

Implementation of Labor Laws for Welfare of Workers: A Study on Ready-Made Garment Factories in Gazipur

Dr. Sahin Akter Sarker*
Md. Jalis Mahmud Suvo**

Abstract: Ready-Made Garment sector is the most promising sectors in terms of both employment and export earnings in Bangladesh. There are specific laws for the welfare of labors of this sector which is known as Bangladesh Labor Act 2015, the latest version of Labor Laws based on previous Bangladesh Labor Act 2006 which was revised in 2013. Labor Laws prescribe different provisions such as employment conditions, employment of young person, maternity benefits, workplace safety, working hours and other welfare measures including minimum wage rate. The study explored the present condition of labor management practices in the factory sites of RMG sector in the context of the Gazipur District (nearby Dhaka City) in Bangladesh considering some significant labor rights as per Labor Law. Under random sampling technique around 84 responses were utilized to gather reliable data. The data was collected using “personal survey” technique and secondary information was utilized to support the data. In the recent past, these laws were not implemented properly in RMG industry. But this study examined that currently situation is changing, and better practice of Labor Laws is in place and workers are getting their rights. However, perfect practice of these laws is yet to take place in all ready-made garment factories.

Keywords: Ready - Made Garment (RMG), Labor Law, Welfare Measures.

Introduction

Bangladesh is earning its highest export earnings through Ready Made Garment (RMG) sector. As per the data source of Export Promotion Bureau compiled by BGMEA - the export earnings of garments products in the year 2014-15 was 81.71% of the country's export earnings, rising from about 65% in the financial year 1994-95. In terms of employment majority of the country's employed manpower are involved in RMG sector. As per the BGMEA data as of 2014-15, in Bangladesh, there are 4296 garment factories and around 4 million workers are employed in this sector.^{1 2} However, Bangladesh failed

* Associate Professor in the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Administration, American International University–Bangladesh (AIUB). Email: sasarker2001@yahoo.com or sasarker@aiub.edu

** HR Executive at The Palace Luxury Resort. Email: jalis1609@gmail.com

¹ http://www.bgmea.com.bd/chart_test/number_of_employment_in_garment

² http://www.bgmea.com.bd/chart_test/factory_growth_in_bangladesh

to reap the benefit from this sector at its optimal level due to poor management practices regarding labor laws in factory sites. In one study, M. M. Islam (2016) stated that from the beginning phase of evolution (since the early 1980s) till date private entrepreneurs' reluctance to accord with compliance issues and workers safety and securities, this sector moved with inadequate policies and programs which have been recognized in different incidents.

There are specific Labor Laws for the welfare and rights of the workers of this sector. The Labor Act 2006; revised Bangladesh Labor (Amendment) Bill, 2013 and the subsequent rules of 2015 provides several provisions as of compulsory prior permission from the chief Inspector of Factories and Establishments regarding the implementation of organizations service rules and policies, the limit of the daily and weekly working hours of the workers, the compulsory weekly holidays or compensatory holidays, festival leave, annual leave, casual and sick leave etc. But these provisions of law are becoming ineffective due to negligence of the law enforcing authority in this sector.

As a result, we witnessed labor unrest/ protest repeatedly throughout the year. Workers employed in garment factories are not treated with proper employment conditions. Employment of child labor is also a problem in the RMG industry though Bangladesh has made a moderate advancement in its efforts to stop children to be involved in hazardous works as per the revised Bangladesh Labor (Amendment) Bill, 2013.^{3 4} More than half of the workers are female in this industry but their rights regarding maternity welfare facilities are not provided in all factories. Safety issue is a big concern for this industry and due to lack of sufficient safety measures in the past we have seen disasters like Rana Plaza and Tazrin Fashion facts.

Keeping this in mind the researchers attempt for finding out the present conditions of labor management practice in RMG factories of Bangladesh in Gazipur district (one of the prominent hubs for RMG factory sites) nearby the capital city Dhaka. Around 1133 RMG factories are in Gazipur district and among them about 633 are in Gazipur Sadar upazila.⁵ Researchers hope it will be very much beneficial to determine both the existing performance and prospects of the RMG sector in Bangladesh. This study will provide important information regarding the implementation of Labor Laws in RMG sector and may be used as source of secondary data for further research purpose. Along with this, the study will provide information regarding the remedial measures that should be taken by the RMG factory owners to utilize the productive capacity of these human capital in efficient manner for the betterment of nation.

³ <https://textiletoday.com.bd/a-review-of-the-new-labor-law-2013/>

⁴ U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. reporting, February 13, 2013. http://ucw-project.org/attachment/Bangladesh_child_labour_report20111125_094656.pdf

⁵ <http://database.dife.gov.bd/factories>

Objective of the Study:❖ *General objective(s):*

- ✓ To know labor management practice(s) in garment industry regarding labor laws prescribed by the authority (govt. of the country) and how these laws are beneficial for the workers.

❖ *Specific objective(s):*

- ✓ To find out employment conditions practiced in garment industry
- ✓ To know about employment of young persons
- ✓ To discover the real situation of maternity welfare facilities
- ✓ To know how much welfare measures are provided to workers
- ✓ To recommend, if needed, necessary actions that should be taken by the government or owner of factories.

Scope of the Study:

The scope of the study covers the application of the Labor Act 2006 and the subsequent revised Rule of 2015 concerning provisions of work facilities and work environment, safety and security, health and hygiene, welfare, working hours, leaves, wages, maternity benefits, provident fund at the work place in RMG sectors of Bangladesh with special reference to Gazipur District.

Methodology and Information Source:

Methodology comprises of all the activities that are required to conduct the study and generate it into a report. The study explored the labor management practices in the factory sites of RMG sector in the context of the Gazipur District (nearby Dhaka City) in Bangladesh. It examined how the private entrepreneurs' practices and implements prescribed labor laws in specific areas for the welfare of workers. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has been utilized for this study. To conduct this study both primary and secondary data were used. Books, journals, articles, studies related to the topic of this study were searched on the website and considered to link up, if possible, with the study. These secondary data were utilized to develop the conceptual framework of this study.

Information about current practice of Labor Law was collected with the help of a questionnaire and respondents were workers from different garments of Gazipur area. A questionnaire containing 25 five-point Likert scale statements was organized for getting the primary data. This was a combination of structured and unstructured questionnaire.

