

Poverty and Social Vulnerability of Stone Quarry Workers in Bangladesh: An Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

Stone quarry is a prominent business to promote the national economy of Bangladesh in terms of producing cement for construction works. Stone workers occupied a large scale of professional community due to increasing number of stone quarries in Bangladesh. This business contributing a lot to meet the local demand of stone and stone products and exporting in abroad is under processed which will enable us to earn a staggering amount of foreign currency. But the stone quarry activities are facing both challenges and opportunities having various negative impacts on the ecology and environment, especially on the human rights of the quarry workers. The objective of this study is to investigate how stone quarry workers are marginalized in terms of work opportunity, income and social amenities leading them to be vulnerable and why they continue to work years long with minimal facilities provided by owners. This study is conducted following both qualitative and quantitative research approach based on primary and secondary data. To validate research data methodological triangulation is applied for the collection of field data. An in depth interview guide and observation have been considered in this study as the most important and befitting data collection tools. 120 quarry workers have been selected from Bholagonj, Sylhet quarries as the sample population through simple random sampling method. The study findings revealed that the socio-economic conditions of the quarry workers are miserable and precarious. They live and work in risky and unhygienic environment and routinely exploited and harassed by the owners, local authorities and local gangs. Furthermore, the study findings will hopefully be a guideline for future researchers and academics opening up the horizon of original knowledge which is assumed to pave the way for further study on the very issue in a different angle calling attention to policy makers regarding the problems of stone quarry workers.

Keywords: poverty, social vulnerability, stone quarry workers, mohajon, exploitation

INTRODUCTION

A handsome amount of stone used for the country's construction sector comes from stone quarries mostly from Sylhet. Every day thousands of cubic feet stones are being extracted from the stone quarries of this region. The stone quarries located in Sylhet District have been active since the end of the Second World War, in the late 1940s (Khoda, 2007). Back in the early day's stone was collected by means of 'Barkees' (one type of small boat). Now the use of heavy machinery and systematic excavation took quarrying to a new level. Bholagonj is the largest stone quarry in Bangladesh and is situated in the west Islampur union of Companygonj Upazila in Sylhet division. Following west ward from India, Dhalai river enters Bangladesh at Bholagonj and goes through the unions of Dayer bazar, Toker bazar, Islampur and joins up with Piyain River near Companygonj.

Dhalai and Piyain rivers carry a vast amount of stone of different size with their flows and waves which clog up around Bholagonj, Ballaghat, Bichnakandi and Jaflong forming a series of bottlenecks (Tusha, 2011). These places are ideal for gathering stone and

many stone quarries have been set up around these area. Laborers in the stone quarry area of the country play a great role to continue economic and other development activities. But they are the victims of socio-economic exploitation from all aspects of life. The workers work for a long period of time in each day, but get a poor amount of wages to afford their family cost. They have been working here since the British period and the current workers involved in this profession by their ancestors. Most of the stone-quarries in Sylhet are situated in the border-line of Bangladesh and India. The stones normally derive from the hilly mountains of India. But the communication facility of these areas is very poor. So, the workers have to collect stones from the stone-quarry area- river or quarry-lakes by the means of using boat. Sometimes they collect stones from the Indian region crossing the border-line, which is very risky. The geographical locations of the stone quarries are detached from the living place of local inhabitants and most of the laborers in stone quarries are children and women. They are deprived of getting proper wages, education, health care and other basic needs (Rahman, 1997). The workers have to face problems from step to step. They have to collect

stones from the stone-quarry lakes which makes them stay in water for a long period of time. Most of them do not have own residence, they live at near slums. Very often the workers fall into ill like-asthma for crashing and separating small stones from sand. It is apathetic sign that when the workers become sick and physically inactive to work, the company never shows any sympathy giving them medical leave. The laborers or their families are poorly compensated in name only when they die. There is a striking lack of government initiatives to help the quarry workers, specially the most vulnerable groups that need help the most –the children and women workers. The children and women workers do similar work with their male workers, but they are paid low wages compared to others.

SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

Labour sector in Bangladesh is an enormously potential economic source (Sobhan, 2000) accommodating a significant number of men and women, particularly in stone quarry activities. In modern world, no country can reach in the apex of development without the participation of each and every community of people in the development process. But unfortunately, stone quarry sector got no considerable attention yet from the policy makers and academics for the betterment of the quarry workers. Though, a very few study was done in small scale and no one of them focused on the issue from sociological standpoint. Furthermore, considering the issue from development perspective it has been an academic interest to find out the underlying causes of poverty of stone quarry laborers who are the building blocks and life lines of this business.

It is expected that the study will contribute to the policy implications for further development of the industry focusing on the aspects of poverty of stone quarry workers and considering the employees and employers relations from welfare point of view.

Moreover, by revealing the findings obtained through the present study global labour and business leaders, academics, development specialists and stake holders will be generally acknowledged to be aware of the situation of workers in stone quarry industry in Bangladesh which would thus be conducive to the promotion of welfare and wellbeing of the impoverished people working in the significant economic sector.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of this study is to investigate how stone quarry workers are marginalized in terms of work opportunity, income and social amenities leading them to be vulnerable and why they continue to work years long with minimal facilities provided by owners.

To obtain the broad objective the study makes an attempt to address the following research questions:

1. What are the underlying causes for unremitting poverty of stone quarry workers and whether what alternative options can they opt for earning income in order to meet their needs?
2. Why do stone quarry workers continue their works in spite of having a bare minimum amount of wages and what are their survival strategies to improve their life conditions and get routes to escape from poverty and exclusion?
3. How are institutional regulations instrumental in the production and persistence of poverty of the quarry workers?

REFLECTION FROM RELEVANT LITERATURES

The literature review helps the research to investigate different dimensions of knowledge about the present status of the stony-pit laborers in Bangladesh. It also describes some of the contradictory findings in relation to the subjects. Some books and documents related to the study have been reviewed for the purpose of better understandings which are as follows:

Stone quarry workers encounter miserable working conditions and live in squalid slum settlement and villages, where there has no waste management system, hygiene is deplorable, there is limited access to clean drinking water and there are only a handful of primary school of all workers the most vulnerable groups are the women and children stone quarry workers who fall unendurable hardship on a daily basis and one routinely discriminated against in a male dominated industry and society that often threatens women and children like second class citizen. The government has almost completely failed and the local community as well as there is also conspicuous lack of government initiatives, although some NGOs and micro credit lending agencies have been active in the area, with limited success (Khoda, 2007).

The scenario of tannery workers in Bangladesh is very miserable. Most of them work in a very nasty environment. The tannery workers have to soak and treat animal hides with over 100 chemicals. Their basic pay is about 100-110 US Dollar per month and they also can earn about 20-30 US Dollar per month with overtime. The employers do not provide any medical benefits, despite the fact those tannery workers frequently become ill due to hazardous working conditions. Workers suffer from chronic skin diseases, respiratory illness and gastric problem caused by direct exposure to a variety of tannery chemicals (ucanews.com Reports, 2014).

A huge number of children are working in different earning source of Bangladesh. One of the estimate shows that around 4.9 million of Bangladeshi

working children aged 5 to 15. There is growing international recognition of the plight of working children, their poverty, vulnerability and deprivation. While in many countries there have been a movement for ban of child labor, this has not always been accompanied by an analysis or understanding of the reasons for the presence of child laborer. Providing children with a quality of education, life and income generating skills is now seen as a means of increasing the options available to working children and their families (UNICEF, 2004).

It says that the Man river is coming from the great Himalayas of India, which bringing millions ton of stone boulder with its tide. The laborer work in these stone quarries earns an average income of 150 taka per day. Stone extraction goes in the area for about eight months a year expect the rainy season. It provides a detailed scenario of economic exploitation of the stony worker on the basis of income.

However, though working of stone laborer is not ensuring the solution of their whole year income but they have to find out other source of income for another six months of the year which is not an easy task to do. Thus the stone worker remains the victims of economic exploitation (China International Press Photo Contest, 2009).

Most of the worker at the stone quarry area of Sylhet comes from the neighboring district. They had a scope to work for six months. Most of them come with their family members and live in neighboring slum area. Working condition of those workers is extremely poor. They have to work whole day long and gets a wages of around 150-180 taka in case of men laborer and 100- 120 taka for women. Through this poor income they are unable to afford their basic needs. Moreover most of them are children, so they do not have a scope to take their basic education. Very often the basic rights of these workers are violated by the authority (Uddin, 2014).

