call. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *8*, 488. Doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2020.00488 (Published)

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# LIST OF PUBLISHED ABSTRACTS AND REFERRED CONFERENCE PROCEEDING FROM THE THESIS

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Ahad, M. A., Parry, Y. K., & Willis, E. The prevalence and nature of maltreatment of child labourers in Bangladesh: A qualitative study of experts' perspectives. The AIRAANZ Conference, 2022, University of Sydney, Australia (presented virtually).

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Children are a valuable resource, and their welfare should be one of the country's foremost interests. The foundation of a country's development is laid down in the healthy growth of its child population. The United Nations (UN) Special Session of the General Assembly on Children in 2002 stated that we need a world fit for children to get the world fit for us (United Nations International Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2008). However, a child's prosperity relies upon valuing their rights. Several national and international treaties and laws have accepted the mandate of ensuring the rights of children (Majhoshev & Angelovski, 2016; Sharma, 2016). Despite this, children are still the most vulnerable group in our society. Their immature stage of development and poor social environment makes them easy victims of violence (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2016). While there has been significant advancement for children in general as part of the child rights' movement, the exploitation of children deployed in labour has increased and is still a challenge, especially in developing and least developed countries (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; Khatab et al., 2019). Taking this into account, this thesis examines child labour as a concept separate from the contemporary focus on the abuse and exploitation of children. It explores the various parameters of violence that occur primarily with child labourers. This chapter provides the background information on the question of violence, abuse and the maltreatment of child labourers, and the underlying principles of studying the topic.

Specifically, this study aimed to evaluate the prevalence, risk factors and psychosocial health impacts of child labour maltreatment of child labourers employed in the rural agricultural and domestic sectors of Bangladesh.

To fulfil the overall objectives, the following three research questions were designed:

1. What is the nature and extent of maltreatment and financial exploitation of child labourers in the agricultural and domestic sectors?
2. Which factors increase the likelihood of child labourers being maltreated in rural Bangladesh?
3. What adverse social and psychological health consequences are visible among child labourers who are maltreated?

As background to these research questions, this chapter first deals with the issue of child labour and related issues of what is known about child abuse, maltreatment of child labourers and exploitation.

## 1.1 Overview of Child Labour

### *1.1.1 Concept of child and child labour*

The term 'children' is viewed from a variety of legal perspectives. Generally, a child is defined using age standards, which may differ according to various laws. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as a person aged less than 18 years old. This age limit is also used in a number of other countries as the formal definition of a child (Mohajan, 2014; United Nations, 1989). For instance, the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 of India states a child is a person who has not reached the age of 18 years (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2013). Likewise, the Bangladesh Children's Act 2013 also classifies anyone under the age of 18 years as a child (Mohajan, 2014). A recent report by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) estimated that 38% of the population of Bangladesh is under the age of 18 years and are considered children (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics [BBS], 2022). Physically, a child is an individual between birth and puberty (Evans & Kim, 2013), or between the growing period of infancy and puberty (Bogin, 2012).

No universally agreed definition of child labour exists, as it is seen as difficult to measure. In general, child labour refers to any work that adversely affects the development and welfare of children (Lee et al., 2012; Radfar et al., 2018). According to Article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, child labour is likely to be hazardous, or to interfere negatively with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development (Makhoul et al., 2004). Broadly, any children who are employed in activities to feed themselves and their family are defined as child labourers (Deb, 2016).

From an economic perspective, child labour is defined as, "any activity resulting in production of goods and services that add value to national product" (Ray et al., 2018, p. 125). Child labour can be grouped into two categories; market-based work, which includes work for wages, and work in the home, farm or family enterprise, or the production of goods and services that are generally not traded (Edmonds, 2003). Notably, like other market and non-market household chores, activities such as prostitution, begging and smuggling are also contentious as economic activities, and children engaged in these activities are also child labourers (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 2011). Child labour is often labelled based on the age of the child or measured by the hours of work per day or week or the means of payment. The Minimum Age Convention of ILO (No. 138) postulates that states should fix a minimum age limit at which children can enter different types of work (ILO, 2011). Using age and hours of work as measures, the ILO states that a child labourer is a person who is aged between 5 and 11 years who works at least 1 hour for a wage, or 28 hours in domestic work per week, or children aged 12 to 14 years who work at least 14 hours of economic activity, or 28 hours in domestic work per week (Gibbons et al., 2005). On the other hand, working children are usually defined as children in economic activity, working at least 1 hour a day (BBS, 2015). Most definitions reflect the direct link between child labour and earning money, but child labour can also be measured through the arrangement of both paid and unpaid work, since most household

chores may not be paid. Chatterjee and Ray define child labourers as children who work with non-related individuals or with their family in a paid or unpaid setting (Chatterjee & Ray, 2019). Apart from paid and unpaid labour, bonded child labour is also prevalent, especially in South Asian countries. In that case, children work as slaves in order to pay back an employer's debt (Banerjee, 2003; Tucker, 1997).

The definition provided by the BBS (2019a) is also different from these many contemporary definitions of child labour, which includes any child aged between 5 and 14 years who work 1 or more hours per week in or outside of household settings in both paid and unpaid forms (Salmon, 2005). However, sections 34 and 39-42 of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, further states that children aged below 14 years involved in paid or unpaid labour, or who engage in hazardous work below 18 years of age, are considered to be child labourers (Bangladesh Employers' Federation, 2009). Most of these concepts of child labour are reformulated based on previous labour histories and laws (Humphries, 1997; Marlenga et al., 2007). It is therefore necessary to discuss the history of the concept and laws relating to child labour.

### *1.1.2 Historical background of child labour and laws*

Child labour has prevailed throughout history despite its brutal, inhumane and degrading nature. In the pre-industrial era, within Europe, children worked in homes or farms as apprentices to a trade, or as domestic servants or assistants in the family business (Kussmaul, 1990). Particularly, in pre-industrial Britain, these tasks were considered auxiliary to their parents but were significant to their family income. Families in rural areas relied on the labour of their children to run the farm. Pinchbeck and Hewitt state that before the advent of the Industrial Revolution, children were employed for long hours in domestic chores and worked from dawn to sundown, especially in the agricultural sector where they had to work with animals, sow seeds and pick the crop. Subsistence farming was the major occupational identity of these children in Europe before industrialisation (Pinchbeck & Hewitt, 1973).

However, these subsistence occupations changed with industrialisation. While historical studies claim that children have been servants and apprentices throughout most of human history, child labour reached new extremes during the Industrial Revolution in Europe from the 1750s onwards. Of note, child labour increased by 20% between the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe (Fanette, 2014-2015; Thompson, 1968). As technological advancement progressed, along with an increase in the number of industries, employment opportunities for children also increased. By the mid-1800s, power-driven machines replaced hand labour for making key manufactured items. As power-driven machines did not necessitate adult strength, factory owners started to employ children as cheap labour (Hamlili & Kameche, 2017).

Notably, many of these worksites were hazardous. Children employed in factories and mines were forced to work in dangerous and unhealthy environments alongside adults. Evidence shows that 50% of children in England between the ages of 5 and 15 years were employed in hazardous conditions during the 1860s (Rea, 2008). The working hours were long; for example, apprentice seamstresses worked from 4 am until 12:00 am throughout spring and autumn (Brown et al., 2002). Fried shows that children aged as young as 7 years worked between 12 and 18 hours a day in damp, dark and dirty mills and coal mines. By 1810, during the peak of the Industrial Revolution, around 2 million underaged children were working 50 to 70 hours per week in England. Many were boys aged under 12 years, compelled to carry heavy loads for a wage of US 40 cents to $1.10 per night. Most of them belonged to poor families (Fried, 2014).

Other evidence suggests child labour was more prevalent in 19$^{th}$-century Western industrialised nations than it is in developing countries today (Humphries, 2003). Alongside Britain and the United States of America (USA), other industrialised nations also had a high prevalence of working children. Between 1839 and 1843, a study based on French child workers demonstrated that children under 16 years constituted 12.1% of the French labour force (Heywood, 1988). During the same time in Belgium, child labourers constituted 19.5% of the

labour force (Herdth, 1996). The high numbers of working children were the product of the Industrial Revolution. However, it is often argued that industrialisation in Western countries initially increased the demand for child labour, but eventually, their numbers decreased (Humphries, 1997). It is believed that the recognition of these children as a vulnerable group during the early 19th century and the introduction of policies to protect them from violence helped to curb child labour (Fanette, 2014-2015).

Britain was the first country to recognise child labour as a serious social and political issue, and to initiate policies to reduce it. From 1802 to 1878, a series of laws gradually shortened working hours, increased the age limit at which children could work and imposed restrictions on unfavourable working environments. The United Kingdom's (UK) leading labour laws such as the Factory Act 1833 and the Mines Act 1842 provided the groundwork for the reduction in child labour. The former act banned the employment of children aged younger than 9 years and the latter extended the starting age of colliery or mine workers to 10 years, which brought an end to the systematic employment of young children (Griffin, 2014). These Acts implicitly influenced many national and domestic platforms to introduce legislation to ban child labour.

Country-based legislation limited the employment of child labourers worldwide. Governments in Europe and the USA introduced income-reducing measures such as trade sanctions that penalised countries with high levels of child labour (Nielsen, 2005). The Keating-Owen bill of 1916 enacted by the US Congress was the first law that explicitly banned the sale of products from any factory, shop or cannery that employed children under the age of 14 years, from any mine that employed children under the age of 16 years, and from any facility that had children under the age of 16 years working at night or for more than 8 hours during the day (Miller, 2013). Later, the US Congress re-enacted the Revenue Act of 1919 following the Keating-Owen Act, also known as The Child Labour Tax Law. This Act outlawed products produced by children by imposing a special tax on such products (Przebowski, 2009). In 1938, the US

Congress passed the Fair Labour Standards Act (FLSA) (Fried, 2014) and established a minimum age of 16 years for non-hazardous work during school hours (Bolander, 1990), 14 years for certain jobs in retail, food and the gasoline sector outside school hours with no more than three hours on a school day, 18 hours for the entire school week and 18 hours for hazardous work such as mining or factory work (Murray, 2019). Under the FLSA child labour provision, 17 non-agricultural hazardous orders were individually adopted between 1939 and 1963 and seven of these hazardous orders (operation of power-driven woodworking machines, metal forming, punching, and shearing machines, meat-processing machines, balers, compactors and paper product machines, circular saws, band saws, guillotine shears, chain saws, reciprocating saws, wood chippers and abrasive cutting discs, roofing and excavation operations) only permitted the employment of 16 and 18-year-old apprentices and student learners under specific conditions. All other hazardous orders were identified as detrimental to the health and wellbeing of minors and not permissible for apprentices and students between the ages of 16 and 18 years (Ahmadkhaniha et al., 2007; Donovan & Shimabukuro, 2016). It is imperative to note that the hazardous orders still do not cover subsistence agriculture and domestic labour.

Internationally, UN-based organisations have directly contributed to the reduction of child labour. The leading platform is the ILO, which was established in 1919 with the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I as a way of achieving safer working conditions for adults, limiting the minimum age for joining the workforce, dealing with hazardous working environments for children and working towards eliminating all forms of child labour. Later, in 1946, UNICEF was established with the mission to enhance the welfare of children (Fried, 2014). In a session of the UN General Assembly, all governments committed to work to promote and protect the rights of all children (Krug et al., 2002). In 2002, the member states of

the UN signed up to the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), six of which are directly linked to the protection and development of children (Hossain et al., 2004).

The notion of child protection embedded within the MDGs deals with the protection of children from maltreatment and neglect (Lieten et al., 2010). With the advancement of the MDGs, the UN designed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as an upgraded development map in 2015. The SDGs call for the abolition of child labour in all its forms. One of the measurable targets of the SDGs is Goal 8 which is about promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all (Venkatesan & Luongo, 2019). The vision of SDG 8.7 is to eliminate child labour in all forms with special attention to the worst forms of child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2025 (Ryder, 2018, Jun 12). These goals are aimed at curtailing the growth of child labour. According to ILO estimates, 246 million children aged between 5 and 17 years were engaged in child labour around the world, with 127.3 million in Asia and the Pacific in 2000 (Öncü et al., 2013). While the above multiple plans and strategies were initiated, and the prevalence of child labourers was reduced from 245,500,000 in 2000 to 167,956,000 in 2012, the problem remains. The 168 million children still in labour represent more than 10% of the world's children aged between 5 and 17 years, with the leading number of child labourers (62.1 million) in Asia and the Pacific region (ILO, 2013a, 2017). In an ILO workshop, the director of International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2013b) stated that considerable progress had been made in reducing the number of child labourers in the South Asia region but more needed to be done, particularly in the agricultural and domestic sectors (Pakistan Press International, 2006).

### *1.1.3 The prevalence of child labour*

Child labour is widespread. In recent years, the proportion of child labourers has dramatically increased, as ILO and UNICEF (2021) report that it accounts for almost 1 in 10 children worldwide. Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, the number of child labourers around the world

was 160 million, as stated in an ILO report published in 2020. In 2017, the ILO estimated that this number was 151.6 million. In their report, the ILO and UNICEF assumed that if social protection measures were not taken to combat the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 estimates could jump to 168.9 million by 2022. Almost 79 million of these 160 million child labourers between the ages of 5 and 17 years are engaged in hazardous work (ILO, 2017; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Approximately 97 million of these children are boys and 63 million are girls. In terms of regional distribution of child labourers, Africa ranks first, followed by Asia and the Pacific with 60.7 million. The distribution of the sectors is almost identical to that published in 2017. Approximately 70% of child labourers work in agriculture, while only 19.7% and 10.3% work in services and industry respectively (ILO, 2017; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Notably, 122.7 million of the 160 million children are employed in rural areas. Specifically, this current study focused on rural settings since they utilise child labour three times more than urban settings (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; UNICEF, 2022). Also, the situation of child labour in the least developed countries is alarming. The least developed countries in South Asia are particularly vulnerable. UNICEF states that 1 in 5 children in the poorest countries are engaged in labour (UNICEF, 2022). The ILO estimates that almost 17 million children in South Asia are engaged in unauthorised labour. Child labour (aged 5–17 years) is highly prevalent in South Asian countries, with India having the highest number (5.8 million) followed by Bangladesh (5.0 million), Pakistan (3.4 million) and Nepal (2.0 million). Bangladesh has the highest percentage of child labourers among South Asian countries based on its population density (Khan & Lyon, 2015).

### *1.1.4 The child labour situation in Bangladesh*

#### *1.1.4.1* Country profile of Bangladesh

Bangladesh, a South Asian country, is densely populated, with more than 165 million people in 1116.01/km$^2$. Around 113 million people live in rural areas, while 52 million are urban

inhabitants. It is a Muslim-majority country with a democratic government. It has eight administrative divisions, which are further subdivided into 64 districts (called Zila). Among its population, more than 38.64 million are in the age group of 0–19 years (BBS, 2022). In recent years, the country has made unprecedented progress in a number of areas. The country has achieved its highest cumulative growth rate in the last decade and established strong macroeconomic stability (World Bank, 2020). The World Bank reported that the country has increased its economic growth, which resulted in a reduction in poverty from 44.2% in 1991 to 12.9% in 2016 (World Bank, 2020). Per capita income has also increased above US$2,000. The economy predominantly relies on agriculture, which makes up 14.2% of the GDP and occupies 42.7% of the workforce (BBS, 2019a). The country successfully met the goals of the MDGs, particularly in the area of maternal and child rights, and health and is moving forward at a faster pace towards achieving the SDG targets by 2030 (Akhter & Dasvarma, 2017). Despite these advancements, there are some complications around governance, poor public institutional capacity, and corruption. Around 39 million people still live below the national poverty line (World Bank, 2020), while UNICEF reports that nearly 26 million children under the age of 18 years are poverty-stricken (Bromfield et al., 2023).

#### *1.1.4.2* Child labour prevalence in Bangladesh

Despite improvements in multiple areas, Bangladesh still faces daunting challenges in child rights and protection, one of the hallmarks of which is the increase in child labour. Although the country has ratified several international conventions related to child rights, and adopted multiple national action plans and policies on child labour, progress in child rights has been limited to a reduction in the mortality rate of the under-5s, and an increase in children enrolling in primary education (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, 2021; UNICEF, 2019). In Bangladesh, child labour remains one of the most pressing issues relating to children's rights.

The Bangladesh National Child Labour Survey 2013 reports the prevalence rate of child labour (5–17 years) as 1.7 million (BBS, 2015). The male and female concentrations of child labour in Bangladesh are 0.95 and 0.75 million respectively. The survey also estimated that 29.9% of child labourers are employed in the agricultural sector followed by the service sector. Most of them (1.15 million) are rural inhabitants, and nearly 40.1% of rural child labourers are employed in the agricultural sector. The national Bangladesh National Child Labour Survey of 2013 further reported that over 1.1 million children work more than 42 hours per week (BBS, 2015). Around 95% of child workers are engaged in the informal economy (BBS, 2019a). Of note, most are engaged in hazardous types of work including crop harvesting and processing, fishing, and drying and processing fish (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, 2018). According to the Bureau of International Labour Affairs, in Bangladesh, nearly 1.28 million children were engaged in hazardous labour just before the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, it believes that the rate would be much higher today due to the economic and health effects of Covid-19 (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, 2021). Of note, there are no precise estimations of child domestic labourers (CDLs) in Bangladesh; however, it is assumed that more than 0.2 million children are working as CDLs in the country (Ashraf et al., 2019). The WHO also reports that risky agriculture, manufacturing pursuits and third-party domestic labour directly expose children to hazards such as isolation, maltreatment and exploitation (WHO, 2020).

Studies on the aetiology of child labour have been completed in Bangladesh. These studies suggest a range of diverse issues such as parental illiteracy, dropping out of schools, low household income, parental unemployment or a decrease in wages, and inadequate public monetary support programs explicitly underlie child labour in Bangladesh (Hadi, 2000; Delap, 2001; Khanam, 2005; Islam, 2018). The traditional cultural practices or social norms within rural areas, such as sending children to work to develop responsibility, or the belief that girls

are better suited for domestic work, have also made children vulnerable to child labour (Delap, 2001; Jensen, 2017; Islam, 2018). Based on these aetiological studies, a series of policy measures were established to restrict the growth of child labour (Majhoshev & Angelovski, 2016; Siddiqua, 2003), as discussed below.

#### *1.1.4.3* National legislation on child labour in Bangladesh

Bangladesh inherited British policies and laws designed by the British Government in the early 19th century to protect child workers. Following independence, the country implemented several strategies designed to eliminate child labour. Two examples are the Factory Act 1833 and the Mines Act 1842, as discussed in Section 1.1.2. Of note, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh guarantees the rights of the child under Article 39(1) and Article 41(1). Specifically, Article 34 of the Constitution of Bangladesh notes that any form of forced labour is strictly prohibited. The Children Act 1933 also included provisions about the punishment of parents or guardians who do not protect their children aged under 15 years from labour. To regulate children, particularly those employed in industrial establishments, the Employment of Children Act 1938 was introduced. This law prohibited children aged under 12 years from working in hazardous industries, but it did permit children aged 15 years or older to be involved in other types of work. This Act includes the provision of penalties for employers who recruit children in hazardous labour (Sharma, 2016). Unique legislation for children who work in tea gardens was established in 1962. The Shops and Establishments Act 1965 prohibits children aged under 12 years from working but allows children aged over 12 years to work with limitations on the number of hours (Siddiqua, 2003).

The Labour Act 2006 is a milestone provision in protecting children from labour exploitation in Bangladesh. Established in 2006 the Act states that children aged below 14 years are not allowed to work. This Act also permits adolescents aged 14 to 18 years to work in any occupation but requires a certificate of fitness. Only those aged over 18 years can engage in

hazardous labour (Bangladesh Employers' Federation, 2009). Nevertheless, the Labour Act 2006 does not address the informal sector, in particular, child labour in the domestic and agricultural sectors (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, 2021). The updated version of the Children's Act 1974 is the Children's Act 2013, which repealed the previous act. This Act limits the age of child labourers; children aged under 14 years can engage in labour except for hazardous activities. The Bangladesh Government has also formulated several specific policies which directly contribute to the elimination of child labour, notably the Child Labour National Plan of Action which aims to develop institutional capacity to eradicate child labour, the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, which is designed for CDLs with the minimum age of domestic work set at 14 years and the Seventh Five Year Planning Strategy (2016–2020) which pays special attention to CDLs and other vulnerable groups, and aims to eliminate child labour. A specialised doctrine, The National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010, was formulated by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Bangladesh. Perceiving the hazardous situation of child labour, this policy suggested that children in labour must be provided with financial assistance to ensure primary and secondary education and well monitored so that they do not work more than 5 hours a day, for unpaid or low wages, or experience any maltreatment at workplaces (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2010). These initiatives have contributed to the reduction of child labour in Bangladesh. For instance, in recent years, the gross school enrolment both at primary and secondary school has substantially increased compared to previous decades (Quattri & Watkins, 2019). Besides, according to The National Child Labour Surveys of Bangladesh, in 2013 the number of working children in the country had reduced to 3.5 million from 7.6 million in 2003 (BBS, 2013).

As mentioned, Bangladesh has ratified key international conventions related to child labour, particularly ILO Convention 182 (worst form of child labour) and the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child. The minimum age that was considered in Bangladesh's laws do not protect children employed in the informal labour sector. However, in 2022, the country ratified the ILO Convention on Minimum Age (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, 2021).

### *1.1.5 Child labour and agriculture*

From the early phases of human evolution, agriculture occupied a large share of the labour force from all segments of the human population. Historically it has always been assumed that children were engaged in this occupation. In today's society, agriculture is recognised as the largest sector for child labourers (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2016). Child labourers, particularly in rural domains, are mostly employed in agriculture and their numbers have substantially increased since 2012. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) revealed that 108 million children are engaged in farming, livestock, forestry or aquaculture, which is nearly 3 out of every 4 child labourers globally (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2018). In a recent report, the ILO and UNICEF (2021) estimated that 112.1 million child labourers were engaged in agriculture. Notably, around 31.4 million children aged between 5 and 14 years in the agricultural sector are performing hazardous work, with most of them in unpaid employment working for smallholder family farms, commercial farms and plantations, with some forced or trafficked (Carter & Barrett, 2006; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Boys outstrips girls in all areas of child labour except domestic work (ILO & UNICEF, 2021).

The highest proportion of agricultural child labours are found in low-income countries (ILO, 2017). A small number of high-income countries may also be exceptions in this regard. In the USA, there are 1.1 million children living on farms and more than half of them work on the farm, with the majority of them between the ages of 10 and 15 years (Hendricks & Goldcamp, 2010). Unfortunately in the USA, every year approximately 115 children die in agricultural incidents, and nearly 12,000 children experience fatal and non-fatal incidents (Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, 2018). Children often live and work where their parents work as

intergenerational labour in the agricultural sector. One study further shows that in China, approximately 7.74% of children under the age of 10–15 years are engaged in crop production and fishing activities (Tang et al., 2018). Farmers in poverty-afflicted countries recruit a large number of child workers in the seed growing and marketing of perilous agricultural products despite knowing the danger. For example, Zimbabwe is the world's sixth largest producer of tobacco, and a significant proportion of children work in this industry, although they are aware of the health impact of exposure to nicotine and pesticides that cause nausea, headaches, dizziness and damage the child's brain (Woelk et al., 2001). In Africa, agriculture accounts for 85% of all child labourers and work in both subsistence and commercial farming and livestock herding (ILO, 2017; The Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco-Growing Foundation, 2018). Similar to other poverty-afflicted continents, agriculture absorbs the largest proportion of children in labour in every South Asian country. For instance, around 94% and 76% of child labourers are engaged in the agricultural sector in Nepal and Pakistan respectively. In South Asia, child labourers mostly live in rural areas, therefore are primarily engaged in this sector. This cumulative rural engagement in agriculture has established this area as a traditional employment venue for many rural families leading to many child labourers taking up the work. This domain is deemed as one of the three most dangerous sectors in South Asia in terms of workplace hazards (ILO, 2017; Khan & Lyon, 2015).

Bonded labour is mostly employed in the agricultural sector. Due to the practice of debt bondage in village areas, children are often employed in agriculture or domestic activity (Basu & Chau, 2003; Tucker, 1997), where they often used like slaves. It is noteworthy that the proportion of child labourers in agriculture in Bangladesh has recently reduced compared to other South Asian countries. According to the Bangladesh National Child Labour Survey 2013, around 30% of child labourers are still deployed in subsistence agriculture in Bangladesh. Of them, almost 21.6% toil as skilled labourers in different hazardous fields of agriculture, forestry

and fishing. Most work for more than 42 hours each week in these areas (BBS, 2015). A number of studies have reported that alongside occupation injury risks, a large number of child labourers working in different domains of agriculture are at risk of experiencing intentional maltreatment (Banday et al., 2018; Hadi, 2000; Hurst, 2007; Khan & Lyon, 2015). Despite these figure and facts, these children have received less attention in the research and the policy arena than children in manufacturing (Human Rights Watch, 2002). The notes that studies of children working in the agricultural sector are deficient because of minimal secondary data availability and the risks associated with this form of research (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2019).

### *1.1.6 Child labour and domestic work*

Child labourers in the domestic domain, similar to the agricultural or manufacturing sectors, are trapped in various ways in or out of households, and much of the maltreatment against these children remains hidden. Children under the age of 18 years or under the legal minimum working age who are engaged in domestic or household work within an employment relationship are regarded as CDLs (ILO, 2013a). The ILO estimates that approximately 10.5 million children aged 5–17 years are employed as domestic workers in people's homes and in hazardous conditions (ILO, 2013c). Nevertheless, a recent report published by the ILO & UNICEF (2021) reveals that there are 7.1 million CDLs in the world. Gender and age heterogeneity are most prevalent in this area, where female children nearly double the number of males, and younger children are preferred (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 2013a). This is also reflected in a report of ILO and UNICEF (2021), which further showed that 4.4 million are girls, while 2.8 million are boys working in domestic sectors. Additionally, nearly 65% of these child labourers are under the age of 14 years. However, no global prevalence estimates are available for children who work in third-party

households, other than a few cross-sectional studies conducted within the context of national population surveys.

It is evident that domestic labour is most prevalent in Asian countries (60.7 million), where a significant number of children are employed in the household in either a paid or unpaid capacity (Thi et al., 2021). Some CDLs work in hazardous or exploitative conditions in South Asian countries that are comparable to slavery (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 2013a; Pflug, 2002). Due to the high concentration of child labourers in rural areas in most South Asian countries, the ILO estimates that most of them will engage in domestic work similar to farming in this region (Khan & Lyon, 2015). As in other South Asian countries, Bangladesh has a large number of CDLs. This issue has been in focus since 1990, but the magnitude of the problem has not improved. Currently, as many as 0.42 million children aged 5 to 17 years are employed as domestic child labourers in Bangladesh. The majority are under the age of 14 (Islam et al., 2013). They are thought to be the most exploited group of child labourers in Bangladesh. Their extended working hours, which are often more than 14 hours per day and their monthly earnings of below US $7 are indicative of this situation (Global March, 2015). Moreover, a report provided by the (ILO, 2006) also demonstrated that around 49% of CDLs in Bangladesh work without any monetary payment. It is commonly perceived that regulations to protect child domestic workers would be challenging to enforce as the workplace is a private dwelling, effectively giving the employer power over the child worker; consequentially, domestic labourers are uniquely vulnerable. They often remain unregistered and usually do not come into the employment statistics, as this sector falls under the informal economy and is overlooked. In Bangladesh, they are not specifically protected by any national laws (Global March, 2015).

The children who work in third-party households as domestic labourers usually live in their employers' houses and either work for money or for food, shelter, and care. They are usually

identified as industrious, docile and malleable, which makes them fit for common household chores, including assisting in the kitchen, mopping floors, washing clothes, cleaning toilets, buying and carrying household items, taking care of children or elderly people, tending to the garden, running errands and helping employers in running small businesses from home (Ara et al., 2011). As domestic labourers are ruled and controlled by their employer's family inside the household, their chances of being physically and psychologically maltreated is higher than other types of workers (Matsuno & Blagbrough, 2002). In an annual report, the ILO, (2006) estimated that in Bangladesh around 90% of CDLs sleep at their employer's place, which further increases their risk of maltreatment. Further, a number of studies conducted in Bangladesh have revealed that domestic workers are routinely subjected to maltreatment (Islam, 2018; Jensen, 2017). Besides abusive experiences, CDLs are discriminated against and feel isolated in the household, making their circumstance challenging. In spite of these vulnerabilities, very few studies exclusively investigate how these abusive and exploitative conditions affect their psychosocial wellbeing (Gamlin et al., 2015).

## 1.2 Maltreatment of Child Labourers

Maltreatment of children is a serious social and public health concern, particularly in low-income countries. Children who have been maltreated tend to have significantly negative physical, emotional, cognitive and social outcomes throughout their lives (Sperry & Widom, 2013; Toth & Manly, 2019; Wolf et al., 2018). The adverse consequences of maltreatment emphasise the importance of studying, identifying and reporting maltreatment cases in order to plan and evaluate interventions that may reduce childhood adverse experiences.

### *1.2.1 Child maltreatment and prevalence*

The major concern of this study is the maltreatment of child labourers. Its meaning varies among professionals, between social or cultural groups and across time (Miller-Perrin & Perrin,

1999). The term ‘child maltreatment’ encompasses both child abuse and neglect. In the literature, legislation and policy, ‘child maltreatment’ and ‘child abuse and neglect’ are often used interchangeably (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2015). Maltreatment of children typically refers to behaviour that is outside the bounds of acceptable conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm. It denotes acts of commission (harmful actions directed towards the child) and acts of omission (inappropriate care usually referred to as neglect) (Irenyi et al., 2006). More precisely, the WHO defines the term child maltreatment as physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or other exploitation, resulting in harm to the child’s health, survival, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (Krug et al., 2002). The *Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect* defines child maltreatment as any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in the child’s death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm (Herrenkohl, 2005).

Despite these various delineations, there are a number of views about maltreatment. As mentioned in the definition, the issue is commonly seen from four different perspectives (e.g., physical, psychological, sexual and neglect). However, this definition does not take into account other forms of exploitation such as economic exploitation or witnessing violence. Each of these types has distinct categories that are used to accurately identify or define them. Child physical maltreatment (CPM) involves excessive intentional physical injury through punching, shaking, hitting, beating, biting, kicking, burning, or other ways of physically harming the child (Sheppard, 2011), while child emotional maltreatment (CEM) denotes inflicting emotional harm through the use of words or verbal action or non-physical interactions. It may include repeated verbal maltreatment of a child in the form of shouting, threats, confinement and degrading or humiliating criticism (Riggs, 2010). Sexual abuse usually ranges between contact and non-contact assaults of a child for sexual gratification by an adult (Murray et al., 2014).

Specifically, it includes sexual gratification through non-penetrative acts, touching the sex organ of a child, talking about sexually implicit matters to a child, and penetrative acts such as rape or sexual intercourse (Badoe, 2017). Finally, child neglect (CN) involves depriving the child of necessities or denying their human rights (Clément et al., 2016). There have been promising studies on the diagnosis of these four common types of maltreatment (Haque et al., 2019; Maguire-Jack et al., 2020; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999).

### *1.2.2 Global prevalence of child maltreatment*

Maltreatment of children is pervasive. The estimations of child maltreatment, however, vary from report to report, and country to country, because of inconsistencies in the operational definitions and methodological variations (Jud et al., 2016; Pinheiro, 2006). Notably, various published reports and meta-reviews have acted as effective platforms in providing accurate and legitimate worldwide views of child maltreatment. In a recent global report, the WHO (2020) estimated that one out of two children, or one billion children, aged 2–17 years, experienced some sort of maltreatment in the past year. A similar prevalence report was also found in a systematic review, which showed that 50% or more children worldwide experienced violence in the previous year (Hillis et al., 2016). CPM is one of the most highly prevalent forms of child maltreatment. A global meta-analytical study of 157 nations from six continents (Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America) estimated that nearly 22.6% of adults globally experienced CPM during their childhood (Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). It found that children on the African continent are highly exposed to both CPM and CEM, followed by Asian countries (WHO, 2020). Recently, CEM has increased, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. A recent meta-analysis estimated that the rate of psychological (emotional) maltreatment (EM) was 39% worldwide in 2020 (Lee & Kim, 2023). There have been a number of studies on child sexual abuse, which have played an undeniable role in exposing child sexual abuse. A meta-analysis of 217 studies estimated the global prevalence of child sexual abuse

was 18% for girls and 7.6% for boys (Stoltenborgh et al., 2015), while another meta-analysis revealed relatively similar frequencies of child sexual abuse at 19.7% for females and 7.9% for males (Pereda et al., 2009). The recent global estimate of child violence also shows that the prevalence of sexual abuse against girls varied from 8% to 31%, while boys experienced rates from 3% to 17% (WHO, 2020).

As opposed to sexual abuse, very few studies have focused on the extent of neglect in children (Clément et al., 2016). A meta-analysis on CN conducted by Stoltenborgh and colleagues found that globally 16.3% of children experienced physical neglect and 18.4% experienced emotional neglect (Stoltenborgh et al., 2013). Likewise, a recent prevalence study on child maltreatment showed an upward trend of CN, which varied between 20.6% and 29.4% annually (Clément et al., 2016). Outside of these contemporary estimations, children witnessing violent acts are often placed in mainstream categories as distinct types of child maltreatment, although the rate is rarely calculated. A UN report estimates that in South Asia, 41–88 million children witness violence at home, making it the region with the world's highest figures (Pinheiro, 2006). Among the different continents, South Asia has been characterised as a continent prone to violence of children. A recent study shows that South Asia accounts for 64% of all maltreated children worldwide (Hillis et al., 2016). Importantly, several studies have found an upward trend of child maltreatment in South Asia. For instance, a study conducted by Kumar et al. (2019) revealed that 89.9% of children in India are maltreated. This reflects that the maltreatment state in South Asia is alarming.

### *1.2.3 Child maltreatment scenario in Bangladesh*

In Bangladesh, torture and violations of human rights have been prevalent since the Liberation War in 1971 (van Schendel, 2009). During the war, the death toll was assumed to be around 300,000 to 500,000 people including men, women and children (Dummett, 2011, December 16). Following the post-independence period, famine or natural disasters, political instability

and corruption exacerbated the situation of human rights (Benson & Clay, 2002). In regard to the violation of human rights, children are the most vulnerable group in this country; they have been deprived of basic rights including healthy nutrition, education and other forms of social security. This has resulted in the prolonged observation of the violation of child rights in Bangladesh (Islam, 2019; Sharma, 2016).

There is very little attention given to systematic research on child rights in Bangladesh. However, a few scientific studies have highlighted the problem (Hadi, 2000; Haque, 2019; Mohajan, 2014). Notably, these studies indicate a high prevalence rate of violence against children. Importantly, most of the statistics on child maltreatment are only covered by the news media or non-government reports, both of which argue for protective policies (Haque et al., 2020).

Importantly, a gruesome image of child maltreatment in Bangladesh has emerged in a number of global reports published by BBS and UNICEF. These reports reveal that 82.4% of Bangladeshi children between the ages of 1 and 14 years experienced either CPM or CEM (BBS & UNICEF, 2016). One of the prominent frontline organisations in Bangladesh known as Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), has long been working on the issue of child protection, and has estimated that in the first eight months of 2017, 222 children were killed, 399 raped, and 58 others gang-raped (Rabbi, 2017, November 4). The data released by government officials also reflect uneven, intensified exploitation of children in the country. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Bangladesh, the incidence of child maltreatment rose sharply to the level of 962, 1093 and 1542 cases for 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively (Islam & Akhter, 2015). However, there are very few methodical studies that explore the extent and aetiology of child maltreatment in the context of Bangladesh. A recent comprehensive study estimated that at least one form, two forms and three or more forms of CPM were experienced by 99%, 95% and 83% of children respectively in Bangladesh (Haque

et al., 2019). Undoubtedly, these data indicate the need for child protection safeguards in Bangladesh.

Despite numerous national and international agreements, plans and initiatives, the country is still experiencing high levels of infringement of the safety and security of children. A logical question might be which class of children is being maltreated or violated the most? Several studies have indicated that children from poverty-afflicted families are highly susceptible to maltreatment. However, children from poor families are also more likely to become street kids, child labourers or victims of trafficking (Amin et al., 2004; Bromfield et al., 2023). Additionally, research has shown that among these vulnerable groups of children, children in labour are highly susceptible to maltreatment and exploitation in Bangladesh (Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2019).

### *1.2.4 Child labour and child maltreatment*

Several contemporary studies argue that child labour is a form of maltreatment in itself. These authors contend that participation in labour might impact on the child's physical and cognitive development, alienate them from their family and peers, and prevent them from gaining an education (Caesar-Leo, 1999; Nik Mahmod et al., 2016; Reddy, 1995). Numerous studies have explored the link between the unintentional maltreatment and employment of a child (Al Ganideh & Good, 2015; Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003; Ibrahim et al., 2018; Türkelli, 2019). These studies mostly argue that abusive experiences in the workplace resulted from forcing children into exploitative hazardous jobs, long working hours, work intensification, inadequate provision of meals, leisure, accommodation, training, workplace safety measures and exposure to dangerous machinery and equipment.

It is also evident that children who work in dangerous pursuits and experience these adversities at workplaces are more likely to be physically injured than those who do not (ILO, 2013b;

Purschwitz & Field, 1990). A growing body of research notes that this is a breach of labour Acts and is also deemed detrimental for health of the young (Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003; Mathews et al., 2003; Roggero et al., 2007). Unfortunately, these studies did not address the risk of intentional violence against child labourers. Few studies postulated that intentional maltreatment of working children should be addressed, claiming that these children are more likely to suffer abusive treatment than any other group (Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi, 2000; International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 2013a).

Therefore, the violation of child labour rights can be seen from two standpoints; first, children are being injured physically as they are employed in dangerous pursuits that violate child labour laws and second, these child workers are routinely being subjected to maltreatment. Yet, there is an intersection between these two standpoints. For instance, as earlier discussed, in hazardous sectors, children are bonded to work for extended hours, which itself results in maltreatment, and on the flip side, further increases their risk of experiencing different forms of maltreatment by their employers or co-workers at the workplace (Al Ganideh & Good, 2015; Hadi, 2000).

### *1.2.5 The extent of maltreatment of child labourers*

There is a great deal of importance for a discussion on intentional child labour maltreatment because a substantial proportion of children are employed in labour throughout the world. Most have experienced abusive behaviour from their caregivers, employers, colleagues or customers (Banday et al., 2018; Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi, 2000). These reports are mostly carried out in industrialised countries. There is no global explicit estimation of the maltreatment of children as labourers. However, studies using surveillance data show that in 1996, 112 workers under the age of 18 years were assaulted and injured and 344 workers died at work due to maltreatment between 1980 and 1992 in the USA (Jenkins, 1996). Based upon a study conducted by Öncü and colleagues, it has been estimated that 24.7% of all children in Turkey

were maltreated within their families, while 21.8% and 53.6% of child labourers have been subjected to physical maltreatment (PM) and psychological (emotional) maltreatment (EM) at their workplaces (Öncü et al., 2013).

The plight of maltreatment among children who work and live on the streets is also extremely concerning. It was found in a study that 50%, 50% and 65% of street-working children were subjected to verbal, physical and sexual abuse respectively (Celik & Baybuga, 2009). A systematic review on violence against children in Pakistan reported that 10–60% of children were physically maltreated at their workplace and 66–79% of them were forced to engage in work, which confirmed they were mentally maltreated (Hyder & Malik, 2007). The violence against child labourers in Nepal is also extensive, with Dhakal et al. (2019) estimating that 72% of child labourers are maltreated, with almost half of them being physically maltreated. The prevalence of child labour maltreatment in Bangladesh has not been explicitly examined through methodological studies, but related studies have observed that it significantly occurs in the agriculture, domestic and industry sectors (Bromfield et al., 2023; Hadi, 2000; Islam et al., 2013). For instance, in Bangladesh, Kamruzzaman (2015) found that more than 35% of child workers are physically assaulted at work.

### *1.2.6 Factors responsible for the maltreatment of child labourers*

There is no single factor contributing to the maltreatment of child labourers, rather a variety of pull and push factors allegedly precipitate their maltreatment. Children experiencing abusive treatment in the workforce are typically different from the general child populations; consequently, the causal factors are varied. The aetiological perspective of child labour maltreatment can be seen from two sides: first, that of the child labourer and second, that of the perpetrator. Child labour itself is a major form of maltreatment of children. The first and foremost fact about child labour is poverty, which pushes unprivileged children into this form of exploitation. It is also associated with parental unemployment (Brown et al., 2002; delap,

2001; Khatab et al., 2019). By and large, the pervasiveness of child labour and maltreatment is also characterised by a higher proportion of low-income families and in regions with abnormally high rates of unemployment (Antai et al., 2016; delap, 2001; Steinberg et al., 1981). An empirical hypothesis proffered by Basu and Pham indicates that where household income falls below a certain benchmark level, child labour rises (Basu & Pham, 1998). Thus, economic insecurity contributes to the risk of child labour, in turn maltreatment.

The literature also suggests that children's internal vulnerabilities contribute to their exposure to maltreatment. Child maltreatment is found to be associated with children's younger ages (Liel et al., 2020). School-going children and skilled child labourers are at a lower risk of maltreatment (Hadi, 2000). Studies have shown that children's living arrangements at work also increase their risk of being maltreated (Banday et al., 2018; Moayad et al., 2021). Notably, children who work long hours for low wages tend to be mistreated more than those who do not (Hadi, 2000; Öncü et al., 2013). Several studies have examined the role of parents in child maltreatment. It is evident that child workers who belong to extended families, have a low income and have illiteracy among family members are more likely to experience maltreatment and neglect (Hadi, 2000; Hunter et al., 2000; Khatab et al., 2019; Öncü et al., 2013). Caregivers' physical and emotional wellbeing is also related to how favourable their relationships will be with their children (Clément et al., 2016; Stith et al., 2009). From the perpetrators' perspective, it has been found that in many studies the caregivers' early history of maltreatment is a significant contributor to child maltreatment. The higher the maltreatment experiences in early childhood, the higher the risk of being a perpetrator of child maltreatment in adulthood (Hurren et al., 2018; Lakhdir et al., 2021).

Aside from social, economic and health forces, cultural values and practices influence guardians' perceptions of child labour and maltreatment (D'Avolio, 2004; Zelizer, 2005). As childhood is considered a social construct, a particular society determines what cultures and

customs it needs to nurture (Biddle, 2017). Parents or guardians, in some societies, believe that early engagement of children in labour makes them more responsible and competent (Brown et al., 2002; delap, 2001). Likewise, maltreatment directed towards these children either in the workplace or at home can be culturally motivated. Parents or employers may see it as part of the culture of disciplining the child. Studies reveal that from an intra-household familial perspective, parental biases towards the child's gender (Korbin, 2003), attitude towards health (Finkelhor & Korbin, 1988) and corporal punishment (Al-Shail et al., 2012; Collier et al., 1999; Lansford & Dodge, 2008) are perceived as forces of abusive behaviour against child labourers. One deterrent is to legislate against child labour and to introduce a range of preventive policies. For instance, a series of national legislations and international conventions were greeted globally with optimism and enthusiasm to protect child labourers from violence, but often there is a failure to monitor these laws and policies, which impedes the goal of protecting children's rights (Fasih, 2007; Majhoshev & Angelovski, 2016). In addition, many child labour laws, such as the Labour Act 2006, are not applicable to the informal sector in Bangladesh. It is noteworthy that the country does not have any policies specifically designed to protect the interests of CDLs, despite the fact that children in this area have faced severe maltreatment (Ara et al., 2011; Islam, 2018; Siddiqua, 2003). This limitation and the absence of laws are thought to increase the risk of child labour maltreatment.

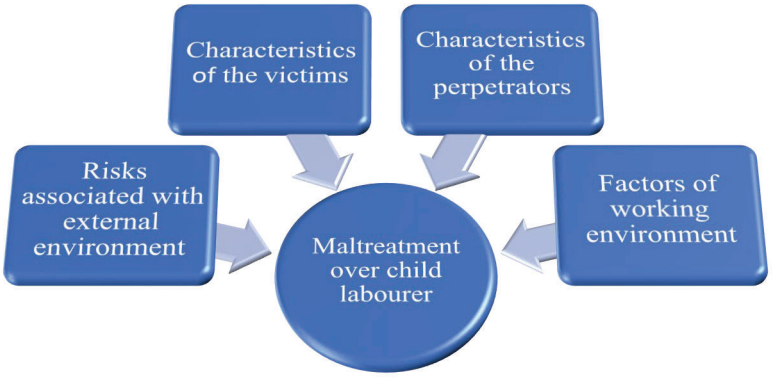


Figure 1.1: Issues associated with the maltreatment of child labourers

Apart from the above discussion of determinants of child labour maltreatment, the conceptual framework designed by UNICEF (presented in Figure 1.1) provides in-depth understanding about factors impacting on the maltreatment of child labourers. This corresponds to factors such as the victim's physical characteristics (including their age, gender, size or timidity, low education level, poverty) and the internal environment of the workplace (such as working alone, night shift and long working hours, dangerous conditions, unhygienic workplaces, noise and vibrations, inadequate lighting, cold or hot environments, working with chemicals, standing up for an extended time and unsanitary toilets). The framework also shows that violence against child labourers is also influenced by adult unemployment, labour market failure, capitalist modes of production practices and political intrigue (Brown et al., 2002; Hadi, 2000).

### *1.2.7 Possible social and health impacts of maltreatment of child labourers*

Generally, child labour and maltreatment are considered social and public health issues, since these lead to a variety of adverse experiences for children. Despite this, the health impact on child labourers is still under-researched (Nuwayhid et al., 2005). Studies on violence of child labourers mostly concentrate on occupational injuries caused by workplace machinery or tools.

Numerous studies have revealed that child labourers are frequently exposed to injuries resulting from PM (Bourdillon, 2006). However, it is relatively easy to detect physical injuries caused by maltreatment exposure, while most of the emotional and social hazards of maltreatment go undetected, resulting in long-term negative consequences for children. Several studies have demonstrated that children who work are more likely to experience emotional difficulties than those who do not work (Al-Gamal et al., 2013; Jayawardana et al., 2023). There is evidence that children who are employed are more likely to suffer from internalised psychosocial impairments such as social isolation, hopelessness, low self-esteem, decreased coping efficacy and externalised psychosomatic problems including aggressive behaviour, a hostile attitude and academic failure (Hesketh et al., 2012; Nuwayhid et al., 2005; Ryan et al., 2000; Sturrock & Hodes, 2016). Moreover, studies on the maltreatment of child labourers have documented behavioural and emotional problems similar to those of children who are maltreated but not in the labour force (Celik & Baybuga, 2009; Dhakal et al., 2019; Kiss et al., 2015). Given that it is already established that child labour has a negative effect on children's emotional health, the impact is further compounded by the violence they endure while in the workplace (Das & Chen, 2019; Dhakal et al., 2019). This reflects the importance of measuring the psychosocial health hazards of intentional physical, psychological maltreatment, sexual abuse or neglect of child labourers (Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003). Of note, very few studies have attempted to assess the impact of maltreatment on the mental health of these children (Dhakal et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2020). Specific to the impact of child labour maltreatment, it is identified that victimised child labourers are likely to display stress, social anxiety, phobias, depression, feelings of shame, lack of assertiveness and substance abuse (Celik & Baybuga, 2009; Dhakal et al., 2019). The emotional wellbeing of victims often goes unnoticed in developing countries such as Bangladesh, where caregivers tend to place high priority on the visible physical problems

(Prince et al., 2007). Therefore, early detection and treatment of any psychosocial impairment in children should be a primary prevention strategy in any country.

## 1.3 Overview of Evolving Child Labour Maltreatment Research

Despite economic growth and sustainability, child labour remains an extensive and growing phenomenon in today's world (Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003). It is considered a major economic and social concern for any country, as it perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty and impedes sustained growth in rural areas. Despite downward trends, the prevalence is still high, particularly in developing nations (ILO, 2017). Despite the fact that this is a global health issue, this area of child rights violations receives little attention in relation to other forms of violence.

Research indicates that the prevalence of child maltreatment among child labourers is highest in rural areas, as the area occupies the highest proportion of child labour (Banday et al., 2018; Hadi, 2000). However, there is a very little documentation of child exploitation in rural communities (Blagbrough, 2008; Slovak & Singer, 2002). Notably, rural communities have been affected by a number of social and economic barriers. These are higher rates of poverty (Belanger & Stone, 2008; Ben-Arieh, 2010), lower literacy levels (Hadi, 2000; Lamb et al., 2014) and an absence of childcare or monitoring services (Belanger & Stone, 2008; Choo et al., 2010) demanding casual labour in agriculture (Cilliers, 1969), high demand for young girls to engage in domestic labour (Admassie, 2003) and an informal labour market (ILO, 2018b). These characteristics of rural settings are associated with the increased odds of children being maltreated (Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003; Hadi, 2000; Maguire-Jack et al., 2020). The majority of rural child labourers are engaged in multitasking activities within agriculture. It is assumed that the risks in this sector are the result of the use of machinery, chemicals or biological agents (Burnette, 2012; Hurst, 2007), meaning that maltreatment by employers, parents or other groups is concealed. Moreover, studies on CDLs are mainly conducted in urban households (Jensen, 2017; Matsuno & Blagbrough, 2002). Children in rural areas, particularly girls, who

are not enrolled in schools, are usually recruited by third-party households as domestic labourers. According to research, domestic child labourers in rural settings are extremely vulnerable to violence (Blagbrough, 2008; Gamlin et al., 2015).

In addition to examining the extent of physical injuries resulting from CPM, several studies have also identified that any form of maltreatment has been explicitly associated with depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome and irritable bowel syndrome (Brooks, 1996; Khatab et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2020; Springer et al., 2003). Additionally, studies have reported decreased coping capabilities, alienation from society and delinquency among child labourers as a result of maltreatment and neglect (Al-Gamal et al., 2013; Ibrahim et al., 2018). However, research into the adverse effects of child labour maltreatment on psychosocial health has largely been overlooked.

Bangladesh is globally recognised as a high-risk area for child labourers due to poverty, income inequality and gaps in policy level, yet the area is neglected in research (Delap, 2001; Islam, 2010; Ara et al., 2011). The majority of studies on child labour in Bangladesh focus primarily on the economic aspects of labour, overlooking the intentional violence they experience (delap, 2001). Generally, media reports and non-academic researchers provide information regarding the maltreatment of child labourers. They have documented that child labourers, especially those who work in the domestic sector, are highly victimised physically, which has led to an increase in the death toll of child labourers in Bangladesh as a consequence (Haque et al., 2020). Furthermore, research into the maltreatment of child labourers is primarily conducted in urban settings (Amin et al., 2004; Islam, 2018). As a result, victimisation experiences in rural areas of Bangladesh remain unknown. Consequently, there is a lack of valid data regarding child maltreatment in the rural context, making it difficult to design, implement and enforce policies to protect these children. This lack of understanding in turn results in a lack of

social awareness. In light of the above discussion, it was deemed essential to conduct a rigorous study of the maltreatment of children employed in rural sectors, especially in agriculture and domestic sectors.

Taking the above concerns into account, this current study attempted to understand child labour maltreatment as a complex phenomenon. The study provides an evaluation of the prevalence, risk factors and psychosocial health impact of maltreatment of child labourers employed in the rural agricultural and domestic sectors in rural Bangladesh.

## 1.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the major direction of the research project, which is to explore the prevalence and types of maltreatment of child labourers in Bangladesh. The background information discussed above indicates that child labourers are highly susceptible to intentional maltreatment both at home and at work. The risk factors include not only child labour and poverty, but also a variety of internal, cultural and political factors that affect children and caregivers. Moreover, child labourers are likely to suffer from both internalised and externalised psychological problems as a result of their victimisation. The knowledge gap, however, suggests a need for further investigation into this complex issue.

The complexity of subjective phenomenon further directed a scoping review of the relevant literature, which is presented in Chapter 2. It is structured using a systematic searching approach and a variety of databases to retrieve the relevant information to address the potential gaps and design research questions for the project. The third chapter of this research project presents the theoretical framework; this is an adaptation of Belsky's (1980) theory of child maltreatment with modifications made to incorporate the workplace. Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology. This chapter presents the blueprint required to answer the research question, explain and justify the research design and describe how the results were analysed.

Importantly, the three populations surveyed were not related or known to each other. Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the interviews with key experts in the field, while Chapters 6 and 7 present the findings from the surveys. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 address the research aims separately, but are then brought together in Chapter 8, which integrates the results. Chapter 9 is a comprehensive discussion of the results and findings of the study with reference to the delineated theoretical framework of this project as presented in Chapter 3.

# CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE MALTREATMENT OF CHILD LABOURERS IN BANGLADESH, INDIA, NEPAL AND PAKISTAN

## 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the contemporary scenario of child labour and subsequent maltreatment. The chapter noted that there needs to be investigation into the maltreatment of child labourers at work. This chapter is a systematic search of the research issues highlighting the gaps in existing studies. Given the considerable complexity and debate that exists between the concept of child labour and maltreatment, a systematic search of the literature was conducted. This was a scoping review.

### *2.1.1 Child labour and its prevalence*

Despite economic growth and development in many developing and least developing countries, child labour remains a growing concern with children routinely engaged in both paid and unpaid work that threatens their lives or their physical and mental health (Avis, 2017). UNICEF defines child labour "as work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the nature of labour". The following criteria define child labour:

Aged 5–11: Children who work at least 1 hour of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household work per week.

Ages 12–14: Children who work at least 14 hours of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household work per week.

Ages 15–17: Children who work at least 43 hours of economic work per week (UNICEF, 2022).

The 18$^{th}$ International Conference of Labour Statisticians organised by the ILO postulated that child labour comprises all 5–11-year-old children in employment, all 12–14-year-old children

in regular employment and all 15–17-year-old children in hazardous forms of employment (ILO, 2008).

As noted in the previous chapter, globally around 160 million children are in labour; of these, 79 million are in hazardous jobs that directly endanger their health, safety and moral development (ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Around 70% of hazardous work done by children is associated with agriculture (ILO, 2017), which establishes child labour as a rural issue (ILO, 2010). A sizeable proportion of children in the service sector (7.1 million) are engaged in households as labourers. This trend is mostly evident in the Asian continent (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 2013a). Child labourers are mostly found in low-income countries (ILO, 2017) with around 1 in 4 children employed (UNICEF, 2017). South Asia alone has 17 million child labourers (Khan & Lyon, 2015).

### *2.1.2 Maltreatment of child labourers*

Child maltreatment is not a new phenomenon; it has been evident for centuries (Radbill, 1968). It is recognised as a global public health concern because of the harmful impacts on the child's development (Norman et al., 2012). The definition provided by the WHO divides maltreatment into four forms; PM, EM, sexual abuse and neglect (Al Odhayani et al., 2013). Globally, every 5 minutes a child dies due to maltreatment. Around one out of two, or one billion, children experience physical punishment each year (WHO, 2020). Chamberlain and colleagues found that the health concerns related to labour maltreatment affects around 25–50% of children worldwide (Chamberlain et al., 2019). The WHO, reporting on the World Mental Health Survey, estimated that the prevalence of PM, EM, sexual abuse and neglect is 8%, 36.3 %, 1.6 % and 4.4 % respectively (Vachon et al., 2015). Of note, these abusive experiences can occur in any social setting, including households, neighbour environments, workplaces or schools. Several studies have been conducted in these settings with the exception of the workplace environment (Aluede, 2004; Ji & Finkelhor, 2015; Stith et al., 2009). The UN asserts that

violence in the workplace is one of the most difficult settings to address among all the places where children are exposed to violence (Pinheiro, 2006). Specifically, Das and Chen (2019) argue that child labourers in workplace settings represent the highest number of victims of maltreatment compared to any other group of children.

However, many contemporary studies define child labour itself as a form of maltreatment (Caesar-Leo, 1999; Majhoshev & Angelovski, 2016; Reddy, 1995). Involvement in labour is not only a matter of toiling long hours doing risky work, but also deprives children of education, entertainment and social interaction with family and peers, impacting on their physical, psychological and cognitive development (Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003). The individual traits of child labourers differ from children who are not in labour. Das and Chen (2019) argue that class difference is a distinguishing factor, associated with low socioeconomic status, which impacts on child labour activities. A number of other studies note that poverty results in higher maltreatment experiences for employed children both at home and in the workplace (Celik & Baybuga, 2009; Khatab et al., 2019; Terre des Hommes, 2017). Regardless of having to work all day, a persistent source of stress for many child labourers is physical and verbal assaults from employers or customers at the workplace (Tannock, 2001). They are consistently deprived of basic necessities within the workplace, which is a form of neglect. Only a few studies address this issue (Chaiyanukij, 2004; Hadi, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Rauscher, 2008). Research indicates that PM ranges from 5.5% to 72.3% (Kacker et al., 2007; Pandey et al., 2020; Rauscher, 2008), and EM and neglect represent 85.1% and 2% respectively among child labourers (Öncü et al., 2013; Rauscher, 2008). Of note, children in the Asian subcontinents are regularly deprived of fair wages or exploited in bonded labour with no wages (Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003; Hadi, 2000).

Most researchers predicate the concept of child labour maltreatment on a combination of structural features such as poverty, low levels of education, parental childhood history of

maltreatment, domestic violence and social isolation (Basu & Pham, 1998; Celik & Baybuga, 2009; Hornor, 2013). The theoretical understanding postulates that socioeconomic attributes, societal interactions, religious and cultural influences, and state or governmental initiatives influence abusive behaviour (Belsky, 1980; Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The personality traits of child labourers and perpetrators, the internal environment of the workplace and external forces also determine the risk of child victimisation (Belsky, 1980). A report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) revealed that economic hardship in South Asia has triggered an unprecedented number of children into the hazardous informal sector, many of whom experience PM as part of the job (Wan & Sebastian, 2011). Existing social norms and the lack of decent work opportunities also aggravate child labour victimisation in South Asia (UNICEF, 2016). The notion of recruiting cheap labour is also a factor (Caesar-Leo, 1999).

The aftermath of this exploitation is immense and parallel common child maltreatment. Literature on the aftermath of adverse childhood experiences documents that maltreated children predominantly exhibit traumatic internalising disorders such as depressive disorder, generalised anxiety disorders, social anxiety, attachment disorders, panic attacks (Brown et al., 2018; Chapman et al., 2004; Levey et al., 2017) and external disorders including substance disorders, personality disorders, conduct behaviour, sleep disorders and eating disorders (English, 1998; Levey et al., 2017). The violence against child labourers not only affects their psychological and cognitive growth, it also is a lead cause of mortality. ILO reported that every year, approximately 22,000 children die at work due to intentional or unintentional maltreatment (ILO, 2011). Despite this, very few systematic studies have been conducted attending to this predicament, which limits our understanding of the true prevalence, possible risk factors and impact of violence against child labourers, particularly in the context of developing nations (Dalal et al., 2008). A recent review of research suggests that this knowledge gap needs to be addressed to identify the intervention points (Das & Chen, 2019;

Hadi, 2000). This scoping review outlines what is known to date on the issues in four South East Asian countries.

### *2.1.3 Rationale for using the scoping review*

This scoping review maps the evidence on the prevalence, determinants and impact of the maltreatment of child labourers in South Asian regions. A scoping review is a methodical approach to examining the extent and characteristics of research activity in a particular area. Specifically, it assesses the extent, breadth and depth of literature on a particular topic that is considered complex and little-known (Schoeller et al., 2018) as well as disseminating new research findings, identifying gaps and making recommendations for future research (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). As mentioned earlier, very few studies identify the prevalence and determinants of maltreatment of child labourers (Dalal et al., 2008; Mathews & Benvenuti, 2014). The area is still unclear and under-studied. Das and Chen (2019) postulate that the maltreatment of child labourers requires innovative methodical studies. This scoping review sought to provide a preliminary understanding of the maltreatment of child labourers in neighbouring countries that utilise a large number of child labourers and share a common sociocultural background with Bangladesh (Khan & Lyon, 2015). It is hoped the findings will provide new insights and assist in prioritising future research in this critical area.

Of note, a protocol was developed to provide methodological direction for this scoping review (Appendix A), which increases comprehensibility, validity and reliability of the review (Munn et al., 2018).

The aim of the scoping review was to determine the extent and nature of existing research, to summarise the available evidence and to identify gaps in the knowledge addressing maltreatment of child labourers in four South East Asian countries: Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

The specific questions for this scoping review are:

1. What is the nature and extent of maltreatment of child labourers in the workplace and household in these four countries?

2. What factors put child labourers at risk of different types of maltreatment in these four countries?

3. What are the adverse health effects resulting from the maltreatment of child labourers in these four countries?

## 2.2 Methodology

### *2.2.1 Methods of the scoping review*

A scoping review is a suitable methodology for identifying distinct patterns of evidence available (both quantitative and qualitative) on a topic and represents existing evidence graphically (mapping or charting) regardless of quality (Peters et al., 2015). The current scoping review was undertaken in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA) checklist to report results and for this a priori protocol was prepared (Munn et al., 2018; Tricco et al., 2016). This framework describes the stages of scoping reviews as: 1) identifying the research question 2) searching for relevant studies 3) study selection 4) charting the data 5) collating, summarising and reporting results.

#### 2.2.1.1 Stage 1: Identifying the research question

The first stage is to identify the research questions to be explored. The review questions outlined are guided by the inclusion criteria for the review. In this review, iterative processes suggested by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) were followed that sketch the scope of the inquiry in order to develop the research questions. The questions were developed through repetitive consultation with supervisors and familiarisation with the literature. The overall question is:

*What is the prevalence, risk factors and impacts associated with the maltreatment of child labourers in four South East Asian countries; Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan?*

The subquestions were outlined in Section 2.1.3.

#### 2.2.1.2 Stage 2: Search for relevant studies

The second phase of the scoping review identified the criteria used to select studies for inclusion. The criteria guide the search and help filter potential studies. This step generally requires comprehensiveness as much as possible in order to identify potential literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Daudt et al., 2013). The inclusion criteria for this review was based on PCC (P: Population, C: Concept and C: Context), which is recommended by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) for scoping reviews (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2019b). This approach directed the screening of studies to be included. It also allows the reader to understand the philosophy of the reviewer.

***Inclusion and exclusion criteria***

Table 2.1: Inclusion criteria based on population, concept and context

| PCC | Inclusion Criteria |
|---|---|
| Population | Child labourers aged 5–18 years |
| | Paid and unpaid agriculture (involved in crop production, livestock farming, fish harvesting and processing, and forestry-related occupations), industrial or domestic child labourers during reference period |
| | Child labourers who were maltreated either by their family member, employers, co-workers or customers |
| Concept | Studies exclusively focusing on prevalence, risk factors and consequences of maltreatment of child labourers |
| Context | The review included all relevant studies in the context of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan |

The inclusion criteria considered the age distribution, type of work and hazards. The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) defines a ‘child’ as a person aged under

18 years. This scoping study selected populations who were under the age of 18 years and drew on studies from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal, given that these countries have the largest share of child labourers within South Asian countries (Khan & Lyon, 2015) and also are known for their limited progress in human rights (Naseem, 2004; Perera et al., 2005).

The search included both empirical and theoretical studies, quantitative or qualitative original peer-reviewed articles, reports, book chapters, and theses or dissertations published in the English language. All relevant studies published between 1960 and 2023 were included. It was assumed that professional and systematic enquiries of the prevalence and characteristics, as well as the consequences, of violence in the workplace against children started to be recorded in 1960 (McCoy & Keen, 2013). Studies that considered populations of children aged below 5 years or above 18 years and that were published in languages other than the English were excluded.

### *Search strategy*

The search strategy used a three-phase approach. The first phase was an initial limited search of two appropriate online databases relevant to the topic, namely PubMed and PsycINFO using the terms; 'child' 'under-age' 'labour' 'work' 'child labor' 'working children' 'maltreatment' 'maltreatment' 'violence' and 'South Asia'. This initial search was followed by an assessment of relevant text words contained in the title and abstract of the most pertinent retrieved papers and index terms used to describe the articles. The first search results (PubMed-231 and PsycINFO-897) were reviewed to ensure the validity of the search strategy.

In the second phase, all identified keywords and index terms from the initial search were managed in order to compile a list of key words that were then used across all selected databases. The search terms and concepts were combined using Boolean operators suggested by Bio-Medical Library like 'AND', 'OR' and 'NOT' (The University of Minnesota, 2023).

The shared key words were ‘child labor’ OR ‘working children’ OR ‘children in hazardous job’ AND ‘child’ OR ‘under-age’ OR ‘adolescent’ AND ‘work’ OR ‘labor’ OR ‘labour’ AND ‘maltreatment’ OR ‘violence’ OR ‘maltreat’ OR ‘ill-treat’ OR ‘ill-used’ AND ‘child maltreatment’ OR ‘physical maltreatment’ OR ‘psychological maltreatment’ OR ‘sexual maltreatment’ OR ‘neglect’ OR ‘workplace violence’ AND ‘Bangladesh’ OR ‘India’ OR ‘Pakistan’ OR ‘Nepal’.

*The PRESS (Peer Review of Electronic Search Strategies): 2015 Guideline Statement* was followed to guide the search of the electronic literature (McGowan et al., 2016). These were repetitively refined through assistance from the Flinders University librarian. Identification of relevant studies was achieved by searching electronic databases: Scopus, Medline (via Ovid), PsycINFO (via Ovid), ProQuest and Web of Sciences. As child labour and child maltreatment is considered a global social and health concern (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018), these databases were assumed appropriate. Appendix B contains the results of the database search.

The third phase involved searching and reviewing the relevant publications. This included journals such as *Child Maltreatment*; *SAGE Publication*, *Child Maltreatment and Neglect*; *Elsevier and Child Maltreatment Review*; and *Wiley Library* which were searched manually using key terminologies associated with child labour maltreatment.

Grey literature sources from the library databases of Google Scholar, websites of ILO, UNICEF, WHO, World Vision, Save the Children, BSAF and BBS were searched. A systematic advanced search in Google with no date restriction was also performed and searched the first 10 screen shots. This grey literature helped to minimise publication bias through gathering diverse studies, alongside the minimal peer-reviewed literature on child labour maltreatment that was found. The search results of peer-reviewed articles and reports from electronic databases were imported into a reference management software called EndNote V

X.8 (Clarivate Analytics, PA, USA). The citations were transferred into a spreadsheet for eligibility screening and charting processes.

#### 2.2.1.3 Stage 3: Screening

The selection of the most pertinent literature was accomplished adopting the PRISMA flow diagram. The overall retrieval process is illustrated in Figure 2.1. A total of 832 identified records from selected databases (Medline = 57, PsycINFO = 39, ProQuest = 439, Scopus = 125 and Web of Science = 73) and grey literature and other hand-searched records (99) were imported into the reference manager for deduplication. Deduplication is a technique of eliminating duplicate copies of repeating data leaving only one copy of data to be stored. A total of 249 duplicate records were detected from the 832 records. After eliminating duplicate records, the remaining 583 records (four databased articles = 504 and grey literature and hand-searched records = 79) were taken to the two-stage screening process. The first stage consisted of two reviewers screening the title, abstracts and sources (Ahad & Parry) to determine the eligibility of each article for further full-text reading. After screening the title, and abstract from the 583 records, a total of 394 (325 databased records and 69 grey literature publications combined with research articles) were excluded. The exclusion criteria are listed in Table 2.2.

In the second step, Ahad and Willis independently assessed the full text of the 179 databased records (peer-reviewed articles, book chapters) and 10 grey literature items and other hand-searched articles to determine whether they met the inclusion or exclusion criteria. These were double screened through reading and re-reading. After assessing the full-text records, a total of nine records met the inclusion criteria. Discrepancies in both abstract and full-text screening were resolved in a meeting with a third-party reviewer. This low number of papers was expected given the focus of the review.

Table 2.2: Reasons behind exclusion of retrieved articles

| **Reason of exclusion** | **Frequency of articles** |
|---|---|
| Selected keywords were not matched with the title and abstract | 322 |
| Not in the English language | 12 |
| Could not access abstract of retrieved article | 33 |
| Very limited evidence and unreliable sources | 27 |
| **Total excluded on title and abstract screening** | **394** |

The eligible literature incorporated six peer-reviewed research articles, two book chapters and one organisational report. Among the six peer-reviewed articles, one was obtained from advanced hand searching on Google (Banday et al., 2018). Although the journal and publisher of three records (Child Rights Governance Assembly [CRGA], 2013; Kamruzzaman, 2015; Omer & Jabeen, 2015) were not listed by Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports from Clarivate Analytics (Watson, 2017), they were also included as the articles are well-written, and the information was pertinent to this study. This review is inclusive of empirical studies, descriptive reports and studies using qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. See Figure 2.1 for the PRISMA diagram below.