These questions were prepared in accordance with the objectives of this research. There were five sections in questionnaire regarding awareness level of workers, availability of familiar welfare measures, maternity facilities, health and safety and payment of wage in the factory site. Eleven (11) garment factories were selected randomly from Gazipur area which produce finished knitwear and woven wear (Table-1, inside Appendix). More than 150 responses being received and around 84 responses were utilized to gather more reliable and accurate data [all these 84 workers were permanent category worker from different departments such as cutting, finishing, quality, production and sewing (Table-2, Appendix). Multi-disciplinary analytical approach is adopted. The research mainly employed personal survey (face to face interview) methodology to gather primary data necessary to meet the research objectives. The responses allowed respondents sensitivities about the subject matter that eventually assisted in developing qualitative analysis of the study. Primary data was analyzed and expressed through graphs with the help of MS Excel worksheet.

Limitation of the Study

Due to some unavoidable reason researchers failed to consider all Laws regarding welfare of workers. Even, workers of the garments were not interested enough to answer all the questions accurately and level of experience of some workers was not enough to meet the objectives of the study. Researchers tried their level best to find out the gap between the prescribed laws and prevailing laws as well as how these laws would benefit the workers. And investigators are expecting that future researcher will concentrate on those areas and will explore new information.

Literature Review

Overview of Bangladesh labor Law

The labor law system is more than a century old in Bangladesh. The first labor law was enacted in the Indian sub-continent during the British period, in 1881. Subsequently, the British Government introduced several laws concerning different labor issues, e.g., working hour, employment of children, maternity benefit, trade union activities, wage, etc. The Factories Act (1881), Workmen's Compensation Act (1923), Trade Unions Act (1926), Trade Disputes Act (1929), Payment of Wages Act (1936), Maternity Benefit Act (1939), and the Employment of Children Act (1938) were labor laws enacted during the British period. After the separation of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, almost all the laws were kept in force with some modifications and amendments, in the form of administrative rules, by the Pakistan Government.

After the independence in 1971, the Bangladesh government retained the previous laws through the Bangladesh Laws Order (President's Order No. 48). It also enacted additional laws in response to the changing circumstances and needs of the working class and the

country. In 2006, the country adopted the revised Bangladesh Labor Law of 2006 or BLL. The BLL is fairly comprehensive and progressive (Hossain, et al., 2010).

A recently published report by the *European Commission* (2017) states that, in July 2013 Bangladesh amended its Labor Act of 2006 which conforms more closely to International Labor Standards concerning such provisions as -- conditions of service and employment, youth employment, maternity benefit, health and hygiene, safety, welfare, working hours and leave, wages and payment, workers' compensation for injury, trade unions and industrial relations, disputes, labor court, workers' participation in companies' profits, regulation of employment and safety of dock workers, provident funds, apprenticeship, penalty and procedure, administration, inspection, etc. And in the year of 2015, Bangladesh Labor Act 2015 was revealed which is effective from 15th September of same year.

The motive behind this initiative was to provide workers of RMG sector a better livelihood which in turn will be able to accelerate their productive capacity and hence to foster the economic growth of Bangladesh. In spite of these amended provisions of law we witnessed frequent workers chaos in this sector because of numerous issues like poor housekeeping, storage system, ineffective monitoring and controlling system, rented factory premises, narrow staircases, insufficient light and air, clean drinking water, separate washroom for male and female etc. This not only affects the major stakeholders but also pull down the socio-economic condition of the nation.

As per the information of the report by the *European Commission* (2017), the readymade garment (RMG) industry has become the lifeline of the economy of Bangladesh creating opportunities for exports, jobs and income. It is the country's main export industry (81.68% of total export revenue). Together, the EU, US and Canada account for almost 85% of Bangladesh's total exports to the world. The RMG industry directly employs around four million people – of whom approximately 80% are women. As per the BGMEA information, the number of garments factories has increased from 2182 in 1994-95 to 4296 in 2014-15. But, the factory fire at Tazreen Fashions in 2012 and the collapse of the Rana Plaza in 2013, a tragedy which claimed more than thousand lives, led to intense global scrutiny of the Bangladesh RMG sector and emphasized the need for vital change regarding provisions of labor laws for workers' rights (Khan and Wichterich, 2015).

Islam (2016, 91) specified that since the independence, incredible demands for our garment's products have been noticed across the world due to innovative and quality products. After the phasing out of the MFA in 2005, the Bangladesh RMG sector entered a period of rigid competition. Contrary to expectations, the sector did not lose its competitive position in the world apparel market. However, consistency of this success of

garments products largely depends on the entrepreneurs' willingness to accord with compliance issues and workers safety and securities.

Salient features of the Bangladesh Labor Law related to the RMG Sector

In the labor condition regime sketched above, we observed RMG exporters of Bangladesh have been under continuous pressures as the success of RMG sector not only depends on availability of cheap labor and government's generous policy but also depends on compliance with international labor standards. International buyers are sensitive about compliance with codes of conduct before placing any order. In order to export readymade garments, both the quality restrictions (important towards acceptance of the product) and the working environment (in which the garments are to be produced) is equally important. However, the compliance standards set by the international buyers are unrealistic in the context of Bangladesh. Besides, standards used in evaluating the working conditions significantly differ from buyers to buyers complying with which is somewhat difficult for the Bangladeshi entrepreneurs. To overcome this problem, a number of initiatives have been launched to develop a common set of codes of conduct for the sector (Rahman and Hossain, 2010; and Afrin, 2014).

Employment standards

An employee or "labor" is defined as any person, including a trainee/probationer, whether the terms and conditions of his/her employment are expressly written or not, who is employed directly or through a contractor/agency, for any skilled, unskilled, physical, technical, business development or clerical job in any establishment or industry. The law specifies what information should be included in the appointment letter and in the service book and requires the letter to be signed by both the employer and the worker (Hossain, et al., 2010).

Welfare and social protection

Gratuity is defined under the law as payment, at least 30 days, for workers discharged from work and yet have worked not less than 6 months. Every establishment/employer is required to form a Provident Fund if three-fourths of its workers demand it by written application, and a Workers' Participation Fund and a Workers' Welfare Fund for its workers. Establishments with 200 or more workers should institute a group insurance. Every employer should provide compensation to its workers for work-related injury, disability and death (Hossain, et al., 2010).

Child Labor condition

As per the findings of the report by the National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh (2014) we witnessed that the Labor Act prohibits children under the age of 14 from work

and no child shall be allowed to work in profession or establishment. Even no parents or guardian of a child can make contract of employment of a child giving permission to work with anyone. However, working children are a visible part of everyday life in deprived urban communities where garment workers live. Poverty is one of the vital causes behind the child labor practices in Bangladesh. A recently published report by the *UNICEF* (2015) states that, though Bangladesh has been relatively successful in eradicating child labor in export-oriented garment factories, it remains a significant concern in the formal and informal sectors that produce for the domestic market. Because of poverty and low wages, RMG workers allow their children contribute to the family income through child labor practices. Typical activities carried out by children related to the RMG industry include embroidery, cutting/trimming, button stitching etc. As per the survey findings of the said report based on domestic market, around estimated 185,000 workers, 59 per cent were below the age of 18 years. In some cases, they were found to be working up to 17 hours per day during peak production. In addition to long working hours, poor working conditions can expose these children to numerous hazards that risk damaging their physical and mental development.