Under a study it is showed that around 30-50 workers are employed in a brick-field. In the brick factory the workers have to work almost 12 hours in a day and get an amount of 120 taka for men and 100 taka for women. That shows that how poor level of income of the brick-field workers. There are around 6000-7000 in Bangladesh, usually located outside the town and cities in the low-lying land. Nearly half of the total number of brick-field is considered illegal, threatening the ecology and human health. The brick-field workers also work in an unhealthy environment (Hasan, 2013).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this proposed study Scott's theory of public and hidden transcript has been applied in order to find out how institutional mechanisms are responsible for

producing poverty and somehow keeping it stable for years after years. The concepts of public and hidden transcript were introduced by Scott (1990) to illustrate the passive resistance of subordinate groups in society. The public and hidden transcript present double faces of culture namely official views and individual views.

The official views are societal or institutional representation and the individual views are constructed in the socio cultural and economic relations with the other- dominators versus dominated and through their interaction with other and the institution. The hidden transcript in most cases represents critique power spoken behind the back of the dominated (Scott, 1990). Scott's main argument is that people who are weak and deprived in society find ways to resist the oppression and exploitation through constructing and expressing their own hidden transcript. The hidden transcript is the discourse that takes place "offstage" beyond direct observation by power holders. The weak has obvious and compelling reasons to seek refuge behind mask when in the presence of power; the powerful have their own compelling reasons for adopting a mask in the presence of subordinates (Scott, 1990:10). Thus, for the powerful there is typically a disparity between the public and hidden transcript deployed in the open exercise of power and the hidden transcript expressed safely only offstage.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problems. It is an exploratory descriptive research. This study is conducted following both qualitative and quantitative research approach based on primary and secondary data. To validate research data methodological triangulation is applied for the collection of field data. An in depth interview guide, some case studies and observation have been considered in this study as the most important and befitting data collection tools which have enabled the researchers to have more direct and practical knowledge from participating in the life situation of stone workers to understand and paint the real picture of poverty and vulnerability and exploitation. Qualitative data will be applied in the view that it has much to offer in research into holistic understanding of poverty as global development problem. (Todlock, 2000, in Uddin, 2013) says that qualitative research provides information in a particular but meaningful context and this method is also suitable to policy context.

120 quarry workers have been selected from Bholagonj stone quarry region of Companygonj, Sylhet-Bangladesh as the sample population through simple random sampling method. Besides, owners, local authorities, NGO officials were sought. Secondary data collected from different published

materials like books, articles, reports by academics and regular internet surfing has been maintained to serve the purpose of the study.

FINDINGS

The maximum portion of the workers of stone quarry area are within the age interval of 17-25 which is about 40% of total workers and about 30% represent the age above 26. There have been working a large numbers of child workers and they are about 30% of total workers (Table-1).

Most of the quarry workers have primary level of education that is about 58.83% of total workers. And about 33.33% workers are illiterate, but only 10.84% of the workers have an experience of education up to class eight. There is no worker of SSC pass (Table-2).

96.66% of the stone quarry workers live in kacha house and 3.34% of workers have no residence to live in. There found no workers who owned a pacca or semi-pacca house (Table-3).

28.33% workers said that they have to work 5-7 hours in a day. About 50% of workers said that have to work between 7-9 hours. But, only 21.67% respondents said that they have to work more than 9 hours in a day (Table-4).

70.83% respondents are dissatisfied with their working environment and 29.17% of them said that they are moderately satisfied with the working environment, but there is no complete satisfaction rate among the quarry workers (Table-5).

In response to the question of capability of the workers to take proper health care, 48.34% of the respondents' answered that they are not capable to take any health care services and 15% of them are capable to take proper health care. Only 36.66% workers are poorly capable in taking health care services (Table-6).

In response to the question regarding the main problem of the quarry workers, 20% respondents said that the authority behave with them in an unjust manner, major percent of the respondents 55% said that they are paid low amount of wages which is one of the major problems that they face. And only 25% of the workers said that they face lack of security in their job (Table-7).