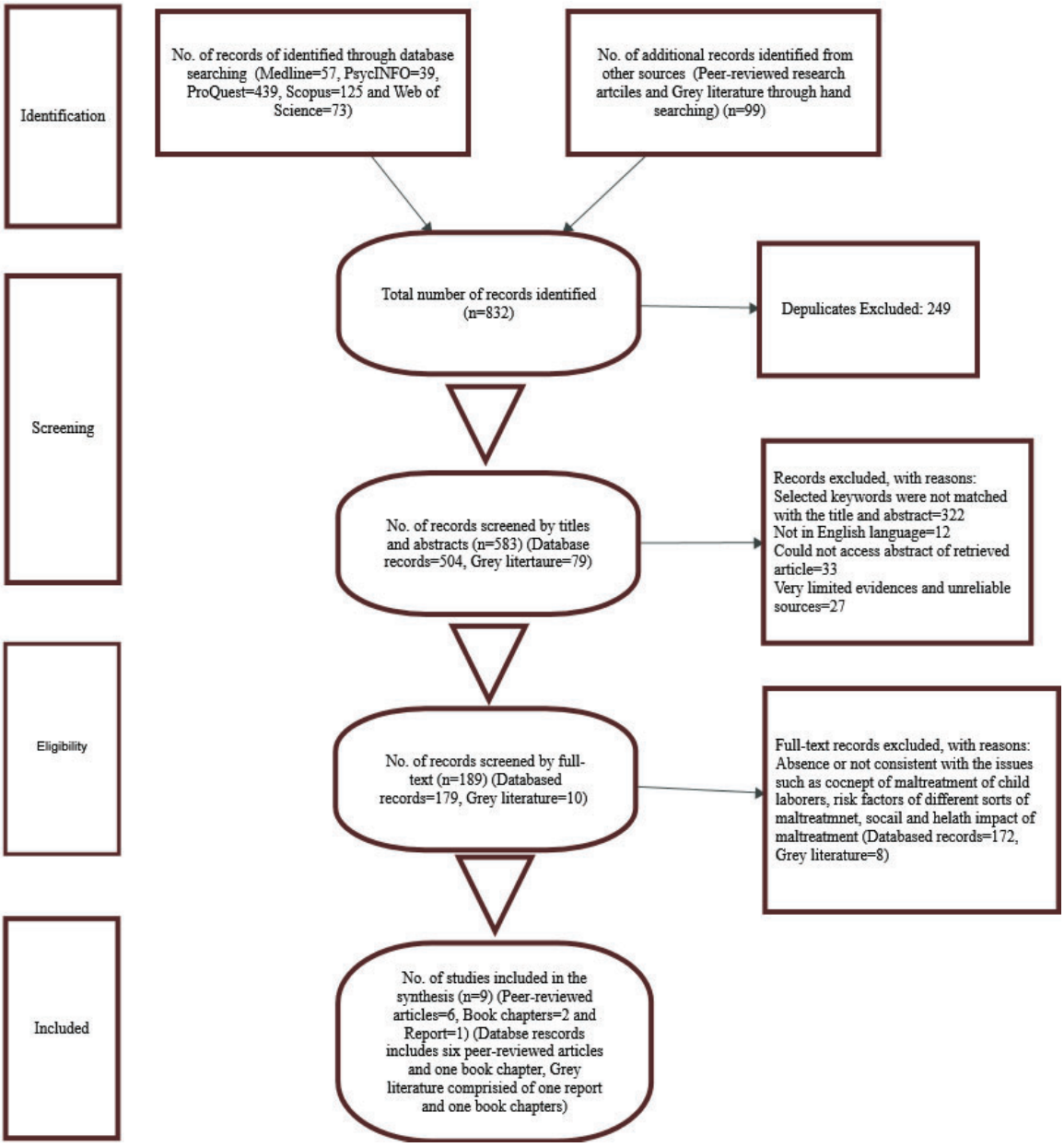


Figure 2.1: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) flow diagram

#### 2.2.1.4 Stage 4: Data extraction

The extraction of data for a scoping review requires charting the results. At this stage, the results of the study were summarised in a logical and descriptive way to align with the questions of the review (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2019a). The purpose of this stage is to chart key emerging ideas that underpin the answers to the research questions. This is done by reading and re-reading the texts. Researchers extract data from each study independently and meet

regularly to ensure consistency with the research questions of the scoping review (Levac et al., 2010). At this stage, a data-extraction form was developed to categorise or extract data from reviewed journal articles, book chapters and one organisational report. The data-extraction instrument containing the key domains is given in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Data-extraction domains

| **Key domain/extraction field** | **Description** |
|---|---|
| Authors | Who are the authors of selected study? |
| Year of publication | Mention the published year of selected study |
| Title | The full title of this study |
| Journal | Journal name |
| Type of publication | Peer-reviewed article, report, conference paper, newspaper article or anything else? |
| Aim/purpose of the study | What are the aims or purposes of this article? |
| Study type | What method is uses (quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method study)? |
| Design of the study | What type of data were taken in this study (longitudinal or cross-sectional or cohort or others) |
| Study population/settings | Target population, their sex, age, ethnic background, socioeconomic characteristics and any other features are all identified |
| Methodology | What was the study design concerning selection of sample and data collection method? What sorts of analytical inferential or descriptive statistics are used in the paper? |
| Type of maltreatment against children | Mention of specific maltreatment against the child labourer |
| Source origin/context | Mention the geographic setting of the study undertaken |
| Key findings | Discuss the major findings or results of the study that are related with the review question? |

The pilot testing and refinement of this charting form was checked by one supervisor to ensure consistency. Extracting the result was an iterative process whereby the table was continually updated through revising the framework and modifying the domains where necessary. Two

reviewers independently extracted the data, following the data-extraction framework. In order to identify the relative consistency of judgements, a sample of the included studies was reviewed. Discordant records were solved through discussion with the third reviewer. At the end of the data-extraction phase, data charting of peer-reviewed articles and reports were combined in a single document (Appendix C1) and extracted data of book chapters were assembled in another separate document (Appendix C2). The analysis and synthesis of these extracted data are discussed in the results section of this review.

#### 2.2.1.5 Stage 5: Collating, summarising and reporting the results

The data analysis for this study relied on both quantitative and qualitative research using the most appropriate and advanced tools. The synthesis of the extracted data was completed through both descriptive, correlational synthesis and narrative synthesis employing thematic analysis to answer the review questions. It was assumed that if inconsistencies emerged in the forms of maltreatment among studies, simple narrative analysis would be employed to discuss the prevalence rates of multiple child labour maltreatment. To identify possible risk factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers, a reflexive thematic approach constructed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed to generate potential themes. The thematic synthesis was underpinned by five stages including re-reading the dataset and coding the relevant text lines, the organisation of the 'free codes' into related areas to construct 'descriptive themes' or 'preliminary themes', and the generation of analytical themes through review and refinement and reporting the results. The qualitative analytical software NVivo (12) was used to manage thematic analysis. The process of thematic analysis is outlined in Figure 2.2. Finally, to diagnose psychological impairments caused by child labour maltreatment, a 2-sample test for equality of proportions (known as a proportion test) was conducted. The proportion test was completed using advanced statistical software 'R Console'.

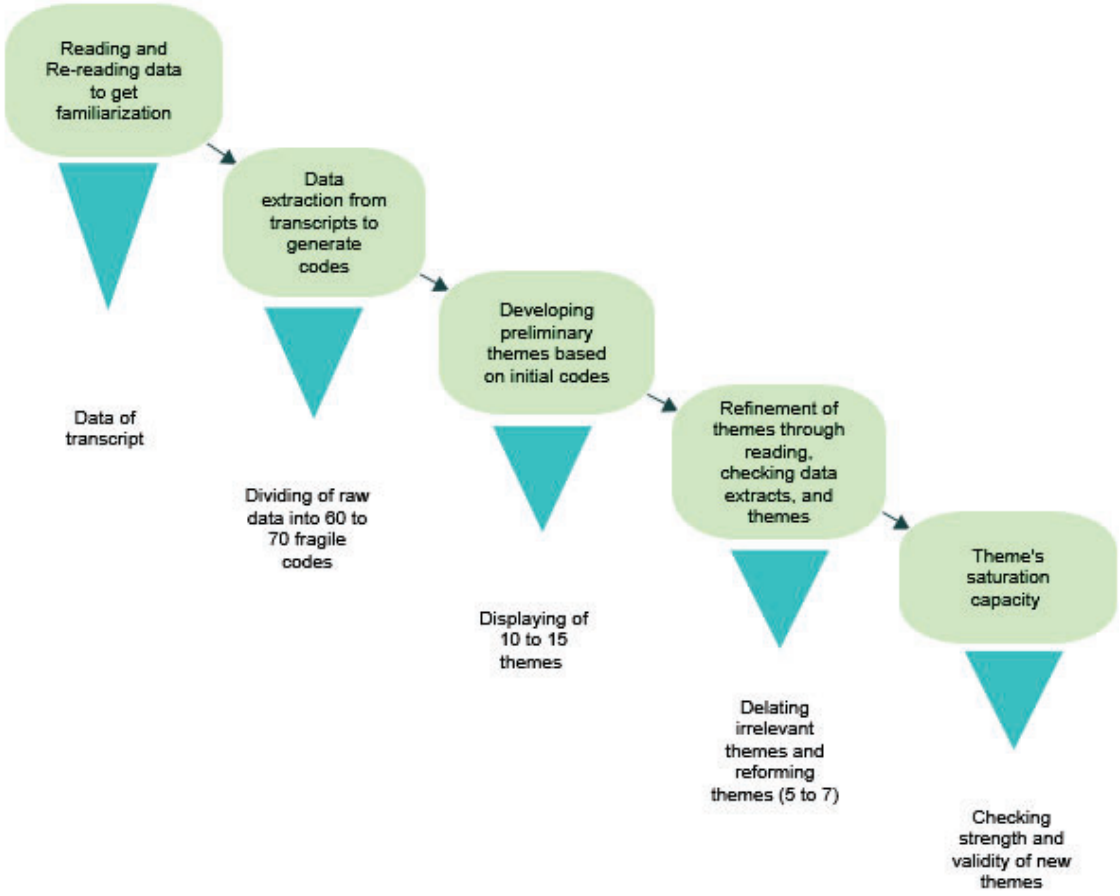


Figure 2.2: Steps involved in the thematic analysis

## 2.3 Result of the Scoping Review

The results of this scoping review are divided into four segments: (i) an overview of the results consisting of the description of studies such as demographics, research design, concept, and context (ii) the prevalence of child maltreatment evidenced within child labourer populations (iii) the potential dimensions as risk factors of child labour maltreatment (iv) the possible psychosocial health impact of child labour maltreatment. The findings are elaborated below.

### *2.3.1 Description of studies: Demographics, research design, concept and context*

#### 2.3.1.1 Demographic characterises of participants included in the studies

The demographic profile includes gender, age, ethnicity, parental information, literacy rates, employment status, household size and socioeconomic information. This information provides

valuable insights into a community's needs, resource allocation and other services (French, 2014). It serves as an excellent road map for future planning.

The studies show that the age range of child labourers varied considerably between 10 and 18 years, except for Omer and Jabeen (2015), who collected data from children aged 5–15 years. Hadi (2000) interviewed the largest number of child labourers (4643), with a significant proportion aged between 10 and15 years. Dhakal et al. (2019) and Pandey et al. (2020) obtained data from 103 and 132 participants respectively, who were aged between 12 and 18 years. Hadi (2000) reports more boys than girls in the workforce, and they also experienced more maltreatment. In contrast, Dhakal et al. (2019) demonstrated a sex distribution of 36.9% male and 63.1% female child labourers. Zainab and Kadir reported on female CDLs (95%) among 385 participants (Zainab & Kadir, 2016). Kamruzzaman (2015) interviewed child labourers (85) toiling in multiple sectors, with 60% male and 40% female. The book chapters written by Banday et al. (2018) and Islam (2018) considered child participants aged 5–18 years, with the majority being boys.

In the case of occupational distribution, the majority of child labourers were employed in domestic work (Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2018; Omer & Jabeen, 2015; Pandey et al., 2020; Zainab & Kadir, 2016), followed by agriculture (Banday et al., 2018; Pandey et al., 2020), transport and factory labourers (Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015), and restaurant workers (Kamruzzaman, 2015; Pandey et al., 2020). Four selected records highlight the duration of working hours that would impact on the physical development of child labourers. Findings show that 20.8% of the children spent at least 4 hours at work a day, 8% worked more than 6 hours a day, and 3.1% worked 8 hours per day (Hadi, 2000). Dhakal et al. (2019) identified the mean hours worked by child labourers as 13 hours in a day. Correspondingly, Kamruzzaman (2015) report that around 42.4% of child workers spent 5–8 hours a day working, while 30.5% worked more than 8 hours per day. The study conducted by Omer and

Jabeen (2015) noted that 66% of CDLs worked more than 15 hours a day. In summary, the reviewed research shows the majority of working children spend more than 8 hours in labour a day. The inclusion of participants' demographic data indicates that the parents of these child workers were illiterate and low wage earners.

#### 2.3.1.2 Type of included records

All the retrieved records except the organisational report (CRGA, 2013) were based on cross-sectional study designs, where the authors evaluated outcomes and exposures (maltreatment of child labourers) of the study samples at a specific time. The studies include six peer-reviewed research articles (Dhakal et al., 2019; Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015; Omer & Jabeen, 2015; Pandey et al., 2020; Zainab & Kadir, 2016), two book chapters (Banday et al., 2018; Islam, 2018) and one organisational report (CRGA, 2013). The only report devised by CRGA (2013) provided raw data on the maltreatment of CDLs, collected at different points in time, from different newspaper sources. This reflects a longitudinal study design.

#### 2.3.1.3 Methodological variance across studies

There was methodological variance across the studies. Of the nine records retrieved, the six peer-reviewed articles (Dhakal et al., 2019; Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015; Omer & Jabeen, 2015; Pandey et al., 2020; Zainab & Kadir, 2016) employed a quantitative design, while the book chapters (Banday et al., 2018; Islam, 2018) utilised a mixed-method evaluation approach. The CRGA (2013) report was a narrative discussion.

The study classifications differed according to the methodological processes used. The articles and book chapter drew on primary data, while the CRGA report used secondary sources. The peer-reviewed articles and book chapters recruited participants following a non-probability sampling frame with the exception of Hadi (2000), who used systematic random sampling. Islam (2018) used both stratified and purposive sampling in his study to detect child labourers

(for quantitative data) and diverse local professionals as key informants (for qualitative data). Most used survey questionnaires, Banday et al. (2018) and Islam (2018) used in-depth interviews, and focus group discussion interviews and survey questionnaires. The cross-sectional studies administered varied from self-prepared questionnaires to first-hand data collections except Dhakal et al. (2019) and Pandey et al. (2020) who explored the maltreatment history and further detected potential psychiatric diagnoses among child labourers through administering validated questionnaires such as the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ), the Youth's (Self Report) Inventory-4R (YI-4R) and the Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ). There were distinct analytical methods among the retrieved studies to give validity to the inferences. Of note, five records (Banday et al., 2018; Dhakal et al., 2019; Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2018; Pandey et al., 2020), used advanced analytical measures such as parametric and no-parametric tests, multivariate analysis and thematic analysis.

#### 2.3.1.4 Geographic and cultural characteristics

Of the nine records reviewed, two peer-reviewed articles (Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015), one book chapter (Islam, 2018) and a report (CRGA, 2013) were written solely by the authors and, in the context of Bangladesh, two reported on research conducted by the authors drawing on data from Pakistan (Omer & Jabeen, 2015; Zainab & Kadir, 2016), while two papers focused on India (both peer-reviewed and book chapter) (Banday et al., 2018; Pandey et al., 2020) and one article was from Nepal (Dhakal et al., 2019). The participants in the studies were predominantly from the city or urban areas (Islam, 2018; Kamruzzaman, 2015; Omer & Jabeen, 2015; Zainab & Kadir, 2016), while Hadi (2000) and Banday et al. (2018) recruited participants from rural precincts. Two articles (Dhakal et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2020) failed to mention the geographic identity of participants, other than they were engaged in home care.

#### *2.3.1.5* Concept of the maltreatment of child labourers

The concept of maltreatment of child labourers in the literature is problematic, as most of the existing studies find child labour itself a form of violence (Das & Chen, 2019). This is because child labour deprives children of their rights and opportunities. In consideration of this complexity, the studies conceptualise both child labour and maltreatment separately. All the retrieved papers focused on violence of child labourers as an independent subjective phenomenon. There was significant variation in the source and type of maltreatment of child labourers across the retrieved studies. This is due to the diversity of the types of maltreatment of child labourers. For instance, existing literature on child maltreatment generally conceptualises the term 'child maltreatment' under four headings or types; physical, psychological, sexual abuse and neglect (Mathews et al., 2020). In his review, Hadi (2000) measured financial exploitation, forced work and work intensification (long hours and increased workload) alongside PM as maltreatment of child labourers. Three authors (Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2018; Kamruzzaman, 2015) explicitly refer to financial exploitation as a form of maltreatment. Dhakal et al. (2019) and Pandey et al. (2020) concentrated on conventional crime and witnessing or indirect victimisation as a form of maltreatment. PM was represented in all retrieved records. All the studies focused on identifying child labourers' exposure to maltreatment. Dhakal et al. (2019) and Pandey et al. (2020) attempted to assess potential psychiatric diagnoses utilising tested appraisal tools. Hadi (2000), Omer and Jabeen (2015) and Banday et al. (2018) also attempted to detect the determinants of child victimisation along with prevalence. These conceptual delineations were mostly framed within the workplace rather than the home context. The CRGA (2013) report only examined physical and sexual assault.

### *2.3.2 Prevalence of the maltreatment of child labourers*

This section reports on the magnitude of maltreatment against child labourers in the context of the four study areas. The review reports the extent of maltreatment based on the varying factors of violence towards child labourers either in the workplace or at home.

#### 2.3.2.1 Physical maltreatment of child labourers

The major form of maltreatment of child labourers is referred to as CPM. The existing literature depicts CPM as ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death due to punching, beating, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating a child (Kolko & Berkout, 2017). This can come from parents or family members, employers, co-workers or customers. Overall, approximately 15.14% of child labourers out of 6247 children reported PM. A large-scale study (849 participants) conducted by Islam (2018) showed that up to 73.27% of CDLs experienced PM, either at the workplace or home. He asserted that beating or physical assaults of CDLs are a common scenario in Bangladesh. Another study noted that 72.73% of child labourers in distinct fields were subjected to PM, with the majority of the perpetrators (56.25%) being extra-familial (Pandey et al., 2020). Likewise, Dhakal et al. (2019) report high levels of PM (46.6%) of child labourers at the workplace. He further stated that most of the perpetrators were not family members. The small cross-sectional study by Omer and Jabeen (2015) revealed that 60% of CDLs endured PM at their workplaces. Around 30% of them consistently experienced PM (Omer & Jabeen, 2015). Conversely, Hadi (2000) conducted a cross-sectional study, with a macro-level sample size (4643), revealing that 2.3% of all children engaged in labour were physically assaulted at work. Hadi (2000) also demonstrated that younger children and boys were more likely to be maltreated physically than girls or older children. Kamruzzaman (2015) and Zainab and Kadir (2016) report similar prevalence rates of PM of child labourers (13% and 8.3% respectively). Kamruzzaman (2015) identified burning, beating and pulling hair as PM against child

labourers, while Zainab and Kadir (2016) subdivided PM into slapping (60%), hitting with a hard object (6%), hair pulling (3%), twisting (3%) and hoofing (strong kicking) (3%) by employers.

Table 2.4: Prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers

| Journal/publication, type of study, author & year of publication | Instrument | Child participant's age (years) & (sample size) | Identified prevalence of childhood abuse | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Physical | Emotional/ psychological | Sexual | Neglect | Financial exploitation | Forced work | Over burden | Witness /indirect victimisation |
| Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, Peer-reviewed research article, Dhakal et al. (2019) | Juvenile Victimisation Questionnaire | 12−18 (103) | 46.6% | 40.77% | 27.2% | 33% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 87.4% |
| Public Health, Peer-reviewed research article, Hadi (2000) | Self-developed (semi-structured questionnaire) | 10−15 (4643) | 2.3% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2.0% | 1.7% | 3.0% | N/A |
| American Journal of Applied Psychology, Peer-reviewed research article, Kamruzzaman (2015) | Self-developed (semi-structured questionnaire) | 10−18 (85) | 13.0% | N/A | 16.5% | N/A | 12.9% | N/A | N/A | N/A |

| Journal/publication, type of study, author & year of publication | Instrument | Child participant's age (years) & (sample size) | Identified prevalence of childhood abuse | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Physical | Emotional/ psychological | Sexual | Neglect | Financial exploitation | Forced work | Over burden | Witness /indirect victimisation |
| Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, Peer-reviewed research article, Pandey et al. (2020) | Juvenile Victimisation Questionnaire | 12−18 (132) | 72.73% | 47.7% | 6.8% | 17.4% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 100% |
| Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan, Peer-reviewed research article, Omer and Jabeen (2015) | Self-developed (semi-structured questionnaire) | 8−15 (50) | 60% | N/A | 60% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association, Peer-reviewed research article, Zainab and Kadir (2016) | Self-developed (semi-structured questionnaire) | 10−14 (385) | 8.3% | N/A | N/A | 6% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| IGI Global, Book chapter, Islam (2018) | Self-developed (semi-structured questionnaire) | 6−18 (849) | 73.27% | 54.33% | 16.99% | N/A | 27% | N/A | N/A | N/A |

The CRGA report of 2013 only focused on the frequency of the maltreated CDLs. The report showed that between January 2009 and July 2012, 109 CDLs were subjected to PM in Bangladesh, of which 86 incidences were reported to police, while 26 deaths were found after PM.

#### 2.3.2.2 Emotional maltreatment of child labourers

CEM is generally regarded as an underestimated and hidden form of maltreatment as it does not leave any sign of physical injury that can be detected (Oates, 1996; Reyome, 2010). It is widely understood that children may recover from CPM, but it is difficult to recover from terror, degradation or humiliation (Briggs & Hawkins, 1996). However, due to the need for clear operational definitions and severity standards (National Research Council, 1993), the identification of the precise extent of CEM remains challenging. Among the nine retrieved eligible records, only three studies (Dhakal et al., 2019; Islam, 2018; Pandey et al., 2020)) mentioned the prevalence of EM of child labourers. These three considered EM as the pattern of behaviour or incidents that convey to child labourers that they are ignored, flawed, unloved, undesirable, endangered or of value only in meeting another's needs. Dhakal et al. (2019) report that around 40.77% of child labourers had undergone EM, with 44.4% and 37.9% aged between 12 and 14 years and 15 and 18 years, respectively. Notably, 71.4% of EM was committed by outsiders. Females and older children are highly susceptible to EM (Dhakal et al., 2019). Pandey et al. (2020) report a similar occurrence in EM of child labourers, at 47.7%. This study reported an outcome opposite to that of Dhakal et al. (2019) in regard to the association of EM with age and gender, finding that male and younger child labourers are more prone to being maltreated emotionally than other demographic groups. Drawing on a sample size of 849 child participants, Islam (2018) found that 54.33% of CDLs had experienced EM. He also revealed that around 95% of them were maltreated by their employers. The proportional distribution of

EM among these studies indicates that 52.21% of child labourers were emotionally maltreated from a population of 1084.

#### 2.3.2.3 Sexual abuse of child labourers

Child sexual abuse has existed in societies for centuries, although many facets are still in dispute (Finkelhor, 1994). It is deemed a serious threat to the child's wellbeing and health in particular. It is widespread and well documented around the world (Aboul-Hagag & Hamed, 2012). Seven of the nine authors reported on the prevalence of sexual abuse against child labourers. The overall estimation revealed that approximately 16.82% of child labourers out of 1219 were sexually abused. The extent and severity of sexual violence against child labourers revealed by Dhakal et al. (2019) was 27.2% in Nepal, where around 93% of perpetrators were known to the victims. Correspondingly, Omer and Jabeen (2015) identified that 60% of CDLs experienced sexual abuse in their workplace. Children in diverse types of labour were subjected to rape, forced sexual perversion and harassment at 14.1%, 16.5% and 10.5% respectively (Kamruzzaman, 2015). A recent study conducted by Pandey et al. (2020) demonstrated that 6.8% of child labourers in different fields in India had experiences of sexual abuse. Surprisingly, the majority of them were male and younger children. Islam (2018) in his book chapter, reveals that 17% of CDLs in Bangladesh are subjected to sexual abuse and 90% of these cases are committed by their employers. The only retrieved qualitative record, authored by Banday et al. (2018) postulate that in India, children living with their employers are highly vulnerable to sexual abuse. Reports of 20 rape cases that occurred between January 2009 and July 2012 against CDLs were published in various newspapers in Bangladesh (CRGA, 2013).

#### 2.3.2.4 Neglect of child labourers

CN is deemed as a form of child maltreatment in many scientific studies. It encompasses acts of omission, where there is a lack of care in providing the child with basic physical, emotional or educational needs, and a failure to protect them from harm or potential impairment (Hornor,

2014; Marc & Hanafy, 2016). To date, most of the CN cases are registered with Child Protective Services rather than researchers (Clément et al., 2016). However, the present review attempted to pinpoint the prevalence of neglect in regard to child labourers. Overall, the extent of neglect shows that a significant proportion of child labourers (12.9%) are neglected both at home and in the workplace. Notably, only three peer-reviewed articles (Dhakal et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2020; Zainab & Kadir, 2016) identified the rate of occurrence of neglect of child labourers. Dhakal et al. (2019) report that 33% had experienced neglect followed by 17.4% noted by Pandey et al. (2020) and 6% observed by Zainab and Kadir (2016). Dhakal et al. (2019) further state that 18.5% had experienced neglect more than four times in their lifetime. They further observed that females were more likely to be neglected (43.1%) than male participants (15.8%), while Pandey et al. (2020) noted that males and younger child labourers are more prone to experience neglect.

#### 2.3.2.5 Other observed categories of the child labour maltreatment

Beyond the four common forms of child maltreatment, this scoping review identified additional distinct exploitative occurrences of child labour maltreatment. Five authors (Dhakal et al., 2019; Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2018; Kamruzzaman, 2015; Pandey et al., 2020) illustrated extensive forms beyond the contemporary types of maltreatment. These included financial exploitation, forced work, work intensification and long hours, and witnessing victimisation of other children. Hadi (2000) reports that child labourers often experience financial exploitation, forced work and work intensification apart from physical assault at the workplace by 2%, 1.7% and 3%, respectively. Work intensification involves working long hours or taking on an extra workload beyond capacity (Hadi, 2000). Two studies (Islam, 2018; Kamruzzaman, 2015) also reported on the financial exploitation experienced by child labourers. Islam (2018) revealed that 27% of the CDLs receive only US$4 to $8 per month, which he regarded as unethical. Another record showed that around 12.9% of child labourers are often deprived of wages

(Kamruzzaman, 2015). Child witness victimisation is also a widespread and overlooked form of maltreatment in research. Pandey et al. (2020) and Dhakal et al. (2019) explored this type of maltreatment in their research with a prevalence of 100% and 87.4% respectively. Dhakal et al. (2019) indicated that female and older children aged between 15 and 18 years are subjected to witnessing or indirect victimisation more than others.

### *2.3.3 Determinants of the maltreatment of child labourers*

A thematic analysis was used to generate the underpinning theme of the determinants of the maltreatment of child labourers. This included recording and systematising all the dimensions in a consistent and comprehensive manner. The four key determinants of child labour maltreatment are sociodemographic perspectives, economic poverty and challenges, established sociocultural structures and dysfunctional immediate environment. It can be assumed that child labourers experiencing these determinants are likely to experience maltreatment either at home or workplaces.

#### 2.3.3.1 Key Dimension 1: Socio-demographic perspectives

Socio-demographics are population characteristics that are significantly associated with the subjective circumstances of individuals. The thematic analysis uncovered a wide range of demographic factors. The core elements or themes that contributed to form Key Dimension 1: Socio-demographic perspectives, are children's demographic profile, parental attributes and geographic settings. These are elaborated in detail below.

***Theme-1: Children's demographic profiles***

According to the current review, the child's demographic profile contributes to their experience of maltreatment. Children's age, gender, school enrolment, occupation and intensified working environments are all risk factors. For example, age is a factor, with younger children at work more likely to be maltreated than older children. Two studies directly noted that younger

children are more susceptible to experience any form of maltreatment (Hadi, 2000; Pandey et al., 2020).

Likewise, gender is a risk factor in child maltreatment. This review demonstrates a wide range of gender-focused concerns that provoke violence towards child labourers. Female child workers are more vulnerable to all forms of maltreatment. Girls are mostly employed in domestic labour because of employer preferences, and because is easy to exercise authority over them (Omer & Jabeen, 2015; Pandey et al., 2020). The children's level of schooling is also a risk factor, particularly poor literacy levels or lack of school enrolment. Estimates show that 33–80% of child labourers are illiterate (cannot read or write).

An additional risk factor is related to where children work. Children in hazardous jobs are more at risk of maltreatment. For example, six out of the nine studies (CRGA, 2013; Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2018; Omer & Jabeen, 2015; Zainab & Kadir, 2016) report on domestic labourers, suggesting this form of work is a problematic area. Long working hours were also a risk factor. Intensified working schedules clearly show that a significant proportion of child labourers are compelled to work more than 8 hours a day (Banday et al., 2018; Dhakal et al., 2019; Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015) exposing them to threats of violence by older workers.

***Theme-2: Parental attributes***

Family background determines the child's social class, and the social mobility of parents influences the child's social status and living arrangements. Relevant parental attributes such as parental literacy and occupation level were explored. All parents of the child participants were illiterate, employed in low skilled and low status occupations such as day labourers or rickshaw pullers, or were unemployed. The influence of these factors on child maltreatment is demonstrated by Hadi (2000) who reports that the probability of a child being maltreated was higher if their father was also a labourer.

***Theme-3: Geographic setting***

Geographic characteristics are also a risk factor in the prevalence of child labour maltreatment. For instance, child maltreatment is high in rural Bangladesh (Hadi, 2000), while another study states that Asian states had frequent incidences of child labour maltreatment (Dhakal et al., 2019). Zainab and Kadir also reported high rates of maltreatment in the rural precincts of Pakistan (Zainab & Kadir, 2016).

#### 2.3.3.2 Key Dimension 2: Economic poverty and challenges

The major method for measuring economic poverty relies on household income and expenditure data (Carter & Barrett, 2006). Key subthemes associated with economic poverty and challenges includes 'to support family', 'poverty' and 'migration'. It is worth mentioning that almost all the retrieved records reported data relating to economic challenges; these are described in detail below.

***Theme-1: To support family***

This theme is associated with poverty, although it does not necessarily mean that children work simply to feed themselves and their families. It sometimes refers to attempts to sustain their economic prospects. It is associated with children's responsibility towards family expenditure and highlights the child's motivation to contribute to family needs and functioning, rather than simply working for its own sake. Banday et al. (2018) noted that children primarily work to provide financial support to their families, which unequivocally underpins this theme.

***Theme-2: Poverty***

Child labour is deeply rooted in socioeconomic vulnerability, as the economic challenges trigger the child's entry into the workforce and exploitation. Poor children are more likely to be subjected to childcare and protection proceedings (Korbin, 1980). Issues associated with this theme principally relate to the economic aspects of poverty. This was a major theme in the

thematic synthesis. For example, Hadi (2000) explored a clear linkage between child labour and economic poverty. Other underlying attributes focused on the linkage between economic poverty and child labour maltreatment, except two studies (Banday et al., 2018; Pandey et al., 2020). The risk of maltreatment remains high among poor children (Pandey et al., 2020), with maltreated children belonging to economically backward and socially disadvantaged groups (Banday et al., 2018).

***Theme-3: Migration***

The theme of migration was supported by two research studies (Banday et al., 2018; Zainab & Kadir, 2016). Of interest is the motivation for the child to migrate. The decision is triggered by an economic catastrophe. Being in a new place leaves the child at risk of maltreatment. This theme is closely related to economic poverty.

#### 2.3.3.3 Key Dimension 3: Established sociocultural and power structure

Culturally controlled power structures position the child labourer in a subordinate relationship to their employers. A range of significant culture-oriented factors contributes to the formulation of this dimension. The three key themes within this dimension are society and culturally established impediments, established master–servant relationships and absence of child labour support forums. This theme was recorded 35 times in the synthesis. The predominant themes of this dimension are described below.

***Theme-1: Society and culture established impediments***

The specific cultural practices associated with this domain relate to patriarchal social systems being accepted in the socialisation and cultural context. Where patriarchy dominates, values and legal systems support maltreatment, maltreatment is legalised in the socialisation process, and class and tribal identities predominate. Seven crucial codes outline the social and cultural barriers contributing to the maltreatment of child labourers with two factors; the

entrenchment of patriarchy precipitates sexual harassment of children (Banday et al., 2018), and class and tribal identities underpin abusive behaviour towards child labourers (Dhakal et al., 2019). Caste is also a factor in maltreatment for those in low caste groups (such as Tamang, Brahman/Chhetri, Dalit, Newar, Gurang people and so on).

***Theme-2: Established master–servant relationship***

In certain social environments, a master–servant relationship reflecting slavery and bonded labour is considered normal (Srinivas, 1995). Developing countries are mostly affected by this pattern of relationship. Children from poor socioeconomic backgrounds employed in domestic labour, industry or agriculture may be caught in these relationships. Child labourers can be viewed as the property of employers; a result of their dependency and the stringent tenets of regulating them at their workplaces. Several subthemes demonstrate different perceptions of adverse master–servant relationships, such as harsh workplaces, and the maltreatment of children to instil fear into them in order to get them to obey, the motive for high levels of productivity and insecurity at workplaces. The literature suggests that employers keep child labourers under pressure through excessive work, limiting leisure time and schooling opportunities, forcing them to perform hazardous activities and witness the victimisation of other children. These practices are common within a master–servant relationship and are a unique cultural idiosyncrasy in some countries. In order to practice these illicit activities, employers may offer middlemen, or parents, cash or exercise power over them (Banday et al., 2018). Children can be forbidden from leaving the farm or consuming their meals before task completion.

In master–servant relationships, employers are generally motivated by profit, or a desire to increase production through exploiting the workers. For example, Banday et al. (2018) report on the violence and bullying that occurred in the pursuit of productivity and financial gains.

***Theme-3: Absence of child labour support***

Working children often cannot access support systems or mechanisms to assist them due to poverty. This means that when they experience maltreatment there are no official or non-government organisations (NGOs) that might assist them in seeking redress.

#### 2.3.3.4 Key dimension 4: Dysfunctional immediate environment

Generally, the immediate environment refers to the surrounding locality in which one lives or works. When components of the environment are flawed or deviate from normal social rules and relationships, it can be regarded as dysfunctional. Children in these dysfunctional environments are highly vulnerable to violence. One such environment is familial disorganisation potentially impacting on violence towards the children. Social disorganisation theory argues that disruption in family structures can lead to parenting deficits over time, which may result in crime, aggressive behaviour or repression towards children, youth or other members of the family (Bellair, 2017). Two distinctive dysfunctional perspectives identified under this dimension are reviewed below.

***Theme-1: Dysfunctional family environment***

This theme identified unhealthy family functioning, the interrelationships of family attributes and social disintegration, which can result in children being maltreated by elders. The specific factors associated with this theme were emotional intra-familial maltreatment, living in an unsafe or broken home, reported experiences of family abduction, and parent's or carer's substance addiction.

***Theme-2: Child-parent interactions***

This theme indicates that parents or carers ignore the child's opinions and work, which enables the perpetrators to maltreat them. Parents often intentionally and repeatedly send their children to work on farms even when they know the risks of maltreatment. In such cases, child labourers

are abandoned and neglected by their parents (Banday et al., 2018). In one study, up to 67% of child labourers said their parents ignored them when they shared with them that they had been sexually abused (Omer & Jabeen, 2015). In some cases, these interactions may be impeded by parental greed. This scenario is supported by Banday et al. (2018), who noted parents regularly accept benefits, in cash and kind, from farmers/employers with promises to keep issues raised by children outside the purview of the law. The extracted summary of all these dimensions is presented in Figure 2.3.

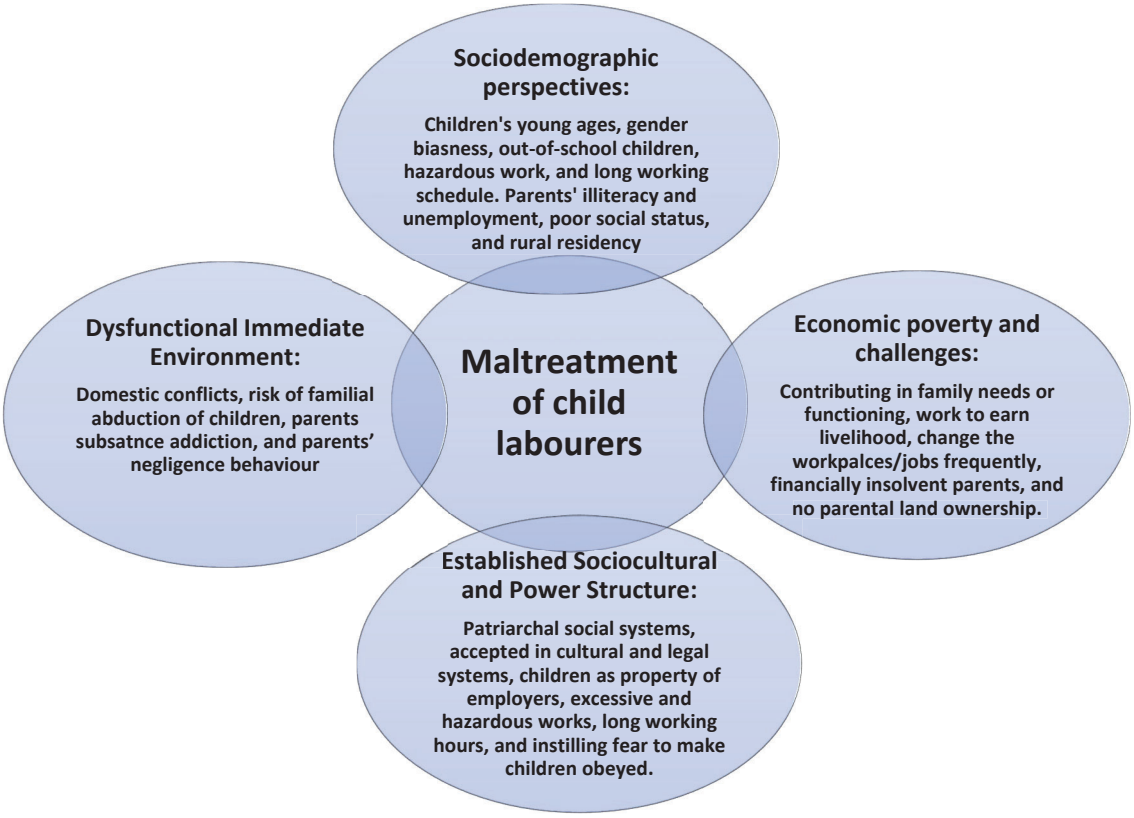


Figure 2.3: Extracted components of the developed dimensions

This theme also suggests that children are reluctant to report offences perpetrated against them in the workplace to their parents. The children are aware that their parents' response is inadequate and that there is no value in telling them about their abusive experiences. Children either avoid sharing their views with their parents/caregivers or avoid regular contact with their parents. Omer and Jabeen (2015) and Islam (2018) noted the inadequate disclosure practices

of children, finding that 22% did not inform their parents and very few CDLs had regular contact with their parents. When parents or guardians have irregular communication with their children, this puts the child labourers at further risk of violence in the workplace, as the parents or authorities cannot take action against the perpetrators. This enables employers to repeatedly mistreat child labourers.

### *2.3.4 Consequences of child labour maltreatment*

Child maltreatment results in a multitude of negative developmental trajectories across the child's physical and psychological functioning. It is not a disorder, but its effects may create pathways to disorders. The most frequent complications of persistent maltreatment observed in the studies are poor peer attachments, and externalising symptoms such as depression, anxiety and PSTD, which can generate long-term negative impacts on the brain or neural development of victims (McCrory et al., 2011; Toth & Manly, 2019). Few studies on the long-term consequences of child maltreatment with the exception of child sexual abuse have been done (Norman et al., 2012). Only two records (Banday et al., 2018; Pandey et al., 2020) explored the psychological outcomes and disorders of child maltreatment using tested child victimisation tools. These two cross-sectional studies investigated the psychiatric outcomes of maltreatment among child labourers. Both studies administered the YI-4R questionnaire, a diagnostic tool to detect psychiatric symptoms. The item scales of YI-4R are consistent with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) (Dhakal et al., 2019). The present review utilised the coherent and parallel criteria (disorders) detected in the retrieved papers to assess the most common and frequent psychiatric conditions caused by the maltreatment of child labourers. Table 2.4 presented the number of participants potentially meeting YI-4R criteria for psychiatric diagnosis.

Dhakal et al. (2019) identified maltreated child labourers as being mostly affected by specific phobias (35.92%), social phobias (30.1%), separation anxiety (27.2%), panic attacks (25.24%)

and obsessions (17.48%) out of the 19 symptom criteria listed in the YI-4R (Gadow et al., 2002). Pandey et al. (2020) published the psychiatric conditions of maltreated child labourers using a similar YI-4R tool. They tested 132 adolescents and found that they had symptoms of multiple disorders including specific phobias (41.67%), conduct disorders (33.33%), social phobias (30.3%), obsessions (18.94%), compulsions (16.67%), substance abuse (13.64%) and panic attacks (12.88%). All the participants in their study showed symptom criteria for specific phobias (38.79%, *SD*: 4.07), social phobias (30.2%, *SD*: 0.14), conduct disorders (20.6%, *SD*: 18.77), panic attacks (19.06%, *SD*: 8.74), obsessions (18.21%, *SD*: 1.03) and separation anxiety (17.77%, *SD*: 13.34) respectively. Only 4.15% of child labourers reported the condition of anorexia, 4.43% had bipolar disorder, 5.29% suffered from vocal tics and 5.4% reported schizophrenia. Table 2.5 presents the types and range of psychiatric conditions reported by the two authors at the 95% confidence interval level.

Inferential statistics were employed to generate a precise summary of the YI-4R criteria (Allua & Thompson, 2009). The present review attempted to detect any statistically significant differences among the identified proportion values for each symptom criterion. The 2-sample test for equality of proportion was accomplished to test the following hypotheses:

$H_0$: The proportion values of each symptom criteria are equal (P1 = P2)

$H_1$: The proportion values of each symptom criteria are not equal (P1 ≠ P2)

The analysis resulted in the null hypothesis being accepted for all diagnoses except separation anxiety and panic attacks. This implies that there are no significant differences between the proportion values for each explored psychological disorder ($p>0.05$), with the exception of two mental disorders, separation anxiety ($p<0.001$) and panic attack ($p = 0.023$). It is apparent that child labourers who are exposed to maltreatment are at risk of meeting the criteria for all identified disorders except separation anxiety and panic attack.

Table 2.5: Potential psychological disorders of maltreated child labourers

| Disorders | P1 (Dhakal et al., 2019) | P2 (Pandey et al., 2020) | Mean | CI | | $\chi 2$ | P value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Lower | Upper | (*df* = 1) | |
| Major depression | 6.79% | 5.30% | 6.05 (1.05) | 4.58 | 7.51 | 0.04 | 0.83 |
| Generalised anxiety | 9.71% | 11.36% | 10.54 (1.17) | 8.92 | 12.15 | 0.04 | 0.84 |
| Social phobia | 30.10% | 30.3% | 30.21 (0.14) | 30.01 | 30.39 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Separation anxiety | 27.20% | 8.33% | 17.77 (13.34) | –0.73 | 36.26 | 13.52 | <0.001 |
| Specific phobia | 35.92% | 41.67% | 38.79 (4.07) | 33.16 | 44.43 | 0.58 | 0.45 |
| Panic attack | 25.24% | 12.88% | 19.06 (8.74) | 6.94 | 31.17 | 5.12 | 0.02 |
| Obsessions | 17.48% | 18.94% | 18.21 (1.03) | 16.78 | 19.64 | 0.02 | 0.91 |
| Compulsions | 8.74% | 16.67% | 12.71 (5.61) | 4.93 | 20.47 | 2.52 | 0.11 |
| Conduct disorder | 6.79% | 33.33% | 20.06 (18.77) | –5.94 | 46.06 | 22.44 | 2.16 |
| Bipolar disorder | 5.83% | 3.03% | 4.43 (1.98) | 1.68 | 7.17 | 0.53 | 0.47 |
| Schizophrenia | 7.77% | 3.03% | 5.41 (3.35) | 0.75 | 10.04 | 1.79 | 0.18 |
| Motor tics | 8.74% | 3.79% | 6.27 (3.51) | 1.41 | 11.12 | 1.72 | 0.19 |
| Vocal tics | 6.79% | 3.79% | 5.29 (2.12) | 2.35 | 8.23 | 0.55 | 0.46 |
| Anorexia | 6.79% | 1.52% | 4.16 (3.73) | –1.01 | 9.32 | 3.06 | 0.08 |
| Bulimia | 7.77% | 6.06% | 6.92 (1.21) | 5.24 | 8.59 | 0.06 | 0.79 |
| Substance use | 6.79% | 13.64% | 10.22 (4.84) | 3.51 | 16.93 | 2.17 | 0.14 |

Note: P1- Proportion 1, P2 - Proportion 2, P value significant at level <0.05, <0.01 and <0.001

As well as investigating the above psychiatric diagnoses using the YI-4R, Pandey et al. (2020) further utilised the SDQ to identify additional emotional and behavioural problems as a robust evaluation of the impact of maltreatment on child labourers. The study revealed that children who experienced maltreatment reported abnormal levels of emotional problems (22%) and peer problems (20.5%), and low levels of prosocial behaviour (6.1%) (Pandey et al., 2020).

Alongside these peer-reviewed articles, a mixed-method study conducted by Banday et al. (2018) asserted that child labourers, who have experienced witness victimisation (particularly witnessing the PM of co-workers), are affected by severe anxiety illness.

The CRGA (2013) report details the physical outcomes caused by violence against domestic child labourers. Drawing on data from a variety of national newspapers in Bangladesh, the authors confirm that between 2009 and 2012, around 11 CDLs were burned in acid attacks, and 11 were found pregnant due to sexual assault. The CRGA (2013) reports that deaths resulting from physical brutality numbered 26 after torturing, 13 were killed after rape and 70 committed suicide due to acute violence against them.

## 2.4 Discussion of the Scoping Literature Review

The importance of this review is its focus on child maltreatment as a distinct issue rather than viewing child labour in itself as a form of maltreatment. Maltreatment in respect to children in general has received much attention in the literature, while the sheer violence directed towards child labourers has been relatively neglected (Das & Chen, 2019). The present review sought to determine the nature and prevalence of child maltreatment, with a focus on child labourers over children in general. A total of 786 records from five databases were retrieved with screening resulting in nine studies, capturing self-reported data from 6247 child labourers. Studies from urban areas and Bangladesh were largely prevalent, despite there being evidence of maltreatment also highly prevalent in many rural precincts (Ersado, 2005; ILO, 2017). The majority of children work in the domestic and agricultural workforce (Gamlin et al., 2015). The mean hours of work for child labourers in rural areas are high at over 8 hours per day (Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015; Omer & Jabeen, 2015). The World Bank found that more than 8 hours a day for child labourers is common (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2016). However, Gamlin et al. (2015) noted that domestic labour is the worse form of child labour due to intensified working hours, with maltreatment by employers making it akin to slavery.

There is no gold standard of the factors that constitute child maltreatment, as forms vary; there are a variety of maltreatment practices. The prevalence rates, which were high, were available for the PM of child labourers across all the studies. Reported rates of PM in the Asian region were between 12% and 61% (Maker et al., 2005; Öncü et al., 2013). These figures deviate from previously reported data. CEM is also a challenging and persistent type of maltreatment (Nelms, 2001), although reporting of EM across child maltreatment studies is negligible (Kairys & Johnson, 2002). Only three studies estimated the prevalence rate of EM of child labourers. However, it represents the highest rates of victimisation. Interestingly, a study conducted in Turkey revealed similar prevalence rates of EM against working children (53.6%) (Öncü et al., 2013). Moody and colleagues further estimated in a meta-analysis that around 60% of child participants in the Asian continent experienced CEM (Moody et al., 2018). Sexual abuse is the next commonly and extensively studied type of maltreatment following PM of child labourers. A meta-analysis reported the highest prevalence rates of child sexual abuse were in Asia (23.9%) (Pereda et al., 2009). Likewise, the current review observed sexual abuse as the second most frequently analysed maltreatment after PM of child labourers (Pereda et al., 2009). It is understood that CN is much more frequent than PM or sexual abuse of child labourers (Hornor, 2014), but estimates of neglect of child labourers are limited in the research. Only 12.9% of child labourers were seen to be neglected.

The current review further identified some distinctive forms of maltreatment suffered by child labourers. Financial exploitation is predominant, which implies the child is deprived of their wages, even after the work is executed (Bachman, 2000). This is a usual practice in many labour markets. It is evident from the demand side that employers recruit low-skilled child labourers at low wages as cheap labour, which predisposes them to financial exploitation (Richter & Ard-am, 1990). Hadi (2000) also observed that a significant proportion of child labourers were forced to work in hazardous conditions, for long hours and at an intensified

pace. These children also witness violence, although studies on witness victimisation predominantly focuses only on the witnessing of intimate partner violence and domestic violence (Groves, 1999; Willis et al., 2010). Nevertheless, children employed in informal sectors are at more risk of witnessing workplace violence (Banday et al., 2018). An estimated 94.46% of child labourers have experienced this form of maltreatment.

This scoping study considered the determinants of child labour maltreatment as a priority objective through an in-depth thematic analysis. Systematic coding produced 11 themes. Each theme had a number of subthemes. Sociodemographic limitations are universal factors for child maltreatment. The sociodemographic characteristics related to child labour maltreatment were their age, gender, school enrolment, occupation, intensified working schedule, parental attributes including literacy level and occupation, and geographic settings. It is evident that young children who earn less or work for long hours in situations where wages are lower are more likely to be maltreated (Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi, 2000; Öncü et al., 2013). Specifically, rural young children not enrolled in school who grow up in an illiterate and poverty-afflicted family environment are highly prone to workplace exploitation and violence (Getto & Pollack, 2015; Öncü et al., 2013). In addition, family attributes and parental complexities have been observed as the key stressors of child maltreatment apart from children's own characteristics (Briggs & Hawkins, 1996; Herrenkohl & Herrenkohl, 2007). It is extensively reported that families with maltreated children were more often of low income, poor education and with parents who have history of early childhood maltreatment (de Paúl & Domenech, 2000; Romero-Martínez et al., 2014). Financial deprivation predominantly drives children towards vulnerable employment. The current scoping review observed that the majority of maltreated child labourers belong to economically backward and socially disadvantaged groups. Literally, this situation makes them vulnerable to employers' abusive behaviour (Das & Chen, 2019).

Following on from poverty, researchers predominantly looked at cultural factors as a functional root of child maltreatment (Korbin, 1980). The existing body of knowledge identified that the sociocultural acceptance of punishment towards children often leads to maltreatment (Al-Shail et al., 2012; Lansford & Dodge, 2008). Children often experience punitive physical disciplining and corporal penalties as part of the cultural and legal practices in some societies (Runyan et al., 2010; Sanapo & Nakamura, 2011). The research also indicates that a large proportion of Asians have these practices (Lee et al., 2014). The findings illustrate that the social construction of masculinity and femineity, and cultural notions of the rights or proper role for women, contributes to the environment of child violence. Learned values emphasised by cultural dogma and existing social systems influence children's socialisation, hence this often put them at risk of maltreatment (Tracy, 2007). Distinct class or caste identities of some child workers were also seen as cultural hurdles in this regard. The current thematic synthesis further identified an authoritative relationship between child labourers and employers known as the master–servant relationship, which has existed for several hundred years; and an obvious reason for the maltreatment of child labourers. Marx's theoretical understanding of capitalist exploitation states that unfree or forced child labour is modern slavery, which restricts economic liberalisation (Rioux et al., 2020). This sociocultural identity of servants plunges them into a fiery furnace of maltreatment by their employers. This results from the employers' economic superiority, cultural and power practices, and capitalist mode of production practices (Srinivas, 1995). The current review also explored that the lack of monitoring or supporting mechanisms also provokes this hidden burden.

Child labour and maltreatment is an apparent outcome of familial/parental disorganisation (Wolfe et al., 2003). Broadly, poor family functioning and low familial cohesion results in domestic violence and prepares the family as an unfriendly space for children (Higgins & McCabe, 2003). The current synthesis shows that child labourers live in houses characterised

by broken, unsafe or unhealthy situations. Some parents were observed to be addicted to alcohol or other substances (Banday et al., 2018; Omer & Jabeen, 2015). The literature shows that parental substance abuse disorders results in a disruption of familial attachment, responsibility, rituals and social life, and precipitates frequent violence (Lander et al., 2013). Parental negligent behaviour also encourages employers to repeatedly maltreat the child labourers. Likewise, Azar delineates in his study that the negligent behaviour of parents is typically the tip of an iceberg in interpersonal relationships that places their offspring at risk of maltreatment (Azar, 2002).

As a public health issue, maltreatment practices prevent healthy growth and cognitive and social development of children (Ahmadkhaniha et al., 2007; Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003). The existing body of knowledge suggests that children who experience multiple maltreatment or poly-victimisation, usually suffer from severe traumatic experiences (Ahmadkhaniha et al., 2007; Feng et al., 2015; Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003; Price-Robertson et al., 2013) and are more challenged by financial strain (Currie & Widom, 2010; Henry et al., 2018) than those who were never exposed to maltreatment. The measured psychosomatic symptoms primarily include depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, chronic pain syndrome and PSTD (Kendler et al., 2000; Springer et al., 2003). Unlike ordinary children, very few studies have estimated the psychiatric disorders among child labourers (Fekadu et al., 2006), where effects generated by maltreatment are usually overlooked. The synthesis of symptom criteria resulting from two studies revealed that child workers were mostly affected by specific phobia, social phobia, obsession, compulsions, substance abuse and panic attacks (Dhakal et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2020). Despite these specific measurements of prevalence, determinants and impacts of maltreatment of child labourers, it goes without saying that these results may not produce adequate generalisations. Rather it suggests the requirement for further comprehensive analytical studies to map the results of the research questions.

Of note, the search strategy was conducted twice. Initially, the study covered the period between 1960 and 2020. A second search strategy was conducted later, changing the time limit to 1960–2023 in order to determine whether any additional research had been carried out. However, the application of the search strategy in the above-mentioned five databases did not result in a new piece of relevant literature meeting the inclusion criteria.

## 2.5 Strengths and Limitations

The primary strength of this review is its broad range and variety of databases, which included Scopus, Medline, PsycINFO, ProQuest and Web of Science. Beyond databases, the searching further expanded to grey literature from the key sources of ILO, UNICEF, WHO, Global Vision, Save the Children, BSAF and BBS. The time frame was also extensive. The search dealt with research from four countries.

There was great variation in the types of maltreatment across all the retrieved documents, which in turn made reporting child labour maltreatment challenging. In some cases, the prevalence data were highly dispersed among studies, which raised questions of reliability. Four of the peer-reviewed studies had extensive methodological flaws such as inadequate sample size and typical statistical analysis, undermining the reliability of data collection tools and overlooking ethical aspects in the conduct of the study. In addition, the reviewed studies were mostly based on the participants' self-reported maltreatment, ignoring other stakeholders' views, which could result in reporting biases. The number of studies retrieved was also low. Given this, a quality appraisal was not performed. The majority of records predominantly emphasised tallying the prevalence of child labour maltreatment while overlooking the identification of causes and consequences.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Maltreatment of child labour is a newly emerging concept and area of research, where it is also deemed as a social and health challenge for developing countries. Noticeably, very few research studies have focused on the intentional maltreatment of child labourers. The scoping review was an effort to find gaps in the limited literature. Despite the low number of papers retrieved and their methodological shortcomings, this review has found that a considerable number of child labourers are intentionally exploited by their employers, relatives and family members. This review suggests a thorough study to fill the gaps related to child labourers' experience of intentional maltreatment is required.

# CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 3.1 Background

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework through which the findings of the research questions are discussed in Chapter 9. The theories included in the framework are considered as not only explaining, but also challenging and extending, the existing body of knowledge. The chapter begins with a brief discussion on the need for theory development in understanding the maltreatment of child labourers, and then presents an adaptation of the Belsky model. In presenting the model, the components of Belsky (1980); Belsky (1993) model are extended to include adults outside of the family, namely employers and co-workers of the workplace. This also includes issues related to the production of labour.

The theoretical framework draws on established theories in the literature that have the potential to fit the findings of the current research questions. Theoretical frameworks operate as blueprints that provide a structure for defining and discussing philosophically or methodologically the research findings, so that the phenomenon can be seen with more clarity (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). They provide a lens for observing the phenomenon. Notably, the theoretical framework not only provides an explanation or interprets the findings, but also assists in understanding the conceptual issues and variables. Metaphorically, the knowledge is constructed based on the foundation of the theoretical framework used in the research. Therefore, the importance of study findings or discussions is limited unless these are justified by a theoretical framework (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). However, identification of good theories is necessary to explain the meaning, nature and challenges of a subject.

Grant and Osanloo argue that the application of theories must be appropriate, logically understood and align with research questions (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). In selecting theory, the current study focused on the overall research objective, which is understanding of the

prevalence, risk factors and health impacts of maltreatment of child labourers. It is an amalgamation of two different concepts, child maltreatment and child labour, which demands more in-depth study.

## 3.2 Knowledge Gaps in Theoretical Insight

Violence or maltreatment of children is a major global issue, yet there is little research on the topic. All forms of violence are commonly identified as a global public health concern (Krug et al., 2002). Violence arises in the domestic arena, in interpersonal relationships, and it can involve youth exploitation, gender-based maltreatment, violence at school and in the workplace. Violence can cut across culture, caste, education and income (Das & Chen, 2019; Steinmetz & Straus, 1974; Stover, 2005; Swan et al., 2008). In particular, violence against children, in general, is well reported. A number of studies have been conducted on the prevalence, causative factors and impact of maltreatment of children (Haque et al., 2019; Hillis et al., 2016; Hovdestad et al., 2015; Korbin & Krugman, 2014). Apart from these empirical studies, theoretical work on violence towards children is also well developed.

Compared to studies on children in general, little attention has been paid to violence against child labourers. Child labour is also a violation of the child's human rights (Lopez-Calva, 2001; Swaminathan, 1998). Research on child labour mostly emphasises sociodemographic, and economic determinants of child labourers (Basu & Pham, 1998; delap, 2001; Khatab et al., 2019; Naeem et al., 2011). Pinheiro argues that theoretical analysis concerning child labourers involved in the informal economy are inadequate (Pinheiro, 2006) resulting in extensive knowledge gaps in the understanding of several context specific concerns of child labourers; maltreatment being one among many. For example, children in labour are more susceptible to maltreatment than other groups of children (Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi, 2000). Little attention is given to this topic in the research literature given the complexity of the issues, and the difficulties of ensuring methodical rigor in research procedures (Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi,

2000). Research on the maltreatment of child labourers is also scarce because of the very issue of child labour being considered an area of child maltreatment (Reddy, 1995).

Moreover, intentional incidences of violence against child labourers are mostly covered by non-academic researchers such as media personnel (CRGA, 2013). National and international child rights organisations such as Save the Children, World Vision and UNICEF predominantly rely on secondary data, picked up from newspaper features, to prepare reports and regulations. It has always been a question as to whether these data are valid. Thus, it is argued that more empirical research into child labour violence is necessary, and that these studies should focus on the development of theories (Das & Chen, 2019).

Typically, most theoretical frameworks on child maltreatment are constructed based on the aetiology of violence on children by caregivers or within an intrafamilial boundary (Begle et al., 2010; Belsky, 1978, 1980). From an interactional standpoint, existing studies mostly prioritise caregivers or parent–child interactions in theory development. This reflects an intrafamilial biasness in the definition and theory of child maltreatment. Theories on ecological frameworks serve as examples (Belsky, 1980; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Nevertheless, children can be ill-treated outside of the family's immediate environment (Das & Chen, 2019). The existing theoretical frameworks fail to discuss child maltreatment in terms of marginalised groups of children such as child labourers, street children or orphaned children, who are highly susceptible to maltreatment by outsiders rather than intrafamilial members. Thus, a comprehensive explanation of the complex phenomenon requires adapting subjective evidence to existing theories. In this study, we adapted Belsky's ecological model to incorporate violence perpetrated towards child labourers.

## 3.3 Belsky's Ecological Model

### *3.3.1 Influences on Belsky's model*

The ecological model is an appealing theory used by many researchers to address the issue of child maltreatment. This theory relies on a model developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, who in 1979 argued that development occurs through the interaction between an individual and environmental systems (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). This theory has been utilised by many researchers to investigate and justify theoretical propositions related to the child's social development and exposure to maltreatment (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Sabri et al., 2013; Sheppard, 2011). Childhood maltreatment studies mostly emphasise the ecological model to illustrate the influence of distinct bio-ecological systems in child maltreatment and how this impacts on the life course of a child who is maltreated (Korbin & Krugman, 2014; Krishnan & Morrison, 1995; Sidebotham, 2001; Tinbergen, 1951).

Bronfenbrenner's theory is widely recognised as a person–context relational process where the child's growth and development is supported by their interaction with multiple social environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner divides an individual's social environment into nested and interrelated systems or layers from the inner to intimate levels such as the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. The structures or surrounding environment included within these layers impact on child development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). However, the key limitation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is that it overlooks the characteristics, either social or biological, of a perpetrator who may maltreat children.

Unlike Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the behavioural development approach of Tinbergen (1951) further proposed that the cellular, physical and social characteristics of perpetrators (parents, neighbour, employers, teacher) or children, in which they are embedded may result in changes to behavioural responses (Barrett et al., 2013). Tinbergen proposes that

it is crucial to examine the ontogenic development of the perpetrators in order to delineate the aetiology of child maltreatment. Probing or identifying how a parent or perpetrator grows up to maltreat a child is one key to understanding child maltreatment (Tinbergen, 1951). The theorist who brought together both the child and the perpetrator is Belsky (1980).

### 3.3.2. Belsky's extension of Bronfenbrenner and Tinbergen's theories

Alongside distinct familial, sociocultural and political causative and protective tiers in the ecological model, Belsky focused on the idiosyncratic characteristics of both perpetrators and victims. He postulates that the causative role in child abuse and neglect is always predominantly played by the perpetrator's psychiatric condition, with maltreatment eliciting characteristics of children and dysfunctional family interactions (Watkins & Bradbard, 1982). Based on these propositions, he developed a framework coupling the behavioural development concerns of Tinbergen and Bronfenbrenner's ecological processes to provide a guide to the aetiology of child maltreatment (Belsky, 1980). His framework consists of four ecological levels; the ontogenic system, the microsystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. The present theoretical framework is designed based on the ecological layers' influences on the maltreatment of child labourers in both home and workplace. This is also illustrated in Figure 3.1.

### *3.3.2 The ontogenic system*

The ontogenic system focuses on the behavioural development of an individual that leads to understanding their personal characteristics. Generally, onotogenic development occurs within an individual as a function of experience rather than their genetic makeup (Lambert & Johnson, 2011). This system is concerned with the deviant characteristics of abusive individuals in order to identify the risk factors of child maltreatment (Perry et al., 1983). Belsky notes that the socialisation history of caregivers is a causative agent of child maltreatment. He stresses that

their adverse childhood experiences can shape the way parents rear their own children, including their emotional attachment and attitudes towards their children (Belsky, 1980). Baumrind, in his literature review, notes that child maltreatment is the product of parental psychopathology (Baumrind, 1995). Their mental state reflects their attitudes towards their children. Children living with parents who are consistently under stress, anxiety, depressive disorders or personality disorders, are at an increased risk of maltreatment. In addition, caregivers with deviant personality traits, such as substance abuse, are more likely to maltreat their children (Sidebotham, 2001). Researchers have also found that parents who maltreat their children may have a history of abusive experiences during their own childhood (Al Odhayani et al., 2013; Azar, 2002; Belsky, 1980; de Lissovoy, 1979). Their own experiences of childhood maltreatment may shape their attributes, which negatively impacts on their style of parenting and interaction with their children (Zigler & Hall, 1989). Subsequently, this results in an intergenerational pattern of reciprocal maltreatment practices.

In terms of socialisation history, the ontogenic phase of the ecological model states that a caregiver's level of education and skills in regard to child-rearing influences them to perpetrate maltreatment against children. It is evident that caregivers with low levels of education are more likely to maltreat children (Daral et al., 2016; Hurford et al., 2016). Moreover, poor parental knowledge and lack of awareness about childcare and development are associated with an increased risk of child maltreatment (Begle et al., 2010). It appears that the ontogenic stage incorporates the caregiver's childhood experiences as well as the development characteristics of early adulthood that make them perpetrators of child maltreatment.

***The ontogenic system in workplace violence:***

The ontogenic system encompasses the attributes of different perpetrators with whom children have an attachment. In the case of marginalised children's groups, such as child labourers, certain demographic, behavioural or adverse childhood experiences of their caregivers, both

parents and employers, may lead to maltreatment of these children. Several studies have identified that the employers of child labourers possess demographic vulnerabilities, specifically their illiteracy level and occupation status, which may result in maltreating child labourers in the informal sector (Banday et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2002; Hadi, 2000; Liao & Hong, 2011). Since these children spend a considerable amount of time at their workplaces, their victimisation is heavily influenced by the characteristics of their employers. According to a meta-analysis, 14.6% of workplace bullying or violence is caused by the mental state of these employers and in particular, failure to meet production targets by employers (Pallesen et al., 2017).

Sidebotham further stresses that child maltreatment studies should focus on the identification of the repetitive maltreatment history of perpetrators, personality traits, psychiatric history and other vulnerability contexts (Sidebotham, 2001). Similarly, Dåderman and Ragnestål-Impola also stresses that to examine workplace bullying or violence, the aversive personality traits of workplace bullies need to be studied alongside the victim's characteristics. They argue that bullying or abusive tactics used in the workplace are related to antisocial personality traits such as psychopathy and subclinical narcissism adapted by employers, managers or co-workers (Dåderman & Ragnestål-Impola, 2019). Of note, interpersonal conflicts at workplaces are influenced by the adverse psychosocial development criteria of the perpetrators. Bullies within a workplace may have characteristics such as self-centredness and callousness. They may focus on their own personal goals by treating subordinates or co-workers poorly. They may develop hostile behaviour, be socially deviant, lack empathy, and be subject to irresponsible and impulsive actions. Their motives may be to earn more money or to seek power over subordinates (Christie & Geis, 2013; Cleckley, 1955; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). The maltreatment of child labourers would be higher among employers who have these negative psychosocial attributes. Employers and co-workers in many informal economies are adept at

these practices (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, 2018). As with parents, employers' education levels may predispose them to maltreat their employees. The knowledge and awareness they possess regarding the monitoring and regulation of young employees is also likely to determine their attitude towards them. Adversity potential is higher for employers who have negative attributions regarding management of their employees and the workplace environment. This may result in them acting as perpetrators of maltreatment of child labourers (Dåderman & Ragnestål-Impola, 2019).

Overall, the ontogenic systems within the ecological model focus on the developmental characteristics of perpetrators, such as employers and parents, who may be predisposed to maltreat children as labourers as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

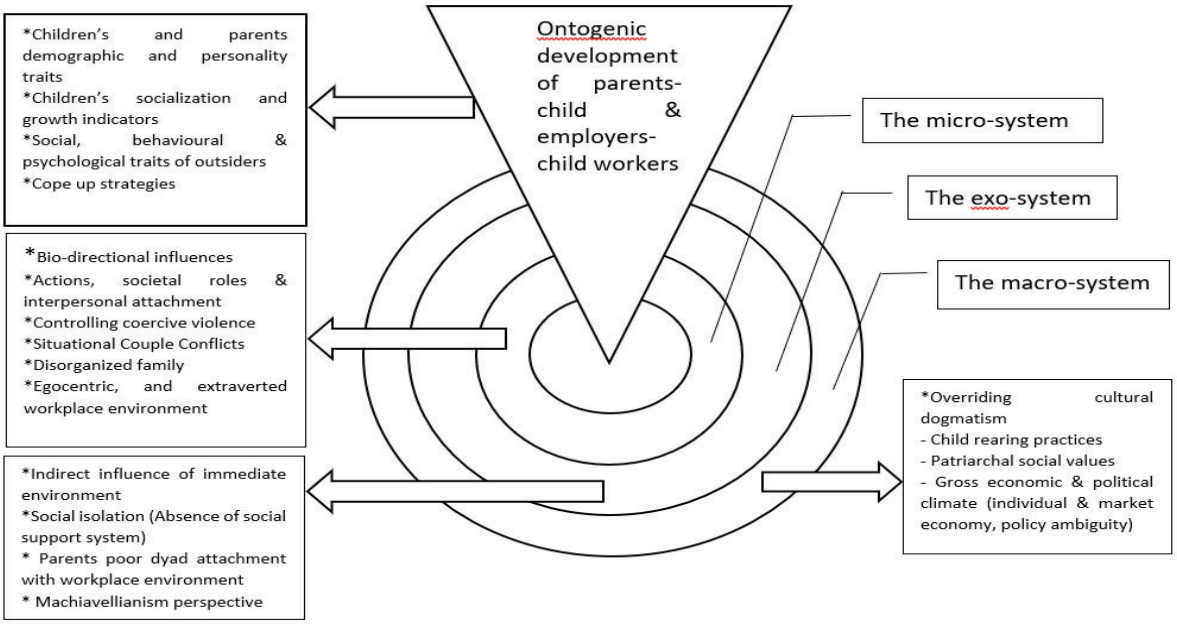


Figure 3.1: Belsky's Ecological Model

### *3.3.3 The microsystem*

The microsystem focuses on children's interaction with their immediate environment such as family, households, school, neighbourhood, workplace or peer groups, with whom they have direct contact. The microsystem consists of actions and societal roles that influence

interpersonal relationships that further predict child maltreatment (Belsky, 1980; Hurford et al., 2016).

This layer reflects a resilient influence of adjacent ecological characteristics on the outcomes of aggressive and coercive behaviour of caregivers in the social environment that affects children (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Burgess, 1979; Patterson, 1976; Sidebotham, 2001). Coercive interactions are often a result of poor interpersonal relationships within a family and lead to the maltreatment of children. Belsky (1980) contends that the parent–child interaction is nested within spousal relationships. Stress and conflict in the family relationship, such as marital discord, partner violence or witness victimisation, can adversely affect the parent–child relationship and the socialisation of the child (Clark, 1976; Green, 1976; Steinmetz, 1977). For instance, mothers who are victims of domestic violence are more likely to employ physical punishment to discipline their children (Hartley, 2002). Steinmetz notes that parents who use abusive words or abusive tactics during domestic violence or spousal conflicts, tend to adopt similar patterns of behaviour when disciplining their children (Steinmetz, 1977). These abusive interactions negatively impact the children.