Occupational Health and Safety

Establishments are required to put up for every 150 workers one first aid box and one trained person per first aid box, and an equipped dispensary with a patient-room, doctor and nursing staff. Employers are required to respond appropriately to protect workers from danger and damage due to fire. Every establishment is required to be kept clean. The work room should not be overcrowded and injurious to the health of the workers. Information suggests that most of the garment industries are situated in buildings (mostly ill structured and overcrowded) which were not constructed to such specific purpose (Hossain, et al., 2010).

Though special importance is given in the Labor Law on occupational health and safety and working environment (78 sections are exclusively on it out of a total of 354 sections in the law), the safety and security measures of the RMG workers are far from satisfactory. (Afrin S., 2014). Nevertheless, gradually we are observing progress in improving safety conditions in the RMG sector. Report by the *ILO* (2016) indicates that, after the Rana Plaza incident the Ministry of Labor and Employment has taken various steps to improve the safety of garment factories in a short time. The main challenge is to overcome the lack of awareness among factory owners and workers.

Working Hour

The report by the National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh (2014) provides useful insights regarding this matter. Under section 100 and 102 of Labor Law, the daily

and weekly working hours are ensured. The revised provision of Labor Law makes a provision of 8 working hours a day for an adult worker. Night shift for female workers without their consent is prohibited as per section 106. Extra allowance for overtime (OT) is guaranteed according to section 108 with imposition of limitation for hours of works for women in consonance with section 109. However, previous studies revealed that, in most of the garment factories, workers are forced to work more than the prescribed hours per day ignoring the labor law.

Leave

In Bangladesh Labor Law, maternity benefits have been increased to 16 weeks and the qualifying service length has been decreased to six months, but this benefit is limited only up to the birth of two living infants (Afrin S., 2014). However, these legal provisions are not consistently observed in practice. Most of the cases pregnant women are led to 'voluntarily' resign rather than being dismissed. Many female garment workers either do not return to the same factory after giving birth or take a significantly shorter amount of maternity leave. This situation is unjustifiable, not just for children and women in their role as mothers, but also for factories which suffer from high employee turnover and a continuous loss of skills and talent. 14 days of sick leave and one day for every 18 days of work annual leave with full average wages have been provided in Labor Law. Workers should get the sick leave with wages only if they can provide medical certificate. Sections 115, 116, 117 and 118 of Bangladesh Labor Law are respectively prescribing in detail about causal leave, sick leave; annual leave with wages and festival holidays for workers of RMG sector (UNICEF, 2015).

Minimum Wages

Bangladesh Government sets minimum wages for various categories of worker. With the continuing labor movement, a tripartite agreement was signed in May 2006 between government, BGMEA and RMG sector workers and a Minimum Wages Board was set up. After prolonged deliberation, a 7-grade minimum wage structure was declared for RMG sector workers in which minimum wage or wages at the lowest grade (grade-7) was determined as 1,662.50 taka per month (Al Faruque, 2009). On 29th July 2010, the Minimum Wages Board has raised minimum monthly wages for its millions of garment workers by about 80% after months of violent protests over poor pay and conditions. The official minimum wage has been set at 3,000 Tk (£28) a month, up from 1662Tk, in the first raise since 2006 (Guardian. 2010). In December 2013, the government-formed wage board has again raised minimum wage to Tk 5,300, which is 76.66% higher than the existing Tk 3000. However, the prevailing wages in Bangladesh's RMG sector are widely considered to be insufficient to allow workers and their families to enjoy an adequate standard of living. Much of the literature reported that a common scenario prevailing in

most of the apparel factories is that in many factories’ wages are not paid regularly. Sometimes the delay is 2 months and then again only part of the wage is paid.

We may thus surmise that; enormous changes are occurring in the RMG sector of Bangladesh and the initiation of the transformation process will be very much beneficial for all the stakeholders related to RMG sector. Hence it is imperative to offer a more comprehensive perspective of the inevitability of these labor laws for the welfare of garments workers of Bangladesh in this regard.

Analysis of the Study

Awareness level of Workers

Our investigation suggests that only 1% respondents have in depth knowledge about existing Labor law prevailing in Bangladesh. Near about 79% respondents have knowledge of this law in brief and 20% demonstrated that they do not have understanding of Labor Law (Figure-1).

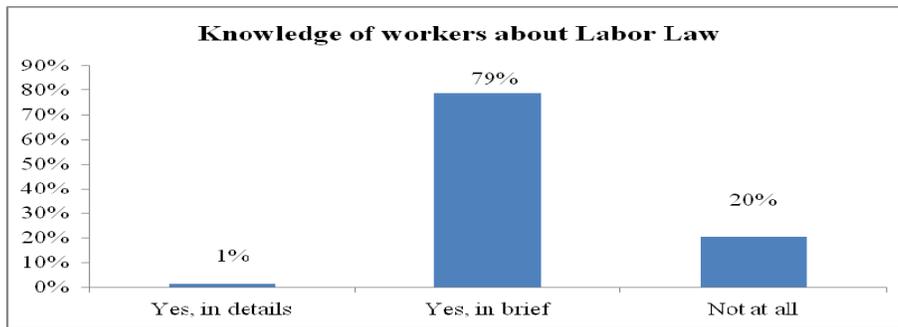


Figure-1: Awareness level of workers about Labor Law

Source: Field survey- November, 2015

Welfare Measures

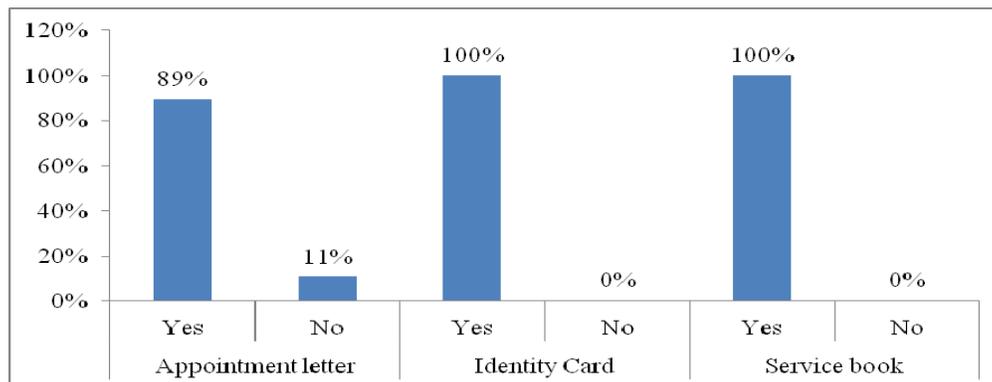


Figure-2: Workers perception about Appointment Letter, Identity Card and Service Book

Around 89% respondents said that appointment letter is provided after joining their respective factories whereas 11% said that appointment letter is not provided. Both identity card and service book are provided to every worker of the factories as 100% of respondents said yes, these are provided regularly (Figure-2).