28.34% of the respondents take and believe in kabiraj and jharphuk (herbal treatment) in any type of diseases, and 57.50% of them take services from local doctors and hospitals. But only a small portion of the respondents around 14.16% take health care services from government hospitals (Table-8).

In response to the question of the quality of instruments used for collecting and crashing stones by the stone workers, 79.17% said that they use traditional equipment for collecting and crashing stones. And only 20.83% said that they use modern instruments for collecting and crashing stones (Table-9).

52.5% respondents said that, they have to give illegal subscription to the local leaders but 25% said that they give no subscription to the local leaders and the remaining 22.5% have no comment in this regard (Table-10).

37.5% respondents said that they are badly treated by authorities in case of performing their works and 33.34% of the respondents said that they have a very bad relation with the authority, and 25% have a good relation with the authority. Only 4.16% respondents told that the behavioral pattern of the mahjong is very good (Table-11).

The male workers earn an amount of (150-200) taka per day and a female worker earns about (100- 120) taka per day. But a child workers' per day income is very low that remains between (80-100) taka. Gender discrimination regarding labor relation is seen here (Table-12).

98% of the respondents said that they take their meals one time a day and use Kua (Well) water for drinking. They also said that they sleep at night without mosquito net. But, only 2% respondents are aware of food and drinking water.

Case Study-1

Under this study, the researcher talked to a stone quarry worker named *Rashida Begum* (pseudo name). She is forty years old, and her educational qualification is under junior school. She has been involved in this profession since 1980s. Her two sons; husband, and one daughter in law are also doing this work inheritedly. She told that "we have to work according to the given conditions of the Mohajon. As, we have no boat and other technology, so we are bound to continue this job. Daily wages we get is very poor to afford our family cost. So, poverty becomes an integrated part of our daily life and we live in hand to mouth. She also added that, this situation becomes very terrible during the rainy season, because in rainy season we have to be workless for two or three months. Finding no other alternative, a large numbers of workers take loan from the village Mohajon to manage their family expenses, and after a specific period of time they have to pay a large amount with high rate of interest. She became emotional saying that I, as woman, work equally compared to male workers, but the mohajon paid me only 150 taka daily, which is 70 taka less than the amount paid to a male worker.

Case Study-2

In this study, another stone quarry worker named *Abul Mia* (Pseudo name) said that “he (as a stone quarry worker) has to do a numbers of activities, such as collecting stones, separating stones according to the size, crashing stones, loading stones into the boat and also unloading boat. He also pointed out that he has to face a number of problems in collecting stone from the border area of India. Because, Indian Boarder Security Force (BSF) is very committed to protect the resources of their native land. Sometimes they shoot the person who crossed the border line of India. Besides, collecting equipment is traditional, so he has to work hard to crash the stone. Unhealthy working environment is major concern for him, because he has been suffering from Asthma for more than seven years just after joining to this profession. He claimed that stone crashing makes a dirty dust environment which is the main cause of lung infection.” In response to the question why do you not find out another job, he responded that most the workers are working here with their family members for a long time; and they are submissive to the mohajon as they have taken loan from them. They cannot leave the place and work without paying the dues in spite of having a low income. In a word, we are living here in the vicious circle of poverty. He thinks that the amount of stones is decreasing day by day because very often the Indian government imposes restriction in the collection of stones from the border area which may negatively effects on the production of various construction factories. He requested to the researcher to inform the government to protect them from this inhuman situation.

DISCUSSION

A sizeable amount of stone used for the country's construction sector comes from stone-quarries, mostly from Sylhet. Everyday thousands of cubic feet of stones are being extracted from the stone quarries. But the workers who are working these stone-quarries do not get their proper wages. Besides, due to unregulated and indiscriminate extraction, the government is losing huge amount of revenue as well as creates severe threat to local socio-economic balance. Stone extraction is common practice for the people of Bholagonj stone-quarry areas. Around 3,000 people- men, women and children, arrived at the Jadukata River every day to collect stones. There have also numbers of workers working in the bank of river about crushing stones, separating stones according to their size and value. On an average they extract about 7.5 million cubic feet (cit.) of stones every day. Earlier stone were collected normally, armed shovels and wicker baskets, laborers load the stones into small boats. However, in recent years the use of heavy machinery and systematic excavation took quarrying to a new level. Excavation machine known as “Boma” machine is used for excavation of stones from under river with 50-60 feet deep. A

number of “Boma” machine and stone crushing plants have been set up in this area.