Belsky (1980) argues that children raised in abusive families or environments exhibit more negative behaviour than other children, and that this further predisposes them to parental hostility. According to Burgess and Conger, these children are 50% more likely to exhibit negative behaviour than their counterparts. Further, Belsky suggests that the characteristics of children, such as poor performance in school, fighting with siblings or breaking objects, increases the risk of conflict between parents and children (Belsky, 1980). Parent–children interaction can further influence children's capacity to form healthy friendships. If their interactive process starts within an abusive environment, it may further predispose the child to maltreatment by outside forces.

Despite external ecological factors, children may be exposed to risk based on their individual characteristics (Belsky, 1980; Hurford et al., 2016). Apart from these adverse characteristics of children, several other economic and demographic factors also negatively impact their relationship with their caregivers, making them more susceptible to maltreatment and exploitation. Studies have indicated that vulnerable characteristics of children, including their young age, gender, ethnic background and health status, contribute to child maltreatment. For instance, in regard to gender, girls are generally more susceptible to maltreatment than boys (Dhakal et al., 2019; Doidge et al., 2017; Lakhdir et al., 2021; Pereda et al., 2009).

In addition, as children grow and develop, their microsystem gradually expands to include relationships with friends, other significant peer groups and adults in their immediate environment (Sidebotham, 2001). Various studies indicate that these relationships are also bi-directional, akin to the parent–child relationship, where individuals or children are often influenced and behave accordingly throughout their lives. It follows that children respond to others within their microsystem in similar ways to how they have been treated in the past. It is also estimated that there are other extended interpersonal relationships within the microsystem that may result in child maltreatment, such as teacher–child relationships, neighbour–child relationships, and employer–child relationships (Belsky, 1980; Kim, 2000).

***Workplace maltreatment and the microsystem:***

In the workplace, interactions between child labourers and individuals, such as employers, co-workers and customers, may predispose them to maltreatment. In general, it is understood that a multitude of external conflicting relationships may predispose child labourers to maltreatment at work, such as those among co-workers, those between employers and employees, and interactions between employers and their families. According to Belsky, aggressive and defiant behaviour affect social interactions (Belsky, 1993). Studies have shown that workplace bullies are egocentric, selfish and extraverted individuals, which can contribute to their aggressive,

hostile and competitive natures (Seigne et al., 2007). It may lead to an antagonistic attitude towards co-workers, including children as labourers, which may result in maltreatment.

The nature of the work environment may also contribute to adverse interpersonal interactions between employees and employers. For instance, if children engage in formal and well-paid labour, there is a tendency to maintain a favourable relationship with their employer and co-workers. It may be more difficult for those children who are employed in the informal sector and are on low wages. Alongside these interactional factors, an additional factor is the employer's motivation for profit in either the formal or informal labour markets. This may impact on interpersonal communication, and barriers to maintaining peace within the workplace (Mundia et al., 2017).

Moreover, the aggressive and coercive behaviours of employers during interactions tend to occur in response to disciplinary, regulatory or monitoring events. For example, a significant proportion of child labourers in Bangladesh spend more than 7 hours a day at their workplaces (Hadi, 2000), which means they spend more time with other workers and their employers than they do with their families. During this period, their skill level and performance at work would also alter the way they interacted with their employers. The aversive interactions at work are frequently caused by a lack of ability to cope with workplace obstacles, a lack of social standing, and a lack of effective teamwork (Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias, 2015). As unskilled workers, child labourers may display these inabilities at work. Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias (2015) found that all of these traits are associated with having been bullied at work. Moreover, their social interaction with employers and co-workers at work may also be influenced by their threatening characteristics, such as young age, gender, dropout from school, long working hours, low wages, ethnicity or health difficulties (Banday et al., 2018; Hadi, 2000; Öncü et al., 2013). These factors may indirectly influence negative interactions between employees and employers, resulting in child maltreatment.

### 3.3.4 The exosystem

The structure involved in the exosystem as proposed by Belsky (1980) entails greater engagement with social systems, where family and other immediate environments of children are embedded. According to Belsky, the exosystem involves two sites in explaining the aetiology of child maltreatment. One is the relationship of child maltreatment with the world of work, and the other concentrates on the neighbourhood as a support system. Children may not directly interact with individuals within this structure of microsystem, but rather their caregivers may experience difficulties or stress within this system, which in turn impacts on the children. This layer identifies situations in which children are not directly involved in the adversity, but their caregivers experience hardship, which ultimately affects children's lives. For instance, parents who have lost their job usually spend more time within the household (Belsky, 1978), which increases the prospect of engaging in conflict with other household members. Research indicates a substantial connection between parents' unemployment and child maltreatment (Gelles, 1975; Raissian, 2015; Taitz et al., 1987). This happen because when a parent loses their employment, there may be an increase in intra-familial domestic violence towards the spouse or children as a result of proximity and stress (Anderberg et al., 2016; Steinmetz & Straus, 1974; Stover, 2005). Even if a caregiver merely experiences disciplinary action within their workplace, the reverberation of this may have a direct impact on family functioning and attitudes towards children. Similarly, income of parents is an indirect influence of child maltreatment. Research shows that a reduction in income would also result in the parents being under stress, and domestic violence might increase, and the impact on the children would be significant (Antai et al., 2016). It is obvious that parents living in poverty might expect that their children contribute to the family wage, instead of sending them to school. Belsky also hypothesises that child maltreatment can occur when parents become frustrated with their children's inability to take on family responsibilities or take care of

themselves. They may force the child to leave the house and enter work (Belsky, 1980). This is usually seen as a result of the parent's incompetence or failure to sustain a livelihood.

Away from the impact of work-related strain, maltreatment of children may indirectly occur as a result of deprivation from formal and informal social support systems, such as schools, social agencies, government services, relatives, neighbours and extended family members. Belsky points out the likelihood that child maltreatment can increase when stress within the family is already high if the family becomes isolated from neighbours (Belsky, 1980). This exosystem pathway may impact on the children's life. The absence of social support systems due to parental inability or inclination to develop these, generates stress (Kempe, 1973). It can be defined as social isolation. Theoretical evidence postulates that a lack of parental social support and collaboration is associated with family stress (Cutrona & Russell, 1990), and particularly, support from the area of residence, where the social and psychological status of neighbours are also linked (Algood et al., 2011).

***The exosystem and child labour maltreatment:***

The exosystem does not involve a structure of its own but is part of the complex dynamics found in the microsystem. If we consider the context of violence against child labourers in workplaces, alongside the dyad relationships such as parents of child labourers and employers of child labourers, employers and their microsystems, the state of the employer's business is similarly important in influencing workplace exploitation and violence.

Studies reveal that child labourers are usually exposed to workplace maltreatment because their parents are oblivious to it, or tolerate the situation (Banday et al., 2018). This reflects the parents' poor interaction with employers and their capacity to monitor the situation. Notably, a large number of children work for low wages in hazardous conditions and a substantial proportion of them experience maltreatment at the workplace (UNICEF, 2015). Workplace

maltreatment not only occurs as a result of the employee's individual characteristics, but it is also precipitated by the hardships of employers. For instance, when employers fail to earn dividends from business, or lack social and government support during economic recessions, this may have a negative impact on child labourers. Dåderman and Ragnestål-Impola (2019) argue that where an employer's greed prioritises money over social issues, or their business fails, they may take their stress out on subordinate workers. This may indirectly influence them to exploit child workers.

Along with this, children who are forced into labour are regarded as belonging to lower social classes and their social networks or opportunities are limited (Domínguez, 2014; Liao & Hong, 2011). Similar to their individual vulnerable traits such as age, drop-out of school, incompetency, their low position also impacts on their social interactions and enables perpetrators to dominate the child workers (Hadi, 2000; Lakhdir et al., 2021; Öncü et al, 2013). Further, employers' relationship with employees, their demographic and economic status, job satisfaction, family disputes, social relationship with neighbours, and formal and informal support systems may influence their behaviour leading to the maltreatment of child labourers.

### *3.3.5 The macrosystem*

The macrosystem principally looks at the overriding cultural fabric such as socially established rules, customs, laws and ideology in which the individual, the family and the community are strongly interwoven.

The macrosystem demonstrates that the notion of child maltreatment not only extends to the individual or family context, but can also be motivated by a cultural perspective, linked to socioeconomic status or ethnic identification. For instance, child-rearing practices in various societies differ based on customs, religious beliefs or community established rules. Different regional or ethnic groups have their own patterns of socialising their children. For example,

various cultural groups in Asian countries have their own commonly accepted customs for disciplining their children using corporal punishment (Raman & Hodes, 2012; Tang, 2006). Parents in developing countries permit corporal punishment of children for their mistakes, but also as a form of discipline (Al-Shail et al., 2012). In Palau, parents have long practiced tying a young child's leg to a post or stick with a rope when they go to the farm, or they may spank them with a broom causing bruises when they do not perform chores (Fontes, 2005). In the Indian subcontinent, some parents believe that it is necessary to take a harsh attitude towards children as part of their development (Haque, 2019). These are socio-culturally approved practices that reflect consistencies in behaviour patterns, attitudes and beliefs.

It can be argued that societal inclinations that tolerate exploitation and violence towards children influence its occurrence in the family (Antai et al., 2016; Gelles, 1975). In some Asian families, due to the patriarchal cultures and social values, male members may maltreat females, resulting in familial hostility (Doe, 2000). The family violence resulting from this may indirectly influence adults who go on to mistreat younger members of the society. As in other developing countries in Asia (Iravani, 2011), Bangladesh caregivers may endorse corporal punishment as an efficient measure to ensure children obey and are responsible (Haque, 2019). Legislative provisions by government in Bangladesh against the corporal punishment in the home and the workplace environment is also lacking. Despite some level of child protection policies in Bangladesh, no provision exists that clearly outlaws culturally practiced corporal punishment or bullying of children (Mohiuddin et al., 2012). These cultural and organisational issues are intrinsic yardsticks impacting on child maltreatment, parallel to that of poverty.

There are other social drivers, alongside culture, such as the political, social and economic climate embedded in the macrosystem (Johnson, 2008). These socially determined factors are explicit risk factors contributing to child maltreatment. Societal factors such as gender inequality, the high incidence of crime, unemployment rates, minority constructs, poor national

income levels, war or natural calamity prone areas also function as macrosystem's causative factors in the maltreatment of children. There are some other causative factors embedded in the macrosystem linked with cultural aspects, including health, economic, educational and social policies. All these create an environment that may encourage violence against children in the society.

***The macrosystem and child labour maltreatment:***

Studies have explored diverse macrosystem factors responsible for child labour maltreatment such as the social acceptancy, politico-economic system, caste system, gender discrimination, and gaps in policy planning and execution (Radfar et al., 2018; Raman & Hodes, 2012). These drawbacks may result in children being in labour and exploited.

Numerous studies indicate that child labour is a consequence of social acceptance and policy gaps in many poor countries (Brown et al., 2002; Norpoth et al., 2014). Indirectly, these factors lead to child labour maltreatment (Hadi, 2000). The demographic and geographic vulnerability and societal attitudes, norms and values in economically disadvantageous areas mean parents are obliged to send their children to work, where they are further exploited. Besides, parents or caregivers in many Asian countries expect children to engage in work as part of being responsible, and in order to learn skills for future employment (Hadi, 2000). Caregivers also believe that work also positively shapes their child's character. Study postulates that cultural dogmatism rather than poverty is the key risk factors of child labour in the supply side (Radfar et al., 2018). Besides, while many informal economies lack legal structures, employers' resort to illegal cultural practices through recruiting children into labour (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, 2018). Small-scale informal enterprises can recruit cheap labour, without giving priority to skills (ILO, 2018a). These enduring customary practices not only send nimble fingers into the machine, but also lead them towards exposure of maltreatment.

In addition, poor education structures and systems in the rural areas of many developing countries lock children out of education (Bachman, 2000; Liao & Hong, 2011). This influences them to seek work and risk exploitation in employment (Braam, 2019). The empirical evidence shows that children who engage in labour are more susceptible to maltreatment than others (Dalal et al., 2008; Hadi, 2000). In the workplace, the employer acts as supervisor and may take up an authoritarian role. It may be acceptable in some developing economies for employers to habitually punish child workers in order to make them obey if they do not work long hours or if they make a mistake (Banday et al., 2018; Das & Chen, 2019). They may consider these exploitative practices as 'part of the job'. Moreover, it is crucial to note that child labour laws in many countries are ambiguous and contradictory. Many of the measures do not outlaw the work of child labourers in the informal sector, nor do they limit the working hours for children (Islam & Cojocaru, 2016; Liao & Hong, 2011). Therefore, employers can exploit them more. Islam and Cojocaru (2016) report in their study that in the absence of legal protection systems and social norms and values, the child labourers identify as a 'servant' class, which sanctions the physical, psychological maltreatment and financial exploitation of child labourers. The general public also has little concern or recognition of child labourers or the violation of their human rights (Liao & Hong, 2011). Of note, researchers have focused on the issue of child labour over the last few years, but studies into violence against them are scarce (Das & Chen, 2019). This lack of research is one factor explaining the limited legislation aimed at protecting child labourers from intentional maltreatment. According to this model, these external forces indirectly influence child labour maltreatment.

## 3.4 Conclusion

The above stages elucidate the diverse ecological influences of maltreatment of child labourers. Unlike Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, Belsky's theory is more reflexive in explaining the possible risk factors associated with the maltreatment of children, in particular child labourers.

The proposed factors included in each stage are related to the internal characteristics of children and perpetrators, their personality traits, the sociodemographic and economic features of most immediate environments, the children's relationship with the external environment such as the workplace, support from neighbours, associated monitoring and legislative bodies. Included also are the influences of existing and conventional sociocultural practices or systems. Given this theoretical discussion, appropriate methods are required to examine the situation. This is explained in the next chapter where the methods and approach to collecting and analysing the data are discussed.

# CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the methods needed to investigate the research questions related to the prevalence, risk factors and potential psychosocial consequences of child labour maltreatment in rural Bangladesh. Overall, a convergent mixed-method design was employed to explore the phenomenon of child labour maltreatment. The rationale for adopting a mixed-method design is presented below.

Systematic studies on child maltreatment or related issues have increased exponentially in recent years. However, the quality of research designs and methods is questionable (Mash & Wolfe, 1991). It is evident that studies on child maltreatment deal with a number of difficulties, particularly in using surveys (Bradley & Lindsay, 1987; Janson, 2018), given the issues are complex sociocultural and public health phenomenon. Studies on methodological aspects of child maltreatment suggest that the quality of research can be advanced if the researcher prioritises theoretical and definitional areas, research design, sampling processes and measurement concerns (Bradley & Lindsay, 1987; Mash & Wolfe, 1991). Alongside the theoretical and definitional dilemmas surrounding child maltreatment (Hutchison, 1990), the majority of the existing research on child maltreatment utilises quantitative methods to estimate prevalence, or to understand the relationship between levels of maltreatment and health impacts (Glass et al., 2016). Because of this focus on quantitative approaches, there is a lack of in-depth knowledge of the topic that qualitative approaches best deal with. The theoretical foundations of the maltreatment of child labourers can be better understood by providing detailed descriptions of this social problem. Gaining this extensive knowledge requires qualitative versatile approaches alongside quantitative methods (Morse & Field, 1996). Besides, it is evident that narrowly and newly studied subjects or the complexities of processes require a

mixed-method design (Glass et al., 2016). Current research on the maltreatment of child labourers is narrow and lacks predictions, has poorly defined variables, no specific measurements, and inadequate or confounded inferences or interpretations (Das & Chen, 2019). Das and Chen (2019) observed that the concept of violence towards child labourers is problematic, as there are few satisfactory studies on this topic. This deficit in the research can be managed by in-depth studies and the generation of a theoretical perspective. In this regard, a comprehensive study with a mixed-method design would best fit the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration of results (Creswell, 2015). Researchers postulate that this method has a powerful ability to illuminate policy deficits and solutions providing directions for social action (Sosulski & Lawrence, 2008).

## 4.2 Concept of Mixed-Method Design

The central premise of a mixed-method design is the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research components to expand and strengthen the study's conclusion (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This method is capable of answering the 'what and how' questions of research (Woolley, 2009) and also reinforces the knowledge and validity of the study (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The combination of both quantitative and qualitative data requires methodological triangulation (Quant+Qual) (Morse, 1991). The purpose of triangulation in the mixed-method design is to obtain converging results, mutual corroboration, and correspondence of findings obtained through different approaches and methods (Creswell, 2011).

### *4.2.1 Convergent parallel design*

In convergent parallel mixed-method design, qualitative and quantitative data are collected at the same time, but on different occasions. This design is useful for obtaining different but complementary data on the same subject matter (Morse, 1991). The procedure for using a

convergent design is straightforward. First, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analysed independently. Following the primary step, the two separate datasets are compared, interpreted and reported together (Creswell & Clark, 2007) (Figure 4.1). The strength of this method is that it eliminates bias regarding the type of data employed. This convergent mixing of data demonstrates multiple perspectives of child labour maltreatment from different stakeholders.

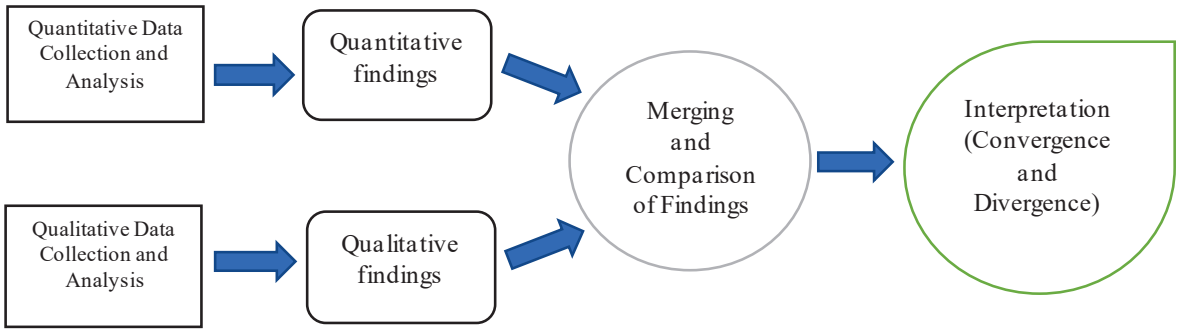


Figure 4.1: Convergent parallel mixed-method design

#### 4.2.1.1 Why qualitative study?

The importance of both qualitative and quantitative methods cannot be overlooked. It is known that qualitative research mainly focuses on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives and thoughts of participants (Hiatt, 1986) that reflect the social interactions of individuals in a social world. A variety of approaches are allowed in the collection of qualitative data including case study approaches (Baxter & Jack, 2010), observation, and focus group discussion (Nyumba et al., 2018). These approaches are significant for identifying patterns, features, or themes (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Lichtman, 2023). Notably, qualitative researchers claim or establish truth based on constructivist perspectives (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). The constructivist approach relies upon participant's social experiences to understand the reality or the complexity of views rather than narrow meanings (Creswell, 2018). Research on violence against children requires an understanding of the subjective experiences,

perceptions of violence, and related vulnerabilities of children and other stakeholders (Kyegombe et al., 2019).

Qualitative research is also assumed to be suitable for investigating new areas of research or theorising hidden problems (Jamshed, 2014). It is understood that the views of expert personnel about a research topic can play a crucial role in both the empirical and theoretical understanding of the problem. Given this, this study used a qualitative design so that a singular reality could be explored using different methods to describe the essence of the current research phenomenon and develop interventions (Teherani et al., 2015).

#### 4.2.1.2 Why a quantitative strand?

Quantitative research allows for generalising the views of larger populations through predicting, controlling and testing the parameters. In quantitative research, an investigator relies on experiments or surveys where the statistical processes can be applied in a systematic way (Creswell, 2015). Positivist researchers prefer quantitative instruments, and to be able to isolate variables that can yield highly reliable and valid scores, and employ a comparative method to specify how variables affect one another disregarding the effect of other variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Where qualitative researchers working in the area of child maltreatment mostly rely on the abusive experiences of participants (Creswell, 2018), the quantitative researchers take an empirical orientation to test the reality or propositions against general experiences of the incidences of maltreatment (Zyphur & Pierides, 2020).

#### 4.2.1.3 Why convergence?

This study uses both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. The merging of both survey and interview data was employed to expand and corroborate the study findings (Wisdom et al., 2012). Integration through merging both datasets was inductive, as qualitative and quantitative data were collected with parallel series of questions, with the only changes or

inclusion of new scales or variables being in the quantitative instruments (Castro et al., 2010). Notably, convergent parallel mixed-method design prioritises the analytical procedures in both strands equally. The strength of the study's interpretation depends on the process and the validity of the triangulation. Data triangulation can result in convergence, corroboration and correspondence between results obtained by different methods, while complementarity can enhance, illustrate and refine the results from one method with the results from the other method (Greene et al., 1989; Parry & Willis, 2013). This combination of different approaches does not necessarily increase validity, but it does expand the depth and scope of the understanding of the knowledge of the topic under investigation; child labour maltreatment (Fielding, 2012). The amalgamation of both findings with the related theory, for example, ecological development theory, is crucial in further conveying the situation of child labour maltreatment to readers. This triangulation as a methodological metaphor will also support the link between existing theory and integrated results, which further challenges the assumptions of theory and may assist in the establishment of a new theory (Östlund et al., 2011).

### *4.2.2* Epistemology and ontology of mixed methods research

Mixed methods studies range across a number of designs, and paradigms, the two most obvious being pragmatic and critical realism (Morgan 2007; Morgan 2014; Baškarada and Koronios 2018). This study seeks to explore the nature of the reality of maltreatment of children in labour, which aligns most clearly with Pragmatism as outlined by Dewey (Maarouf 2019). Ontologically, the pragmatic paradigm takes an intersubjective approach. This means the researcher's stance is both objective (in dealing with the quantitative data) and subjective (when dealing with the qualitative data). Another approach is to see the subjective and objective positions along a continuum and to situate mixed methods at a point within this continuum in terms of how reality and knowledge are constructed (Maarouf 2019).

A further approach to ontological and epistemological issues in mixed methods makes reference to the reality cycle, acknowledging that reality differs according to context (Maarouf 2019). As will become clear, in this study, realities are explored from perceptions of four social actors; experts, child laborers, parents and employers. The approach taken in this study was to qualitatively understand the knowledge and views of experts as the population who can solve the problem and to juxtapose this against the statistical 'facts' of child laborers, parents of child laborers and employers of child laborers. This is what Morgan means when he suggests that mixed methods research adopts a pragmatic or practical approach to issues of ontology and epistemology; in effect researchers use what will work (Morgan 2007). The study presents the facts in quantitative detail, but also exposes the views of researchers, policy makers and health professionals. The interaction between two different world views will create new insights.

As will become clear, the axiology governing this study is evident in the topic chosen, and the instruments used and the systematic literature review. Axiology refers to the values and beliefs of the researcher (Morgan 2014). This study is a critical examination of the maltreatment of child laborers. I position it as damaging and an abuse of the child's human rights.

## 4.3 Research Process Through a Convergent Parallel Method

This study was conducted in three stages with data from all used to triangulate findings related to the prevalence, risk factors and consequences of the maltreatment of child labourers. The research process is discussed below.

### *4.3.1 Phase 1: Qualitative method*

The qualitative component comprised in-depth key informant interviews (KII)s with a sample of 17 expert professionals on the phenomenon of child maltreatment and child labourers.

#### 4.3.1.1 Target population and sample

***Process of selecting participants***

Selection of respondents for the qualitative interviews was based on the availability of professionals in Bangladesh who are acknowledged as experts and have been working for several years in the field of child rights and protection in different organisations. A review of the existing literature indicated that the concept of maltreatment of child labourers is poorly understood worldwide. Therefore, it was assumed that before selecting the population for the qualitative interview, an initial examination of their profile and experiences would be constructive. More than 30 stakeholders, employed in different public and private organisations, were initially selected for interview. An initial conversation with selected experts allowed them time to gain consent from their employers and to ascertain their level of understanding and willingness to participate in the interview.

***Participants' area of employment***

There are a variety of government departments and NGOs that work on the protection of child rights in Bangladesh. Expert stakeholders were chosen from these groups. Following examination of the relevant web pages, home pages, organisational mission statements and reports, five different sectors that are directly or indirectly involved with protecting the rights of children, were purposively selected. These were (i) NGOs (ii) the Ministry of Women and Children Welfare and Ministry of Labour and Employment (iii) universities (iv) medical college and (v) national frontline newspapers. This diversity assisted in providing a broad range of perspectives. Each of these organisations has a research section that produces reports on child labour maltreatment. Some professionals have particular expertise on the study phenomenon and were willing to share information for research purposes (Kumar, 1989).

Bangladesh has a high number of national and international NGOs with relatively parallel goals (Gauri & Galef, 2005). Up to 90% of villages had at least one NGO in 2000 (Fruttero & Gauri,

2005), and more than 35% of the country's population benefited from their activities (Kabeer et al., 2012). Approximately 235 NGOs operate with the mandate to protect child rights in Bangladesh (Child Rights International Organisation, 2018). A significant number of these NGOs have been lobbying international donor organisations to work with them on child protection, monitoring and supervising disadvantaged children, combating abusive and exploitative child labour, and engaging in capacity building, advocacy, conducting research and reporting, executing and evaluating different programs related to the rights of children, and contributing to policy frameworks (Kabeer et al., 2012; Sajjad, 2004). A total of six expert professionals were selected from six different national and international NGOs.

It is presumed that expert professionals engaged in these various projects or programs directly led by the related ministerial bodies are knowledgeable informants. There is considerable expert advice and data on the websites of two ministries: The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Bangladesh. Key informants were approached and selected from these two ministries for the interview, given the work they publish on the topic of child protection. For instance, an ongoing meta-project, Accelerating Protection for Children, under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has been running since 2017.

University academics and researchers play a pivotal role in knowledge transfer and generating policy recommendations regarding child rights and protection through research. Currently there are 104 universities in Bangladesh (Adnan, 2016). The frequent publications and presentations of the research in many universities have highlighted the different areas of child maltreatment in recent times. Before proceeding, their websites were viewed for the most reputed universities in rank order and then the profiles of relevant academics in the social sciences were screened for publications if related documents were available. Based on this proforma, five academics were purposively selected from five universities of Bangladesh:

Dhaka University, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Khulna University, North South University, and Premier University. An academic with expertise in child rights in Bangladesh was selected from the University of Northern Iowa, USA; although not living in Bangladesh, she was considered as an expert given her research contribution related to vulnerable children in Bangladesh.

In addition, paediatricians also work as academics and researchers expanding the medical knowledge of child labour maltreatment (Kronick et al., 2009). While social science researchers may fail to recognise some patterns of maltreatment, these medical specialists can observe the clinical outcomes of maltreatment. A UK-based research project on child subdural haemorrhage stated that many intentional injury cases against children may not be clearly identified by social service professionals, therefore paediatricians are required (Jayawant et al., 1998). Given this, a paediatrician's engagement in maltreatment research increases the reliability of the data. Therefore, two paediatricians from two reputed medical colleges; Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital, Dhaka and Osmani Medical College and Hospital, Sylhet were approached to be part of the expert team. However, only the one from the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital was available.

Data collection of the current project was also motivated by the work of journalists from two national newspapers: The *Daily Star* and the *Kaler Kantho*. In the past, media reporting of child maltreatment has been influential in getting the topic onto the political agenda (Saint-Jacques et al., 2012). Newspaper portrayals of child maltreatment cases provide case histories of incidents (Hove et al., 2013), which contribute to the field of knowledge regrading child labour maltreatment.

***Distribution of key informants***

The purposive sampling technique was conducted to select participants who have expertise in child rights and protection. This sampling technique provided an opportunity to select heterogeneous participants, linked to the area of research. The technique is similar to expert sampling, which provides findings from expert personnel and is also identified as a pragmatic tool for researching new and complex topics such as understanding child labour maltreatment (Etikan, 2016). For this qualitative study, a total of 17 key informants were interviewed. They were considered experts on child rights and protection issues, or in particular, had researched the issue.

The determination of sample size for the qualitative component of this study reflects the views of key qualitative researchers. Kumar argues for a range of 15 to 35 (Kumar, 1989). Notably, no studies recommend a sample size over 40–50 for in-depth interviews (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). However, qualitative researchers do not recommend less than 15 participants (Guest et al., 2006). Mason found that the most typical sample sizes were 20–30 across many qualitative studies. Irrespective of these highlighted limits, he further suggests that if saturation is the guiding principle for qualitative studies, it is likely to be achieved at any point (Mason, 2010). Based on these recommendations and the availability of expert personnel, 17 experts in the area of child rights and protection in Bangladesh were approached as representatives for this qualitative component of the mixed-method design.

These 17 key informants were purposively selected from the identified areas. The purposive selection of participants primarily requires an understanding by the researcher about which characteristics are essential to the study (Battaglia, 2011). These characteristics include how relevant the participants' field of work is within the context of child labour or maltreatment,

sharing scope, assessing question set by participants and the availability of key informants. The distribution of the 17 expert professionals is given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Distribution of key informants

| Key Informants | Numbers |
|---|---|
| Expert professionals from non-government organisations | 6 |
| Experts from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Employment | 2 |
| University academics and researchers | 6 |
| Specialised paediatrician | 1 |
| Journalists (Newspaper) | 2 |

#### *4.3.1.2* Data collection

The interview technique sought the interviewees' points of view about their experiences from their research or general understanding of maltreatment of child labourers (Kvale, 2009). Specifically, the interview technique was based on the KII approach. Key informants are believed to have expertise (Mumtaz et al., 2014; Parsons, 2011). Notably, KIIs should not be confused with case study methods. Both methods use in-depth interviewing techniques, but KIIs focus on gathering unique knowledge from skilled professionals, whereas case study interviews do not necessarily search for experts. KIIs are best suited to obtain in-depth information about sensitive and limited pressing issues from a small number of well-connected and informed experts (Parsons, 2011). This method of data collection was predominantly chosen as it provides flexibility in examining new ideas and themes (Kumar, 1989) on the maltreatment of child labourers (Das & Chen, 2019).

To obtain data from each key informant, Zoom and Skype interviews were conducted. While it is difficult to establish rapport over the phone, it does provide an opportunity to access geographically dispersed participants, provides wide flexibility in scheduling interviews, reduces cost and also enhances the freedom of thinking and answering comprehensively

(Drabble et al., 2016). The major reason for choosing telephone interviews was to maintain the social distance and lockdown measures required as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Face-to-face interviews had been planned but were not possible.

To perform in-depth interviews via online platforms, an interview protocol with a number of open-ended questions was used that primarily focused on the nature and causes of child labour maltreatment and its health effects. The interview tool was designed based on a thorough review of the existing literature related to violence against child labourers. The findings of the scoping review also supported the formulation of the interview protocol. The interview protocol included 10 open-ended questions, plus subsidiary questions under three overarching questions that helped to eliminate misinterpretations (Kross & Giust, 2019). During the interviews, probing questions were asked to clarify answers. The protocol underwent pilot testing with an NGO (Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum) professional who had expertise in children's rights. This pilot testing identified the linguistic issues, irrelevant questions and time considerations, which was further reviewed. For instance, there was a subsidiary question in the pilot protocol, 'Would you tell me the most precise rate of prevalence of different forms of maltreatment?'. This question was omitted because the literature on the prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers is not enriched and the participants would not have been able to answer this question. Appendix D lists the revised schedule of qualitative questions.

The interview responses were recorded using a tape recorder. During each interview, notes were taken. Note-taking started immediately when the interview commenced. To avoid information being missed while writing during interviews, the recording option in online platform was turned on when the interviewees consented. The recorded audio ensured the collection of detailed information. The recorded audios were stored in a secure and password protected computer drives in accordance with the Flinders University ethics application. The preparation of transcripts was based on both written notes and recorded audios. Interviews were

recorded in the Bengali language for greater understanding and straightforward rapport building. The transcription of audio-recorded interviews was translated into the English language through a two-stage process: first, the recorded interview was written in Bengali and re-checked by the researcher. In the second phase, the Bengali transcription was translated into the English language. Three bilingual certified transcribers performed this translation. Transcribers signed a confidentiality agreement for transcription services prior to moving forward with transcription (Appendix F4). The transcribed English script was reviewed by two PhD supervisors for clarity. Key participants were also given the opportunity to review their transcripts and to correct content if necessary. Only one key informant sent back the transcribed interview with minor changes.

#### *4.3.1.3* Data analysis

Broadly, the aim of qualitative analysis is to reflect the complexity of the phenomenon and present the underlying structure that makes sense of the issue (Green & Thorogood, 2018). The qualitative part of this mixed-method design relied on the inductive reasoning process to interpret and structure the meanings derived from the data. Of note, as per the rules of convergent mixed-method design, the qualitative method was applied to all three objectives of this research project in parallel to the quantitative component.

Zina O'Leary has designed procedures for conducting qualitative analysis including identifying bias, noting overall impressions, data reducing and coding into themes, searching for patterns and interconnections, mapping and building themes, building and verifying theories, and drawing conclusions (O'Leary, 2014). These processes may vary from study to study, although the steps are more or less identical. To explore the risk factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers, a thematic approach was employed. This technique draws on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006); Maguire and Delahunt (2017) and involves six phases; (i) an elementary exploration of data through reading transcripts (ii) preparing initial codes (iii)

developing preliminary themes by aggregating parallel codes (iv) reviewing and linking preliminary themes to reinforce cutting-edge themes (v) defining and naming reviewed themes and (vi) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

***Step 1: Elementary exploration of data through studying transcripts and memos***

Before commencing thematic analysis, transcription of recorded interviews was conducted. A total of 17 transcripts were read repeatedly to gain an understanding of the ideas. This was an iterative process to become familiar with the entire qualitative dataset before starting coding (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

***Step 2: Generating preliminary codes***

Codes are features of the data identified as interesting to the analyst (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Coded data are different from the unit of analysis called themes, which are identified in the next phase. In this phase, data related to the research questions were extracted from transcripts for coding. The extracted data were coded using data analytic software called NVivo version 12.

***Step 3: Developing initial themes***

The preparation of themes commenced when all the data had been initially coded and collated. A theme is an abstract entity that carries significance (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000). In this phase, codes are sorted or fitted together to form a potential theme. Notably, some initial codes directly formed major themes, while others were part of subthemes. Codes that are not related to any themes are moved under the 'miscellaneous' theme.

***Step 4: Reviewing and linking themes***

This step commences when a set of themes has been devised and requires refinement. In this stage, inadequacies in the initial coding and themes are disclosed and may require refinement (King, 2004) The researcher reads the coded data associated with each theme to check whether

the data really support the theme or not. The researcher identifies the codes of a theme, which may seem different in meaning, but underpins the theme. The data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, with a clear and identifiable distinction between them (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Codes that were not related to the research question were discarded. A review of themes was accomplished in this way so that the researcher could confirm that the themes were able to tell the story of the data. Reviewing themes ensures the coherence of the analysis.

***Step 5: Defining and naming themes***

The aim of this phase was to identify the essence of what each theme was about and what it was saying precisely. The theme names were modified, where required, after reading and verifying the contents. The theme names should be precise so that the reader understands what the theme is about. It was also ensured that when the themes were described, they provided a detailed and multifaceted account and captured the shape and texture of the themes. The analysis also focused on achieving data saturation. The study reached a level where no new information was found to construct new themes or categories. The generation of themes was counter checked with two other researchers familiar with saturation. When themes and subthemes were developed, the researcher examined the content to see if there was any association between them.

***Step 6: Producing the report***

After finalising the themes through analysis, the write-up of a report starts. In this step, the data extracts or themes were reviewed and checked with other researchers to verify the themes. The themes were organised to reflect the rich and complicated story of child labour maltreatment in the agriculture and domestic area of Bangladesh. This was done to help the reader understand the authenticity of the analysis. Notably, this narrative writing goes beyond the description of data to establish a logical argument in relation to the research questions. The developed themes

and subthemes are presented in a concept map (Figure 5.2). The overall process of data collection and analysis is outlined in Figure 2.2.

***Rationale points for the application of thematic analysis***

Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative data technique in social and health science research. Qualitative research is frequently criticised as having poor trustworthiness and reliability of findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). However, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that a rigorous thematic analysis establishes trustworthy and insightful findings. Most qualitative researchers adopt this method due to the theoretical freedom and flexibility it accommodates while providing a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of the data. Thematic analysis of the open-ended responses from the KIIs can explore the concept and context at a more in-depth level than quantitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Alongside these advantages, it is expected that the themes that identified from this analysis will underpin the answers to the research questions gained through the surveys allowing for a comparison with the findings of quantitative analysis.

### *4.3.2 Phase 2: Quantitative study*

The quantitative part of this mixed-method study is a population-based cross-sectional design to fulfil the study objectives. The hallmark of a cross-sectional design is that it is appropriate to determine the prevalence, cause and impact of a particular phenomenon (Mann, 2003).

#### 4.3.2.1 Study area

The population-based surveillance areas for this study were three Upazilas (subdistricts) of the Sunamganj district of Bangladesh. Sunamganj is located in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh. It is a hoar[i] based district within the Sylhet Division of Bangladesh. The district

[i] It is a type of wetland ecosystem within the north-eastern part of Bangladesh that is characterised by a shallow depression in the shape of a bowl or saucer, also known as a backswamp. Rahaman, M., Sajib, K. I., & Alam, I.

is characterised by poverty (the poverty headcount rate is 26%) compared with other districts in the Sylhet division. The district consists of 11 Upazilas (BBS, 2013) and purposively, three Upazilas were selected as study areas (Bishwambarpur, Dharmapasha and Doarabazar). Approximately half of the inhabitants of the district live below the poverty line, according to UNICEF (Chávez & Rigole, 2020). Additionally, the landscape poses challenges to the production of agricultural products. The topography is primarily flat and low-lying near the Bangladesh–India border, contributing to this phenomenon (BBS, 2013).

This district has an estimated 89.62% of its population employed in agriculture (Hossain et al., 2020) with crop production and fishing making up the majority of jobs (BBS, 2013). There have been studies examining the livelihood status of agricultural farmers in this haor area of Bangladesh, which found that almost 50% of the population have no formal education, and have limited income opportunities (BBS, 2013; Hossain et al., 2020; Mozahid et al., 2018). Young children make up a substantial portion of the workforce. Of note, children aged 0–14 years are the largest population group (42.66%) in this region (BBS, 2015). Moreover, the district's census report indicates that nearly 69.65% of children aged 7–14 years did not complete their primary education, which indicates a critical state of child education in the area (BBS, 2013).

Three predetermined criteria were considered when selecting the three Upazilas as study areas: the standard literacy rate, poverty rate (headcount index) and agricultural holdings. These three areas are characterised by high levels of illiteracy and poverty (BBS, 2013), and have fewer small-scale agricultural enterprises than other Upazilas in the country. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 identify these three subdistricts.

(2015). A study of climate change impact on the livelihood of the people in Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh. World Water Congress XV. International Water Resources Association (IWRA), Edinburgh, Scotland.

Table 4.2: Literacy, poverty and agricultural holdings of study area

| Uapzila (subdistrict) | Literacy rate | Poverty headcount ratio | Agricultural holdings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bishwambarpur | 34.6 | 30.4 | 24280 |
| Dharmapasha | 29.2 | 25.5 | 23489 |
| Doarabazar | 30.4 | 29.9 | 20704 |

Source: (BBS, 2013; World Bank, 2016)

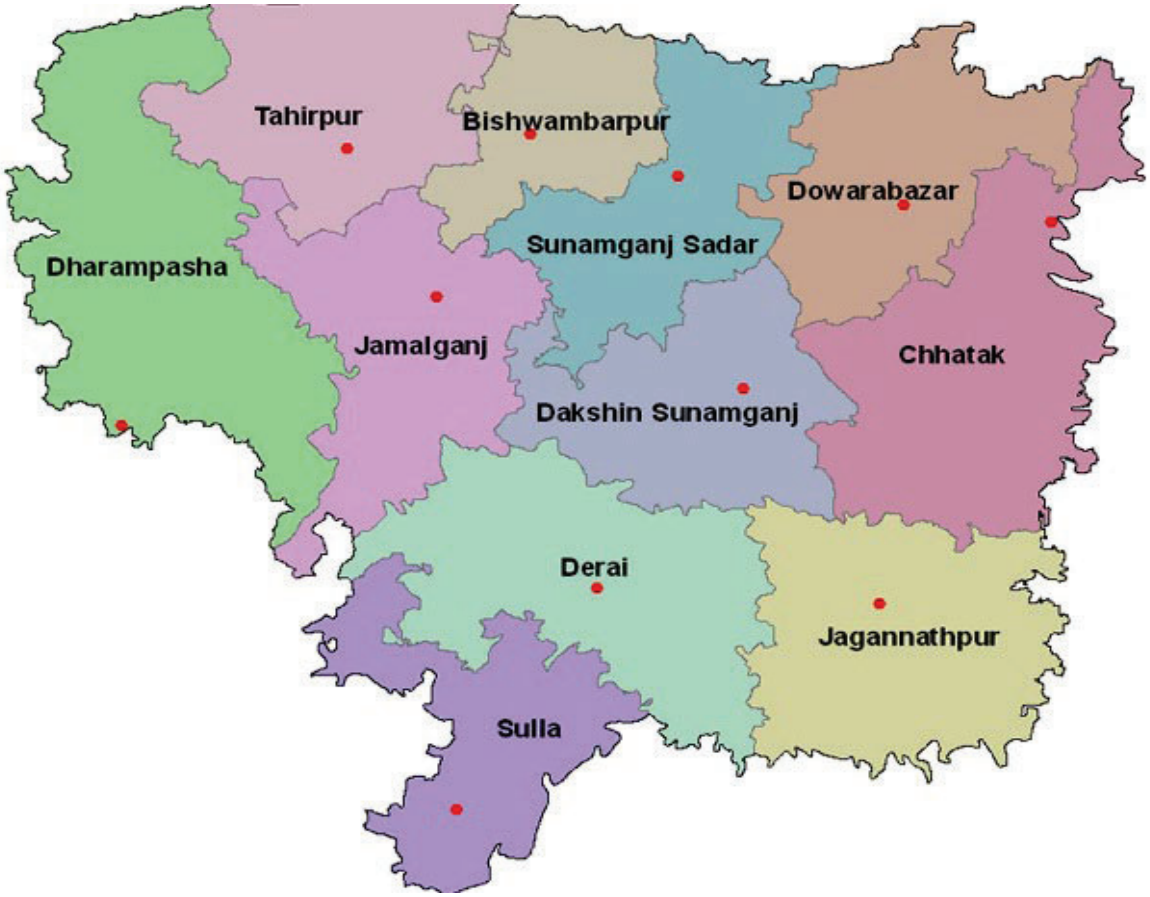


Figure 4.2: Map of Sunamganj district and Upazilas

### 4.3.2.2 Target population, selection of sample and sampling process

The target population for the quantitative study comprised three groups of participants: child labourers, parents and employers of different groups of child labourers. Following the definition of UNICEF, child labourers were selected for this study if they were between the ages of 10 and 11 years and had worked at least 1 hour of economic work per week; 12–14 years and had worked more than 14 hours of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid domestic labour per week; or 15–17 years and had worked more than 43 hours of economic work per

week (UNICEF, 2022). As early-aged child labourers are unlikely to respond effectively (Chan, 2012), the parents and employers of different groups of child labourers were also included in order to gain comprehensive insights. Likewise, Togunde and Weber noted that as certain responses would be avoided by children due to the complexity of the question, parents of child labourers can be considered participants (Togunde & Weber, 2007). Employers were also included since they are considered to be the principal perpetrators of workplace maltreatment (Rao & Rao, 1998). Table 4.3 presents the inclusion criteria for selecting the target population for the quantitative study. In a nutshell, the views of parents and employers of children are seen as proxies and supportive in strengthening the richness of data (Gardner & Randall, 2012).

Table 4.3: Categories of study population

| **Target population** | | **Inclusion criteria** |
|---|---|---|
| Child labourer | Children in agricultural labour | Children aged 10–17 years who are involved in crop production, fish farming, forestry and animal husbandry. In case of working hours, the study further considered child labourers between the ages of 10 and 11 years and had worked at least one hour of economic work per week, 12 to 14 years and had worked more than 14 hours of economic work (paid labour) per week and 15 to 17 years and had worked more than 43 hours of economic work per week. |
| | Children in domestic labour | Children aged 10–17 years who are involved in third-party households as domestic labour either in a paid or unpaid form. In case of working hours, the study further considered child labourers between the ages of 10 and 11 years and had worked at least one hour of economic work per week, 12 to 14 years and had worked more than 14 hours of economic work per week and 15 to 17 years and had worked more than 43 hours of economic work per week. |
| Parents (either father or mother) | | Parents of child labourers aged 10–17 years. They are supportive participants. They have knowledge of household characteristics and children's experience of maltreatment. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Employer | They recruit children (10–17 years) to perform labour. They are owners or managers of farms or small agricultural enterprises, landlords or owners of houses. |

The overall sample size was 300, selected from child labourers, parents and employers, each of whom numbered 100. These representative populations were selected using the snowball sampling technique. In the snowball sampling method, the researcher recruits one individual participant from workplace or home who in turn provides information about another participant, and the chain continues. A snowball sampling approach is used when it is difficult to obtain samples with the desired characteristics. In this study, snowball sampling was followed since the participants are a marginalised group of the population, and it would be difficult to reach them randomly (Naderifar et al., 2017; Tenzek, 2017).

The present study considered the overall CPM and CEM as a proportion of the population since there is no specific estimation of maltreatment in regard to child labourers in rural areas of Bangladesh. The sample for each study group was based on an estimate of the magnitude of child maltreatment in Bangladesh, which was set at 82.9% (BBS & UNICEF, 2016) as a proportion of the population, a two-sided 95% confidence interval, with an absolute precision of 7%. Therefore, the margin of error is considered higher than the optimal 5% level considered in many studies (Nundy et al., 2022). This produced a sample size of 114 following the formulae for two-sided confidence intervals for one proportion. However, the study was able to collect 100 participants from each group (Lwanga & Lemeshow, 1991). In total, 300participants, including child labourers, parents of child labourers and employers, were selected.

#### 4.3.2.3 Data collection

***Survey method***

Face-to-face interviews (surveys) were conducted with the three groups of participants using three sets of structured questionnaires. Surveys with children and employers were conducted at their workplaces, while parents were surveyed at their home. Face-to-face interview techniques ensure that respondents are able to clarify their questions or answers in the presence of the interviewers (Lavrakas, 2008), which results in a higher response rate (Kelley et al., 2003). This approach is also effective in the current study area, where the literacy rate is low (BBS, 2013; The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020).

***Recruitment of interviewers and web-based survey administration***

We designed and uploaded each of the three prepared survey questionnaires to an Excel spreadsheet and then imported into Google Forms (survey administration software) as it provided flexibility and reduced data inconsistencies (Thysen et al., 2021). For the purpose of collecting data from the study area, three skilled interviewers (data collectors) were recruited. They were all university postgraduates experienced in conducting survey-based and clinical research.

The lead researcher organised a 3-day online training session for the interviewers (data collectors). These three data collectors were trained by the principal researcher on how to introduce themselves at the start of each interview, followed by a brief explanation of the nature and goals of the study. They were also trained on the application of questionnaires and combating biases, including building rapport, obtaining consent, maintaining confidentiality, avoiding conflict and responding appropriately. The data investigator team conducted a trial survey with the principal researcher over a period of 1–6 weeks earlier, which allowed them to gather information regarding the ethical and rigorous processes in place for the study. During

data collection, the principal researcher communicated regularly with them via Skype to resolve any issues that arose during the process. The survey was performed from April to June 2021. Data collectors repeatedly checked the data and uploaded them into a password-protected Google Drive. Following the completion of the data-collection process, data were transferred into the Excel sheet followed by an export to SPSS. Data files were stored in Flinders OneDrive and in a password-protected Google Drive.

***Data collection tools***

Three sets of structured questionnaires were designed for each group of participants (child labourers, parents and employers). These structured questionnaires were designed based on the literature review, established theoretical frameworks such as ecological model frameworks (Belsky, 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and discussion with experts in that field. Both self-designed questions and validated item scales were used in the development of questionnaires (Appendix E1, E2 and E3). To fulfil the objectives, the questionnaires took into consideration various sociodemographic, economic and health characteristics of the study participants. The predictor and outcome variables are presented in Table 4.4. The sets of questionnaires are discussed below.

***Sociodemographic characteristics and operational definitions***

The sociodemographic characteristics of child labourers are age, education, number of jobs at present, area of employment, level of income, working hours, accommodation, mother's education, father's occupation and land ownership. The study further included drug abuse characteristics of employers or co-workers and members of the family. In Bangladesh, nearly 2.1 million working children do not attend school (BBS, 2015), which is a major risk factor for children's exposure to maltreatment (Haile & Haile, 2012), therefore schooling was incorporated in the study. The area of employment is also evidently linked to the maltreatment

experiences of working children. It is well documented that children's exposure to intentional maltreatment is often induced by the pattern of working areas and environments (Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2018; Pandey et al., 2020), therefore the study considered asking the participants about the type of employment, such as agricultural or third-party domestic labour. Research shows that child labourers who work 8 hours or more in a day, have an increased risk of experiencing multiple victimisations at the workplace (Banday et al., 2018; Radfar et al., 2018). Therefore, the participants were asked, 'How many hours does the young child employee work?' Similarly, insufficient income also poses a risk. Studies have observed that the risk of maltreatment is higher among child labourers who receive low wages, while it is documented that in Bangladesh (Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi, 2000), exploited child labourers earn less than US$2 a day, which is below BDT5000 (Bangladesh Taka) per month (Beaubien, 2016). Therefore, the participants were asked, 'How much money do child employees earn per month?' Further, children who live at their employer's place are more frequently victimised by workplace staff/co-workers (Banday et al., 2018; Islam, 2018). This prompted questions about the living arrangement of child labourers.

Prior studies have identified that parental schooling and occupation are significantly linked with children's risk of being victimised (Hadi, 2000; Stith et al., 2009). These parental characteristics were also incorporated into the demographic and socioeconomic sections of the questionnaires. The impacts of exposure to drug abuse on children in the workplace and household environment were assessed by the questions, 'Have you ever seen someone at your workplace taking drugs?' and 'Have you ever seen someone from your family taking drugs?' with dichotomous response categories. Several studies have detected substance abuse as a risk factor for child maltreatment among child labourers in their immediate environment (Austin et al., 2020; Doidge et al., 2017).

Moreover, parents were asked questions related to their children's schooling, health and accommodation status. Additionally, they were asked questions about their individual earnings, household income and land ownership pattern. The National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016) reports that the average household income in Bangladesh was BDT15,988 per month (BBS, 2019b). Considering this income level, parents were asked, 'How much household earnings do you have per month?' Apart from household income, parents were also asked about their individual earnings. The response categorisation was framed from the estimated data of The Global Wage Report 2020-21, which reported that the nominal wage of a person in Bangladesh is BDT400.53 per day (ILO, 2020). Parents were further asked, 'Is there any land you own outside of your household land?' Child labourers' land ownership pattern is identified as an important indicator of their risk of being subjected to maltreatment (Hadi, 2000). Additionally, the study focused on parents' attributes related to health and childhood maltreatment experiences. There is evidence showing that the risk of child maltreatment is associated with caregivers' history of early childhood maltreatment (Jameson & Schellenbach, 1977). Hence, parents were asked, 'Have you ever experienced childhood maltreatment yourself?' In addition, adverse health or illness of parents is also an indicator of children's exposure to maltreatment (Austin et al., 2020). Thus, parents were further questioned about their physical and psychological health status with dichotomous answers 'Yes' or 'No'. Alongside common socioeconomic indicators, employers were additionally asked, 'How many child employees are working at your workplace?' Research indicates that there is a higher risk of maltreatment when more labourers work together in workspaces (Ortega et al., 2009).

Table 4.4: Predictor and outcome variables

| **Objectives** | **Outcome variables** | |
|---|---|---|
| Objective 1 | PM, EM, CN, and financial exploitation | |
| Objective 2 | PM, EM, CN, and financial exploitation | |
| Objective 3 | Psychosocial impairments | |
| **Predictor variables** | | |
| **Stakeholders/Participant groups** | **Demographic and economic correlates** | **Possible social and health vulnerabilities** |
| Child labourers | 1. Age<br>2. Current schooling<br>3. Level of occupation<br>4. Number of working hours<br>5. Income of child labourers<br>6. Living arrangements<br>7. Mothers' education<br>8. Fathers' occupation<br>9. Land outside of household | 1. Drug abuse among co-workers<br>2. Drug abuse among family members |
| Parents | 1. Level of education<br>2. Current occupation<br>3. Self-income<br>4. Spouse's education<br>5. Household's earning<br>6. Land outside of household<br>7. Level of education of working children<br>8. Living arrangements of children | 1. Physical illness of parents<br>2. Psychological disorder of parents<br>3. Physical illness of children<br>4. Psychological disorder of children<br>5. Childhood maltreatment experiences of parents |
| Employers | 1. Level of education<br>2. Current occupation<br>3. Number of employees<br>4. Age of employees<br>5. Working hours of children<br>6. Wage of child employees<br>7. Living arrangements of child employees | 1. Physical illness of employers<br>2. Psychological disorder of employers<br>3. Physical illness of child employees<br>4. Psychological disorder of child employees<br>5. Childhood maltreatment experiences of employers |

Note: PM – physical maltreatment EM – emotional maltreatment; CN – child neglect

### *Data collection instruments*

In addition to demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in the structured questionnaires, the study utilised two validated tools for data screening. These were the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN) developed child abuse screening tool, and the Paediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC) scale. These are discussed below.

**ISPCAN child abuse screening tool**

ISPCAN has developed child abuse screening tools (ICAST) as measures used to evaluate the prevalence of the maltreatment of child labourers. The ICAST questionnaire has long been used as a survey tool across cultures and languages as a multidimensional measure of exposure to violence (Meinck et al., 2018; Runyan et al., 2015). In this study, both ICAST-CH (for children) and ICAST-P (for caregivers) were administered to explore responses from child labourers, parents and employers of child labourers.

**ICAST-CH (Child home version screening tool)**

ICAST-CH is a child maltreatment screening tool is designed for children aged 11–18 years. The items within the ICAST-CH questionnaire were considered applicable to both the workplace and home environments (O'Leary et al., 2018). Based on the study objectives, three dimensions of the ICAST-CH tool; PM (9 items), EM (8 items) and neglect (5 items) were used in the survey (Feng et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2019; Sahaimi et al., 2020; Zolotor et al., 2009). All these items allow the respondent to make one of four responses: 'many times', 'sometimes', 'not in the past year' and 'never'. During the survey, child labourers were asked to respond to each of the child abuse and neglect items in these 4-response categories. A four-point scoring system for the multiple response levels (4= many times, 3= sometimes, 2= not in the past year but this happened, and 0= never) were used. There is flexibility in considering weighted values in the ICAST questionnaires, suggested by the ICAST manual (Runyan et al., 2015). For each participant, the mean score of each form of maltreatment varies between 1 and 4. In a study by Zolotor and colleagues, it was found that all the items in each domain of the ICAST-CH tool have a Cronbach alpha level between 0.72 and 0.86, which indicates a high level of internal consistency (Zolotor et al., 2009).

**ICAST-P (Parents' version screening tool)**

The ICAST-P is a caregiver version of the child abuse screening tool, which is designed for parents of children aged below 18 years. It measures disciplinary maltreatment practices directed at children (Earls et al., 2007; Zolotor et al., 2009). Similar to the ICAST-CH tool, the ICAST-P was also found adequate to assess child maltreatment at work and at home (O'Leary et al., 2018). The survey asks parents and employers about acts of victimisation towards their children as labourers committed by them or other individuals at home or in the workplace. In this study, the ICAST-P instrument was hypothesised to measure the extent of PM, EM and neglect reported by parents and other caregivers of children such as employer at workplace. Of note, this study did not consider the sexual abuse of child labourers, as children are less likely to disclose these incidents and there were ethical restrictions in collecting sexual abuse-related data from working children during Covid-19. In addition, there are not adequate access opportunities to crime reports compiled by police or child protection agencies in Bangladesh. In the parents' version of the survey, the physical form of maltreatment contained 16 items, the EM contained 11 items, and the neglect domain contained 3 items. The weighted values of the items were measured using a 6-point scale in descending order (1 = never, 2 = yes but not in the past year, 3 = once or twice, 4 = 3–5 times, 5 = 6–10 times, and 6 = ≥10 times). The study calculated the mean of the responses for each participant. The mean score of each maltreatment form varied from 1 to 6 for each participant. A higher mean indicated a higher prevalence of maltreatment (Earls et al., 2007; Runyan et al., 2009). This tool was validated and found reliable (Cronbach's alpha: 0.60–0.87) in the cultural contexts of South Asia (Chen et al., 2020).

**Inclusion of financial exploitation as a module in the survey**

Apart from the three forms of child maltreatment outlined above, financial exploitation among child labourers was included as a form of child labour maltreatment. Prior research has

suggested that child labourers are more likely to be victimised financially than other employees (Banday et al., 2018; Hadi, 2000). Recruitment of children into labour is theoretically a motive for exploiting them financially (Das & Chen, 2019). Given this is an area neglected in research, this study sought to understand the circumstances of financial exploitation against child labourers. A review of the existing literature assisted in deriving four forms of exploitation of child labourers that depict financial exploitation; those paid a low wage, those working without payment (Hadi, 2000; Islam, 2018; Öncü et al., 2013), those not paid on time (Banday et al., 2018) or those not paid for overtime. According to the Labour Act 2006, Bangladesh, wages, and overtime allowances have to be paid within 7 days of the wage period (30 days). Any delays in paying wages are considered exploitation (Bangladesh Employers' Federation, 2009).

Apart from these insights, working children are often deprived of the necessary allowances to cover healthcare (Dey, 2008). In poverty-afflicted households, children are compelled to play the role of bread earners and are forced to contribute to family expenses (Banday et al., 2018). This results in bonded labour, where parents who have borrowed money for household expenses give their children's labour as compensation (Tripathy, 1989). Although narrowly understood, the study conducted by Banday et al. (2018) conceptualised that these working children were often victimised by pick pocketers, and had their money stolen by co-workers and other peers. Evidently, child labourers in Bangladesh, especially those who work in third-party domestic households, do not receive their wages on time and are not paid adequately (Ara et al., 2011). In order to address these types of exploitation, the study included financial exploitation as a form of maltreatment and included a question with four categories including depriving employees of their full wage/salary, delaying their salary payment, depriving them of medical benefits, forcing them to contribute to family expenses and stealing money.

**Paediatric Symptom Checklist**

The PSC tool has long been used to assess the mental health of disadvantaged children across a range of settings (Simonian & Tarnowski, 2001). To explore the cognitive, emotional and behavioural impact of the maltreatment of child labourers, the survey incorporated both the Youth-reported PSC (Y-PSC) and the parent's version of the PSC.

The Y-PSC was administered to collect data from child labourers aged between 11 and 18 years, while the PSC tool was administered to collect data from parents of child labourers aged 10 to 16 years. A total of 35 PSC items were listed in both item scales (Y-PSC and PSC) with response items anchored to 'often', 'sometimes' and 'never' with weighted values of 2, 1 and 0 respectively (Jellinek et al., 1999). The range of possible scores based on these points was between 0 and 70 points, which was calculated by adding the values for each participant. A cut-off score for the Y-PSC was considered as 30 or higher, while the cut-off score for the parents' PSC-16 years was 28 or higher, which indicates psychological impairment of child labourers (Jellinek et al., 1988). The tools have been validated as standard screening devices for measuring children's psychosocial problems (Pagano et al., 2000). Both are highly reliable tools as Cronbach's alpha is measured above 0.86 (Anderson et al., 1999; Reed-Knight et al., 2011). Of note, the screening of psychosocial problems of these PSC tools was completed by a member of the research assistant group who has clinical expertise and field-level experience.

***Reliability level of the tool***

All three survey tools possess standard rates of internal consistency. The reliability of the tools was measured using the Cronbach's alpha test, which indicates that the tools maintain an internal level of consistency and provide accurate measurements of the issues (Brown, 2002). In the ICAST-CH, Cronbach's alpha level was estimated as relatively low; between 0.5 and 0.6 for each of the PM and EM items. On the other hand, the Cronbach's alpha for ICAST-P (parents) ranged between 0.77 and 0.85 for both PM and EM forms, which suggests that the

tool is highly reliable and consistent. For employers, the Cronbach's alpha levels for PM and EM of ICAST-P were 0.75 and 0.68 respectively, which indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency. Moreover, both the Y-PSC and the parents' PSC are estimated to have an acceptable level of internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha at 0.7 and 0.76, respectively. Table 4.5 provides the internal consistency levels of the three tools.

Table 4.5: The internal consistency level (Cronbach's alpha) of the physical and emotional maltreatment items in three versions of the questionnaire

| Maltreatment forms | ICAST-CH | ICAST-P (Parents as caregivers) | ICAST-P (Employers as caregivers) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Physical maltreatment | 0.50 | 0.86 | 0.75 |
| Emotional maltreatment | 0.52 | 0.77 | 0.68 |

***Translation***

First, the questionnaires along with all item scales of ICAST-CH, ICAST-P (parents as caregivers) and ICAST-P (employers as caregivers), Y-PSC and PSC tools were translated into the Bengali language in accordance with the standards of translation (Darwish, 2006) and cultural validation, including a back translation into English. Three bilingual certified transcribers performed this translation, which was also verified by two academic experts in the field of social science research. The transcribers signed a confidentiality agreement. Furthermore, the translated Bengali versions of the questionnaire were tested on three child labourers, two parents, and two employers of child labourers and were found to be understandable.

#### 4.3.2.4 Ethical consideration

This study received ethical approval from the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee of Flinders University, SA (Appendix F1). The information sheets, consent letters and confidentiality agreement (transcription service) were also attached in appendices (Appendix F2, Appendix F3 and Appendix F4).

The participants were given the opportunity to 'think out loud' while the data collectors filled out the questionnaire. In view of the fact that many of them may have been illiterate, it was not expected that they would be able to fill out the survey form. Therefore, the data collector filled in the form on their behalf. As part of the consent process, they were informed that if they wished to receive a copy of the completed interview schedule or questionnaire, they could. It was explained to them that they could withdraw from giving an answer during the session if they felt uncomfortable or reluctant to continue. The researchers assured participants that if they became physically or psychologically ill during the interview session, they would assist them in obtaining medical treatment. Moreover, a detailed informed consent statement was included on the first page of each set of questionnaires stating the purpose of the research, and a declaration stating that 'I agree to be involved in this survey' to ensure the participant's compliance to participate in the study. Participants were assured of confidentiality and participants of quantitative study were compensated A$2.50 (BDT157) for their participation in the survey. Detailed ethical approaches are provided in Appendix F. The parent and employer participants were not related to the children who were interviewed. This was done in order to protect the children from risk of being abused by parents and employers due to disclosure of their maltreatment history at home and in the workplace.

#### *4.3.2.5* Data analysis

The survey data were downloaded from Google Drive and transferred into an Excel spreadsheet, checked, and imported into SPSS version 28 for further data cleaning and analysis.

***Data screening and cleaning***

To begin with, raw data were examined to identify any miscoding, missing data or other errors, and these errors were later ratified in order to ensure the data were usable, reliable and valid for further analysis. Data normality of pertinent variables were visually checked using

frequency, histograms, and a normal Q-Q plot. Data also underwent statistical analysis to see any multicollinearity[ii] and multiple outliers[iii] exist or not in the multivariable model (Tabachnick et al., 2007).

A small number of outlier cases were replaced with the mean value of observations (Kwak & Kim, 2017). It is evident that multivariate tests are extremely sensitive to high multicollinearity and weaken the statistical power of the regression model (Marill, 2004). The study conducted variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis to detect multicollinearity. The highly correlated variables (multicollinear) were excluded from the statistical analysis (Pallant, 2020). It was ensured that the data were normally distributed. Descriptive statistics were used in the data-cleaning phase.

***Analysis of data***

The analysis was conducted in three phases to fulfil the study objectives. At the preliminary stage, a descriptive statistical analysis was performed to estimate the sociodemographic features of each participant group. The prevalence of maltreatment identified in the ICAST tools was estimated by calculating the frequency and percentage of response levels for each category of the different forms of maltreatment. Again, the mean of each maltreatment form was calculated, which was used in the hypothesis measurement (Lakhdir et al., 2021). In order to calculate the mean score of each maltreatment form, the responses of the items within each maltreatment domain were added together and divided by the total number of items. To measure psychological impairment among victimised child labourers, the study estimated an overall PSC score by adding the scores of all 35 item (Simonian & Tarnowski, 2001). The study also estimated the mean score of 35 items for each participant in order to examine the

[ii] A situation in which the predictor variables are highly correlated.
[iii] Particular observations are much smaller or larger than the vast majority of the observations. Dasu, T., & Johnson, T. (2003). *Exploratory data mining and data cleaning*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. . https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/0471448354

relationship between different forms of maltreatment and psychosocial impairments. In the second phase, the construed hypothesises were taken into consideration in order to measure the risk factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers. The study designed linear regression models to test the following hypotheses:

1. Socioeconomic and health adversities of participants increase the chances of PM of child labourers.
2. Socioeconomic and health characteristics of participants influence the risk of EM of child labourers.
3. Socioeconomic and health characteristics of participants increase the risk of neglect of child labourers.
4. Financial exploitation of child labourers increases due to adverse socioeconomic and health characteristics of participants.

To analyse the risk factors, the study first conducted a simple linear regression analysis. The changes due to predictor variables were expressed as unstandardised beta coefficients. The explanatory variables with a P value of less than 0.2 in the simple linear regression analysis were considered candidates for the multivariate analysis. It was assumed that insignificant variables, if theoretically important, would have substantive importance and could be probed as significant in an extended analytical approach (i.e., multivariable analysis) (Lo et al., 1995). This procedure was followed to identify potential risk factors from all three versions of the questionnaires (child labourer, parent and employer versions). The study utilised multiple linear regression analysis as an extended form of the simple linear regression model (Tian et al., 2018), which helps to generalise the findings of the simple linear regression models (Hu et al., 2019). Before conducting multiple linear regression, the assumptions included in linear regression such as linearity between independent and dependent variables, normality of response variable, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity were examined and met. For the

multivariate analysis, the confidence level was set at 95% and a P value of less than 0.05 was considered ideal for statistical significance. The overall findings of the simple and multiple linear regression were presented in the form of tables and forest plots.

Moreover, the study further investigated the impact of maltreatment on psychosocial impairment among child labourers using multivariable regression analysis. Prior to the multivariate analysis, the study adopted factor analysis in order to compress the eligible items of the PSC into a small number of components (Pallant, 2020). Before determining the factor structure the study ensured that the data met all the assumptions necessary for establishing a model. Based on a spot check of some linear correlations among the PSC items, it was determined that the study met the linearity assumptions (Pallant, 2020). We ensured that the scale items did not contain outliers during the initial screening phase.

In exploratory factor analysis (EFA), this study followed two primary criteria. At first, it measured the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test to check the sampling adequacy and also analysed Bartlett's test of sphericity to consider whether the principal component analysis was appropriate in this EFA. Second, a fixed number of factors were taken into account regardless of the subtle measurement of the number of reliable constructs based on the eigenvalues (Field, 2017; Pallant, 2020). Using measures and structures used in prior studies analysing factor structures for Y-PSC, a 35-item scale for children, this study conducted an EFA considering three factors (Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Reijneveld et al., 2006). Similarly, the EFA for the PSC (parents' version) also considered a 3-factor structure (Bala et al., 2012; DiStefano et al., 2017; Reed-Knight et al., 2011). The systematic dimension reduction process of these studies generated three constructs; internalising, externalising and attention factors. In EFA, a varimax rotation approach was applied to these three factors. The varimax method is mostly used in the orthogonal approach which pulls in the highest factor loading values, extracting the variables with lower values (Pallant, 2020). It helps to reduce the less significant items and retain items

with strong loading values. Factor loadings greater than 0.3 are considered significant in determining whether items fit with each other within a component or factor. This factor loading parameter has been adopted by a number of preceding studies and empirical guidelines to retain items with strong factor loadings (Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Stoppelbein et al., 2005). The study further checked the level of consistency of the retained items of the three components by estimating Cronbach's alpha. After developing the 3-factor structure, the study calculated the mean value of each factor/component.

In order to assess the construct validity of the emerged 3-factor structure from the EFA, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Prior to the commencement of CFA, the study ensured that factors or constructs identified by EFA presented adequate factor loadings and acceptable Cronbach's alphas. The CFA was conducted to evaluate the model fit using maximum likelihood estimation (Weston & Gore, 2006). Model fit was estimated for four fit indices including $\chi 2/df$ (CMIN/DF), comparative fit index (CFI), the root means square error of approximation (RMSEA), and parsimony comparative fit index (PCFI). In CFA, the study also explores the relationship between factors/latent constructs and observed variables, where the level of loadings illustrates how well the observed variables explain latent properties (Weston & Gore, 2006). These were demonstrated in the measurement model diagram (structural path). The structural diagram also illustrated the correlations among the latent constructs. Because of the existence of missing values in the datasets, modification of items/observed variables was not possible following indices. The CFA was performed using SPSS AMOS 25.

Specifically, to analyse whether the different forms of maltreatment were significantly associated with psychosocial impairment among child labourers, multivariable linear regression analysis was conducted. The study designed three models to examine the relationship between the mean of three latent constructs (derived from factor analysis) and the

estimated mean of four forms of maltreatment of child labourers. In the linear regression analysis, a 95% confidence level and P value of less than 0.05 were set as criteria for determining a significant relationship. The overall analysis was performed using IBM SPSS software version 26, Stata software version 16.1.0 and R console.

## 4.4 Point of Integration

The point of integration allowed the provision of theoretical statements, a narration of results from both the qualitative and quantitative data and more comprehensive meaning through inferences (Venkatesh et al., 2013), which enhanced the value of a mixed-method study (Creswell, 2011). Generally, in this design, both types of data are usually collected simultaneously by the researcher, and the methods are prioritised equally. Data analysis is conducted independently, and the results are merged during interpretation. Researchers attempt to find convergence, divergence, contradictions or relationships between two data sources.