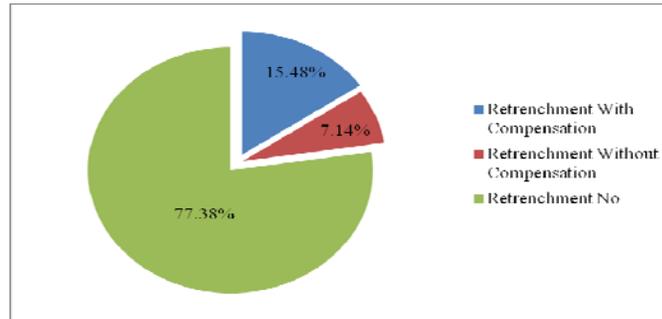


Figure-3: Workers perception about retrenchment

It was found that 15.48% respondents said that factory management retrenches workers with compensation whereas 7.14% respondents commented that workers are retrenched without compensation and 77.38% said that no retrenchment practice is in their factories (Figure-3).

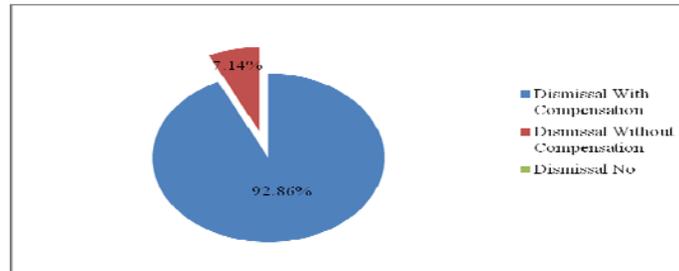


Figure-4: Workers perception about dismissal

Most of the respondents (92.86%) expressed their opinion that employers dismiss workers with compensation and 7.14% said that employers dismiss workers without compensation and both sort of dismisses takes place in case of misconduct (Figure-4).

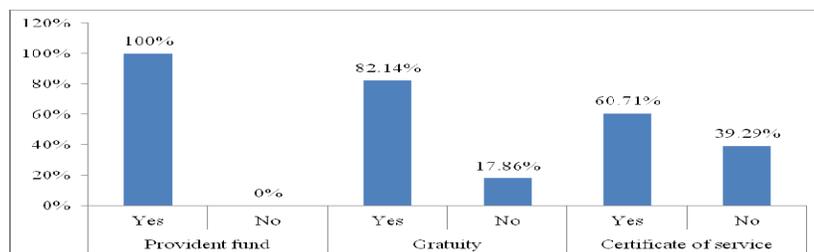


Figure-5: Workers perception about Provident Fund, Gratuity and Certificate of Service

According to our investigation, 100% respondents said that provident fund is given to workers if they contribute for it. Almost 82.14% said that gratuity is given whereas 17.86% said that this is not given. Certificate of service is provided to the workers according to 60.71% of respondents and almost 39.29% said that no certificate of service is provided (Figure-5).

Out of 84 workers almost 94% respondents strongly disagreed that child labor is not employed in factories and 6% were disagreed with the statement that means no child labor is employed in garment factories (Figure-6).

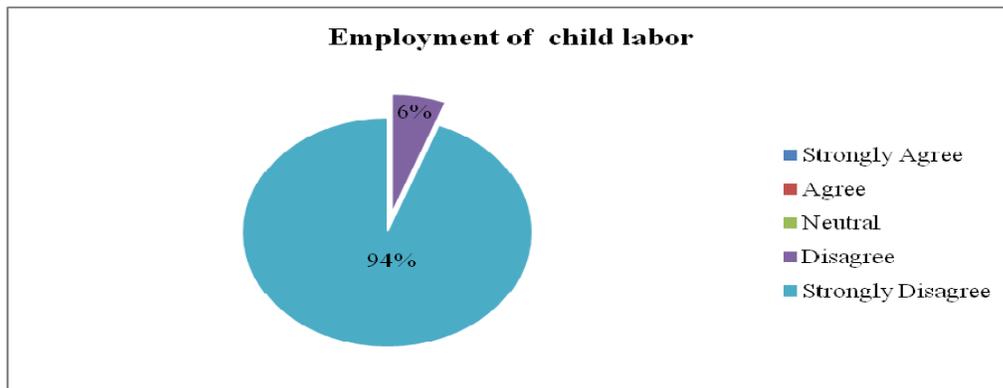


Figure-6: Employment of child labor

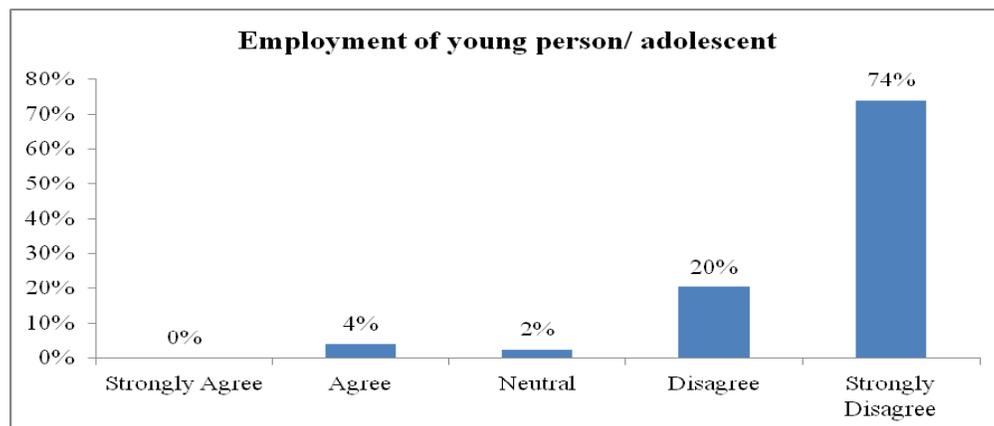


Figure-7: Employment of young person/ adolescents

About 74% respondents strongly disagreed that there is employment of young person in factories and 20% disagreed with the statement. 2% of respondents were neutral whereas only 4% of them agreed that there is employment of young person in factories. So, most of the employers do not employ young persons in their factories (Figure-7).

