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Academic

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- Development of Rice Milling Industry and Employment Generation: Policy Options for the Betterment of Rice Mill Workers in Bangladesh
- Victimization and Violation of Rights of Women in Garments Sector in Bangladesh: A Study on Women Garments Workers of Ashulia, Savar, Dhaka

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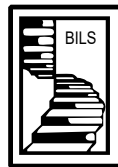
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Editorial

We have given priority on migrant workers problems in the present issue of BILS journal. The areas of their sufferings and pain and way of exploitation in system are analysed in different articles following a number of references.

The major causes of victimisation for women migrant workers responsible for discrimination, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance that expose to serious physical, psychological and sexual violence are discussed in the article titled, “Victimization of Female Migrant Workers: National Perspectives”. State of women migration, exploitation of domestic workers, Physical and mental abuse, workplace violence, sexual victimization, harassment by police, trafficking, forced prostitution and other relevant issues are discussed in the article. Issues of workers sufferings in Middle East countries are discussed in the article titled, “Horror and Heartbreak in Middle East: Plights of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers”.

Rice milling is the main rural agro-based industry and promising employment sector in Bangladesh. Instead of being closely linked with the overall food security of the country, the workers of this sector are very much neglected and deprived of their rights. Appropriate policy measures are crucial to improve their livelihood. Based on the secondary data the article titled, “Development of Rice Milling Industry and Employment Generation: Policy Options for the Betterment of Rice Mill Workers in Bangladesh” is an attempt to make an overview of rice milling industry in terms of temporal and spatial expansion, scope of employment generation, socio-economic profile and working conditions of rice mill workers and policy measures for their betterment.

The article titled, “Victimization and Violation of Rights of Women in Garments Sector in Bangladesh: A Study on Women Garments Workers of Ashulia, Savar, Dhaka” is a descriptive study, where data have been collected from the women workers ten garments factories of Ashulia, Savar. The findings of the study shows that most of the worker’s earn less than a dollar (US) a day, faced sexual harassment and different types of victimization.

Bangladesh has gradually integrated with the global trade. Our Ready Made Garments (RMG) alone has captured the 5% of total global apparel trade, which is the significant portion of Bangladesh trade. The article titled, “RMG industry of Bangladesh needs global perspective” has discussed on different issues of RMG supply chain and workplace safety.

This journal is divided into two parts. One is academic and another one is trade union part. The objective of the first part is publishing research-based articles on different issues. These articles are ‘double blind’ peer reviewed. Its second part publishes contributions from the labour activists with a view to portray their observation and experience on workers and trade union.

We acknowledge Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh Office and LO-FTF Council, Denmark for their precious support to publish this journal.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed

Editor

Academic Part

Victimization of Female Migrant Workers in Countries of Destination: A Review

Habiba Lilun Nahar¹ & Md. Aurongajeb Akond²

Abstract

The migration of female workers from Bangladesh is in upward trend and consequently has been contributing a significant amount of remittance to the national economy since 1991. Despite of notable contribution in national socio-economic development, women have experienced violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination in both countries of destination and as well as countries of origin. The victimization is recurrent in every stage of migration process ranging from forced labor to sexual slavery. This paper mainly analyzes the patterns of female migration from Bangladesh and their challenges in countries of destination. Though this study not only found a very potential figure of female migration from Bangladesh at the recent era but also explored an alarming level of threats for the female migrant's by analyzing the scenario of victimization in the receiving countries. The major threats identified for the female migrant are to be a victim of economic exploitation, discrimination, racism, and xenophobia, serious physical, psychological and sexual violence. This paper attempts to understand and analyzes the situation of female migrant victimization in the countries of destination focusing the national perspectives.

Keywords: *Migrants, Victimization, Female migrants, Domestic Workers, Violence against women*

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1. Introduction and background

In the era of globalization, migration from one country to another is a very common scenario. The Global Migration Trends Factsheet of International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that worldwide international migrants residing in a country other than their home country reached 244 million in 2015 whereas the figure was counted as 232 million in 2013 (IOM, 2017). Correspondingly, the latest available statistics by UNDESA shows that currently the total number of international migrants reached to 257.70 million. Significantly, the same source also indicates that the female migrants constitute a notable proportion of the international immigrant stock estimated as 48.1 percent of the total migrants (UN, 2017). Although there are a wide ranges of factors that influence the growth of international migrants, leaving home country for work have been considered as one of the major factors of migration. Migration for work is a dominating pull factor special for the people of developing countries to migrate comparatively in a country with better economy. This labor migration, in many cases, has significant contribution in the national economic development of a country. Bangladesh, a major emerging country of South Asia, is a good example of this kind, which receive a significant amount of remittance from migrant workers, annually. This paper also defines migrant workers from the international perspective as a person who migrates from one country to another (or who has migrated from one country to another) with a view to be employed otherwise than on his own account, and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment (Article 2 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990).

However, migration from Bangladesh has been started in 1976 with a modest number of six thousands only. According to (IOM, 2015), migrant workers of Bangladesh constitute 5.5 percent of the total population of the country. Presently, Bangladeshi female migrants are working in more than 25 countries of the world.

Notably, participation of female migrant workers in overseas employment has been increased for the last few years in Bangladesh. Government statistics shows that the female workers migration rate was 10.37 percent of the total in 2011, which comparatively increased to 21.99 percent in 2012 and sharply increased to 51.19 percent in 2013(BMET, 2017). The increased number of female migrants correspondingly contributes a notable sum of remittance to the national economy. Though the contribution of female migrants to national development increased significantly, unfortunately the lack of adequate regulation and monitoring the victimization are very frequent in the countries of destinations. Evidence shows that regardless of culture, race, class, education, income, ethnicity and age, females are victimized of sexual violence in their workplace (WHO, 2002). The scenario is worsening for the female migrant workers. Hence, this study has been conducted underlying two particular research questions; what is the present trend of female migration from Bangladesh? Moreover, what are the nature and types of victimization of female migrant workers in countries of destination, in general? The review of existing research works and empirical findings have been used to address the particular research questions.

2. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to identify the potentiality of victimization of Bangladeshi female migrant in countries of destination by reviewing the nature and types of victimization in the countries of destination, in general. Specifically, this paper portrays the nature of victimization of female in countries of destination who are migrated from all over the world focusing the issues of female migrant workers of Bangladesh. In addition, the objectives also include the analysis of the present state of female migration from Bangladesh to understand the national potentiality of female migration.

3. Research methodology

This article has been developed based on latest data collected from different secondary sources. This paper is developed through document review using the content analysis methods following both the qualitative and quantitative approach. The data from different secondary sources like relevant books, research reports, journal articles, newspaper articles, web contents, interviews, country reports were thematically analyzed rigorously to draw the findings. Particularly, the latest available relevant documents on current state of female migration from Bangladesh and the overall victimization nature in countries of destination were analyzed systematically to develop this paper. These review works suffer with methodological limitation because of dependency on a limited number of data sources and sometimes the recent updated data were not available.

4. Theoretical explanation of female migrant victimization

Theoretical framework underpinning this paper, highlighting nature of female migrant victimization that provides a holistic and female-focused platform for exploring causes of victimization. In examining the perspectives of violence against migrant women involved in this research draws upon intersectionality, Lutya and Lanier (2012) work on involuntary prostitution using the concept of demand theory from the feminist perspective.

Feminist theory claim that intersectionality has become the predominant way of conceptualizing the relation between systems of oppression, which construct women's lives by multiple identities and our social locations in hierarchies of power and privilege (Carastathis, 2014).

Intersectionality is used to understand the experience of others and various systems of oppression, it focuses on a variety of ideologies, titles, and cultural practices that are regarded as interrelated, and cannot be understood on their own (Hill Collins and Chepp, 2013). Primarily, intersectionality has dealt with the statuses of gender, race, class, and sexuality (Weber, 1998 cited in Hill Collins, 2015), but has

extended to include age, ethnicity, ability, nation, citizenship status, religiosity, and language (Hill Collins and Chepp, 2013; Hill Collins, 2015). Marilyn Frye (1983) writes about systems of oppressions that affect women, which can lend support to understanding intersectionality. Frye is acutely aware of the different systems of oppression and begs the reader to consider these systems of oppression as wires of a birdcage (MacKinnon, 1983). Migrant women workers are subjected to various expressions of gender-based violence including: forced sexual servitude, prostitution, sexual harassment, rape in transit and upon arrival to destination country, and “trafficking of persons for the purpose of sexual labor or exploitation and kidnapping” (UN, 2009; IACHR, 2011). As mentioned previously, Amnesty International (2010) estimates that six out of ten women and girl migrants experience sexual violence during the journey to the border (Clark, 2017).

Lutya and Lanier (2012) have attempted on explaining forced prostitution using the concept of demand theory from the victimological point of view. To explain victimization of human trafficking for involuntary prostitution they identified some key factors as victim offender interaction, repeat victimization and lifestyle. These factors describe the nature of victimization of human trafficking for forced prostitution (Lutya and Lanier, 2012). Hughes (2004) said that the demand for prostitutes can be classified into three categories: users or purchasers of sex, profiteers from selling sex, and socio-cultural attitudes towards sex. Vulnerability of migrant women may contribute to human trafficking of young women and girls for forced prostitution. In this regard, social, cultural, religious and ideological differences may often be the factors of violence. Domestic worker especially females are experienced torture or other serious physical, psychological or sexual violence or they are at risk of violence. They often faced gender based persecution as rape, widow burnings, honor killings, domestic violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation but their home country governments are unwilling or unable to protect them (Martin, 2003).

Another dominant theory of criminology, the Routine Activity Theory developed by Felson and Cohen which explain, for a crime to occur, there must be presence of three elements altogether; a motivated offender, a vulnerable offender and insufficient protection or absence of capable guardian. According to this theoretical framework, the vulnerabilities of migrant women can easily be explained. The female in countries of destination, mostly serve under a condition of insufficient protection in terms of legal and human rights, where they meet a lot of motivated offender both in inside and outside of workplace without having capable guardian to protect. In addition, the social position of the female workers in countries of destination and the cheating of recruiting agency makes the situation more vulnerable for the female in abroad. Empirical evidence suggest that vulnerability and exploitation is a key concern, particularly when women migrate into risky, low paid and dangerous jobs (Martin,2003; Skeldon,2003).Violence is often used for the purpose of controlling or exploiting victims of trafficking in sexual (HDR, 1999:5; Demleiner,2001;Martin,2003; Karofi and Mwanza,2006) and non-sexual forced labor (Juredini,2010).Undocumented workers can be threatened with arrest and deportation if they rebel to exploitative working conditions (UNODC,2015). Most of the victims are exploited because of inadequate knowledge about their rights and inability to assert them (IOM,2009; Human Right Watch,2012). Due to their social and economic condition, workers do not protest all of these oppression. Migrant workers may be more exposed to be a victim of biased law enforcement and cruel treatment within criminal justice system including in terms of severe sentencing, custodial violence and discriminatory decision-making. Police force may be biased in question of making arrests and in stop and search activities (UNODC, 2015).

5. State of female migration from Bangladesh

According to the Report of International Labor Conference by ILO (2004), there were around 120 million migrant workers across the world. The number of migrant workers reached to 247 million in 2013

and was estimated to over 250 million in 2015 (World Bank, 2015). The world make 1.0 billion migrants out of total 7.0 billion of world population among them 232 million is international migrants and 740 million is internal migrants. International migrants comprises about 3.2percenof world population in 2013, compared to 2.9percen in 1990 (United Nations,2013).Importantly, 60 percent of total migrant stocks were originated from the developing countries (UNDESA, 2013;Rahman&Akond, 2015).The There are four pathways of international migration-North–North, South–South, South–North, North–South.

Figure 1. Migration pathways

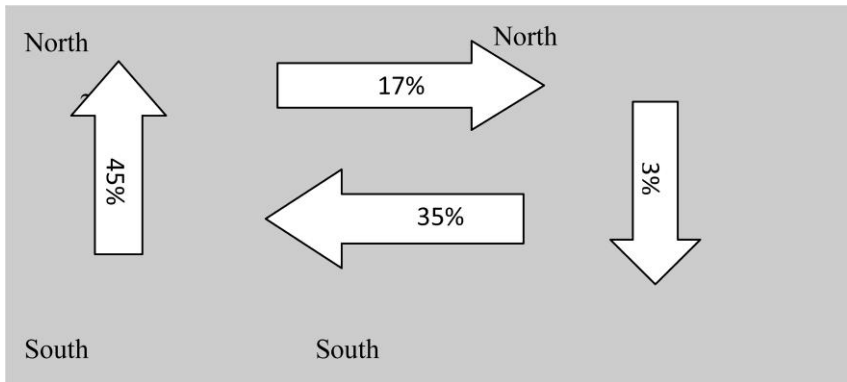
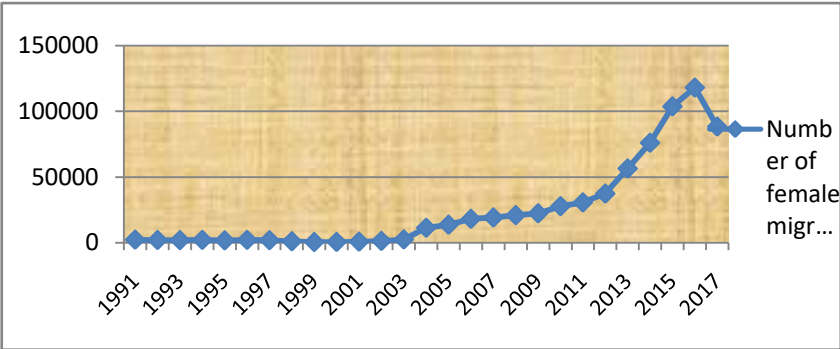


Figure: Four migration pathways, World Bank classification, (IOM,2013).

Bangladesh is one of the major labour sending developing countries of the South Asia. The figure of the overseas employment shows that from 1976 to November, 2017 Bangladesh has sent a total of 11,388,250 workers and the country received more than USD 175,000 Million as remittance (BMET, 2017).The government statistics shows that Bangladesh has sent over 1.0 million workers to abroad only up to the month of November in 2017.Particularly, the statistics of female workers migration as available from the year 1991 reveals a significant increasing number of female migrated to abroad every year which indicates theirnotable contribution to national economy. The number of female migrants was only 2,189 in 1991 whereas the number sharply

reached to 113,009 as of November 2017(BMET, 2017). Though there was up and down trend at the beginning but the number has been sharply increasing since 2004.

Figure 2. The Rise of Female Labor Migration from Bangladesh (1991-2017)



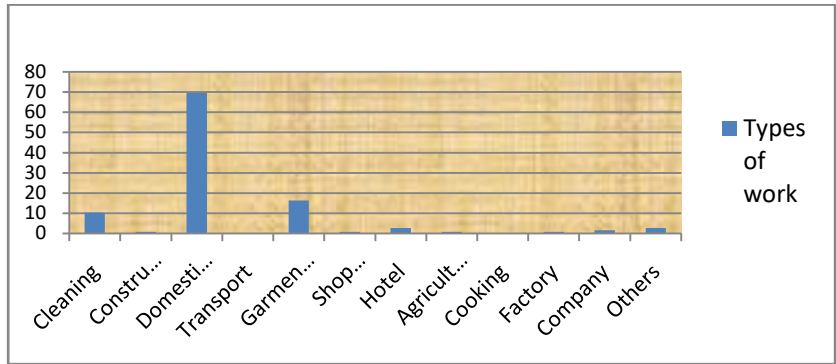
Source: BMET, 2017.