In order to generate a clear picture and to ensure credibility, both qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated through a joint display approach, where a side-by-side comparison of quantitative and qualitative findings was adopted (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McCrudden et al., 2021). This joint display approach provides a visual means of combining findings and helps in generating new inferences on the maltreatment of child labourers. This inductive procedure or triangulation technique is presented in tabular form (Guetterman et al., 2015). In side by side comparison, the qualitative findings of how the expert participants shared their views on the maltreatment of child labourers were displayed first followed by the quantitative results. This integration phase emphasised the confirmation or disconfirmation of one set of findings by other findings. The tabulated data was then presented in a narrative form to indicate congruence and discrepancies between quantitative and qualitative findings. This integration process supported the generation of potentially rich and robust findings and a substantive theory concerning the maltreatment of child labourers.

## 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed how the study utilised a convergent mixed-method design using a joint display approach to integrate the results. It is assumed that the integration of both strands using the mixed-method approach provides a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the maltreatment of child labourers. Further, this chapter discussed a variety of data-gathering and analytical tools and techniques employed during the data collection and analysis phase. Using these multiple methodological strands in this pragmatic design led to the collection of more insightful results. The next chapter provides the qualitative results from the key informants.

# CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

## 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter reports on the views of the 17 expert participants using the interview schedule as the framework for reporting the results. First, the views of key informants regarding the nature and prevalence of child labour maltreatment are presented. A discussion of who the perpetrators are, the determinants and the impact of child labour maltreatment follow. The final section of this chapter discusses the limitations and presents some concluding remarks.

## 5.2 Nature and Prevalence of Maltreatment of Child Labourers

### *5.2.1 The nature of maltreatment of child labourers*

The experts interviewed discussed the concept of maltreatment of child labourers as narrowly defined. Most of the experts obtained their knowledge from the media or NGO reports. They viewed the major forms of maltreatment as being physical, psychological, neglect and financial exploitation. They identified themes and subthemes on the nature and prevalence of maltreatment in the workplace as presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Connection between the research concern, themes and subthemes

| Research concern | Theme | Subtheme |
|---|---|---|
| Nature and extent of the maltreatment of child labourers | Opinion-based prevalence rather than evidence-based | Physical maltreatment |
| | | Psychological (emotional) maltreatment |
| | | Neglect |
| | | Financial exploitation |
| | Home vs workplace perspective | |
| | Rural vs urban layout | |
| | Disparities in formal and informal sectors | |
| | Prevalence is silenced | Complexity in conceptual understanding |
| | | Lack of standard measurement tool |
| | | Sample size 'Not to Be Trusted' |

The participants stated that the children in workplaces highly experience PM. The paediatrician mentioned the importance of defining the types of maltreatment. Along with an academic, he highlighted the 17 operational items of PM, developed by ISPCAN, as the starting point for defining the categories of CPM. He stated:

> Surely, children in the workplaces will face physical maltreatment more than others and this is not a hypothesis—they are used to being victimise by biting, burning, stabbing, pushing—kicking. I think the nature of sexual abuse also harms them physically, so that could fall under that as well. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

Another participant referred to abduction as a form of PM. She stated that its physical effects were more serious than other types of maltreatment.

Most of the participants agreed that working children are more susceptible to EM than PM in any settings, in particular, verbal abuse. One respondent noted:

> Actually, psychological maltreatment happens more often. They are rebuked more often. As rebuking and scolding leaves no proof, perpetrators can easily hide it. (Premier University)

One expert journalist observed that children in workplaces were frequently threatened and humiliated in public, and there was a relationship between EM and neglect. He said:

> Then the emotional [abuse] is more for the child workers. Their emotional abuse is not limited to bullying but may also be due to lack of opportunities. Maybe a child is getting sick while working, even if he is told not to work, it is uncomfortable for him. He may need a little sport or relaxation at that time. But all the children who work may not get this opportunity. These often act as emotional stressors. (*Kaler Kantho*)

In addition to the above, the majority of experts maintained that when children were forced into labour this in itself was a form of EM.

Neglect was the third form of maltreatment identified by the experts. Neglect is characterised by depriving the child of opportunities and arises from the family's lack of understanding of legal issues concerning child rights violations. The experts also indicated that child labourers were deprived of food, education and primary healthcare, thus constituting neglect. Because child labour occurred most often in the informal sector, children were often not given any induction or training or paid leave. A participant noted:

> If you talk about neglect, you do not need methodical research for this. Childhood is not the age of work, it's a time to learn from the environment. When they are involved in labour, they all, I would say, are neglected from basic opportunities, which they need for their development and growth. In the workplace, they are highly deprived of education, nutritious food, health advantages, and recreation. So, I would say all child workers are neglected. (International Labour Organisation)

Financial exploitation of child labourers in the workplace was identified by all the experts. They saw the recruitment of young children into the workplace as a way for employers to increase profits by paying lower wages. A participant noted in detail:

> Children are being deprived of their economic rights. Sometimes they're recruited by local brokers who take an amount of money from them. They are forced to work beyond their limit. If any child wants to quit work, the owner may not pay their full

> salary. They don't get holiday pay—where they're supposed to get 10,000 Taka for a bonus, they get like 100 or 500 Taka. So, they're being deprived of a huge amount of money. (Premier University)

Participants noted that in some workplaces, children were provided with food or accommodation instead of wages. They agreed that this was the case for domestic workers, which made the children highly vulnerable. One journalist explained:

> They never receive an actual or fixed wage that they should get. I have seen in several workplaces, where there is no wage—at all, the employer serves them two square meals, one breakfast, one lunch and a dinner only. These meals or foods are his/her wage. (*Daily Star*)

The quotes above outline the knowledge and insights provided by participants on their understanding of child maltreatment while in the labour force. These experts had limited evidence on the prevalence of maltreatment, as outlined below.

### *5.2.2 Prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers*

The expert respondents did not have a clear idea of the prevalence of child labour; however, they did offer some points of discussion from their knowledge of empirical studies on child maltreatment conducted in Bangladesh. In presenting their responses, the physical, emotional, neglect and financial forms of maltreatment are discussed separately.

#### 5.2.2.1 Physical maltreatment

The expert participants assumed that around 70–100% of child labourers are physically maltreated. This is higher than the rate of maltreatment against children who do not engage in paid work. One participant with a strong research track record in child protection stated:

> It will be visible from outside and he will feel pain, which is physical maltreatment. I assume—it is 80% and not only among working-class children, in our study, but we have also found 90 to 100% in the domestic household as well. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

Considering CPM is the most dominant form, three experts observed that the rate of PM of child labourers was as high as 70–80%, although they did not have direct research evidence. Following a visit to a crisis centre, the participant from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs noted:

> In these centres, we have found, for instance, that more than half of the children have been physically maltreated. (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs)

However, one of the academics interviewed did not agree that CPM was on the increase. He reported that PM of child labourers had reduced given the increase in social awareness boosted by NGOs and media reports, stating:

> Actually, the rate of physical maltreatment is lower than it was before when I was writing an article about child labour. Because the people and the parents are now more conscious of it. So, the rate of physical torture has decreased. Now it may be like 20–30%. (Premier University)

#### 5.2.2.2 Emotional maltreatment of child labourers

Most participants perceived that the EM of child labourers was higher than other forms of maltreatment. All the experts identified child labour itself as a form of maltreatment. They surmised that the degree of CPM increased with the level of mistakes the child made, and a comment was made that, while CPM may have decreased, CEM was on the increase. For example, one expert proposed that all child labourers were victims of EM in different ways at workplaces:

> When a child is forced to work, there is a kind of initial emotional trauma for them. After that, when they come to work, they are constantly subjected to various kinds of abuse, threats, violence, and humiliation in various adverse situations. So, I think the rate of 90 to 100% is plausible. This mental torture is related to the rest of the type of children maltreatment, I think. So, it could be 100%. (*Daily Star*)

An academic reported that child labourers have a higher chance of being rebuked irrespective of their age or gender, in line with the level of their mistakes or failures. He assumed that this rate would be half of the overall child labour population. His view was that:

> If they make a mistake, they are rebuked and it's easy for the owners to avoid the accusation of maltreatment. They make various excuses when any accusation of psychological abuse comes up. As rebuking and scolding leaves no proof, they can easily hide it. So, its rate is a little high, maybe 60%. (Premier University)

#### 5.2.2.3 Neglect of child labourers

All of the participants contended that child labour was a form of CN. Several participants were of the view that the rate of neglect was similar to EM of child labourers at around 90–100%. As the expert from Ain O Salish Kendra (an NGO; law and arbitration centre) noted, all child labourers are deprived of basic and work-related rights:

> They are not getting opportunities like other children. Hence, it is complete neglect. Besides, they are deprived of various facilities or rights required as workers at the workplaces—you know, leave facilities, being overworked, not getting a chance to attend school. This is absolutely neglected, and I would predict that the rate would be even 100%. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

However, one of the academics had an opposing view, as he had observed different findings from a number of empirical studies. In his view, it was not logical that all child labourers were maltreated, but rather there were differences depending on the field of work, the child's age, family status and so on. He noted:

> You cannot say 100%—because there are still one or two employers who are good. In that case more than 90% workers are abused. (Shahjalal University of Science and Technology)

Similarly, the expert from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs drew on estimates published by the BBS, which showed that the rates of neglect were about half that of EM of child labourers. He asserted:

> I read out a recent report, where I have wondered that the ratio of neglect is near half of the EM. So, if you talk about neglect—it would be—around 40 to 50%. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs)

In summary, the expert participants noted that neglect was also a highly prevalent type of maltreatment; however, their views were not always based on solid evidence. Given the dearth of research in this area, this is not surprising.

#### 5.2.2.4 Financial exploitation

Most participants believed that child labourers were financially exploited by their employers. However, they were of the view that the prevalence of this type of maltreatment was not known. They drew on media sources or grey literature in sharing their assumptions about the extent of financial exploitation of child labourers at workplaces. For example, two participants assumed the figures were about half, that children were not paid for overtime, and that wages negotiated were not paid in full, particularly where there were brokers or middlemen. An academic reported that:

> It is obvious that our country has no fixed minimum wage for labourers. That's how they get a low wage and are financially exploited. So, I think the rate of financial exploitation is 50%. (Premier University)

For these reasons, many child labourers want to leave their employment, particularly domestic workers, but are unable to access their wages. A journalist claimed that child labourers often did not receive their actual wages. He added that:

> Since there is no structural arrangement in the workplace, many are simply provided with temporary accommodation and meals instead of pay. In that way, about one-third are exploited. (*Daily Star*)

Discussion on the prevalence of child labourer maltreatment produced a number of subthemes. These subthemes suggest that prevalence is impacted by area, type of work, geographic position and the lack of adequate research.

#### 5.2.2.5 Home versus workplace perspective

Participants indicated that PM and EM were more prevalent in the workplace than in the home. However, the expert from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs had a different opinion. She stated that children are always at risk of maltreatment in all settings in Bangladesh. She highlighted the fragile socioeconomic status of child labourers and described them as insecure even with their parents:

> It does not matter whether they are inside the home or studying at schools or even though they are working in a small industry or workplace, where they may even spend the night. I assume—they would be exploited in both areas equally. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs)

#### 5.2.2.6 Prevalence in the rural and urban layout

A significant proportion of participants were of the view that child labourers in urban areas are much more vulnerable to maltreatment than in rural areas, although rural maltreatment issues often remain underreported. As a participant from a reputed NGO stated:

> We often miss this scenario of capitalist exploitation in rural area. That is why violence rates in workplaces in rural areas are lower than in urban settings. (World Vision)

Contrary to this view, a number of experts argued that wherever child labourers are, they can be exploited. There are no specific differences between the violence in a village or the city as noted by the paediatrician:

> With my findings, I can raise the hypothesis that the rate of abuse in the urban and rural areas are the same. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

#### 5.2.2.7 Disparities in extent between the formal and informal sectors

All the participants suggested that maltreatment of child labourers was more prevalent in the informal economy. Some believed that children working within the formal economy had access to organised legal working arrangements that governed hours and wages. Most were of the

view that the chance of maltreatment was reduced in regulated industries. In contrast, some experts were of the opinion that maltreatment in the informal sector was primarily financial and more likely to occur in small-scale enterprises. These experts believed the rate of financial exploration was high. An academic explained:

> The people who run informal restaurants, stalls, or businesses, usually they don't have savings or investments or reserves. Their risk management capacity is low—in these types of enterprises, young children are highly exploited—and it can be even two-third of total child employees. (Khulna University)

#### 5.2.2.8 Prevalence is not known

Despite the statistics reported above, generally, the experts had no idea of the true estimation of prevalence. Their knowledge of it mostly came from reading accounts reported in the media. They argued that the concept of maltreatment of child labourers had not attracted much attention in child protection research, although they considered it a sensitive and significant issue. One participant from the Ministry of Labour and Employment noted that most of the information came from the media:

> Since there is less research, we get these issues through paper magazines or on TV at different times. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Other experts were of the view that there was no systematic and methodical way of determining the number of child labourers who were maltreated, and hence no estimation of prevalence. In reflecting on this, they were sensitive to the danger of being misinterpreted. As one NGO participant noted:

> As I do not have any valid data, I cannot share any estimated prevalence of abuses. As you noted before, I agree with your ratio—it is possible to get a high proportion of child workers victimised by physical assault, however, I am not sure—but as vulnerable workers they may suffer to some extent. (Manusher Jonno Foundation)

#### 5.2.2.9 Complexity in conceptual aspects and measurements

Many of the expert participants believed that they did not have comprehensive knowledge of child maltreatment. This is because the concept has not yet been explored in the research literature, nor is it seen as contrary to healthy child development. They suggested that some families think that maltreatment is helpful for the development of children. They believe that many caregivers do not know what approaches are not acceptable. For example, parents often intentionally avoid taking care of children, they are not aware of the nature of child development, the importance of rights, or the subjective cost of children's injury. Participants argued that institutional bodies in Bangladesh overlooked the necessity of upholding laws minimising children's participation in the workplace by ignoring knowledge of child development. To exemplify this, a participant from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs commented:

> The poor families actually cannot differentiate which one is psychological abuse or which one is neglect. It is quite hard to define properly—if a mother forces a child to cram a poem, it is not seen as psychological abuse. In developed countries, the categorisation is possible, but in the case of Bangladesh—it is relatively hard. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs)

In the above quote, the expert acknowledged that the levels of treatment and support for children are lacking in Bangladesh and noted the acceptability of maltreatment. Participants were not only limited to stating the gaps in defined concepts but also were concerned about its impact on research and the level of data precision regarding child maltreatment. An expert academic added:

> Besides, the classification and determinants of these abuses are somewhat problematic. The estimated data is not precise and does not reflect the actual situation. This is also a big issue—shortcoming, I think—in child labour and abuse-related research. (Shahjalal University of Science and Technology)

In particular, one participant raised questions about the validity and reliability of existing measurement tools, which they found inadequate to deal with analysing the maltreatment of child labourers:

> When we found 5 questions on negligence from ICAST 16 questions dealt with physical maltreatment and five were about negligence which is very insufficient for our culture. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

Other researchers raised the problem of differences in measuring tools used across a range of studies, arguing that they differed and that in many instances the sample sizes were not standardised and representative, or were limited to specific sites so that the data could not be generalised, for example, a paediatrician explained:

> A multi-star cast assembling should be done in Bangladesh with a population-based large sample collection that covers every district, every ward. Our studies are done in small and limited areas—your study is also within a limited area—With these limited and scattered studies, we cannot measure negligence. My suggestion would be to conduct a large-scale study. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

Likewise, the expert participant from the ILO also thought that the existing cross-sectional surveys on child maltreatment have very small sample sizes, which she assumed were not representative of the prevalence data of child maltreatment and should not be published.

Identifying perpetrators and their characteristics was essential since these factors are typically viewed as potential risk factors for the maltreatment of children. However, this study focused specifically on the perpetrators of child labour maltreatment in addition to an analysis of its general risk factors.

## 5.3 Who are the Perpetrators?

The experts were asked to identify what groups were most likely to be perpetrators of child labour maltreatment. They identified two categories: immediate families, relatives and neighbours; and intermediaries, employers and workplace staff.

### *5.3.1 The immediate family, relatives and neighbours*

The most significant group who maltreat child labourers are members of the child's immediate family. Drawing on their knowledge of the grey literature, the majority of key informants suggested that perpetrators are everywhere, but unfortunately, children are more likely to be maltreated by those closest to them. 'Immediate family members' were identified as caregivers; either parents or other elder family members, foster parents, stepbrothers or uncles. Drawing on knowledge acquired from newspapers and reports, participants suggested these individuals are the primary perpetrators, noting that a significant proportion of family violence cases go undetected or undisclosed. For example, a participant from an NGO stated that:

> We have seen a lot of fathers abusing their daughters in their own homes. The mother is probably at work, then Dad exploits her—even though everyone knows of about the exploitation, they ignore it and try to keep the issue secret. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

There were some differences on whether fathers, mothers or older family members were more likely to maltreat children who work. Some argued that mothers were more likely to maltreat their children. Another participant thought there was a relationship between being abused at home and being maltreated by outsiders, suggesting that these children were invariably first maltreated within their home environment by their primary caregivers. Correspondingly, one academic participant argued that child labourers are primarily maltreated by older family members of households alongside parents:

> They may also be rebuked and maltreated by elder brothers, sisters, uncles and other older persons of households, with whom they live. (North South University)

As demonstrated, maltreatment of child labourers is often perpetrated by multiple persons within the family unit. They can be a close relative or a neighbour. This occurs as poor families often send their children to work with relatives or neighbours. The story below illustrates this point:

> I know of a housemaid who worked for her aunt doing housework—the mental pressure was that she had to get up, but wanted to sleep first, after all—naturally a child wants to eat, sleep, play as she pleases, but when she has to work, she has to take care of all the people in the house when they are eating, and after eating, she arranges for them to go to sleep. She gets up first thing in the morning again. I could see that she was working with the aunt—I was talking about, but she might have called her in the morning, but she is sleeping. After a while the child was seen sitting and reclining somewhere—because she was exhausted and had not slept properly. She isn't even allowed to go to bed, she must work. It's a mental pressure to her. She is related to this family. (North South University)

Individuals identified as perpetrators of maltreatment towards child labourers are illustrated in the project map in Figure 5.1.

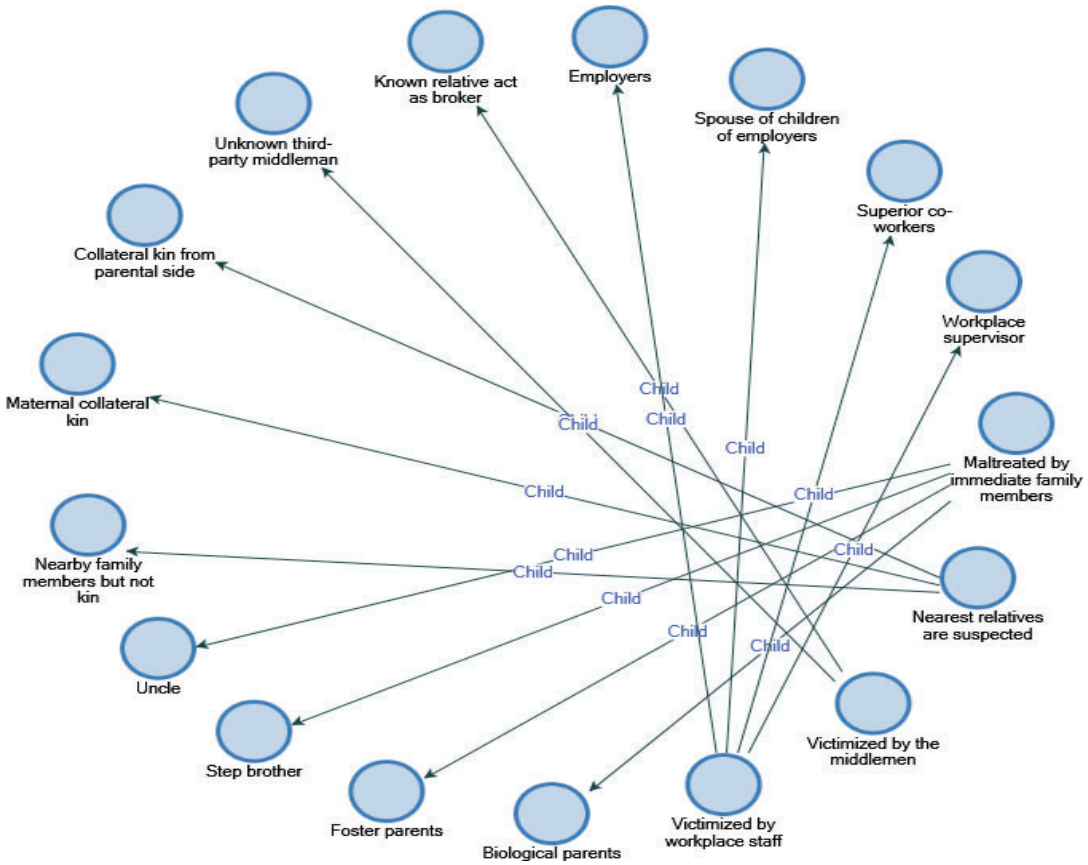


Figure 5.1: Project map showing identified perpetrators who maltreat child labourers

### *5.3.2 Intermediaries and workplace staff*

A number of expert participants thought that third-party intermediaries, employers/recruiters and co-workers were perpetrators of child labour maltreatment. The participants assumed that children who are involved in labour through middlemen are only one step ahead of the risk of experiencing violence as well as enduring workplace hardship. Given that parents are not around, this is a factor that puts the child at risk. Participants argued that the chances of being physically victimised increased with the risk of abduction and trafficking of these young workers. The most insightful quote identified:

> As is the case with domestic workers—an intermediary group, locally known as agents, brings them from the village to do domestic labour. They are trafficking and abducting them at a global level—yes, of course—in the meantime these children go through intense mental and physical torture. (Dhaka University)

A number of participants placed the motive of financial gain by middlemen as a risk for these children. The participant from the Ministry of Labour and Employment added:

> Middlemen who work recruiting child labourers—usually have a hidden contract with the actual employers, whereby they receive partial benefit from the employer, and in many cases, they further demand a financial payment from the child labourer —as they helped them to get the job. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

The employers in the workplace are not the only people who victimise children; also supervisors, co-workers, and spouses or children of employers are involved. Children employed in the informal sectors in rural domestic and agricultural domains, where there is little oversight, are more likely to be victimised. In particular, participants noted that senior co-workers and female staff in workplace settings are perpetrators. An academic from Premier University was of the opinion that:

> In this matter, obviously the child workers, because they are unskilled, are frequently maltreated by the employer—but I assume—co-workers and those who are in superior position at workplaces also maltreat the child. They are maltreated by senior workers, which often remains unnoticed—and which is often settled through compromise. The seniors make them work more, rebukes them, sometimes even beats them. (Premier University)

While discussing the interpersonal characteristics of perpetrators, participants primarily addressed female perpetrators, with the majority identified as CDLs. As an academic from the University of Northern Iowa claimed:

> If I am talking about the domestic child labour sector, obviously the women employers are the major perpetrators—working under female employers shows that they are usually picky and meticulous about the job—and if child labourers don't work properly, they swear at the child, raising their hands to hit them. (University of Northern Iowa)

It would appear that children who are deployed in labour are at risk of exposure to victimisation by multiple workplace individuals, partly from other members of their own household, followed by intermediaries, and other workplace employees.

### 5.3.3 Adverse characteristics of perpetrators

Retrospective studies indicate that perpetrators of child maltreatment have a number of adverse traits that trigger them to engage in offensive acts (May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991), but what is not clear is whether this is similar for those who maltreat child labourers. This study identified six themes related to the risk factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers both in the household and workplace settings. Table 5.2 presents the themes and subthemes related to the characteristics of child maltreatment perpetrators.

Table 5.2: Identified potential risk factors of perpetrators

| Theme | Subtheme | Codes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Adverse childhood experiences | History of childhood maltreatment themselves | 4 |
| | Complex childhood psychosocial development | 5 |
| 2. Illiteracy and perpetrators' attitude | Education matters | 10 |
| 3. Limited knowledge and awareness | Lack of familial and social awareness | 16 |
| | Employers' level of social awareness | 3 |
| | No knowledge of child health and development | 2 |
| | No formal parenting skill | 4 |
| | Not aware of laws | 4 |
| 4. Emotional functioning and coping mechanism | Psychotraumatic history | 3 |
| | Low stress coping capacity | 2 |
| | Parental mental stress | 3 |
| 5. Regard child labourers as 'moral dirt' | Weak moral guiding code | 2 |
| | Lack of empathy and narcissism | 2 |
| | Possessive supervision style | 3 |
| 6. Economic instability | Unemployed parents | 11 |
| | Low profit margin | 5 |

#### 5.3.3.1 Theme-1: Adverse childhood experiences

The expert professionals were of the view that the perpetrators had themselves experienced maltreatment during their childhood. This pattern of childhood adversity is a cyclic process, resulting in the intergenerational transmission of child maltreatment. Participants outlined two kinds of adverse experiences prevailing among perpetrators: direct maltreatment experienced and the negative impact on their psychosocial growth during childhood.

Participants were of the view that perpetrators, whether caregivers or employers, had often grown up in environments where they were insecure and routinely beaten themselves. These experts noted that in later life, perpetrators may be aroused by their own past violent exposure. Some participants saw this as a form of revenge, while others believed the perpetrator was ignorant of appropriate behaviour. The first point is reflected by an academic, who stated:

> Firstly, their employers have grown up since childhood in such environment that their learning was like that, they grew up being often beaten. (Shahjalal University of Science and Technology)

Perpetrators' own abusive experiences presumably would have left them with some psychosomatic difficulties, traumatic stress, dysfunction and possible juvenile delinquency during their own childhood. These experiences may impact on them as adults. The paediatrician reported that:

> Children, who act as prospective perpetrators, had some definite psychological disruption issues during childhood. If you read the research on child neurology, you will find how it affect them—it's massive, devastating, it disrupts normal brain function and gradually heightens stress-related levels and cognitive impairment. It becomes a chronic issue sometimes. What I would like to say—yes—they actually nurture psychological dysfunction which influences them to be a prospective perpetrator. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

In summary, adults with childhood abusive experiences may exhibit high rates of psychosomatic difficulties, poor self-esteem and low self-control, which may lead them to maltreat others, especially young children.

#### 5.3.3.2 Theme-2: Illiteracy and perpetrators' attitude

This theme identified that formal education is indispensable in shaping a person's psychological development, which then impacts on the prevention of children's engagement in labour and childhood victimisation. Participants highlighted the influence of illiteracy on child maltreatment rates in rural areas. They argued that literacy contributed to people's positive attitudes and strengthened moral development, which in turn protected children and their rights. One expert professional explained:

> In the case of parents, employers or even his co-workers with whom he works, their educational level or status is important for others as well, since they are not educated to a satisfactory level, their development and understanding are at a lower level in this way—their understanding is substandard. This further leads them to be violent towards others—particularly young children who are more vulnerable. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

In a similar fashion, participants argued that many impoverished parents had to drop out of school at an early age to work. An administrator assumed that the conflict and maltreatment rates would be higher in these families. He noted:

> Not only poverty-afflicted families experience the burden of child labour, but where parents have dropped out of school in their early school life, and family members are not educated—I am talking about formal learning; children of these families are prone to maltreatment by these adults. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs)

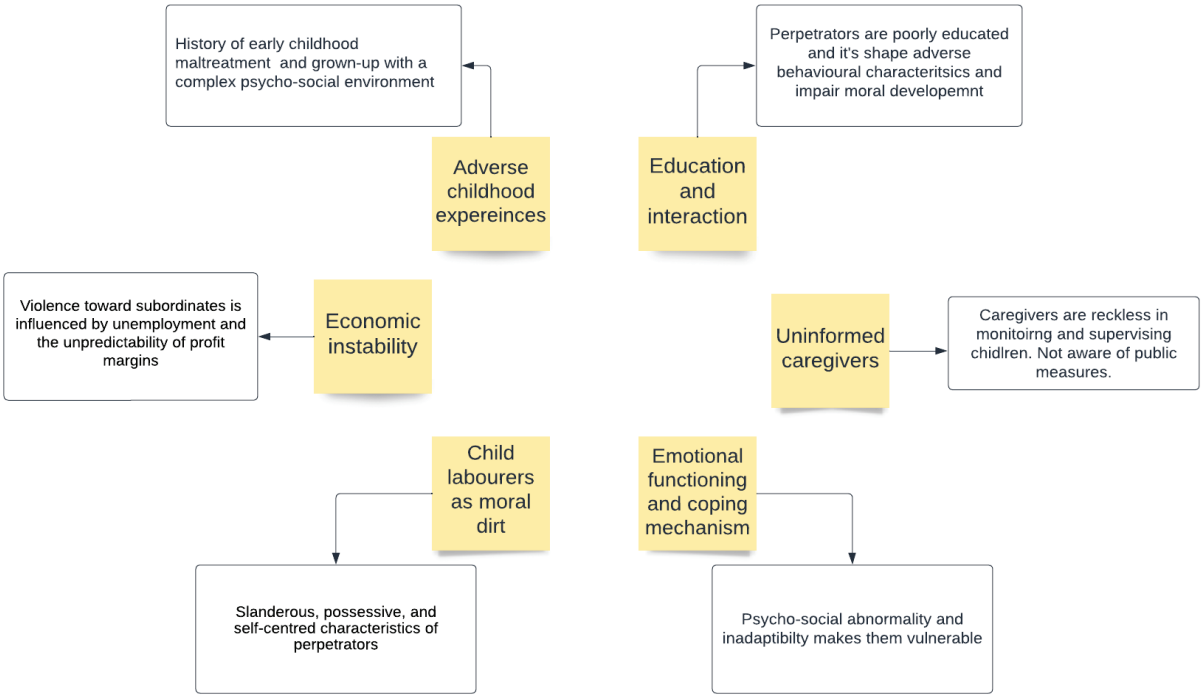


Figure 5.2: Adverse characteristics of perpetrators

#### 5.3.3.3 Theme-3: Limited knowledge and awareness

The experts were of the view that the perpetrators had inadequate knowledge and social awareness. Participants said that caregivers were reckless in monitoring and supervising children and did not see any problem in their children engaging in work or being maltreated by employers. The experts observed from their own fieldwork that many caregivers and employers did not see any problem with abusive behaviour against children. As a consequence, they felt that children are deprived of a number of socialisation processes during childhood. This complication is highlighted in the following statement:

> Familial movement will come first before community initiatives here. If you look at the family factors, you will see that many parents in our society do not know that when children are beaten, this is detrimental to them. Actually, they are not even cognisant of their children's development. I assume that parents or caregivers of these children, who are recognised as perpetrators may not have had a sound upbringing themselves—I am referring to the informal education that we receive from our family—these will be, I think—you know, many people do not know what type of behaviour with children is ethically right and what is wrong. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

Participants contended that the absence of awareness is interwoven with different socioeconomic vulnerabilities. They observed that perpetrators consider 'delay discounting' (increased concern about short-term financial gain) which they think is an outcome of the lack of social and familial awareness. Irrespective of their ignorance, parents were supportive of their children's engagement in labour for the short-term monetary benefits. An academic argued:

> Parents primarily focus on the short-term benefits, not the long-term outcomes of the child's education. If they could think of the long-term impact, the child would be sent to school and be educated. The child would then occupy a superior position and could contribute more to the society. (Premier University)

Furthermore, this theme indicates societies' shared insight towards women and children. Because of the patriarchal views in society, there is discrimination and irresponsible behaviour towards family functioning. The participant from the Manusher Jonno Foundation stated:

> If we look at the philosophy of society towards women and children, we can understand what our attitude is. Next to us we see some fathers leaving their sons and daughters behind. There is no responsibility. They live a life like a vagabond. When boys and girls become parentless, they suffer. (Manusher Jonno Foundation)

The issue of parenting styles was raised when participants discussed caregivers' knowledge of rearing children. They were of the view that parents have little knowledge regarding child development. One academic explained:

> As they have no knowledge about child education, child psychology, child development, they have learnt from their life experience—and they think that this is the right way to treat children. I assume that—no—I actually found this in a report as an explicit reason for the maltreatment of child labourers. (Shahjalal University of Science and Technology)

A quarter of all participants were of the view that despite legislation, many parents are not aware of the law protecting children. Employers are not aware of the rules and regulations

governing work, in particular, actual working hours and wages for workers, or safety measures in workplaces. A participant shared a view that parents and employers are:

> Ignorant of labour rules or regulations; it is a big issue here, I think—that motivates employers to take the opportunity to financially exploit child workers. (Manusher Jonno Foundation)

#### 5.3.3.4 Theme-4: Emotional functioning and coping mechanisms

Of note, five experts claimed an association between the emotional states of perpetrators and their behaviour. Specifically, participants assumed that perpetrators of child maltreatment had experienced psychotraumatic events themselves. They suggested that these traumatic experiences of individuals predisposed them to violence towards the children. As one respondent stated:

> The people who have a particular psychological disorder, for instance—in the case of the perpetrators of sexual cases, I mean who are paedophiles, are the perpetrators of child maltreatment. This trait of psychological abnormality makes them more violent towards children. In such ways—I say, they have a particular disorder, yet I am assuming they are not diagnosed. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

This subtheme of 'psychotraumatic disturbance is largely linked to 'parental mental state'. Key informants indicated that even though children told their parents about the maltreatment they experienced, the parents often ignored them, as they themselves were overwhelmed with stress and were probably maltreated themselves as children so regard it as normal. One participant stated:

> Even if children are maltreated in some way and if they share this with family members, they are often not believed—or sometimes the parents overlook the issue as they themselves are psychologically distressed given their poor socioeconomic status—they try to avoid these allegations of child labourers maltreatment; family members are often reluctant to take action. (International Labour Organisation)

The expert participants believed that the perpetrators also have high levels of socioeconomic stress in their own lives. They presumed that the effects of these stressors are exhibited in their

attitude towards children. In workplace settings, employers punish young workers when they make mistake, out of anger or anxiety about their own financial state. One participant indicated:

> In their occupation life, they may be unhappy with their wages. They are not getting a wage as expected or they are facing adverse behaviour from their supervisor and afterwards, they focus their aggression on other members of the family. They cannot control their anger and anxiety—and therefore they become violent towards younger children of the family—they could be generous with their children, and they often fail to be patient. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

#### 5.3.3.5 Theme-5: Child labour maltreatment is the result of moral failure

This theme had three components: first, illustrating the employers' moral failure and desire to profit through exploiting child workers; second, the lack of empathy; third, the child's biological parents' motivation for sending their children to work, which includes a possessive supervision style. The child may thus be mistreated by their family members given their identities as low status or 'moral dirt'.

This theme suggests that the perpetrators appear to have forgone any moral and ethical values when dealing with working children. Participants observed that they do not see the maltreatment of child labourers as an ethical issue. The participant from the ILO termed this concept a "loss of integrity and responsibility and a form of moral failure" by the perpetrators. She suggested that this degradation led them to treat child labourers as ethically compromised as they themselves are. She noted:

> When someone has no ethics or integrity at workplace, he thinks that other people are like him—I mean, people often cannot admit it. They are not capable of being loyal to individuals, or to having a social conscience. Losing their ethics, they become grossly self-centred, slanderous and violent in nature—and so on. As you are dealing with employers and parents as perpetrators, I assume that they could be more responsible towards children under them, but they regard the child workers as immoral as they are and treat the children accordingly. (International Labour Organisation)

Moreover, participants noted the lack of kindness towards child workers in many informal sectors as a crucial point. They suggested that the usual sensitivities of kindness and care were not accorded to child labourers. A participant from the Ministry of Labour and Employment stated in this regard that:

> Forgiveness is a common human trait in any setting. Particularly, when you talk about children's issues, you must be gentle and kind to them, as they are very young. But it is a matter of regret even—I would say it's terrible that child labourers are usually treated like common older workers. There is little sympathy, especially in the informal sectors. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Beyond this moral failure, participants noticed possessive parental styles, where they observed that child workers usually grow up in an authoritarian environment. They are treated as subordinates, to be controlled by rules and regulations. Participants further argued that in this possessive environment, parents see their children as their property, which allows them to be overly authoritarian. The academic participant theorised:

> In our social structure parents are the primary caregivers, while if you look at the western countries—in Australia as well—you will find in early childhood, employed parents have access to childcare centres, but you will not find these in our culture. Here, parents are the only guardians of the child. Our children do not have any other structural and institutional caregiving opportunities. Parents can control their children as they want—which is often oppressive—and exercise power over them. This parenting style is narcissistic, where children have no freedom, no voice—and this forcefully triggers them into labour. I think, child workers are not valued in their household, as they are not contributing economically, possibility they drop out of school. I think in these cases the child is assumed to be inferior. (Shahjalal University of Science and Technology)

#### 5.3.3.6 Theme-6: Economic instability

Two substantial subthemes covered this theme. Most of the participants were of the view that child labourers mostly came from families where parents had lost their jobs or were unemployed. This altered the family's way of living and resulted in instability. Participants

stated that adult unemployment made the child's life precarious. The expert from the Ain O Salish Kendra suggested that:

> A structural chain, I assume, as children are not being victimised in a straight way—rather they engage in labour because of some family problem, mostly parental poverty. I think, their parents are liable here, you know—many of them do not want to continue working or are fired. These effects are direct—they need money, unemployment still exists, children have to stop their education, come out of family attachment and then engage in labour. These types of children further experience violence in their home. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

Participants further attributed the maltreatment of the child labourer in the workplace to employers' failure in business or low profit margins. Here, participants emphasised the unpredictability of profits in small-scale businesses or farms. They stressed that the mental state of employers towards subordinate workers when business fails was a factor. They projected that young workers could be victimised both physically and financially in such cases. A journalist from the *Daily Star* newspaper discussed this point noting the risk to child labourers if the employers' business failed:

> I am a witness of an incident that I heard before, which was about the exploitation of child workers in rural crop production farms. I have seen that young children were being recruited unofficially before harvesting time, as they know that in some rural parts, schools are closed during the crop harvesting season. So, what happened—I asked some farmers about the payment issue of these young workers, and they shared with me later that they recruit them for harvesting rice and some other crops during the harvesting period—yes, if we think production is good enough, then we pay adequately, otherwise, we do not pay them at all. (*Daily Star*)

## 5.4 Determinants of Child Labour Maltreatment

This study explored some potential determinants of the maltreatment of child labourers. The risk factors of child labour maltreatment are illustrated in Figure 5.3. The established themes and subthemes with the number of the extracted codes are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Themes reflecting the risk factors of child labour maltreatment

| Reviewed theme | Subtheme | Code frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Children and international factors | Young age | 6 |
| | Initial themes/subthemes | 7 |
| | Health complications | 4 |
| | Education and training matters | 13 |
| | Dependency and maltreatment exposure | 3 |
| 2. Sociocultural challenges | Cultural dogmatism shifted to discipline | 9 |
| | Class conflicts and maltreatment | 8 |
| | History of political interference | 3 |
| | Family disorganisation | 8 |
| 3. Economic poverty and child maltreatment | Economic uncertainty | 9 |
| | Income-expense disparity | 7 |
| 4. Violence-prone areas and stretched structure | Violence-prone workspace | 11 |
| | Informal economy | 8 |
| | Capitalist market structure | 3 |
| 5. Gaps in public policy planning | Failure in policy formulation and support program | 15 |
| | Absence of legal entities in rural areas | 6 |
| | Gaps in execution of existing legal codes | 9 |

### *5.4.1 Theme-1: Children and interactional factors*

Several factors lead to a child being exposed to victimisation. Of note, the children's ontogenic traits were identified as the second most common theme reported by the key informants. These are discussed below.

#### 5.4.1.1 Subtheme-1: Young age as a determinant

All participants emphasised that the children's young age was a determinant in their victimisation both at home and in workplace settings. They argued that children who are unable to protect themselves and, in some cases, cannot perform tasks required of them because they

are too young are at risk. They are minors and helpless because of their younger age. A quotation indicates this:

> See, they are young in age but have big responsibilities in every setting, here, they may do wrong, may fail to perform a duty, the manager wants to get the job done having them for long hours. Because they are young, they are incapable of doing the task. That is why, I think, the issue of the risk of childhood victimisation has increased. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

#### 5.4.1.2 Subtheme 2: Gender as a determinant

Across all interviews, participants emphasised that in a male-dominated society, the rights of girls are reduced. Girls were excluded from the training that boys received. Participants suggested that this discriminatory behaviour is a factor that contributed to the maltreatment of female child labourers. They pointed out that the victimisation of female workers is different from that of male child labourers. For example, the participant from the Law and Arbitration Centre noted:

> In our patriarchal society, the girl is required to be veiled—she just has to follow the customs, she has to know everything, she has to obey. At the same time a boy has to change his attitude, take responsibility, respect women, no one can be teased, no one can talk dirty, these are the teachings we as parents do not pass on properly to our children. That's why they make mistakes over and over again—yes in any setting, they are victimised. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

Paradoxically, two participants disagreed with these views. They argued that violence against female child labourers was often the subject of media attention, which ignored violence of male child labourers. One journalist stated that:

> Look, various news media and reports predominantly highlight the violent incidences against female child labourers neglecting that against the male child workers. This means there is little empathy for boys. There needs to be an awareness of the situation for male child workers as well. We need to expose the maltreatment experienced by male workers as well. (*Daily Star*)

#### 5.4.1.3 Subtheme 3: Health and disability determinants

Throughout the 17 interviews, expert personnel indicated that child labourers with chronic health conditions or disabilities may be treated differently across all settings. For instance, a participant noted that children with a congenital disability were at high risk of maltreatment. Needless to say, children who are physically incapacitated, may make mistakes or fail to perform tasks adequately, which makes them more vulnerable, particularly in the workplace. Highlighting this, an academic explained that:

> You see, in our society—across the Indian subcontinent, children, in particular, with physical or intellectual disabilities are not normally accepted. Most family members consider them a burden. They are deprived of basic care. You cannot expect them to do what you want—I mean, they may fail to do it. This is intense suffering on the child. (Shahjalal University of Science and Technology)

Likewise, physical impediments, long-term mental illness also increase the risk of child labourers experiencing maltreatment. Participants noted that these children experience difficulties in adapting to the workforce environment. They believed that these children experienced aggressiveness, depression, stress, and anxiety that could expose them to maltreatment. They noted the need to study the child's behaviour in combating child labour maltreatment. One paediatrician shared his opinion:

> [Some] suffer from various forms of mental depression, some suffer from constant anxiety—some are frightened because of being overburdened with work—getting threats etc. Due to the direct effect of these, they are mentally traumatised—in fact, it is a cyclical process, where being maltreated and later suffering from mental problems, again they are being maltreated for not being able to work given their emotional state. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

#### 5.4.1.4 Subtheme 4: Absence of education and training programs

This subtheme was developed based on the two aspects of maltreatment of child labourers; one corresponds to inadequate formal schooling and training opportunities. Participants

emphasised that children who drop out of school are at a higher risk of maltreatment. They extended their impressions to the limits where they supposed that the absence of institutional education is a notable sign of intentional maltreatment experienced by child labourers in any setting. One participant from the Law and Arbitration Centre articulated that:

> Family members continued beating or maltreating for the less dynamic traits of child labour such as their ignorance or dropping out of school, incompetence, misconduct—and so on. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

Regardless of these factors, the majority of experts believed that a significant number of children joined the work force and at the same time experienced maltreatment due to a lack of access to education in rural areas. They think that employers' attitudes towards child labourers depended on whether the child was enrolled in school or not. Children who had not been to school were more likely to be maltreated than those who had. An administrative expert shared that:

> You certainly cannot deny that they have no satisfactory level of education, they do not know how to read and write—they are illiterate. These are not enough to be misused?—Indeed, this is a part of how the work efficiency would be—and when they cannot perform the task, they get maltreated. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Along with the fact that child labourers tended to either drop out of school or not be enrolled, participants were critical of the lack of availability of training, as training affects productivity and performance. Participants suggested there was a need for training as a key to work efficiency and to protecting the child labourers. Where it was not available, children will continue to endure violence because of their mistakes. They were also concerned about the possibility of financial exploitation of child labourers due to them being unskilled workers. Reflecting on the children’s failure in performing work, the participant from the Ministry of Labour and Employment elaborated:

> Whoever you are, your level of performance at the workplace will reflect how efficient you are. Children are recruited as they can be paid a low wage. Generally, employers in the informal sector are reluctant to provide training. Consequently, the children make mistakes and experience abusive behaviour because of being unskilled child labourers. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

#### 5.4.1.5 Subtheme 5: Dependency on the employer for accommodations

This subtheme captured two ideas: children living away from home in accommodation provided by the employer and reliance on the employer. Because the children are dependent on their employers for other aspects of their life such as accommodation and food, they are subordinate members and more exposed to maltreatment. The expert personnel from ILO explained:

> As child labourers are mostly unskilled and do not have previous work experience, they usually rely on the supervision of the senior staff, in particular, you know that—they follow the guidance of employers in the informal labour markets. You may come to know that supervision in most of the informal small-scale business is manipulatively time-oriented, many times these are specified—which put child labourers in the risk of violence. (International Labour Organisation)

Due to the nature of the work, a high proportion of child labourers are forced to live at their employers' houses. Participants view this type of dependency as a factor contributing to child maltreatment. Relating to this risk, an academic stated:

> Where he has completed his work for the day, he may sleep somewhere, he may have to stay somewhere. In that case, maybe he/she is with his employers, where they may not be educated or socially superior—they may also be maltreated at different times. (Dhaka University)

This is a crucial trait that has been found to be a major risk factor that predisposes a child to violence.

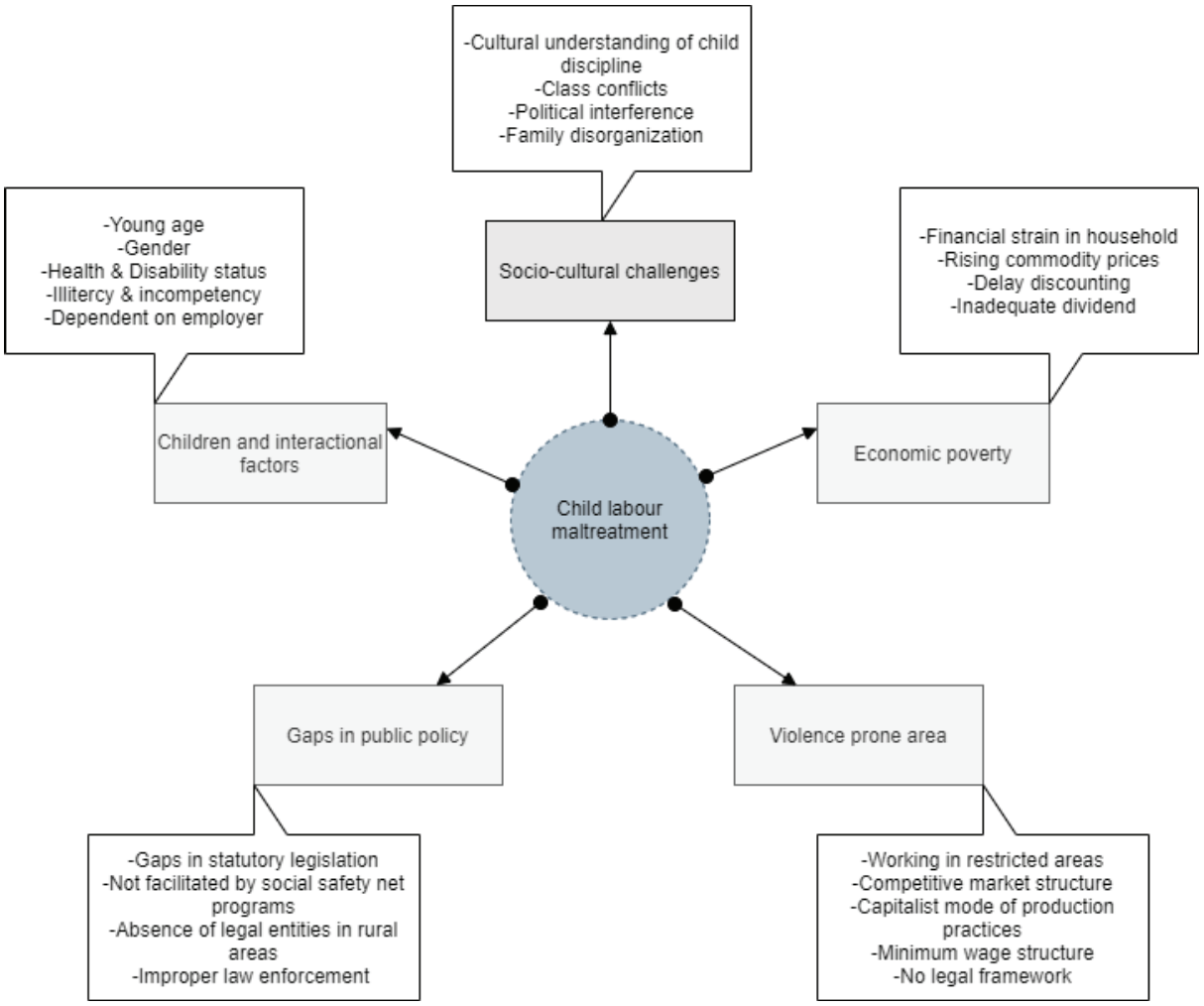


Figure 5.3: Determinants of child labour maltreatment reported by key informants

### *5.4.2 Theme-2: Sociocultural challenges*

#### 5.4.2.1 Subtheme 1: Cultural beliefs about child discipline

The maltreatment of child labourers is also a result of cultural beliefs about disciplining children. Participants focused on the practice of corporal punishment in rural settings, which they see as a culturally approved strategy to make children obedient and responsible. Child labourers are also subject to this practice. If children are reluctant to do something, a usual

tactic is to beat them with an object. In particular, corporal punishment in schools or home settings is a common approach of dealing with children. For example, one participant noted:

> We have a common cultural belief about child labourers that if we beat or punish them, they will be more productive and responsive in both the home and workplace settings. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Participants further argued that due to the incorporation of traditional practices within mainstream society, culturally abusive behaviours have long been accepted in society. A representative from an NGO stated:

> I think this is a cultural belief that kids don't need entertainment, they don't need separate meals—and so on. In earlier times it may have been an individual belief but now maybe it has become part of how children are disciplined. (Manusher Jonno Foundation)

#### 5.4.2.2 Subtheme 2: Class conflicts and maltreatment

Participants argued that class differences result in forms of social stratification based on poverty status, the caste system, and geographic locality. Participants were of the view that the working classes are dominated by the bourgeoise. In general, the socially constructed superior classes exploit subordinate groups. Participants noted that society is intolerant of weak segments of society, with impoverished young children being the most affected. Of note, participants presented a framework of class differences where child labourers in rural areas are viewed as inferior to urban child workers and are more likely to be exposed to maltreatment. They assumed that abuse is more prevalent among those who have a lower status in society. Considering the case of child labourers, the paediatrician articulated that:

> Here in Bangladesh, children get beaten due to power relations. The upper class suppresses the lower class in society. If I were an owner, I will suppress my domestic helpers—children involved in labour are not provided with equal distribution of opportunities—I mean, the society is not equal—so those children, who are already in a subordinate position to others, will not be allowed to get priority as working-class children. It creates an imbalance and again the issue of power dominance will

> come into play. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

#### 5.4.2.3 Subtheme 3: The history of political interference

Participants noted that human nature tends to hold onto historical and cultural social activities. Talking about this, one of the participants said that if we look at our political history, we have achieved our independence through a series of wars or struggles. This was achieved through violence. This history of violence resulted in an identity of intolerance towards others as part of the culture. In these circumstances, many people do not consider child maltreatment an act of violence. The expert paediatrician explained:

> But we ignore the macro-level factors. The thing is we have a colonial and post-colonial past. We have got this history from our past generations, and it is a violent history. Like, my grandfather, they have seen the Second World War, the Pakistan regime, the division, and independence, after that we have seen the famine of '74, the military uprising, and distorted legislative system. When the democratic way came, we witnessed continuous suppression from law enforcement entities, strikes, etc—the overall situation is violent, and we had to live with this situation. So, beating a child is not considered very violent here. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

Parallel to this, participants also condemned the country's political instability as well as extrajudicial killings, robberies, murders, and religious and class-based terrorism. They considered that these also corrupted the people's values towards society and culture. Participants were also aware of the volatile situation in the sociocultural domain, which is the inability to bring offenders to justice. They were of the view that perpetrators of child maltreatment in the Asian subcontinent escape actual punishment because of their political links. Hence, they are not deterred from doing the same thing again. Once people learn this, they begin to think of child maltreatment as secondary. A participant stated:

> We have had a history of political violence, extrajudicial killing, and the uprising of extremists where they kill people when they differ from them. I think—it's just an assumption of mine that when people experience or witness extremism, or severe

> violence, or murder, they try to ignore the less severe issues such as those you are talking about such as child abuse, or sexual harassment. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

Hence, from the above discussion, it can be seen that the long-running unstable political culture in Bangladesh is seen to impact attitudes towards child maltreatment.

**Subtheme 4: Family disorganisation**

The chaotic nature in the family environment is strongly linked to increases in the victimisation rate of child labourers, with child labourers who are subjected to family conflicts, more likely to be re-maltreated. Participants argued that if children are not safe at home, where else can they be secure? They pointed out that interpersonal disagreements inside the family are on the increase. They identified multiple causal factors, several recessions, including the Covid-19 outbreak, disagreements over family decisions, gender discrimination, unpredictability and reckless behaviours. Participants posited that the increasing pattern of interpersonal conflicts inside of families forces children into labour where they are at risk of maltreatment. They alleged that authoritarian conduct within the family leads to the discrimination of individuals which in turn can provoke child maltreatment. One participant indicated that:

> Conflict and instability inside of home environment are increasing day by day. Domestic violence has been on the escalation since the advent of special Covid-19—with the recent increase in Covid-19, domestic violence has also increased drastically—and if you look at the recent reports, you can see that child maltreatment has also increased, which is actually a manifestation of domestic violence. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

Expert participants expressed their concern about the recent increase in rates of divorce in Bangladesh. In-depth discussion indicated that the breakdown of familial and interpersonal relationships is a risk factor for the maltreatment of children within the workplace. Situations such as divorce or separation can have an intense impact on the child and put them at risk of maltreatment. An academic articulated this by pointing to his research findings:

> The rate of loss of family relationships may have been 5 to 6% before but now this has increased to 30 to 35%—recently due to an upward trend of divorce rates, this was higher among poorer segments of society than in previous times. Child labour and maltreatment may increase with the breakdown of the family, as it has increased in recent times. (Dhaka University)

Overall, in recent times, a breakdown of familial relationships has been recorded everywhere at an alarming rate, which is intertwined with domestic violence and child maltreatment.

### *5.4.3 Theme-3: Economic poverty and child maltreatment*

This theme was identified as the most significant factor of child labour maltreatment. Participants across all the interviews pointed out the financial strain on households of child labourers, which they argued was the principal risk factor for child labour maltreatment. As family income decreases, the incidences of child labour maltreatment increase. A participant stated:

> They are forced to join the labour market. Behind this—there are some factors, primarily poverty is the main issue. When a family becomes poor or financially unstable, there will be no alternative but to engage their children in the labour market—no doubt, they are strongly, perhaps not visible in many cases, but they are definitely being discriminated against as their financial position is weak. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs)

Participants assumed that even when the income level of the family was stable, the cost of consumer goods increased, leading to further instability and inequality. They argued that economic inequality leads to more children in the labour force. They argued that the poor could not afford to be concerned with the impact on the child labourer, or the risk of maltreatment at workplaces on their children. Their major concern is to get relief from poverty. These views were mirrored in a statement:

> Thereby, economically affected parents have a vision of how to overcome the loss, so they first consider the reduction of family expenses—one thing that can be noticed here is that they predominantly focus on income. They feel they are forced to send

> even their young children into part-time work just because of their financial insolvency—they do not even imagine the risk of maltreatment at workplaces. (UNICEF)

Parallel to the fact of disparities between income and expenditure, poverty prompts many parents to send their children to work. Many experts were of the opinion that parents engaged in what they referred to as 'delay discounting'. This metaphor reflects the fact that a number of parents are more concerned about immediate short-term financial gains rather than long-term gains and economic prospects for their children. They argued that despite government-initiated financial subsidies for social security, the parents' need to access money now increases the risk of child maltreatment. Considering the parental concern for short-term benefits, one academic articulated:

> If they could look at future productivity, they would not send them to work. Just for pitiful earnings, it's not economically sensible, I would say—now maybe our school is giving a stipend. Books are still free for primary to secondary school. Even then parents think that if boys and girls go to school, it will cost some money. 100 Taka does not last a month. Then family expenses will increase more. A labourer, whether old or young, can earn Taka 8000 to Taka 10,000 per month. If he/she does over time, they can earn more money. That is why parents think that it would be better to send their children to work without sending them to school. (Premier University)

Employers likewise entice the children of poor families into labour. Participants further noted that they had few notions that they often experience impulsivity from parents to employ their children. Participants stressed that these circumstances may lead to the possibility of violence towards children. This was illustrated by an expert from ILO:

> The employer says, if I had not given them a chance to work, they would have died without food. I see many times, employers say, the parents of the children came and started holding their hands and feet so that we should recruit the child as a labourer—here we just try to supervise them, ignite them—we do not maltreat physically, sometimes we verbally alert them to the job. (International Labour Organisation)

### 5.4.4 Theme-4: Violence-prone areas and structure

Across all interviews, participants talked about the vulnerable working domains for child workers. The subtheme of a violence-prone workspace reflected that most of children were engaged in the unregulated working sectors; with those most vulnerable employed in domestic labour. Participants were committed to bringing the plight of domestic work to the attention of legislators and having it defined as hazardous work. Expert personnel asserted that CDLs are surrounded by the boundary of four walls, where nobody can hear their voices. In this circumstance, the perpetrators can mistreat them according to their will. This situation was described as:

> The domestic child worker is in the topmost vulnerable position of any other group of child labourers. Because, I have worked alone on child labour issues from 2003 to 2015, and my experience is first and foremost with domestic child labour outside—they suffer physical ill-treatment inside the four walls of private homes because of the few mistakes they make. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

The experts agreed that child labourers in the domestic and agricultural sectors are unsafe venues for children. In agricultural labour, children are not only limited to crop production activities, but a significant proportion also work in the fishing industry. Participants acknowledged that the major spotlight areas are coastal and haor areas of Bangladesh, where the work is split into tasks such as crewing boats, catching fry, fish harvesting and processing. They contended that in these competitive production market structures, every stakeholder focuses on profit maximisation, which they argue contributes to the maltreatment of child labourers given these small-scale rural farms are in the informal and unregulated sectors. In a statement an academic noted:

> If any leader has 1 acre of land, he craves to make the maximum profit out of it and he employs 3–4 people to collect the rents and each one of them is trying to maximise their profit. The problem is, it's not fixed. They use their power, strength, and abuse to get that. Child labourers are highly victimised in that case. (Premier University)

Apart from the fishing industry, participants also discussed the crop production sector, where they observed the practice of intentional maltreatment including financial exploitation, and psychological bullying. Participants agreed that in crop farming, child labourers are more often verbally maltreated than other forms of maltreatment. One journalist from the *Daily Star* newspaper witnessed the victimisation of children while he was conducting fieldwork, he noted that:

> If we think of rural society, we see that most of the children work in the fields or on small-scale farms. Here, the chance of being emotionally bullied is common practice and it is difficult to regulate, or control employers. The minimum wage structure is not followed in these areas, for that reason. I mean, child labourers do not get actual wages, and—this further makes them vulnerable to their parents. (*Daily Star*)

This subtheme of the informal economy was well supported by experts as a factor. The view was that child labour was used in many sections of the informal economy; however, they stressed that it was practiced mostly in the agricultural sector. They stated that these establishments often do not follow legal instructions and orders, which means they are hidden from public surveillance. Therefore, perpetrators were able to exercise abusive practices in these sectors. For example:

> It is seen that there are about 5% of children engaged in the formal sectors as child labourers and all the others are in the informal sectors—since these issues are more prevalent in the informal sector, there is less scope for law enforcement or action by the government—what I said is, 95% of child labour is in the informal sector, here, there is no scope for government law enforcement. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Many expert personnel were in an agreement that the children were recruited as cheap labour and can be exploited easily in informal settings to gain profits. They were of the view that many employers resorted to unscrupulous means and employed children for ill-gotten gains in their informal workplaces. They were able to do this as they were not listed in government records. The participant from Ain O Salish Kendra explained:

> If they recruit a child, he will work for little money or even if he is not paid or if he is provided with a little food. This will save employers expenses, which they do for business motives. But if someone hires an adult worker, he has to go through a structural format and pay a good salary—employees engage in exploitation techniques in order to increase their commercial success. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

The above quote and thoughts indicate that the informal sector is more prone to employ children and to engage in maltreatment, as this area is outside the formal regulated areas and hidden from mainstream labour policies and orders.

### *5.4.5 Theme-5: Gaps in public policy planning*

This theme was identified as one of the most prevalent and quoted factors. Almost all expert personnel expressed their views about the dearth of related studies and condemned the lack of government policy as an explicit reason of child labour maltreatment.

Participants noted that governments failed to mandate specific actions at the policy level, although a few initiatives were highlighted. Taking into account the limitations of the national constitution, participants stressed the need to consider child protection. They indicated that child maltreatment is not directly specified anywhere in the constitution, although rates are on the increase. This indicates that the government does not take child violence seriously. One participant argued that in our society the legal process and the level of punishment is negligible in comparison to the intensity of child maltreatment crime:

> If we look at our country context, we will find that the severity of punishment for these crimes is not what it should be. Our social and judicial system does not punish them properly. (*Daily Star*)

It is also realised that state and community monitoring and support programs are not yet adequate enough to protect vulnerable children. In particular, participants said that socially disadvantaged children are not protected under social safety net programs. One participant added that access to these public services can ameliorate the vulnerability of children:

> In some cases, where there are no working people in their family and children are engaged in labour, it may be possible to bring them under the social safety net programs—since the monitoring mechanism of the government is not so strong, it could be done at the community level—could be another one, which is our union council under local government body, but they lack resources. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Children were also discriminated against in public policy planning, and this is framed as the 'absence of legal entities in rural areas'. Participants criticised the inadequacy of government planning for the countryside in terms of catering for child development. They suggested that child development monitoring centres in rural marginalised areas could address the problem of violence against children, but given they were not available or not operating one academic expert stated:

> There are many agencies in the urban areas and those dealing with the social violence that we are talking about, but they are completely absent in the rural area. (Shahjalal University of Science and Technology)

The participants pointed out that awareness of violence is less noticeable in those organisations working for the protection of children. They argued that there is a need for independent public agencies that can work towards eliminating all negative practices towards vulnerable children. However, they also noted that poor implementation of laws is a barrier, since they think that in most cases the real culprits are often acquitted, rather the plaintiff suffering through various administrative hurdles. The participant from the *Daily Star* shared his experiences:

> But you will see that when cases appear before the lower judicial body, it gets its proper focus and outcome. When the case goes to the high court, in many situations the real culprit does not get punished and there is never a verdict. So, this procrastination in the judicial system also encourages abusive behaviour in society.—They should bring transparency into law enforcement. (*Daily Star*)

On the whole, participants agreed that the rise in child labour maltreatment was induced by a lack of policy formulation, discrimination in institutional frameworks and the malfunction of existing child protection bodies.

## 5.5 Impact of Maltreatment of Child Labourers

The thematic analysis of the impact of maltreatment on child labourers considered a broad range of outcomes resulting from child maltreatment. Under this analysis, a total of 83 codes were generated, which yielded four broad themes; emotional and behavioural functioning, physical injuries, cognitive functioning and socioeconomic dysfunction. These are outlined in Table 5.4. The findings and significance of subdomains under each of the themes are as follows.

### *5.5.1 Theme-1: Emotional and behavioural functioning*

Mental health complexities among victimised child labourers have proliferated. Participants reported multiple perspectives when explaining the emotional states of children. They stressed that the children's experiences of anxiety, depression, fear, loneliness, defiant behaviour, substance abuse and suicidal tendencies were all due to their exposure to maltreatment. This was one of the most crucial themes evident across all phases of the analysis.

Anxiety was identified as a negative emotion experienced by child labourers who were victimised. Participants pointed out that victimised child labourers become psychologically vulnerable, unstable and depressed, caused by excessive fear and stress. They assumed that exposure to violence instils social anxiety in the children which, in particular, develops into fear and distrust of strangers, decreases communicative qualities and impacts their capacity to sustain secure relationships. As one of the expert professionals explained:

> So, when the child grows older, some of the parts of his brain are distorted especially the stress recovery part. So, his stress hormones such as cortisol will secrete more, which will cause internal vascular changes. There will be an abnormality in the stress management component of his makeup. Suppose I have been beaten in my

> childhood, the centre of my stress centre will be hyperactive—these children will fear and may lack positive communicative qualities. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

A significant proportion of expert professionals emphasised that depressive disorders were frequently reported among child labourers due to their experience of maltreatment. Alongside suffering from social anxiety, they underlined that the victimised child labourers could experience major depressive symptoms. They indicated that children may feel persistent fatigue and depression and may be reluctant to engage in activities with their peers. A sense of hopelessness can also be seen among maltreated child labourers. They surmised that these were a result of the child labourers' experience of trauma. One academic highlighted the symptoms criteria:

> When he is maltreated, he may become frustrated—you will find them always sad and usually, they are reluctant to participate in sports with their peers. This actually occurs at all groups of people, I think—they keep to themselves and do not share or mix with others. (North South University)

Victimised child labourers tend to demonstrate signs of social isolation, as suggested by expert stakeholders. Although not widely discussed, these children are seen to be introverted, which shapes their social behaviour and orientation leading to loneliness. This idea is reflected in the quote of one participant from UNICEF:

> Because of being maltreated, they feel lonely and more confined in their activities within themselves—they become more introvert. (UNICEF)

Beyond these innermost signs of emotional malfunction, participants postulated a number of external antisocial behaviours that can be seen among victimised child labourers. A defiant attitude towards other individuals is one of the signposts of behavioural dysfunction. This is one of the most highly mentioned responses to maltreatment. As a subtheme, it encompasses the symptoms of anger, destruction of property and disrespect towards others. The expert professionals identified that maltreated child labourers exhibited aberrant traits such as anger,

irritable moods, and abnormal physical and verbal reactivity including yelling, screaming, disrespecting others, aggressiveness and dreaming of being violent towards others. This emotional and behavioural dysfunction is illustrated through the quote of a participant, where she explained an incident:

> A 12-year-old girl was working as a housemaid. So, this child worker used to work in a woman's flat, and the woman's daughter also lived in a flat on the first floor of the same building. The child worker had to work in these two flats. So, when the woman left for the office, she would leave her small child with the child worker, and it would be at the mother's house. One day the girl came and told me that her housemaid did not take good care of my little boy and cut off his clothes, screaming at the child. Our counsellor then had a series of sessions with the child worker and later identified that the domestic worker herself was a 12–14-year-old child, and we were leaving her with another child for the rest of the day. The child worker had to feed the baby, take care of him, wash his clothes, and handle him when he cried. Both the child worker and the small child were physically and emotionally maltreated. The child worker could not manage all these activities by herself. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

Besides these deviant behaviours, child labourers who are maltreated may also be addicted to substances. The study suggests that children, even at a very young age, when maltreated, become addicted to drugs to manage their frustration. The experts surmised that substance abuse is a hallmark of emotional dysfunction. One participant argued that:

> Because when a boy is a child labourer at a very young age, and is maltreated, he may become frustrated, or he may become a drug addict along with other children. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

While a proportion of child labourers become drug addicts, the world appears as a very insecure place to others. Participants reported an increased risk of suicide ideation among maltreated child labourers because of their emotional distress. They contended it is a social crime. They reported the tendency to attempt suicide among domestic child labourers because of being maltreated. One of the participants indicated that:

> The rate of committing suicide is also on the increase because of increased rates of maltreatment, particularly among domestic child workers. Many are opting for this path to get rid of their feelings of helplessness, depression, or exhaustion, which is certainly alarming. (Ain O Salish Kendra)

This theme suggests that child labour maltreatment is associated with multiple psychosomatic symptoms and high-risk health behaviours.

Table 5.4: Summary of themes and subthemes of health impact of child labour maltreatment reported by key informants

| Theme | Subdomain | Total number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Emotional and behavioural functioning | Anxiety or stress | 30 |
| | Defiant behaviour | |
| | Depression | |
| | Dysfunction of empathy | |
| | Loneliness | |
| | Substance abuse | |
| | Suicidal behaviour | |
| 2. Physical Injuries | Dermatological problems | 18 |
| | Cut/bruises | |
| | Eye injuries | |
| | Cardiac illness | |
| | Musculoskeletal problems | |
| | Mutilation | |
| 3. Cognitive functioning | Dropped out of school | 12 |
| | Loss of work efficiency | |
| | Poor self-esteem | |
| 4. Social Dysfunction | Disclosure of himself as a perpetrator of child maltreatment | 23 |
| | Abuse and delinquency | |
| | Social alienation | |

### *5.5.2 Theme-2: Physical injuries*

This theme reflects one of the most immediate consequences of child labour maltreatment. Physical signs of intentional maltreatment were mentioned as the third most prominent abuse

experienced by these children. Child labourers are exposed to six types of short-term physical risks as a result of intentional maltreatment. Moreover, these were also viewed as linked to the emotional failure of victimised child labourers.

The most common types of injuries are abrasions and bruises among child labourers who are physically maltreated. The experts argued that maltreated CDLs are highly vulnerable to these kinds of injuries, and these also lead to emotional distress. An academic reflected that:

> "You will find that child labourers at home are often physically abused, a common symptom of which is first or second cuts, bruises of burn—they often get burned by their women employer, which also hurts them emotionally as well". (Khulna University)

Parallel to cuts and burn cases, participants indicated that as child labourers become stressed, they may develop chronic inflammatory dermatitis leading to infections. They also indicated that men may burn the child on the back or hands using cigarettes, as punishment, which they think causes infectious dermatological diseases.

