

**Report for the Committee on Rights of the Child
41st Session Pre-Session Working Group**

**Answers by the State Party
to the Questions asked by the
Committee on the Rights of the Child
41st Session- Pre-Session Working Group**

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Response to the Queries of the Committee on the Rights of the Children

Question 1: Please provide disaggregated data (by gender, age, groups, ethnic minority, urban or rural areas) covering the period between 2002 and 2005 in the number and proportion of children under 18 recruited in the armed forces or in the police and paramilitary forces

Answer: The minimum age for enrolment in Bangladesh defense services was set much before ratification of the Optional Protocol by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Recruitments in the armed forces take place genuinely on voluntary basis. It does not require recruiting and employing persons under 18. It is the usual practice that recruitments in the Commissioned Rank of Bangladesh Army, Cadets of Bangladesh Navy and Flight Cadets of Bangladesh Air Force are preceded by two years training before they are employed for actual services.¹ No one is recruited in Police, Armed forces and Paramilitary forces at an age below 18 years.² So provision of data on recruitment of children below 18 in Police, Armed forces and Paramilitary forces does not apply to Bangladesh.

Question 2: Please provide disaggregated data (by age and gender) covering the period between 2002 and 2005 on the number and proportion of persons provided to the UN Department of Peace keeping Operations (DPKO) to be deployed in UN peace missions.

Answer: During the period between 2002 and 2005, a total number of 22,229 Bangladeshi defense personnel were deployed on different UN peacekeeping missions abroad. They were between 22 to 50 years age. Data shows that there has never been any deployment of persons below the age 18 in the UN peacekeeping missions from Bangladesh.

Gender disaggregated data on Bangladeshi nationals deployed in UN Peace keeping mission during the period between 2002 and 2005 is presented below.

Table 1: Gender disaggregated data on Bangladeshi nationals deployed in UN Peace keeping missions:

Year	Child (Below 18 years)		Adult (Above 18 years)			Adult (Above 18 years)		Total	
	Girl	Boy	Police Service			Defense Service		Female	Male
			Women	Men	Total	Women	Men		
2002	-	-	1	98	99	-	4648	1	4747
2003	-	-	-	80	80	-	4712	-	4792
2004	-	-	1	88	89	-	4120	1	4209

¹ Army Instructions, Grant Commission in Bangladesh Army

² Ministry of Home Affairs (Law Branch), 17.06.2004

2005	-	-	17	402	419	-	8062	17	8481
Total	-	-	19	668	687	-	21,542	19	22,229

Data presented in Table-1 show that no children under-18 from Bangladesh was engaged in UN peace keeping missions.

Question 3: Please provide data for 2003-2006 on budget allocations and trends (in percentages of the national and regional budgets or GDP) allocated to the implementation of the Protocol, and in particular to the measures adopted with regard to disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration of children victims of activities contrary on the Protocol.

Answer: Pursuant to Bangladesh’s commitment to full and effective implementation of the Protocol and in particular the measures adopted with regard to disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration of children, victims of activities contrary to the Protocol the budgetary allocation is presented below:

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has been implementing a project titled **"Empowerment and Protection of Children and Women"** with the financial support from UNICEF. The project budget is Tk. 35.70 million of which Tk. 34.97 million is foreign aid and Tk. 0.73 million from GoB.

The Ministry of Social Welfare has been implementing two projects namely **"Poverty Alleviation and Socio-economic Development of the Poor People of Hill Tract Districts"** and **"Urban Community Development"** with a total GOB contribution of Tk. 440 million and Tk. 100 million respectively.

In case of Chittagong Hill Tracts, UNDP in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (Economic Resource Division of the Ministry of Finance) has undertaken a project titled **"Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts"** (2005-2009). The project has a budget of Tk. 300.00 billion in which EC, Japan, Australia and USAID are the donors. The aim of the project is to reduce poverty especially among the most vulnerable and strengthening the local institutions and communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The target area includes 2500 communities, which are located in deep jungles.³

Question 4: Please provide information on the legislation concerning voluntary recruitment of children under 18 and protection of children from being engaged in hostilities. In particular, please provide specific information on measures taken to ensure that recruitment of under-18s is genuinely voluntary, and about when and how the consent of the parents is sought.