Available on www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/statistics, (Accessed on 7 December 2017.)

Micro analysis explain that out of total 272,958 workers migrating from 1976 to 2004, the number of female workers was estimated as 11,246 , and out of total 9142,806 migrant workers during 1976 to 2014, the number of female was 1554,277 (BMET,2015). BMET also estimated a total of 182,558 female workers migrated to 18 countries until 2011 (Das, 2012) but the number reached to 103,718 and 118,088 separately in a single year consecutively in 2015 and 2016 (BMET, 2017). According to a recent study on returning migrant workers most of the rerunning female workers (60.7 percent) were from the division of Dhaka as their origin, followed by Chittagong (12.9 percent), Khulna (9.6 percent) and Barisal (8.8 percent) Division (Hossain, et.al. 2014; Rahman & Akond, 2015). The socio-demographic analysis also reveal that most of the female migrant workers are young in age with low level of education.

A study found that almost 83 percent of female migrants were more than 25 years age followed by 11 percent in the age group 21-25 years and 6 percent belongs to the group 18-21 years (Das, 2012). Another study on returnees explored that majority of the female returnees (61 percent) belonged to 26-35 years group followed by 27.6 percent to 18-25 years group (Hossain, Ahmed and Akond, 2014). Regarding education, Das (2012) showed that, about 62 percent of female migrant workers had no formal educational qualifications and only 25 percent female migrant workers completed up to primary education and the rest completed secondary level at the time of migration. Similarly, another study on returnee migrants indicates that 31.1 percent female migrants never attended school (Hossain, Ahmed and Akond, 2014). This low level of education and less skill consequently leads their involvement to low value added home based work, mostly.

Figure 3. Sectors of Work

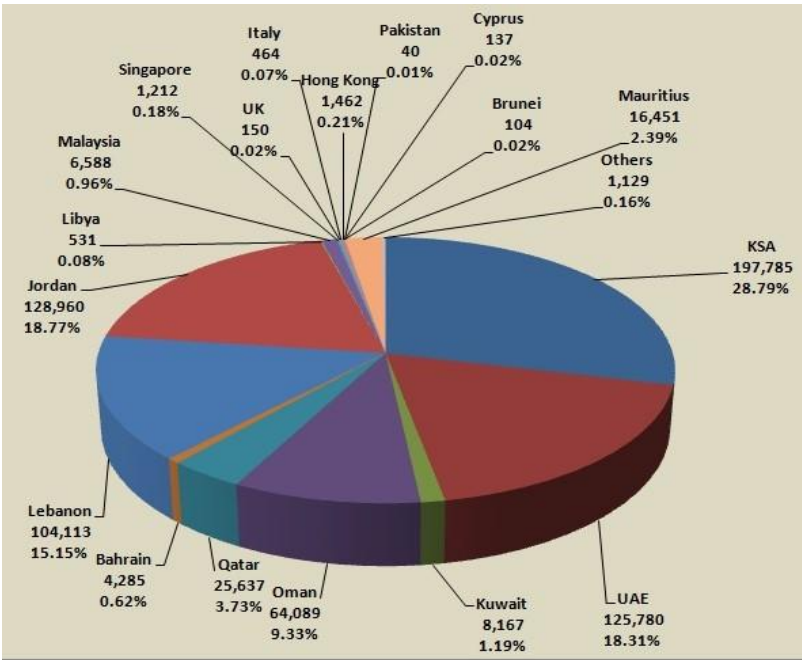


Source: Adapted from Hossain, Ahmed & Akond (2014), P-29.

The statistics (in Figure-3) reveals that most of the female were engaged in domestic works (69.5percent), followed by garments (16.2percent) and cleaning sector (10.3percent) (Hossain, Ahmed, & Akond, 2014). Because of the skill and nature of the job the destination of the migrant workers also varies accordingly. General, most of the Middle East and Gulf countries receive female workers for household works. Developed countries receive skilled workers engaged in sophisticated sectors like information technology, accountancy,

engineering, medicine, and so on. Hence, the major countries of destination for the female migrants from Bangladesh are to Middle East and Gulf region. Particularly for the female migration, BMET source showed, a total of 182,558 female workers were migrated to more than 18 countries, mainly to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Jordan, Kuwait and Malaysia (BMET, 2015; Rahman & Akond, 2015). The recent statistics on the countrywise overseas employment of female workers from 1991 up to November 2017 (Figure-4) shows KSA (28.8 percent) is the top female workers receiving countries followed by other major receiving countries like UAE (18.3 percent), Jordan (18.8 percent), and Lebanon (15.1 percent).

Figure 4. Country -wise overseas employment of female workers from 1991-2017



Source: BMET, (2017).

Available on www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/statistics, (Accessed on 7 December, 2017.)

In search of the causes of migration of female workers, the study found almost similar causes like their male counterpart but the gender role and status have also influenced the decision of migration for overseas employment. About 6 percent of the total population migrated from Bangladesh to five continents for work, and this mobility resulted from a wide range of reasons including both push and pull factors (BMET, 2015; IOM, 2014; Hossain, Ahmed & Akond, 2014). Das (2012) in his study on female migrant workers found that 97 percent female migrant workers faced economic hardship in their families and most of them were motivated to migrate by other migrant family members, relatives, and local people. According to the BILS-ILO Study on returnee migrant workers, majority of female workers (58.46 percent) had decided to migrate with an expectation to have a healthier income for themselves and their families, more than 40 per cent of the returning female workers mentioned poverty as their main cause of going abroad (Hossain, Ahmed & Akond, 2014; Rahman & Akond, 2015).

Table 1. Reasons for migration

Reasons for Female migration	Percentage
Due to poverty	42.65
Due to unemployment	12.13
For more/better income	58.46
To become self-dependent	8.46
Loan recovery	6.99
Loss in business	0.37

Source: Hossain, J., Ahmed, M. & Akond, M. A., 2014, P-12.

Another study (2002) conducted on returnee migrant to understand the factors affected migration decision explored five categories of responses- distressed economic condition, further improvement of economic status, social factors, political factors and access to information and demand in receiving countries. Das, (2012) pointed

out that female workers use remittance usually for the repayment of family loan (32.61 percent), followed by family consumption (31.52 percent) and investment in small business or buying of agricultural land (26.09 percent)

However, irrespective of the causes, the contribution of migrant workers for the national economic development of Bangladesh is beyond description. Bangladesh is one of the top 10 remittance recipient countries globally according to the World Bank (Independent, 2012; OECD, 2006).

Almost half of the population is female in Bangladesh, and their participation in the labor force and their contributions to the national economic development are now well established. Bangladesh witnessed a 51 percent record growth in 2013 in the last nine years that ultimately contributes to the steady growth of remittances and the stability of foreign exchange reserves of the economy (Financial Express, 2014). Since women migrant workers remit on an average of 72 percent of their income to home, whereas, men remit 45 – 50 percent of their income to home, the higher flow of remittances by female migrant workers add more values to their families and the national economy as well (Das, 2012). On the other hand Barkat, Ahsan and Manzuma, (2014) argued that female migrant workers on an average remit BDT 75, 018.91 Taka annually whereas a male remit BDT 115, 864.89. Women migrant workers (over 95 percent of them are engaged in domestic works abroad) can send the majority of their earning (though over 81 percent earn below 10,000 taka per month) to their families as household owners mostly bear their living cost and this may have a significant impact on the national economy (Das, 2012). The use of bank as a legal channel for sending remittances to Bangladesh has been used by most of the female migrant workers that has also significant contribution to the national economy (Rahman & Akond, 2015).

6. Nature and types of victimization

This section mainly presents the patterns of victimization of female migrant workers in different countries of destination irrespective of the origin of victims. According to a report by the leading dailies *Protho Alo* (2017), about 3000 Bangladeshi female workers were forced to return home only for the prevalent victimization in countries of destination. Similar source also mentioned that a non-government organization WARBE governed complaint center has already received 61 complaint of victimization in countries of destination from Bangladeshi workers during the month of January to October 2017 whereas 31 complaint lodged by the female migrants. *Bangladesh Ovbashi Mohila Sramik Assocaion* (BOMSA) claimed that the organization receives 8-10 complaints on an average from the female migrant workers, monthly (*Prothom Alo*, 2017). The nature of victimization includes different forms which can be categorized mainly as physical, psychological, economic, social and political victimization. The physical victimization includes different types of violence and sexual abuse against the female workers, psychological form includes mental abuse through verbal and humiliating attitude, whereas the low wage and denial of wage or cheating constitutes the economic exploitation and different types of discrimination and denial of political rights like freedom of association, right to organize and strike are some of the common forms of social and political victimization. However, the following section particularly explain the common patterns of female migrant victimization in countries of destination. Notably it does not explain solely the victimization scenarios of Bangladeshi female workers but present a general scenario of victimization of the migrant female workers originated from all over the world as following;

Irregular and low wages

Many female migrants frequently faces problem related to wages. In relation to the issue of wage migrant female sometime being victim of deception or fraud by middleman or their employers in question of

promising money (Vlieger, 2011). A study conducted on wage related problem found 43.26 percent of women experienced various wage related problems. Among all the respondents, 18 female complained about low wages at the destination and most returning female workers complained about irregular payments. Thirty-five of the domestic workers interviewed said their employers had delayed paying salaries for weeks or months, and even then underpaid or charged unwarranted deductions (Human Right Watch, 2014). They also addressed the problem was mainly from Saudi Arabia, Maldives, UAE, Oman, and Lebanon. Returning workers (31 females) claimed that they did not received wages according to their contracts. There was long time overloaded work according to their report, 48 workers (ten were female) returning from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Lebanon, Malaysia, and Maldives, did not receive wages for their overtime work (ILO, 2015). In case of Bangladeshi migrants low wage has also been identified as a major problem (ILO, n.d). Financial Express (2017) explaining the story of Bangladeshi migrant workers reported that the workers sometimes do not get the job and salary promised during recruitment rather experiences to irregular payment and sometimes exposed to lifelong debt bondage. The situation is also true for the female migrants. A study on returnee female migrants of Bangladesh found that the most of the female returnee (65 percent) reported to receive the wage between 5,000 to 12,000 Taka per month which can be termed as low wage and maximum respondents experienced the problem of irregular payment (BOMSA, 2012).

Exploitation of domestic workers

Abuses against migrant domestic workers in the UAE and others countries includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuses; forced labor; passport confiscation and violations of freedom of movement, and denial of food, healthcare, and adequate living conditions (Human Right Watch, 2014). ILO report estimated the annual cost of exploitation of migrant workers as \$21 billion. Domestic workers experience wage exploitation and long hours of work, sleep and food deprivation, inadequate living conditions and verbal, physical,

psychological, and sexual abuse. The average monthly salary ranges between \$150 and \$200. A typical day involves working at least 16 and 21 hours of work which brought down hourly wages to between 15 and 30 cents per day(Sönmez, Apostopoulos, Tran, and Rentropé, 2011).Female migrant workers who work in Middle East countries face worse working conditions, poor mental health status, sexual abuse, and their low position within Arab society(Dessiye, 2011). BOMSA (2012) study reported that in reality majority of female migrant (almost 98 percent) engaged in the jobs of domestic sector and the recent statistics also showed that almost 70 percent are involved in domestic job. Thus, the situation is not different from the international evidenced.

Physical and mental abuse of female migrants

Physical and mental abuse of migrants is very common. Verbal abuse and shouting at domestic workers by their masters/mistresses or supervisor is a common phenomenon in countries of destination, particularly in Middle East. Physical abuse such as slapping, pulling hair, punching, choking, spitting, beating, kicking are also very usual. If the domestic workers are young girls, they become victim of sexual harassment. A large majority of domestic workers alleged their employers verbally abused them by calling them animal or donkey according to Human Right Watch. Sometimes beaten or twisted workers arm also reported by Human Right Watch (2014). Verbal Abuse is most common for 65 percent garment workers, 62 percent domestic and 68 percent construction workers and Physical beating has been faced by 4 percent garment, 6 percent domestic and 8 percent of the construction workers (Das, 2012).

Workplace Violence against female migrants

Most of the returned female workers reported that they experienced some kind of workplace violence in their place. Women workers in Bangladesh, often go for overseas job through recruiting agents or middlemen. Several cases showed that middlemen deceive them and

they become subject to harassment, abuse, and violence. About 32 percent of the respondents reported facing violence. Female returned workers reported that they have experienced physical and mental torture, ranging from simple scolding to indecent behavior by employers (ILO, 2015). Respondents also reported that they were worried about their workplace security. Forty-six percent construction workers, 33 percent garment workers and 12 percent domestic workers felt insecure due to physical and psychological reason. About 44 percent of the sex workers reported that they do not feel secured at all in their profession (Das, 2012).

Sexual victimization of migrant domestic workers

Sexual exploitation and violence is too frequent in migration process. Migrant domestic workers are mainly the victim of sexual violence or other sexual abuse due to structural issues relating to their dependency on their householders and the nature of job. Firstly, domestic work confine them in the household away from the outside world (Gavanas, 2013; Llacer et al. 2007; Haidinger, 2007; Karakayali, 2009; Tastsoglou & Hadjicostandi, 2003). Secondly, it creates dependency on their employers because of undocumented migrants and facilitates them to be exploit (Llacer et al. 2007).

Hundreds of female Bangladeshi migrant workers endured physical and sexual assault and subsequently were forced to return home. Women workers have no clear idea about their employment terms, salary, rights, etc, consequently, they are highly susceptible to exploitation (Daily Star, 2017).

Harassment by police

One of the most common cited problem which faced by migrants was police harassment. A study conducted on returning migrants among them 21.41 percent faced this issue. In addition, 4.90 percent female think police harassment is a common issue (ILO, 2015). Human Rights Watch alleged that the police provided an inconsistent array of responses of complaints that are filed by migrants. Workers reported

that the police appeared do not concerned about their complaints, sometimes discouraged workers from filing formal complaints, and sent workers back to abusive employers (Human Right Watch, 2014).

Trafficking of women and children

O'Neill Richards (1999) in his paper estimated that between 45,000 and 50,000 women and children are trafficked into the United States for sweatshop labor, domestic servitude, agricultural work, and prostitution each year. His study figured out that 50,000 victims of sex slavery of undocumented workers in 1999 (Chapki, 2003). Migrant domestic workers who enter under the *kafala* system in the Middle East, can be a victim of trafficking by agents or employers (Juredini, 2010). Specifically domestic worker in Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, they are often victim of trafficking, contending that forced confinement and exploitation (Villager, 2011).

Women (71.0 percent) were found migrated more through *dalal* than men (45.6 percent). Most of the migrant workers are less educated and from the rural area and they are potential victims of trafficking and fraudulent recruitment process. Trafficking and the exploitation of women and children as sexual slaves is most common in Third World countries as well as Bangladesh. In Asia, millions of women and children have been led into systems of prostitution, such as street prostitution, sex entertainment clubs, luxury establishments, sex tourism, and prison-like brothels (Raymond, 2002). The UNHCR report published in December 2014 informed that about 53,000 Bangladeshi and Myanmar citizens migrated to Malaysia and Thailand by sea in 2014. Haque (2015) based on official references mentioned that the number is about 25,000 during the period of January to March 2015 (Hossain, Akond & Akter, 2014).