Following dermatological problems, participants mentioned specific injuries as significant. They argued that victimised child labourers suffer from muscle pain, swelling and other bone complications. Participants indicated fractures including breaking hands or legs as a frequent consequence of non-accidental CPM. This may result in the child limping as well. The risk of fractures is reflected in the quote from an academic, who said:

> "We often read in the news of a child suffering a fracture at their workplaces, home—whatever the extent, it is not an unusual incident. Punishment by employers often extends to the breaking of hands or legs". (University of Northern Iowa)

The probability of cardiovascular diseases was also mentioned by the expert participants. They were of the view that child labourers may suffer from hypertension as a result of traumatic experiences such as exposure to maltreatment. The paediatrician noted:

> "Children's hearts will be affected regardless of physical or mental abuse—his blood pressure will be high, and over time the long-term effects are extensive". (Bangabandhu Shiekh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

Notably, most experts considered this a long-term impact of child labour maltreatment. In addition, participants were aware of the impact of mutilation, which they believed to be a hindrance to the normal growth and development of child labourers.

### *5.5.3 Theme-3: Cognitive functioning*

Exposure to violence early in life markedly increases the risk of cognitive impairment among child labourers. Participants agreed that maltreated children suffer from neuropsychological disorders. This theme centred on three syndromes: dropping out of school, lacking work efficiency and poor self-esteem.

Participants argued that negative attitudes against child labourers resulted in psychosomatic disorders, which explicitly hindered their academic performance and contributed to a high dropout rate from school. Of note, they emphasised the immense impact on their academic performance. This idea points to neuropsychological dysfunctional behaviours such as verbal inefficacy, attention deficit, and delayed memory. One participant noted that:

> If—if he is tense, then maybe he is not going to work, he is not going to school. Even though he is attending to school, he cannot concentrate like other students—indeed, they cannot compete with the rest, as the incidence of maltreatment impacts brain development. This can increase the dropout rate—this is normal. (Dhaka University)

In accordance with dropping out of school, participants stressed that victimised children have multiple somatic complaints that can have a negative impact on school performance and cause a deterioration in work efficiency. They considered this a consequence of cognitive impairment resulting from the failure in intellectual functioning. The paediatrician disclosed that:

> We have often seen in our education update that the dropout ratio is declining, you may come to know that government-initiated programs are in place to ensure primary

> education reaches 100%. I am not talking about this particular output, but I am wondering how the productive manpower we are creating—a huge proportion of children are growing up suffering unspoken vulnerabilities. For example, those who are experiencing maltreatment, their brain function and development are not similar to others who never experienced this violence. These children suffer from an intellectual disability and cannot progress as other children do. Therefore, we are also producing low-skilled manpower. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

These experts contend that children who are maltreated usually come across as having a sense of self-degradation, which is a result of cognitive dysfunction. This exacerbates the severity of mental strain and along with depressive symptoms, is debilitating. This is endorsed by a quote from the paediatrician:

> Where children are forced to work, you are condemning them and abusing them. The stresses the child experiences cause intellectual disability as well as low self-esteem —the kid who faces physical maltreatment with an allegation of stealing, this can work as a social stigma. (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital)

He underlined that child labour itself is considered a disgraceful occupation, where their victimisation experience develops a feeling of subservience.

### *5.5.4 Theme-4: Social dysfunction*

This was the second most highly reported theme indicating that maltreated child labourers are affected by a vicious social cycle following the emotional and behavioural syndrome. The long shadow of the perpetrator hangs over the maltreated child, which in turn inspires the same behaviour later in their own reaction to children. Participants suggested the possibility that a maltreated child may become a child perpetrator. They argued that children who experience harsh maltreatment grow up with feelings of hostility. In particular, they mentioned the situation of child labourers, and assumed that among these victimised children, some will later

take up the position of employers, and there will be those who show violent behaviour towards their own child workers. These instances were reflected in the quote of an administrator:

> Children can be abused and maltreated. Maybe in the future, a situation may arise where he is the owner of an organisation, then maybe he is antagonistic towards his subordinates such as child labourers treating them in the same way he was treated. (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Notably, social impact analysis has shown elevated rates of crime among victimised child labourers. Expert professionals argued that child labourers who are physically maltreated were more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour. They further added that because of their victimisation experience, they leave employment. When this occurs, they are at risk of being involved in crime as a substitute means of livelihood. One journalist from a daily newspaper explains,

> They often quit work, as they repeatedly experience abuse and sometimes, they become involved in various criminal activities. They develop hatred attitudes against everyone. They think they can rob and kill someone at any time because they consider everyone to be enemies because they think that when we are victims of neglect, we have not found anyone to care for us. (*Kaler Kantho*)

Across all the interviews, participants stressed that children engaged in crime, in particular, stealing, hijacking, looting, drug smuggling, gambling, cyber bullying and blackmailing. Young child labourers mostly commit these acts.

The experts also argued that child labourers who encountered PM and EM and who engaged in offences due to their maltreatment experience suffered social alienation from other people. Commenting on this estrangement with other children and peers, one expert professional noted:

> Maybe they do not communicate with their parents about complications. Then, they disappear, maybe they are missing and do not keep in touch with anyone—maltreated children are not mentally stable, which makes them difficult to cope with. (Khulna University)

Participants highlighted the impact of poor interaction with immediate members as a decisive

effect of child labour maltreatment.

The above-mentioned themes outline the significant impact of child labour and the maltreatment of child labourers both on them, their families and the country.

## 5.6 Limitations Encountered with Experts and Methodology

### *5.6.1 Lack of first-hand knowledge of child labour maltreatment*

One of the limitations that was repeatedly highlighted is the narrowness of knowledge and data availability provided by these experts. While the experts provided responses to all the interview questions, they argued that there were too few methodical studies on child maltreatment of children as labourers for them to be adequately informed. For most of them, their views and opinions were based on news reports. This was a significant limitation in their responses.

### *5.6.2 Fields of experts are different*

Despite the adequate sample size, the type of organisations from which experts were recruited was not consistent. Apart from a few academics and researchers, most of them held administrative functions, which impacted on getting objective responses. The researcher anticipated to reach at least one more paediatrician, and two more researchers with expertise in the field, but failed. This made it difficult to extract more relevant answers about the prevalence and health impact of maltreatment of child labourers.

### *5.6.3 Impact of Covid-19*

Qualitative interviews were conducted between January 2021 and July 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic occurred at this time making travel impossible. This meant that interviews could not be done face-to-face. While interviews were done via TEAMS and Zoom with the experts listed in Table 4.1, it meant that it was difficult to make contact with other experts who might have more concrete knowledge and understanding of child labour maltreatment. A number of experts

contacted were reluctant to attend a virtual interview. These, in particular, generated shadows in the research findings.

### *5.6.4 Validity and reliability of the data*

Although there is no specific consensus to judge the standards of qualitative research, a few criticisms can be observed in this study. Despite a given benchmark of selecting a sample size for the qualitative study, this study was able to collect data from 17 expert professionals. The purposive selection of expert participants can raise the question of sample bias. Specifically, administrative participants were indifferent to political influence and government incompetence, which raised the question of accountability of the verbatim descriptions.

## 5.7 Conclusion

Findings from the qualitative part of this mixed-method study suggest that child labourers in the domestic and agricultural sectors are highly vulnerable to all forms of maltreatment. Beyond the known types of maltreatment, experts identified EM and neglect as the leading forms of violence against child labourer. However, they also thought that the prevalence of maltreatment was underreported in the studies. Perpetrators' childhood maltreatment history, low literacy rates, lack of social awareness, poor emotional state, low moral standards and economic hardship emerged as key determinants of child labour maltreatment. The vulnerable traits of the children themselves, social and cultural beliefs, economic poverty, the nature of the informal sectors and weak public policy are also provoking factors. The experts interviewed argued that maltreated child labourers are damaged in their emotional and cognitive functioning, injured physically and also experience societal difficulties. Despite the gaps in these findings, they provide a way forward to better understand the results of the quantitative study of child labour maltreatment outlined in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MALTREATMENT OF CHILD LABOURERS

## 6.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a description and analysis of the quantitative data reported by child labourers. The focus is on their demographic characteristics, risk factors associated with their maltreatment experiences and the psychosocial impact of that maltreatment.

## 6.2 Demographic Characteristics of Child Labourers

In this study, the sociodemographic characteristics of children employed in agricultural and domestic work were analysed, which further assisted the identification of possible risk factors of child labour maltreatment. Children recruited to the study ranged in age from 10–17 years, with the majority (68%) falling between the ages of 13 and 15 years. More than 60% were not enrolled in school. Seventy per cent worked in the agricultural sector while 30% were domestic labourers. The minimum wage for 58.6% of child labourers was less than BDT2000 per month, while 24.3% earned between BDT2001 and BDT5000 per month. The exploitative nature of employment is reflected in the estimation of working hours, with 63.2% of the child labourers working at least 5–8 hours a day followed by 30.3% who toiled more than 9 hours a day. Around 35.7% of child labourers were accommodated at their employer's house or workplace at night.

The children reported that 76.9% of their mothers had no formal educational qualifications, while 23.1% said their mothers had completed primary education. Parental occupations were distributed as follows: 48.5% of child labourers stated their father was a farmer, followed by 20.6% drivers and 15.5% businessmen or unemployed. Approximately 77.9% of child labourers indicated that their families did not own land outside of their household. Approximately 40.2% of the children indicated that their co-workers were addicted to drugs

and 38.3% said they thought family members were also addicted. These demographic data are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics reported by child labourers

| Characteristics | Categories | Frequency (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Age | 10–12 years | 32 (32) |
| | 13–15 years | 68 (68) |
| Current school enrolment | Yes | 38 (38.4) |
| Type of occupation | Agriculture | 70 (70) |
| | Domestic | 30 (30) |
| Income of per month | ≤BDT2000 | 41 (58.6) |
| | BDT2001–5000 | 17 (24.3) |
| | BDT5001–8000 | 12 (17.1) |
| Working hours | 1–4 hrs/day | 5 (6.6) |
| | 5–8 hrs/day | 48 (63.2) |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 23 (30.3) |
| Living arrangements | Return to home | 63 (64.3) |
| | Sleep at employer's house/workplace | 35 (35.7) |
| Mother's education | Primary | 21 (23.1) |
| | No educational qualification | 70 (76.9) |
| Father's occupation | Farmer | 47 (48.5) |
| | Driver | 20 (20.6) |
| | Businessman | 15 (15.5) |
| | Unemployed | 15 (15.5) |
| Land ownership | Yes | 21 (22.1) |
| Drug abuse among co-workers | Yes | 37 (40.2) |
| Drug abuse among family members | Yes | 36 (38.3) |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing

## 6.3 Prevalence of Maltreatment of Child Labourers

The prevalence estimation presented in this section is primarily focused on the self-reported prevalence of maltreatment over the past year, both at workplaces and in the home environment.

### *6.3.1 Prevalence of child labour maltreatment based on self-reported data*

This section of the study mostly focused on the prevalence over the past year of self-reported child labour PM, EM, neglect and financial exploitation maltreatment.

#### 6.3.1.1 Physical maltreatment of child labourers

The percentages of items related to the PM of child labourers is presented in Table 6.2. The majority of child labourers were subjected to being pushed, grabbed and kicked. More than half experienced this type of maltreatment, with 29.2% reporting that they experienced PM many times. Approximately 66.7% experienced being hit, beaten and spanked with a hand sometimes, followed by 17.8% who experienced this many times. Notably, 61.2% of the child labourers said that they never experienced abusive behaviour with a belt, paddle, a stick or other object, while 18.8% said they experienced this sometimes.

The majority (85.9%) of the child labourers reported that they were never maltreated through being choked, smothered or drowned, while 6.4% said that they had experienced these in their life, but not in the past year. The majority of the child labourers (70%) had never been burned or scalded, while 16.3% said that they had suffered from these forms of maltreatment sometimes. More than 63% of the child labourers revealed that they had never been locked up in a small place, or tied up or chained to something in the past year, while 20.8% said that they experienced this sometimes. The study estimated that 41.9% of child labourers were sometimes maltreated by the perpetrators through pulling their hair, pinching and twisting their ear, with 12.9% saying that they had experienced this type of maltreatment before, but not in the past

year. Child labourers reported that had been forced to stay in one position holding a heavy load as punishment. Approximately 41.5% of child labourers were victimised sometimes by this kind of maltreatment, although 30.9% had never experienced this form of punishment. When asked if they had ever been 'threatened with a knife or a gun', 86.8% responded that they had never experienced this. However, 6.6% responded that they had been subjected to this type of maltreatment before but not in the past year.

Table 6.2: Prevalence of physical maltreatment reported by child labourers

| Maltreatment categories | N | Many times | Sometimes | Not in the past year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pushed, grabbed, or kicked | 96 | 28 (29.2) | 51 (53.1) | 6 (6.3) | 11 (11.5) |
| Hit, beaten, or spanked with a hand | 90 | 16 (17.8) | 60 (66.7) | 7 (7.8) | 7 (7.8) |
| Hit, beaten, or spanked with a belt, paddle, a stick or other object | 85 | 6 (7.1) | 16 (18.8) | 11 (12.9) | 52 (61.2) |
| Choked, smothered or tried to drown | 78 | 3 (3.8) | 3 (3.8) | 5 (6.4) | 67 (85.9) |
| Burned or scalded, (including putting hot chillies or peppers in the mouth) | 80 | 5 (6.3) | 13 (16.3) | 6 (7.5) | 56 (70.0) |
| Locked up in a small place, tied up, or chained to something | 77 | 9 (11.7) | 16 (20.8) | 3 (3.9) | 49 (63.6) |
| Pulled hair, pinched or twisted ear | 93 | 15 (16.1) | 39 (41.9) | 12 (12.9) | 27 (29.0) |
| Forced to stay in one position holding a heavy load as punishment | 94 | 18 (19.1) | 39 (41.5) | 8 (8.5) | 29 (30.9) |
| Threatened with a knife or a gun | 91 | 4 (4.4) | 2 (2.2) | 6 (6.6) | 79 (86.8) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise.

#### 6.3.1.2 Emotional or psychological maltreatment of child labourers

The sociodemographic variables associated with the EM of child labourers is presented in Table 6.3. In regard to EM, the data show that almost all child labourers reported enduring loud and aggressive screaming (96%), with 52.1% of child labourers sometimes experiencing this EM behaviour, while 34.4% responded that it happened many times. Over half (52.1%) were sometimes victimised by being called names, cursed or had nasty comments said to them, with

34.4% saying it had occurred many times in the past year, although 21.4% said never, and 42.9% replied that they sometimes were made to feel ashamed/embarrassed in front of others. Approximately 55.9% of the child labourers had never had someone wish they were dead or had never been born, but 26.9% reported they had experienced this behaviour sometimes in the past year. Likewise, more than half of the child labourers (54.1%) answered that they had never experienced any threat of being abandoned, although 33.7% revealed that they had experienced this sometimes in the past year. Child labourers were sometimes (35.4%) locked out of the home for an extended period of time. However, 46.9% replied that they had never experienced this type of victimisation over the past year. The findings reveal that 61.9% of child labourers have never been subjected to any threats to hurt or kill them through invoking evil spirits, but 19.6% had experienced this sometimes in the past year. Child labourers reported that they were frequently subjected to emotional bullying (teased) by others so that they feel sad or bad. Around 44.9% of child labourers responded that this abusive behaviour sometimes happened to them, while 21.4% had suffered this behaviour many times in the past year.

Table 6.3: Prevalence of emotional maltreatment of child labourers

| Maltreatment Categories | N | Many times | Sometimes | Not in the past year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Screamed very loudly and aggressively | 96 | 33 (34.4) | 50 (52.1) | 10 (10.4) | 3 (3.1) |
| Called names, said mean things, or cursed | 96 | 33 (34.4) | 50 (52.1) | 7 (7.3) | 6 (6.3) |
| Made you feel ashamed/embarrassed in front of other people | 98 | 27 (27.6) | 42 (42.9) | 8 (8.2) | 21 (21.4) |
| Said that they wished you were dead/ had never been born | 93 | 9 (9.7) | 25 (26.9) | 7 (7.5) | 52 (55.9) |
| Threatened to leave forever or abandon | 98 | 7 (7.1) | 33 (33.7) | 5 (5.1) | 53 (54.1) |
| Locked out of the home for a long time | 96 | 9 (9.4) | 34 (35.4) | 8 (8.3) | 45 (46.9) |
| Threatened to hurt or kill, including invoking evil spirits | 97 | 13 (13.4) | 19 (19.6) | 5 (5.2) | 60 (61.9) |
| Bullied (teased, embarrassed) so that you feel sad or bad, by another child at home or the workplace | 98 | 21 (21.4) | 44 (44.9) | 4 (4.1) | 29 (29.6) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise.

#### 6.3.1.3 Neglect of child labourers

The prevalence of neglect is illustrated in Table 6.4. The table shows that up to 45.4% of child labourers were sometimes deprived of enough food and drink followed by 24.7% who experienced this many times, and 25% who reported never in the past year. Correspondingly, 40% of child labourers reported that they had to wear dirty, torn clothes and shoes sometimes, although 31% revealed that they had never experienced this type of neglect in the past year and 12% said that this had happened before but not in the past year. While 43.3% of child labourers reported that sometimes they were not taken care of when they were sick, 26.3% responded that they never experienced this type of neglect. In addition, 39% of child labourers felt that they were not important while 34% had never felt this in the past year. In general, 39.8% responded that they sometimes felt that nobody looked after them, supported them or helped them when they needed to be cared for, whereas 23.5% had experienced this form of neglect many times in the past year.

Table 6.4: Prevalence of neglect reported by child labourers

| Maltreatment Categories | N | Many times | Sometimes | Not in the past year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Deprived of enough food and drink | 97 | 24 (24.7) | 44 (45.4) | 4 (4.1) | 25 (25.8) |
| Had to wear dirty, torn clothes and shoes | 100 | 17 (17.0) | 40 (40.0) | 12 (12.0) | 31 (31.0) |
| Not taken care of when you were sick | 99 | 20 (20.2) | 43 (43.4) | 10 (10.1) | 26 (26.3) |
| Felt that you were not important | 100 | 21 (21.0) | 39 (39.0) | 6 (6.0) | 34 (34.0) |
| Nobody looked after you, supported you or helped you when you most needed it | 98 | 23 (23.5) | 39 (39.8) | 7 (7.1) | 29 (29.6) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise.

#### 6.3.1.4 Financial exploitation of child labourers

Nearly half of the child labourers revealed that they often did not receive full wages as per the contract. Up to 67.7% of the child labourers revealed that their employer or manager often delayed paying them. More than 57% of the child labourers revealed that they did not receive any medical assistance from employers. More than 59% of child labourers revealed that their family forced them to contribute to the family expenses. More than 35% of child labourers reported that their money was stolen by someone and never returned. These data are illustrated below in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Prevalence of financial exploitation reported by child labourers

| Maltreatment categories | N | Financial exploitation, n (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Do not get full wage/salary as per the contract | 97 | 55 (56.7) |
| Employer or manager delay in paying you | 96 | 65 (67.7) |
| Your employer provides you with medical care | 96 | 41 (42.7) |
| Family forced you to give them money to cover household expenses | 96 | 57 (59.4) |
| Anyone steals money from you and never gives it back | 96 | 34 (35.4) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise.

## 6.4 Determinants of Child Labour Maltreatment

### *6.4.1 Simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers*

A simple linear regression analysis of child labour self-reported data was conducted to determine potential indicators of child labour maltreatment. The variables with a p value of less than 0.20 were further considered in the multiple linear regression analysis to assess the significant risk factors of child labour maltreatment.

#### 6.4.1.1 Simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers

The study identified a number of predictor variables that were significantly associated with child labourers' exposure to PM such as type of occupation, income, working hours, living arrangements, mothers' occupation, land ownership pattern and drug addiction among co-workers. These are shown in Table 6.6. The table shows that CDLs are less likely to experience PM than agricultural workers. Compared to agricultural child labourers, CDLs had a lower risk of being physically victimized by a score of 0.23 ($\beta$ = –0.23, CI = –0.44, –0.02, $p$ = 0.03). It also evident that working hours contribute to PM, as those working 5–8 hours per day experienced more PM ($\beta$ = 0.34, CI = 0.11, 0.56, $p$<0.01) than those working 1–4 hours a day. The risk of PM also increased by 0.23 among child labourers who worked with drug addicts ($\beta$ = 0.23, CI = 0.02, 0.44, $p$ = 0.03) compared to those who did not. Higher level of income, home living arrangement, mothers' primary level of education and land ownership showed a higher risk of PM than their counterparts.

Table 6.6: A simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | 95% CI | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 10−12 years | 32 | Reference | - | - |
| | 13−15 years | 68 | −0.21 | −0.41, 0.07 | 0.06 |
| Current schooling | Not enrolled | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Enrolled | 38 | 0.07 | -0.13, 0.28 | 0.48 |
| Type of occupation | Agriculture labourer | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Domestic labourer | 30 | –0.23 | −0.44, −0.02 | 0.03 |
| Income/month of child labourers | ≤BDT2000 | 41 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT2001−5000 | 17 | −0.02 | −0.16, 0.12 | 0.81 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 11 | 0.13 | 0.02, 0.24 | 0.02 |
| Working hours | 1−4 hrs/day | 5 | Reference | - | - |
| | 5−8 hrs/day | 48 | 0.34 | 0.11, 0.56 | <0.01 |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 23 | −0.32 | −0.76, 0.13 | 0.16 |
| Living arrangements | Sleep at employer's house/workplace | 35 | Reference | - | - |
| | Return to home | 63 | 0.23 | 0.03, 0.43 | 0.03 |
| Mothers' education | No formal education | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 21 | 0.26 | -0.01, 0.51 | 0.04 |
| Fathers' occupation | Driver | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | Farmer | 47 | 0.06 | −0.21, 0.32 | 0.65 |
| | Business | 15 | −0.06 | −0.39, 0.28 | 0.75 |
| | Unemployed | 15 | −0.11 | −0.45, 0.24 | 0.54 |
| Land ownership | No | 74 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 21 | 0.28 | 0.06, 0.49 | 0.02 |
| Substance abuse among co-workers | No | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 37 | 0.23 | 0.02, 0.44 | 0.03 |
| Substance abuse among family members | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 36 | 0.19 | −0.02, 0.41 | 0.06 |

Note: β - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P: Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 6.4.1.2 Simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the emotional maltreatment of child labourers

The linear regression model further estimated the relationship between demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and EM of child labourers (Table 6.7). The mothers' level of education significantly influenced their children's exposure to EM; for example, the risk of EM decreased by 0.28 ($\beta$ = −0.28, 95% CI = −0.51, −0.06, $p$ = 0.02) for those children whose mothers completed primary level of education compared to the mothers with no formal education. Land ownership is also identified as significant predictor than it's counterpart.

Table 6.7: A simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the emotional maltreatment of child labourers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | *β* | 95% CI | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 10−12 years | 32 | Reference | - | |
| | 13−15 years | 68 | −0.07 | −0.28, 0.12 | 0.43 |
| Current schooling | Not enrolled | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Enrolled | 38 | −0.18 | −0.37, 0.01 | 0.06 |
| Type of occupation | Agriculture labourer | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Domestic labourer | 30 | 0.02 | −0.17, −0.23 | 0.79 |
| Income/month of child labourers | ≤BDT2000 | 41 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT2001−5000 | 17 | 0.22 | −0.05, 0.49 | 0.11 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 12 | 0.14 | −0.17, 0.45 | 0.37 |
| Working hours | 1−4 hrs/day | 5 | Reference | - | - |
| | 5−8 hrs/day | 48 | 0.27 | −0.16, 0.69 | 0.21 |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 23 | −0.06 | −0.51, 0.39 | 0.81 |
| Living arrangements | Sleep at employer's house/workplace | 35 | Reference | - | - |
| | Return to home | 63 | −0.09 | −0.29, 0.11 | 0.36 |
| Mothers' education | No formal education | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 21 | −0.28 | −0.51, −0.06 | 0.02 |
| Fathers' occupation | Driver | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | Farmer | 47 | 0.11 | −0.15, 0.35 | 0.43 |
| | Business | 15 | 0.13 | −0.19, 0.45 | 0.63 |
| | Unemployed | 15 | 0.13 | −0.25, 0.41 | 0.43 |
| Land ownership | No | 74 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 21 | 0.27 | 0.04. 0.51 | 0.02 |
| Substance abuse among co-workers | No | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 37 | 0.13 | −0.07, 0.32 | 0.19 |
| Substance abuse among family members | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 36 | 0.09 | −0.11, 0.29 | 0.34 |

Note: β - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 6.4.1.3 Simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers

The influence of demographic and socioeconomic risk factors in predicting the neglect of child labourers is presented in Table 6.8. The risk of neglect was higher among CDLs, in contrast to their risk of PM. CDLs experienced neglect more than child labourers in agriculture by a score of 0.25 ($\beta$ = 0.25, 95% CI = 0.02, 0.49, $p$ = 0.03). Child labourers' enrolment in school is also significantly associated with their experience of neglect.

Table 6.8: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | *β* | 95% CI | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 10−12 years | 32 | Reference | - | - |
| | 13−15 years | 68 | −0.24 | −0.47, −0.01 | 0.05 |
| Current schooling | Not enrolled | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Enrolled | 38 | 0.24 | 0.02, 0.46 | 0.04 |
| Type of occupation | Agriculture labourer | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Domestic labourer | 30 | 0.25 | 0.02, 0.49 | 0.03 |
| Income/month of child labourers | ≤BDT2000 | 41 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT2001−5000 | 17 | 0.01 | −0.31, 0.31 | 0.99 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 12 | 0.25 | −0.15, 0.65 | 0.22 |
| Working hours | 1−4 hrs/day | 5 | Reference | - | - |
| | 5−8 hrs/day | 48 | −0.28 | −0.78, 0.22 | 0.26 |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 23 | 0.23 | −0.03, 0.48 | 0.08 |
| Living arrangements | Sleep at employer's house/workplace | 35 | Reference | - | - |
| | Return to home | 63 | −0.04 | −0.27, 0.19 | 0.74 |
| Mothers' education | No formal education | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 21 | 0.04 | −0.23, 0.31 | 0.78 |
| Fathers' occupation | Driver | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | Farmer | 47 | 0.08 | −0.21, 0.37 | 0.59 |
| | Business | 15 | −0.02 | −0.39, 0.35 | 0.92 |
| | Unemployed | 15 | 0.18 | −0.19, 0.55 | 0.34 |
| Land ownership | No | 74 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 21 | −0.21 | −0.48, 0.05 | 0.12 |
| Substance abuse among co-workers | No | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 37 | 0.05 | −0.18, 0.28 | 0.66 |
| Substance abuse among family members | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 36 | 0.19 | −0.03, 0.42 | 0.09 |

**Note:** *β* - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI- Confidence Interval, P- Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 6.4.1.4 Simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers

Table 6.9 indicates that the higher the income of child labourers, the lower the risk of financial exploitation. Child labourers who were earning BDT5001−8000, had a reduced risk of financial exploitation by a score of 0.07 ($\beta = -0.07$, CI = −0.12, −0.02, $p = 0.01$) compared to those who had an income level between BDT0 and BDT2000 per month. School-enrolled child labourers were more likely to be exploited financially than unenrolled child labourers.

Table 6.9: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | 95% CI | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 10−12 years | 32 | Reference | - | - |
| | 13−15 years | 68 | −0.08 | −0.19, 0.03 | 0.13 |
| Current schooling | Not enrolled | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Enrolled | 38 | 0.12 | 0.02, 0.22 | 0.02 |
| Type of occupation | Agriculture labourer | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Domestic labourer | 30 | −0.01 | −0.09, 0.12 | 0.86 |
| Income/month of child labourers | ≤BDT2000 | 41 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT2001−5000 | 17 | −0.03 | −0.09, 0.03 | 0.32 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 12 | −0.07 | −0.12, −0.02 | 0.01 |
| Working hours | 1−4 hrs/day | 5 | Reference | - | - |
| | 5−8 hrs/day | 48 | 0.19 | −0.05, 0.43 | 0.12 |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 23 | −0.03 | −0.15, 0.09 | 0.67 |
| Living arrangements | Sleep at employer's house/workplace | 35 | Reference | - | - |
| | Return to home | 63 | 0.02 | −0.09, 0.13 | 0.71 |
| Mothers' education | No formal education | 70 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 21 | −0.07 | −0.21, 0.06 | 0.27 |
| Fathers' occupation | Driver | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | Farmer | 47 | 0.05 | −0.09, 0.18 | 0.48 |
| | Business | 15 | 0.05 | −0.12, 0.22 | 0.57 |
| | Unemployed | 15 | −0.01 | −0.18, 0.16 | 0.93 |
| Land ownership | No | 74 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 21 | −00.02 | −0.14, 0.11 | 0.73 |
| Substance abuse among co-workers | No | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 37 | −0.02 | −0.13, 0.08 | 0.69 |
| Substance abuse among family members | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 36 | −0.09 | −0.19, 0.02 | 0.11 |

**Note:** $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

### 6.4.2 Multiple linear regression analysis of potential risk factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers

Following the potential indicators identified in the simple linear regression models, a multivariate analysis was performed to gain specific understanding about the significant predictors of the maltreatment of child labourers.

#### 6.4.2.1 Risk factors associated with physical maltreatment of child labourers

Figure 6.1 summarises the findings of the multivariable linear regression analysis of risk factors related to the child labourers' socioeconomic characteristics and their exposure to PM. The multivariate analysis shows that three predictor variables (increased income, longer working hours and more land owned by family) are significantly associated with their exposure to PM. The predictor variables were able to explain 54% of the variability in the PM of child labourers. The findings of the study indicate that child labourers are more likely to suffer PM as their income increases. The study findings reveal that the risk of exposure to PM increases by a score of 0.37 ($\beta$ = 0.37, 95% CI = 0.02, 0.75, $p$ = 0.04) for child labourers earning BDT5001 to 8000 compared to child labourers receiving BDT0−2000. In addition, child labourers who spent more hours at work were also more likely to encounter PM, as illustrated in Figure 6.1. The figure demonstrates that child labourers who worked 5−8 hours a day had an increased risk of experiencing PM by a score of 0.52 ($\beta$ = 0.52, 95% CI = 0.18, 0.86, $p$ = 0.04) compared with those who worked between 1 and 4 hours a day. The study identified that the more land a family owns, the greater the risk of their child labourers experiencing PM. When families of child labourers occupied additional land outside of their household land compared to families with no additional land, child labourers of these families became more prone to experiencing PM by a score of 0.25 ($\beta$ = 0.25, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.48, $p$ = 0.04).

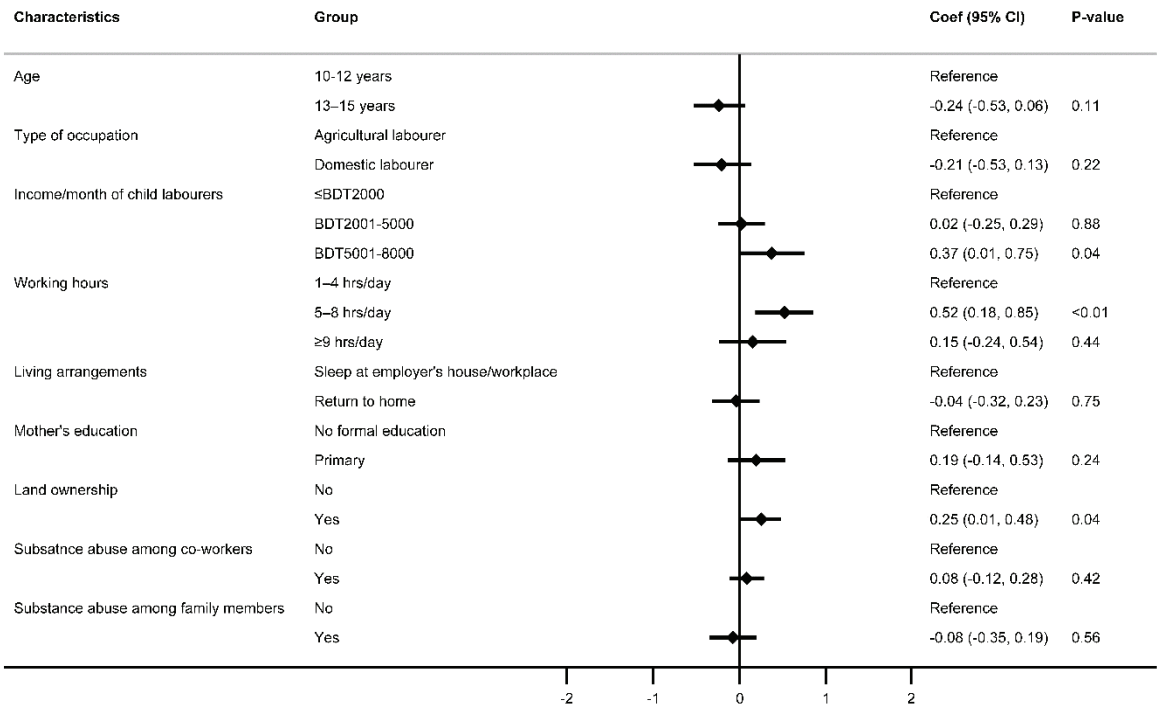


Figure 6.1: Forest plot of the risk factors associated with physical maltreatment reported by child labourers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

### 6.4.2.2 Risk factors associated with emotional maltreatment of child labourers

The multiple linear regression analysis of the characteristics of child labourers and their exposure to EM is illustrated in Figure 6.2. The forest plot illustrates that both mothers' level of education and land ownership pattern are significant predictors of EM of child labourers. More than 17% of the variability in the outcome variable was explained by these predictor variables. There is an inverse relationship between the EM of child labourers and the level of education of their mothers. As illustrated in Figure 6.2, the children of mothers who had a primary level of education had a reduced risk of being neglected by 0.29 points ($\beta = -0.29$, 95% CI = −0.52, −0.07, $p = 0.01$) as compared to those with mothers who had not attended school. Family land ownership pattern also posed a risk of EM to child labourers. The risk of experiencing EM increased by a score of 0.24 among child labourers when their family-owned additional land outside of their household land ($\beta = 0.24$, 95% CI = 0.02, 0.47, $p = 0.03$)

compared to those who had no additional land outside of their household land. However, child labourers' current schooling, level of income, and drug addiction among co-workers were not significantly associated with their experience of EM.

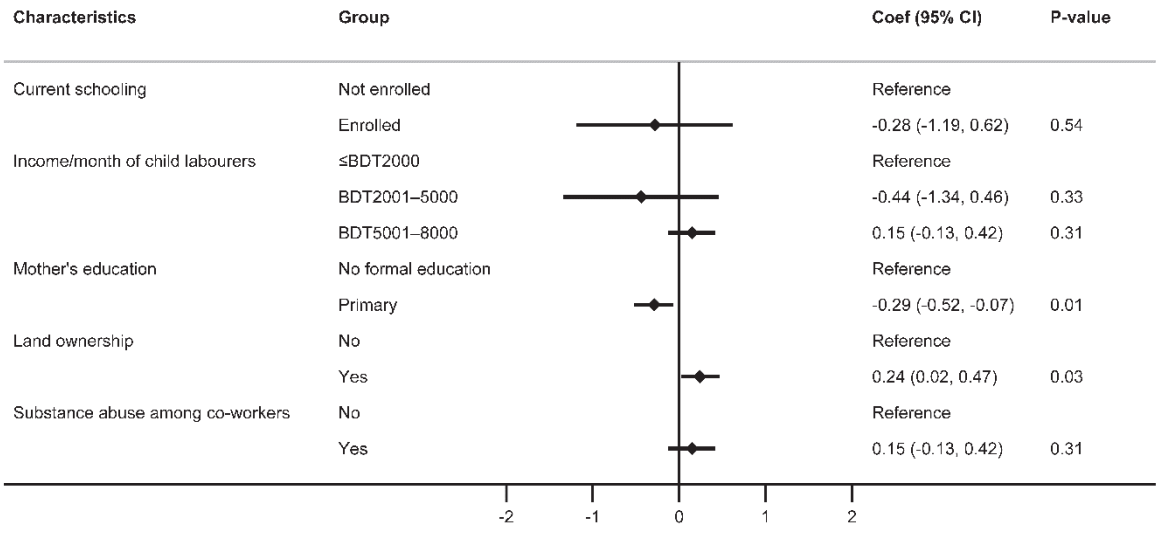


Figure 6.2: Forest plot presenting the risk factors associated with emotional maltreatment reported by child labourers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

### 6.4.2.3 Risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers

The findings of the multiple linear regression analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics of child labourers and their experience of neglect are presented in Figure 6.3. This figure shows that the children's working hours and family land ownership patterns are significantly associated with their exposure to neglect. The predictor variables explained 34% of the variance in the neglect of child labourers. The longer the working hours, the higher the child labourers' exposure to neglect. The figure demonstrates that child labourers who have been working for extended hours (5−8 hours/day) were at an increased risk of being neglected by a score of 0.51 ($\beta = 0.51$, 95% CI = 0.14, 0.88, $p < 0.01$) compared to those who were working 1−4 hours/day. Neglect of child labourers is inversely related to families' land ownership, the higher the land ownership, the lower the neglect. The study found that child labourers with

additional land owned by their family had a reduced risk of being neglected by a score of 0.27 ($\beta$ = −0.27, 95% CI = −0.53, −0.01, $p$ = 0.04) compared to those whose family did not own additional land. However, child labourers' age, current schooling, occupation, and drug addiction among family members were not significantly associated with their experience of neglect.

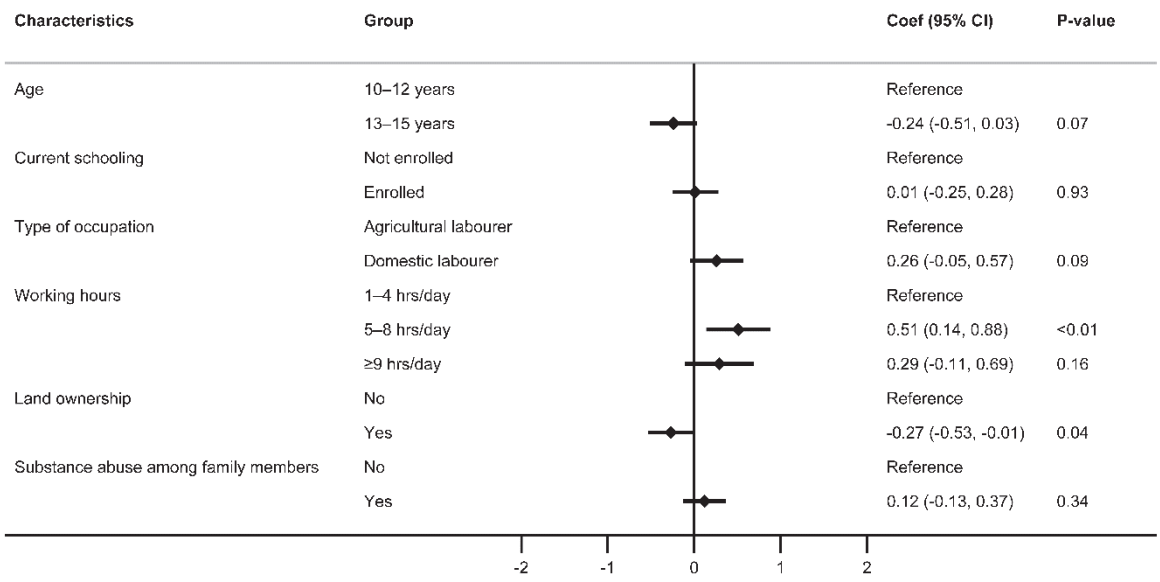


Figure 6.3: Forest plot presenting the risk factors associated with the neglect reported by child labourers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P value significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 6.4.2.4 Risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers

Results of the multiple linear regression analysis of factors associated with the child labourers' exposure to financial maltreatment are shown in Figure 6.4. It is noteworthy that the predictor variables accounted for 32% of the variance in this model. The study revealed that the income of child labourers is inversely linked to the child labourers' exposure to financial exploitation; the higher the income, the lower the financial exploitation among child labourers. Figure 6.4 illustrates that child labourers who were earning BDT5001−8000 per month had a reduced risk of being financially exploited by a score of 0.22 ($\beta$: −0.22, 95% CI: −0.39, −0.06, $p < 0.01$) compared to those who were earning BDT0−2000 per month. The variables such as age,

current schooling, working hours of child labourers, and drug addiction among their family members were not significantly associated with their experience of financial exploitation.

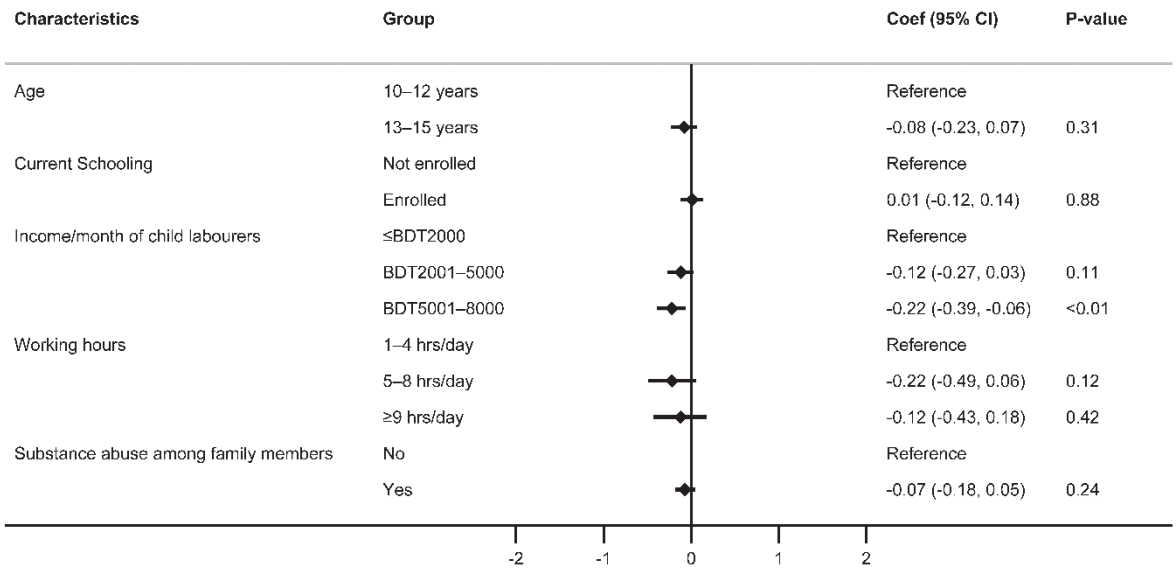


Figure 6.4: Forest plot presenting the risk factors associated with the financial exploitation reported by child labourers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

## 6.5 Impact of Maltreatment of Child Labourers on Psychological Health

The focus of this section is the elucidation of the findings of the third objective, which examined the effects of multiple victimisation experiences on the likelihood of suffering from psychological impairment. In order to report on psychological health, the study used the validated PSC (both PSC and Y-PSC) (Jellinek et al., 1988). A two-part exploration of the psychological functioning of maltreated child labourers was conducted. The first part demonstrates the structure of the PSC tools, with the second section presenting the results on the association between exposure to maltreatment (PM, EM, neglect and financial exploitation) and outcome variables (PSC components). Presented below is a summary of the method followed by an explanation and interpretation of the findings and recommendations for future action.

### 6.5.1 Findings of the psychological impairment using the children-reported Paediatric Symptom Checklist scale

The descriptive analysis resulted in an overall mean of sum of Y-PSC score for child labourers is 27.87 (*SD* = 7.16; range = 0−33). In accordance with the baseline cut-off score for Y-PSC, 46% of child labourers scored 30 or higher, which indicates a high rate of psychological impairment warranting further investigation. The internal consistency of the scale items is satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha = 0.72$).

#### *6.5.1.1* Factor analysis of the Children-reported Paediatric Symptom Checklist

In order to determine the factor structure of the study, EFA was conducted, which met all the assumptions necessary for establishing a model. Notably, the process reduces a large number of items to a smaller number of factors. Prior to conducting the EFA, the study was first assessed to ascertain if the sample was appropriate for factor analysis. For factor analysis, a sample size of 80−200 is recommended (Stoppelbein et al., 2005; Tabachnick et al., 2007). The ideal sample size, however, is generally considered to be 150 or more (Pallant, 2020). This study measured KMO sampling adequacy, and it was found to be nearly 0.6, which suggests that the sample size is in line with the analysis. Moreover, the study ran a Bartlett's test of sphericity, which is significant ($\chi 2 = 390.29$, $p < 0.001$) and implies that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, thereby, the principal component analysis can be applicable (Field, 2017). It was confirmed that the data satisfied the linearity assumptions by checking some correlations among several items of the PSC.

A total of 35 items were evaluated in an EFA of the Y-PSC, but 15 failed to meet the factor loading criteria and were eliminated from the analysis. These were 'complaints of aches or pain', 'tire easily and little energy', 'have trouble with teacher', 'less interested in school', 'daydream too much', 'distract easily', 'are afraid of new situations', 'are irritable and angry', 'feel hopeless', 'have trouble concentrating', 'down on yourself', 'visit doctor with doctor

finding nothing wrong', 'take unnecessary risks', 'act younger than children your age', and 'do not show feelings'. These items resulted in lower communality values than the selected absolute value of 0.30, and the individual estimation of the Cronbach's alpha level of these items was also insufficient. The alpha coefficient of all these items was below 0.4. It was speculated that the removal of these items would result in an increase in variance (Pallant, 2020). Notably, the 3-component solution accounted for 32.06% of the variance, as shown in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10: Values of initial eigenvalues and the rotated sum of squares loadings with the amount of variance explained by the three components

| **Component** | **Initial eigenvalues** | | | **Rotation sum of squared loadings** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Total** | **% Variance** | **Cumulative %** | **Total** | **% Variance** | **Cumulative %** |
| I | 3.036 | 13.200 | 13.200 | 2.928 | 12.728 | 12.728 |
| II | 2.514 | 10.930 | 24.130 | 2.594 | 11.278 | 24.006 |
| II | 1.826 | 7.938 | 32.068 | 1.854 | 8.062 | 32.068 |

A reliability estimate, as measured by alpha coefficients, was also used to determine whether to retain the remaining 20 items. For instance, retention or extraction determines an acceptable coefficient for factor 1, which is 0.71. Table 6.11 presents the factor loadings for the items allocated among the three components as well as the Cronbach's alpha level for each component.

Table 6.11: Factor loadings for the Children-reported Paediatric Symptom Checklist

| Y-PSC items | Internalising factors | Externalising factors | Attention | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. Want to be with parent more than before | 0.63 | | | |
| 27. Seem to be having less fun | 0.59 | | | |
| 21. Have trouble sleeping | 0.53 | | | |
| 22. Worry a lot | 0.51 | | | 0.71 |
| 2. Spend more time alone | 0.51 | | | |
| 24. Feel that you are bad | 0.48 | | | |
| 4. Fidgety, unable to sit still | 0.48 | | | |
| 26. Get hurt frequently | 0.46 | | | |
| 11. Feel sad, unhappy | 0.46 | | | |
| 33. Blame others for your troubles | | 0.68 | | |
| 32. Tease others | | 0.59 | | |
| 34. Take things that do not belong to you | | 0.57 | | |
| 31. Do not understand other people's feelings | | 0.53 | | 0.61 |
| 7. Act as if driven by motor | | 0.47 | | |
| 15. Less interested in friends | | 0.46 | | |
| 29. Do not listen to rules | | 0.45 | | |
| 18. School grades dropping | | | 0.64 | |
| 17. Absent from school | | | 0.59 | 0.43 |
| 35. Refuse to share | | | 0.49 | |
| 16. Fight with other children | | | 0.48 | |

Table 6.11 presents a rotated 3-factor solution, which demonstrates the items under investigation have high loadings. The table shows the delineated cluster of items in the 3-factor structure. The allocation of different items into particular components assisted in labelling the components as internalising factors, externalising factors and attention factors. Of note, the

factor loadings value in the table demonstrates that all of them met the 0.30 cut-off criteria. The included items in each component correlating well with each other, as presented in the transformation matrix. Table 6.11 shows that there are nine items substantially loaded in the first factor including 'wanting to be with parent more than before', 'seem to be having less fun', 'have trouble sleeping', 'worry a lot, spend more time alone', 'feel that you are bad', 'fidgety and unable to sit still', 'get hurt frequently', and 'feel sad and unhappy', which were characterised as internalising factors. Notably, the highest five items of internalising factor had loadings above 0.5, which suggests that these factors contribute higher to this component. Seven items corresponded to the second factor, which is the externalising psychosocial factor. These are 'blame others for your troubles', 'tease others', 'take things that do not belong to you', 'do not understand other people's feelings', 'act as if driven by motor', 'less interested in friends', and 'do not listen to rules'. Four of these items have loadings above 0.5. The third component covered four items that correspond to the attention subscale. These items are 'school grades dropping', 'absent from school', 'refuse to share' and 'fight with other children'. Table 6.11 illustrates that only two of these obtained loadings above 0.5. The identified components further exhibited a varied level of reliability. Internal consistency measures for internalising and externalising factors were satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha = 0.71). For externalising factors, the measured level of Cronbach's alpha (0.61) is also deemed acceptable. Apart from these acceptable consistency levels, the attention subscale of the Y-PSC resulted in a lower level of Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.43$). Considering the limitations contained with sample size and data, the attention subscale is also taken into account as a potential component.

A brief descriptive summary of the latent constructs is shown below in Table 6.12. The mean extracted items under each construct show that child labourers, who were victimised through a number of forms of maltreatment, are mostly affected by internalised psychosocial difficulties followed by externalised symptoms and attention difficulties.

Table 6.12: Descriptive statistics of the factor structure of Youth-reported Paediatric Symptom Checklist

| **Items** | **Mean** | ***SD* (range)** |
|---|---|---|
| Internalising | 7.57 | 3.23 (0−14) |
| Externalising | 4.43 | 2.66 (0−11) |
| Attention | 3.71 | 1.83 (0−8) |

It is apparent that the factor structure is derived from empirical studies. Therefore, it is crucial to test the construct validity, so that those items that are consistent with each other under respective factors or constructs can be identified. It is imperative to use powerful tests to evaluate how well the data fits with the model designed using latent constructs (factors). CFA can be an effective tool in this regard as an extension of EFA (Weston & Gore, 2006).

#### *6.5.1.2* Confirmatory factor analysis

The study primarily focused on the correlation matrix values among the retained observed items, which indicated a moderate intercorrelation among the subscale items. Although the items within each of the retained 20 items are not highly correlated with one another, the items within each component are highly related. These are presented in Table 6.14. This indicates that every latent construct has its own independent characteristics, as items within constructs are highly correlated. These are also manifested in the measurement model of a 3-factor solution comprising 20 items given in Figure 6.5. The model fit indices are presented in Table 6.13. Overall, the estimates of the model goodness-of-fit can be considered acceptable in spite of some limitations. The scaled chi-square goodness-of-fit is measured as significant at a P value of 0.02. The measurement model with three constructs resulted that $\chi 2/df$ (CMIN/DF) is 1.23, which is much lower than the cut-off level of 3.0 as recommended, and the RMSEA is 0.04, which is closer to the ideal level of zero and lower than the recommended level of 0.08, PCFI at 0.61 which is greater than the recommended 0.5 (Jiang et al., 2020). All these indices met the recommended threshold value of model goodness-of-fit except the CFI. The CFI value

(0.81) was lower than the recommended level of 0.9. However, as mentioned in the limitations, the study had a small sample size. Of note, the emerging limited number of items from the EFA approach could affect this finding. Besides, there is an argument that analysing a perfect fit is not applicable to social sciences given the complexity in the scale and relationships (Cadell et al., 2003). Moreover, due to low sample size and the existence of missing values, modification of the observed variables was not feasible in order to adjust the model fit measures. Taking into account the statement and limitations, the study accepted the fit indices as appropriate.

Table 6.13: Estimates for goodness-of-fit

| **Goodness-of-fit statistics** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| PCMIN/*df* | 1.26 |
| Root mean squared error of approximation | 0.04 |
| Comparative fit index | 0.81 |
| Parsimony comparative fit index | 0.61 |

The measurement model generated from the CFA is presented in Figure 6.5. The 20 psychosocial symptom indicators were observed as loaded effectively onto the latent constructs internalising factors, and externalising factors but poorly loaded onto the attention construct. The modified factor loadings between observed variables and latent constructs in the CFA show that for internalising factors, all observed variables such as PI23, PI27, PI21, PI22, PI2, PI24, PI4 and PI11 were satisfactory loaded with values above 0.4 except the item 'get hurt frequently' (PI26). For the internalising latent construct, the standardised regression weights were between 0.34 (PI26: get hurt frequently) to 0.51 (PI23: want to be with parent more than before). Items 'want to be with parent more than before' (PI23) and 'seems to be having less fun' (PI27) had the highest standardised regression weights including 0.51 and 0.5 respectively for the internalising factor. The externalising observed variable 'blame others for troubles' (PI33) scored the highest factor loadings (0.70) among all the observed variables. The regression weights for the externalising factor were moderate, between 0.25 and 0.7.

Furthermore, four other observed variables had latent constructs that had values above 0.4. These were the externalising factors (PI32: tease others, PI34: take things that do not belong to you, PI31: do not understand other people's feelings and PI15: less interested in friends). In comparison to other items of latent constructs, the factor loadings for the attention scale items were minimal as shown by the standardised regression weights between −0.01 and 3.81. The item 'absent from school' (PI17) was highly loaded (3.81) within the attention construct. The observed variable 'refuse to share' showed a negative standardised regression weight (−0.01) for the attention subscale. Despite removing this negative item from the model, no difference was observed in the model.

Further, Figure 6.5 demonstrates that very weak correlations exist among the latent constructs. The relationship between two intergroup psychometric constructs was also observed as negatively correlated, including internalising factor and attention ($\phi = -0.04$) and externalising factor and attention ($\phi = -0.01$). The other pair, internalising factor and externalising factor, was observed as positive but poorly correlated ($\phi = 0.12$). It follows that there is heterogeneity among the constructs. Therefore, it would appear that these latent constructs are distinct and are not mutually homogeneous.

Table 6.14: Correlation coefficient matrix of the items resulted from exploratory factor analysis of child labourers-reported Paediatric Symptom Checklist scale

| Item | PI2 | PI4 | PI7 | PI8 | PI11 | PI15 | PI16 | PI17 | PI18 | PI21 | PI22 | PI23 | PI24 | PI25 | PI26 | PI27 | PI28 | PI29 | PI31 | PI32 | PI33 | PI34 | PI35 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PI2 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI4 | 0.43 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI7 | 0.13 | 0.20 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI8 | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.15 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI11 | 0.21 | 0.09 | -0.02 | 0.04 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI15 | 0.02 | 0.19 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.21 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI16 | -0.17 | 0.14 | -0.01 | 0.29 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI17 | -0.14 | -0.12 | 0.01 | -0.04 | -0.05 | 0 | 0.25 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI18 | 0.09 | -0.11 | -0.11 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.54 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI21 | 0.25 | 0.13 | 0.13 | 0.06 | 0.21 | 0.01 | 0.01 | -0.10 | 0.07 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI22 | 0.15 | 0.14 | -0.18 | -0.09 | 0.31 | 0.09 | -0.05 | -0.03 | -0.12 | 0.24 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI23 | 0.16 | 0.31 | -0.12 | -0.24 | 0.16 | 0.37 | -0.15 | -0.04 | 0.01 | 0.11 | 0.32 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI24 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.09 | -0.12 | 0.18 | 0.05 | 0.09 | -0.02 | -0.13 | 0.16 | 0.18 | 0.21 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI25 | 0.23 | 0.21 | 0.11 | 0.04 | -0.02 | 0.02 | 0.07 | -0.01 | 0.08 | 0.17 | -0.04 | 0.13 | 0.18 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | |
| PI26 | 0.03 | 0.09 | 0.01 | -0.05 | 0.15 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.0 | 0.07 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 0.22 | 0.13 | 0.12 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | |
| PI27 | 0.09 | 0.09 | .001 | -0.09 | 0.21 | -0.01 | 0.11 | -0.12 | -0.03 | 0.26 | 0.19 | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 1.0 | | | | | | | |
| PI28 | 0.08 | 0.19 | 0.09 | 0.04 | 0.11 | 0.18 | 0.07 | -0.18 | -0.04 | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.25 | 0.06 | -0.01 | 0.25 | 0.12 | 1.0 | | | | | | |
| PI29 | -0.21 | .013 | 0.11 | 0.15 | 0.01 | 0.26 | 0.22 | 0.03 | 0.01 | -0.16 | -0.07 | -0.03 | 0.09 | -0.06 | -0.11 | -0.05 | 0.27 | 1.0 | | | | | |
| PI31 | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0.32 | 0.22 | -0.02 | 0.21 | 0.09 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.04 | -0.05 | -0.07 | 0.06 | -0.07 | 0.05 | -0.05 | 0.08 | 0.19 | 1.0 | | | | |
| PI32 | -0.07 | 0.11 | 0.08 | 0.14 | -0.01 | 0.25 | 0.12 | -0.06 | -0.04 | -0.11 | -0.11 | 0.03 | 0.03 | -0.07 | -0.09 | -0.16 | -0.08 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 1.0 | | | |
| PI33 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.04 | 0.13 | 0.29 | 0.11 | -0.03 | -0.08 | -0.16 | -0.09 | 0.07 | 0.22 | -0.01 | -0.11 | 0.02 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.24 | 0.45 | 1.0 | | |
| PI34 | 0.21 | 0.16 | 0.33 | 0.06 | -0.05 | .06 | -0.05 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.02 | -0.10 | 0.13 | 0.16 | 0.11 | -0.04 | -0.03 | 0.11 | 0.12 | 0.22 | 0.25 | 0.35 | 1.0 | |
| PI35 | 0.09 | 0.08 | -0.02 | 0.16 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.15 | 0.04 | 0.14 | 0.14 | -0.09 | 0.13 | 0.14 | 0.27 | 0.05 | 0.16 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.11 | 0.08 | -0.06 | 0.24 | 1.0 |

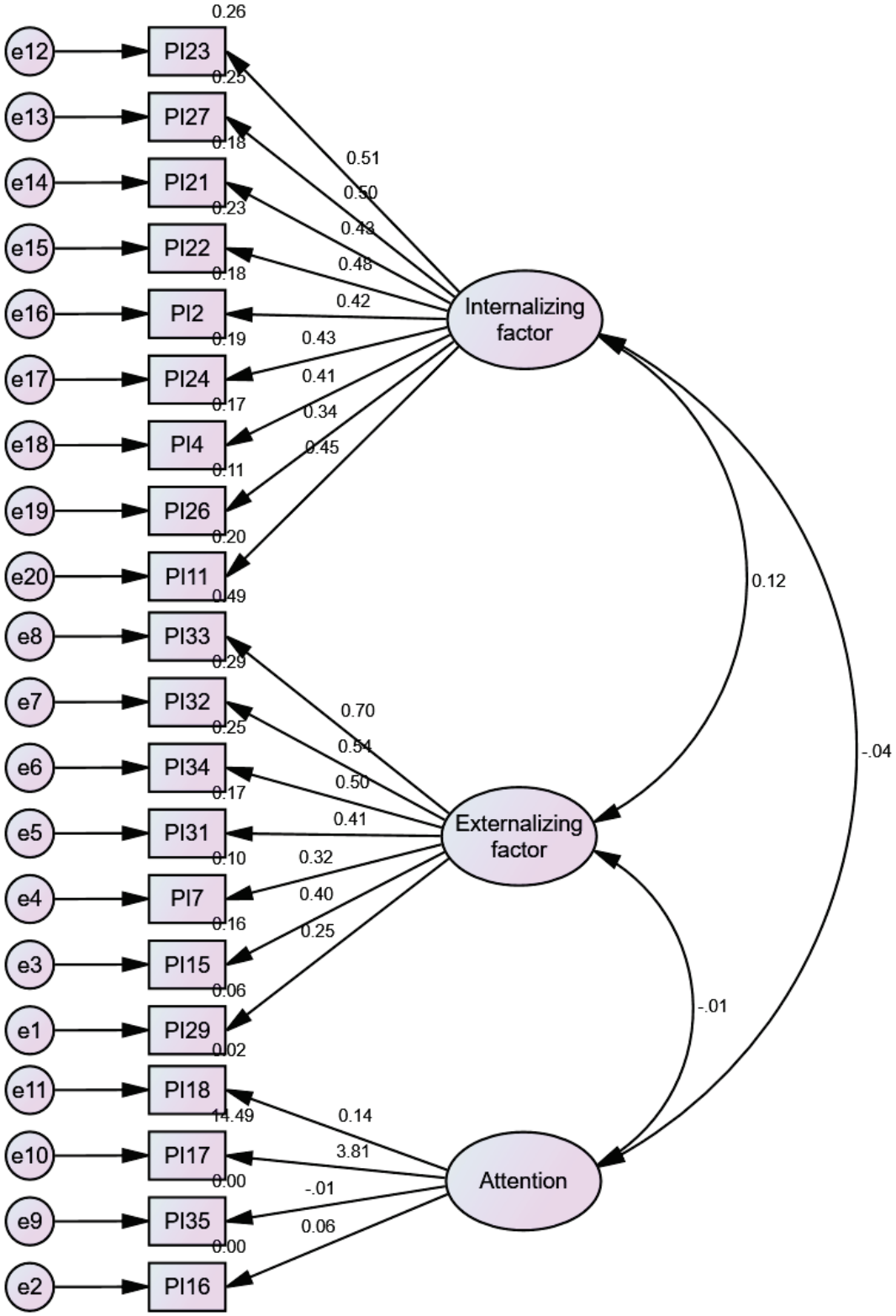


Figure 6.5: Measurement model of components associated with psychosocial impairments

#### *6.5.1.3* Multivariate analysis between latent constructs (factors) resulting from the exploratory factor analysis and different maltreatment forms reported by child labourers

It is evident that the psychosocial functioning of children is largely affected by exposure to maltreatment during childhood (Zhao et al., 2019). The study appraised the substantial underlying psychosocial difficulties through a dimension reduction of the PSC scale items, and an effort was further taken to conduct a multivariate regression analysis in order to assess mediating effects between different forms of maltreatment and psychosocial complications among child labourers.

The effect of four specified forms of child maltreatment on the internalised factor of psychosocial impairment is presented in Table 6.15. Despite being subjected to maltreatment, the multivariate regression analysis indicates that child labourers did not respond to any internalised psychosocial symptom criterion. Surprisingly, the EM experiences of child labourers were found to be inversely associated with their exposure to internalised psychosocial impairments. Table 6.15 illustrates that the child labourers who have experienced EM have a reduced rate of screening for internalised psychosocial symptoms by a score of 0.16 ($\beta$ = −0.16, CI = −0.31, −0.01, $p$ = 0.04).

Table 6.15: Multivariate regression analysis between internalising factor and maltreatment forms

| Item | Internalising psychosocial factor | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Co-efficient | 95% CI | P |
| Physical maltreatment | −0.02 | −0.17, 0.13 | 0.78 |
| Psychological maltreatment | −0.16 | −0.31, –0.01 | 0.04 |
| Neglect | −0.11 | −0.24, 0.03 | 0.13 |
| Financial exploitation | 0.03 | −0.27, 0.33 | 0.83 |

Note: Coefficient - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

Table 6.16 presents the multivariate regression analysis of the externalising psychosocial factor actuated by different forms of maltreatment including PM, EM, neglect and financial exploitation of child labourers. The study results suggest that only psychologically maltreated child labourers are more prone to display externalised psychosocial symptom criterion. Table 6.16 illustrates that when child labourers are exposed to psychological victimisation, they become more likely to be screened for externalised psychosocial difficulties by 0.19 times ($\beta$ = 0.19, CI = 0.03, 0.36, $p$ = 0.02). Other than that relationship, the externalising construct does not appear to be significantly associated with PM, neglect or financial exploitation of child labourers.

Table 6.16: Multivariate regression analysis between externalising factor and maltreatment forms

| **Item** | **Externalising factor** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coefficient** | **95% CI** | **P** |
| Physical maltreatment | 0.09 | −0.06, 0.26 | 0.24 |
| Psychological maltreatment | 0.19 | 0.03, 0.36 | 0.02 |
| Neglect | −0.05 | −0.19, 0.11 | 0.54 |
| Financial exploitation | 0.21 | −0.11, 0.53 | 0.08 |

Note: Coefficient - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

Table 6.17 provides an overview of the relationship between the maltreatment of child labourers and attention associated with psychosocial difficulties, showing that the attention problems of child labourers do not appear to be significantly related to any particular form of maltreatment.

Table 6.17: Multivariate regression analysis between attention-associated psychosocial problems and forms of maltreatment

| Item | Attention | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coefficient** | **95% CI** | **P** |
| Physical maltreatment | 0.08 | −0.12, 0.29 | 0.42 |
| Emotional maltreatment | −0.12 | −0.32, 0.09 | 0.25 |
| Neglect | 0.06 | −0.11, 0.25 | 0.55 |
| Financial exploitation | −0.28 | −0.68, 0.12 | 0.16 |

Note: Coefficient - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

## 6.6 Conclusion

It was identified from the child labourers' reported data that child labourers are highly susceptible to experiencing EM and neglect both at home and the workplace. The study utilised both simple and multiple linear regression models to explore the possible determinants of child labour maltreatment. The multivariate model facilitated the exploration of the more robust and attractive predictive variables across the four defined models. Child labourers' individual and household income, working hours, family land ownership pattern, living arrangements and parents' education significantly influenced their risk of exposure to maltreatment. In particular, the study further indicated that both internalised and externalised psychosocial difficulties are largely influenced by child labourers' experience of EM.

# CHAPTER 7: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PARENTS AND EMPLOYERS OF CHILD LABOURERS

## 7.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a prevalence picture of child labour maltreatment from the perspective of parents and employers. The risk factors for maltreatment assessed by determining the relationship between sociodemographic and economic characteristics among parents and employers of child labourers and the distinct maltreatment trajectory of child labourers. Finally, a psychosocial evaluation of the child labour victims was conducted based on the data reported by their parents.

## 7.2 Sociodemographic and Economic Characteristics of Parents of Child Labourers

This study investigated the personal and household characteristics of parents of child labourers. Note that these parents were not related to the child labourers who were interviewed as reported in Chapter 6. Table 7.1 shows that 55% of parents had not attended school. Half of the men were engaged as agricultural labourers followed by 34.7% working in the service sector. Over half of the mothers of child labourers were housewives (52.7%) with 62.2% reporting that their spouses had never attended school. Income levels of the parents ranged from 63.3% with an individual monthly income of BDT5001−10,000, with 45% reporting that their monthly household income fell under BDT10,001−19,999. Around 63% of parents said they owned land outside of their household land, although nearly 52.4% said the plot was less than 0.5 bigha[iv] land. Forty-four per cent of parents disclosed that their children were enrolled in primary school. The majority of parents (86%) said that their children did not live with their employers. A significant number of parents (42.3%) reported that their children had chronic

[iv] The bigha is a traditional unit of measurement of area of land. In Bangladesh, 1 bigha is one-third of an acre Ministry of Land. (2016). *Standard Land Measurement Rules of Bangladesh*. Retrieved 22 March 2021 from https://minland.gov.bd/site/page.

physical illnesses. Eighty-three per cent reported that they were maltreated as children themselves. Nearly half of the parents were victims of childhood maltreatment between zero and 24 times, followed by 25.8% who were victims between 25 and 49 times. Up to 46% of parents stated that they had a chronic physical illness, while 87% responded that they suffered from psychological distress.

Table 7.1: Demographic characteristics of parents of child labourers

| Characteristics | Categories | n (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Parents' education | Primary | 45 (45.0) |
| | No school enrolment | 55 (55.0) |
| Parents' occupation | Agricultural labourer | 50 (51.0) |
| | Service employee | 34 (34.7) |
| | Self-owned businessmen | 14 (14.3) |
| | Unemployed | - |
| Parents' income/month | BDT1000−5000 | 21 (21.4) |
| | BDT5001−10,000 | 62 (63.3) |
| | BDT10,001−15,000 | 15 (15.3) |
| Parental exposure to childhood maltreatment | Yes | 83 (83.0) |
| Times of parental exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤24 | 48 (49.5) |
| | 25−49 | 25 (25.8) |
| | 50−74 | 24 (24.7) |
| Parental exposure to chronic physical illness | Yes | 46 (46.0) |
| Parental exposure to chronic psychological disorder | Yes | 87 (87.0) |
| Spouses' education | Primary | 37 (37.8) |
| | No formal education | 61 (62.2) |
| Spouses' occupation | Service employee | 32 (35.2) |
| | Housewife | 48 (52.7) |
| | Unemployed | 11 (12.1) |
| Household income/month | BDT5000−10,000 | 36 (36.0) |
| | BDT10,001−20,000 | 45 (45.0) |
| | ≥BDT20,001 | 19 (19.0) |
| Land ownership | Yes | 63 (63.0) |
| Amount of land owned | ≤0.5 biga | 22 (52.4) |
| | 0.6−1 bigha | 20 (47.6) |
| Education of working children | Primary | 44 (44.0) |
| | Secondary | 40 (40.0) |
| | No formal education | 16 (16.0) |
| Chronic physical illness of children | Yes | 42 (42.3) |
| Living arrangement of children | Return to home | 86 (86.0) |
| | Employer's house/workplace | 14 (14.0) |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, 1 bigha = one-third of an acre

## 7.3 Sociodemographic and Economic Characteristics of Employers of Child Labourers

It is assumed that the social and demographic characteristics of employers, including child labourers, will impact on the quality of their relationships, social attachments and responsibility towards employees (Metzner & Fischer, 2010; Rosen et al., 2019). The cohort of employers who completed the survey were not linked or related to the child labourers or parents who were interviewed.

