



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

**Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts**

of

NAJMUS SAQIB

BA (York University, 2012)

**“Child Labour and School Attendance in Bangladesh: The Impact of Individual,
Parental and Household Factors on Human Capital Development”**

Department of Economics

Thursday, December 17, 2015

10:30AM

David Strong Building

Room C124

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Alok Kumar, Department of Economics, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Carl Mosk, Department of Economics, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Joshua Ault, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Michael Miller, Department of Computer Science, UVic

Abstract

Household survey data collected primarily from rural Bangladesh (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2005-2006) is utilized in this paper to identify the important individual, household and district-level factors that influence the decision making process that parents undertake to determine their children's (between the age of 7 and 14 inclusive) absence rate from school and work intensity. Bivariate Tobit model is used to jointly estimate the absence rate and hours worked equations. The results of the analysis conducted in this paper suggest that an increase in perceived returns on human capital from attending school – as measured by the wage differential between low-skilled and higher-skilled occupations in a given market – negatively impact absence rate in rural Bangladesh. Moreover, results suggest that the education level of the parents has an impact on a child's absence rate and the number of hours worked in a week. It is found that the higher the education level of the father, the lower the absence rate and the number of hours worked of a child, while higher levels of the mother's education level is shown to negatively impact the absence rate. It is also found that being the first born child in a household is associated with both higher absence rate from school and greater amount of hours worked per week. With respect to gender, being a girl is found to be associated with a greater number of hours worked. Lastly, household wealth is found to have a U-shaped relationship with both absence rates and number of hours worked; it is negatively associated with both of the dependant variables at lower levels, but has a positive impact on both absence rate and number of hours worked at higher levels. In general, the results detailed in this paper highlight the importance of policies such as the provision of cash stipends to the poorest households, improving the quality of schooling facilities and directed educational schemes meant to eradicate the persistent gender inequality that is hindering truly universal primary education in rural Bangladesh.

Keywords: Child labour, absence rate, bivariate Tobit, skill premium, Bangladesh