Forced prostitution

Women involved in prostitution are amongst the most victimized by brokers in Middle East or others countries by migration or trafficking. Holding the position of marginalization and degradation after being

migrant, women are forced to engage with prostitution (Weitzer, 2005). Migrant women are reportedly recruited under the guise of work and coerced into prostitution upon arrival. 10,000 women from sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, South and East Asia, Iran, Iraq and Morocco, have been trafficked into the UAE for sex work (USDOS study). Illegal prostitution may represent 30 percent of Dubai's economy (Sönmez et.al., 2011). There are serious concerns about how the victims of sex trafficking are treated in different countries, with many being deported (Goodey, 2003).

A study on the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in 2006 found that nearly 27,000 Bangladeshi women and children have been forced into prostitution in India, and around 40,000 children from Bangladesh are involved in prostitution in Pakistan (UNICEF, 2007 in Foreign Affairs Insights and Review, 2015). Another study reports that 300,000 Bangladeshi children and women have been trafficked to India alone in the last 10 years (UNICEF, 2009 in Foreign Affairs Insights and Review, 2015). The annual report of (2009) an organization based in Pakistan called Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid reveals that nearly 200,000 Bangladeshi girls and women were sold in Pakistan (Foreign Affairs Insights and Review, 2015).

Secondary victimization

Female migrants who suffer abuses can seek redress through the courts but they face many barriers for this reason they cannot be able to protect themselves from a threat of secondary victimization. Due to the cost of hiring a lawyer, workers who wish to pursue civil court cases against their employer for unpaid wages or other breach of contract are unlikely represented by lawyers. Cases filed by workers are pending in court due to language problems and the costs of interpretation and translation of documents, and lengthy legal proceedings of respective countries. Because of lengthy proceedings and confusion of cases leads many workers to drop their cases against their employers. Workers with pending cases do not have salary and work authorization (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be summarized that female migration from Bangladesh is in upward trends. Majority of the female workers migrated for changing their lives and constitute a large figure in the Middle East and other developed countries particularly in KSA, UAE, Jordan, Oman and Qatar. The female migration has influential and recognizable contribution for the socioeconomic development of the nation. Despite sharing a large number of remittances to the national economy they are facing a wide ranges challenge in the countries of destination due to lack of proper regulation and monitoring of the migration process. Many migrant female are employed at low wages along with the adverse working condition. Sometime they have been victimized of forced prostitution, sexual harassment, physical abuse, slavery, trafficking and other humiliating conditions. There are no sufficient legal protection measures for the safety of migrant and domestic workers in countries of destination. In addition, fake brokers and recruiting agents take advantage of the vulnerable situation. Lack of proper monitoring, irregular coordination with the government of countries of destination, inadequate awareness of the female and social status of the migrants in countries of destination are basically some of the factors for female victimization. As the female migrant workers of Bangladesh have higher potentiality to contribute in the national development, thus the government should be more concern to address the challenges by ensuring proper protection measures in countries of destination.

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Development of Rice Milling Industry and Employment Generation: Policy Options for the Betterment of Rice Mill Workers in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Rice milling is the main rural agro-based industry and promising employment sector in Bangladesh. Instead of being closely linked with the overall food security of the country, the workers of this sector are very much neglected and deprived of their rights. Appropriate policy measures are crucial to improve their livelihood. Based on the secondary data the article is an attempt to make an overview of rice milling industry in terms of temporal and spatial expansion, scope of employment generation, socio-economic profile and working conditions of rice mill workers and policy measures for their betterment. Although the statistics is not collected and maintained systematically the number of all types of rice mills across the country has increased over the years. The expansion of automatic rice mills, however, has been faster compared to semi-automatic and husking rice mills. During the last decade employment generation in the industry has increased remarkably. The labour requirement is highest in the Boro season and about 34 per cent of rice milling activities is done by women. The rice mill workers are mostly of young age, low educational profile and landless with only homestead. Average monthly income of rice mill workers is much below the poverty line income. Women can get 69 per cent of wage of the men and earn only half of them. Poor working condition, job insecurity, low wage and gender discrimination are the main problems faced by the rice mill workers. Finally some policy recommendations are picked up for livelihood development of rice mill works.

Introduction

Rice is the staple food for half of the world's population while 90 per cent of the world's rice crop is grown and almost entirely consumed in Asia. Bangladesh is the fourth largest (7.1 per cent) rice producing country in the world after China (29.9 per cent), India (22.3 per cent),

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and Indonesia (7.7 per cent) (Rice Outlook: July, 2017). Bangladesh was a food deficient country during 1971-1999. Due to the adoption of high yielding varieties (HYVs) of rice and improved method of rice cultivation the country achieved almost self-sufficiency in rice production (Islam, 2009). The output of rice, the staple food, has increased from about 12 million to over 34.77 million metric tons during the last four decades (Asaduzzaman *et.al.*, 2014). In Bangladesh cultivation of rice occupies 11.41 million hectare of land or 82 per cent of the total cropped area (DOF, 2016). Almost all of the 15 million farm families in the country grow rice. It provides half of agricultural gross domestic product (GDP), one-sixth of rural household income, half of rural employment, two-thirds of per capita daily calorie intake, and half of the per capita daily protein intake (Rahman *et. al.*, 2016). It accounts for 31 per cent of total household expenditure while the rural poorest income group spent 38 per cent on rice (BBS, 2011). Therefore, rice plays a significant role in determining livelihood status of households in Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas (Hasan, 2012).

For human consumption, paddy must be processed to remove the husk (outer shell of paddy) and bran (inner coating over the kernel) to produce clean rice. Parboiling, drying and milling are the different stages of rice processing (Zaman *et. al.*, 2001). The traditional manual method is the use of *dheki* (in which the pestle is iron tipped and fixed to a foot-operated long and thick pole), the mortar being a lined hole in the ground. The *dheki* has now been replaced with more mechanized methods. The processing of rice can be performed on commercial and non-commercial basis. Non-commercial processing of rice refers to home pounding in *dheki* in small quantities in rural communities while commercial processing covers large mills and small husking machines (Raha *et. al.*, 2013).

Milling is a crucial step in post-harvest processing of rice. As late as the late 1970s, two thirds of Bangladesh's paddy was milled by women, in their homesteads, by means of the foot-operated wooden hammer mill-the *dheki* (Harriss-White, 2011). More than 80 per cent of rice is processed in villages and less than 20 per cent rice is processed in commercial rice mills (Rahman and Hasan, 2011). The operation of rice mills of different vintages has diverse implications for rice consumption, trading, employment generation and its gender implications, land use, energy (diesel and electricity) consumption, and in terms of other economic and social dimensions. In addition, technological changes and the productivity of rice milling have

important implications for employment, particularly for women (Asaduzzaman *et.al.*,2014).

Approximately 2.0 to 2.2 million people enter into the labour market annually (ILO, 2013). A large proportion of the total labour force remains engaged in marginal and low productivity occupations (BBS, 2010). More than 86 per cent of workers are engaged in informal economy where productivity, wages, and legal and social protection are inadequate or non-existent. The high unemployment (4.2 per cent), time-related under employment (3 per cent) (who were looking for new/additional jobs) and underutilized working age population (6.7 per cent) remains as a challenge for sustainable development and decent work. Unemployment among young people (8.7 per cent) is particularly high. The majority (42.7 per cent) employment of the country comes from this agricultural sector (BBS, 2017). In the agriculture sector, the small rice mills create more jobs, particularly for women (ADB, 2010).

The country aims at reaching “middle-income” status by 2021. Accordingly, its 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) envisages creating decent jobs for the large pool of under-employed and new labour force entrants by increasing the share of employment in the manufacturing sector (GOB, 2015). Over the period rice milling has been emerged as a promising employment sector in the country. Zaman, *et. al.*, (2001) commented that except the apparel sector, none of the other industries could provide higher employment scope as high as rice mills. The industry has employed a large number of people of which a significant portion is women (Siddique, 2010).

Rice milling industry is one of the emerging agro-processing industries in Bangladesh. Increasing demand of food grain, increased production of rice, expanded electricity coverage, capital flow and availability of technology have been the main factor of gradual development of rice milling industry in the country (BILS, 2010). It is assumed that there are about 5 lakh workers in the rice milling industries in the country and a significant portion of them are women. Although rice milling industry is closely linked with the overall food security of the country, the workers of this sector are very much neglected and deprived. Instead of being engaged in ensuring food supply of millions of people, the rice mill workers and their families are very poor and low fed. They are neglected in the government policy documents including Food Distribution Policy, Food Policy 2006, Government Finance Acts

(budget), and National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (PRSP), etc. Due to non-recognition of rice mill workers in the government policy papers they are being deprived of their rights (BILS, 2007).

Objectives

In order to ensure improved livelihood of rice mill workers through appropriate policy measures documentation of their overall socio-economic profile and working conditions is crucial. Available studies on rice milling industry in Bangladesh concentrate on capacity utilization, milling efficiency, economic and social implications, food security, market structure and, socio-economic profile and working conditions of rice mill workers (Asaduzzaman *et.al.*, 2014; BILS, 2007; BILS, 2010; Rahman and Hasan, 2011; Raha *et.al.* 2013; Zaman, *et. al.*, 2001). The article is an attempt to make an overview of rice milling industry in terms of temporal and spatial expansion; scope of employment generation by seasons and gender; socio-economic profile and working conditions of and problems faced by rice mill workers as well as to suggest policy measures for their betterment. The article is based on the information collected from secondary sources.

Development of Rice Milling Industry in Bangladesh

Development of rice milling in Bangladesh can be linked with the establishment of Bengal Civil Supply Department after the Great Bengal Famine of 1943 in the undivided Bengal which aimed to ensure food distribution and food safety through food rationing. Following the division of British India in 1947 the Food & Civil Supply Department was established. Rice milling in the country got a momentum with the rice milling for the government purpose. Internal procurement of food grains (mainly *Aman* paddy) in the country started from the financial year 1948 on a regular basis to build up stock in government hands for subsequent distribution to the people through rationing channels as rice. Conversion of paddy into rice, therefore, grew in importance. Milling of paddy into rice came to be regulated under the provisions of the Bengali Rice Mills Control Order, 1943. Under this order milling of rice or manufacturing rice products by power driven machinery was forbidden except with a license issued for the purpose. Even a license mill owner was required to receive paddy only against a permit for milling purpose (Ahmed and Chowdhury, 1994).

Types of Rice Mills: Rice mills can be categorized in many ways. In broad terms, four types of rice mills can be differentiated in Bangladesh. The “Automatic Rice Mills” are mostly dependent on automated machineries, where the presence of automatic drier, polisher and colour sorter can be found. The ‘Semi-Automatic mills’ use rubber rollers like the automatic mills but they might not have automatic drier; rather they opt for sun-drying. The third group is the most widely used traditional mill, popularly known as “*Chatal*” which uses the Engelberg steel roller processing. Finally, the stationary and mobile hullers are used for small scale paddy processing (Asaduzzaman *et.al.*, 2014). Recently, vendor huskers are also available in the villages. These huskers visit from door to door of the villagers and husk paddy for them at a fixed price in the farmyards of the customers (Zaman *et. al.*, 2001). Majority of rice mills in the country belong to the Engelberg type according to hulling mechanism. The other type is known as Rubber Roller husker by which paddy is husked without any breakage even when it is raw rice (Ahmed and Chowdhury, 1994). In the automatic rice mills all steps of milling, from paddy to rice, are done by machines. But the small rice mills or *Chatal* or husking mills occupy the maximum share in the rice milling industry. In 1999 the shares of both automatic and semi-automatic (Major) rice mills were approximately 2 per cent while that of the husking and small rice mills was 96 per cent of the overall rice milling industry (Zaman *et. al.*, 2001). According to the recent data the shares of automatic, semi-automatic and husking mills stand for 4 per cent, 11 per cent and 85 per cent respectively (DOF, 2017).

Number of Rice Mills: The exact number of rice mills in the country is somewhat difficult to estimate. While information is available on licensed rice mills which are mostly mechanized, there is hardly any data related to the hullers (Asaduzzaman *et.al.*, 2014). The information on licensed rice mills is maintained by the Department of Food (DOF). The rice mills under the Department of Food are generally classified as Husking rice mills, Major Rice mills (semi-automatic) and Automatic rice mills. The number of rice mills collected from different sources is

shown in Table 1. The figures reported by Ahmed and Chowdhury (1994) include non-licensed huller machines. According to Ahmed and Chowdhury (1994) there were 5,893 rice mills in 1969. Till 1982 there was no automatic rice mills while in 1987 the number of husking (including non-licensed mills), semi-automatic and automatic rice mills were 50,780, 486 and 88 respectively. The figures reported by Zaman *et.al.* (2001), Kabir *et. al.* (2009) and Asaduzzaman *et.al.* (2014) are based on licensed rice mills collected from DOF. Although information is available only for few years it is evident that all types of rice mills showed increasing trend over the years. However, the automatic and semi-automatic rice mills have increased faster than the husking mills. In 1999 the number of automatic, semi-automatic and husking rice mills were 198, 220 and 12,133 respectively (Zaman *et. al.*, 2001). According to the Official record of DOF there are 838 automatic rice mills, 2,238 semi-automatic rice mills and 17,541 husking mills in 2017 in the *Boro* season. In addition there are many non-licensed rice hullers. It is also difficult to estimate the number of non-licensed rice hullers. The number of traditional Engelberg type non-licensed rice hullers in the country was estimated at about one lakh in 2007 (Kabir *et. al.*, 2009).

Table 1: Number of Rice Mills by Year

Year	Husking	Major	Auto	Total	Source
1969	5800	93	-	5893	Ahmed and Chowdhury, 1994 (The figures include non-licensed huller machines).
1978	11437	169	0	11606	
1982	16171	206	0	16377	
1986	43374	251	66	43691	
1987	50780	486	88	51354	
1999	12133	220	198	12551	Zaman <i>et. al.</i> 2001
2007	14239	457	142	14838	Kabir <i>et. al.</i> , 2009.
2011	16,347	131	361	16,839	Asaduzzaman <i>et.al.</i> 2014.
2016/17	17647	2148	778	20572	DOF Office (<i>Aman</i> season)
2017	17541	2238	838	20616	DOF Office (<i>Boro</i> season)

Geographical Distribution of Rice Mills: The impact of geographic location in the development of rice milling industry in Bangladesh is clearly visible. Although rice mills have been established in all rice

producing areas, the rice mills are concentrated in several regions particularly in Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Chittagong and Dhaka regions. Irrespective of types about 85 per cent of rice mills are concentrated in Rangpur (6,491), Rajshahi (5,292) and Dhaka (2,599) regions (Table 2). Over the years the number of rice mills, particularly the automatic rice mills, has shown increasing trend in Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka and Khulna regions while decreasing trend is observed in Barisal, Sylhet and Chittagong regions. The period of establishment of rice mills differ from region to region. The first rice mill in Dinajpur region was established in 1964-65, Sherpur & Dhamrai of Dhaka region in early 1970, Kustia in 1980s and Ashuganoj in 1986 (BILS, 2010).