Table 7.2 shows that the majority of employers (48%) had completed secondary education. The employers were mostly agricultural farmers (85.3%). The majority of employers (48%) said that they employed two−four workers in their workplace. Three-quarters of employers revealed that the age of employees fell between 15 and 17 years. Notably, nearly half of the employers said that the young employees working for them toiled more than 9 hours per day. Despite these long working hours, the majority (58%) paid the child labourers between BDT2001 and 5000 per month. Of note, 43% of employers pointed out that their child employees often stayed at the workplace at night. Additionally, the majority of employers (76.9%) assumed that child employees had feelings of psychological distress. Nearly half of the employers (42%) stated that the children had chronic physical illnesses. Additional to these physical complaints, 35.4% noted that the children frequently suffered from fever and headaches.

More than 85% of employers were victimised during their childhood, with 46.1% revealing that they experienced severe maltreatment between 25 and 49 times. A few proportions (13.3%) of employers stated that they had a chronic physical illness, while 74.5% responded that they suffered from psychological difficulties.

Table 7.2**:** Demographic characteristics of employers of child labourers

| **Characteristics** | **Categories** | **n (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| Level of education | Primary | 31 (31.0) |
| | Secondary | 48 (48.0) |
| | No formal education | 21 (21.0) |
| Current occupation | Agricultural labourer | 81 (85.3) |
| | Service employee | 14 (14.7) |
| Employers' exposure to childhood maltreatment | Yes | 84 (85.7) |
| Times of employers' exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤24 | 30 (33.7) |
| | 25−49 | 41 (46.1) |
| | 50−74 | 18 (20.2) |
| Employers' exposure to chronic physical illness | Yes | 13 (13.3) |
| Employers' exposure to psychological disorders | Yes | 73 (74.5) |
| Number of employees | Less than 2 | 33 (33.0) |
| | 2−4 | 48 (48.0) |
| | 5−9 | 19 (19.0) |
| Age of child employees | 10−14 years | 22 (24.7) |
| | 15−17 years | 67 (75.3) |
| Working hours of child labourers | 5−8 hrs/day | 54 (54.0) |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 46 (46.0) |
| Income/month of child employees | ≥BDT2000 | 24 (24.0) |
| | BDT2001−5000 | 58 (58.0) |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 18 (18.0) |
| Child labourers' exposure to psychological disorders | Yes | 70 (76.9) |
| Child labourers' exposure to physical illness | Yes | 41 (42.0) |
| Type of physical illness | Fever and headache | 23 (35.4) |
| | Musculoskeletal disorder | 14 (21.5) |
| | Malnutrition | 12 (18.5) |
| | Dermatological problem | 16 (24.6) |
| Living arrangements of child labourers | Often | 43 (43.0) |
| | Sometimes | 23 (23.0) |
| | Never | 34 (34.0) |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing

## 7.4 Prevalence of Maltreatment of Child Labourers Aged 10−17 Years Reported by Parents

The study primarily focused on the prevalence of child labour maltreatment over the past year, both at workplaces and in the home.

### *7.4.1 Physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents*

Table 7.3 shows that 42.7% of parents reported that their children were victimised three−five times through being hit on the buttocks with an object in the past year. Likewise, 34.9% of parents revealed that their children had been hit up elsewhere to three−five times with objects in the past year, but not on the buttocks. The parents were also aware of victimisation by twisting the child's ear. Almost 35.6% of parents stated that their children had been victimised through this type of maltreatment three−five times in the past year, and 22.2% reported that this had occurred six−ten times. Over 35% of parents reported that their children were victimised once or twice by being hit on the head with a knuckle or the back of the hand during the past year. The study found that 39.4% of parents stated that their children had been victimised three−five times by the pulling of hair in the past year, while 22.3% of parents said that this happened once or twice in the last year. Spanking with bare hands (or something else) is another form of PM that is prevalent among child labourers. The highest number of parents (20.9%) reported that their children experienced this treatment between six and ten times in the past year. When it came to the lifetime prevalence of PM, 15.2% of parents reported that their children were being kicked.

Table 7.3**:** Prevalence of physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

| Maltreatment categories | N | >10 times | 6−10 times | 3−5 times | Once or twice | Not in past year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shook him/her | 84 | - | - | - | 9 (10.7) | 11 (13.1) | 63 (75.0) |
| Hit him or her on the buttocks with an object such as a stick, broom, cane, or belt | 89 | 1 (1.1) | 16 (18.0) | 38 (42.7) | 27 (30.3) | - | - |
| Hit elsewhere (not buttocks) with an object such as a stick, broom, cane, or belt | 83 | 1 (1.2) | 15 (18.1) | 29 (34.9) | 23 (27.7) | 4 (4.8) | 5 (6.0) |
| Twisted his/her ear | 90 | 2 (2.2) | 20 (22.2) | 32 (35.6) | 20 (22.2) | - | 14 (15.6) |
| Hit him/her on head with knuckle or back of the hand | 91 | 1 (1.1) | 11 (12.1) | 20 (22.0) | 32 (35.2) | 3 (3.3) | 14 (15.4) |
| Pulled his/her hair | 94 | 2 (2.1) | 11 (11.7) | 37 (39.4) | 21 (22.3) | 13 (13.8) | 10 (10.6) |
| Kicked him/her with a foot | 92 | 2 (2.2) | 12 (13.0) | 22 (23.9) | 26 (28.3) | 14 (15.2) | 14 (15.2) |
| Put chilli pepper, hot pepper, or spicy food in mouth (to cause pain) | 89 | 1 (1.1) | 2 (2.2) | 10 (11.2) | 10 (11.2) | 4 (4.5) | 62 (69.7) |
| Forced him/her to kneel or stand in a manner that results in pain | 94 | - | 5 (5.3) | 19 (20.2) | 30 (31.9) | - | 40 (42.6) |
| Spanked him/her on the bottom with bare hand | 91 | 2 (2.2) | 19 (20.9) | 19 (20.9) | 19 (20.9) | 7 (7.7) | 22 (24.2) |
| Choked him/her or squeezed his or her neck with hands (or something else) | 97 | - | 1 (1.0) | 3 (3.1) | 26 (26.8) | 2 (2.1) | 64 (66.0) |
| Pinched him/her (parents' self-realisation) | 97 | - | 3 (3.1) | 15 (15.5) | 23 (23.7) | 12 (12.4) | 39 (40.2) |
| Slapped on face or back of head | 96 | 4 (4.2) | 13 (13.5) | 25 (26.0) | 20 (20.8) | 8 (8.3) | 25 (26.0) |
| Used a hand or pillow to prevent breathing | 94 | 2 (2.1) | 10 (10.6) | - | 17 (18.1) | 7 (7.4) | 57 (60.6) |
| Burned, scalded, or branded him/her | 94 | - | 3 (3.2) | 5 (5.3) | 21 (22.3) | 5 (5.3) | 60 (63.8) |
| Hit him or her over and over again with object or fist (beat-up) | 97 | 2 (2.1) | 13 (13.4) | 26 (26.8) | 19 (19.6) | 6 (6.2) | 31 (32.0) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

### 7.4.2 Emotional or psychological maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

The prevalence of EM of child labourers reported by parents is presented in Table 7.4. Children were threatened with abandonment, with 30% of parents reporting that their children had experienced this type of maltreatment between three and five times over the past year. It is noteworthy that 37.8% of parents stated that their children had been yelled at, screamed at or shouted at six−ten times in the past year. Furthermore, 26.5% of them reported that this had occurred up to three−five times in the past year. Approximately 27% of parents reported that their children had been locked out of the house once or twice during the past year. More than 32% of parents reported that their children had been insulted six−ten times in the past year by being called dumb, lazy or other negatives names. The survey also found that 24.7% of parents believed someone had refused to speak with their child labourers three−five times in the past year.

Table 7.4: Prevalence of emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

| Maltreatment categories | N | >10 times | 6−10 times | 3−5 times | Once or twice | Not in past year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Threatened to leave or abandon him/her | 100 | 4 (4.0) | 18 (18.0) | 30 (30.0) | 17 (17.0) | 3 (3.0) | 28 (28.0) |
| Shouted, yelled, or screamed at him/her | 98 | 9 (9.2) | 37 (37.8) | 26 (26.5) | 20 (20.4) | 2 (2.0) | 3 (3.1) |
| Threatened to invoke ghosts or evil spirits, or harmful people | 97 | 7 (7.2) | 16 (16.5) | 16 (16.5) | 12 (12.4) | 2 (2.1) | 7 (7.2) |
| Cursed him/her (parents' self-realisation) | 100 | - | - | 21 (21.0) | 22 (22.0) | 8 (8.0) | 40 (40.0) |
| Threatened to kick out of house or send away for a long time | 97 | 5 (5.2) | 13 (13.4) | 20 (20.6) | 15 (15.5) | 2 (2.1) | 41 (42.3) |
| Locked out of house | 100 | 2 (2.0) | 5 (5.0) | 12 (12.0) | 27 (27.0) | 5 (5.0) | 49 (49.0) |
| Insulted him/her by calling [name] dumb, lazy, or other names like that | 99 | 11 (11.1) | 32 (32.3) | 22 (22.2) | 14 (14.1) | 8 (8.1) | 12 (12.1) |
| Refused to speak to him/her | 93 | 2 (2.2) | 12 (12.9) | 23 (24.7) | 19 (20.4) | - | 37 (39.8) |
| Withheld a meal as punishment | 98 | 3 (3.1) | 15 (15.3) | 22 (22.4) | 19 (19.4) | 6 (6.1) | 28 (28.6) |
| Locked him or her in a dark room | 99 | 1 (1.0) | 1 (1.0) | 7 (7.1) | 19 (19.2) | 3 (3.0) | 65 (65.7) |
| Used public humiliation to discipline him or her | 96 | - | 8 (8.3) | 20 (20.8) | 19 (19.8) | 4 (4.2) | 42 (43.8) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

### *7.4.3 Neglect of child labourers reported by parents*

The prevalence of neglect of child labourers as reported by parents is illustrated in Table 7.5. Approximately 78% of parents reported that their children did not receive medical care when they were injured or ill. About 63% of parents reported that their child has been deprived of food or liquid. In addition, 61% answered that their children were injured or hurt when someone was supervising them inappropriately.

Table 7.5**:** Prevalence of neglect of child labourers reported by parents

| **Neglect** | **n (%)** |
|---|---|
| Child didn't get medical care for an injury or illness | 78 (78.0) |
| Child didn't get food or liquid | 63 (63.0) |
| Child was seriously hurt or injured (cuts, broken bones or worse) when you or another adult should have been supervising them | 61 (61.0) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

### *7.4.4 Financial exploitation of child labourers reported by parents*

Table 7.6 presents the financial exploitation of child labourers reported by parents. Over 30% of parents reported that their children were forced to contribute to family expenses. Also, 25% of parents reported that their child had been robbed and the money had not been returned.

Table 7.6**:** Prevalence of financial exploitation of child labourers reported by parents

| **Financial exploitation** | **n (%)** |
|---|---|
| Family forced you to give them money to cover household expenses | 29 (30.5) |
| Anyone steals money and never give it back | 24 (25.0) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

## 7.5 Prevalence of Child Labour Maltreatment Reported by Employers of Child Labourers

The study further utilised ICAST-P to explore employers' views regarding the extent of maltreatment of child labourers, similar to that of parents as caregivers.

### *7.5.1 Physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers*

Table 7.7 shows that twisting the ear of child labourers is a prevalent type of PM. Up to 25.5% of employers reported that this type of maltreatment occurred once or twice, while 17% reported that this happened six−ten times in the past year. The survey revealed that 24% of employers reported that young employees had been hit on the head once or twice with a knuckle or the back of the hand in the previous year, and 24% reported that this occurred three−five times. One of the most common forms of maltreatment of child labourers is the pulling of their

hair. Approximately 25.5% of employers reported that this occurred one or two times to their child employees, whereas 18.1% said that this occurred six to 10 times in the past year. Thirty-three per cent of employers responded that child labourers had been spanked once or twice in the past year. Approximately 28.6% of employers reported that their child employees were repeatedly hit with an object or fist three−five times during the past year.

Table 7.7**:** Prevalence of physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

| Maltreatment categories | N | >10 times | 6−10 times | 3−5 times | Once or twice | Not in past year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shook him/her | 95 | - | - | - | - | 1 (1.1) | 90 (94.7) |
| Hit him or her on the buttocks with an object such as a stick, broom, cane, or belt | 96 | 9 (9.4) | 3 (3.1) | 12 (12.5) | 15 (15.6) | - | - |
| Hit elsewhere (not buttocks) with an object such as a stick, broom, cane, or belt | 97 | 10 (10.3) | 6 (6.2) | 19 (19.6) | 20 (20.6) | - | 41 (42.3) |
| Twisted his/her ear | 94 | 9 (9.6) | 16 (17.0) | 21 (22.3) | 24 (25.5) | 2 (2.1) | 22 (23.4) |
| Hit him/her on head with knuckle or back of the hand | 96 | 5 (5.2) | 6 (6.3) | 23 (24.0) | 23 (24.0) | 6 (6.3) | 33 (34.4) |
| Pulled his/her hair | 94 | 11 (11.7) | 17 (18.1) | 18 (19.1) | 24 (25.5) | 6 (6.4) | 17 (18.1) |
| Kicked him/her with a foot | 97 | 7 (7.2) | 15 (15.5) | 22 (22.7) | 22 (22.7) | 6 (6.2) | 24 (24.7) |
| Put chilli pepper, hot pepper, or spicy food in mouth | 97 | 2 (2.1) | 1 (1.0) | 3 (3.1) | 3 (3.1) | 5 (5.2) | 81 (83.5) |
| Forced him/her to kneel or stand in a manner that results in pain | 98 | 6 (6.1) | 7 (7.1) | 9 (9.2) | 19 (19.4) | 4 (4.1) | 50 (51.0) |
| Spanked him/her on the bottom with bare hand | 97 | 5 (5.2) | 10 (10.3) | 19 (19.6) | 32 (33.0) | 4 (4.1) | 26 (26.8) |
| Choked him/her or squeezed his or her neck with hands | 96 | 2 (2.1) | 3 (3.1) | 3 (3.1) | 3 (3.1) | 1 (1.0) | 82 (85.4) |
| Pinched him/her | 97 | - | 6 (6.2) | 21 (21.6) | 13 (13.4) | 5 (5.2) | 51 (52.6) |
| Slapped on face or back of head | 96 | 1 (1.0) | 11 (11.5) | 15 (15.6) | 23 (24.0) | 4 (4.2) | 40 (41.7) |
| Used a hand or pillow to prevent breathing | 98 | - | - | 5 (5.1) | 2 (2.0) | 4 (4.1) | 82 (83.7) |
| Burned, scalded, or branded him/her | 98 | - | 2 (2.0) | 14 (14.3) | 9 (9.2) | 5 (5.1) | 67 (68.4) |
| Hit him or her over and over again with object or fist (beat-up) | 98 | 4 (4.1) | 6 (6.1) | 28 (28.6) | 23 (23.5) | 4 (4.1) | 31 (31.6) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

### *7.5.2 Emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers*

Table 7.8 illustrates that 29.9% of employers reported that their child employees had been threatened with abandonment three−five times in the past year. It is observed that shouting, yelling or screaming is frequently experienced by child labourers, as 45% of employers responded that their child employees have been exposed to this form of maltreatment six-10 times in the past year. A significant proportion of child labourers have been subjected to insults as people called them dumb, lazy or other names. In the past year, approximately 40% of employers reported that this had occurred to their child employees six to ten times, while 31% said that this had occurred three−five times. Moreover, approximately 29.3% of employers reported that their child labourers had been subjected to the withholding of meals three−five times as punishment in the past year. Public humiliation was also a common method of bullying child labourers. According to about 25% of employers, this had happened once or twice in the past year with their child employees.

Table 7.8**:** Prevalence of emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

| Maltreatment categories | N | >10 times | 6−10 times | 3−5 times | Once or twice | Not in past year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Threatened to leave or abandon him/her | 97 | 4 (4.1) | 14 (14.4) | 29 (29.9) | 19 (19.6) | 6 (6.2) | 18 (18.6) |
| Shouted, yelled, or screamed at him/her | 100 | 5 (5.0) | 45 (45.0) | 25 (25.0) | 15 (15.0) | 6 (6.0) | 4 (4.0) |
| Threatened to invoke ghosts or evil spirits, or harmful people | 100 | 1 (1.0) | 3 (3.0) | 7 (7.0) | 8 (8.0) | 7 (7.0) | 72 (72.0) |
| Cursed him/her | 100 | 2 (2.0) | 11 (11.0) | 19 (19.0) | 14 (14.0) | 9 (9.0) | 44 (44.0) |
| Threatened to kick out of house or send away for a long time | 98 | 4 (4.1) | 13 (13.3) | 26 (26.5) | 17 (17.3) | 8 (8.2) | 27 (27.6) |
| Locked out of house | 100 | 3 (3.0) | 6 (6.0) | 11 (11.0) | 11 (11.0) | 4 (4.0) | 60 (60.0) |
| Insulted him/her by calling [name] dumb, lazy, or other names like that | 100 | 8 (8.0) | 40 (40.0) | 31 (31.0) | 13 (13.0) | 2 (2.0) | 6 (6.0) |
| Refused to speak to him/her | 99 | 8 (8.1) | 12 (12.1) | 24 (24.2) | 20 (20.2) | 3 (3.0) | 25 (25.3) |
| Withheld a meal as punishment | 99 | 6 (6.1) | 11 (11.1) | 29 (29.3) | 18 (18.2) | 5 (5.1) | 30 (30.3) |
| Locked him or her in a dark room | 100 | 1 (1.0) | 2 (2.0) | 6 (6.0) | 5 (5.0) | 5 (5.0) | 76 (76.0) |
| Used public humiliation to discipline him or her | 100 | 2 (2.0) | 9 (9.0) | 15 (15.0) | 25 (25.0) | - | 46 (46.0) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

### *7.5.3 Neglect of child labourers reported by employers*

As shown in Table 7.9, 61.2% of employers reported that child labourers had never been provided with medical care when they were injured or ill. A total of 60.0% of employers reported that their child employees had been deprived of food or liquid in the past year. Moreover, a considerable proportion of employers (67.0%) disclosed that their child employees were seriously hurt or injured when someone was supervising them.

Table 7.9**:** Prevalence of neglect of child labourers reported by employers

| Neglect | N (%) |
|---|---|
| Child didn't get the medical care for an injury or illness | 60 (61.2) |
| Child didn't get food or liquid | 57 (60.0) |
| Child was seriously hurt or injured (cuts, broken bones or worse) when you or another adult should have been supervising him or her | 65 (67.0) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

### *7.5.4 Financial exploitation of child labourers reported by employers*

In the study, the highest number of employers (33.7%) revealed that child employees do not receive their salary as stipulated in the contract. Additionally, more than 30% of employers reported that their child employees were forced to contribute to household expenses.

Table 7.10: Prevalence of financial exploitation of child labourers reported by employers

| Financial exploitation | n (%) |
|---|---|
| Do not get full wage/salary as per the contract | 32 (33.7) |
| Employer or manager delay in paying | 27 (28.1) |
| Employer does not provide financial allowances for treatment purposes | 24 (25.0) |
| Family forced you to give them money to cover household expenses | 29 (30.5) |
| Stealing of money and never give it back | 24 (25.0) |

Note: Data presented as n (%) unless stated otherwise

## 7.6 Determinants of Child Labour Maltreatment Reported by Parents

The estimation of the determinants of child labour maltreatment was processed in two stages. First, a simple linear regression analysis was performed, which indicated potential predictors. The potential variables with a P value of less than 0.2 were further assessed using multivariable regression analysis to determine the significant predictors of child labour maltreatment.

### 7.6.1 The simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with child labour maltreatment based on parents' reported data

The type of employment parents engaged in impacts the risk of child labourers being exposed to PM. For example, children whose parents worked in the service sector had a lower risk of PM ($\beta = -0.52$, 95% CI = −0.88, −0.15, $p < 0.01$) than those in agriculture (Table 7.11). The study also found that PM was significantly higher among child labourers whose parents had also been maltreated between 50 and 74 times during their own childhood, compared to those who had experienced fewer events (less than 24 times) ($\beta = 0.62$, 95% CI = 0.21, 1.03, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, children whose parents owned less than 0.5 bigha of land were more likely to be physically maltreated ($\beta = 0.77$, 95% CI = 0.25, 1.28, $p < 0.01$) than children whose parents owned more land. Moreover, parents' exposure to childhood maltreatment, physical illness, psychological disorders and children's higher level of education showed a significant association with their counterparts.

Table 7.11: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents' education | No school enrolment | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 45 | 0.21 | −0.12, 0.54 | 0.21 |
| Parents' occupation | Agricultural labourer | 50 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 34 | −0.52 | −0.88, −0.15 | <0.01 |
| | Self-owned businessmen | 14 | −0.08 | −0.57, 0.41 | 0.76 |
| Parents' income/month | BDT1000−5000 | 21 | Reference | | |
| | BDT5001−10,000 | 62 | −0.12 | −0.29, 0.05 | 0.17 |
| | BDT10,001−15,000 | 15 | 0.08 | −0.07, 0.24 | 0.31 |
| Parents' exposure to childhood maltreatment | No | 17 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 83 | −0.49 | −0.94, −0.05 | 0.03 |
| Times of parental exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤24 | 48 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 25 | 0.35 | −0.05, 0.74 | 0.08 |
| | 50−74 | 24 | 0.62 | 0.21, 1.03 | <0.01 |
| Parents' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 46 | −0.34 | −0.67, −0.01 | 0.04 |
| Parental exposure to psychological disorders | No | 13 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 87 | −0.61 | −0.11, −0.12 | 0.02 |
| Spouse's education | No school enrolment | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 37 | 0.02 | −0.33, 0.37 | 0.92 |
| Spouse's occupation | Unemployed | 11 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 32 | 0.07 | −0.23, 0.36 | 0.66 |
| | Housewife | 48 | 0.21 | 0.06, 0.34 | <0.01 |
| Household income/month | BDT10,001−20,000 | 45 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT5000−10,000 | 36 | 0.06 | −0.07, 0.18 | 0.17 |
| | ≥BDT20,000 | 19 | −0.01 | −0.11, 0.08 | 0.82 |
| Land ownership pattern | No | 37 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 63 | −0.05 | −0.41, 0.29 | 0.76 |
| Amount of land ownership | 0.6–1 bigha | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤0.5 bigha | 22 | 0.77 | 0.25, 1.28 | <0.01 |
| Education of child labourers | No formal education | 16 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 44 | 0.01 | −0.46, 0.48 | 0.97 |
| | Secondary | 40 | 0.52 | 0.05, 0.99 | 0.03 |
| | No | 55 | | - | - |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children's exposure to chronic physical illness | Yes | 42 | −0.18 | −0.52, 0.17 | 0.32 |
| Living arrangements of children | Return to home | 86 | Reference | - | - |
| | Stay at employer's house/workplace | 14 | 0.25 | −0.24, 0.75 | 0.31 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, 1 bigha = one-third of an acre, $\beta$ – Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI – Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

There was a relationship between parents' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and their children's experience of EM (Table 7.12). Children whose parents were themselves maltreated (25−49 times in their early childhood) had an increased risk of experiencing psychological victimisation by a score of 0.48 ($\beta$ = 0.48, 95% CI = 0.07, 0.89, $p$ = 0.02) compared to parents who experienced fewer incidents (0−24 incidents). Besides, child labourer whose mother was a housewife had an increased risk of suffering EM by a score of 0.13 ($\beta$ = 0.02, 95% CI = 0.03, 0.23, $p$ = 0.02) compared to child labourers with a parent who was unemployed.

Table 7.12: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents' education | No school enrolment | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 45 | 0.11 | −0.23, 0.45 | 0.53 |
| Parents' occupation | Agricultural labourer | 50 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 34 | −0.23 | −0.63, 0.13 | 0.19 |
| | Self-owned businessmen | 14 | 0.11 | −0.41, 0.62 | 0.67 |
| Parents' income/month | BDT1000−5000 | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT5001−10,000 | 62 | −0.09 | −0.28, 0.11 | 0.37 |
| | BDT10,001−15,000 | 15 | 0.02 | −0.16, 0.19 | 0.84 |
| Parents' exposure to childhood maltreatment | No | 17 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 83 | −0.13 | −0.58, 0.32 | 0.57 |
| Times of parental exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤ 24 | 48 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 25 | 0.48 | 0.07, 0.89 | 0.02 |
| | 50−74 | 24 | 0.34 | −0.08, 0.75 | 0.11 |
| Parents' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 46 | −0.25 | −0.58, 0.09 | 0.14 |
| Parental exposure to psychological disorders | No | 13 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 87 | −0.47 | −0.96, 0.02 | 0.06 |
| Spouse's education | No school enrolment | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 37 | 0.03 | −0.32, 0.38 | 0.87 |
| Spouse's occupation | Unemployed | 11 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 32 | 0.07 | −0.15, 0.28 | 0.55 |
| | Housewife | 48 | 0.13 | 0.03, 0.23 | 0.02 |
| Household income/month | BDT10,001−20,000 | 45 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT5000−10,000 | 36 | 0.02 | −0.36, 0.39 | 0.68 |
| | ≥BDT20,000 | 19 | −0.09 | −0.56, 0.37 | 0.91 |
| Land ownership pattern | No | 37 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 63 | 0.02 | −0.33, 0.37 | 0.92 |
| Amount of land ownership | 0.6–1 bigha | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤0.5 bigha | 22 | −0.53 | −1.08, 0.03 | 0.06 |
| Education of child labourers | No formal education | 16 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 44 | −0.01 | −0.49, 0.47 | 0.96 |
| | Secondary | 40 | 0.38 | −0.11, 0.87 | 0.12 |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children's exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 42 | −0.24 | −0.59, 0.09 | 0.16 |
| Living arrangements of children | Return to home | 86 | Reference | - | - |
| | Stay at employer's house/workplace | 14 | −0.09 | −0.31, 0.14 | 0.45 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, 1 bigha = one-third of an acre, $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

The type of work parents engaged in impacts on their child labourer's experiences of neglect (Table 7.13). Where the parent is engaged in service work, this reduces the risk of their child being neglected ($\beta$ = −0.19, 95% CI = −0.32, −0.07, $p < 0.01$) compared to children whose parents were farmers. The data also show that the more the parent was maltreated, the more their children experience neglect. Table 7.13 illustrates that the parents who were subjected to 50−74 times of early childhood victimisation, their children as labourers were neglected by a score of 0.22 ($\beta$ = 0.22, 95% CI = 0.07, 0.36, $p < 0.01$) compared to the parents who had experienced victimisation 0−24 times. The study further shows that child labourers in a family with a low household income (BDT5000-10000), compared to those living in a family with an aggregate income of BDT10,001−20,000, had an increased risk of being neglected ($\beta$ = 0.07, 95% CI = 0.03, 0.11, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, parents' exposure to physical illness and amount of land ownership are found significantly associated with the child labourers' experience of neglect.

Table 7.13: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers reported by parents

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents' education | No school enrolment | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 45 | 0 | −0.12, 0.12 | 0.98 |
| Parents' occupation | Agricultural labourer | 50 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 34 | −0.19 | −0.32, −0.07 | <0.01 |
| | Self-owned business | 14 | −0.21 | −0.38, −0.03 | 0.02 |
| Parents' income/month | BDT1000−5000 | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT5001−10,000 | 62 | −0.01 | −0.08, 0.07 | 0.94 |
| | BDT10,001−15,000 | 15 | −0.01 | −0.07, 0.06 | 0.83 |
| Parents' exposure to childhood maltreatment | No | 17 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 83 | 0.06 | −0.09, 0.22 | 0.43 |
| Times of parental exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤ 24 | 48 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 25 | 0.18 | 0.04, 0.33 | 0.01 |
| | 50−74 | 24 | 0.22 | 0.07, 0.36 | <0.01 |
| Parents' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 46 | −0.18 | −0.29, −0.06 | <0.01 |
| Parental exposure to psychological disorders | No | 13 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 87 | −0.18 | −0.36, −0.01 | 0.04 |
| Spouse's education | No school enrolment | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 37 | 0.04 | −0.08, 0.17 | 0.49 |
| Spouse's occupation | Unemployed | 11 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 32 | -0.07 | −0.18, 0.06 | 0.31 |
| | Housewife | 48 | 0.08 | −0.04, 0.19 | 0.18 |
| Household income/month | BDT10,001−20,000 | 45 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT5000−10,000 | 36 | 0.07 | 0.03, 0.11 | <0.01 |
| | ≥BDT20,000 | 19 | 0.01 | −0.02, 0.04 | 0.65 |
| Land ownership pattern | No | 37 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 63 | 0.01 | −0.12, 0.13 | 0.95 |
| Amount of land ownership | 0.6–1 bigha | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤0.5 bigha | 22 | −0.26 | −0.39, −0.13 | <0.001 |
| Education of child labourers | No formal education | 16 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 44 | 0.14 | −0.02, 0.31 | 0.09 |
| | Secondary | 40 | 0.29 | 0.13, 0.46 | <0.001 |
| | No | 55 | Reference | - | - |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children's exposure to chronic physical illness | Yes | 42 | −0.06 | −0.18, 0.07 | 0.37 |
| Living arrangements of children | Return to home | 86 | Reference | - | - |
| | Stay at employer's house/workplace | 14 | −0.02 | −0.19, 0.15 | 0.82 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing1 bigha = one-third of an acre, *β,* - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI – Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

Table 7.14 shows that financial exploitation increases with a decrease in the household income of child labourers. Child labourers were more likely to be financially exploited when their family had an income of BDT5001−10,000 ($\beta = 0.12$, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.23, $p = 0.04$) compared to the children in households where the income ranged from BDT10,001 to 20,000.

Table 7.14: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers reported by parents

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents' education | No school enrolment | 55 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 45 | 0.06 | −0.04, 0.16 | 0.26 |
| Parents' occupation | Agricultural labourer | 50 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 34 | 0 | −0.11, 0.12 | 0.97 |
| | Self-owned business | 14 | −0.09 | −0.25, 0.07 | 0.25 |
| Parents' income/month | BDT1000−5000 | 21 | Reference | | |
| | BDT5000−10,000 | 62 | −0.01 | −0.07, 0.06 | 0.79 |
| | BDT11000−15,000 | 15 | −0.01 | −0.06, 0.05 | 0.79 |
| Parents' exposure to childhood maltreatment | No | 17 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 83 | 0.02 | −0.12, 0.16 | 0.73 |
| Times of parental exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤ 24 | 48 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 25 | 0.02 | −0.11, 0.14 | 0.82 |
| | 50−74 | 24 | −0.04 | −0.17, 0.09 | 0.55 |
| Parents' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 46 | −0.05 | −0.15, 0.06 | 0.39 |
| Parental exposure to psychological disorders | No | 13 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 87 | 0.14 | −0.01, 0.29 | 0.08 |
| Spouse's education | No school enrolment | 61 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 37 | 0.03 | −0.08, 0.13 | 0.59 |
| Spouse's occupation | Unemployed | 11 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 32 | −0.01 | −0.11, 0.09 | 0.81 |
| | Housewife | 48 | −0.08 | −0.05, 0.04 | 0.85 |
| Household income/month | BDT10,001−20,000 | 45 | Reference | - | - |
| | BDT5000−10,000 | 36 | 0.12 | 0.01, 0.23 | 0.04 |
| | ≥BDT20,001 | 19 | 0.15 | 0.01, 0.29 | 0.04 |
| Land ownership pattern | No | 37 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 63 | −0.05 | −0.16, 0.06 | 0.36 |
| Amount of land ownership | 0.6–1 bigha | 20 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤0.5 bigha | 22 | -0.05 | −0.17, 0.08 | 0.47 |
| Education of child labourers | No formal education | 16 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 44 | −0.07 | −0.22, 0.08 | 0.36 |
| | Secondary | 40 | 0 | −0.15, 0.16 | 0.97 |
| | No | 55 | Reference | - | - |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children's exposure to chronic physical illness | Yes | 42 | 0.05 | −0.06, 0.16 | 0.37 |
| Living arrangements of children | Return to home | 86 | Reference | - | - |
| | Stay at employer's house/workplace | 14 | −0.02 | −0.17, 0.13 | 0.75 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, 1 bigha = one-third of an acre, $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

### 7.6.2 Multiple linear regression analysis of potential factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers based on parents' reported data

The results of the simple linear regression analysis derived from the parents' reported data offered a pathway to measure the degree of factors influencing child labour maltreatment by linearly relating factors to all forms of maltreatment. This section provides an interpretation of the factors identified from the multiple linear regression analysis of the parents' reported data.

#### 7.6.2.1 Risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

Figure 7.1 illustrates the potential factors associated with the PM of child labourers based on an analysis of parents' reported data. The data indicate that their individual income, household income and spouses' occupation were significantly related to their child's risk of experiencing PM. These predictor variables were able to explain a total of 27% of the variability in the outcome variable. According to the data, parental income is inversely related to the PM of child labourers, which suggests that an increase in parental income reduces the risk of PM among child labourers. Figure 7.1 demonstrates that child labourers' risk of experiencing PM is reduced by 1.92 times when their parents' income level was between BDT5001 and 10,000 ($\beta$ = −1.92, 95% CI = −1.79, −0.17, $p$ = 0.02) compared to those whose parents' income level was between BDT1000 and BDT5000 per month. Likewise, the study observed that an increase in household income decreased the risk of child labourers being physically victimised. It appears in Figure 7.1 that child labourers in households with a household income greater than

BDT20,000 were 0.98 times less likely to suffer PM ($\beta$ = −0.98, 95% CI = −1.79, −0.17, $p$ = 0.02) compared to those in a household where income levels ranged between BDT10,001 and 20,000 per month. According to the parents' reports, the occupation level of their spouses also contributes to the PM of their child labourers. It is evident in the forest plot that for spouses who worked in the service sectors, the risk of their children experiencing PM was reduced by a score of 0.87 ($\beta$ = −0.87, 95% CI = −1.72, −0.02, $p$ = 0.04) compared to spouses who were unemployed. Moreover, parents' exposure to childhood maltreatment, physical illness, psychological disorders, amount of land owned, and children's level of education were not significantly associated with child labourers' experience of PM.

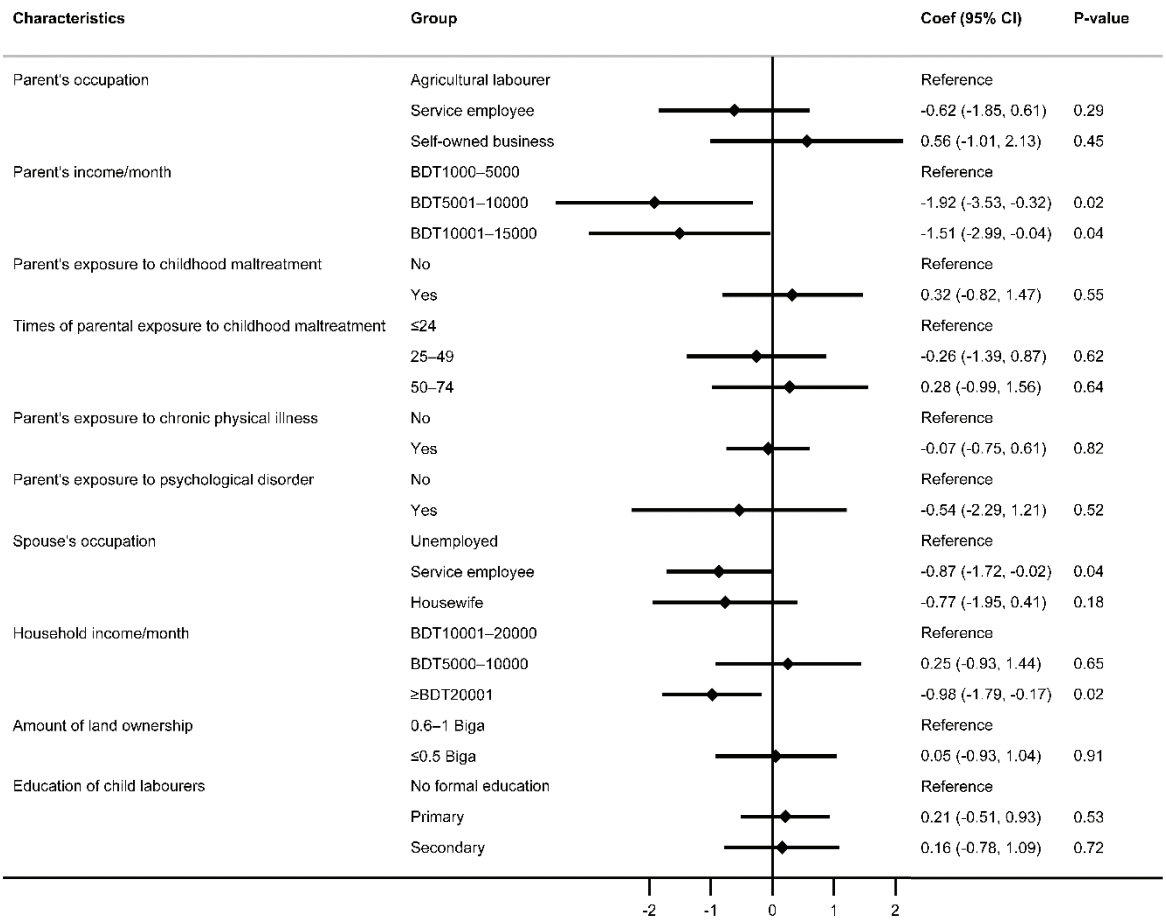


Figure 7.1: Forest plot presenting risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

### 7.6.2.2 Risk factors associated with the emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

Figure 7.2 presents the multiple linear regression analysis of predictor variables associated with the EM of child labourers. Estimated results suggest that 14% of the variance can be explained by predictor variables in the EM of child labourers. As shown in Figure 7.2, no explanatory variables are significantly associated with EM among child labourers.

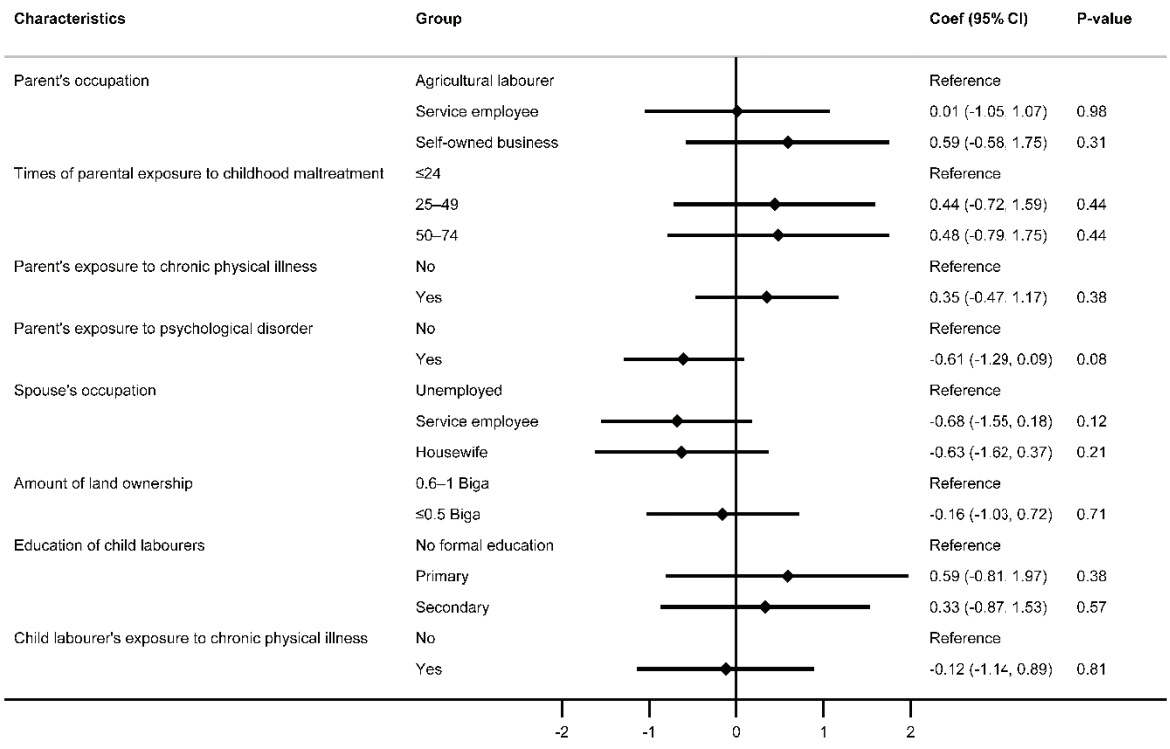


Figure 7.2: Forest plot presenting risk factors associated with emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

### 7.6.2.3 Risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers reported by parents

Parallel to other models, the potential factors derived from the simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers were incorporated into the multivariate model. Figure 7.3 illustrates the measured relationships. Based on Figure 7.3, no particular predictor variable is significantly associated with child labourers' experience of neglect. However, the model indicates that the predictor variables account for 34% of the variability in neglect of child labourers.

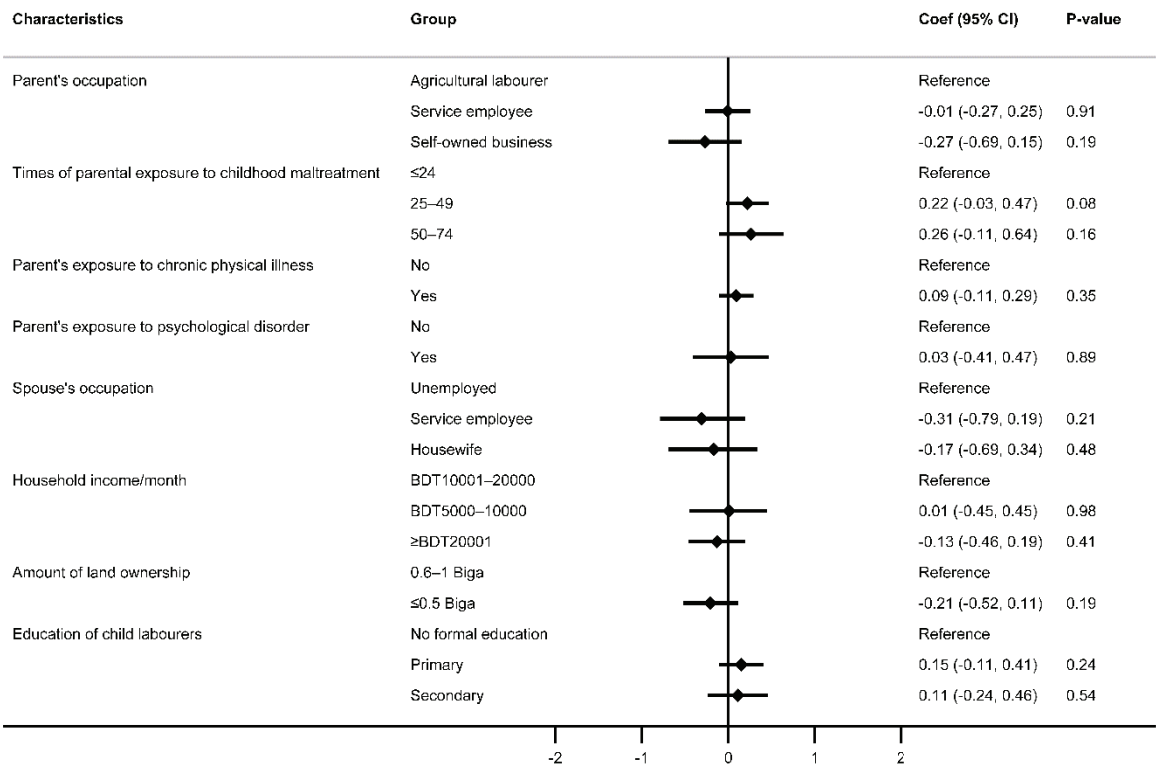


Figure 7.3: Forest plot presenting multivariate analysis of risk factors associated with child labour neglect reported by parents

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 7.6.2.4 Risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers reported by parents

Figure 7.4 illustrates the possible risk factors associated with the financial maltreatment of child labourers derived from multiple linear regression analysis of parents' reported data. Nearly 29% of the variability in the mean score of financial exploitation of child labourers is explained by the predictor variables. According to Figure 7.4, both parental psychological health and household income are significant predictors of child labourers' risk of being exploited financially. The figure indicates that child labourers' exposure to financial exploitation increased by a score of 0.12 when their parents suffer from chronic mental illness ($\beta = 0.12$, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.24, $p = 0.03$) as compared to those whose parents did not suffer from mental illness. Parents' reports of household income revealed an inverse relationship with child labourers' financial exploitation. Specifically, child labourers' risk of experiencing

financial exploitation decreased by a score of 0.14 when the aggregate household income of their parents exceeds BDT20,000 ($\beta = -0.14$, 95% CI = −0.25, −0.04, $p = 0.01$) in comparison to parents whose household income ranges between BDT10,001 and 20,000 per month.

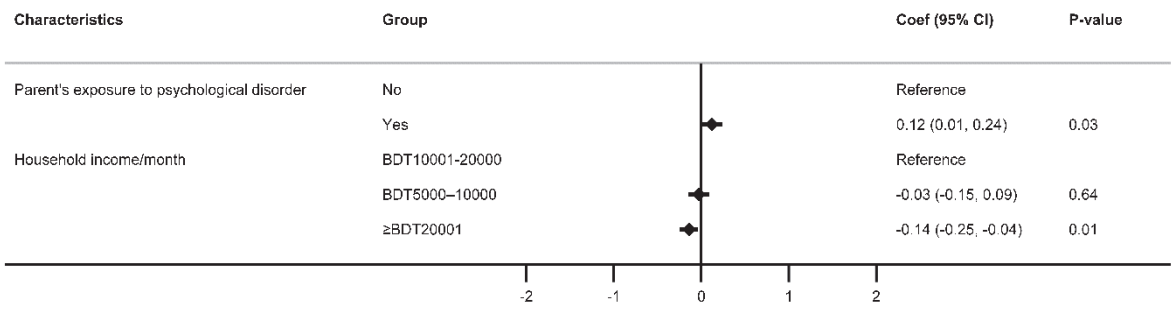


Figure 7.4: Forest plot presenting risk factors associated with financial exploitation of child labourers aged 10−17 years reported by parents

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

## 7.7 Determinants of Child Labour Maltreatment Reported by Employers of Child Labourers

To explore factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers, a simple linear regression analysis of employers' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and maltreatment of child labourers was performed. This provides an indication of the variables that can be included in the multivariable linear regression analysis.

### *7.7.1 A simple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the child labour maltreatment reported by employers*

Table 7.15 shows there were a number of significant predictor variables of child labourers' exposure to PM. Those child labourers working for employers who themselves had been maltreated during their childhood up to 25−49 times had an increased risk of PM by a score of 0.37 ($\beta = 0.37$, 95% CI = 0.07, 0.66, $p = 0.02$) compared to those employers who had fewer experiences (less than 24 times). The health of the child labourer was also a risk factor. For example, those who suffered from musculoskeletal illnesses were more likely to experience PM than those who suffered from fever and headache ($\beta = 0.57$, 95% CI = 0.17, 0.96, $p = 0.01$).

Likewise, psychologically distressed child labourers were at increased risk of PM by a score of 0.32 ($\beta = 0.32$, 95% CI = 0.02, 0.63, $p = 0.04$) compared to those who had no disorders. Moreover, child labourers whose employers had studied up to secondary level of education had an increased risk of PM than children whose employers had no formal education.

Table 7.15: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer's level of education | No formal education | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 31 | 0.38 | 0.02, 0.74 | 0.04 |
| | Secondary | 48 | 0.36 | 0.03, 0.69 | 0.03 |
| Current occupation | Agricultural labourer | 81 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 14 | −0.04 | −0.39, 0.29 | 0.79 |
| Employer's exposure to early childhood maltreatment | No | 14 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 84 | 0.32 | −0.07, 0.71 | 0.11 |
| Times of employer's exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤24 | 30 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 41 | 0.37 | 0.07, 0.66 | 0.02 |
| | 50−74 | 18 | 0.32 | −0.05, 0.69 | 0.09 |
| Employer's exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 85 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 13 | −0.25 | −0.62, 0.13 | 0.19 |
| Employer's exposure to psychological disorder | No | 25 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 73 | 0.26 | −0.03, 0.55 | 0.08 |
| Number of employees at workplace | <2 | 33 | Reference | - | - |
| | 2−4 | 48 | 0.04 | −0.11, 0.19 | 0.56 |
| | 5−9 | 19 | 0.02 | −0.11, 0.14 | 0.74 |
| Age of child labourers | 10−14 years | 22 | Reference | - | - |
| | 15−18 years | 67 | −0.02 | −0.32, 0.28 | 0.89 |
| Working hours of child labourers | 5−8 hrs/day | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 46 | 0.29 | −0.12, 0.39 | 0.14 |
| Income/month of child labourers | BDT2001−5000 | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤BDT2000 | 24 | −0.12 | −0.42, 0.19 | 0.46 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 18 | −0.12 | −0.47, 0.22 | 0.47 |
| Employees living arrangements at workplace | Never | 34 | Reference | - | - |
| | Often | 43 | 0.13 | −0.16, 0.41 | 0.38 |
| | Sometimes | 23 | −0.12 | −0.29, 0.05 | 0.15 |
| Child labourers' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 41 | 0.06 | −0.19, 0.32 | 0.63 |
| Type of physical illness of child labourers | Fever and headache | 23 | Reference | - | - |
| | Musculoskeletal disorder | 14 | 0.57 | 0.17, 0.96 | 0.01 |
| | Malnutrition | 12 | 0.07 | −0.34, 0.49 | 0.73 |
| | Dermatological problem | 16 | 0.24 | −0.14, 0.63 | 0.21 |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Child labourers' exposure to psychological disorder | No | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 70 | 0.32 | 0.02, 0.63 | 0.04 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

Table 7.16 shows the number of employees within the workplace and the employers' own experiences of maltreatment during childhood are risk factors for child labour maltreatment. Those who worked for an employer who had been exposed to childhood maltreatment themselves between 50 and 74 times, were more at risk of experiencing EM by a score of 0.46 ($\beta = 0.46$, 95% CI = 0.04, 0.88, $p = 0.03$) than those child labourers who worked for employers who had been maltreated fewer than 24 times during their own childhood. Child labourers are more likely to be exposed to EM when working with more employees. Those child labourers who worked in groups of two−four employees had an increased risk of EM by a 0.31 score ($\beta = 0.31$, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.63, $p = 0.04$) compared to those who worked alone. Employers' higher level of education is also significantly associated with their children experience of EM.

Table 7.16: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer's level of education | No formal education | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 31 | 0.22 | −0.17, 0.61 | 0.26 |
| | Secondary | 48 | 0.41 | 0.04,0.76 | 0.03 |
| Current occupation | Agricultural labourer | 81 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 14 | 0.07 | −0.33, 0.48 | 0.72 |
| Employer's exposure to early childhood maltreatment | No | 14 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 84 | 0.11 | −0.29, 0.52 | 0.59 |
| Times of employer's exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤24 | 30 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 41 | 0.24 | −0.09, 0.58 | 0.16 |
| | 50−74 | 18 | 0.46 | 0.04, 0.88 | 0.03 |
| Employer's exposure to physical illness | No | 85 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 13 | 0.06 | −0.36, 0.48 | 0.76 |
| Employer's exposure to psychological disorder | No | 25 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 73 | 0.19 | −0.14, 0.51 | 0.26 |
| Number of employees | <2 | 33 | Reference | - | - |
| | 2–4 | 48 | 0.31 | 0.01, 0.63 | 0.04 |
| | 5–9 | 19 | 0.32 | −0.07, 0.72 | 0.11 |
| Age of employees | 10−14 years | 22 | Reference | - | - |
| | 15−17 years | 67 | 0.31 | −0.03, 0.65 | 0.07 |
| Working hours of child labourers | 5−8 hrs/day | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 46 | −0.04 | −0.32, 0.24 | 0.76 |
| Income/month of child labourers | BDT2001−5000 | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤BDT2000 | 24 | 0.07 | −0.28, 0.41 | 0.71 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 18 | −0.04 | −0.17, 0.08 | 0.49 |
| Employees living arrangements at workplace | Never | 34 | Reference | - | - |
| | Sometimes | 23 | 0.09 | −0.23, 0.42 | 0.56 |
| | Often | 43 | −0.13 | −0.51, 0.25 | 0.49 |
| Child labourers' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 41 | −0.21 | −0.49, 0.07 | 0.13 |
| Type of physical illness of child labourers | Fever and headache | 23 | Reference | - | - |
| | Musculoskeletal illness | 14 | 0.37 | −0.04, 0.79 | 0.07 |
| | Malnutrition | 12 | −0.18 | −0.62, 0.25 | 0.41 |
| | Dermatological problem | 16 | 0.27 | −0.12, 0.67 | 0.17 |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Child labourers' exposure to psychological disorder | No | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 70 | 0.19 | −0.17, 0.54 | 0.29 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

Table 7.17 shows that, similar to the risk factor analysis of EM, the number of co-workers is also found to be a contributing factor to child labour neglect. Those children working alongside five−nine employees had higher rates of neglect (0.08 score of neglect) than those who worked alongside one other employee. Injuries and diseases also affected the child labourer's exposure to neglect. For example, malnourished child labourers were 0.30 score more likely to experience neglect ($\beta$ = 0.30, 95% CI = 0.04, 0.57, $p$ = 0.03) than child labourers suffering from fevers and headaches.

Table 7.17: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers reported by employers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer's level of education | No formal education | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | Primary | 31 | −0.03 | −0.23, 0.17 | 0.77 |
| | Secondary | 48 | 0.02 | −0.17, 0.19 | 0.86 |
| Current occupation | Agricultural labourer | 81 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 14 | 0.08 | −0.12, 0.28 | 0.43 |
| Employer's exposure to early childhood maltreatment | No | 14 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 84 | 0.05 | −0.16, 0.25 | 0.66 |
| Times of employer's exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤24 | 30 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 41 | 0.03 | −0.14, 0.20 | 0.73 |
| | 50−74 | 18 | −0.01 | −0.20, 0.19 | 0.95 |
| Employer's exposure to physical illness | No | 85 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 13 | −0.03 | −0.24, 0.18 | 0.77 |
| Employer's exposure to psychological disorders | No | 25 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 73 | −0.09 | −0.25, 0.08 | 0.31 |
| Number of employees at workplace | <2 | 33 | Reference | - | - |
| | 2–4 | 48 | 0.03 | −0.05, 0.11 | 0.45 |
| | 5–9 | 19 | 0.08 | 0.02, 0.15 | 0.01 |
| Age of employees | 10−14 years | 22 | Reference | - | - |
| | 15−18 years | 67 | −0.04 | −0.21, 0.13 | 0.63 |
| Working hours of child labourers | 5−8 hrs/day | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 46 | 0.14 | 0.01, 0.28 | 0.05 |
| Income/month of child labourers | BDT2001−5000 | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤BDT2000 | 24 | −0.08 | −0.25, 0.08 | 0.33 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 18 | 0.09 | −0.09, 0.28 | 0.29 |
| Employees living arrangements at workplace | Never | 34 | Reference | - | - |
| | Often | 43 | −0.03 | −0.19, 0.13 | 0.69 |
| | Sometimes | 23 | −0.05 | −0.14, 0.04 | 0.29 |
| Child labourers' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 41 | −0.24 | −0.37, −0.11 | <0.001 |
| Type of physical illness of child labourers | Fever and headache | 23 | Reference | - | - |
| | Musculoskeletal disorder | 14 | 0.18 | −0.08, 0.43 | 0.18 |
| | Malnutrition | 12 | 0.30 | 0.04, 0.57 | 0.03 |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Dermatological problem | 16 | 0.06 | −0.19, 0.31 | 0.62 |
| Child labourers' exposure to psychological disorder | No | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 70 | 0.04 | −0.14, 0.21 | 0.68 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

Table 7.18 demonstrates an association between employers'' socioeconomic characteristics and the financial exploitation of child labourers. The higher the number of co-workers, higher the financial exploitation of child labourers. As illustrated, child labourers had a 0.07 score increased risk of being financially maltreated when they worked with five−nine employees compared to one employee ($\beta = 0.07$, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.14, $p = 0.03$). In addition, employers' increased rates of exposure to maltreatment during childhood are significantly associated with their child labourers' experience of financial exploitation.

Table 7.18: A simple linear regression model of risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers reported by employers

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer's level of education | No formal education | 21 | Reference | - | |
| | Primary | 31 | −0.11 | −0.29, 0.08 | 0.27 |
| | Secondary | 48 | −0.11 | −0.29, 0.06 | 0.19 |
| Current occupation | Agricultural labourer | 81 | Reference | - | - |
| | Service employee | 14 | −0.01 | −0.21, 0.19 | 0.94 |
| Employer's exposure to early childhood maltreatment | No | 14 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 84 | −0.02 | −0.21, 0.18 | 0.85 |
| Times of employer's exposure to childhood maltreatment | ≤24 | 30 | Reference | - | - |
| | 25−49 | 41 | −0.07 | −0.15, −0.01 | 0.04 |
| | 50−74 | 18 | −0.05 | −0.11, 0.02 | 0.14 |
| Employer's exposure to physical illness | No | 85 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 13 | −0.11 | −0.29, 0.09 | 0.31 |
| Employer's exposure to psychological disorder | No | 25 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 73 | −0.05 | −0.21, 0.11 | 0.52 |
| Number of employees | <2 | 33 | Reference | - | - |
| | 2–4 | 48 | 0.08 | 0.01, 0.15 | 0.05 |
| | 5–9 | 19 | 0.07 | 0.01, 0.14 | 0.03 |
| Age of employees | 10−14 years | 22 | Reference | - | - |
| | 15−18 years | 67 | 0.13 | -0.02, 0.29 | 0.09 |
| Working hours of child labourers | 5−8 hrs/day | 54 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≥9 hrs/day | 46 | 0.05 | −0.08, 0.19 | 0.46 |
| Income/month of child labourers | BDT2001−5000 | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | ≤BDT2000 | 24 | −0.02 | −0.18, 0.15 | 0.84 |
| | BDT5001−8000 | 18 | −0.05 | −0.11, 0.01 | 0.12 |
| Employees living arrangements at workplace | Never | 34 | Reference | - | - |
| | Often | 43 | −0.03 | −0.19, 0.12 | 0.65 |
| | Sometimes | 23 | 0.04 | −0.05, 0.13 | 0.39 |
| Child labourers' exposure to chronic physical illness | No | 58 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 41 | −0.09 | −0.22, 0.05 | 0.22 |
| Type of physical illness of child labourers | Fever and headache | 23 | Reference | - | - |
| | Musculoskeletal disorder | 14 | −0.01 | −0.19, 0.19 | 0.96 |
| | Malnutrition | 12 | 0.16 | −0.04, 0.36 | 0.12 |

| Characteristics | Categories | N | β | CI at 95% | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Dermatological problem | 16 | −0.01 | −0.19, 0.18 | 0.94 |
| Child labourers' exposure to psychological disorder | No | 21 | Reference | - | - |
| | Yes | 70 | −0.06 | −0.23, 0.11 | 0.46 |

Note: US$1= BDT107 at time of printing, $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

### 7.7.2 Multiple linear regression analysis of potential risk factors associated with the child labour maltreatment reported by employers

To assess more conclusive evidence of risk factors for child maltreatment, multivariate models were constructed using the variables identified from simple linear regression analysis of risk factors reported by employers.

#### 7.7.2.1 Risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

Figure 7.5 illustrates the results of the multiple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with the PM of child labourers. The study found that child labourers' risk of being physically victimised is related to their employers' educational level and their living arrangements at workplaces. The predictor variables were able to explain 41% of the variability in the mean score of PM of child labourers. Child labourers' exposure to PM is impacted by their employers' level of education. The study suggests that child labourers whose employers have completed a primary education level are at 0.56 score higher risk of experiencing PM ($\beta$ = 0.56, 95% CI = 0.03, 1.11, $p$ = 0.04) than those whose employers do not have any formal education. The living arrangements of child labourers have also been found to predict the likelihood of experiencing PM. Child labourers who lived at workplaces sometimes compared to those who never lived at workplaces had a reduced risk of being physically victimised by a score of 0.61 ($\beta$ = −0.61, 95% CI = −1.15, −0.07, $p$ = 0.03). However, employers' exposure to early childhood maltreatment, physical illness, psychological disorders, child labourers'

working hours, physical illness and psychological disorders were not significantly related to the child labourers' experience of PM.

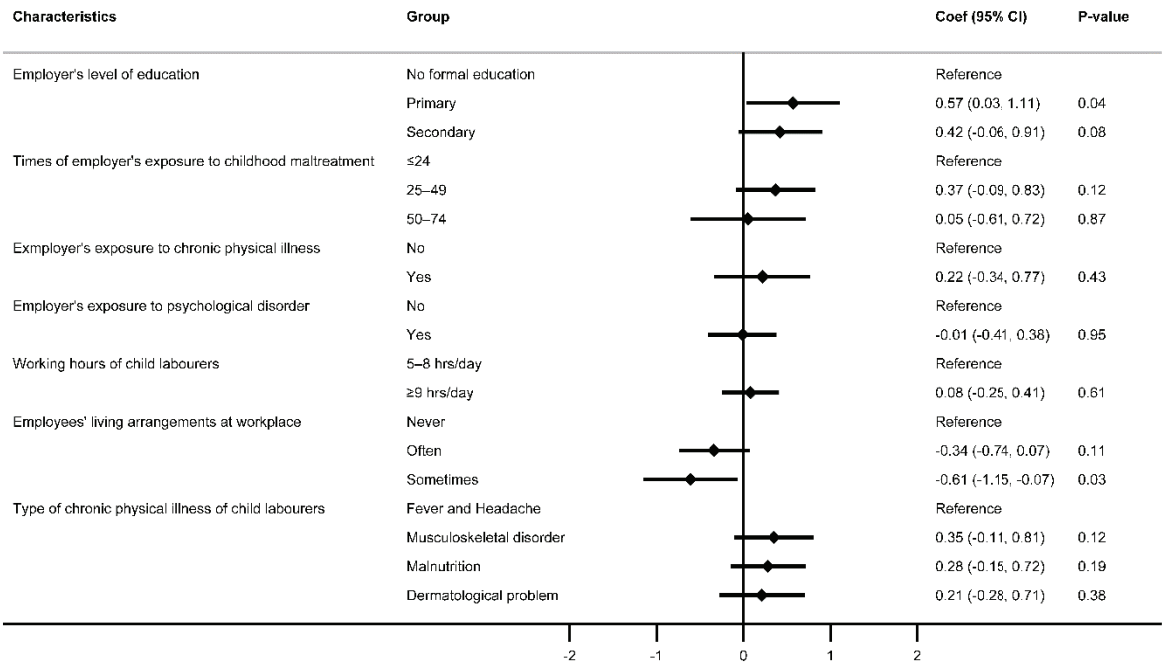


Figure 7.5: Forest plot illustrating the risk factors associated with the physical maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 7.7.2.2 Risk factors associated with the emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

Figure 7.6 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis of risk factors associated with EM experienced by child labourers reported by employers. Of note, the predictor variables explained 19% of the variability in the mean score of EM of child labourers reported by employers. The study only found that the number of employees in the workplace is significantly associated with the EM of child labourers. Figure 7.6 exhibits that the risk of EM of child labourers is increased by a score of 0.39 when their employers hire two−four employees as opposed to one employee ($\beta = 0.39$, 95% CI = 0.06, 0.72, $p = 0.02$). Apart from this, employers' level of education, exposure to early childhood maltreatment, child labourers'

age and exposure to physical illness have no significant relationship with the child labourers' experience of EM.

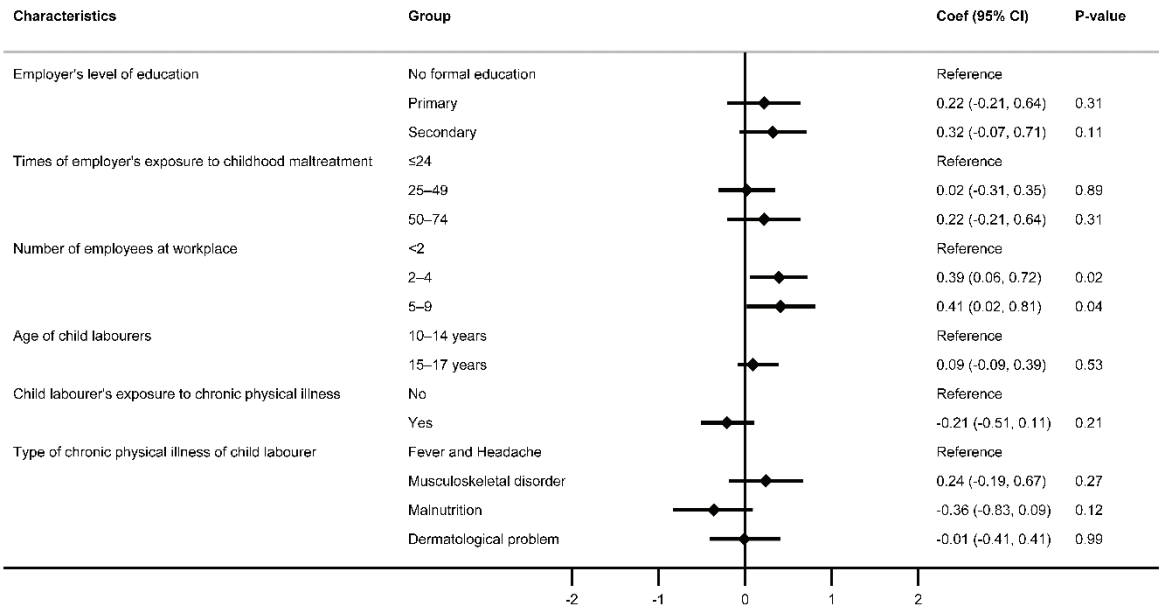


Figure 7.6: Forest plot presenting risk factors associated with the emotional maltreatment of child labourers reported by employers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 7.7.2.3 Risk factors associated with the neglect of child labourers reported by employers

Figure 7.7 demonstrates that child labourers' health status significantly influences their exposure to neglect. It is noteworthy that 29% of the variability in the neglect of child labourers is explained by the predictor variables. The risk of neglect for physically ill child labourers is reduced by a score of 0.34 ($\beta = -0.34$, 95% CI = −0.51, −0.16, $p < 0.001$) compared to those without physical illness. Child labourers' experience of neglect is also influenced by the type of illness they suffer from. According to the figure, malnourished child labourers were more likely to be neglected by a score of 0.29 ($\beta = 0.29$, 95% CI = 0.05, 0.55, $p = 0.01$) compared to

those who had fevers or headaches. Neither the number of employees nor the working hours of child labourers were significant factors of the neglect of child labourers.

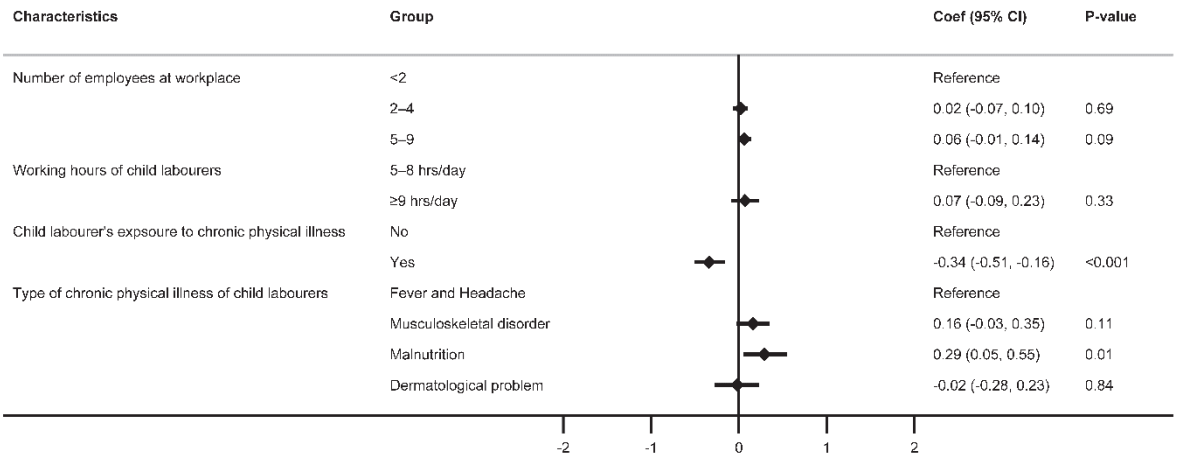


Figure 7.7: Forest plot illustrating the risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers reported by employers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

#### 7.7.2.4 Risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers reported by employers

Figure 7.8 illustrates the multiple linear relationships between the sociodemographic characteristics of employers and the financial exploitation of child labourers. No one variable was found to be significantly associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers. However, 11% of the variability in the mean score of financial exploitation of child labourers was explained by the predictor variables.