Care for female workers

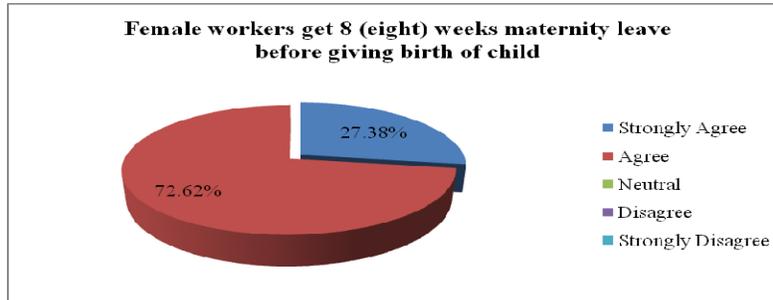


Figure-8: Workers perception about maternity leave (before giving birth of child)

Almost 27.38% expressed their opinion as strongly agree that female workers get 8 (eight) weeks maternity leave before giving birth of child and 72.62% agreed with the statement which shows that female workers are getting this facility almost in every factory (Figure-8).

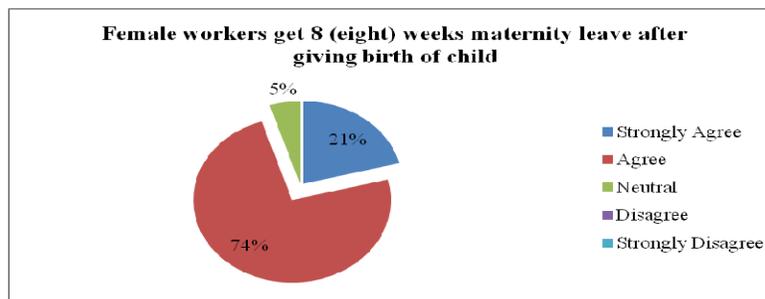


Figure-9: Maternity leave facility for female workers (after giving birth of child)

Our investigation indicates that almost 21% of respondents strongly agreed that female workers get maternity leave of 8 (eight) weeks after giving birth of child and 74% agreed with the statement. Only 5% demonstrated neutrally. Therefore, about 95% agreed with this statement. So, it is clear that most of the employers of factories provide this facility to female workers (Figure-9).

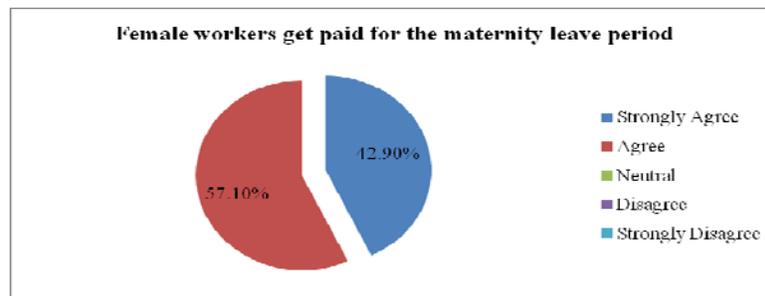


Figure-10: Payment of maternity benefit

Workers were asked whether female workers get paid for the maternity leave period and 42.90% of them strongly agreed that female workers get maternity benefit payment according to Labor Law. Almost 57.10% agreed with the statement. So, it is clear that almost every employer provides this facility to female workers (Figure-10).

About 71.40% agreed that female workers can rejoin after the maternity leave period in their respective factories and almost 21.40% strongly agreed with the statement. So, female workers can rejoin in their respective factories after having 8 (eight) weeks maternity leave (Figure-11).

Our investigation found that almost 69% respondents disagreed that female workers are retrenched, discharged or dismissed during the time of maternity leave and 31% of them strongly disagreed on the fact. So, employers do not retrench or dismiss female workers during that time (Figure-12).

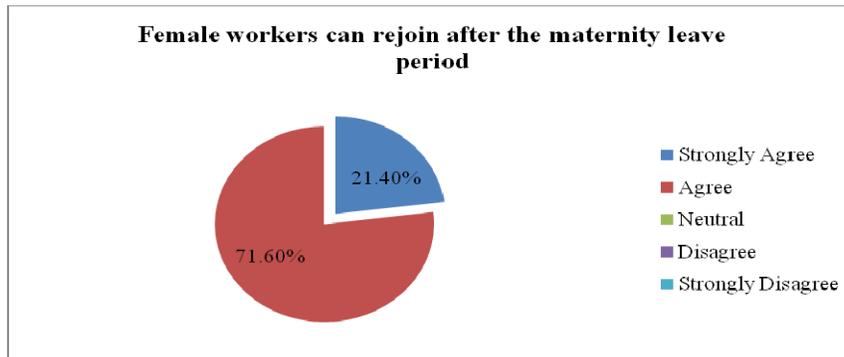


Figure-11: Rejoin of female workers after the maternity leave

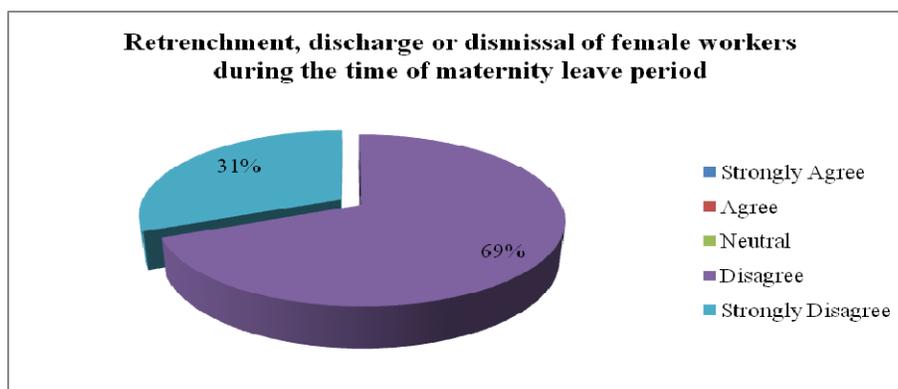


Figure-12: Workers perception about retrenchment, discharge or dismissal of female worker during the time of maternity leave

Health and Safety Measures

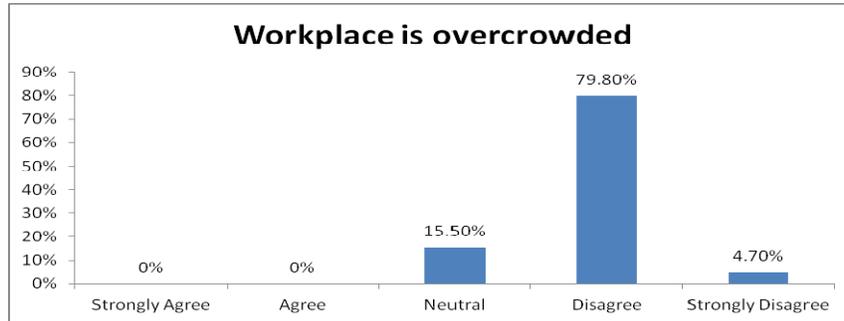


Figure-13: Workers consideration on workplace crowd

About 80% expressed their opinion as disagree that mean factory workplace is overcrowded and about 5% respondents strongly disagreed regarding overcrowded workplace. Among the respondents 15% demonstrated neutrally. So, relax working environment is ensured according to most of the respondents (Figure-13).