Table 2: Number of Rice Mills Different Divisions of Bangladesh in 1999 and 2014

Divisions	Zaman <i>et. al.</i> , 2001				Asaduzzaman <i>et.al.</i> 2014			
	Husking	Major	Auto	Total	Husking	Major	Auto	Total
Rajshahi	5661	67	26	5754	5,242	2	48	5,292
Rangpur					6,361	20	110	6,491
Dhaka	2309	91	12	2412	2,430	64	105	2,599
Khulna	1695	15	7	1717	1,932	21	14	1,967
Chittagong	1456	18	105	1579	307	11	74	392
Sylhet	782	22	48	852	51	0	10	61
Barisal	230	7	0	237	24	13	0	37
Total	12133	220	198	12551	16,347	131	361	16,839

Capacity of Rice Mills: The capacity utilization varies across the types of rice mills. The Engelberg type steel huller, representing 95 per cent of the mills, incurred a significant loss of rice and rice byproducts. The existing market sizes of husking, semi-automatic and automatic rice mills in 2009 were estimated at Tk. 19,795, Tk. 27,420 and Tk. 11,360 million, respectively. With the level of automation the level of capacity utilization increases from husking (18 per cent) to semi-automatic (33 per cent) to automatic (60 per cent) rice mills (Kabir *et. al.*, 2009).

Most of the large/automatic rice mills are running with underutilization of their capacity (Siddique *et.al.* 2008). Full utilization of milling capacity would lead to more employment opportunity.

Employment Generation in Rice Milling Industry

Level of Employment: The level of employment provided by rice milling industry is an important indicator of its performance (Zaman, *et. al.*, 2001). It should be mentioned here that the data on employment generation in the rice milling industry is not collected and maintained systematically by the concerned ministry. There is no detail survey to estimate the employment status in the rice milling industry. Only the cross section data collected by individual researchers is available at a limited scale. The employment status varies with the type of rice mills. Up to 1997, in a husking mill about 18 people were involved of which 90 per cent were women labourers (Siddique, 2010). In 2007 the numbers of labourers employed in per unit of husking, semi-automatic and automatic rice mills were 10, 30 and 44 respectively with total engagement of 2,61,348 persons including employment of 1,00,000 persons in Husking (non-licensed) mills having employment capacity of 1 person per unit (Table 3). According to the estimates of Raha *et. al.* (2013) employment capacity of husking, semi-automatic and automatic rice mills is 26, 38 and 60 persons per unit respectively. Based on these figures total employment generation in the rice milling industry in 2017 *Boro* season is estimated at 5,91,390 persons.

In terms of annual employment opportunity, an automatic rice mill with modern equipment utilized about 5,925 man-days per year compared to other rice mills (ranging from 2,232 to 3,120 man-days per year) because of higher capacity utilization. This higher capacity utilization is because of the higher demand for quality rice (in terms of physical size and shape, and glassy looking) in the market. However, labour requirements in automatic rice mills and automatic rice mills with modern equipment are far less (3.20 man-hours and 3.95 man-hours per ton of paddy processing respectively) compared to husking and semi-automatic rice mills which are in the range of 14.17-15.67 man-hours per ton of paddy processing (Table 4).

Table 3. Employment by Types of Rice Mills

Type of rice mill	No. of rice mill	Employment/ unit	Total employment
Husking (registered)	14139	10	1,41,390
Husking (non-registered)	1,00,000	1	1,00,000
Semi-automatic	457	30	13,710
Automatic	142	44	6,248
Total employment			2,61,348

Source: Kabir *et. al.*, 2009.

Table 4. Employment Capacity by Types of Rice Mills

Type of rice mill	Labour		Staff	
	Man-hour per ton of paddy	Man-days Per year	Man-hour per ton of paddy	Man-days Per year
Husking	14.17	2232	6.95	1095
Semi-Auto*	14.17	2274	9.13	1095
Semi-Auto**	15.67	3015	4.50	1460
Auto rice mill*	3.20	3120	5.99	5840
Auto rice mill**	3.95	5925	4.14	6205

*Without modern equipment, **With modern equipment

Source: Raha *et. al.* 2013.

The employment opportunities of staffs is highest in automatic rice mills with modern equipment (6,205 man-days per year) followed by automatic rice mills without modern equipment (5,840 man-days per year), semi-automatic rice mills with modern equipment (1,460 man-days per year) and semi-automatic rice mills without modern equipment and husking mills (1,095 man-days per year) (Table 4). However, staff requirement of automatic and semi-automatic rice mills with modern equipment is lower (4.14 and 4.50 man-hours per ton of paddy processing respectively) compared to automatic and semi-automatic rice mills without modern equipment (5.99 and 9.13 man-hours per ton of paddy processing respectively), and husking mill (6.95 man-hours per ton of paddy processing).

Employment scope is the highest in automatic mills followed by semi-automatic and the lowest in husking mill (Table 5). Because the automatic mills use huge amount of paddy compared to husking and semi-automatic mills as well as run longer period than other categories of mills. However, the labour requirements in husking and semi-automatic rice mills without modern equipment are almost similar as the capacity of the rice mills and drying of paddy are similar.

Level of Employment by Gender: Employment in rice mills by gender varies across the type of rice mills. The small rice mills create more jobs particularly for women (ADB 2010). In the husking mills 90 per cent of the people engaged were women labour. The proportion of women and men was 3:2. Generally, the mechanic (*Chatal mistree*) and manger of the *Chatal* were men (Siddique, 2010). In 2013 the proportions of men were found much higher in automatic (82 per cent) and husking (65 per cent) rice mills compared to women while the proportion of women (58 per cent) was slightly higher in semi-automatic rice mills (Table 5).

Table 5: Distribution of Number of Employee by Type of Mills

Type of mills	Men		Women		Both	
	No.	Per	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Automatic	49	82	11	18	60	100
Semi-automatic	16	42	12	58	38	100
Husking	17	65	9	35	26	100

Source: Raha *et. al.* 2013.

Seasonality in Employment: Analysis of seasonal pattern of employment in rice mills is highly constrained by non-availability of data on it. To know the employment figure by crops (*Aman* and *Boro*) and by season and non-season in a mill, seasonal pattern of employment of daily wage workers was collected from a miller by Zakir *et. al.* (2001) and is presented in Table 6. The analysis rendered some insights on how employment changes between the crops as well as in seasons and non-seasons within a crop. It was observed that, the number of workers varied by the seasons. The number of workers declined during the non-seasons for all crops. However, employment opportunity is highest in the *Boro* seasons and the per cent of women remains higher for both all crops.

Table 6: Seasonal Pattern of Employment in a Rice Mill

Season	Daily			Yearly					
	Men (No.)	Women (No.)	Both (No.)	Men		Women		Both	
				No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Aman									
Seasonal	14	25	39	1260 (35.9)	30.0	2250 (64.1)	31.2	3510 (100)	30.7
Non-seasonal	10	20	30	240 (33.3)	5.7	480 (66.7)	6.6	720 (100)	6.3
All Aman	24	45	69	1500 (35.5)	35.7	2730 (64.5)	37.7	4230 (100)	37.0
Boro									
Seasonal	18	30	48	2160 (37.5)	51.4	3600 (62.5)	49.7	5700 (100)	50.4
Non-seasonal	15	25	40	540 (37.5)	12.9	900 (62.5)	12.4	1440 (100)	12.6
All Boro	33	55	88	2700 (37.5)	64.3	4500 (62.5)	62.2	7200 (100)	63.3
Total	57	100	157	4200 (36.7)	100	7230 (63.3)	100	11430 (100)	100

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage of men and women.

Source: Zaman, *et. al.* 2001.

According to the miller, for *Aman* a mill could be operated for 30 days in a month in the peak season and 12 to 16 days in non-seasons in a month, which also depend on the volume of paddy. For analysis 12 days mill operation period was assumed for non-season. Peak season of *Aman* was defined from November-December to January-February (90 days) and the non-season of *Aman* was defined from February-March to March-April (24 days). On the contrary, the mill had operated 120 days in the peak season of *Boro* and 36 days in the non-season of *Boro*. The peak season of *Boro* is from April-May to July-August, while August-September to October-November' is defined as the non-season for *Boro*. The reason for longer operating days in the *Boro* season is that it also includes the *Aus* paddy harvested period being from July to September. Based on the assumptions, estimated total employment in the *Aman* season was 4,230 while for the *Boro* season it was 7,200. Of course, the employment rate was highest in the seasons. For *Aman*, employment rate was 83 per cent and for *Boro*, it was 80 per cent. The *Boro* season generated highest employment (63 per cent) (Table 6).

Participation by Gender: In the rice processing mills women work side by side with the men. It is difficult to gender-based concrete demarcation of works. In the case of *dheki*, rice processing is almost women dominated activity. With mechanized means in mills, women are still employed but more in parboiling and drying activities while the scope of work of women in large automated mills is very limited. For portable hullers, women appear to be almost nonexistent (Asaduzzaman *et.al.* 2014). On an average 66 per cent activities are done by men whereas 34 per cent by women in the rice processing mills. Individually, carrying of paddy/rice bags is done 100 per cent by men. Loading and unloading soaking tank with paddy are done 80 and 20 per cent by men and women, respectively. Drying parboiled paddy on the drying floor is done equally by men and women (Table 7). Participation in firing of boiler furnace and feeding husk fuel are 70 and 30 per cent by men and women, respectively.

Table 7. Activities Performed by Men and Women Labourers in the Rice Processing Mills

Activities		Participation (Percentage)	
		Men	Women
1.	Carrying bags	100	0
2.	Filling soaking tank with water	80	20
3.	Filling steaming tank with water	80	20
4.	Firing of furnace and feeding husk fuel	70	30
5.	Loading / unloading soaking tank with paddy	80	20
6.	Loading/unloading steaming tank with paddy	80	20
7.	Drying paddy on the drying floor	50	50
8.	Milling paddy with the huller	60	40
9.	Separating bran and broken rice by hand	0	100
10.	Weighing bags	60	40
Average for all activities		66	34

Source: Khatun *et.al.* 2015.

For milling paddy one men driver operates the huller machine; other associated activities such as feeding paddy in the huller, feeding milled rice in the cleaner/separator, etc. are done 60 per cent by men whereas 40 per cent by women. Manual separation of rice bran and broken rice is done 100 per cent by women. Participation of women in weighing bags is 40 per cent and that of men 60 per cent (Table 7). Almost similar result was found by Sultana and Afrad (2014). They reported that women are mostly involved in drying (97 per cent in drying before boiling and 94 per cent in final drying) but carrying the sack (96 per cent), helping in boiling (98 per cent) and boiler operation is almost done by their men counter parts.

Extent of women's participation: The study by Sultana and Afrad (2014) revealed that women workers on an average spend most of their time in rice mills for helping in husking machine operation (3.02 hours) followed by final drying of paddy (2.05 hours), drying the paddy before boiling (1.25 hours), piling the paddy (1.12 hours), cleaning the threshing floor (1.05 hours) and packing the rice (1.02 hours) per day. Almost similar trend was observed by Muhibbullah (2010).

Socio-Economic Conditions of Rice Mill Workers

There are several studies which examined socio-economic status of rice mill workers in Bangladesh in different geographical locations.

Age distribution: Rahman and Hasan (2011) found that the highest portion (42 per cent) of rice mill labourers was from the age group 20 to 30 years while the lowest portion (3 per cent) came from the age group 50 and above years. The average age of the selected respondents was 36 years. Sultana and Afrad (2014) found that 65 per cent of the rice mill workers were middle aged (36 to 50 year) while Khatun *et.al.* (2015) observed that 51 per cent were middle aged (33 to 54 year).

Educational Status: The rice mill workers mostly came from low educational profile. From the study conducted by Rahman and Hasan (2011) it was evident that, 85 per cent rice mill labourers were illiterate. Only 15 per cent rice mill labourers were literate up to primary level of education. No secondary and above level of education were found for the rice mill labourers. In term of gender, 63

per cent of men and 65 per cent of women rice-mill labourers were illiterate. The level of primary education was 37 per cent to 27 per cent respectively for men and women labourers. Sultana and Afrad (2014) found that 54 per cent of the rice mill workers were illiterate and 40 per cent could only sign. Khatun *et.al.* (2015) found that 41 per cent of the rice mill workers were illiterate while 47 per cent had up to primary level of education. Most of the rice mill (*chatal*) workers can only sign while the rate of signature ability is comparatively low among the women rice mill workers (BILS, 2007).

Occupational Status: Working in rice mills as wage labourer is the main source (66.67 per cent) of employment for the rice mill workers. In addition to working in rice mills some labourers participated in housework, petty business, etc (Rahman and Hasan, 2011). While Khatun *et.al.* (2015) found that the rice mill labourers were engaged in diversified occupation and most of them (38 per cent) were working as farm labourer. In addition to working in rice mills they were also engaged in household works and farming. In the lean period the rice mill workers engage in fishing, petty trading and rickshaw pulling. For the women workers the scope of alternative employment is limited (BILS, 2007).

Land holding: Rice mill labourers are land poor possessing only 2.84 decimal of land of which 1.99 and 0.85 decimal were decimal homestead area and rented in land respectively meaning that without homestead they were landless (Rahman and Hasan, 2011). Another study indicates that the average homestead land holdings of the respondents family groups was 4.77 decimals for mill labour household. In case of mill labour household, own land was 4.60 decimals. The mill labour households rented in amount of land is higher than that of mortgaged in land (Khatun *et.al.* 2015). Majority of the respondents (65 per cent) had only house, 29 per cent were landless and 6 per cent had house with a piece of land (Sultana and Afrad, 2014).

Family Size: Family size is defined as the total number of persons living together and taking meals from the same kitchen under the same head of the family. The average family size of rice mill labourer was 4.36 persons (Rahman and Hasan, 2011) while it was found 4.96 persons by Sultana and Afrad, (2014). Both figures are slightly lower than the national average of 4.53 persons (HIES, 2010).

Assets position of the households: Household assets of rice mill workers include livestock, poultry, television, furniture, rickshaw/van, grocery shop, etc. Livestock includes cow, goat, sheep and poultry (Rahman and Hasan, 2011).

Sources of income: The rice mill labourers received income from different sources. Next to working in rice mills (88 per cent) the other sources of income were wage labourer in agriculture (5 per cent), day labourers (5 per cent) and working as housemaid (2 per cent). The women rice mill labourers' contribution to the total annual family income was 24 per cent which directly help to maintain the family livelihood (Rahman and Hasan, 2011). The *Boro* season generated highest income opportunity. A man could earn Tk. 16,200.00 while a women could obtain half of the men (Zaman, *et. al.*, 2001). The level of income of rice mill workers varies in different geographic locations. The flow of income is discontinued in the lean period (BILS, 2007). Considering the poverty line the monthly income of rice mill workers would be Tk. 5,747.00 whereas the average monthly income of rice mill workers is Tk. 3,739.00 which is much below the poverty line income (BILS, 2010).

Expenditure Pattern: The main items of expenditure were food, clothing, housing, education, health, social expenditure and recreation (Rahman and Hasan, 2011). Average annual expenditure of the rice mill labourer households was Tk.46,500.00. Larger share of the total expenditure accounts for food items (80 per cent). They spent a little proportion of their income on education and recreation (3 per cent). After food, the most important items were clothing (4 per cent) followed by housing (4 per cent) and health (3 per cent).