³ www.undp.bangladesh.org

Answer: The Bangladesh Armed Forces, Police and Paramilitary forces have their own recruitment rules and regulations. In those rules there is no provision for or scope to recruit persons under 18 in the police, army and paramilitary forces. Moreover, Bangladesh has a number of child related Acts among which Mines Act of 1923, Factories Act 1965 having provisions for protecting children from being engaged in hostilities. **Bangladesh does not have any separate legislation regarding voluntary recruitment of children under 18 with the provision of taking consent of their parents.**

As per Army Instruction Grant Commission in Bangladesh Army (Instruction No 6 & 8) the following are the age limit for the voluntary enforcement of recruitment:⁴

⁴ Army Instructions, Grant Commission in Bangladesh Army

Bangladesh Army:

- Combats: 17-20 years
- Non-Combats: 17-20 years
- Commission ranks: 17-40 years

Military training involves a 6 months training in various training centres and academy² to 3 months training in a respective unit or regiment. Under-18 recruits undergo the same training and on completion they are required to perform duties like other soldiers. **Recruits are not considered part of the armed forces until they have completed training.**

Bangladesh Navy:

Cadets: 17-20 years
Sailors: 17-20 years

After initial recruitment cadets undergo a basic training course of two years and Sailors for minimum of 15 months before they are commissioned and employed for actual services. **Therefore, no personnel of Bangladesh Navy is actually employed in Naval Service before attaining the age of 18 years.**

Bangladesh Air Force:

Flight Cadet: 16.5 – 21 years
Airmen: 16 – 21 years
MODC : 17 – 22 years

Parent's consents are required prior to enrolment in the training program. After successful completion of the training course they get employment for serving in Bangladesh Air Force.

Police, Bangladesh Rifle (BDR), Ansar:

The minimum age for recruitment: 18 years

Thus, it is evident from the information presented above that there is no scope for any person to be employed for actual service/combats in defense services, internal security services or paramilitary forces of Bangladesh who has not attained the age of 18.

***Question 5:* Please provide information on the presence in the school curricula of courses about human rights and humanitarian law aiming at strengthening a culture of peace.**

Answer: Primary school curricula include issues on human rights and introduction to humanitarian law to strengthen a culture of peace and tolerance. The textbook

‘Introduction to Environment’ of grade V includes separate chapters on human rights and humanitarian law. Included also in that textbook another chapter titled “**World Peace and United Nations**”.

The Chapter on “Human Rights” includes an introduction to “**General Declaration on Human Rights**” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December 1948. Besides, this chapter discusses about **The Children Act, Compulsory Primary Education Act, Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act 2000 (amended in 2003)** etc. There is also detailed discussion on **Child Rights, Women and Child Trafficking, Acid Throwing, Communalism and Effects of Dowry**.

There is another chapter on tolerance and peaceful co-existence of different communities in the society irrespective of their religion, culture and tradition.

Moreover, the curriculum includes measures to protect human rights and awareness building through national and international programs such as “**World Anti Child Labour Day, World Women’s day etc.**”

In brief, the primary education curricula adequately address the issues on human rights and humanitarian law.

Question 6: Please provide information on the number of children who continue to be affected by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Conflict, although it ended in 1997:

- a) as displaced persons,**
- b) as orphans,**
- c) as combatants.**

Answer: Certain sections of the child population live in especially difficult circumstances, hence special attention, protection and assistance from their families and communities must be forthcoming. The groups which could be categorized under especially difficult circumstances are: orphans and street children, children of refugees and displaced persons, of victims of war and natural disasters, of migrant workers and socially disadvantaged groups, of sex workers, disabled children, and juvenile delinquents or indigenous origin tend to endure greater inequities at all levels.

A separate Ministry on Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs has been established for the progress and development of the hill tract people. There are altogether 1947 children in the hill tracts areas having some form of combatant background. The present status of impact upon the conflict in Chittagong Hill Tracts is illustrated in the following table⁵:

Table 6: Children affected by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Conflict:

⁵ Ministry of Hill Tracts Affairs

Type of Children	Number of children affected
Displaced	-
Orphans	-
Combatants	1947