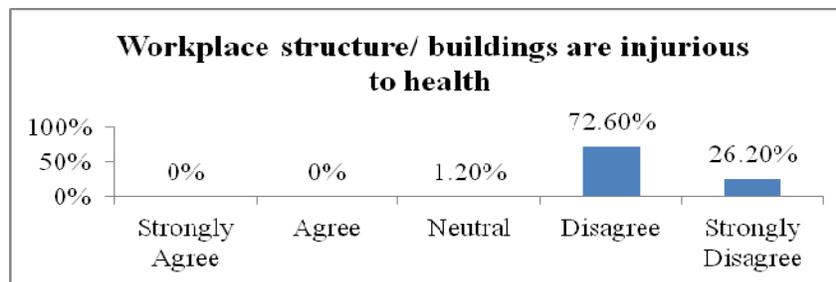


Figure-14: Workplace buildings are injurious to health

About 26% strongly disagreed with the statement that mean workplace structures/ buildings are not in a condition which may be injurious to health and most of the respondents that is 73% disagreed. Only 1% expressed their opinion as neutral (Figure-14).

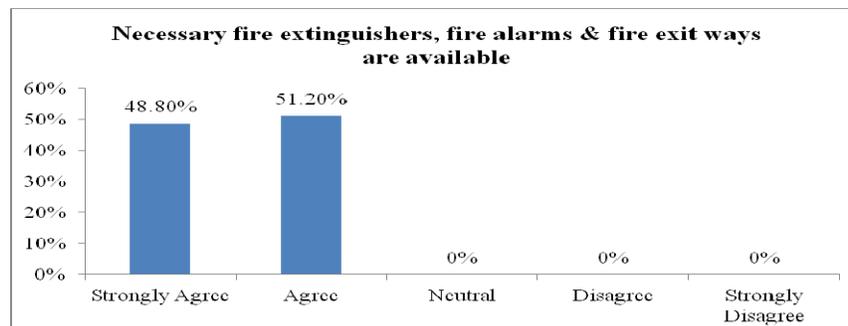


Figure-15: Presence of necessary fire extinguishers, fire alarms & fire exit ways

Almost 48.80% of respondents strongly agreed that there are necessary fire extinguishers, fire alarms and fire exit ways in the factory whereas most of the respondents which is 51.20% agreed with the statement. So, every garment factory has necessary fire fighting equipment (Figure-15).

Our investigation indicates that about 71% strongly agreed that fire drills or mock fire fighting is arranged in the factory in every six months and 29% agreed with the statement. In fact, now a day this is practiced in every two or three months (Figure-16).

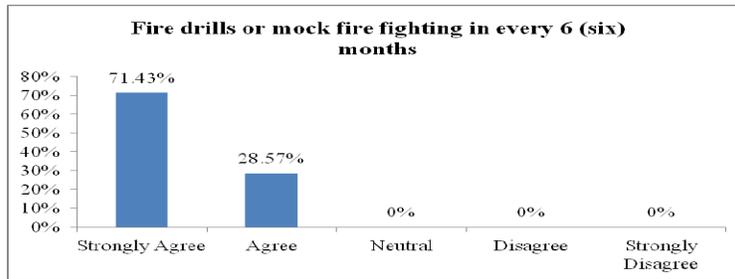


Figure-16: Arrangement of fire drills or mock fire fighting

Respondents expressed their opinion regarding giving notice of certain accidents and diseases by the employer to proper authority and only 1% agreed that mean notice is given by the employer but most of them which is almost 96% demonstrated neutrally. 2% opined as disagree that mean notice of certain accidents is not given to proper authority (Figure-17).

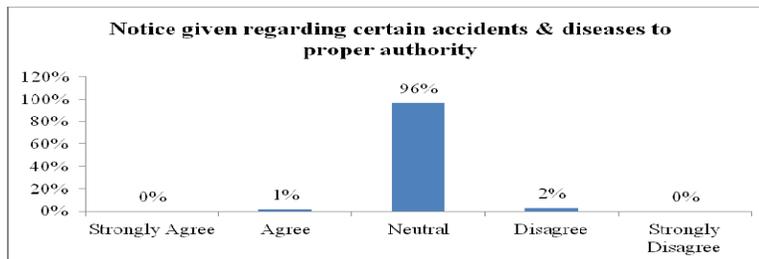


Figure-17: Notice of certain accidents and diseases to proper authority

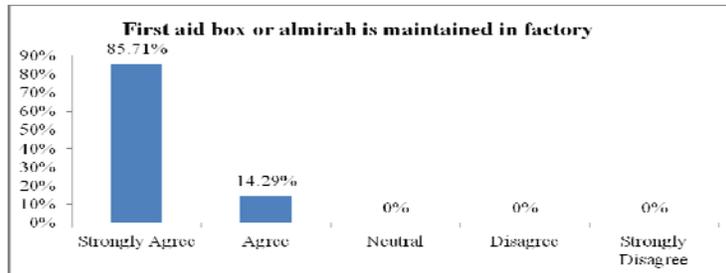


Figure-18: Arrangement of first aid tools in factory

Around 86% respondent strongly agreed that first aid box or almirah is properly maintained in factory and 14% agreed with the statement. So, primary treatment facility is available in every garment factory (Figure-18).