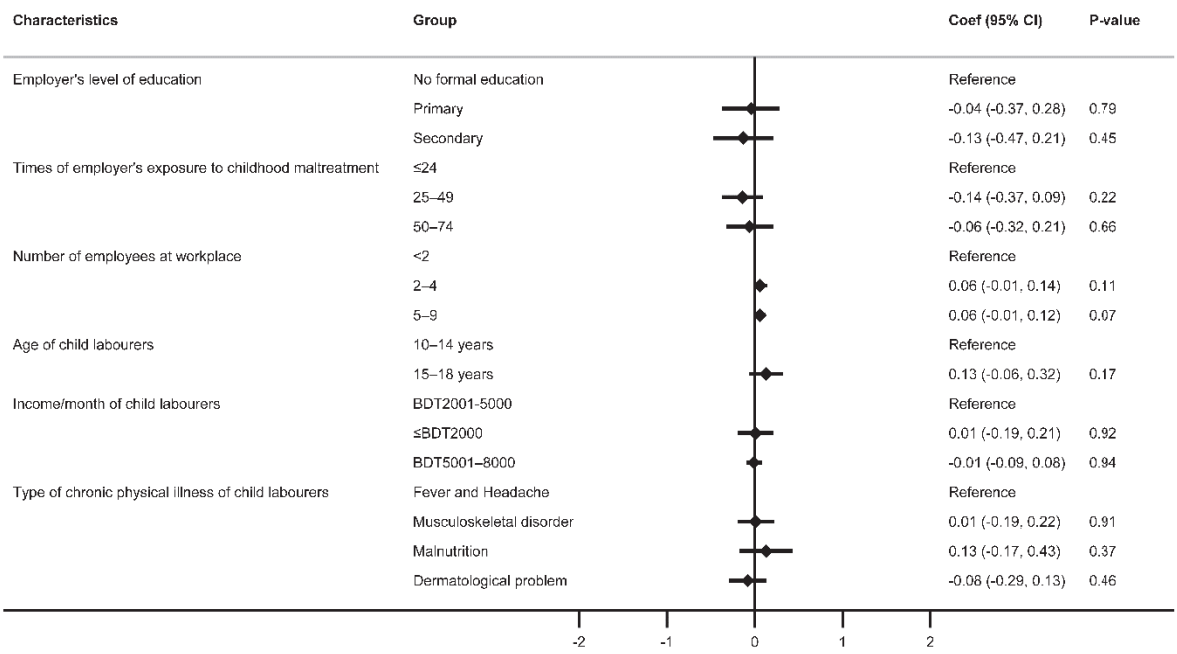


Figure 7.8: Forest plot illustrating the risk factors associated with the financial exploitation of child labourers reported by employers

Note: Coef - Unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, P - Level of significance at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

## 7.8 Impact of Maltreatment on the Psychosocial Health of Child Labourers Reported by Parents

This section presents the findings of the impact of maltreatment on psychosocial difficulties among child labourers. The study presents a descriptive summary below prior to the development of latent constructs from the 35-item PSC, which indicates the overall diagnosis of psychosocial impairment in child labourers.

The parents reported data reveals that the sum of PSC scores for each participant is 26.24, which is marginally lower than the cut-off level of 28 or above for parents of child labourers. However, 43% of parents reported an elevated score of 28 or higher on the PSC. This level indicates a startling episode of psychosocial problems among child labourers, warranting immediate attention.

The study further sought to categorise the items of psychosocial problems of victimised child labourers into comprehensible small underlying factors using factor analysis.

### 7.8.1 Exploratory factor analysis of the Paediatric Symptom Checklist instrument

Using EFA, the psychosocial items were compressed into meaningful latent structures, which is also known as dimension reduction. As mentioned earlier, the study considered a 3-factor structure as fixed factors in the model of EFA of PSC items. Here is a brief description in the process of developing the 3-factor structure from a PSC scale. The methods of conducting factor analysis were discussed in Chapter 4.

The estimated KMO measure and Bartlett's test checked the suitability of data reported by parents for establishing factor structure, which is presented in Table 7.19. The measured value of the KMO test was 0.6, which is above the cut-off level of 0.5 and indicates that the sample size is adequate to run an EFA (Pallant, 2020). Bartlett's test of sphericity is found significant ($\chi 2 = 2390.835$, $p < 0.001$), which implies that as the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix, the study is eligible to conduct a principal component analysis (Field, 2017). It is noteworthy that the Cronbach's alpha value of the PSC scale is 0.81, which indicates high reliability.

Table 7.19: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test

| **Test** | | **Values** |
|---|---|---|
| **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy** | | 0.57 |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 486.493 |
| | *df* | 253 |
| | Sig. | <.001 |

The 3-factor solution resulted in 36.6% of the variance being explained in the model, presented in Table 7.20.

Table 7.20: Values of initial eigenvalues and the rotated sum of squares loadings with the amount of variance explained by the three components

| Component | Initial eigenvalues | | | Rotation sum of squared loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Total** | **% Variance** | **% Cumulative** | **Total** | **% Variance** | **% Cumulative** |
| I | 3.892 | 16.920 | 16.920 | 3.289 | 14.302 | 14.302 |
| II | 2.412 | 10.485 | 27.405 | 2.596 | 11.288 | 25.591 |
| II | 2.116 | 9.199 | 36.604 | 2.533 | 11.013 | 36.604 |

Based on the principal component analysis, 22 items were retained after excluding items with low coefficients or loadings under the three latent constructs, internalising factor, externalising factor and attention. This is presented in Table 7.21.

Table 7.21: Factor loadings for the Paediatric Symptom Checklist

| PSC items | Internalising factors | Externalising factors | Attention | Cronbach alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. Gets hurt frequently | 0.651 | | | |
| 12. Is irritable, angry | 0.635 | | | |
| 21. Have trouble sleeping | 0.621 | | | |
| 22. Worry a lot | 0.578 | | | |
| 11. Feels sad, unhappy | 0.564 | | | 0.81 |
| 25. Takes unnecessary risks | 0.486 | | | |
| 10. Is afraid of new situations | 0.481 | | | |
| 19. Is down on him or herself | 0.445 | | | |
| 28. Acts younger than children his or her age | 0.432 | | | |
| 13. Feels hopeless | 0.416 | | | |
| 34. Takes things that do not belong to him or her | | 0.625 | | |
| 31. Does not understand other people's feelings | | 0.584 | | |
| 32. Teases others | | 0.527 | | |
| 2. Spends more time alone | | 0.475 | | 0.63 |
| 33. Blames others for his or her troubles | | 0.471 | | |
| 35. Refuses to share | | 0.459 | | |
| 29. Do not listen to rules | | 0.429 | | |
| 15. Less interested in friends | | 0.404 | | |
| 17. Absent from school | | | 0.751 | |
| 16. Fights with other children | | | 0.749 | 0.71 |
| 18. School grades dropping | | | 0.689 | |
| 14. Has trouble concentrating | | | 0.456 | |

The excluded 13 items were ‘complains of aches and pain’, ‘tires easily, has little energy’, ‘fidgety, unable to sit still’, ‘has trouble with teacher’, ‘less interested in school’, ‘acts as if driven by a motor’, ‘daydreams too much’, ‘distracted easily’, ‘visits the doctor with doctor finding nothing wrong’, ‘wants to be with you more than before’, ‘feels he or she is bad’, ‘seems to be having less fun’ and ‘does not show feelings’. These items failed to demonstrate significant factor loadings (≥0.3) and were accordingly excluded from the 3-factor structure. Of note, prior to exclusion, the study also examined the reliability level of the excluded items and observed that the Cronbach’s alpha level of these items was inadequate as compared to other items (<0.4).

The retained items, however, demonstrated an acceptable level of reliability. Upon removing the insignificant items from the EFA, the reliability statistics of the retained items changed and increased. The estimation of the level of internal consistency of the three established constructs was found to be acceptable and adequate enough to correspond to the strongest loadings. As shown in Table 7.21, the items incorporated into the internalising factor are highly reliable (Cronbach’s alpha, $\alpha = 0.81$) followed by a moderately acceptable level of internal consistency obtained in the attention factor (Cronbach’s alpha, $\alpha = 0.71$), and the externalising factor (Cronbach’s alpha, $\alpha = 0.63$).

Notably, the latent constructs were justified in terms of interpretability and theory, as discussed earlier. The first identified component is the internalised psychosocial difficulties among victimised child labourers, formed with 10 potential PSC items which explicitly reflect the sadness or anxiety of victimised child labourers. The majority of these symptoms are associated with depressive disorders, which are signs of internalised difficulties (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The findings associated with this component indicated that half of its items had factor loading values above 0.5. These are ‘getting hurt frequently’ (0.65), ‘being irritable,

angry' (0.64), 'having trouble sleeping' (0.62), 'worrying a lot' (0.58), and 'feeling sad, unhappy' (0.56). The remaining five internalising items also displayed meaningful and acceptable loadings between 0.4 and 0.5. Eight items are included in the second component corresponding to the externalising factor, which indicates aggression and conflicts among child labourers towards external environments and people. These symptoms are indicative of conduct disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In terms of factor loadings, the item 'take things that do not belong to him or her' had the highest score of 0.63. Other items of the externalising factor have satisfactory loadings as well, including 'does not understand others' (0.58), 'teases others' (0.53), 'spends more time alone' (0.48), blames others for his or her troubles (0.47), refuses to share (0.46), does not follow rules (0.43) and 'less interested in friends' (0.41). The third factor that emerged from the EFA of PSC is associated with attention deficit and hyperactivity behaviour symptoms in child labourers (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Miller et al., 2010). Two among the four items of the latent construct, attention, exhibited the highest loadings (above 0.70), which are 'absent from school' (0.75) and 'fighting with other children' (0.75). Additionally, this latent construct or factor encompasses two other potential factors, including 'school grades dropping' (0.69) and 'trouble concentrating' (0.46).

Table 7.22 presents a descriptive analysis of the three factors (or latent constructs) developed from parents' reported PSC. The table indicates that maltreated child labourers are most likely to exhibit internalised psychosocial problems followed by externalised psychosocial symptoms and attention-associated problems.

Table 7.22: Descriptive statistics of the identified latent constructs

| Items | Mean | *SD* (range) |
|---|---|---|
| Internalising | 7.61 | 3.91 (0−18) |
| Externalising | 5.52 | 2.99 (0−13) |
| Attention | 3.25 | 2.26 (0−8) |

As the development of latent constructs (factors) is primarily a theory-driven approach, construct validity is imperative. The study performed CFA to evaluate the degree of agreement of the designed EFA model.

### *7.8.2 Confirmatory factor analysis*

Table 7.24 presents a correlation matrix for the items identified in the EFA for the PSC. This correlation matrix illustrates that the intercorrelation among the three subscales was moderate. It is evident that overall, only a few pairs of items among the constructs are strongly correlated, but items within one latent construct/component are highly correlated. Thus, each of the latent constructs containing retained items related to psychosocial difficulties has maintained its idiosyncratic nature.

This independent nature of the constructs is also reflected in the established measurement model of CFA presented in Figure 7.9. Prior to a discussion of the regression weights between latent and observed variables, the study focused on the model fit indexes. Fit indices indicate that the model is not strongly satisfactory but can be considered acceptable in light of the study's limitations. According to the chi-square value generated by the measurement model, the model is significant at the level of 0.01 ($\chi 2 = 299.08$, $p < 0.001$). Table 7.23 presents the goodness-of-fit indices. This table illustrates that the PCMIN/*df* is 1.45, which is excellent as it is lower than the cut-off score of 3.0, the RMSEA is also acceptable (0.06) since it is less than the recommended cut-off level of 0.08 and the PCFI is noticed as above the recommended level of 0.5 and considered acceptable (Jiang et al., 2020).

Specifically, these three fit indices; PCMIN/*df*, RMSEA and PCFI suggested the model fits adequately with the data. However, CFI shows a value of 0.71, which is less than the recommended cut-off level (0.90). In addition, due to the low sample size and the existence of missing values, the model failed to estimate modification indices.

Table 7.23: Estimates for goodness-of-fit

| **Goodness-of-fit statistics** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| PCMIN/*df* | 1.45 |
| RMSEA | 0.06 |
| CFI | 0.71 |
| PCFI | 0.55 |

Table 7.24: Correlation coefficient matrix resulted Paediatric Symptom Checklist scale

| Item | PI2 | PI10 | PI11 | PI12 | PI13 | PI14 | PI15 | PI16 | PI17 | PI18 | PI19 | PI21 | PI22 | PI25 | PI26 | PI28 | PI29 | PI31 | PI32 | PI33 | PI34 | PI35 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PI2 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI10 | -0.01 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI11 | 0.16 | 0.29 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI12 | -0.12 | 0.29 | 0.28 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI13 | 0.25 | 0.27 | 0.15 | 0.37 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI14 | 0.16 | .23 | 0.21 | 0.31 | 0.29 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI15 | 0.29 | 0.12 | -0.02 | 0.02 | 0.07 | 0.04 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI16 | 0.03 | 0.22 | 0.11 | 0.37 | 0.14 | 0.21 | 0.08 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI17 | 0.23 | 0.32 | 0.12 | 0.17 | 0.21 | 0.17 | 0.03 | 0.42 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI18 | 0.35 | -0.02 | 0.06 | 0.16 | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.11 | 0.43 | 0.45 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI19 | 0.37 | 0.11 | 0.26 | 0.25 | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.21 | 0.13 | 0.16 | 0.31 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI21 | 0.14 | 0.22 | 0.32 | 0.45 | 0.35 | 0.26 | 0.25 | 0.14 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.51 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | | |
| PI22 | 0.09 | 0.36 | 0.41 | 0.18 | 0.13 | -0.01 | 0.07 | -0.11 | -0.09 | -0.01 | 0.35 | 0.46 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | | |
| PI25 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.35 | 0.29 | -0.02 | -0.02 | -0.11 | -0.19 | 0.03 | 0.35 | 0.16 | 0.31 | 1.00 | | | | | | | | |
| PI26 | 0.02 | 0.09 | 0.31 | 0.42 | 0.28 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 | -0.17 | -0.11 | 0.36 | 0.48 | 0.49 | 0.38 | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| PI28 | 0.12 | 0.03 | 0.08 | 0.39 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.07 | -0.04 | -0.15 | 0.05 | 0.21 | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| PI29 | 0.29 | -0.02 | 0.01 | -0.02 | 0.27 | 0.29 | 0.18 | 0.12 | 0.21 | 0.19 | 0.12 | 0.16 | 0.04 | 0.14 | 0.09 | -0.09 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| PI31 | 0.17 | -0.14 | -0.21 | -0.01 | 0.15 | 0.11 | 0.21 | 0.12 | 0.03 | 0.22 | 0.21 | 0.27 | -0.01 | 0.05 | -0.04 | 0.03 | 0.25 | 1.00 | | | | |
| PI32 | 0.26 | -0.24 | -0.31 | -0.21 | 0.02 | -0.14 | -0.08 | -0.13 | 0.09 | 0.13 | -0.12 | -0.17 | 0.02 | 0.06 | -0.16 | -0.01 | 0.23 | 0.19 | 1.00 | | | |
| PI33 | 0.16 | 0.11 | 0.15 | 0.03 | 0.16 | 0.09 | 0.19 | -0.01 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.26 | 0.09 | 0.14 | -0.03 | 0.12 | -.015 | 0.09 | 0.48 | 0.08 | 1.00 | | |
| PI34 | 0.21 | 0.11 | -.002 | 0.08 | 0.23 | 0.19 | 0.23 | -0.09 | 0.11 | 0.05 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.13 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.15 | 0.34 | 0.41 | 0.22 | 0.43 | 1.00 | |
| PI35 | 0.19 | 0.07 | -0.11 | 0.14 | 0.39 | 0.04 | 0.12 | -0.25 | -0.02 | -0.01 | 0.12 | 0.26 | 0.24 | 0.25 | 0.07 | 0.17 | 0.22 | 0.15 | 0.35 | 0.07 | 0.48 | 1.00 |

Figure 7.9 illustrates the measurement model developed from CFA. The measurement model measured the 22 observed items under the three latent constructs derived from EFA, which indicates that no additional items were required to be added or extracted. The standardised regression weights between the observed items and latent constructs indicate that variables associated with internalising and externalising factors are moderately loaded. In contrast, items associated with the attention construct are highly loaded. The item PI12 ‘are irritable, angry’ obtained the highest regression weights (0.62) in internalised factor, while the item PI26 ‘get hurt frequently’ had loadings of 0.58. The item PI34 ‘take things that do not belong to you’ has the highest regression weights (0.64) among all externalised variables followed by the items PI31 ‘do not understand other people's feelings’ (0.52) and PI33 ‘blame others for your troubles’. The standardised regression weights for the attention subscale combined with four items are between 0.36 and 0.75. Among all other observed variables, two items of the attention component had the highest regression weights including PI17 ‘absent from school’ (0.75) and PI18 ‘school grades dropping’ (0.75).

The measurement model further generated correlations among latent constructs. It was found that there was the highest correlation between the internalising factor and externalising factor ($\phi = 0.38$), followed by the relationship between the externalising factor and attention ($\phi = 0.22$) and internalising factor and attention ($\phi = 0.17$). Observed correlation values were below 0.4, indicating that the observed items are outwardly heterogeneous between the constructs.

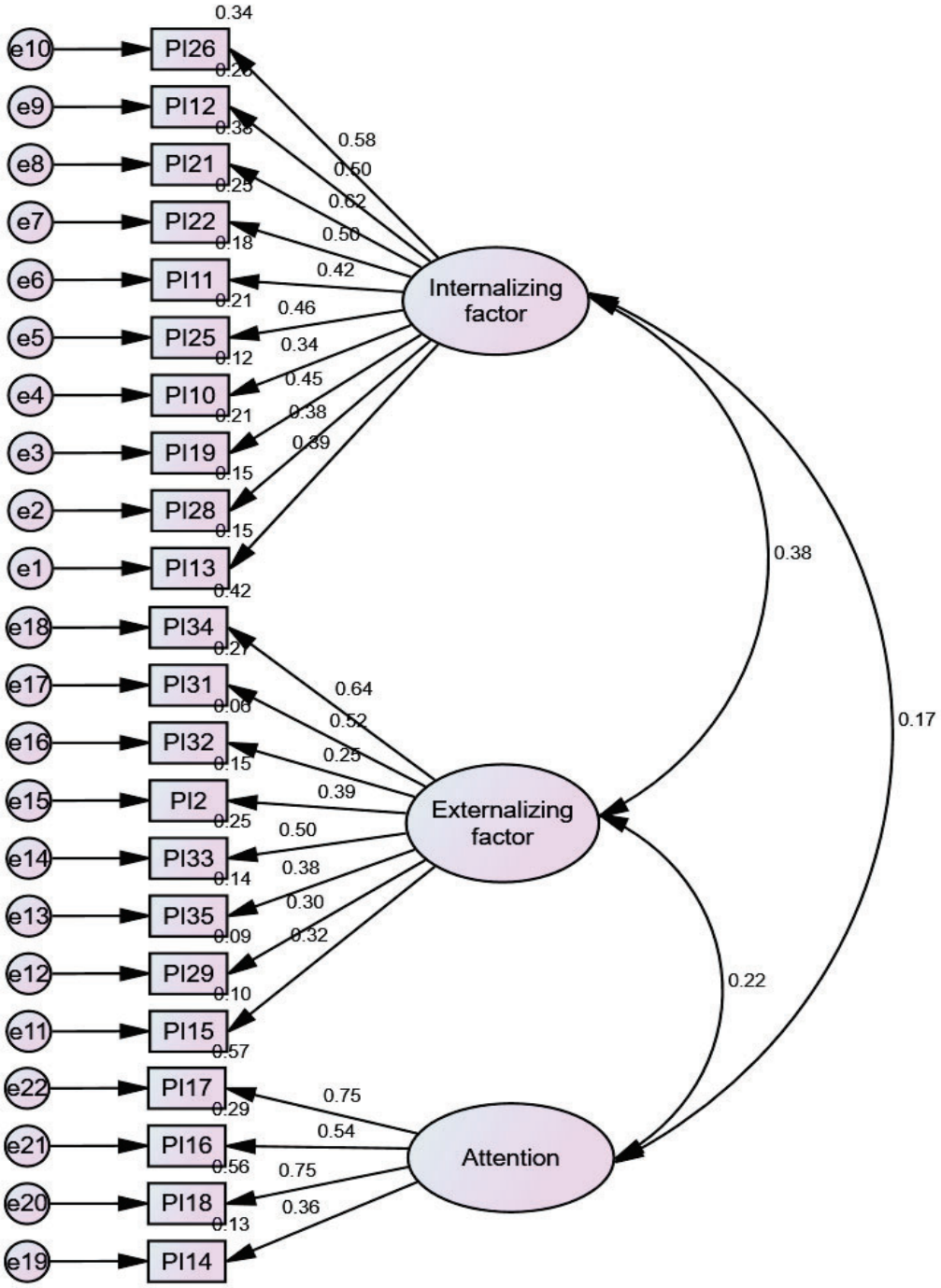


Figure 7.9: Measurement model for the Paediatric Symptom Checklist scale

### 7.8.3 Relationship between latent constructs resulting from the exploratory factor analysis and maltreatment of child labourers reported by parents

In addition to assessing psychosocial difficulties using the PSC score, a multivariate regression analysis was conducted in order to investigate the relationship between developed factors and different forms of maltreatment experienced by child labourers.

Table 7.25 illustrates the relationship between the four different types of child labour maltreatment and internalising psychosocial difficulties. According to the table, child labourers who have been subjected to both physical and psychological maltreatment are much more likely to exhibit internalised psychosocial difficulties. The multivariate regression analysis of parents' reported data revealed that child labourers who have experienced PM are more likely to be screened for internalised psychosocial symptoms by a score of 0.12 ($\beta$ = 0.12, 95% CI = 0.03, 0.21, $p$ = 0.01). Child labourers who have experienced EM were also found to have been affected by internalised psychosocial factors. As shown in Table 7.25, child labourers were more likely to be screened for internalised psychosocial difficulties by 0.11 units when they were psychologically victimised ($\beta$ = 0.11, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.19, $p$ = 0.02). No other forms of maltreatment were observed as significantly associated with internalised psychosocial problems.

Table 7.25: Relationship between internalising psychosocial problems and maltreatment of child labourers

| **Maltreatment** | **Internalising factor** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ***β*** | **95% CI** | ***P*** |
| Physical maltreatment | 0.12 | 0.03, 0.21 | 0.01 |
| Psychological maltreatment | 0.11 | 0.01, 0.19 | 0.02 |
| Neglect | 0.02 | −0.25, 0.29 | 0.89 |
| Financial exploitation | 0.21 | −0.11, 0.53 | 0.18 |

Note: $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

Table 7.26 presents the relationship between the maltreatment of child labourers and their exposure to externalised psychosocial impairments. According to the reports provided by parents, financial exploitation is significantly linked to the externalised psychosocial problems of child labourers. Specifically, financially exploited child labourers were more likely to exhibit externalised psychosocial problems by a score of 0.27 ($\beta = 0.27$, CI = −0.57, −0.03, $p = 0.04$).

Table 7.26: Relationship between externalising factor and maltreatment of child labourers

| **Maltreatment** | **Externalising factor** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **$\beta$** | **95% CI** | **P** |
| Physical maltreatment | 0.03 | −0.07, 0.12 | 0.57 |
| Psychological maltreatment | 0.02 | −0.06, 0.12 | 0.56 |
| Neglect | −0.13 | −0.38, 0.13 | 0.33 |
| Financial exploitation | 0.27 | −0.57, −0.03 | 0.04 |

Note: $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

The study also estimated the relationship between attention-associated psychosocial problems and the maltreatment of child labourers, which is presented in Table 7.27. It was found that the attention subscale appears to be strongly associated with child labourers' experiences of both PM and EM. It is more likely that child labourers who have been subjected to PM will be exposed to attention-related psychosocial problems by a score of 0.22 ($\beta = 0.22$, 95% CI = 0.09, 0.36, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, child labourers who were psychologically maltreated displayed a significant number of attention-associated psychosocial difficulties. The table exhibits that psychologically maltreated child labourers were more likely to be screened for attention-related psychosocial difficulties by 0.27 score ($\beta = 0.27$, 95% CI = 0.14, 0.42, $p < 0.001$).

Table 7.27: Relationship between attention-associated psychosocial problems and maltreatment of child labourers

| Maltreatment | Attention | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | $\beta$ | 95% CI | $p$ |
| Physical maltreatment | 0.22 | 0.09, 0.36 | <0.01 |
| Psychological maltreatment | 0.27 | 0.14, 0.41 | <0.001 |
| Neglect | 0.29 | −0.11, 0.68 | 0.15 |
| Financial exploitation | −0.17 | −0.64, 0.29 | 0.46 |

Note: $\beta$ - Beta unstandardised coefficient, CI - Confidence Interval, *P significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$

## 7.9 Conclusion

Based on the reported data of both employers and parents, it appears that child labourers substantially experience EM, followed by neglect, PM and financial exploitation. The multivariate models revealed that a variety of underlying factors affect child labour maltreatment, including childhood maltreatment history of parents and employers, age, income, living arrangements and physical illness status of the child labourers. The psychosocial problems reported by parents indicate that PM and EM of child labourers accounts for most of the internalised and attention-related psychosocial problems among child labourers.

# CHAPTER 8: INTEGRATION OF THE RESULTS

## 8.1 Introduction

This final stage of the parallel convergent mixed-method design is the integration of findings derived from both the qualitative and quantitative studies, which follows an innovative joint display approach. The side-by-side comparison yielded new insights into the intentional maltreatment of child labourers drawing on the views of both expert participants and child labourers, parents and employers.

## 8.2 Side-by-Side Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

The joint display approach for integrating the data from both the qualitative and quantitative findings provided a rich and inclusive outcome which helped to draw a number of inferences. Table 8.1 summarises the findings.

Table 8.1: Side-by-side comparison of the findings of quantitative and qualitative strands using a joint display approach

| Research objectives | Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|---|---|
| Prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers | Of note, in the quantitative section, the past year prevalence of physical maltreatment (PM) and emotional maltreatment (EM) of child labourers was estimated using the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAST) instruments.<br>**Prevalence reported by child labourers:**<br>Among the categories of PM, 84.4% of child labourers experienced being hit, beaten, or spanked with a hand in the past year. In terms of EM, 86.5% of child labourers reported being screamed at, or being called names within the past year. Based on estimates of neglect, 70.1% of child labourers reported a lack of food and drink. Of note, 67.7% of child labourers experienced a delay in payment, which indicates that a significant proportion have been exploited financially.<br>**Prevalence reported by parents:**<br>Up to 92.1% of parents reported their children working as labourers were physically victimised by being hit on the buttock with an object during the past year. The highest percentage (93.9%) of parents reported that their children experienced shouting, yelling, and | In the opinion of the 17 experts, the rate of PM of child labourers is high, but has decreased over time. The experts also tended to assume that EM (more than 90%) is more common than PM (below or nearly 50%) among child labourers. According to them, children's involvement in labour is an indication of neglect itself. They believed financial exploitation was also common, estimating that over half of child labourers were victims. Four quotes are presented here to illustrate their views:<br>In these child rehabilitation centres, we have found, for instance, that more than half of the children have been physically maltreated. (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs).<br>When a child is forced to work, there is a kind of initial emotional trauma for them. After that, when they come to work, they are constantly subjected to various kinds of abuse, threats, violence, and humiliation in various adverse situations. So, I think the rate of 90 to 100% is plausible. This mental torture is related to the rest of the type of child maltreatment, I think—so, it could be 100%. (*Daily Star*)<br>They are deprived of various facilities or rights required as workers at the workplaces—you know, leave facilities, being overworked, not getting a chance to attend school—this is absolutely neglect, and I would predict that the rate would be even 100%. (Ain O Salish Kendra) |

| Research objectives | Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|---|---|
| | screaming from others in the past year. Parents also reported high levels of neglect of their children working as labourers. Seventy-eight per cent of parents stated that their child labourers had not received medical care in the past year. Approximately 30% of parents reported that their children had been required to contribute to household expenses as labourers.<br>**Prevalence reported by employers:**<br>Employer-reported data revealed that 85.4% of child labourers had been hit with an object on their buttocks within the past year. Similar to the data provided by parents, 92% of employers confirmed that their child workers had experienced shouts, yells, or screams within the past year. The highest percentage of employers (79.6%) reported that their workers did not have access to medical care. It is estimated that 33.7% of child labourers do not receive their full wages as stipulated in their contract. | It is obvious that our country has no fixed minimum wage for labourers—That's how they get a low wage and are financially exploited. So, I think the rate of financial exploitation is 50% (Premier University) |
| | **Summary:** According to the survey-based estimation, child labourers are most likely to experience EM, followed by PM, neglect and financial exploitation. | **Summary:** In the opinion of the expert participants, children engaged in labour are highly vulnerable to neglect and EM, followed by PM, and financial exploitation. |
| Risk factors of child labour maltreatment | Diverse risk factors of child labour maltreatment were identified across three different sets of data. | The experts were of the views that children's internal and interactional traits, suffering from economic poverty, living with sociocultural challenges, being |

| Research objectives | Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|---|---|
| | **Child labourer report:**<br>Child labourers' exposure to PM and neglect is significantly influenced by both their extended working hours and land ownership patterns. The land ownership pattern of families was identified as a significant predictor of child labourers' exposure to EM. The level of financial exploitation increases with a decrease in their income.<br>**Parent reports:**<br>Based on the data reported by parents, it appears that child labourers are less likely to experience PM if they come from families with parents who have both high individual and aggregate household incomes and are employed in the service sector. Parents' increased rate of early childhood maltreatment is a significant indicator of children's experience of EM. The psychological adverse symptoms of parents placed their children at risk of financial exploitation, whereas the increased level of family income decreased this risk.<br>**Employer reports:**<br>Employers revealed that those child employees living at home instead of the workplace were at an increased | engaged in a violence-prone and unstructured working sector, and limitations in child protection policies are the primary risk factors of child labour maltreatment. Key informants also emphasised the vulnerability of perpetrators as a risk factor for child labour maltreatment. Individuals with adverse childhood experiences, such as maltreatment or trauma, psychosomatic difficulties in adulthood, and economic insecurity are more likely to maltreat child labourers. A few quotes from key informants are listed below:<br>They are young in age but have big responsibilities in every setting, here, they may do wrong, may fail to perform a duty that the manager wants to get done—because they are young, they are incapable of doing the task. That is why, I think, the issue of the risk of childhood victimisation has increased. (Ain O Salish Kendra)<br>Continued beating or maltreating for the less dynamic traits of child labour such as their ignorance or dropping out of school, incompetence, misconduct—and so on. (Ain O Salish Kendra)<br>Conflict and instability inside of the home environment are increasing day by day. Domestic violence has been on the escalation since the advent of special Covid-19 and—if you look at the recent reports, you can see that child maltreatment has also increased, which is actually a manifestation of domestic violence. (Ain O Salish Kendra)<br>They are forced to join the labour market. Behind this— there are some factors, primarily poverty is the main issue. When a family becomes poor |

| Research objectives | Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|---|---|
| | risk of PM. More employees at the workplace is also a significant risk factor for EM of child labourers. In addition, malnourished child labourers have an increased risk of being neglected over headache and fever illness. | or financially unstable, there will be no alternative but to engage their children in the labour market—no doubt, they are strongly, perhaps not visible in many cases, but they are definitely being discriminated against as their financial position is weak. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs)<br>The domestic child worker is in the topmost vulnerable position of any other group of child labourers. Because I have worked alone on child labour issues from 2003 to 2015, and my experience is first and foremost with domestic child labour outside—they suffer physical ill-treatment inside the four walls of private homes because of the few mistakes they make. (Ain O Salish Kendra)<br>If we look at our country's context, we will find that the severity of punishment for these crimes is not what it should be. Our social and judicial system does not punish them properly.<br>Firstly, their caregivers have grown up since childhood in such environment that their learning was like that, they grew up being often beaten. (*Daily Star*)<br>Not only poverty-afflicted families experience the burden of child labour, but where parents have dropped out of school in their early school life, and family members are not educated—I am talking about formal learning; children of these families are prone to maltreatment by these adults. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs) |

| Research objectives | Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|---|---|
| | | People who have a particular psychological disorder, for instance—in the case of the perpetrators of sexual cases, I mean who are paedophiles, are the perpetrators of child maltreatment. (Ain O Salish Kendra)<br>When he has completed his work for the day, he may sleep somewhere, he may have to stay somewhere. In that case, maybe he/she is with his employers, where they may not be educated or socially superior—they may also be maltreated at different times. (Dhaka University)<br>They need money, unemployment still exists, children have to stop their education, come out of family attachment and then engage in the labour. (Ain O Salish Kendra) |
| | **Summary**: There are several factors that contribute to the maltreatment of child labourers, such as their educational background, income, living arrangements, working hours, and health status. Caregivers' early childhood maltreatment history and psychological disorders are external factors that contribute to child labour maltreatment. | **Summary**: Child labour maltreatment is triggered by sociodemographic factors of child labour and parents such as age, gender, household economic status, education, and employment level. Cultural practices and gaps in public policies contribute to child labour maltreatment. Income, education, psychological health, and adverse childhood experiences of perpetrators pose a risk of increasing maltreatment towards child labourers. |
| Psychological health impact of child labour maltreatment | The Children-reported Paediatric Symptom Checklist (Y-PSC) scale showed that 46% of victimised child labourers had psychosocial difficulties. The study further revealed that maltreated child labourers displayed internalising problems such as having less | The experts' opinions regarding psychological difficulties revealed that victimised child labourers frequently suffer from anxiety, depression, fear, loneliness, defiant behaviour, and substance abuse. One key informant stated:<br>When he is maltreated, he may become frustrated—you will find them always sad and usually, they are reluctant to participate in sports with their peers. This actually occurs in all groups of people, I think—they |

| Research objectives | Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|---|---|
| | fun, difficulty sleeping, sadness, fidgetiness, etc. However, the multivariable regression analysis<br><br>revealed that psychologically victimised child labourers were significantly screened for externalised psychosocial difficulties.<br><br>The parent's version of the PSC tool revealed that 43% of victimised child labourers had psychosocial problems. Based on the PSC scale, it becomes evident that most maltreated child labourers are exposed to internalising impairments such as anger, fear, difficulty sleeping, and hopelessness. The multivariate analysis of parents' reported data shows that both physically and psychologically maltreated child labourers suffer from internalised and attention-related psychosocial disorders.<br><br>Emotional victimisation significantly contributed to psychosocial problems among child labourers found in both children and parents' reported data. Children's data revealed externalised problems as adverse psychosocial problems of child labour maltreatment, while parents' data revealed internalised and attention-related psychosocial impairments. | keep to themselves and do not share or mix with others. (North South University)<br><br>Maltreatment may also have an adverse effect on cognitive functioning, leading to dropouts from school, decreased work performance, and feelings of low self-esteem. One expert noted that:<br><br>If—if he is tensed, then maybe he is not going to work, he is not going to school. Even though he is attending school, he cannot concentrate like other students—indeed, they cannot compete with the rest, as the incidence of maltreatment impacts brain development. This can increase the dropout rate−this is normal. (Dhaka University)<br><br>Physical illnesses may be accompanied by psychosomatic difficulties. It is evident from the interviews that maltreatment could result in dermatological disorders, cardiac ailments, musculoskeletal problems, etc. among child labourers. These are reflected in a statement of a key informant:<br><br>Children's hearts will be affected regardless of physical or mental maltreatment—his blood pressure will be high, and over time the long-term effects are extensive (Bangabandhu Shiekh Mujibur Rahman Medical University Hospital).<br><br>Maltreatment also exposes the child labourers to social dysfunctions, which are intricately related to psychological problems, such as their disclosure as perpetrators during adulthood, involvement in criminal activities, and social alienation. One expert stated that: |

| Research objectives | Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | | Children can act as perpetrators of child maltreatment. Maybe in the future, a situation may arise where he is the owner of an organisation, then maybe he is antagonistic towards his subordinates such as child labourers treating them in the same way he was treated. (Ministry of Labour and Employment) |
| | **Summary:** Internalised psychosocial problems is highly prevalent among victimised child labourers. | **Summary:** Child labourers can be subjected to both internalised and externalised psychosocial impairments as a result of their maltreatment experiences. |

### 8.2.1 Prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers

The comparison between the quantitative and qualitative findings about the prevalence of child labour maltreatment shows much variation. For example, while the quantitative study focused on specific forms of maltreatment, the key informants interviewed in the qualitative study failed to consider the nature of various types of maltreatment. These experts provided their insights and understanding of child labour maltreatment based on their observations and empirical studies, which differ from the first-hand information provided by child labourers, parents and employers. Except for two expert professionals (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University and Ain O Salish Kendra), most key informants agreed that PM rates among child labourers would be around 50%. For example, one expert stated, "We have found, for instance, that more than half of the children have been physically maltreated" (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs). However, the survey results indicate a higher proportional distribution over the past year of PM, which exceeded 84% across the three groups of respondents.

Despite the differences in the findings about PM, both the experts and survey respondents agreed on the severity of EM of child labourers. The data from both sources indicated a higher likelihood of EM than other forms of maltreatment in the past year. In addition, key informants also supposed that the severity of EM was between 90% and 100% of the time. This corroborates the estimates of the quantitative study, which observed EM of child labourers to be between 86.5% and 93.9% in the past year.

A comparison of the results of the two datasets on neglect of child labourers revealed low congruency. The majority of the key informants indicated that the involvement of children in labour itself was a form of neglect. In their opinion, almost everyone employed as a labourer experiences emotional neglect at least to some extent. For example, one expert stated, "They are deprived of various facilities or rights required—I would predict that the rate would be even 100%" (Ain O Salish Kendra). The survey scores indicate that 70% to 80% of child labourers are likely to be neglected, while both

datasets highlighted the difficulty of accessing medical treatment. There was little difference between the survey and interview results when triangulating findings about the financial exploitation of child labourers. The quotes of key participants further supported the estimates of financial exploitation as shown in the survey. The quantitative results found a range of 30% to 68% of child labourers were exposed to financial exploitation, while the key informants stressed that nearly half of working children were underpaid. For example, one expert stated that, "Our country has no fixed minimum wage for labourers—the rate of financial exploitation is 50%" (Premier University).

### *8.2.2 Determinants of maltreatment of child labourers*

The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative findings on the risk factors for child labour maltreatment resulted in a high degree of concordance. The quantitative study focused on previously identified explanatory variables, whereas the qualitative study provided key informants with the opportunity to expand on their understanding of risk factors, leading to some divergence in the interpretation of risk factors. The integration of results was limited to significant predictor variables from the multivariable regression analysis, which resulted in a narrower scope of analysis. However, it is assumed that the qualitative results adequately elucidate the quantitative results related to the risk factors of child labour maltreatment. The quantitative study focused more specifically on significant explanatory variables identified in multivariable regression analysis, whereas the qualitative interviews explored a set of concrete indicators related to the maltreatment of child labourers. The two datasets identified several common characteristics, including issues related to children's internal and interpersonal characteristics, challenges of poverty, workplace threats and several vulnerable characteristics of the perpetrators of child labour maltreatment. While key informants stressed the socioeconomic, health and cultural characteristics of child labourers and caregivers as perpetrators, the quantitative study pointed out that specific potential predictors such as individual and family aggregate income, extended working hours, living arrangements of child labourers and health status of caregivers played an important role in determining child labourers' exposure to maltreatment. The three groups of survey participants identified low levels of individual income of child labourers and

parents, and integrated household incomes as the most influential predictors, while the synthesis of qualitative data focused on aggregate household income as a distinct issue. As one participant pointed out, “When the family becomes poor or financially unstable, the only option is to engage the children in employment” (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs).

In addition, the quantitative and qualitative findings both identified extended working hours as a potential predictor variable. According to the interviewed participants, children spend extended periods of time at their workplaces due to their low skill level and their young age. As one respondent noted; “The victimised child labourers are young in age but have big responsibilities in every setting, here, they may do wrong, may fail to perform a duty, the manager wants to get the job done having them for long hours” (Ain O Salish Kendra). Similarly, this observation is reflected in the quantitative results, which indicate that the long working hours of child labourers are associated with their increased risk of being maltreated.

The findings derived from both data sources suggest that child labour maltreatment is likely to be influenced by the child’s living arrangements. The key informants revealed that child labourers are highly dependent on their employers or co-workers and that this could be a leading indicator of their exposure to maltreatment. For instance, one key informant stated, “When he has completed his work for the day, he may sleep somewhere —in that case maybe he/she is with his employers—they may also be maltreated at different times” (Dhaka University). This was examined in the survey and found that children who returned home after their work were less likely to be physically maltreated compared to those who lived at workplaces at night.

There were divergent views between the two datasets. For example, key informants stated that due to the absence of a fixed wage structure for child employees, they received a low wage, which, in turn, resulted in maltreatment and exploitation. According to one key informant, “Our country has no fixed minimum wage structure for labourers—that’s why they get a low wage and are financially exploited”. In contrast, the reports from the child labourers indicated that a higher income was

associated with a higher level of PM, although that data also suggest that higher income reduces the possibility of financial exploitation.

The expert participants characterised child labour perpetrators as poorly educated. This is reflected in a quote from one participant: “Not only poverty-afflicted families experience the burden of child labour, but [also] where parents have dropped out of school in their early school life, and family members are not educated” (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs). However, the survey revealed a more complex set of findings. For example, the risk of maltreatment was higher among child labourers whose employers are educated.

The survey also found that when parents are employed, the likelihood of their children being exposed to maltreatment is reduced, although this depends on what industry the parents are in. Similarly, the qualitative component concluded that parents who are unemployed force their children to work, which results in maltreatment and exploitation. Key informants in the qualitative study also highlighted economic insecurity as a potential reason for caregivers maltreating child labourers. A participant commented: “They need money, unemployment still exists, children have to stop their education, come out of family attachment and then engage in labour” (Ain O Salish Kendra). This statement corroborated the findings of the quantitative study. The survey found that caregivers who earned higher incomes had a lower risk of their children being maltreated. Furthermore, participants in the qualitative interviews also noted that caregivers’ household income is a predictor of child labour maltreatment, which is reflected in a statement by one key informant: “When the family becomes poor or financially unstable, there will be no alternative but to engage their children in the labour market” (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs). The survey results reveal that maltreatment of child labourers tends to be reduced when caregivers belong to a family with a higher income.

There was considerable agreement between both datasets for the psychological condition of the participants. The results of the quantitative design indicate that children are more likely to be exploited if their caregivers are suffering from psychological disorders. Key informants also stressed

that emotional and behavioural disorders of the perpetrators contribute to child labour maltreatment, as one key informant noted: “People who have a particular psychological disorder—are the perpetrators of child maltreatment” (Ain O Salish Kendra).

There was an underlying congruent risk factor identified in both qualitative and quantitative studies, which was caregivers’ early childhood maltreatment history. The key informants’ opinions sufficiently confirmed the quantitative findings that parents who had a maltreatment history during childhood, had children at a greater risk of EM. One key informant stated: “Firstly, their caregivers have grown up since childhood in such environment that their learning was like that, they grew up being often beaten” (*Daily Star*).

### *8.2.3 Psychosocial impact of maltreatment of child labourers*

In the quantitative study, the Y-PSC and PSC was used as a psychosocial screening tool, while the key informants shared their opinions based on their subjective research expertise or clinical experience. There was a high level of congruence observed in the study regarding the psychosocial difficulties experienced by maltreated child labourers. Both studies emphasised the internalised psychosocial difficulties among victimised child labourers. In particular, while the quantitative data identified that victimised child labourers experienced being hurt frequently, worrying a lot, feeling sad/unhappy and having difficulty sleeping, the key informants stressed the psychological condition of anxiety and depression among victimised child labourers. For example, one key informant stated, “When he is maltreated, he may become frustrated” (North South University). Moreover, in the quantitative findings, absenteeism from school and poor academic performance are common indicators of attention deficit disorder among maltreated child labourers, while key informants reported failure to concentrate in class and frequent absences from school. One key informant noted, “If he is tensed, then maybe he is not going to work, school. Even though, he is attending to school, he cannot concentrate like other students” (Dhaka University).

There were very few divergent findings observed with regard to externalised psychosocial problems among maltreated child labourers. While multivariate models indicate that externalised psychosocial symptoms are not significantly associated with child labourers' exposure to maltreatment, the experts in the qualitative design proposed that victims of child labour maltreatment may exhibit social withdrawal and defiant behaviour. For example, one participant stated, "You will find them always sad and usually they are reluctant to participate in sports with their peers" (North South University), while another participant said, "He is antagonistic towards his subordinates" (Ministry of Labour and Employment). However, in the quantitative component of the study, the measured data indicates that financial exploitation is only associated with externalised psychosocial difficulties among child labourers. The experts in the qualitative study overlooked the impact of the financial exploitation of child labourers.

## 8.3 Conclusion

From the results of the integration of the qualitative and quantitative data, it is apparent that psychological maltreatment is more prevalent among child labourers working in agricultural and domestic settings than other forms of maltreatment. There are many factors that contribute to child labour maltreatment, including low household earnings, family ownership of land, the child's extended working hours, living arrangements, physical illnesses and the caregivers' history of early childhood maltreatment. Both studies identified these factors as contributing to child labour maltreatment. Psychosocial impairment was highlighted in both studies, with internalised psychosocial impairments identified as a common problem among victimised child labourers.

# CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION

This research project was primarily focused on the different forms of maltreatment of child labourers working in the agricultural and domestic sectors in rural Bangladesh. There were three objectives that were central to this dissertation. Preliminary consideration was given to determining the prevalence of the maltreatment of child labourers, the risk factors associated with that maltreatment and the psychosocial outcomes these children experienced. It was assumed that these three focal points would provide insights into understanding and designing interventions to eliminate this intentional violence towards child labourers both at home and in the workplace. In order to generate greater depth of understanding of the study objectives, the study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-method design. The integration of findings from both the qualitative and quantitative strands provided a more comprehensive overview of the research objectives than studies using a single method. There was significant concordance of results when the findings from both approaches were compared. This chapter presents an overview of the study including a discussion of how the theoretical framework 'fits' with the findings. Interspersed throughout is commentary on the implications for policy.

## 9.1 Brief Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 presented a general discussion of child labour and child maltreatment, followed by a discussion on what is known about the mistreatment of child labourers. It is clear that children are easy targets for exploitation in all types of settings. Globally, child labour and child maltreatment are widespread, especially in recent years (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; WHO, 2020). In rural Bangladesh, child labourers are found mostly engaged in the agricultural and domestic sectors. Most of these children, aged below 18 years, belong to families with poor socioeconomic backgrounds (Radfar et al., 2018). Worldwide, approximately one of every two children experiences maltreatment, with countries like Bangladesh accounting for an extremely high numbers of cases (Haque et al., 2019; WHO, 2020).

Both child labour and violence against children are described as pervasive social and public health concerns that carry multiple short- and long-term health impacts that demand special attention (Dalal et al., 2016; Hovdestad et al., 2015). The enduring and extending ad verse lifetime outcomes include low levels of literacy and earning potential, physical and psychological health damage, and restrictions on other development opportunities (Ahmed & Ray, 2014; Gulzar et al., 2009; Toth & Cicchetti, 2004). Studies, programs and policies have been extensively conducted in an effort to prevent these public health hazards. In spite of the wider concern, scientific efforts and understanding of maltreatment of children over the past few decades, there remains a gap in understanding the problem. Unfortunately, most studies to date have focused on either the economic aspects of child labour or the maltreatment of children in general, while knowledge of the underlying causes and extent of maltreatment of child labourers is still relatively unexplored (Das & Chen, 2019; delap, 2001). The South Asian region has high rates of child labourers who are the most likely to experience maltreatment, as reported in population-based surveys and reports (Dhakal et al., 2019; Hadi, 2000). Similar to a number of prior studies, the focus of this study was on exploring children's experiences of PM, EM, neglect and financial exploitation both in the domestic and agricultural sectors and possible psychosocial outcomes (Bourdillon, 2006; Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003; Hadi, 2000; Korbin & Krugman, 2014).

Chapter 2 provided a scoping literature review in order to gain a preliminary understanding of this complex phenomenon (Peters et al., 2015). PRISMA shows that studies regarding the maltreatment of child labours are limited, with only nine records found that are explicitly related to the topic. It appears that child labourers are a highly vulnerable group in Southeast Asia. Similar to many previous studies on the maltreatment of children, the scoping review showed that among child labourers, EM is the most prevalent, followed by PM and neglect (Öncü et al., 2013; Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). The risk factors associated with the maltreatment of child labourers mainly presents as sociodemographic stressors (de Paúl & Domenech, 2000; Lakhdir et al., 2021; Maker et al., 2005), with very little understood about the sociocultural and economic aspects of maltreatment against child labourers in

South Asia (Al-Shail et al., 2012; de Silva, 2007). Data regarding the health consequences of maltreatment of child labourers are limited. Only two studies were found that concentrated on the psychological adversities of maltreatment of child labourers (Dhakal et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the scoping review suggested that further studies should measure the prevalence of child maltreatment with the association of varied risk factors and health impacts covering both physical and psychological difficulties in order to provide adequate policy responses.

Chapter 3 presented the ecological model as a theoretical framework to underpin the study's results. This model has previously been adopted to analyse child maltreatment (Lakhdir et al., 2021; Sheppard, 2011). It is critical to note that four stages of the model are indicative of influences within the individual, the family, forces within the external environment and the community or national level. These domains were further reformulated in light of the violence directed towards child labourers in the present study (Belsky, 1980). Unlike the influence of community or political forces, the other three domains involved in Belsky's ecological model provided a good fit to the integrated findings derived from this mixed-method study. Importantly, this theoretical framework provided a foundational basis for the methods and materials used in this study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

Chapter 4 outlined the methods used in the study to achieve rich and comprehensive data on child labourers' exposure to maltreatment. This was a convergent parallel mixed-method design. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used concurrently using rigorous, validated and advanced methods and materials that have also been conducted in prior studies on the maltreatment of children (Lakhdir et al., 2021; Sheppard, 2011). Unlike other mixed-methods studies on child maltreatment, this study considered a range of participants; experts were drawn upon for the qualitative study and child labourers, parents and employers for the quantitative component (Ginn et al., 2022; Regnaut et al., 2015). The application of the methodical and analytical strategies provided reliable data on the state of child labour maltreatment in one region of rural Bangladesh.

The study findings were outlined in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Chapter 5 presented the qualitative findings from the perspectives of key informants. The shared views of these key informants noted the high rates of maltreatment of child labourers in Bangladesh. Risk factors identified under two dimensions were the vulnerable traits of perpetrators of child labour maltreatment, and the sociodemographic characteristics of children and parents. Key informants were of the view that child labourers who are maltreated are highly vulnerable to social and health hazards.

Chapters 6 and 7 reported the quantitative findings. Chapter 6 discussed the results of the child labour maltreatment reported by the children themselves. A wide spectrum of findings was presented outlining the high rates of child labour maltreatment and the possible influences of adverse socioeconomic attributes, particularly, low level of earnings in households, familial land ownership patterns, extended working hours of child labourers and experience of internalised psychosocial problems among victimised child labourers.

Chapter 7 presented the findings of the data collected from parents and employers, which were considerably different from the data collected from the children reported in Chapter 6. In this study, for example, most of the sociodemographic predictor variables were different from those used for child labourers, such as parental age, occupation and early childhood maltreatment history, thereby resulting in a variety of results. Parents and employers reported a high prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers in both agricultural and domestic sectors. Based on the reported data of employers and parents, specific predictors of child labour maltreatment were identified, including the occupation and income of the parents, their own adverse childhood maltreatment experiences, and their views on their child's health. Similar to Chapter 6, a psychosocial assessment of victimised child labourers was conducted based on data collected from parents. Victimised child labourers were found to have a significant level of internalised psychosocial difficulties.

Chapter 8 provided a methodical integration of the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative studies. A substantial number of concordant results were identified in this chapter. Chapter 9

concludes this thesis, with a discussion of the findings with reference to the literature, theory and practices. The implications for policy are formulated, and the potential directions for future research on the maltreatment of child labourers are outlined.

## 9.2 Discussion of the Results: Link to Empirical Literature and Theoretical Framework

### *9.2.1 Prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers*

Bangladesh is a populous and low-income country, although the per capita income has recently increased (BBS, 2019a). Despite the recent economic progresses, 9.2% of the population is impacted by extreme poverty (Green, 2020). UNICEF recently reported that more than 26 million children aged below 18 years are living under the poverty line in Bangladesh (Bromfield et al., 2023). These children encounter multiple stressors and vulnerabilities. One of the poverty-afflicted consequences is child labour (Amin et al., 2004). Bangladesh is trapped with more than 3 million children aged below 18 years engaged in the workforce (Khan & Lyon, 2015). In recent years, children from low-income families have become increasingly involved in diverse forms of work, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic and economic recession (ILO & UNICEF, 2021). The sudden fall of income level and rise in unemployment during the pandemic in these courtiers led the children of poverty afflicted families into labour (Becker, 2020; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Child labour problems and prospects have been extensively studied and have greatly influenced policy formulation (Ibrahim et al., 2018; Sturrock & Hodes, 2016). Some studies have confirmed that marginalised or socially alienated children are more susceptible to victimisation than children in general (Bromfield et al., 2023; Das & Chen, 2019; Hadi, 2000). Consistent with these findings, this study determined that these children, particularly those who are engaged in agriculture and domestic labour, are at a high risk of maltreatment.

Unlike other studies (Haque et al., 2019; Hussey et al., 2006; Moayad et al., 2021), this study examined the prevalence of various forms of maltreatment of child labourers (PM, EM, neglect and financial exploitation) using a mixed-method approach. In regard to the maltreatment of child

labourers in the qualitative study, key informants were of the opinion that child labourers are not only victimised by their employers, but also by their biological parents. They assumed that the rate of maltreatment against them would be higher than for other children (Iqbal et al., 2021). However, the key informants stressed that the actual prevalence of child labour maltreatment is hidden and therefore unknown, which is also supported by a number of researchers who argue that there are no accurate and precise statistics on the maltreatment of child labourers (Bourdillon, 2006; Das & Chen, 2019; WHO, 2016). On the other hand, the quantitative strand provided a comprehensive picture of the prevalence of maltreatment by utilising ICAST-CH and ICAST-P validated instruments. Consistent with prior studies in the context of Bangladesh, the quantitative strand estimated that a sizeable proportion of child labourers is maltreated (Haque et al., 2019; Hossian et al., 2021).

The integration of the findings from both data sources illustrated a high level of concordance in reporting prevalence, suggesting that the quantitative findings are well aligned with the views held by key informants. The estimated rate of maltreatment was similar between both databases and, in some instances, much higher than those reported in many prior population-based studies conducted on the maltreatment of child labourers (Hadi, 2000; Iqbal et al., 2021). In brief, the key informants reported a range between a quarter to all child labourers as suffering maltreatment, except for financial exploitation, which was assumed to be experienced by nearly half of all child labourers. The quantitative strand yielded a range of 79% to 94% for some forms of maltreatment in the past year, with the financial exploitation rate higher than the range reported by key informants. These findings are partially consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Haque (2019), who estimated that 99% of children in Bangladesh experience at least one form of maltreatment over their lifetime, which is an alarming rate. This study also observed an upsurge in numbers in comparison to Kamruzzaman (2015), who found that nearly 26% of child labourers in Bangladesh earned less than BDT2000, which is a form of financial exploitation. It is evident that in the least developed countries like Bangladesh, children will be more prone to financial exploitation as there is no legal wage structure for the informal sector (Maligalig et al., 2009). These estimates indicate that the maltreatment of child

labourers is significantly higher than the maltreatment of children in general irrespective of group, according to numerous studies (Annerbäck et al., 2018; Hussey et al., 2006). For example, Stoltenborgh et al. (2015) conducted a meta-analysis, and found that globally, 36.3% of children are emotionally maltreated, while a study conducted in the USA found that 41.5% of children were neglected (Hussey et al., 2006).

Apart from children in general, few prior studies on child labour maltreatment have observed the same results as the current study estimates (Dhakal et al., 2019; Öncü et al., 2013; Pandey et al., 2020). For example, this study reported more than three-quarters (75%) of child labourers were maltreated, similar to a study conducted by Moayad et al. (2021) that estimated that more than 77% of child labourers in Iran are maltreated at their workplace. In the context of the South Asian region, several studies show the prevalence of maltreatment of child labourers ranges from 66% to 83.36% (Dhakal et al., 2019; Hyder & Malik, 2007; Pandey et al., 2020). In the context of Bangladesh, approximately 60% of CDLs were found to be maltreated in a study (Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum, 2012).

In terms of the category of maltreatment, the integration of the findings of the current study reported that children employed in agricultural and domestic labour were predominantly subjected to EM followed by PM. Consistent with the current findings, Stoltenborgh et al. (2015) and Taran et al. (2016) found that EM is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment (36.3% and 31.8%, respectively), followed by PM and neglect globally. Similar to the current study, prior studies carried out with the ICAST instrument also found that children suffer from EM far more frequently than PM or neglect (Al-Eissa et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2019). According to some studies conducted in South Asian contexts, EM rates range from 50% to 90%, which corresponds to the highest rate of EM reported in this study (Ashrafi, 2017, August 29; Kulkarni, 2016). This result concurs with previous findings on child labour maltreatment where it was observed that EM was higher than other forms of maltreatment (Iqbal et al., 2021; Moayad et al., 2021). In particular, Moayad and colleagues noticed

that child labourers in Iran are highly victimised by EM (70.4%) followed by neglect (52%) and PM (5.8%) (Moayad et al., 2021).

Despite the strong resonance between the findings of this study and previous studies, a few researchers have contradicted the current findings, reporting that PM is more prevalent among children than EM or neglect (Fang et al., 2015; Haque et al., 2019; May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005; Witt et al., 2017). For instance, Dhakal et al. (2019) and Pandey et al. (2020) report that 46.6% and 72.7% of child labourers are commonly subjected to PM, followed by 40.8% and 47.7% who have experienced EM respectively. As opposed to this, this current study reported estimates of EM at 93.9%, followed by PM at 92.1% and neglect at 79.6%. In contrast to the results of the current study, Hadi (2000) observed an identical likelihood of PM and financial exploitation among Bangladeshi child labourers. Clearly, there is a considerable gap in studies examining the prevalence of PM and EM among child labourers. Yet, no comprehensive and systematic study has been conducted on the issue of the child labourer's financial exploitation.

Notably, the categories of maltreatment measured in this study were found to be consistent with the findings of other studies utilising the ICAST instrument. In terms of PM, the integrated results of this study illustrate that child labourers were highly victimised by pushing, grabbing, hitting, beating or slapping in both agricultural and domestic labour workplaces. A number of previous studies have also concluded that children are frequently subjected to these types of PM (Haque et al., 2019; Jiménez-Borja et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2019). When it comes to EM, studies applying ICAST have demonstrated that children, in general, were most likely to be subjected to shouting, screaming and being called insulting names as a form of EM (Al-Eissa et al., 2015; Haque et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2019; May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005). This also echoes the current study. The study conducted by Haque (2019) determined that children in Bangladesh generally lack access to medical care, adequate food, and safe drinking water. These results are similar to this current study which found that child labourers in Bangladesh often went hungry and thirsty and experienced lack of care at home and in

the workplace (Haque, 2019). It was also observed in both the UK and Saudi Arabia that a large proportion of children were not being cared for by their caregivers and that this is the highest form of neglect (Al-Eissa et al., 2015; Al-Eissa et al., 2016; May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005). The study established that half of the child labourers are financially exploited, mostly being deprived of their wages, although, in informal sectors, children are often employed without legal employment contracts. This result is consistent with the findings of previous studies that found that child labourers in Bangladesh and India are largely denied access to reasonable wages paid in a timely manner (Banday et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2013). Child labourers are also understood in many instances to be the sole contributor to their poverty-afflicted family, particularly in rural areas (Radfar et al., 2018). It is also evident that children in such families in Bangladesh are often forced to join the labour market with the hope of supporting families financially (delap, 2001; Norpoth et al., 2014).

Prevalence of violence against working children is still under-researched; however, its extent indicates that almost all of the child labourers in agriculture and domestic work frequently experience maltreatment and neglect. While the prevalence of child labour maltreatment continues to increase, effective prevention strategies are imperative. Identifying the risk factors for child maltreatment is crucial to developing prevention strategies (Austin et al., 2020). This study examined the aetiological factors underlying maltreatment of labouring children. Due to the conceptual variations, the mixed-methods approach in this study resulted in a range of understandings of the aetiological factors. The study also examined how well both qualitative and quantitative findings could be explained by a complex interplay between and among four nested ecological phases, which are outlined later in this chapter.

### *9.2.2 Risk factors associated with child labour maltreatment*

This section provides a theoretical discussion on the maltreatment of child labourers drawing on both the empirical literature and Belsky's ecological model as outlined in Chapter 3, with an adaptation made to incorporate children within the labour force.

#### 9.2.2.1 General empirical analysis of risk factors of child labour maltreatment

Several studies have shown that professionals under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, healthcare professionals, academics and journalists play crucial roles in identifying, dealing with, and reporting cases of maltreatment, which contributes to policy formulation (Goddard & Liddell, 1995; Islam et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2019). Accordingly, their opinions regarding risk factors are of great importance in this study. Chapter 5 presented two perspectives derived from the viewpoints of the experts, stating that the perpetrators of child labour maltreatment are at greater risk because of their illiteracy, lack of social and public awareness, poor emotional and behavioural functioning, economic poverty and adverse childhood experiences. The second perspective emphasised the adverse characteristics of child labourers as well as their parents, cultural acceptance and policy inadequacies. Researchers in different South Asian countries as well as around the world have also observed similar results (Milner et al., 2022; Moayad et al., 2021; Regnaut et al., 2015).

A person's mental state during their childhood has a significant influence on how they interact with others as an adult (Kisely et al., 2018). The paediatrician interviewed in this study suggested that individuals with experiences of prolonged psychopathology, including stress, anxiety or depression may later maltreat children. Numerous studies have underlined these characteristics of perpetrators of child maltreatment (Dubowitz et al., 2011; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991; Stith et al., 2009). Perpetrators of child maltreatment are more likely to have intergenerational experiences of childhood maltreatment themselves (Ginn et al., 2022). A number of prior studies have identified that perpetrators of child maltreatment are likely to have experienced early childhood violence (Hurren et al., 2018; Lakhdir et al., 2021), which was also stated by the key informants in this study. The key informants were of the view that low levels of education and literacy led to a lack of understanding of the impact of maltreatment on children's development. In turn, this negatively impacted the individual's behaviour towards others and exacerbated interpersonal conflict and child maltreatment. Several studies have argued that caregivers with low levels of education are more likely to act in a

perpetrator role than caregivers with higher levels of education (Ethier et al., 2004; Kotch et al., 1995; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991).

Researchers have observed that caregivers are not aware of their children's potential, but instead seek short-term benefits by sending them to work (Siddiqi & Patrinos, 1995; Srivastava, 2012). Moreover, perpetrators may not be aware of laws related to child protection that indicate that maltreatment is a crime (Hurren et al., 2018). In addition, the study illustrated that children's participation in labour is associated with social stigma (Lopez-Calva, 2002), which experts identify as 'moral dirt'. As per the experts, perpetrators often internalise the inferior status of child labourers, and in such cases, employers or co-workers are likely to maltreat the children. Theoretically, this perception of caregivers or employers is a bias which illustrate the social stigma of elite classes of people and feeling of disgust towards these vulnerable child labourers (Harris & Fiske, 2011). Albeit while not exhaustive, expert participants further speculated that this could happen because of a lack of empathy and self-control among perpetrators, which is evident in the literature findings (Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991). The economic circumstances of caregivers are *a priori* contributing factors, as they directly result in potential indicators of dysfunctional interactions within the family. The experts in this study identified economic vulnerability as a contributing factor to child maltreatment as well (Hawkins & Duncan, 1985; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991; Öncü et al., 2013).

There is a tendency to consider children's vulnerable characteristics as risk factors for maltreatment. A number of studies on child maltreatment have identified that a child's young age, gender discrimination (Austin et al., 2020; Hussey et al., 2006), dropping out of school (Haque et al., 2019; Lakhdir et al., 2021), and physical illness or disability status (Jarosz, 2008) significantly contribute to their maltreatment risk. Most key informants identified these factors as high-risk factors for the maltreatment of children at work. Banday et al. (2018) found that child labourers' excessive dependence upon their employers is indicative of maltreatment, which is also reflected in the views of the key informants interviewed for this study. As with adverse traits related to personal

characteristics, key informants also indicated that income disparity compared to household expenditure was a burdensome factor contributing to child labour and maltreatment. A number of empirical studies have demonstrated that economic poverty in households causes both child labour and maltreatment. It also accounts for parental unemployment (Austin et al., 2020; delap, 2001; Hussey et al., 2006; Stith et al., 2009). Parents of poverty-afflicted families are compelled to send their young children into labour as a consequence of increased expenditure, which also prompts them to tolerate exploitation (Radfar et al., 2018). Most studies on the aetiology of child maltreatment reveal that maltreatment towards children is primarily influenced by economic crises followed by sociocultural practices. In this study, key informants assumed that children in labour were also subjected to cultural barriers, such as corporal punishment, as a disciplinary act and developed adverse interpersonal relationships caused by class conflicts (Al-Shail et al., 2012; Collier et al., 1999; Doe, 2000; Tang, 2006). Maltreatment also involves the disorganised family system, including domestic violence and violence arising from political instability, both of which contribute to child maltreatment in society (Gibson, 1992; Hartley, 2002; Liel et al., 2020). According to key informants, children engaged in agricultural and domestic labour do not have access to legal policies or laws, as these industries are regarded as part of the informal economy. The existing labour laws in Bangladesh are often not applicable to these informal sectors (Norpoth et al., 2014).

Many studies have examined the issue of child labour from the perspective of parents and children, while very few have sought the opinions of employers (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018; Hadi, 2000; Nengroo & Bhat, 2015). This study's strength is it considered the perspectives of all three stakeholders in the quantitative strand. In the quantitative study, child labourers were found to be exposed to a range of interpersonal and external factors that contributed to their experiences of PM. This study confirms the findings of other studies, which indicate that the PM of child labourers is largely influenced by their parents' and aggregate household income (Dalal et al., 2008; Makhoul et al., 2004; Öncü et al., 2013; Sedlak, 1997), their extended working hours (Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015; Öncü et al., 2013), family land ownership pattern (Hadi, 2000), parent's occupation (Kamruzzaman, 2015;

Moayad et al., 2021), their living arrangements (Banday et al., 2018; Hadi, 2000) and their employers' education (Hurren et al., 2018; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991).

According to the study, when the incomes of parents or aggregate households decrease, the PM of child labourers increases. Previous studies have also confirmed this finding (Dalal et al., 2008; Makhoul et al., 2004; Öncü et al., 2013; Sedlak, 1997). A recent study conducted by Bromfield et al. (2023) also found that the risk of PM decreases with an increase in a family's income. In contrast, child labourers' income and PM appear to be correlated differently. For example, in this study, child labourers with higher incomes were more likely to suffer PM. This finding differs from that of Öncü et al. (2013), who found that child labourers with a higher income were less likely to be maltreated. However, Maker et al. (2005) argue that income level may not always be a predictor of child maltreatment in certain groups. An inconsistency is also seen in regard to the education of employers. There is evidence that children are not protected in workplace settings where their employers are uneducated (Tippett, 2013), but the current study found that higher levels of education place children at a greater risk of PM. Also of interest, this study found that children who work long hours in the agricultural and domestic sectors are more likely to be physically maltreated than those who work less hours. This is also confirmed in the studies conducted by Kamruzzaman (2015) and Öncü et al. (2013) for child labourers. For children in general, Khatab et al. (2019) report that children who work over 16 hours a day are more likely to be subjected to PM in Egypt. Child labourers' experience of PM is also associated with their family's land ownership pattern. The higher the level of land ownership by the family, the higher the PM among child labourers. Likewise, one study argues that children from land-rich households are often motivated to engage in child labour, which may result in PM (Bhalotra & Heady, 2003). In contrast, Khanam (2008) and Hadi (2000) point out that the total land area owned by a household does not have always a significant impact on the PM of child labourers. Studies have also demonstrated that child labour maltreatment is significantly increased when parents are unemployed (Ahad et al., 2021; Basu & Pham, 1998; Taitz et al., 1987). This study

also noticed that the PM of child labourers is reduced when their parents work in the service sector as opposed to those parents who are unemployed.

Since child labourers work long hours, they are more likely to stay at work, which has been cited as a further risk factor for child maltreatment (Banday et al., 2018). The living arrangements of child labourers as reported by their employers showed a contrary finding. For example, children who lived sometimes at work experienced less PM than those who did not. In rural Bangladesh, most CDLs work from their employer's home, where they are frequently subjected to PM (CRGA, 2013; Islam, 2010; Save the Children, 2020). It is evident that employers are the most likely to maltreat and neglect child labourers because they are able to exert extended control over them if they live in their home (Jensen, 2017). Thus, it is essential to understand the attitude and disposition of employers (Rao & Rao, 1998). The present study found that child labourers of employers with higher levels of education are more likely to suffer PM than child labourers of employers with no formal education. This contradicts the findings of prior studies. Literacy is attributed to better knowledge and attitudes to child labour and maltreatment. Children with educated caregivers are assumed to always have a reduced risk of experiencing corporal punishment (Khosravan et al., 2018; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991).

Three proximal factors are associated the EM of child labourers that indicate the experiences of emotional bullying or being treated as worthless, unwanted or flawed. These factors include parental history of early childhood maltreatment, land ownership patterns and the number of employees at work; these findings are consistent with the results of numerous studies (Hadi, 2000; Lakhdir et al., 2021; Lewis et al., 2017; Makhoul et al., 2004). It is evident that an increased rate of early childhood maltreatment history increases an individual's likelihood of becoming a child perpetrator in later life. This, in turn, leads to the development of intergenerational behaviours and makes children more vulnerable to maltreatment (Hemenway et al., 1994; Lakhdir et al., 2021). According to this current study, child labourers are more susceptible to EM if their parents have experienced high levels of

maltreatment during their childhood compared to those whose parents had less incidents. Moreover, it could be considered that increased resources of caregivers may ameliorate the risk of EM of children (Hadi, 2000; Lakhdir et al., 2021). This study also found that families where child labourers were emotionally maltreated possessed more land. However, previous studies report an opposite finding; parents with high economic resources (particularly those who own additional land) have a lower risk of maltreatment for their children (Gao et al., 2017; Hadi, 2000). The EM of child labourers appears to be linked to the number of co-workers at the workplace, with signs that those who work with more co-workers are more prone to experience EM. Many prior studies also show that bullying-associated negative behaviour is more prevalent in larger organisations with more employees than in smaller organisations (Fevre et al., 2010; Lewis et al., 2017).