The stone-quarry workers collect stones from the quarry area and they crush, load, and transport this to different part of the country. Most of the workers have an average income of around 100- 150 taka per day although they work almost whole day long. The stone quarry workers are the victims of economic exploitation such as- unjust behavior of authority, a long period of work, no scope for medical services, no security of job, no chance of other job as well as unhealthy working environment. Among these the most important is very low amount of income is paid to them which are not enough to afford their subsistence need. As a result, most of the workers live under the poverty line, even in whole life long. They are also deprived of their basic needs, such as- education, health care, accommodation, cloth and others.

Besides, the stone quarry workers have to pass a very difficult period at the time of rainy season, because then they remained unemployed. Although the stone quarry workers work very hard and play an important role to the economic development of the country, they get a little support government and other local authority. So, poverty and social vulnerability always co-exist with the stone quarry workers. A number of common features emerged across all the data. The findings are analyzed under these features: Amount of wages and income, Unjust action and behavior of authority, Illegal subscription etc. The amount of wages and income has been identified to explore the situation of economic exploitation of stone laborers. Wages in the stone quarries are given on daily basis and the wages of a labor vary on the basis of age and sex.

The average daily wages of a child (8-16) is about 120 taka and in case of a male (16+) is about 200 taka and a female (16+) normally gets about 150 taka per day. Each of them has to work from 6 AM to 5:30 PM with a midday break about half an hour. They have to collect stone from the river, separate the stone based on size and also there quality. Based on the quality, the stone are categorized into three categories: Single, Boulder and Botu. However their amount of income is very low and this level of income is not guaranteed for whole the year. From this study, it is also found that the female worker normally engaged in separating the stone and sand at several places that are fixed for these. They also carry these from the boat to the bank of the river and also from river bank to the boat, which is locally called the task of loading and unloading. On the other hand male worker collect stones from several place of the stone quarries area by means of barkee boat.

Furthermore, almost all the laborer is faced the rude behavior of the authority. The observed participants were asked that what they thought about the main forms of exploitation or how exploitation is occurred. Most of them said that they have the experience of unjust behavior of authority and they also get low wages and they have no job security. This situation is alarming for the female worker. Besides, another common feature is that children are one of the most neglected classes among the stone quarry workers. They work almost same as the elder one but they get a less caring behave from the authority (Rahman, 1997). But it is a matter of satisfaction that the sexual harassment as a form of unjust behavior is not seen here. Unjust behavior normally occurs at the ground of the amount of wages and the amount of stone collected by the group of laborer. The worker who collects stone from the river has to pay an amount of 10 taka per day as subscription. During collecting the stones when they stop their boat on the bank of river which is locally called 'Ghat' they also have to pay. It is a common affair almost all sector of Bangladesh. The scenario is not so cruel but it is present at stone quarries. The stone laborer is not free from the danger of political subscription. They have to face the local political leader. Normally the parties which are in the power of the country continue these illegal tasks. In this way, the effects of economic exploitation on the life of the stone laborer are everlasting, which has a multi-dimensional effect on the life of the stone laborer such as: extreme poverty, less opportunity of education, the effects on psychology. An alarming issue is that none of the stone laborer out of the circle of poverty. It influences on their life, health and housing. The data collected from this study shows a very miserable scenario of the life of the stone laborer. They are the cruel victims of poverty. Most of them have no house to live so they live in others house by means of rent. Almost all of the stone workers of Tahirpur Upazilla live below the poverty line. And most of them cannot afford proper food that is necessary to maintain good health. Sometimes they have to starve and very often a laborer takes one meal in a day.

On the other hand, education has been an important indicator to measure the life standard and the level of consciousness among the people. The study showed that most of the stone laborers are illiterate and they are only able to put a signature but they do not know how to read and write the basic things. Most of the workers have started their work at a very early age. And due to the extreme poverty they are unable to provide education to their children because they normally take their children to work at an early age. Moreover, extreme poverty and the unconsciousness (due to lack of education) create pressure on the psychology of the stone laborer. As a result they cannot take decision in a sound mind. Most of the cases they destroy themselves by taking drugs.