Household food consumption: The major food items were rice, wheat/flour, pulses, fish and vegetables. Daily consumption items were rice, wheat/flour and vegetables. Pulses and fishes were consumed once in a week while meat and fruits were rarely consumed due to lack of sufficient money. Most of the consumption requirements were met by consuming rice (Rahman and Hasan, 2011).

Problems of Rice Mill Workers

Problems faced by the rice mill workers studied by Khatun *et.al.* (2015) in terms of several dimensions are presented below.

Physical work environment: Seven physical work environment problems were identified. These, in descending order, are no plantation in the mill yards (88 per cent), poor aeration in mill houses (88 per cent), insufficient light (75 per cent), excessive heat (75 per cent), excessive light (68 per cent), no ventilation in the machine rooms (62

per cent), excessive noise (53 per cent), load shedding (48 per cent) and no disposal facility of soaking water causing bad smell (39 per cent).

Economic environment: The most severe (98 per cent) problems are no job security and salaried leave. Other economic problems relates to no financial help for sick worker (93 per cent), no overtime (93 per cent), absence of co-operative society for securing rights, low salary and wage (88 per cent), no festival bonus (86 per cent), no allowance other than salary (85 per cent), no loan facility from mill owner (85 per cent), no advance payment from salary (85 per cent). The study conducted by Farouq and Zaman (2002) identified problems relating to low wage, overtime, Eid bonus, paid leave etc. About 33 per cent of the rice mill workers complained for sudden sack by the employers without notice (Rahman and Hasan, 2011).

Health-related environment: The health-related problems of rice mill workers include absence of facilities for recreation (98 per cent), health checkup (97 per cent), consulting with doctors (97 per cent), accident insurance (97 per cent), first aid in the mill premises (92 per cent) and sanitary latrine (92 per cent). Other problems are unhygienic environment (92 per cent), excessive work load (93 per cent), long working hours (90 per cent) and no supply of personal protective equipment (90 per cent). Zaman *et al.* (2001) also reported that no first aid given, low lighting, lack of aeration facilities and no treatment facilities etc. were the problems faced by the rice mill workers.

Gender related issues: Gender based discrimination is very common in rice milling industry. The employer pays lower wage (67 per cent to 70 per cent) to women (Tk. 100.00 - Tk. 120.00 per day) than that of men (Tk. 170.00 - Tk.200.00 per day). Different wage system and rates are observed in different areas (Raha *et.al.* 2013). The wage for men and women reported by Siddique (2010) was Tk. 80.00 -Tk. 100.00 per day and Tk. 60.00 -Tk. 80.00 per day respectively. The women could get 69 per cent wages of the men (Zakir, *et. al.* 2001). In 95 per cent cases the men are paid more than women (Khatun *et.al.* 2015). In case of husking and automatic rice mills, the women receive respectively 2.9 times and 3.1 times lower wage than the men (BILS, 2010). In the industry the picture is common throughout the country. This might be due to abundant supply, highly unorganized, risk avoiding tendency and more submissiveness of women labour.

Although it was argued that men are more efficient than the women it was not validated in practice. Moreover, most of the cases labourers specially the women work on contract basis. They are not regular employees of the mills. The millers enjoy complete freedom in setting wages and other terms of employment for the labourers (Raha *et.al.* 2013).

Shortage of skilled manpower: All types of rice mills were facing shortage of supply of skilled manpower which was reported by 40 per cent, 50 per cent and 39 per cent of automatic mills, semi-automatic mills and husking mills respectively. The semi-automatic rice mills were facing problems with non-availability of labourers for sun drying of paddy and higher labour cost (Raha *et.al.* 2013).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The rice milling, the main rural agro-based industry, has provided with huge employment opportunity particularly for the rural poor women and thereby is empowering them economically and contributing poverty reduction (BILS, 2010). Millers could provide employment opportunity for both men and women of the rural areas. Compared to other major industries, employment scope in the rice mills is observed high at the national level (Zakir, *et. al.* 2001). Sound policy intervention is required for sustainable development and wellbeing of the rice mill workers. In connection to this following steps may be considered:

- 1) The exact number of rice mills in the country is somewhat difficult to estimate. While information is available on licensed rice mills which are mostly mechanized, there is hardly any data related to the hullers (Asaduzzaman *et.al.*, 2014). The information on licensed rice mills is maintained by the Department of Food (DOF). There is no comprehensive data on the number of rice mill workers in the country. The government should have a complete and accurate data base on rice mills and market intermediaries which will facilitate appropriate policy formulation and also monitoring business activities (Raha *et.al.* 2013). Detail labour force survey for the rice mills may be conducted by the BBS (BILS, 2007).

- 2) The rice mill workers should be properly addressed in the relevant policies of the government and the existing policies should be properly enforced (BILS, 2007). The representatives from the rice mill workers may be consulted during formulation of various development plans of the government including during formulation of relevant policies and national annual budget of the government (BILS, 2007).
- 3) Wage should be determined according to contribution to final product (Raha *et.al.* 2013). The government should ensure regular inspection of payment of minimum wages to the rice mill workers (BILS, 2010).
- 4) Gender based discrimination is very common in rice milling industry. The employers pay lower wage to women than that of men. Although it was argued that men are more efficient than the women it was not validated in practice. Moreover, most of the cases labourers specially the women work on contract basis. They are not regular employees of the mills. The millers enjoy complete freedom in setting wages and other terms of employment for the labourers. Wage discrimination by sex needs to be addressed (Raha *et.al.* 2013). The women could get 69 per cent wages of the men (Zakir *et. al.* 2001). About 95 per cent respondents mentioned that the men are paid more than women (Khatun *et.al.* 2015). Therefore, the government should intensify regular monitoring to ensure payment of equal wage for the women workers (BILS, 2010).
- 5) Rice milling activities are mostly seasonal in nature. To help cope with the seasonal variability of income, the government should undertake appropriate policy for income generation of the rice mill workers, especially for the rural women throughout the year. (Rahman and Hasan, 2011).
- 6) The rice mill workers should bring under the local social safety net programmes such as food for work, VGD, VGF etc. of the government during the lean season when they do not have any work or scope for work is very limited (BILS, 2010).

- 7) The rice mill owner and local government jointly may extend some welfare measures for the rice mill workers. For instance, health and sanitation, day care centre facilities, may be developed jointly. This will not only help the rice mill workers but also the mill owners will be benefitted through increased productivity as the workers will be able to concentrate more for work (BILS, 2010).
- 8) Since majority of the rice mill workers are women, special measures should be taken for their welfare and protection of labour rights including to ensure paid maternity leave (BILS, 2007).
- 9) Vocational training programme may be introduced to produce qualified personnel for operating the automatic rice mills (Raha *et.al.*, 2013).

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Victimization and Violation of Rights of Women in Garments Sector in Bangladesh: A Study on Women Garments Workers of Ashulia, Savar, Dhaka

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Abstract

Women workers are the highest part in garments sector in Bangladesh; they are still victimized in work place by co-workers, senior, and officers. This study mainly focuses to find out the nature, cause and patterns of women victimization and violation of their existing rights in RMG sector. This is a descriptive study and data have been collected from the women workers ten garments factories of Ashulia, Savar. The findings of the study shows that most of the worker's earn less than a dollar (US) a day, faced sexual harassment and different types of victimization. Finally the paper suggests that the proper enforcement of existing labour code and ensuring rights must be implemented at factory level to reduce the victimization of women workers.

Key words: Victimization, Female workers, Violation, Rights, Labour Act

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1. Introduction & Background of the study

The readymade garments industry is the backbone of the national economy in Bangladesh. It is the highest foreign exchange earner in our country and it employs the largest number of peoples. Though the reality that the garments industry in Bangladesh is at the heart of the country's export, it was first developed in 1776. The industry has grown dramatically over the past 35 years. At present, there are 4,825 garments factories where three million people are engaged for employing. This sector attracts the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of more than \$1,000 million which was 2.4% in 1986. European companies and UK are the largest investment agency in Bangladesh (Kaber, Mahmud, 2003). Almost 90 percent of the worker is women in this sector. These women who are often illiterate or having less than primary level education come to urban areas in search of work in garment factories. But they are being highly victimized in the garments sectors in terms of absence of written contracts, irregularity of payments, violations of health and safety regulations, long hours of overtime. Mahmud, (1992) found that two groups of women have been particularly likely to engage in these jobs: women in low-income men-headed households, and women heads of household. Paul-Majumder and Zohir, (1995) found that the 80% of the women workers families live below the poverty line and the women support their family by their earnings. In spite of discrimination and irregularity in wages and earnings, women workers are employed in the export oriented garment industry and contribute to their family. About 46% garments women who directly support their family by their earnings face different types of victimization. Mahmood and Paul-Majumder, (1996) and Bhattacharya identified the gender effects on export-oriented industrialization but they provide very little information about the extent of gender differences in the conditions of employment and the work environment. Majumder and Khatun (1997) show that about 30% of women who work in the garments sector are the primary earners of their families while the others are secondary earners.

Furthermore, Paul-Majumder and Begum (1997) studied about the women rights in garment sector and they found that the number of

women garment workers has been increased over time and youthful women workers are increasing due to their nimble fingers and low price. Naila Kabeer and Simeen Mahmud (2000) in their paper discuss the nature of women workers in the garment sector. Dina M. Siddiqi (2003) focuses on the sexual victimization of women in the working place. Shakila Matin Mridula (2009) worked on the conditions and reproductive health status of women garments workers in Bangladesh. F.Begum, R. N. Ali , M.A. Hossain and Sonia B. Shahidj of the Bangladesh Agricultural University, (2010) worked on sexual harassment of women garments workers in Bangladesh. Those studies analyzed the different factors that are responsible for the harassment of women garment workers in Bangladesh. Md Kamrul islam & Dilara Zahid, (2012) focused on the socio-economic deprivation and garment workers movement in Bangladesh. Najmul Kadir Kaikobad and Md Zafar Alam Bhuiyan, (2012) analyzed the causes of switching the garments workers job. However, our present study focused the specific nature of women workers' right violation in factories of Ashulia area.

2. Objectives of the study:

The major objective of the study is

1. To find out the nature of the women garments workers in Bangladesh.
2. To find out the causes of harassment of women garments workers in Bangladesh
3. To explore the violation of rights of women workers in those factories

3. Methodology of the Study

The study have used survey method in order to collect the sample and descriptive method were used to analyze the primary data. More specifically, Survey design was used to collect empirical data from field level while descriptive design were used to describe nature, patterns of victimization and causes of violation of right of women in the garments sector in Bangladesh. The area of the study was Ashulia , Savar. So, data were collected from ten garments industry of Ashulia, Savar that were selected as high raising zone of industry and it was

easy to found out the respondents and easily collect information. Respondents have been selected purposively. A total of 180 respondents have been selected as sample size for this study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents. After collecting data, data were analyzed by using SPSS and MS Excel 2007.

4. Results and Discussion:

Demographic characteristics of the respondents:

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-emographic characteristic of the Respondents	Criteria	frequency	Percentage
Age group	11-20	73	40.56
	21-30	91	50.56
	31-40	16	8.88
	Total	180	100
Religion	Islam	142	78.89
	Hindu	38	21.11
	Christian	0	0
	Total	180	100
Education	Primary	94	52.22
	Secondary	76	42.22
	Higher Secondary	10	5.56
	Total	180	100
Marital status	unmarried	96	53.33
	married	53	29.44
	divorced	24	13.33
	others	7	3.90
	total	180	100
Residence area	Semi slum	77	42.78
	Slum	64	35.55
	Brick built	39	21.67
	Total	180	100

According to this table 40.56% of women workers belong to 11-20 years of age, 50.56% of workers belong to 21-30 years of age and

8.88% women is 31-40 years of age. This study shows that the largest numbers of the women workers belong to the age of 21-30 years of age. From this table we find that young women have the highest percentage involvement in garments sector in Bangladesh.

From the socio-demographic study of the women workers of Bangladesh, we find that 78.89% woman workers were Muslim and 21.11% were Hindu. So, the study findings were that, the Muslim garments workers are highest in number in Garments sector. By the studying of the educational background of the women workers in Bangladesh we find out that 52.22% women workers received primary education, 42.22% received secondary education and 5.56% received higher secondary education. On the basis of the educational qualification who received primary education they are in highest level in the garment sector and those who received higher degree their number is lower than others. The study found that garments workers are belonging to low level of education and they do not know about their rights and the labor law. This study found that, 53.33% of the women are unmarried which is highest in numbers, 29.44% women workers were married and 13.33% were divorced and 3.90% belongs others categories. Unmarried women joined in the sector and being victimized in different way in the working area. The table also shows that 42.78% respondents are living semi slum, 35.55% living slum area and 21.67% are living brick built house.

Table 2: Types of work

Work pattern	Frequency	percentages
Quality controller	5	3
Operator	55	30
Supervisor	3	2
Sewing helper	25	14
Folding	5	3
Finishing helper	30	17
Polyer	45	25
Embroidery	10	5
Line chief	2	1
Total	180	100

In garment industry, women are mostly employed at the lower category of jobs, like operator, finishing helper etc. and the nature of these jobs are very monotonous since there is no scope for personal creativity and achievements. According to the table 2, it is found that about 30 percent of the women workers were operator, while 25 percent, 17 percent and 14 percent were finishing ployers, finishing helper and sewing helpers respectively. An women operator have to sew a small part of garment throughout her long working hours. It is very difficult for a worker to hold his/her patience for a long time and doing the same work repeatedly. Her monotony reaches the climax when she has to work at a stretch for more than 6 hours without any break (Paul-Majumder, 2003). The case is similar with helpers. Sometimes they are not even allowed to go to the toilets or to drink water. The workers become bored and dissatisfied with repetitive and monotonous work. Sometimes they lose interest in work and become depressed.

Table-3: Violation of Labor Rights:

Labuor rights	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Working hours	Always 8	0	0
	9-10	98	54.45
	11-12	71	39.44
	13-14	11	6.11
	total	180	100
Salary structure	1100-2000	50	27.77
	2100-3000	88	48.89
	3100-4000	30	16.67
	4100-5000	12	6.67
	Total	180	100
Payment Schedule	1 st	70	38.89
	2 nd	91	50.55
	3 rd	19	10.56
	total	180	100

This table represents that 54.45% of the workers always work for 9-10 hours and 39.44% are doing work for 11-12 hours. And 6.11% told that they are doing work for 13-14 hours. Most of the workers said that they always feel pressure to work overtime and 60 % said sometimes they feel pressure from the authority to work overtime. In labor law section 100 told that every workers do the work in a day not exceeding 8 hours

and if any person do overtime must be give rest and leisure time. The table also shows that the low wages and irregular wage payment of the workers is another problem in Bangladesh garments industry. It is observed that a large number of women workers received wages below the minimum wage rate fixed by the Government of Bangladesh. Maximum 48.89% women workers got salary between Tk. 2100 to tk. 3000 per month, 27.77% , got 1100-2000 tk and 16.67% got 3100-4000 tk and highest salary get 4100-5000 tk only 6.67% . In labor rights, according to section 120- it has been said that the lowered minimum wage of workers is 5000 tk. After amendment of Labor law in 2013 minimum wage for the workers is 8000 tk . But workers got 3500-4000 tk . So the labor rights of women is violated in a highly way in Bangladesh. This study finds out that in the payment of wage is also irregular. It has been found that 38.89 percentages of the worker get salary in 1st week in month, 50.55% in 2nd week and 10.56% in 3rd week. This study found that only 38.89% get wage in right time and 10.56% are paid lately. These are also the violation of rights because in labor rights section 121 said that every labor wage must be paid in first week and UDHR said that to give the salary of the worker in the 1st week but some factories follow this rules and some never follow this.