The quantitative study further found that neglect is significantly associated with child labourers extended working hours, land ownership pattern of families and their exposure to illness. As with the current study, previous studies have shown that an increase in workplace maltreatment and neglect of child labourers is associated with their long working schedules (Pinzon-Rondon et al., 2010). The current study also found that children's chances of experiencing neglect are reduced when they live in land-rich households. Many previous studies have also demonstrated that children from high socioeconomic backgrounds are at a reduced risk of maltreatment and neglect (Haque et al., 2020; Lakhdir et al., 2021; Stith et al., 2009). It is evident that children who are physically challenged or ill are neglected (Kotch et al., 1995; Sullivan, 2009). Contrary to many previous studies, this study concludes that children with physical illnesses are less likely to be neglected (Jarosz, 2008; Xu et al., 2019). However, the type of physical illness was found to be a potential indicator. This study shows that malnourished child labourers were significantly more neglected than children with common fevers. This was also investigated as a proximal risk factor of child neglect in an earlier study (Hock et al., 2017). In poverty-afflicted families, children are often deprived of adequate nutrients in food consumption, which leads malnutrition. Caregivers with these malnourished children may suffer from

mental disturbances (De Miranda et al., 1996). This may lead to further maltreatment and neglect their own children (Kisely et al., 2018; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991).

Bangladesh's informal economy is hampered by barriers related to wage structure, working conditions and social protection (Maligalig et al., 2009). These issues largely affect child labourers in informal industries. Prior studies have found that children working in the informal sectors in Bangladesh receive little or no actual wages (Beaubien, 2016; Hadi, 2000; Kamruzzaman, 2015). In addition, child labourers on low wages are highly vulnerable to exploitation and maltreatment, which is also argued by a study conducted by Banday et al. (2018). Low wage earners are unskilled workers, thus further exploited financially by being underpaid (Hadi, 2000). Capitalist modes of production practice not only exploit workers through overburden, but also produce dividends for the owners by paying pitiful wages to workers. Children are often recruited as cheap labour in the informal economy. Employers typically target children from poor families, who are often forced to work for low wages (Ara et al., 2011; Banday et al., 2018; Pinzon-Rondon et al., 2010; Srivastava, 2012; Tripathy, 1989). This study also demonstrates that financial exploitation of child labour appears to be exacerbated by the low level of income of parents. A parent's emotional distress status is also identified as a proximal factor in their child's experiences of maltreatment or exploitation (Santhosh, 2016; Wiehe, 2003). This study identified that the child labourers who live with these parents are more likely to be exploited financially than those who did not.

***Summary of findings in light of previous research***

The key predictors of child labour maltreatment are the working hours of children, individual income levels, household incomes, occupations, the health of child labourers, caregivers' history of early childhood maltreatment, cultural acceptance of corporal punishment, domestic violence and gaps in policy practices. The majority of these risk factors are in agreement with previous studies, with a few exceptions, such as the living arrangements of child labourers, land ownership patterns and physical illness of child labourers.

#### 9.2.2.2 Belsky's ecological model and risk factors associated with child labour maltreatment

The next section discusses the possible determinants of maltreatment of child labourers using the ecological framework suggested by Belsky (1980). The determinants are explained by drawing on the ontogenetic phase (personal characteristics), microsystem (family characteristics), ecosystem (community and social factors), and macrosystem (cultural factors) (Belsky, 1980).

***Ontogenic phase and child labour maltreatment***

The ontogenic phase emphasises the origins and development of an individual, particularly parents, caregivers or other parties with caregiver responsibilities (Belsky, 1980). As this study shows, child labourers are exposed to more maltreatment when their caregivers have experienced adverse childhood experiences such as maltreatment in their early childhood. The ontogenic phase also postulates that adverse childhood experiences may negatively affect the behavioural development of a person. Both parents and employers reported being maltreated themselves as children, and the studies shows that these adults admit to maltreating either their own children or their child employees. This contributes to an intergenerational cycle of child maltreatment (both PM and EM) (Lakhdir et al., 2021). As the key informants stressed, caregivers who were perpetrators of child maltreatment were also influenced by the psychosocial difficulties they experienced during their childhood. Individuals suffering from traumatic symptoms or growing up in an emotionally challenged family may encounter developmental difficulties (Chapman et al., 2004; Milner & Chilamkurti, 1991; Santhosh, 2016). This may result in them being disposed to maltreat children during their adulthood (Hurford et al., 2016; Levey et al., 2017).

The ontogenic stage of the ecological model is further concerned with socioeconomic traits and socialisation history of individuals as a risk factor of child maltreatment. The result from this study shows that the low levels of literacy, inadequate parenting skills, and lack of social awareness of parents and employers of child development, place child labourers at risk of maltreatment. Previous studies on the aetiology of child maltreatment have also highlighted the significant role of caregivers' illiteracy in predicting child maltreatment (Antai et al., 2016; Khatab et al., 2019). Haque et al. (2019)

report that children of parents with low levels of education are more likely to experience PM in Bangladesh. However, as noted above, the education level of employers does not follow this trend. The study found that those employers with primary level of education were more likely to physically maltreat children than those never enrolled in schools. The moral failure of employers is also a factor contributing to the maltreatment of children in the workplace. Consistent with these findings, prior studies also stressed that the lack of monitoring, supervision, or caregiving skills, as well as the lack of social awareness of caregivers, make children vulnerable to maltreatment (Howarth et al., 2019; Hurford et al., 2016; Kim, 2000; Rohner, 1975).

***The microsystem and child labour maltreatment***

In Belsky's (1980) model, the microsystem refers to the child's interactions with members of their immediate environment, such as family, friends and co-workers at their workplace. Belsky (1980) states that children themselves contribute to their abusive experiences. Consistent with prior studies (Hadi, 2000; Haque, 2019; Lakhdir et al., 2021), the experts interviewed for the qualitative component of the study identified that the child labourers' characteristics such as their young age and a lack of education are risk factors for maltreatment, although these variables were not significant predictors in the quantitative study. Rather, the child labourers' level of income, working hours, living arrangements and exposure to physical illness were explicitly associated with their experiences of PM, neglect and financial exploitation. Presumably, the level of income of child labourers impacts on family dynamics and interpersonal interactions with others in the workplace (Mundia et al., 2017). There is evidence that interpersonal interactions may also be adversely affected by inadequate earnings, and this may negatively impact on peace and harmony within the family, leading to violence (Banday et al., 2018; Hadi, 2000). The extended work-hours of children are also a contributing factor. If a young child remains at the workplace for a prolonged period of time, it increases the potential for unwanted interactions with co-workers, possibly leading to maltreatment. Previous research has also shown that child labourers who work extended hours are at risk of experiencing multiple types of maltreatment at the workplace (Banday et al., 2018; Öncü et al., 2013). Those child labourers who

are dependent on employers for their living arrangements are also at risk. Prior studies show that child labourers who sleep overnight at the workplace are more likely to experience PM (Banday et al., 2018; Moayad et al., 2021). Included also in this phase is the child's health status (Sidebotham, 2001) as it impacts on their social interactions. Children who are physically ill have a greater likelihood of experiencing maltreatment, particularly EM (Jarosz, 2008), while those who are malnourished have an increased risk of neglect.

Key informants indicated that conflict within the home increased the risk of child maltreatment. Similarly to other studies, they noted that children are the most vulnerable victims of domestic violence (Afolabi, 2015). According to Belsky (1980), stress and conflicts resulting from marital discord negatively affect the relationship between parents and children. A lack of protection and safety measures in the informal labour market further exposes child labourers to a variety of threats (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, 2018). The key informants stressed that child labourers are vulnerable to victimisation in informal labour market settings.

***The exosystem and child labour maltreatment***

The exosystem emphasises the indirect influence of external factors on child maltreatment, such as work and wider social support. These components explain several factors, such as parents' income, education and land ownership patterns. This study found that a decrease in parental income increases the risk of child labour maltreatment. For example, low income leads to low job satisfaction (Clark & Oswald, 1996), which results in parental stress and in turn can lead to child maltreatment (McKinley, 1964). This study also concludes that the low income of individuals and households has an indirect effect on the vulnerability of child labourers to PM and financial exploitation. There is no doubt that economically disadvantaged families in Bangladesh force their children to work in order to contribute to their family expenses (delap, 2001; Norpoth et al., 2014). Further, where parents are unemployed, children are more vulnerable to child labour maltreatment. Research shows that an increase in unemployment is associated with an increase in familial conflict, which in turn leads to child maltreatment (Afolabi, 2015; Steinmetz & Straus, 1974). It is also assumed by Belsky (1980)

that unemployment results in parents spending more time with their children at home, thereby increasing the risk of child maltreatment. Moreover, it is assumed that the land ownership of a family represents its resources. An increase in family resources is predicted to result in a decrease in child maltreatment and neglect (Bhalotra & Heady, 2003). This model theorises that increased resources will reduce parental stress and contribute to positive relationships between caregivers and children. The current study found that the risk of neglect was reduced among child labourers whose families owned additional land beyond their household land. It has also been observed by Hadi (2000) that child labourers in Bangladesh are less likely to be exposed to maltreatment when their parents own additional land, but as outlined above, it may increase PM as the child may be forced to work for this land.

***The macrosystem and child labour maltreatment***

The macrosystem focuses on the sociocultural forces and beliefs that underlie violence. Corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice is one of the most important cultural determinants of child labour maltreatment. Numerous studies have demonstrated that child maltreatment, particularly corporal punishment, is widely accepted and practiced in many countries (Lansford & Dodge, 2008; Steinmetz & Straus, 1974). Belsky (1993) stresses that corporal punishment continues to be used as a means of disciplining children in some parts of the world, despite improvements in child rights. In this study, key informants indicated that the acceptance of corporal punishment within the family and workplaces was a key factor in child labour maltreatment. The quantitative findings indicate that over 90% of child labourers have been physically victimised, typically by hitting, slapping, pulling hair or twisting ears. Although the Bangladesh Government has prohibited all forms of corporal punishment, this practice remains prevalent. Many caregivers in Bangladesh believe that this type of practice helps them to manage their children's behaviour and enhances the child's sense of responsibility (Haque et al., 2019; Mohiuddin et al., 2012). This macrosystem characteristic implies that there is a societal tolerance for family violence and that this contributes to child maltreatment.

The key informants stated that, in Bangladesh, the patriarchal social system contributes to domestic violence, which is considered one of the causal factors of child labour maltreatment. Prior studies also agree with this finding (Hunter et al., 2000; Tracy, 2007). Within the patriarchal system in Bangladesh, male children are required to contribute to the family income, which means that they must work, primarily in agriculture in rural areas, while girls work as domestics. Numerous studies have indicated that both these informal economic sectors are vulnerable sites for children (ILO, 2009; Islam et al., 2013; Islam, 2018).

This study further found that these children are highly stigmatised or considered moral dirt by parents and employers, who see them as inferior. According to Belsky (1980), children in certain societies are often judged to be property that can be handled in any manner the caregiver chooses. These authoritarian attitudes of caregivers and other stakeholders in a society place children at risk of maltreatment. Many Asian countries are known to adopt this dominant stance (Al-Shail et al., 2012; Srinivas, 1995).

The macrosystem also addresses the policy gaps in child protection. Politics and policies also have a significant impact on legislation, such as corruption or inadequate funding for comprehensive efforts to combat child labour and maltreatment (Hoffman, 1978). Children's rights are inadequately protected in the country as a result of complexities and ambiguities in the existing laws regarding child protection (Martinello, 2020). The problems in policy legislation and execution were also reported by key informants as contributing factors to child maltreatment. The study further highlights the lack of community monitoring, awareness and support programs that should be designed to eliminate child labour and maltreatment in rural areas. Labourers in many informal sectors are not covered by child protection policies in Bangladesh (Siddiqua, 2003). Therefore, young children employed in informal labour market are severely affected by abusive practices.

It is notable that all four stages of Belsky (1980) ecological framework provide adequate explanations for the risk factors identified in this study. The factors included in the first three stages of the model

were well suited to the determinants derived from the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings. The cultural and political influences that were identified in the qualitative chapter are explained by the macro-systems of Belsky's ecological model. Further, working hours or living arrangements of child labourers, as well as the number of employees at the workplace, also reflect the children's internal occupational characteristics, although not explicitly described in Belsky's (1980) model. While not explicitly picked up in either the qualitative or quantitative data, the local and global capitalist system of profit must also be considered a determinant of child labour and child labour maltreatment although the links are complex. The exploitation of child labourers' wages is evidence of this, as the assumption that the maltreatment they endure is in some instances due to impacts they may have on the employer's profit margins. Poor labour laws and protection for workers is further evidence. Das and Chen (2019) provide preliminary theoretical insights into this macro determinant, but the idea is not explored in detail here due to the lack of supporting data. A more rigorous applications of Belsky (1980) ecological model in child labour maltreatment studies would allow more comprehensive aspects that include not only the child labourers' familial characteristics but also their external workforce characteristics such as the impact of capitalism.

Belsky's ecological model suggests that a number of social and public health measures should be taken to eliminate child labour maltreatment. As a preventive measure, social campaigns could be conducted to educate the public about the impacts of maltreatment and neglect on children's health and development. The awareness program could be extended by providing information regarding the impact of domestic violence and the risk of intergenerational cycles of child abuse and neglect. Bangladesh's labour laws should be amended to include policies regarding the exploitation of children in the informal economy. There needs to be a special policy framework addressing the measures to combat the violence and exploitation of child labourers in rural areas of Bangladesh.

It is expected that the inadequate understanding of psychosocial consequences would further hinder the development of prevention policies and programs. The following section focuses on a

comprehensive discussion of the assessed psychosocial difficulties experienced by maltreated child labourers in agricultural and domestic sectors.

### *9.2.3 Psychosocial impairments of maltreatment of child labourers*

Child maltreatment is considered a public health concern, since it is associated with a variety of detrimental health consequences (Abbasi et al., 2015; Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003). Over the past few years, research has been conducted on the devastating effects of child maltreatment, where emotional problems are increasingly identified (Ahn et al., 2022; Lippard & Nemeroff, 2020). Several studies have also shown that socially and economically vulnerable groups of children are highly susceptible to acute psychotraumatic symptoms (Al-Gamal et al., 2013; Pandey et al., 2020; Sturrock & Hodes, 2016; Zhao et al., 2019). Earlier studies have shown that child labour itself is strongly associated with poor mental health outcomes for children (Graitcer & Lerer, 1998; Sturrock & Hodes, 2016). The maltreatment exposure would exacerbate the situation for child labourers.

This study shows that a substantial proportion of maltreated child labourers in Bangladesh suffer from psychological problems. The key informants were of the opinion that the majority of victimised child labourers in Bangladesh are affected by psychological disorders. This was also noticed in some previous studies conducted in the context of South Asian countries (Dhakal et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2020). The views of key informants reflect that maltreated child labourers predominantly display both internalised and externalised psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, fear, loneliness, aggressive and defiant behaviour, substance abuse and suicidal tendencies. These difficulties have been identified as common psychosocial outcomes for victimised children in several prior studies (Islam, 2018; Kisely et al., 2018; Pandey et al., 2020; Vachon et al., 2015; Zhao et al., 2019).

The early detection of psychosocial problems using an appropriate treatment protocol is imperative (Hasan et al., 2021; Hossain et al., 2014). Researchers who do not use formal screening instruments have a low level of sensitivity for identifying psychosocial problems (Simonian & Tarnowski, 2001).

It is also a matter of concern that there is a lack of cross-culturally valid instruments to detect psychological difficulties. Taking these concerns into account, this study found the Y-PSC and PSC an effective measure of the psychosocial difficulties among victimised child labourers (Jellinek et al., 1988). The study conducted an EFA of both the Y-PSC and PSC instruments as a dimension reduction technique and developed small meaningful factors from a large set of items (Pallant, 2020). Notably, a fixed 3-factor structure was adapted based on prior studies (Bernal et al., 2000; Reed-Knight et al., 2011). There is also evidence that these three psychosocial factors are related to children's exposure to maltreatment (Kisely et al., 2018). Unlike prior studies by Reed-Knight et al. (2011) and Stoppelbein et al. (2005), the EFA of items of both the Y-PSC and PSC tools retained a limited number of items; 22 and 22 among all 35 items under these three factor structures respectively. Items were assigned to each of these subscales in accordance with their internal congruence, which have been similarly observed in previous studies conducted on factor analysis for PSC (Bala et al., 2012; Reed-Knight et al., 2011). Clustered items of internalised problems, derived from both the Y-PSC and PSC, depicted depression, anxiety, withdrawal or internal somatic symptoms. Externalising items reflect aggressive, destructive or misconduct behaviour, while items in the attention subscale implied the effects of cognitive difficulties in children (Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Stoppelbein et al., 2005). The fact that few items are endorsed under the attention subscale, does not necessarily imply that these are only social hazards, but indicates a common emotional problem.

In this study, factor analysis of both the Y-PSC and PSC retained underlying items with factor loadings ranging between 0.45 to 0.68 for Y-PSC and 0.41 to 0.75 for PSC, which appears stronger than estimated loadings found in other factor analyses of PSC (Ardıç et al., 2020; Stoppelbein et al., 2005). The attention items were found to be significantly stronger than those observed in many previous studies (Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Wolfe-Christensen et al., 2014). The 3-factor structures in this study demonstrated proportional variances that fall in between the accounted variances identified in several prior studies with a range between 31% and 42% (Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Stoppelbein et al., 2005). With the exception of the internalised psychosocial factor, the current study

demonstrated a low level of internal consistency for the items of both externalised subscales in comparison to a few prior studies (Stoppelbein et al., 2005; Wolfe-Christensen et al., 2014). Besides, there were few disagreements noticed between the current and prior studies with factor analyses of both Y-PSC and PSC. For example, the item 'fights with other children' is identified under the component of the attention subscale in the factor analysis of both Y-PSC and PSC, while prior studies found it as a high loaded item of an externalised factor (Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Stoppelbein et al., 2005). In addition, two studies simultaneously characterised the item 'spend more time alone' in the internalised factor (DiStefano et al., 2017; Stoppelbein et al., 2005), while the current study observed it as an externalised psychosocial symptom.

The study deducted a number of items during the EFA of both Y-PSC and PSC considering the issues such as low factor loadings, dependency on the other items and low level of reliability, which were also noticed as primary reasons for eliminating items in prior studies (Stoppelbein et al., 2005; Wolfe-Christensen et al., 2014). For example, the EFA of Y-PSC resulted in almost 15 items with factor loadings of below 0.4 as well as an unacceptable level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha level of below 0.4), were therefore deducted. The construct validity through CFA reflected that the 3-factor structure emerged from the EFA of both Y-PSC and PSC are partially accepted, although the CFI ranged below 0.90. This is found nearly consistent with the findings of few previous studies (Murphy et al., 2016; Reed-Knight et al., 2011).

The estimated mean scores of three factors indicates the severity of the psychosocial difficulties suffered by maltreated child labourers. It appears that child labourers are more likely to develop psychosocial problems when they are victimised than other children, as found in multiple studies in a variety of situations (Jutte et al., 2003; Reijneveld et al., 2006). Several studies conducted on children with chronic illness have also observed similar levels of psychosocial difficulties (Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Simonian & Tarnowski, 2001). For example, Reed-Knight et al. (2011) measured the mean PSC level as an estimated 15.82 for children with symptoms of paediatric illness. The studies on child maltreatment that have used different other psychosocial screening instruments also

identified that victimised children are highly susceptible to a variety of psychosocial problems (Duffy et al., 2021; Madhlopa et al., 2020). Additionally, similar to previous studies conducted with children who suffer chronic health issues, this study revealed that victimised child labourers were highly-screened for internalised psychosocial symptoms followed by externalised symptoms, as well as attention deficit disorder (Jutte et al., 2003; Reed-Knight et al., 2011; Reijneveld et al., 2006).

Internalising problems primarily consist of depression and anxiety syndromes (Gilliom & Shaw, 2004; White et al., 2015). Several prior studies show a linear increase in internalising behavioural symptoms such as depression, anxiety and sadness with an increase in maltreatment (Badr et al., 2018; Dhakal et al., 2019; Kisely et al., 2018). It is evident that children who are dispatched to work are more likely to exhibit internalised psychosocial problems than externalising problems (Sturrock & Hodes, 2016). Badr et al. (2018) found that nearly half of all children with maltreatment experiences exhibit internalised symptoms, which are higher than any other form of emotional or behavioural disorder. Since internalised psychological problems are invisible and difficult to measure, they remain undetected. In poverty-afflicted families, parents do not prioritise their children's psychosocial wellbeing, therefore the situation worsens (Al-Gamal et al., 2013; Sturrock & Hodes, 2016). These internalised ramifications are core issues in disrupting brain development in children (Luijten et al., 2021; Mills et al., 2013). On the other hand, some studies have found that externalised and attention problems outweigh internalised problems (Rogosch et al., 2011; Schatz-Stevens et al., 2015). Of note, disruptive behavioural disorders are a frequent problem among child labourers (Fekadu et al., 2006). As they become victimised, externalised psychosocial problems increase. Pears and colleagues identified an increased rate of externalised behaviour in children who were maltreated compared to other forms of psychosocial problems (Pears et al., 2008). This study found that the rate of externalised problems is nearly equal to internalised problems among maltreated child labourers as identified in some previous studies (Bhat et al., 2012; Kisely et al., 2018). While the current study observed that attention-associated problems are less likely to occur among victimised child labourers,

several prior studies identified that abusive experiences result in poor academic outcomes or delayed cognitive improvements (Briscoe-Smith & Hinshaw, 2006; Stern et al., 2018).

Consistent with several prior studies, the child labourers' reported data revealed that their experience of EM was significantly associated with their exposure to internalised and externalised psychosocial problems (Kisely et al., 2018; Muniz et al., 2019). This reflects that emotionally victimised children are critically vulnerable to emotional health hazards. Pandey et al. (2020) found that emotionally victimised child labourers exhibit greater oppositional defiant behaviour. However, in this study, internalised difficulties were found to significantly decrease with the increase in EM among child labourers. There is no evidence yet that shows this kind of inverse relationship, except for the study conducted by Pears et al. (2008), who identified that only physically or sexually abused children have an increased risk of experiencing of internalised problems. Therefore, prospective studies should examine this relationship in more detail.

Moreover, the PSC instrument revealed in this study that children who have been subjected to PM and EM exhibited increased internalised and attention deficit psychosocial symptoms, which were found to be consistent with several previous studies (Cecil et al., 2014; Ford et al., 2000; Leeb et al., 2011; Mills et al., 2013). Children who have experienced PM are more likely to suffer from phobias and stress-related disorders (Hesketh et al., 2012; Pandey et al., 2020). Likewise, a global meta-analysis conducted by Norman et al. (2012) states that EM significantly causes internalised depressive disorders and anxiety problems among children. The parents' reported data reveals that PM and EM have no significant effect on externalised psychosocial symptoms, although child labourers are usually seen to be committing delinquent acts and crimes. Many preceding studies have noted that physically and psychologically victimised children have more often displayed externalised defiant behaviours (Liu, 2019; Mills et al., 2013; Pandey et al., 2020). It is unclear whether externalised symptoms are underreported by the parents or children, suggesting that further research is needed.

It has also been found that financial exploitation significantly affects externalised psychological problems. Children working in Bangladesh's informal economy are often deprived of actual wages

in order to support their families (Beaubien, 2016; Hadi, 2000). The financial exploitation of younger children negatively affects their sense of trust towards other people (Acierno et al., 2019). A particular manifestation of this problem can be seen in the children's externalised defiant behaviour (Muniz et al., 2019). Several studies indicate that neglected children usually report higher internalised symptoms (e.g., major depression) and attention difficulties (e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders [ADHD]) (Briscoe-Smith & Hinshaw, 2006; Mills et al., 2013; Pandey et al., 2020). This study, however, did not find a significant impact of neglect on psychosocial difficulties. It is recommended that future research is crucial to bridge this gap.

It appears that children who have experienced PM display high attention-related low self-esteem, lack of competence, and social withdrawal issues (Madhlopa et al., 2020; Toth & Cicchetti, 2004). This is also identified from the parents' reported data in this study. Children with physical victimisation experiences have been identified as poor in social and academic functioning or delayed cognitive development (Briscoe-Smith & Hinshaw, 2006; Ford et al., 2000). Of note, screening of attention-associated problems among child labourers is under-researched. Like PM, EM of child labourers significantly contributes to their exposure to attention-associated psychosocial difficulties. There is ample evidence that psychological bullying of children may lead to ADHD and PTSD (Badr et al., 2018; Dhakal et al., 2019; Hadianfard, 2014; Stern et al., 2018). In turn, this results in cognitive impairment. According to Dhakal et al. (2019) and Pandey et al. (2020), emotionally maltreated child labourers significantly meet the criteria for ADHD, particularly the symptom of impulsiveness and inattentiveness. The current study did not find a link between neglect and financial exploitation of child labourers and the exposure of these workers to attention-related psychosocial problems. However, several studies have found that neglected children significantly exhibit attention-associated disorders (Ford et al., 2000; Pandey et al., 2020). Notably, the current study reveals that neglect is substantially prevalent among child labourers. However, the reporting of attention-associated problems was not disclosed by parents, as many do not consider attention-associated problems as an emotional problem (Hadianfard, 2014). Key informants in this study were of the view that neglect

and financial exploitation would negatively impact children's cognitive development. These inconsistencies indicate a need for further research to explore the relationship between neglect and attention difficulty among child labourers.

## 9.3 Strengths and Limitation of this Study

### *9.3.1 Strength of the study*

The major strength of this study is that it explored one of the obscure aspects of child maltreatment endured by child labourers in rural settings. The study identified different forms of child labour maltreatment including financial exploitation and neglect. The use of a mixed-method design in this study to examine the complex issue of child labour maltreatment provided an expanded understanding of the contextual boundary and evidence (Creswell & Clark, 2007). One of the strengths of this study is the insights provided by the expert participant groups, which included government and non-government stakeholders, while a further strength is the inclusion in the survey the views of children, parents and employers.

The quantitative study used reliable and validated instruments such as the ICAST and PSC to examine the prevalence of child labour maltreatment and evaluate the impact of this victimisation on the psychosocial outcomes of the children. Further, all the data collectors were trained in accordance with proper guidelines for collecting information accurately and maintaining ethical principles. Additionally, the study examined the construct validity of the PSC tools using CFA. In providing an analysis of the data from both sources, a joint display approach was employed. The quantitative study assessed risk factors associated with child labour maltreatment examined the socioeconomic and health characteristics, while the key informants extended this analysis to the causal agents such as the social, cultural and political factors.

### *9.3.2 Limitations of the study*

There were a number of limitations identified in this study. The current study is limited to child labourers employed in agriculture and domestic households. In addition, third-party CDLs tend to be

located in urban areas, while the present study examined CDLs in rural areas (Jensen, 2017). The current study only surveyed children aged between 10 and 17 years, although the largest proportion of children in Bangladesh fall under the age group of 6−11 years (BBS, 2015). The current study was limited to a 100 participants in each group on account of the difficulties encountered in reaching participants as a result of various public health measures imposed during the Covid-19 outbreak. The quantitative data were also collected through retrospective self-reports, which may lead to an under-reporting of child labour maltreatment due to recall difficulties. The current study also overlooked the assessment of content validity and criterion-related validity of the PSC instruments due to the absence of a strong guiding hypothesis and limited studies directly exploring the psychological symptoms criterion of victimised child labourers.

The quantitative study lacked several predictor variables that were identified by expert participants in the qualitative study. Due to the use of parallel convergent mixed methods, these variables were not able to be considered in the quantitative study. This could have been informed by using a sequential mixed-method study.

Financial exploitation was not included in the original ICAST instruments as an indication of maltreatment. The question of the validity and reliability of the categories of financial exploitation should be raised. Note that the study used the caregivers' version of the ICAST-P tool to determine the views of employers as a proxy for caregivers. There was an assumption that employers may not reveal the exact picture of the workplace maltreatment. Finally, the study primarily focused on prevalence over the past year, overlooking the lifetime prevalence of maltreatment when interpreting prevalence findings. This is also considered to be a limitation in this study.

The expert participants had varying knowledge of the field. Many of the government and non-government bureaucrats' knowledge came from secondary sources. This raises issues on the trustworthiness of their knowledge, and importantly suggests that they may be uninformed when it comes to policy design.

## 9.4 Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The current research project had to confront several limitations due to the rapid spread of the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in 2019. The WHO declared the Covid-19 outbreak as a pandemic in March 2020 (Bratan et al., 2021). To mitigate the impact of Covid-19, several public health measures were taken nationally and internationally. Among the health measures, lockdowns, social distancing and travel restrictions were common around the world. Due to these measures, researchers, particularly those working on public health issues, were forced to stop projects because of the health risks. As per study timelines, it was intended that the survey data for this research would have been collected between May 2020 and August 2020.

Flinders university's social and behavioural research ethics committee did not permit researchers to travel overseas and conduct field studies during this period. As a result, the survey was not able to be conducted until mid-2021. In addition, while social distance measures were eased, travel restrictions continued until the middle of 2022. This led to the lead researcher recruiting three skilled data collectors to carry out the fieldwork. This resulted in changes to the project plan, in addition to a delay in the field survey. As part of the original proposal the intention was to explore the physical health consequences of child labour maltreatment. Since data collection was delayed and time limitations were present, this objective was excluded, and the study focused only on the evaluation of psychosocial consequences of child labour maltreatment.

## 9.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

There are very few national legislative and legal policies that protect the rights of children in Bangladesh. Those that do, have a narrow focus that does little to protect child labourers from maltreatment and exploitation (Shahidullah, 2017), especially those in the informal economy. This is reflected in the current estimates that a substantial proportion of children continue to work in hazardous conditions and to suffer from severe maltreatment. To ensure that child labourers are protected from violence, a comprehensive public policy is needed that complies with all the necessary

initiatives and agreements, including a system of adequate implementation of the laws. Of particular concern is that perpetrators of child maltreatment are easily able to escape legal action through bribery or other means. Therefore, the government should take initiatives to ensure that these laws are properly executed.

Key informants in this study also stressed that most existing laws do not apply to informal economic sectors. For example, the Labour Act 2006 does not cover the rights of labourers in agriculture, domestic work and family businesses (Norpoth et al., 2014). This makes protecting children in these two areas challenging. An amendment to existing labour laws or an independent labour policy would ensure the rights of labourers engaged in the informal sector. In addition, a separate legal entity could be established in rural precincts of Bangladesh to protect vulnerable children.

The government of Bangladesh has prohibited culturally accepted corporal punishment practices from educational institutions (Mohiuddin et al., 2012). However, the estimated rate of PM of child labourers indicates that corporal punishment is still in vogue. It is time to prohibit all forms of corporal punishment of children practiced as disciplinary acts in all settings. The cultural taboo of physically maltreating or bullying children should be abolished through enacting laws and initiating social awareness programs. The abolition of domestic violence through awareness-raising programs is also a key component of this effort. The government needs to mobilise and strengthen the functions of the Department of Social Services and the Bangladesh Police (e.g., The Child Affair Desk) in order to actively combat violence against child labourers in rural areas.

In Bangladesh, agriculture and third-party domestic work are not included on the hazardous work list (ILO, 2014). The current study, however, found that the majority of agricultural and domestic labourers work for over 8 hours per day, and some are unpaid or receive low wages, which impacts on their education. They are victims of multiple forms of maltreatment in these sectors. As per the national child labour elimination policy 2010, the working environment that causes such adversity constitutes a hazardous job for children (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2010). Hence, these

two areas should be placed on the hazardous work list. This will assist in combating the heightened rate of child labour, and in turn violence, in these two sectors.

One of the predominant risk factors for child labour maltreatment is low individual and family income. This implies that child labour maltreatment is strongly rooted in low levels of income; therefore, children in poverty-afflicted families are severely affected by this type of maltreatment. A social safety net program such as parental income and employment support could be introduced for vulnerable families with child labourers. The monetary assistance to these families could be provided contingent on the children attending school.

The lack of knowledge and awareness among caregivers regarding the health effects of maltreatment places children at risk. A social awareness campaign on the importance of positive caregiving is necessary in order to combat child maltreatment at work and at home. Government and non-government organisations can work together to raise this awareness to the population.

As per the national eighth 5-year plan, the study findings have policy implications, specifically involving the review and restructuring of primary healthcare services in rural areas and ensuring the expansion of health service schemes for people living in poverty (Islam et al., 2023). Providing health supports to vulnerable children in rural areas can be achieved by strengthening community health centres. An independent team of healthcare centres could be responsible for screening for psychosocial impairments among children who have been victimised. If necessary, they would recommend further treatment.

## 9.6 Future Research

Research in this area is still in its infancy. The notion that child labour itself is a form of maltreatment is frequently used to obscure the reality of violence against this vulnerable group of children. It is crucial to have a thorough understanding of intentional violence of working children in order to protect them from maltreatment in the home and at work. This study was only able to explore three common forms of child maltreatment and financial exploitation. Therefore, all forms of maltreatment

that child labourers are alleged to experience should be included in future research. Of note, due to ethical limitations, subjective difficulties and time constraints, the study did not evaluate sexual abuse among child labourers, which requires a more comprehensive investigation in future research. In addition, this study only covered children employed in two informal sectors, while future research could focus on other sectors where child labourers are prone to maltreatment, including children in urban areas.

This study involved interviews with expert professionals about their views on child labour maltreatment. Future qualitative studies may incorporate real-life maltreatment histories of child labourers based on the perspectives of the children themselves and their caregivers. It would be useful to determine whether qualitative views corroborate the findings of quantitative results, and this would assist in understanding the phenomenon in more depth. A gold standard measure should also be developed that incorporates possible categorical classifications of the types of maltreatment experienced by child labourers. It could be based upon the norms of victimisation both at work and at home. Future studies exploring the psychosocial impairment of child labourers using the PSC instrument should require explicit validation of the scale. The content and criterion validity of the scale could be examined to ensure that it is reliable and effective for assessing the health problems of maltreated child labourers.

As already noted, there were discrepancies in the results on the potential predictor variables of child labour maltreatment, such as the level of income and living arrangements of child labourers, as well as the education level of employers of child labourers. Prospective studies could further examine the relationship between child labour maltreatment and these conflicting variables. It is recommended that future research focus on the formulation of a prevention model that takes into account child labour maltreatment. In order to measure the trend of maltreatment of child labourers, periodic follow-up studies should be conducted.

## 9.7 Conclusion

Maltreatment and child labour is considered a global public health concern. There are several studies on child labour in the literature, but the upward trend in violence affecting child labourers has only just begun to be explored by researchers. The scoping review of this study revealed that studies related to violence of children as labourers in the South Asian regions are limited, with research relating to economic and health hazards of child labourers being more extensive. However, maltreatment of child labourers in Bangladesh is extremely common, particularly for children employed in the agriculture and domestic sectors. This study reveals that child labourers are more likely to suffer EM, PM, neglect and financial exploitation than children in general.

In regard to exploration of potential risk factors, this study paid more attention to the economic and cultural traits of participants, which indicated that individual and household aggregate income and parental occupation significantly predict child labour maltreatment. Other potential determinants of child labour maltreatment include children's physical health, their living arrangements and workplace attributes. Additionally, the lack of legal frameworks for informal sectors and sociocultural acceptance of maltreatment were identified as potential predictors of child labour maltreatment.

An in-depth discussion has been initiated on the psychosocial difficulties of child labourers in rural Bangladesh, which posits that child labourers who have endured PM and EM are at high risk of developing internalised psychosocial problems with little hope of assessment and prevention. A nation's future depends on the physical and psychological wellbeing of its children. Steps need to be taken to bring the maltreatment and vulnerability aspects of these children under the child protection system by conducting research and reporting on these issues.

## 9.8 Reflexivity Statement

I grew up in a rural area, where I have seen how parents raise their children. While my parents taught me social values and justice, at some point of time in early childhood, I also experienced abuse and neglect. During childhood, I witnessed a number of my peers living in rural areas being denied food, education, working, and experiencing abuse. These childhood experiences explicitly helped me in my current research process. This assisted me in the pathways of building rapport with the participant, formulating probing questions, clarifying the answer, and developing themes based on real-life experiences. Media reports and newspaper articles generally address the problem of violence against children in Bangladesh. Upon becoming aware of the plight of vulnerable children in Bangladesh from these sources, I have also decided to contribute to the area of child protection through my scientific research efforts. Prior to beginning my PhD program, I conducted a few studies on child labour in Bangladesh. The knowledge gathered from these preceding studies assisted in developing questionnaires and conducting surveys in the field. Furthermore, previous experiences assisted me in understanding that intentional abuse of child laborers is a relatively unknown phenomenon, despite being theorized by Das and Chen (2019). This motivated me to focus on this issue and to bring this aspect of child labour in Bangladesh to the forefront through my research.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Scoping review protocol

https://doi.org/10.22492/issn.2186-5892.2022.17

***The Prevalence and Impact of the Maltreatment of Child Laborers in Developing Countries: A Scoping Review Protocol***

Md Abdul Ahad, Flinders University, Australia
Yvonne Parry, Flinders University, Australia
Eileen Willis, Flinders University, Australia

The Asian Conference on Education 2021
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**
Background: Children working in the rural agricultural and domestic occupations are more prone to maltreatment than children in other settings. However, very little is known about the maltreatment of child laborers. Objectives: This protocol outlines the key components of a scoping review that explores the nature and consequences of maltreatment of child laborers in domestic and agricultural work in the South Asian rural context. Inclusion criteria: Studies that report on the prevalence, risk factors, or impact of maltreatment of child laborers aged 5 to 17 years engaged in the agricultural or domestic work, their employers or the parents of child laborers. Studies will be limited to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal and include both qualitative and quantitate studies. Grey literature will also be included. Methods: This review will seek pertinent studies from databases such as Scopus, PubMed, Medline, PsycINFO and ProQuest. The search strategy will include appropriate terms (and synonyms). A two-part selection process e.g., the titles and abstracts and full texts will be used for the assessment of retrieved records based on the inclusion criteria. Data from the retrieved records will be extracted using the standardised data extraction tool. The outcomes from the extraction process will be pooled in a narrative or statistical analysis depending on the quality of articles retrieved. Conclusion: The findings of this review will guide researchers on policy measures to address the issue of maltreatment of child laborers in the four countries identified.

Keywords: Child Laborer, Maltreatment, Agriculture, Domestic, South Asia and Scoping Review

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## Appendix B: Search Strategy

The combined key words are ((‘child labour’ OR ‘working children’ OR ‘children in hazardous job’ or ‘agricultural child labourer’ OR ‘domestic child labourer’) AND working children (‘child’ OR ‘under-age’ OR ‘adolescent’ OR adolescent) AND (‘work*’ OR ‘labour’ OR ‘labour’ OR job ) AND (‘adverse childhood experiences’ OR ‘child abuse’ OR ‘physical abuse’ OR ‘psychological abuse’ OR ‘sexual abuse’ OR ‘workplace violence’) AND (‘abuse’ OR ‘violence’ OR ‘maltreat’ OR ‘ill-treat’ OR ‘ill-used’) AND (‘Bangladesh’ OR India OR Pakistan OR Nepal)

**Name of the databases**: Medline, PsycINFO, Scopus, ProQuest, Web of science

**DATABASE: Medline**

Search Strategy:

| # | **Searches** | **Results** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Child Labour/ | 26 |
| 2 | ((child* or under-age or adolescent) adj4 (work* or labour* or labour* or job*)).ti,ab,kf. | 15715 |
| 3 | or/1-2 | 15719 |
| 4 | adverse childhood experiences/ or physical abuse/ or rape/ or torture/ or workplace violence/ or child abuse/ or child abuse, sexual/ | 39503 |
| 5 | (adverse childhood experiences or abuse or abusing or violenc* or maltreat* or "ill-treat" or "ill-used").ti,ab,kw. | 164062 |
| 6 | or/4-5 | 180495 |
| 7 | Bangladesh/ or bhutan/ or exp india/ or nepal/ or pakistan/ | 135773 |
| 8 | (Bangladesh* or India* or Pakistan* or Nepal*).ti,ab,kw. | 198743 |
| 9 | or/7-8 | 240429 |
| 10 | 3 and 6 and 9 | 57 |

Total identified: 57

**DATABASE : PsycINFO**

Database(s): APA PsycInfo 1806 to May Week 3 2020
Search Strategy:

| # | Searches | Results |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | child labour/ | 316 |
| 2 | ((child* or under-age or adolescent) adj4 (work* or labour* or labour* or job*)).ti,ab,id. | 27902 |
| 3 | or/1-2 | 27948 |
| 4 | exp child abuse/ or exp abuse reporting/ or child abuse reporting/ or child neglect/ or exp child welfare/ or domestic violence/ or emotional abuse/ or failure to thrive/ or pedophilia/ or physical abuse/ or exp sexual abuse/ or exp violent crime/ | 85459 |
| 5 | childhood adversity/ | 1812 |
| 6 | (adverse childhood experiences or abuse or abusing or violenc* or maltreat* or "ill-treat" or "ill-used").ti,ab,id. | 190597 |
| 7 | or/5-6 | 191066 |
| 8 | (Bangladesh* or India* or Pakistan* or Nepal*).ti,ab,id. | 42175 |
| 9 | 3 and 7 and 8 | 39 |

Total identified: 39

**DATABASE: Scopus**

(TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( ( child* OR "under-age" OR adolescent ) W/4 ( work* OR labour* OR labour* OR job* ) ) ) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( "adverse childhood experience*" OR abuse OR abusing OR violen* OR maltreat* OR "ill-treat*" OR "ill-used" ) ) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( bangladesh* OR india* OR pakistan* OR nepal* ) ) )

Total identified =125

**DATABASE: ProQuest**

noft(((child* OR "under-age" OR adolescent) NEAR/4 (work* OR labour* OR labour* OR job*))) AND noft(("adverse childhood experience*" OR abuse OR abusing OR violen* OR maltreat* OR "ill-treat*" OR "ill-used")) AND noft(bangladesh* OR india* OR pakistan* OR nepal*) AND stype.exact("Scholarly Journals" OR "Dissertations & Theses" OR "Reports" OR "Working Papers")

Total identified= 439

**DATABASE: Web of Science**

TS=((child* OR "under-age" OR adolescent) NEAR/4 (work* OR labour* OR labour* OR job*)) AND TS=(("adverse childhood experience*" OR abuse OR abusing OR violen* OR maltreat* OR "ill-treat*" OR "ill-used")) AND TS=(bangladesh* OR india* OR pakistan* OR nepal*)

Total identified= 73

## Appendix C1: Data Charting of Peer-reviewed Articles and Reports

**Table: Data extraction of peer-reviewed articles**

| Author (Year of publication) & Journal | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hadi, (2000), Public Health, | Child abuse among working children in rural Bangladesh: prevalence and determinants | Cross-sectional Study (Quantitative study) | **Total respondent:** 4643 Children<br>**Age group:** 10 to 15 years<br>**Job description:** Transport worker, factory helper, housekeepers, and domestic servants | **Sampling technique:** Systematic random sampling<br>**Method of data collection:** Survey method<br>(Self-prepared questionnaire)<br>**Analytical technique:** Descriptive statistics, and Multivariate analysis | The prevalence and determinants of the child abuse in rural Bangladesh | Rural area, Bangladesh | This study shows that 20.8% and 3.1% of the children were working more than fours and eight hours a day, respectively. Younger children especially boys were more abused than girls. Parental socioeconomic factors like poorer and illiterate families, little or no agricultural had a significant positive association ($p < 0.01$) with child labour abuse in rural areas of Bangladesh. On aspect of child abuse prevalence, study shows 2.3%, 2.0%, 1.7% and 3.0% of children were reported to be physically assaulted, never received full wages, forced to engage in inappropriate job as well as forced to work long hours beyond their physical capacity respectively. |

| Author (Year of publication) & Journal | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dhakal et al., (2019), Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, | History of abuse and neglect and their association with mental health in rescued child labourers in Nepal | Cross-sectional Study (Quantitative study) | **Total Respondents:** 103 children and 21 care-home employees (keyworkers) **Age group of children:** 12 to 18 years | **Method of data collection:** Survey method (Applying the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire, The Youth Inventory and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, completed by child labourers) (Adolescent Symptom Inventory and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire completed by Care-home employees) **Analytical Techniques:** Descriptive statistics as well as chi-square test were used to analyse the data | Assessing the frequency of childhood maltreatment among child labourer and the association of current psychiatric disorder (mental and behavioural problems) with childhood maltreatment | Care homes, Nepal | The study reveals that 72% of child labourers were experienced various sorts of maltreatment in their lifetime such as 46.6% confront with physical abuse (62.7% acts were committed by perpetrators outside of the family), 40.77% emotional abuse (71.4% committed by perpetrator outside of the family), 27.2% had experienced sexual abuse where 92.9% perpetrators are known and 33% were neglected. Female and older children are highly to be maltreated by any forms ($p < 0.01$). Most of the victims of childhood maltreatment reported the symptoms of anxiety disorders like specific phobia, social phobia, separation anxiety and panic attack as well as keyworkers reported around 50.5% young people's behaviour consistent with PTSD because of subjected to childhood maltreatment (n = 74). |

| Author (Year of publication) & Journal | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kamruzzaman (2015), American Journal of Applied Psychology | Child Victimization at Working Places in Bangladesh | Cross-sectional Study (Quantitative study) | **Total Respondents:** 85 children **Age group:** 10 to 18 years **Job outline:** Household labourer, Transport workers, Industrial labour, Restaurant workers, and Others. | **Sampling technique:** Convenience sampling **Method of data collection:** Survey method (Self-prepared questionnaires) **Analytical techniques:** Descriptive statistics | The prevalence of various sorts of child victimization at working places | Urban context, Bangladesh | The study shows that highest portion of child labourers are male and aged 10-14 years. Fathers of majority child labourers were either rickshaw pullers or day labourers, while mothers were either housewives or ready-made-garments workers. Study further revealed that significant portion of child labourers (16.5%) were sexually abused like rape, forced sexual perversion and sexual harassment, while 13% of child labourers were physically assaulted including heating, beating, and pulling hair of workers. The study also generated a specific focus on the assault by senior co-worker at workplaces and study found it was almost 23.55% among 85 child workers in Tangail Sadar Upazila of Bangladesh. This study also shows that around 12.9% of child workers often deprived of the salary/wages. |
| Pandey et al., (2020), Australian & | Childhood maltreatment and its mental health | Cross-sectional Study | **Total Respondents:** 132 children | **Sampling technique:** Purposive sampling | The prevalence and types of childhood maltreatment, and | Care homes, India | The mean age of participants who were started working is 11.33 years (SD=3.11), while 26.6% worked before the age of 10. |

| Author (Year of publication) & Journal | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, | consequences among Indian adolescents with a history of child work | (Quantitative study) | **Age group:** 12 to 18 years **Job outline:** Domestic labourers, Retail assistant, Garage workers, Restaurant workers, Carpenters, Brick kiln workers, Rag picking workers and agricultural labourers. | **Method of data collection:** Survey method (Applying the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, Youth Inventory-4R and Juvenile Victimization Questionnaires) **Analytical techniques:** Chi-square, One-way analysis of variance | their association with the psychological health problems | | Highest 37.12% of were living with their employers while they worked. Over 65% reported working for ≥10 hours a day. They mainly worked because of poverty, to run away, for enjoyment and better life. Of the total sample, 72.7%, 47.7%, 6.8%, 17.4% and 100% were experienced physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect and indirect or witness victimization, respectively. The first incidence of physical and emotional maltreatment occurred at under the 9 years of age. Majority of these perpetrators are extra-familial. Notably, male, and younger child labourers are more likely prone to be maltreated. Around 83.33% of adolescents had symptoms of one or more psychiatric disorders. The ANOVAs score on the YI-4R shows that the effect of childhood maltreatment was significant for conduct disorders, specific phobia, obsessive disorders, compulsive disorders, social phobia, and dysthymia at 5% level of |

| Author (Year of publication) & Journal | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | significance. The SDQ noticed the presence of peer problems (20.5%), conduct problems (19.7%), hyperactivity (13.6%) and low level of prosocial behaviour (6.1%) among the abused participants. The ANOVAs on the SDQ shows that physical abuse has significant effect on emotional problems ($p = 0.011$), emotional abuse on conduct problems ($p = 0.017$), hyperactivity ($p = 0.023$), and general neglects on greater hyperactivity ($p = 0.038$). |
| Omer & Jabeen, (2015), Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: *Alam-e-Niswan* | Situational Analysis of the Gender Based Violence Faced by Domestic Workers (Age 8-15) at their Workplace | Cross-sectional study (Quantitative study) | **Total participants:** 50 children **Age group:** 5 to 15 years **Job outline:** Domestic labourers (had at least six months of employment | **Sampling technique:** Purposive sampling **Method of data collection:** Survey method: Interview schedule (Self-prepared questionnaire) **Analytical techniques:** Descriptive statistics | The reason for engagement in domestic work, the extent to which they experience physical and sexual violence at their workplaces and psychological problems associated with violence against domestic workers | Pakistan | The demographic profile shows that around 66% of children fall in age group of 11-13, while 805 were found illiterate. Parents of more than 90% children were illiterate and the family size was extended. The study revealed that 66% work 15 hours a day. The history of abuse proclaimed that around 60% of domestic workers were sometimes experienced physical maltreatment, while 30% regularly. In addition, 60% faced sexual harassment at their workplaces. The |

| Author (Year of publication) & Journal | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | experience with the current employers) | | | | psychological effects include anxiety and frustration (64%) and taking drugs (60%). |
| Zainab, (2016), Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association | Nutritional status and physical abuse among the children involved in domestic labour in Karachi Pakistan: A cross-sectional survey | Cross-sectional study (Quantitative study) | **Total participants:** 385 children **Age group:** 10 to 14 years **Job outline:** Domestic labourers (had at least six months of employment experience with the current employers) | **Sampling technique:** Snowball sampling **Method of data collection:** Survey method: Interview schedule (Self-prepared questionnaire) **Analytical techniques:** Descriptive statistics, Logistic regression (Univariate and multivariate analysis) | The prevalence of the physical maltreatment among domestic child labourers and the nutritional status of these child labourers | Pakistan | The demographic aspect of this study reveals that 94.5% of domestic labourers are female. 94% were not studying because of financial insolvency. Around 67.2% started work at 10. Near about parents of 90% of the domestic child labourers are illiterate. The overall prevalence of physical child maltreatment is 8.3%, of which slapping by the employers (60%), hitting with a hard object (6%), hair pulling (3%), twisting (3%) and hoofing (3%). Around 6% were experienced neglect (restriction on some facilities as punishment). |

## Appendix C2: Data Extraction of Book Chapters

**Table: Data extraction of book chapters**

| Author (Year,) & Journal/ publication) | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Focus/Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banday et al., (2018), Indian Perspectives on Workplace Bullying | Abuse Faced by Child Labourers: Novel Territory in Workplace Bullying | Cross-sectional study (Mixed-method design) | **Total Respondents:** Survey: Inhabitants from 61 village, farmers from 113 farms, 379 child workers, and 190 adult workers Qualitative interview: 21 key informants, 3 Mates or co-workers and 36 child workers **Age group of children:** Up to 18 years **Job outline:** Agricultural child labour | **Sampling technique:** Not mentioned **Method of data collection:** Survey (Applying self-prepared questionnaire) and in-depth interview **Analytical Techniques:** Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis | Assessing the working condition of migrant children working on Bt cotton seed production farm and children's experience of physical violence, bullying and sexual harassment at work | India | The trend survey reveals that 37.3% were between 11 and 14 years, while 33.5% were illiterate. Around 90.2% children reported 8-10 hours work daily and 9.3% worked 11-15 hours daily. Most children stay in owner-provided accommodation on the farms. **Key Informants' Views:** The factors including class, caste/tribal identity, gender, social, economic, and political context such as parental behaviour put the children at risk of violence, bullying and sexual harassment on the farms. Children belonged to economically backward and socially disadvantaged group. Children of many alcoholic parents join in the work without the parent's consent. The study also found the entrenchment of patriarchy results in the sexual harassment. Due to economically and |

| Author (Year,) & Journal/ publication) | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Focus/Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | socially superior such as higher class and caste positions, employers take advantages of children's age, development stage and distance from home. Farmer bribed numerous officials and used local powers to exploit the child workers. Farmers maltreat children in the pursuit of productivity and financial gains. The speed up of work and task accuracy challenges also increase the violence over child labourers in the farm. Mistreatment encountered by child labourers goes underreported.<br><br>**Mates' Views:** Verbal aggression including scolding and reprimands are resorted when children were caught resting in between task or leaving the farms or consuming meals before task completion and corporal and emotional punishment is adopted to instil fear in children's mind so that mistakes are not adopted. Some farmers are also known criminals. Children also experience witness victimization. Farmers often come to their |

| Author (Year,) & Journal/ publication) | Title of the Identified Study | Study design | Participants characteristics | Methods | Focus/Concept | Context | Key Findings (prevalence, risk factors and effects) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | accommodation at night and sexually harass them.<br><br>**Children's view:** The regular bullying over children to ensure the children wake up early, speed up work, increase output and reduce mistakes. Farmers deliberatively overload the children which pave the way for maltreatment. Children also witness the mistreatment of co-workers. Witnessing the physical maltreatment of co-workers create severe anxiety in the child labourers. Despite these they find these works necessary to support their family, buy foods, medicines, and purchase cloths. They also find the complaint systems and monitoring mechanisms are unavailable to support them, which make the perpetrators free to mistreat again. |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Islam, (2018), IGI Global | Abuse among child domestic workers in Bangladesh | Cross-sectional study (Mixed-method design) | **Total Respondents:** Survey: 849 CDLs and 849 household owners Qualitative Interview: 15 different professionals **Age group of children:** 6 to 18 years **Job outline:** Domestic child labour | **Sampling technique:** Stratified cluster sampling and purposive sampling **Method of data collection:** Survey (Applying self-prepared semi-structured questionnaire) and FGD **Analytical Techniques:** Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis | To explore the prevalence and course of child abuse among the CDLs | Bangladesh | **Child Participants:** The study shows that the CDLs were maltreatment multiple times. Around 73.27% of them were maltreated physically, followed by 54.33% emotionally and 17% sexually. Almost 95% of the children were maltreated by their employers, while 30% were by their family members. Child participants revealed that 27% of them receive only BDT301-600 (US $4 to $8) per month, which perhaps the most beneath and exploitative remuneration in Bangladesh. **Key professionals:** Sexual abuse is most frequently occurred than children mentioned during the survey. Beating or physically assault of CDLs is a common scenario in Bangladesh. |

"Content removed for privacy reasons"

# Appendix F1: Ethics Approval Letter

| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Human Research Ethics |
| **To:** | ahad0005@flinders.edu.au; Yvonne Parry; Eileen Willis |
| **Subject:** | 8639 SBREC approval notice (14 July 2020) |
| **Date:** | Tuesday, 14 July 2020 11:57:00 AM |
| **Attachments:** | image001.png |
| | 8639 application STUDENT (2 April 2020).pdf |
| | 8639 conditional approval response (4 July 2020).msg |
| | 8639 deferral response (9 June 2020).pdf |
| | 8639 SBREC Conditional approval notice (29 June 2020).pdf |
| | 8639 SBREC Deferral notice (18 May 2020).pdf |
| **Importance:** | High |

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Dear Md.Abdul,

Your conditional approval response for project 8639 was reviewed by the Chairperson of the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) and was **approved.** The ethics approval notice can be found below. Please also note the important information regarding COVID-19 Virus below.

ResearchNow – Ethics and Biosafety

Please note that this project will need to be transferred to the new online system for human ethics (called 'ResearchNow – Ethics and Biosafety') before any modifications or annual progress reports can be submitted. To transfer your project to the new online system, please refer to the instructions at the bottom of this approval notice.

APPROVAL NOTICE

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project No.: | **8639** | | |
| Project Title: | Understanding the prevalence and impact of the maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh | | |
| Principal Researcher: | Mr Md.Abdul Ahad | | |
| Email: | ahad0005@flinders.edu.au | | |
| Approval Date: | 14 July 2020 | Ethics Approval Expiry Date: | **18 December 2022** |

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS

## 1. Participant Documentation

Please note that it is the responsibility of researchers and supervisors, in the case of student projects, to ensure that:

- all participant documents are checked for spelling, grammatical, numbering and formatting errors. The Committee does not accept any responsibility for the above mentioned errors.
- the Flinders University logo is included on all participant documentation (e.g., letters of Introduction, information Sheets, consent forms, debriefing information and questionnaires – with the exception of purchased research tools) and the current Flinders University letterhead is included in the header of all letters of introduction. The Flinders University international logo/letterhead should be used and documentation should contain international dialling codes for all telephone and fax numbers listed for all research to be conducted overseas.
- the SBREC contact details, listed below, are included in the footer of all letters of introduction and information sheets.

  *This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 'INSERT PROJECT No. here following approval'). For more information regarding ethics approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.*

## 2. Annual Progress / Final Reports

In order to comply with the monitoring requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (updated 2018)* an annual progress report must be submitted each year on the **14 July** (approval anniversary date) for the duration of the ethics approval using the report template available from the Managing Your Ethics Approval web page.

**Please note** that no data collection can be undertaken after the ethics approval expiry date listed at the top of this notice. If data is collected after expiry, it will not be covered in terms of ethics. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that annual progress reports are submitted on time; and that no data is collected after ethics has expired.

If the project is completed *before* ethics approval has expired please ensure a final report is submitted immediately. If ethics approval for your project expires please either submit (1) a final report; or (2) an extension of time request (using the modification request form).

| | |
|---|---|
| First Report due date: | **14 July 2021** |
| Final Report due date: | **18 December 2022** |

## Student Projects

For student projects, the SBREC recommends that current ethics approval is maintained until a student's thesis has been submitted, assessed and finalised. This is to protect the student in the event that reviewers recommend that additional data be collected from participants.

## 3. Modifications to Project

Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval has been obtained from the Ethics Committee. Such proposed changes / modifications include:

- change of project title;
- change to research team (e.g., additions, removals, researchers and supervisors)
- changes to research objectives;

- changes to research protocol;
- changes to participant recruitment methods;
- changes / additions to source(s) of participants;
- changes of procedures used to seek informed consent;
- changes to reimbursements provided to participants;
- changes to information / documents to be given to potential participants;
- changes to research tools (e.g., survey, interview questions, focus group questions etc); · extensions of time (i.e. to extend the period of ethics approval past current expiry date).

To notify the Committee of any proposed modifications to the project please submit a Modification Request Form available from the Managing Your Ethics Approval SBREC web page. Download the form from the website every time a new modification request is submitted to ensure that the most recent form is used. Please note that extension of time requests should be submitted prior to the Ethics Approval Expiry Date listed on this notice.

## Change of Contact Details

If the contact details of researchers, listed in the approved application, change please notify the Committee so that the details can be updated in our system. A modification request is not required to change your contact details; but would be if a new researcher needs to be added on to the research / supervisory team.

## 4. Adverse Events and/or Complaints

Researchers should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 08 8201-3116 or human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au immediately if:

- any complaints regarding the research are received;
- a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs that effects participants;
- an unforeseen event occurs that may affect the ethical acceptability of the project.

**Instructions to Transfer Project to Online System**

ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety is the new online platform for human research ethics at Flinders University. It can be accessed via Okta (add the “ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety” chicklet to your dashboard) and allows researchers to apply for human research ethics approval, including modifications, online.

We note that your current project will expire after 31 December 2020. As you may be aware, all current projects approved under the old system that do not expire on/or before 31 December 2020 will need to be transferred into the new online system. Therefore, we would like to request that you complete the short HREC Transfer Project Form. To transfer your project, please

- login to ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety through your Okta dashboard. ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety will need to be added to your Okta dashboard via the "+ Add Apps" green button (top right) in the first instance.
- Ensure you are on the "Home page", you will see "Work Area" at the top of this page.
- Select the "Create Project" tile from the left hand "Actions" menu.
- A pop-up appears. Type in the "Project Title" and in the "Main Form" drop-down select "HREC Transfer Project Form".
- Click "Create" and save your project application form.

Select "Project Information" under "Questions", complete the form and submit it.

During the transfer, you can also modify your existing project. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the transfer process.

Kind regards
Andrea

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**Andrea Mather**

Executive Officer, Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (FU HREC)
Research Development and Support | human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au P: (+61-8) 8201 3116 | andrea.mather@flinders.edu.au

Flinders University
Sturt Road, Bedford Park, South Australia, 5042 GPO Box 2100,
Adelaide, South Australia, 5001
http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/ebi/human-ethics/human-ethics_home.cfm

CRICOS No: 00114A This email and any attachments may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please inform the sender by reply email and delete all copies of this message.

# Appendix F2: Information sheets

**INFORMATION SHEET**
**(for 'Key Informant')**

**Title:** 'Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh'

**Researcher**
Mr. Md Abdul Ahad
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Flinders University
Tel: 8201 3354

**Supervisor(s)**
Dr. Yvonne Parry
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Flinders University
Tel: 8201 3354

Emeritus Professor Dr. Eileen Willis
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Flinders University
Tel: 0882013110

Dr Shahid Ullah
College of Medicine and Public Health
Flinders University
Tel: +61 8 82012341

**Description of the study**
This study is part of the project titled "Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh". This project will investigate the prevalence, nature and effect of maltreatment of child labourer in context of rural area. This project is supported by Flinders University, College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

**Purpose of the study**
The purpose of this project is to measure the frequency and nature of maltreatment of child labourers and moreover, to identify the causes and psychological-social impact of maltreatment of child labourers in the context of rural Bangladesh.

**What will I be asked to do?**
You are invited to attend a one-on-one interview with a researcher who will ask you a few questions regarding your views about child labour and different types of maltreatment they experience both at home and workplace. Participation is entirely voluntary. The interview will take about one hour. The interview will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder to help with reviewing the results. Once recorded, the interview will be transcribed (typed-up) and stored as a computer file and will only be destroyed once the transcript is checked by the participant.

**What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?**
The sharing of your experiences will give us an insight into the maltreatment of children who are engaged in work, through which we will be able prepare a summary of the study. This will help to formulate recommendations and suggestions to government to initiate awareness programs or policies and laws to eradicate hazardous child labour.

**Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

We do not need your name and you will be anonymous. Any identifying information will be removed, and your comments will not be linked directly to you. All information and results obtained in this study will be stored in a secure way, with access restricted to relevant researchers.

**Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?**
The researcher anticipates few risks from your involvement in this study, however, given the nature of the project, some participants could experience emotional discomfort. If you feel any emotional discomfort, please share this with the researcher, so that he will try to help you by providing support. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the researcher.

**How do I agree to participate?**
Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions, and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate, please read and sign the form and send it back to the researcher.

**Recognition of Contribution / Time / Travel costs**
Although your participation is voluntary, however, if you would like to participate, in recognition of your contribution and participation time, you will be provided a gift (diary). This gift will be provided to you face-to-face on completion of the interview.

**How will I receive feedback?**
On project completion, outcomes of the project will be given to all participants via email.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8639). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au*

**INFORMATION SHEET**
**(for 'Child labourers', 'Parents' and 'Employers')**

**Title:** 'Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh'

**Researcher**
Mr. Md Abdul Ahad
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Flinders University
Tel: +61 8 82013354

**Supervisor(s)**
Dr. Yvonne Parry
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Flinders University
Tel: +61 8 82013354

Emeritus Professor Dr. Eileen Willis
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Flinders University
Tel: +61 8 82013110

Dr. Shahid Ullah
College of Medicine and Public Health
Flinders University
Tel: +61 8 82012341

**Description of the study**

This study is part of the project titled "Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh". This project will investigate the prevalence, nature and effect of maltreatment of child labourers in context rural areas. This project is supported by Flinders University, College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

**Purpose of the study**

This project aims to find out the frequency and nature of maltreatment of child labourers and also to measure the risk factors and psycho-social impact of maltreatment of child labourers in the context of rural Bangladesh.

**What will I be asked to do?**

You are invited to attend a one-on-one questionnaire interview with a researcher who will ask you a few questions regarding your views about child labour and maltreatment of child labourers at the workplace or within the family. Participation is entirely voluntary. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes. The researcher will ask questions from a questionnaire and the researcher will fill up the questionnaire by himself.

**What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?**

The sharing of your experiences will give us an insight into the maltreatment of children who are engaged in work. This will help to formulate policies and suggestions to government to initiate awareness programs or policies and laws to eradicate hazardous child labour. For participating in this interview, the researcher will pay you $3.50 AUD (200 BDT) as a reimbursement.

**Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

We do not need your name and you will be anonymous. Any identifying information will be removed, and your comments will not be linked directly to you. All information and results obtained in this study will be stored in a secure way, with access restricted to relevant researchers.

**Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?**

The researcher anticipates few risks from your involvement in this study, however, given the nature of the project, some participants could experience emotional discomfort. If you feel any emotional discomfort please share this with the researcher, so he will try to help you by proving support. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please share with the researcher.

**How do I agree to participate?**

Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions, and you are free to withdraw from answering the questions at any time without effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate, please ask researcher to read this information sheet for clear understanding and sign the form and send it back to the researcher.

**Recognition of Contribution / Time / Travel costs**

If you would like to participate, in recognition of your contribution and participation time, you will be provided with a $3.50 AUD (200 BDT) reimbursement. This honorary payment will be provided to you face-to-face on completion of the questionnaire.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8639). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au*

## Appendix F3: Consent Letters

Flinders
UNIVERSITY

**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**
**(Key Informant)**

| Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh |
|---|

I ….....being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the …… for the research project with the title listed above.

I have read the information provided.

Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.

4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.

5. I understand that:

   I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.

   Participation is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time; and can decline to answer particular questions.

   The information gained in this study will be published as explained, and my participation will be anonymous and confidential.

   While the information gained in this study will be confidential and published as explained, on the basis that the interview will be undertaken in my place of employment, anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

   Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my current employment.

   I may ask that the audio recording be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.

   Even though information provided will be treated with the strictest confidence, disclosure of illegal activities will not be safe from legal search and seizure and may need to be reported to authorities.

6. I understand that only the researchers on this project will have access to my research data and raw results; unless I explicitly provide consent for it to be shared with other parties. If the need to seek your consent to share your research data with other parties does arise, I will be contacted by the researchers via email (ahad0005@flinders.edu.au) or phone (+61480107369).

7. I have had the opportunity to discuss taking part in this research with a family member or friend.

**Participant's name…….....**

**Participant's signature……Date……...**

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

**Researcher's name…….…….....**

**Researcher's signature……...Date…….**

*NB: Two signed copies should be obtained (one for researcher; one for participant). The copy retained by the researcher may then be used for participant review and approval of interview transcripts (point 8) where relevant.*

Review / Approval of Interview Transcriptions

8. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my interview participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

**Participant's signature……Date……...**

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8639). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au*

**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH (Child labourer)**
**(by questionnaire)**

**Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh**

I ….....
being below the age of 18 years, hereby consent to participate as requested in the focus group for the research project with the title listed above.
I understand the information provided.
Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

3. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
4. I understand that:
   - I will directly benefit from taking part in this research and will receive $3.50 AUD or BDT200 from the researcher.
   - Participation is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time; and am free to decline to answer questions.
   - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, my participation will be anonymous, and my individual information will remain confidential.
   - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my progress in my course of study, or results gained.
   - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my current employment.
   - The researcher will seek permission to take a photo.
6. I understand that only the researchers on this project will have access to my research data and raw results; unless I explicitly provide consent for it to be shared with other parties. If the need to seek consent to share research data with other parties does arise, I will be contacted by the researchers via phone.

**Participant's signature……Date……...**

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

**Researcher's name…….…….....**

**Researcher's signature……..Date…….**

*NB: Two signed copies should be obtained (one for researcher; one for participant). The copy retained by the researcher may then be used for participant review and approval of interview transcripts (point 8) where relevant.*

Review / Approval of Interview Transcriptions

8. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my interview participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

**Participant's signature……Date……...**

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8639). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au*

**PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**
**FOR PARENTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN WHO ARE CHILD LABOURERS**
**(by questionnaire)**

**Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh**

I ….....
being over the age of 18 years, hereby consent to participate as requested in the interview for the research project with the title listed above.
I have read the information provided.
Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

3. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
4. I understand that:
   My child will not be interviewed.
   I will directly benefit from taking part in this research by getting $3.50 AUD or BDT200 reimbursement.
   I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and is free to decline to answer particular questions.
   While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, my child will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
6. I understand that only the researchers on this project will have access to my research data and raw results; unless I explicitly provide consent for it to be shared with other parties. If the need to seek your consent to share research data with other parties does arise, I will be contacted by the researchers via phone.

**Parent / Guardian signature……Date……...**

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

**Researcher's name…….....**

**Researcher's signature……. Date…….**

*NB: Two signed copies should be obtained (one for researcher; one for parent / guardian).*

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8639). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au*

**EMPLOYER'S CONSENT FORM**
**FOR THE EMPLOYERS OF CHILD LABOURERS**
**(by questionnaire)**

**Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh**

I ….....
being over the age of 18 years, hereby consent to participate as requested in the interview for the research project with the title listed above.
I have read the information provided.
Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

3. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
   - I and my employee may directly benefit from taking part in this research by getting $3.50 AUD or BDT200 reimbursement.
   - My employee is free to withdraw from the project at any time and is free to decline to answer particular questions.
   - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, my employee will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
   - Whether my child employee participates or not, or withdraws after participating, will have no effect on his/her employment.
   - Whether my child employee participates or not, or withdraws after participating, will have no effect on his/her progress in his/her course of study, or results gained.
6. I understand that only the researchers on this project will have access to my employee's research data and raw results; unless I explicitly provide consent for it to be shared with other parties. If the need to seek your consent to share employee's research data with other parties does arise, I will be contacted by the researchers via phone.

**Employer's signature……Date……...**

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

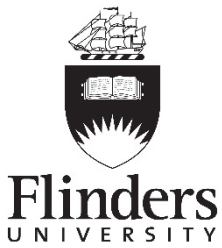
**Researcher's name…….…….....**

**Researcher's signature……..Date…….**

*NB: Two signed copies should be obtained (one for researcher; one for parent / guardian).*

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8639). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au*

# Appendix F4: Confidentiality Agreement for Translation Service




## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

### Transcription Services

Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Md Abdul Ahad related to his doctoral study on Understanding the prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child labourers: A mixed-method analysis in the context of rural Bangladesh. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, questionnaires or in any associated documents;

2. To not make copies of any audiotapes, computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, or questionnaires unless specifically requested to do so by Md Abdul Ahad;

3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;

4. To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Md Abdul Ahad in a complete and timely manner.

5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____