Working Hour, Wages and Leave

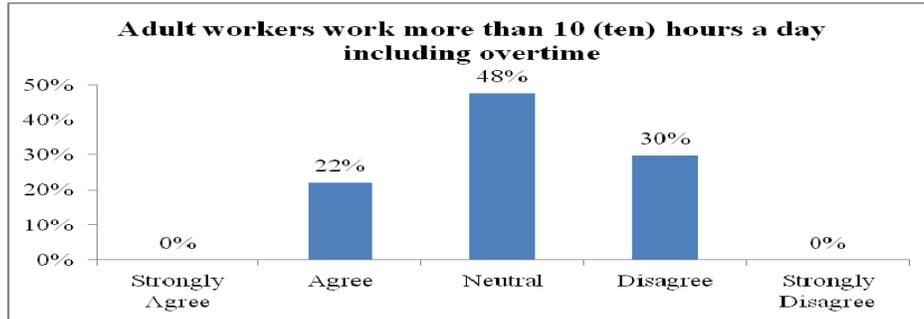


Figure-19: Working hours of adult workers

Among the respondents, 22% agreed that mean daily working hour in factories is more than 10 (ten) hours including overtime whereas 48% were neutral in their comments. 30% of respondents disagreed that mean workers are not working more than maximum hours prescribed by law (Figure-19).

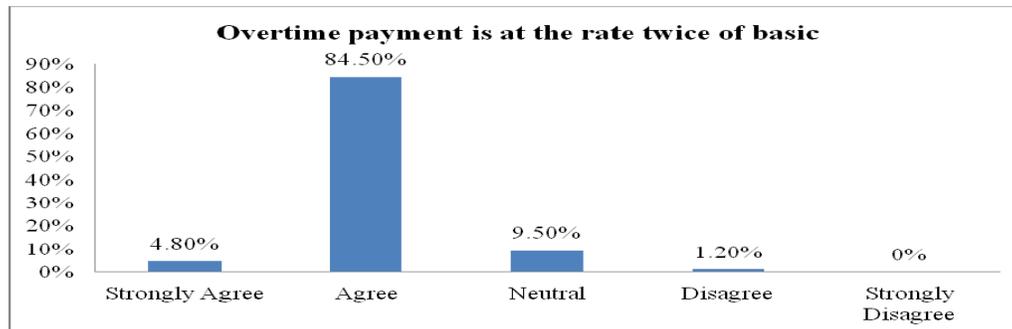


Figure-20: Overtime payment of wage

Regarding overtime payment given at the rate twice of basic according to most of the respondents as 85% agreed whereas 5% strongly agreed. 9% demonstrated neutrally with the statement. Only 1% disagreed that overtime payment is not given according to Labor Law. So, most of the employers follow appropriate overtime payment system (Figure-20).

Workers expressed their comments on different types of leaves they are getting from their employer. Regarding casual leave, which is 10 (ten) days per year, 92.86% said that they are getting it. On the other hand, 7.14% said no as they are not getting it. All the workers that is 100% said that they can have sick leave, which is 14 (fourteen) days per year, in

case of sickness and also 100% of respondents said they can enjoy festival leave and annual leave as per Labor Law. In fact, annual leave is converted to earned leave if that leave is not taken (Figure-21).

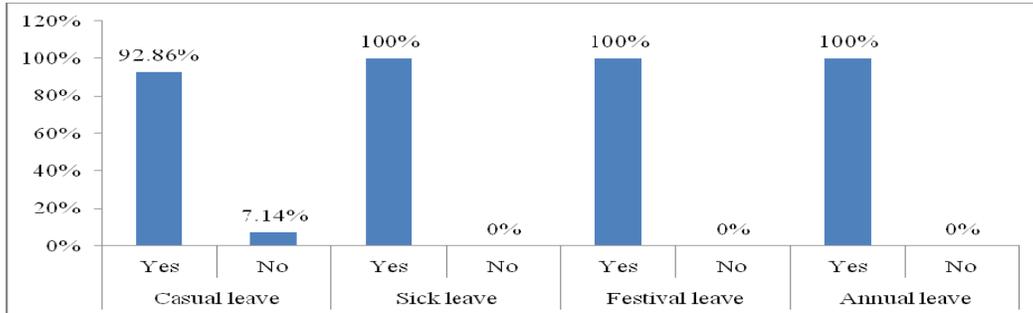


Figure-21: Workers perceptions about Different Leave Practices

Our investigation suggests that minimum wage is paid to workers as per wage board declaration as 44% of respondent strongly agreed and 56% agreed with the statement. So, employers are following wage board declaration as well as relate Labor Law (Figure- 22).

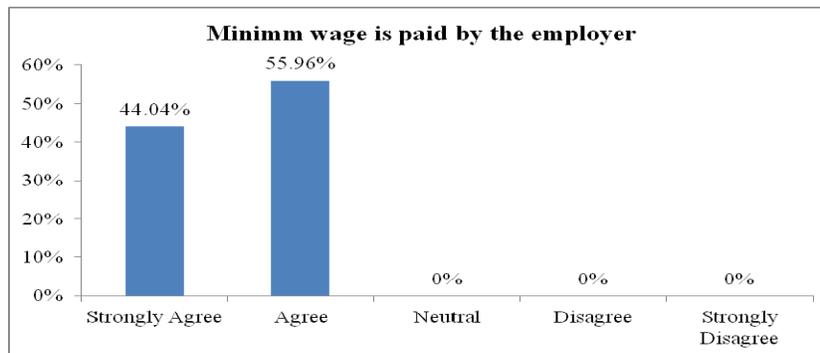


Figure-22: Payment of minimum wage by the employer

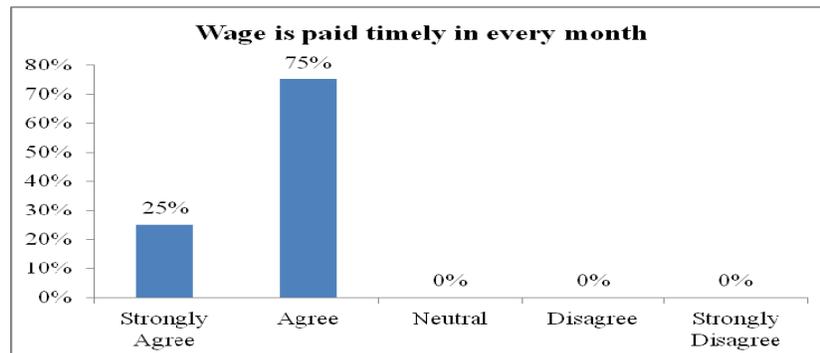


Figure-23: Timely payment of wage

Worker were asked whether they are getting wage timely in every month and 25% strongly agreed that they get it on regular basis whereas 75% agreed with the statement. So, we may conclude that employers are paying wage in time (Figure-23).