Table-4: Labor Rights Violation:

Labor rights	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Over time payment	Same as normal hour	85	47.22
	double	15	8.33
	do not know	80	44.45
	total	180	100
Festival bonus	yes	123	68.33
	no	57	31.67
	total	180	100
Sick leave	Yes	72	40
	No	108	60
	Total	180	100
Cut of money in sick leave	yes	108	60
	no	72	40
	total	180	100

In Bangladesh labor rights violation is higher comparatively with other country. Labor rights violation have been found in some area such as problem arise in overtime payment, in festival bonus, sick leave, and cut of money in sick leave. In overtime payment, three types of section have been found from the worker rights. In the case of payment for their overtime work they have different opinion. . In labor law section 100 told that every workers do the work in a day not exceeding 8 hours and if any person do overtime must be give rest and leisure time. The table also shows that the low wages and irregular wage payment of the workers is another problem in Bangladesh garments industry. It is observed that a large number of women workers received wages below the minimum wage rate fixed by the Government of Bangladesh. Maximum 48.89% women workers got salary between Tk. 2100 to tk. 3000 per month, 27.77% , got 1100-2000 tk and 16.67% got 3100-4000 tk and highest salary get 4100-5000 tk only 6.67% . In labor rights, according to section 120- it has been said that the lowered minimum wage of workers is 5000 tk. After amendment of Labor law in 2013 minimum wage for the workers is 8000 tk . But workers got 3500-4000 tk . So the labor rights of women is violated in a highly way in Bangladesh.

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it has been told that before discharging the labor from work salary must be paid to the workers of the garments. But in reality this law doesn't followed by the most of the garments industry in Bangladesh.

Table -5: Violation of Maternity Benefit

Maternity rights	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Maternity leave	Yes	55	30.56
	no	125	69.44
	total	180	100
Amount of money	Equal of wage	30	16.67
	Half of wage	55	30.56
	no wage	95	52.77
	total	180	100
Money in maternity death	yes	45	25
	no	135	75
	total	180	100
Child care system	yes	25	13.89
	no	155	86.11
	total	180	100

This table shows that 30.56% women workers told that maternity leave has given but 69.44% women workers told that they did not get maternity leave and benefit. According to Bangladesh labor rights 2006 section 45-50 said that before and after the time of pregnancy, the garments worker must give 6 month maternity leave. But alongside with the maternity leave, the labor law suggests to bear the money for treatment and medical allowance in the pregnancy time of the garments worker in Bangladesh. But, in our study, we have found that 75 percent of the garments working women don't get maternity leave benefit.

Table -6: Violation of Fundamental and Human Rights:

Fundamental rights	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Gender discrimination	Yes	148	82.22
	No	32	17.78
	Total	180	100
Field of discrimination	Salary	94	52.22
	Promotion	76	42.22
	Over time	10	5.56
	Total	180	100
Human rights			
Rest & leisure	Half hour	100	55
	Less than half hour	50	28
	no	30	17
	Total	180	100
Inhuman behavior & unsafe environment	Yes	165	91.67
	No	15	8.33
	Total	180	100

In this study we have found that working women in the garment sectors in Bangladesh are being highly victimized and faced violation of human and fundamental rights. The table shows that 82.22% women worker told that they face gender discrimination in their working area. Such as salary, promotion, overtime and night shift working. According to table 6, 52.22% women are being victimized in salary and 42.22% faced different types of harassment in promotion and 5.56% have been victim in over time. But according to the constitution of Bangladesh, we know that all should have equality before law and every person has right to enjoy without any discrimination age, sex, color and race. But this law not followed by the owner of the garments. According to UDHR and ICCPR article 4 and 5 said that every person should give right to work on freedom and freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading punishments. It also said that workers must free from slavery and servitude and give safety and security in working sectors. But from this study we found that in the garments sector these

rights have been violated. This study found that 55% women workers told that they get only half hours for lunch and 28% women workers told that they get less than half hour for taking their lunch and 17% said that they don't get any time to take their lunch in the lunch time. Some women workers said that they work throughout the day without any break which is conflicting with the existing labor laws in Bangladesh. But in labor law it has been told that the worker must given lunch time and rest time in the working schedule.

Table -7: Victimization in working conditions:

Working conditions	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Working place harassment	Physical	26	14.44
	Mental	74	41.11
	Sexual	80	44.45
	Total	180	100
Safety water, Separate toilet & Transport facility	Yes	45	25
	No	135	75
	Total	180	100
Fuming, Ventilation , Dust & Burnt safety	Yes	26	14.44
	No	154	85.56
	Total	180	100

The study found that women garments workers are victimized at work place. This study have found three types of victimization among the garments workers of women in Bangladesh such as physical psychological(mental) and sexual victimization. According to the table 7, it has been found that 44.45 % women worker harassed sexually. Most of the garments women sexually victimized in the night shift working period and on that time they are victimized by their co-workers, senior and owner. On the other hand, 41.11% women workers are being psychologically victimized and the women workers face different mental pressure and grow fear among them. Alongside, 14.44% of the women workers face physical torture in the time of their working period.

So it has been said that, women garments workers are highly victimized in the working sector. In Bangladesh most of the garments industry there were no safe drinking water, separate toilet facility, no transport facility for the garments worker. In this study we found the same situation by studying the women garments worker in Bangladesh. According to the table 7, 75% women garments workers told that in the garments sector there were lacking of the facility of safety water, separate toilet & transport. But in law it has clearly identified to give safe drinking water, separate toilet for women and transport facility. In labor law in chapter v section 51-60 is given discussions on health and hygiene situation of the garments worker. And these rights must be given to the worker. The garments worker must provide health security and protected them from hazardous material, fuming and dust. On the other hand, the ventilation system and fire alarming system must include in the garments sector. But in this study we found that 85.56% garments women told that in their working area there were no fuming and ventilation facility. Some good level garments are ensured it only 26% but mostly are not followed. For those reason, workers are affected by various types of diseases. Such as eye problems, headache, respiratory problems, stomach problems, ulcers problem and vomiting, skin irritating , pain in joint and anemia etc.

Table -8: Type of harassment by type of person

Type of harassment	Co-workers	Senior	Officers	Total
Type of person				
Physical	5	10	10	25
Sexual	30	40	50	120
Mental	5	10	20	35
Total	40	60	80	180

From this study we found that, women in the garment sector face different type of harassment from their co-workers, senior and officers in the garments. Total 25 workings women were physically harassed among them 5 women were harassed by their co-workers, and 10 women were harassed by their senior and 10 women victimized by the

officers of the garments sector. On the other hand, 120 working women were sexually harassed and 50 women were harassed by the officer. Without this two harassment women were also psychologically victimized. In this study, we found that 35 garments working women were victimized. Among them 80 garment working women were harassed by the officers. From this study, we explore that, most of the women garments workers claim that they were victimized by the officer of the garments rather than co-workers and their senior.

Table -9: Type of harassment vs. age of respondents

Age Type of Harassment	Physical	Mental	Sexual	Total
11-20	10	20	50	80
21-30	10	20	45	75
31-40	2	23	0	25
Total	22	63	95	180

Fig: Cross table of Harassment vs. Age of Respondents.

According to the table 9, we found that garments worker (62.5%) who belongs 11-20 years of age are being harass by physically, sexually and mentally. In this period of age the garment women are mostly victimized sexually. About 50 garments workers are sexually victimized in the garments sector. The garments worker who belongs 21-30 years of age also faces different types of victimization. In this stage, most women (about 45) face sexual harassment. On the other hand, women garments worker who belongs to the 31-40 year of age they face lower victimization comparatively with others category of age. So, from this study it is clear that 11-20 and 21-30 years of age are being mostly sexually violated in Bangladesh garment sector.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The current study brings a number of significant findings. The first portion of the analysis chapter outlines the socio demographic characteristics of the women workers among which the age group represents that 40.56% of women workers belong to 11-20 years of age

whereas 50.56% of workers belong to 21-30 years. In next section, regarding the working hour, the study indicates that most of the women workers are working more than their allocated time. The data represents that 54.45% garments women work for 9-10 hours and 39.44% work for 11-12 hours. On the other hand, 6.11% garments women work 13-14 hours in a day. Furthermore, if we look at the minimum wage, 48.89% women workers earn between 2100-3000 tk per month that clearly violates the labor law. Moreover, they face different types of harassment in various stage of salary payment. According to the study, 47.22% garments worker said that they are paid overtime money properly only.

In addition, Sexual harassment is another concerning issue here. It has been found that, 60% women workers are sexually victimized by officers, 30% by their co-workers, 41.11% by their seniors. We also found that, 14.45% garments worker face physical harassment, 44.45% sexual harassment belonging to the age of 11-20 years.

Side by side, the study found unhygienic environments in the garments sector that affect the physical and mental health of the workers. Among 180 respondent, 160 garments worker have been suffering from nausea, 170 are suffering from skin diseases and 150 garments worker are experiencing ulcers. Moreover, the study found that there were no child care system in those garments factories. For that cause, the women garments worker face different types of problems with their child. Though in labor law, sec-94 told that to keep a child care room in garments but it is not followed properly. From the study, we said that the victimization and violation of rights of women in garments sector in Bangladesh is so acute. As a researcher we feel that the condition of the garments working environment should make suitable for the women garments worker. And the government should take some necessary steps to stop this violation and victimization of women in the garments sector. Labor law should be strictly followed by the every garments sector in Bangladesh. If labor law is strictly followed, then there would have no violation of labor rights (including women workers right) violation in Bangladesh.

To our opinion, the study finds a new overview about the violation of rights and victimization of female garments workers. It explores the socio-economic condition of female workers, their work environment and their violation of rights and causes of victimization and nature and pattern of victimization. Finally, the study findings can be helpful for

the government to formulate policy and taking necessary steps to improve the working conditions and ensuring proper human rights for the female workers in the factory level.

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Trade Union Part

Horror and Heartbreak in Middle East Plights of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers

ZAM Khairuzzaman¹

Newspaper readers have been appalled by what they saw in a report published on Dhaka-based Bangla national daily 'The Kaler Kantho' on November 11, 2017. The report headlined 'Amake Deshe Firiye Nin, Era Manush Na' (Take me back to my country, they are not human beings). This was a desperate appeal made by a Bangladeshi female domestic worker from Saudi Arabia to a journalist of the Bangla daily. Hailing from Patuakhali, she was sobbing uncontrollably while appealing. On November 7, evening, she complained to the journalist that she had been asked to do the job of a domestic worker in Saudi Arabia, but on arrival here, she was forced to confine in a room where she faced brutal torture, including sex assault. She sought help from the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for her rescue.

On April 4, this year, the girl left for Saudi Arabia abandoning her job at a garment factory. She took the decision at the instigation of a broker, Abul Kalam, at Kaktiria village under Barguna Sadar. She had to pay the broker an amount of Tk 40,000. She was given a false promise that she would get a monthly salary of Riyal 1,000. The Kaler Kantho newsman came to know from her family members that her husband Md Joynal Mia (not real name) abandoned her when her son Emran Mia (not real name) was merely three months' old. She struggled hard to bring up her son, who now lives at his grandmother's house in Barguna Sadar upazila and reads in class-VI at a local school. Near and dear ones of the girl informed the journalist about their appeals to the owner of the recruiting agency time and again, but to no avail. Finally, she lodged a complaint with the ministry. One month already elapsed, but the girl's family members are yet to see any ray of light in this regard.

As per report, The Kaler Kantho journalist tried to establish contact with Mehdi Hasan Arif, owner of Mehdi Travel and Tour, the recruiting agency responsible for her plight, over cell phone time and

¹ Media activist.

again. Later, the newsmen sent a message to him giving his identification, but he did not bother to reply the same.

When the reporter contacted the assistant director of Probasi Kalyan Board (expatriate welfare board), Zahid Anwar, he told that he had received a complaint in this regard. He further said that the department concerned had talked to the concerned agency that gave an assurance that the girl would be returned to home country.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) president Benzir Ahmed said, "Similar complaints come from Saudi Arabia. I shall take necessary action after an investigation.

Victim's son Emran urged The Kaler Kantho journalist to take steps for rescue of his mother. He broke down saying: My mother wants to come back to the country. She suffers a lot. Uncle, please help safe return of my mom. I'll feed my mother doing job. I won't let her go abroad.

The girl's mother told The Kaler Kantho: After taking my daughter to Saudi Arabia, she was forced to remain in confinement at a room. Instead of giving her a job, she has to suffer continuous torture. We have urged the concerned agency for her return, but it demanded Tk 2 lakh for the purpose. Most often, my daughter cries over mobile phone "When I requested the agency owner to bring my daughter home, he abused me verbally giving threats," the girl's mother told The Kaler Kantho newsman. "Now, where shall I go for my daughter's rescue?" she lamented.

This is the latest incident of a Bangladeshi migrant's rights violation in Saudi Arabia. We are witnessing similar incidents of migrant rights violations in the Middle East for years together.

Let us have a look on a story contributed by the Human Rights Watch ((HRW). The story titled "I Was Sold" - Abuse and Exploitation of Migrant Domestic Workers in Oman. The story is as follows:

I would start working at 4:30 a.m. and finish at 1 a.m. For the entire day they wouldn't let me sit. I used to be exhausted. There were 20 rooms and over two floors. He wouldn't give me food. When I said I want to leave, he said, "I bought you for 1,560 rials (US\$4,052) from Dubai. Give it back to me and then you can go." — Asma, a Bangladeshi domestic worker, in Oman.

Many families in Oman, like other Middle Eastern countries rely on migrant domestic workers to take care of their children, cook meals,

and clean their homes. At least 130,000 female migrant domestic workers—and possibly many more—are employed in the country.

Many workers leave families in the country after recruiters promise them decent salaries and good working conditions. For a large number of workers, the promises remain unrealised.

For them, the reality is bleak. After they arrive, many find themselves trapped with abusive employers and forced to work in exploitative conditions, their plight hidden behind closed doors.

Based primarily on interviews with several female domestic workers in Oman in May 2015, this report documents the abuse and exploitation some migrant domestic workers experience during their recruitment and employment, and the lack of redress for such abuse. It also examines the ways in which Oman's legal framework facilitates these conditions. In some cases, workers described abuses that amounted to forced labor or trafficking, including across Oman's porous border with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). While this report does not purport to quantify the precise scale of these abuses, it is clear that abuses are widespread and that they are generally carried out with impunity.

Most of the workers said that their employers confiscated their passports, a practice that appears to be commonplace even though Oman's government prohibits it. Many said their employers did not pay them their full salaries, forced them to work excessively long hours without breaks or days off, or denied them adequate food and living conditions. Some said their employers physically abused them; a few described sexual abuse.

Instead of protecting domestic workers from these abuses, Oman's laws and policies make them more vulnerable. In fact, Oman's legal framework is often more effective in allowing employers to retaliate against workers who flee abusive situations than in securing domestic workers' rights or ensuring their physical safety. The country's immigration system prohibits migrant workers from leaving their employers or working for new employers without their initial employers' consent and punishes them if they do. Oman's labour law excludes domestic workers from its protections, and those who flee abuse have little avenue for redress.