Almost all the stony-pit laborers live under the extreme stress of poverty. Most of them take loan from the local 'Mohajon' to meet their needs. And thus they increase the psychological pressure on their life.

From this study finding it is observed that almost all the stone workers who are working in different stone-quarries are not satisfied about their level of income. Moreover most of them said that they get a very poor wages regarding to their work. As a result they become the victims of poverty and economic exploitation. And different workers think different reasons behind such kind of economic exploitation. Most of them think that their huge dependence on this profession is the main cause. Although most of the workers are conscious about this sort of exploitation, but none of them are able to take any initiatives in order to get rid of this exploitation. Majority of the workers came into this profession, when they had nothing to afford their livelihood. They think that if they get the scope of other job, they will come out from this job forever. But the workers who are engaged in stone quarries activities cannot work whole year in the stone-quarries. Most of them are able to work about half a year. Normally during rainy season there have no scope to work. In this period of time they have to find out another job.

Under this study, we observed that stone quarry workers cannot manage the scope of other job during rainy season and they remain unemployed. So, poverty becomes an integrated part of their daily life. Moreover, after working, the wages that they get per day is not sufficient to manage the expenses of their family. As a result a large numbers of workers take loan from the village mohajon to manage their family expenses and after a specific period of time they have to pay a big amount with high rate of interest. From this study it is also observed that stone quarry workers have to do a numbers of activities such as collecting stones, separating stones according to the size, crashing stones, loading stones into the boat and also unloading boat. But they have to face a number of problems in this regard. Collecting stone from the border area is very risky, collecting equipments are traditional, unhealthy working environment, poor communication facilities etc. are the glaring examples of it. Some pregnant women are working in this unhygienic and risky environment to afford the cost of their family life.

They think that the amount of collecting stones is decreasing day by day, because very often the Indian government imposes restriction for collecting stones from the border area which may negatively effects on the production of various construction factories. Furthermore, BOOMA machine is very harmful and threat for our ecology and environment (Dev, 2014). Because, these machines lifting up stones from 200

feet deep of the ground with heavy sound and flow. Besides, their health and sanitation facilities are very poor. In order to solve the above mentioned problems majority of the workers opined that there should be established strong coordination between workers and the authority and illegal political subscription should be stopped. They are not aware of the labor rights of Bangladesh and the child laborers working in this zone are being treated as inhuman being (Matthew, 2000). Finally, the workers working in stone quarry areas claim poverty as their fate and main reason of deprivation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

To conduct and complete the study we have faced a number of limitations. Such as:

- As a young researcher, it would create difficulties to conduct a research work due to lack of skill, knowledge, and experience. This happened for personal lacking, time limitations and some other relevant causes.
- We have faced greater problems due to shortage of necessary and relevant books, journals and written documents in various libraries in sylhet.
- Poverty and social vulnerability of stone worker is a sensitive issue. Most of them are children and women, as a result they are doubtful about it and sometimes the respondents were unwilling to provide necessary information. So, it was very difficult to explore the real situation.
- The respondents did not have enough time to answer the whole questions, because they were busy in their professional work. Besides, some women laborer were not interested to talk with unknown one,
- Wider concept made it difficult to cover the whole area.
- It is very lengthy process to take permission from the authority. The authorities often restrict the labor to give an interview. We had to maintain lengthy formalism. So it created some problems to collect field data.

CONCLUSION WITH POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Most of the people of our country live below the poverty line, so they are engaged in various risky and unsecured works in order to afford their basic needs. And most of them are day laborers. The cement factories and other construction factories mostly depend on the stone quarries of the country. It is the evident that the authorities of the quarries are getting a great share of benefits of the quarry, although unfortunately the stone workers are deprived of it.