Finding(s) of Study

Based on the analysis section above, we witnessed the following findings-

- A large portion of the workers know about Labor Law in brief and they are mostly aware of employment conditions, minimum wage structure and maternity leave along with other leave facilities. At the end of employment provident fund is provided properly if workers contribute *for it but gratuity is not provided* to every worker of every factory.
- Employment of both *child labor and adolescents was rarely seen in factory sites.*
- All the garment factories are *providing maternity leave facilities* to female workers with certain leave period and proper amount of maternity benefit prescribed by the Labor Law though few female workers think that these facilities should be revised and increased. Surprisingly at the time of maternity leave no female workers getting dismissed or discharged.
- Maximum factories workplaces are *not overcrowded.* All the factories are now conscious about workplace safety as almost every workplace structure are in a *good condition and don't seem injurious to health.*
- Workers get *reasonable leave facilities* including casual leave, sick leave, festival leave and annual leave. But annual leave is become paid leave or earned leave in case of maximum workers as they do not enjoy it. *Working hours* of adult workers is a matter *of concern* as maximum garment factories bound them to work more than prescribed hours when there is demand for more production (though *overtime payment is paid* according to Labor Law).

Recommendation(s)

Based on our survey findings we prescribe here some suggestions that may be considered for better practice of Labor Law and also for betterment of garment factories workers-

- ✓ Appointment letter should be provided to every worker of every garment factory.
- ✓ Termination of workers may be through retrenchment, but this should not be practiced without compensation. If someone is retrenched, s/he should be paid with proper compensation.
- ✓ Dismissal of workers may take into action by the employers in case of misconduct and after proper warning procedure. If any worker is dismissed, then that person should be paid with due payments.

- ✓ Gratuity should be given at the end of employment of every worker according to Labor Law.
- ✓ No employment of child labor should be in practice as presently it is. On the other hand, young person should not be employed in factories even after they are fit for work.
- ✓ Maternity facilities may be revised as many female workers think it should be.
- ✓ Working hours for adult workers should not be more than prescribed law and this should be strictly maintained with proper overtime payment.
- ✓ Though minimum wage is paid to workers according to wage board declaration, but new wage structure may be introduced as many workers think that this is high time for setting new wage structure for better livelihood.

Conclusion

The market dynamism of purchasing RMG products is rapidly changing across the world. Therefore, it is a significant task for the Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to persistently make aware and build-up the confidence level among the stakeholders / customers to continue purchase the necessary RMG products from Bangladesh. Literally, it is evident from the findings that the significance of Labor Law to accommodate the diversified demand of stakeholders regarding RMG sectors of Bangladesh is moderately satisfactory. Safety issue is now considered with great importance and maximum garment factories are now maintaining workplace safety with the help of proper maintenance of fire fighting equipment which should be continued forever for the sake of ready - made garment industry of this country. However, there are some drawbacks (mentioned above) which are hindering prospects. If proper steps have been taken, then not only the obstacles will be eradicated but also many attracting facilities will be able to grab vast number of customers. Hopefully, by the following years, under the RMG sectors, entrepreneurs will introduce more facilities.

References

- Afrin, S. (2014). "Labour Condition in the Apparel Industry of Bangladesh: Is Bangladesh Labour Law 2006 Enough?", *Developing Country Studies*, 4(11), 70-77
- Al Faruque, A. (2009). "Current Status and Evolution of Industrial Relations System in Bangladesh", Cornell University ILR School, *International Publication*. Retrieved from http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_123336.pdf
- Berik, G. and Rodgers, Y. (2010). "Options for enforcing labour standards: Lessons from Bangladesh And Cambodia", *Journal of International Development*, 22, 56-85

- European Commission, (October 2017), Implementation of the Bangladesh Compact Technical Status Report. Retrieved from http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2017/october/tradoc_156343.pdf
- Guardian. (2010). "Minimum wage for workers in Bangladesh raised after protests", Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/29/minimum-wage-workers-bangladesh-protests>
- Hossain J., Ahmed M., and Akter A. (2010). Bangladesh Labor Law: Reform Directions. Retrieved from http://ndc.gov.bd/lib_mgmt/webroot/earticle/2088/Bangladesh_labour_Law.pdf
- Islam, Mohammad M. (2016). "Implementation of Labour Laws in RMG Sector of Bangladesh: A Case Study", *NU Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences & Business Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (January-June), 91-109
- ILO, (September 2016). Strengthening workplace safety and labour rights in the Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment sector. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_474048.pdf
- Khan, Mohd. R. I. and Wichterich, C. (2015). "Safety and Labor Conditions: the accord and the national tripartite plan of action for the garment industry of Bangladesh", *ILO Working Paper No. 38*, (September). Retrieved from http://www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/GLU_Working_Papers/GLU_WP_No.38.pdf
- National Human Rights Commission, (June 2014). Bangladesh; Security and Safety Net of Garments Workers: Need for Amendment of Labour Law. Retrieved from http://nhrc.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/nhrc.portal.gov.bd/page/348ec5eb_22f8_4754_bb62_6a0d15ba1513/Security%20and%20Safety%20Net%20of%20Garments%20Workers.pdf
- Rahman, Md. A. and Hossain, Mir S. (2010). "Compliance Practices in Garment Industries in Dhaka City", *Journal of Business and Technology (Dhaka)*, Vol. V, No. 2, (July-December), 71-87.
- UNICEF, (November 2015). The Ready-made Garment Sector and Children in Bangladesh. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/csr/files/csr_bangladesh_rmg_report.pdf.

Appendix**Table- 1: Garment factories selected randomly for the research**

Sl. No	Name of Factory	Number of Participants (Garment workers)
1	Kuliarchar Sweater Ind. Ltd.	10
2	Reaz Export Apparels Ltd.	8
3	Interfab Shirt Mfg. Ltd.	10
4	Ananta Casual Wear Ltd.	10
5	Saturn Textile Ltd.	10
6	Moonlight Garments	8
7	NORP Knit Industries Ltd.	6
8	Minimax Limited	4
9	Matrix Sweater Ltd	5
10	Hop Lun Apparels Ltd	10
11	Interstoff Clothing Ltd	3
Total		84

Source: Field survey

Table-2: Types of Respondents

Designation	Number of Respondents
Assistant Cutter	2
Button Machine Operator	1
Chief Quality Controller	1
Cutting Master	6
Cutting Supervisor	4
Finishing Ironman	2
Poly Man	3
Knitting Machine Operator	1
Linking Operator	2
Mending Operator	1
Packer	5
Loader	4
Quality Controller	4
Quality Inspector	4
Sample Man	2
Sewing Machine Operator	10
Sr. Button Machine Operator	2
Sr. Cutting Master	2
Sr. Knitting Machine Operator	2
Sr. Packer	1
Sr. Quality Controller	2
Sr. Quality Supervisor	2
Sr. Sewing Machine Operator	16
Sr. Winding Machine Operator	1
Supervisor- Embroidery	1
Treaming Operator	3
Total	84

Source: Field survey