Female migrant domestic workers face multiple forms of discrimination and arbitrary government policies: as domestic workers,

they are excluded from equal labor law protections guaranteed to other workers; as women, regulations provide that they can be paid less than male domestic workers; and as migrants, their salaries are based on their national origin rather than their skills and experience. These policies and practices violate Oman's obligations under human rights treaties it has ratified, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Recruitment agents promise domestic workers decent working conditions in Oman, and many sign contracts stipulating good salaries before leaving their home countries. But upon arrival, many find that they have to work for less pay than promised and under worse conditions.

Several workers described conditions that amount to forced labor under international law. Many described employers beating them, withholding their salaries, threatening to kill them, falsely accusing them of crimes when they sought to leave, or retaliating against them by beating them for trying to escape abuse. Several workers said that their employers behaved as though they owned them—claiming that the recruitment fees they paid to secure workers' services were in fact a price paid to acquire them as property. Oman's legal framework facilitates abuse of domestic workers to such a degree that it could leave some trapped in situations that amount to slavery under international law.

Human Rights Watch interviewed a Bangladeshi migrant worker who said that her employer cut her hair and burned her feet and her employer's son raped her.

Many domestic workers said that their employers delayed paying their salaries or paid less than was owed. Some did not pay their wages at all. One worker said she did not receive wages for a year. Almost all domestic workers complained of working long periods of up to 15 hours per day and, in extreme cases, up to 21 hours per day with no rest and no day off, even if they were sick or injured.

For example, Babli, another 28-year-old Bangladeshi domestic worker, said her employer made her work 21 hours a day with no rest and no day off. She said that her employer also physically and verbally abused her, and withheld two months of her salary. She said when she asked to leave, her employer said, "If the agent doesn't give me back my money, I won't let you go."

In some cases, women worked for large, extended families or in multiple houses. Parveen, another Bangladeshi domestic worker, said she worked for a family of 15 in four houses in their compound in Sohar, a port city in northern Oman. She said she worked for 16 months from 4 a.m. until midnight with no day off. She said her employer only paid her 50 Omani rials a month (\$130), 20 rials less than she was owed, and withheld 4 months' salary entirely.

Domestic workers described common employer practices that kept them isolated from sources of support, namely passport confiscation, tight restrictions on communication, and confinement in the household. While Oman prohibits employers from confiscating workers' passports, it is not clear whether the law actually allows for criminal sanctions or whether any have ever been imposed.

Under contractual terms mandated by Oman's government, employers are required to provide domestic workers with adequate room and board; these provisions are particularly important given that many domestic workers are not free to leave their employers' homes, are not paid in full and on time, and, in many cases, do not earn enough to provide their own food and lodging. Yet some domestic workers said their employers gave them insufficient or spoiled food, and berated or beat them if they requested more.

Mamata, another Bangladeshi domestic worker, said her employer punished her after she fled to the police for help but they returned her. "My madam beat me up and locked me in the room for eight days with only dates to eat and water to drink," she said. Some domestic workers described inappropriate and inadequate sleeping conditions in their employers' homes, including in kitchens, living rooms, or with small children.

Domestic workers who flee their employers due to abuse have very few options for physical or legal protection. While the government provides some limited shelter services for women subjected to trafficking, very few victims are referred by the government for shelter services, with only five victims provided shelter in 2015. Moreover, the authorities have not established any official emergency shelter specifically for domestic workers exposed to abuse. Some workers said when they reported abuse to their recruitment agencies, agents confined them, beat them, and forced them to work for new families against their will.

Domestic workers seeking assistance or justice following abuse are given little help—and may even be punished. Some domestic workers who turned to the police for help said officers simply returned them, against their will, to their employers or recruitment agencies. They said the police did not follow up, and in several cases, domestic workers said their employers beat them after the police sent them back.

Some domestic workers avoided the police altogether, stating that they feared prosecution. This is an entirely reasonable fear, because employers can report domestic workers who flee abusive situations as having “absconded,” an administrative offense under Oman’s abusive kafala system that can result in deportation and a ban on future employment.

Oman’s labour dispute settlement procedures are inadequate and the courts are not a practical avenue for redress for domestic workers. Many workers simply give up and return home unpaid and without justice.

Oman, like other Middle Eastern countries, implements the notorious kafala (visa-sponsorship) system. Under this system, all migrant workers—who make up almost half of Oman’s population of 4.4 million people—are dependent on their employers to enter, live, and work legally in Oman as they act as their visa sponsors.

Employers have an inordinate amount of control over these workers. Migrant workers cannot work for a new employer without the permission of their current employer, even if they complete their contract and even when their employer is abusive. Moreover, employers can have a worker’s visa cancelled at any time. Workers who leave their jobs without the consent of their employer can be punished with fines, deportation, and reentry bans.

In May 2015, the Times of Oman quoted a Ministry of Manpower official stating that Oman is considering extending the law’s protections to include domestic workers. At present, Oman’s labour law explicitly excludes domestic workers from important protections enjoyed by workers in other sectors, such as limits on working hours and provisions for overtime pay. Instead, domestic workers only enjoy a much narrower range of basic protections under regulations issued in 2004 that specifically pertain to domestic workers.

Omani authorities issued a standard employment contract for domestic workers in 2011, which mandates one day off per week and thirty days

of paid leave every two years. However, these provisions fall far short of the protections offered by Oman's labour law and in any case, domestic workers have little ability to enforce employers' contractual obligations. The contract also provides less than many workers are promised when recruited in their home countries, and falls far short of international standards. Labour inspectors have no mandate to check on domestic workers, and as such, there are no inspections for working conditions of domestic workers in private homes.

The Omani government is obligated under international human rights and labour treaties to address and remedy abuses against migrant domestic workers. However, in breach of these standards, Oman has, like other Middle Eastern countries, failed to adequately protect domestic workers against exploitation and abuse. Indeed, in some respects the country's legal framework facilitates abuse.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and many United Nations human rights experts and bodies have called on the Middle Eastern countries, including Oman, to end the kafalasystem and grant domestic workers full labor law protections.

These countries should cooperate with countries of origin to prevent abuse and exploitation of domestic workers, and should thoroughly investigate abuses and prosecute those responsible. It should ratify key international treaties, including the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, and bring its laws into compliance with their provisions.

As per Dhaka-based The Daily Star: Bangladeshi migrant workers toil hard in foreign lands and remit their hard-earned money to the country. Do they really enjoy the expected services from their own government or their host governments in exchange of their hard labour? The answer is that neither their own government nor the receiving government cares about their rights.

The migrants are 'profitable' for everybody -- recruiting agents/brokers, government at home and the employers abroad. It is well established that recruiting agents cheat and exploit the migrants in the name of sending them abroad, charging huge, irrational amounts as fees. Migrants who leave their families and country to change their fortunes face exploitation, discrimination and hatred from the beginning to the end of their migration period.

According to The Daily Star, every month, the incidents of the violation of rights of the Bangladeshi migrants are published in media.

In many cases, it has been seen that the concerned Bangladeshi mission officials remain in darkness about their nationals' miseries.

It is true that the incumbent government has been trying to take some measures to protect the migrants at home and abroad. For instance, it is putting emphasis on reducing the migration costs and exploitation by private agencies and trying to include its participation in the direct migration process. But there are controversies also over the government's initiatives. Migration experts say the government needs to include the private recruiters in its process to send workers under effective and underpinning terms and conditions. More than 90% Bangladeshis work in Middle Eastern countries. So, the incidents of cheating, exploitation and discrimination of our workers are higher there. Almost every day, some Bangladeshi male or female migrant are subjected to harassments in their workplaces by their employers, their employers' agents or the law enforcers.

As per The Daily Star: Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, (RMMRU), a reputed organisation working for the Bangladeshi migrants, states it has found that Bangladeshi labour attachés are not very efficient and sincere in dealing with the problems of the Bangladeshi migrants.

The rising number of unexpected abuses against our sisters working abroad definitely worries us. They become victims of abuse -- sexual and physical -- by their agents or employers, the English daily said.

The Daily Star said that our labour attachés or mission officials respond in cases of emergency assistance sought by our migrants, but the response (or lack thereof) in most cases is still not satisfactory. There are some imminent challenges for our government to protect migrants from exploitation and cheating as well as to ensure sufficient jobs for thousands of unemployed jobseekers. Finally, it is of utmost importance that we raise our collective voices to protect our people from all types of exploitation. If we can do that soon, we believe our migrants can enjoy their expected rights.

Bangladeshi migrant workers, particularly women, face an array of abuse abroad, The Daily Star said. According to UN's International Organisation for Migration, seven out of ten female migrant workers suffer torture while abroad. Unscrupulous recruiting agencies and brokers run a syndicate that puts a large number of female workers abroad in conditions tantamount to modern-day slavery. Deprived of any rights and without much education, they resign to their fate.

Migrant workers assert that due to lack of coordination and cooperation from officials and staff of the labour wings, they have been forced to lose their jobs and even face deportation from the countries they worked in.

The number of women migrant workers has shot up significantly in recent years, and along with it have spread the tentacles of human trafficking syndicates. In this light, it is of vital importance to formalise the sector.

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) has conducted a survey in this regard. Its result is as follows:

Migrant workers' remittances to Bangladesh are a significant source of foreign exchange, second to ready-made garments. According to World Bank data, Bangladesh is the sixth largest labour exporting country with a migrant population variously estimated as 6.0 to 7.0 million. That number, interestingly, is higher than the population of at least 100 countries of the world.

BILS said: Key destination countries include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Workers number decreased after 2007 in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Workers number increased to Lebanon, Oman and Qatar at the same time. By 2005, the six countries accounted for over 95% of the flow, with nearly 60% unskilled employment. By 2014, the share of workers received in these countries declined to 74%, with the remaining migrant workers finding employment in other countries, doubling from 13% in 2005 to 26% in 2014.

In 2014, the number of female migrant workers became more than doubled to 76,000 comparing the year 2000 from only more than 37,000 in 2012. From 2000 to 2015, Jordan and Lebanon were the major destinations for female workers—more than 50% engaged in domestic work and about 10% in garment factories or related work.

BILS, quoting a BBS survey in 2013 said that although nearly 30% of female migrants are less than 25 years old, compared with 20% of male migrants in that age bracket, most of the migrant workers, regardless of gender, have less than a secondary school certificate. Masons, electricians, plaster technicians are among the better paid workers with wages ranging from TK 14 to 20 thousands. Bangladesh recruiting agents receive substantial demands for low or semi-skilled workers

mainly because they are cheap, willing to perform lowly or even hazardous work.

High cost of migration, high recruitment fees and charges by intermediaries make access to migration opportunities tough for the interested workers. Most of the labour receiving countries reduced the salary significantly for all levels of jobs. The trend of labour migration in these countries is decreasing, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where almost half of the total labour is migrated every year.

An ILO survey revealed that a typical semi-skilled or low skilled migrant does not have a general or technical education and training. They are employed in lowly jobs with wages of around the equivalent of Tk 13,000 a month. As per BILS: The vulnerability of less-skilled Bangladeshi migrant workers to exploitation, especially for those who are unauthorised, is also the result of negative public attitudes towards them in receiving societies.

These unfavorable attitudes have contributed to the irresolute reception that has marked less-skilled labour migration flows from Bangladesh. While declining labour market demand and other legitimate factors may inform these periodic shifts away from welcoming Bangladeshi workers, widespread antipathy towards them has also played a role.

When a migrant worker from Bangladesh lands at an unfamiliar country, without the language skill or even literacy, he is totally at the mercy of various exploiting agents and his prospective employer. In the Middle East, it is a common practice that his passport would be taken away and an identity card — called Iqama — would be given to him.

Some Arab employers would reduce migrant workers previously agreed wage significantly, knowing very well that this poor chap has no recourse but to accept the new offer.

These workers are also aware that any dissent would result in immediate dismissal and return home with the loss of all the monies they had forked out so far.

BILS stated that despite signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the Saudi government and other Middle East Muslim countries, these countries had been persistently violating the provisions of the resolution.

The workers who manage to get jobs abroad, mostly in the Middle East, after paying commissions, hand outs, kickbacks etcetera to touts,

various government officials and agency staff etcetera do so on their own initiatives.

These workers risk their life savings, their fortunes and their existence to eke out a living, only in the hope that they may be able to live a life free from poverty far in the future.

Apart from Kuwait, no other Middle Eastern country sets minimum salaries for migrant workers.

Migrant workers assert that due to lack of coordination and cooperation from officials and staff of the labour wings, they have been forced to lose their jobs and even face deportation from the countries they worked in.

With a view to resolving the issue, BILS has prepared the following recommendations: Pre migration training, language development, detecting fraud and taking action, minimum education, skill development and G2G contact. The recommendations should be implemented in a bid to improve the situation.

--The writer is a media activist.

RMG industry of Bangladesh needs global perspective

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed¹

Bangladesh has gradually integrated with the global trade. Our Ready Made Garments (RMG) alone has captured the 5% of total global apparel trade, which is the significant portion of Bangladesh trade. It is the landmark of Bangladesh trade history. Other industry like pharmaceutical and leather are entering in the world trade with huge potential. This participation in global trade put Bangladesh in global responsibilities also, such as workers rights, environment and security.

Bangladesh entered the era of globalisation and met international trade in mid 80's, when World Bank and IMF were formulating their policies in full swing and changes were taken place leaving socialist economic system.

It is needed to be recalled that the spirit of Bangladesh's heroic Liberation War and constitutional mandate have given it the direction for socialist economy with the guarantee of equal opportunity and fare distribution of wealth.

Bangladesh from the very first stage accepted the globalisation agenda and opened its market with following structural adjustment policy including denationalisation, public-private partnership and inviting foreign investment without any dedicated remark. Besides, Bangladesh entered the free market economy almost with no preparation.

As a result, the country faced the declining of its traditional industry like jute and textile, which created a huge negative impact on labour market, economy and society.

Still there is significant number of changes that somehow managed the damage of deindustrialisation process. One of them is emerging of RMG industry that created opportunity of huge number of jobs, which contributed in foreign exchange earnings. Externally because of Multi Fibre Arrangement(MFA) and internally because of low wages, absence or inactiveness of regulatory framework, state support and enthusiasm of our

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young entrepreneurs have made the possibility of rising of the RMG industry in Bangladesh from ground zero to number one industry that captured 5% apparel supply in the world within twenty years competing China, India and other giants. It must be a matter of pride for any nation.

Unfortunately, because of the narrow perspective especially in running internationally linked industry, long term preparation, framing the legal instruments in case of governing the industry, building up institution and human resources and effectively governing the industrial relation system to ensure workers participation and social dialogue, all shining images that the country built by itself, become fading.

According to the survey of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS, the series of workplace accidents that took place in the last fifteen years, 8012 workers killed in different sectors. There, the death toll at RMG sector was 1917, which is approximately one fourth of the total number. The highest number of workers (1133) loses their lives in Rana Plaza disaster in 2013. Reasons behind those tragedies were weak governance and inspection, no training or preparation to face the situation after accident, absent of functioning trade union and many more.

Unforgettable landmark tragedy happened in the last decade in several factories. After Rana Plaza disaster, it became the international top issue and agenda of discussion for all international bodies starting from Pope to ordinary consumers. Bangladesh Government responded promptly by taking different initiatives like signing international agreement in safety issue to defend stakeholders and global partners, taking initiatives on national plan of action, inviting Accord and Alliance and taking many other initiatives with ILO and other international trade union organisations and other national and international organisations, trade union and NGOs.