They are the subject of economic exploitation in terms of wages, income and working hours etc. This situation forced the stone quarry workers to stay within the circle of extreme poverty. The stone

workers provide their best towards the development of the country but get back a few. But they are getting minimum wages and just living at the level of abject poverty that is characterized by social and economic exploitation. The attention of government and other institution at this sector is rarely seen. It is alarming news to continue the collection stone for the enormous demand of the country in such a situation. Social services organizations should take effective measures for ensuring the fulfillment of the basic rights of the stone quarry workers. Finally it can be said that government should take proper steps to improve the existing situation. In view of the present findings and the discussion the following recommendations are made:

- The unjust behavior of the authority has been identified as one of the major causes of low income of stone-workers. So immediate necessary steps should be taken by the government on this regard.
- Basic daily wages should be raised in certain level so that they can survive a minimum living standard.
- At the period when the stone workers remain unemployment government and development organization should come forward to introduce some development initiatives to improve the living condition of stone-quarry workers, such as- providing micro-credit, occupational training, poultry rearing etc. as well as to give them temporary working opportunity to lead their life.
- Some consciousness raising programs should be carried out to improve their basic learning skills and the health and health care services to keep them physically fit (Asmar, 2007).
- Effective steps should be taken to remove the illegal political subscription that is collected by the local leaders.
- To strengthen labor organization in stone-quarry area, so that they can initiate various development programs for their workers and protect them from any kinds of exploitation.
- Improving the cordiality between the stone workers and the authority and sound working condition must be ensured.
- All the stone workers should be treated according to their capability of performance not as their age or sex.
- Recreation and leisure opportunity should be created for the workers for their physical and psychological development.
- Promoting fairness and justice in the management of stone quarry.
- Stone workers welfare society should be established so that all stone workers can ensure their basic right.

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APPENDIX
List of Tables

Table-1: Age of Respondents

Year	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
8-16	36	30
17-25	48	40
26 and above	36	30
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-2: Level of Education

Educational Level	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	40	33.33
Primary	67	55.83
Up to class eight	13	10.84
SSC	0	0
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-3: Place of Residence

Types of Residence	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Pacca	0	0
Semi-pacca	0	0
Kacha	116	96.66
No residence	4	3.34
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-4: Working Hour of the workers

Working Hours	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
5-7	34	28.33
7-9	60	50
Above 9	26	21.67
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-5: Satisfaction about Working Environment

Opinion of Respondent	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Satisfactory	0	0
Dissatisfactory	85	70.83
Moderate	35	29.17
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-6: Capability of Workers to Take Proper Health Care Facilities

Opinion of Respondent	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Capable	18	15
Poorly capable	44	36.66
Not capable	58	48.34
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-7: Problems Faced by Stone Workers

Types of problems	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Unjust behavior	24	20
Low wages	66	55
Unsecured job	30	25
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-8: Level of Health Care Facilities

Service Provider	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Government hospital	17	14.16
Local doctors & hospital	69	57.50
Kabiraj and Jharphuk	34	28.34
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-9: Instruments used by Workers for Collecting and Crashing Stones

Type of Instruments	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Modern	25	20.83
Traditional	95	79.17
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-10: Illegal Subscription Taken by Local Leaders

Opinion of Respondent	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	63	52.5
No	30	25
No comment	27	22.5
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-11: Behavioral Pattern of the Authority with the workers

Opinion of Respondent	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Very Good	5	4.16
Good	30	25
Bad	45	37.5
Very Bad	40	33.34
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table-12: Amount of Income

Type of Workers	Income per day	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Children	80-100	13	10.83
Male	150-200	70	58.34
Female	100-120	37	30.83
Total	--	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Table- 13: Nature of Workers Welfare

Opinion of Respondent	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	0	0
Poorly satisfied	48	40
Not satisfied	72	60
Total	120	100

Field data Collected from Bholagonj, Sylhet, 1st August to 25th September 2014

Photographs



A child labour excavating to collect stone



Quarry workers taking their meal on the working zone



An aged quarry worker unloading the stone from boat on the River Dhalai



Bottlenecks of stone at Bholagonj quarry zone beside Dhalai River



Boma machine through which stone withdrawn from 150-200feet deep of ground



A woman labour carrying stone from boat to truck



Different activities at quarry zone



Women workers separating stone according



Quarry workers loading the pick up van with stone



Researcher talking with the women labours to the size



Stone cracker machine



Unhygienic latrine for stone quarry workers