

**Women Workers, Behavioral Rationality
and Labor market: Evidence from RMG
Sector in Bangladesh**

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INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Women are increasingly becoming visible in the productive labor force in Bangladesh.
- ▶ The surplus labor is expected to take in the family farms in the rural areas and in other informal enterprise.
- ▶ The garment sector has ensured huge employment opportunity for women, which stands an estimated rate of 70.8% of the total employed population in this sector (Sobhan and Khundker, 2001).
- ▶ The garment sector is the single highest earnings contributor in the country.

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ This sector is labor intensive, the availability of cheap labor especially female labor, in Bangladesh has lured the national and international entrepreneurs to establish Ready Made Garments industries (RMG).
- ▶ Two factors, which played important roles in the growth of the RMG industry in Bangladesh, were; low wages of Bangladesh and a favorable exporting environment.
- ▶ Women are ignored socially, neglected politically, deprived legally, exploited economically and oppressed religiously (Halim, 2001).

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Export oriented industrialization has emerged as a significant factor in the industrialization programmes of several Asian countries during the 1970s and the 1980s (Lee, 1984).
- ▶ The early decades of the twentieth century, most of the female workforce in the garment industry was made up of young single women from the rural areas for whom the only alternative employment was domestic service (Kabeer, 2000).
- ▶ Women working in the garment sector have migrated from rural areas. The growth of the RMG sector has provided an unprecedented employment opportunity for women (Paul Muzumder, 2000).

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

- ▶ The study was conducted on 200 female garment workers of 20 garment industries located in Dhaka and Narayanganj – the second largest hub of RMG factories in Bangladesh.
- ▶ In this study, female respondents were chosen positively as they are harassed more than male workers in their workplace.
- ▶ In this paper the discussion have been covered with the brief description of the factory profile to workplace security, work environment, labor market. The subsequent discussion shed light on the respondent's profile and their workplace security.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

- ▶ The objectives of the paper is to explores whether women's workers have secure environment in the garment sector and is there any wage discrimination between male and female workers in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.
- ▶ This paper also investigates the existing labor market and status of women workers in the context of wage discrimination based on gender, obstacles of work place environment in and outside of the industries .

Respondents profile

- ▶ The demographic profile of the respondents shows that the majority of the workers (42%) are of the age between 18 to 20 years.
- ▶ The maximum age of the workers was interviewed is 45 years where as the minimum wage is 15 years.
- ▶ It is found that majority of the workers (72%) are unmarried while only 26% are married, very few of them are divorcee (2-5 years) or separated from their husband (1%).
- ▶ 23% of the workers have primary education, 51% have secondary education, 12% have high school education, and only 12% are illiterate.

Table: 01 Share of Female Labor Force in Manufacturing Sector:1996-2003

Year	Sector	Women's Share in paid employment (%)	Women's Share in total employment (%)
2002-2003	Manufacturing	34.9	39.3
1999-2000	Manufacturing	27.5	37.9

Source: Calculated from LFS data

Table: 2 Distribution of Labor force by Skill (Percent)

Area	Workers Sex	Skilled	Unskilled	Total
Rural	Female	8.9	91.1	100
	Male	37.2	62.8	100
Urban	Female	11.9	88.1	100
	Male	34.6	65.4	100

Source: LFS 2000

Table: 03 Wage By Sex and Industry:1999-2000

Industry	All	Male	Female
Manufacturing	73.54	82.99	38.69

Source: LFS 2000

Table: 04 Nature of Accidents at Workplace

Nature of Accidents	Frequency	Percentage
Finger Pricking	20	10
Cuts	44	22
Any combination above	120	60
Collapse injured by headache	12	6
No response	4	2
Total	200	100

Table: 05 Condition of the Equipments

Condition of the Machines	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	36	18
Good	110	55
Acceptable	34	17
Bad	12	6
No response	8	4
Total	200	100

Table: 06 Nature of Harassment at Workplace

Nature of Harassment	Frequency	Percentage
Work related harassment	100	50
Sexual Intercourse	18	9
Personal Abuse	8	4
Combination of above	26	13
No response	48	24
Total	200	100

Table: 07 Probability of losing job

Value Label	Frequency	Percentage
High	82	40
Medium	48	24
Low	70	35
Total	200	100

Table: 08 Level of skilled women worker

Level of skilled	Frequency	Percentage
Highly skilled	16	8
Skilled	44	22
Semi Skilled	118	59
Unskilled	22	11
Total	200	100

Table: 09 Level of education of the respondents

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	24	12
Can signature	4	2
Primary level	56	23
Secondary level (VI-X)	102	51
Higher Secondary	24	12
Total	200	100

CONCLUSION

- ▶ Women's workers are active agents of production and loose opportunities in the labor market, even when they are preferred, because of lack of education and access to information because of socio economic discrimination in the other spheres of life.
- ▶ From this study, we see that women's working condition is not favorable in terms of their social security and economic security.
- ▶ To minimize these risk, the institutional reforms such as regulation and formulation of labor laws is important factors and in order to implement this laws and regulations state and non-state providers should play a catalyst role.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ Ensuring women workers payment and job security the application of service rule is vital and the accountability of the RMG entrepreneurs should be taken part in to account.
- ▶ The garment workers are so overworked that they find no time to educate themselves. The RMG entrepreneurs to make provision for the workers education and technical training for at least two or three hours a day on alternative days.
- ▶ In addition, it could be initiate health insurance programme for the workers.

References

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Thank You

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