he explains. "According to the law, up to the age of 14 years, a person is a child. Up to the age of 18 years, the child is an adolescent. Once the child turns 18, he or she becomes an adult. There is no confusion here so far as the law is concerned. However, the law does state that employing a child below the age of 14 is illegal and punishable under the law. A child between the ages of 14-18 can be employed provided that he or she is not involved in any kind of hazardous activities, is not refrained from continuing his or her education and is given enough time for recreation and relaxation."

According to Ahmed, to fill up the gaps and loopholes in the system, the government must build safety nets so that the families depending on working children are not affected. "The government must establish schools for orphans and children belonging to poor families in every upazilla, along with hostels. Along with the arrangements, vocational training schools should also be built with the schools and hostels. This way, children will be able to live and study at the same place and also develop their skills as well, for instance tailoring, electric, plumbing and other fields as well."

Ahmed also adds that the government should probably introduce something called the Family Responsibility Law. "It sounds very ambitious," he admits. "But because of the everyday arising problems like men leaving their wives and children to face the debtors all by themselves, this law should be introduced by the government. This way, legal actions can be taken against the men or the perpetrator. Moreover, when an adolescent is employed, he or she will be required to register his or her name, family details and other necessary details under this law."

Ahmed further says that the government should also keep a check on family planning and invest more in the health sector for these children, especially in rural areas. "Health is probably one of the most deteriorating sectors in the country which is especially affecting the children belonging to poor families. And family planning should also be a major priority for the government so that families, belonging to all walks of life in society."

According to the National Child Labour Policy 2007, some of the major reasons behind children working in dangerous and hazardous work places are poverty and lack of education.



Most of these children under 15 support their family. They have no time to go to school Zinzira, Dhaka. by: Azizur Rahim Peu, DrikNews