But as of now, especially as per the observation of ILO it seems international community are not very much satisfied with the present trend of strengthening the Labour Inspection Department, befitting the wages (Still it is low but double than the previous), forming trade union and many more.

After the incident of Rana Plaza and Tazreen, huge campaign started on the working condition, environment, life and

livelihood of Bangladeshi workers and the weak governing system for the industry, which was a natural consumer's reaction in this area. The consumer world always have the choice in the Free Market Economy. Suppliers give their highest importance on consumer's choice that ensures to include better products with cheaper price in a view to produce in environmental and social needs and decent condition, which is the international commitment in whole world now.

However, because of the narrow perspective, sometimes our government and owners misinterpret this. Actually, this campaign is not against any country or industry. This is the campaign for human rights and decent work. Government as a member of UN and ILO and signatory of all ILO core conventions, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is committed to ensure it.

Some senior leaders, politicians and ministers, with the same voice of the owners, branded the international campaign as conspiracy against the industry and the country. They blamed national and international trade unions, NGOs, human rights organisations for that.

The industry in Bangladesh is only a portion of the international supply chain, where the design is made abroad, materials are made in another country, brands are located in European or American state, and products are sold from the showrooms of Europe and America. Therefore, a country together with other countries needs to study the market potentiality.

We can recall how our policy makers keep their eyes shut in case of the development of our inspection department comparing the very fast development of the industry. Still they are on the back foot and making many barriers to form the trade union for social dialogue and to make the relevance in the framework according to the international needs.

Bangladesh is the member of WTO as well as ILO. In addition, it is WTO, which was trusted to ILO in its first conference in 1996 to look after the workers' rights in different countries.

Side by side, there are number of international instruments from the sourcing countries and their regional bodies like European Union that follow OECD Guidelines. Therefore, a country that supplies its product has lot of obligations. One of the obligations

is to ensure Decent Work through effective social dialogue and effective participation of the workers through their trade union. Without fulfilling those obligations, we will always be responsible to the consumer groups, human rights organisation and trade unions.

Just one example, Very recently, Human Rights Watch made some comments on the working condition and trade union rights of Bangladesh RMG industry. Just after that there were some reaction about the situation where some ministers branded the HRW as an unknown organisation. At present, HRW is vocal in case of revealing the truth of Rohingya issue that refers its position in favour of Bangladesh. They also fight in Middle East countries on the issue of Bangladeshi migrant workers. If we welcome their statement and invite them for discussion, it will rectify them toward the positivity. Therefore, we need a global perspective, while 50 Billion Dollar vision is not enough for that. How 50 Billion Dollar business can promote the industry, national economy and the life and livelihood of the 5 million workers that will determine whether it is vision or emotion.

An industry, which is becoming the lifeline of our economy, lining 5 million families with its daily business, we cannot look at this through a narrow focus. A recent published global survey conducted by McKinsey & Company shows the status of Bangladesh's RMG industry, where issues of infrastructure, compliance, suppliers' performance and skilled workforce, raw materials and economic and political stability are mentioned, while it underscores that utilities, road network, and port facilities are seen as major limiting factors, compliance situation has improved over the last few years but significant continued efforts required, labour costs are expected to increase, skill/capability/capacity gap needs to be closed, dependency on imports are considered a major source of risk regarding lead times and risk of political instability threatens sourcing activities.

We need to prepare ourselves for these. We should try to see the consumer's world with open eyes and to meet the demand. An isolated and grocery shop vision cannot open and complete in international trade regime.

Adjudication of Labour Issues & Legal Protection of Workers in Bangladesh

Recommendations from National Trade Union Federations

Introduction: 56.70 million Labourers are in employment right now in our country and there are seven Labour Courts to deal with Labour issues, three in Dhaka, two in Chittagong and one each in Khulna and Rajshahi. The issue of ensuring protection of legal rights of the workers has emerged urgent matter to deal with the steady expansion of Labour force. It is necessary to increase the number of Labour Courts as well as stronger role of the honorable members' participation in the dispensation of justice. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS organized seminars and workshops at different times for the formulation of recommendations from Trade Unions aimed at increasing effectiveness of the Labour Court in relation to the employers and the policy makers. The objective of making recommendations was to place it before the state policy making level.

BILS has continued its efforts to update and adapt to the need of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006(amended 2013) and Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015 and to make a comprehensive proposal in this regard through regular review and research and through exchanges of views of different parties concerned in the matter. In sequence with these, leaders of BILS associated National Trade Union Federations, BILS Advisory Council and Executive Council Members, Members of all the Labour Courts of Bangladesh on behalf of the workers and Labour Law experts have participated in the workshops organized by BILS at different times and submitted their respective recommendations. These recommendations included to bring all the working people under the protection of Labour Law and Labour Courts, to strengthen power of the Labour Courts, to make it more dynamic for ensuring necessary arrangement and facilities in discharging duties of the Labour Court Members on behalf of the workers and strengthening efficacy of the overall Labour Administration. In addition, the issues concerning appointment of Judges to the Labour Courts, the trial procedures and amendments of laws and selection of the Members of the Court for employees and

employers and duties and responsibilities of the Ministry of Labour and Employment came up and the participants of such fora deliberations raised more recommendations.

Recently, necessary recommendations were adopted through such workshops and seminars where representatives/delegates of the Members of Labour Court representing workers, representatives of Sramik-Kormochari Oikkyp Parishad-SKOP (Workers-Employees' Unity Council), representatives of organizations conducting cases in the Labour Court, Laour Law Experts, representatives of the Labour Court Bar Association, representatives of Labour Safety Forum and the labour leaders took part.

The recommendations received from the workshops organized by BILS at Divisional and national levels are briefly discussed here.

Bringing all working people under the protection of Labour Law and Labour Court

The first thing needed to ensure legal protection of the workers is bringing the workers of public and private, fromal and informal organizations irrespective of ownership of such organizations through amendments of the Labour Law. and to allow them the rights of Trade Union. Besides, necessary amends ought to have made in the definitions of workers, employers and organizations laod down in the labour legislation. The rights of all working people employed based on wages require to be recognised as workers and their rights to seek protection of the Labour Court should be ensured. The amendment of Labour Law needed for enhancing punishment for breach of the law and adjustment of punishment terms for different kinds of offense.

Providing for stricter provisions is also necessary to stop the current trend of irregular employment or outsourcing for jobs of regular nature. Prohibition of so-called promotions and designation in different ways and names in factories and establishments is essential in this regard. Giving workers and employees of semi-government, Nationalised Banks including public corporations the rights to seek protection of Labour Court is also necessary. Irrespective of the nature, terms and duration of employment, strict implementation of issuing appointment letter and identity card to each such employee/worker should be

compulsorily under section 5 of the labour Act. Giving the aggrieved workers/labourers right to file case directly is also essential for their protection.

Increasing Power of the Labour Court and Making It More Dynamic

Increasing the number of Labour Courts by establishing Labour Court in the developed industrial zones/ nearby district towns and running circuit courts in the divisional cities/towns and the busy industrial areas are needed to reduce pending cases. In this regard, establishing a new bench in the Labour Appeal tribunal is also essential. Structural improvement is needed in case of making provision of court building with required and enough facilities for all including the Judges, Members of the Court, Lawyers, justice seekers and officials and employees. The immediate shifting of the Labour Appeal Courts to a suited location/building and creation of enabling environment for the members of the court, aggrieved women and disabled is necessary. Necessary amendments and making rules for compulsory participation of both workers and employers and taking written views of the Members of the Labour Court are required.

All facilities and protocols existing for the District & Sessions Judges should be ensured for the appointed Chairman of the Labour Court. Alongside, provisions are needed for ensuring proper and better accountability of those concerned in matter of discharging their responsibilities. Removing unusual delay and foot dragging in the conduct of the cases are very much essential. Cases should be disposed by way of understanding between two parties after review of evidences and exhibits in possible instances for avoiding long hearing and lessening dependence on witnesses. Shifting criminal cases to other weekdays than Thursdays is better.

To complete the whole proceedings of the case/cases ensuring attendance of the member with whose presence it was initiated and to deliver judgment with importance given to the Member present in the hearing besides referring to the opinions of the members in the judgment are essential. It is also necessary to strictly enforce the rules for appointing new Members removing those remaining absent without permission of the court or

assigning any reason thereof. In case of their absence for 3(three) consecutive days it is needed to ensure application of relevant rules. It is also important to implement the provisions for compulsion of attendance of the Members and taking their written opinion.

It is required to declare judgment in the open court, reading out opinions of the Members alongside the judgment of the Judge and taking measures so that the petitioner worker could get the copy of judgment within 15 days of delivery of judgment. Ensuring role of the members of the Labour Court in matter relating to wages and compensation cases is very much important.

It is needed to bring Labour Court directly under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court that is the Judiciary. Following this, holding monthly and quarterly meeting of the Members of the Court and Lawyers of the Bar is also necessary. Appointing government pleader in the Court and provision for regular transfer of Labour Court employees are also needed.

It is required to take initiatives for disposal of pending cases by constituting a special tribunal. In case of nominating Member of the court on behalf of the employer it is important to send those people who have decision making power and not those who is the employee of the employer. Such people should be made representative on behalf of employer or worker who have enough knowledge on Labour Law and time to attend the court. Their attendance in the court shall be made compulsory.

Making Necessary Arrangement and Ensuring Facilities in Discharge of Responsibility for the Members of Lalour Side

Giving preference to qualification, experience and involvement with the labour movement over political consideration is important in making nomination as Member of the Labour Court. Organizing training at government level and preparing a relevant training manual after the nomination of members to increase their efficiency concerning Labour Law are also equally important. Arranging for regular briefing on the past judgments and publication of cases and the judgments of higher courts is a good practice. Round table conference or exchanging views

across the table can be arranged for the former Members of the Labour Court, experienced lawyers, the officials of the relevant government Departments and retired Judges and BILS might take such initiative.

The nomination of more women Members to the Labour Court can be taken into consideration. Besides, upward review of honoraria for the Members in view of present economic situation is essential. Arranging exclusive sitting arrangement of the Members and introducing necessary ICT support in the library with providing reference materials are necessary for them.

Strengthening Efficacy and Administration

Adopting necessary measures aimed at implementation of Labour Law and receipt of legal redress of the workers and to obtain these, ensuring more dynamic the labour administration, inspection and procedures of resolving litigation through enhance advocacy program of the Trade Union are important as part of strengthening the efficiency.

Increasing number of Labour Inspectors and Labour offices; regular training for increasing efficiency of the labour inspectors and appointment of Lawyers at government level for assisting in the conduct of cases alongside Labour Inspector at Labour Court are also needed here. Besides, extending legal aid programme to Labour Court and simplifying bottler-neck free Trade Union Registration may also strengthen the process.

Recommendations Concerning Appointment of Labour Court Judges

Judges generally considers their appointment in the Labour Court tantamount to a kind of punishment. The government step is needed to steer clear this mentality. Contractual appointment of judges in labour appeal Court at the leg of tennure saps morale of the judges. This crisis needs to be resolved. Ensuring regular day to day attendance of Judges at the court is a must. Therefore, taking measures to fill the vacant positions of judge in the Labour Court is also important. It is necessary to inform the Labour Court Judges about the importance of the members at the time of appointment of Judges to the Labour Court.

Arranging training of the judges appointed to the Labour Court in Judicial Training Centre on Labour Law is also important when they are appointed.

Trial Procedure and Recommendations Concerning Revising Law

Forming commission is important to find out identity of the workers. Many workers do not get appointment letter and this will ensure the rights of these workers to sue employers.

It is important to introduce provision allowing workers of the factory areas to sue in the local Labour Court. Such cases are required to be filed in Dhaka because the factory headquarters are located in Dhaka.

ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) mechanism is needed to be made. It is also needed to dispose cases speedier enough by making obligatory payment of wages and ADR mechanism. It is also a good option to introduce provision for e-mail notice.

The duration of making statement to be reduced. To give effect to the provision for a fine for extension of time. The tendency of moving to higher court needed to be discouraged. Speedier payment of dues of the workers is possible by implementing Section 12a. Simplifying legal procedure of enforcing the judgment.

Recommendations Concerning labourers and Employers

Mandatory mention of opinions of the members in the judgment is required. (It is only possible to give such opinions if a single and certain Member attends court all through from beginning to the end of the case).

The Members representing the employers remain usually absent in the court. Therefore, it is necessary that a provision is made allowing hearing to continue if one member of the either sides is present in the court.

Making provision is essential for involvement of the Members in all cases excepting CR cases. Ensuring increased honorarium, privileges, and facilities of the members is important. The trial of Criminal cases need be held on a fixed day so that the members of the Labour Court can avoid embarrassment.

Detailed inclusion of the role and activity of the members in the Labour Law is needed. Preparing schedule of attendance of Members in the Labour Court in accord with specific cases is also important. It is also important to declare specifically the status of the Members. In the papers of the Labour Court, it is written `wages of the Members and not `honarium. This practice should be reversed. Ensuring library and reference books is an important issue. Organizing visits of the Members to neighboring countries for exchanging views and materials concerning Labour Court Programmes will be added advantage. It is also important to organise training for the Members.

What the Ministry of Labour and Employment should Do

It is essential to ensure monitoring and annual accountability under the Ministry. It is also necessary to supervise the number of cases pending and aimed at pointing out reasons why they have become backlog etc. Besides, increasing the number Labour Courts and establishing Labour Court in the labour intensive areas will be a good initiative in this regard. For making Section-5 mandatory letter concerning this should to be issued from the ministry.

Other Recommendations

Other recommendations are there like ensuring payment of compensation to the worker in case of persistent prolongation of trial procedure by the employer and identifying e anomalies in the Labour Law that delay the trial process and making recommendations.

Labour Law provision needs in complying with the tripartite conditionalities in the constitution of the court but the provision ought to be included that only the presence of Labour side in conduct of the court shall be enough.

Attendance Register needed to be introduced to keep record of the attendance of the Members. Assistant Judges need to be given responsibility by introducing lower tier of the existing Labour Court to let them acquire experience in Labour Law in phases under the this process.

Publication Policy

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies - BILS has been working on labour issues since its establishment in 1995. BILS endeavors to uphold the causes of working people and Trade Unions of Bangladesh. Twelve major National Trade Union federations are associated with BILS.

Keeping in view to build a just and democratic society, enabling the workers organizations to play proper role as a major force, BILS emphasizes on capacity building of the Trade Unions through trainings, research and information sharing. Protecting workers rights is the main objectives of BILS and it strives to promote fair and worker friendly policies and Laws in Bangladesh. It also plays the role of a catalyst in building relations between trade unions, civil society and the government on labour market issues.

The 'Labour' is a half- yearly journal published by BILS with twin objectives. The first objective is publishing research-based articles on different issues related to the labour, establishment of labour rights, labour welfare, labour laws and the likes. The research articles published are 'double blind' peer reviewed. Secondly, it publishes contributions from the labour activists focusing on the above-mentioned issues with the hope that the practical and empirical realities are properly recorded with an archival value. The journal actually seeks to provide an intellectual platform for the national and international scholars, critics, academicians, researchers and activists of labour rights and human rights issues. It aims to promote interdisciplinary research on labour laws, labour policy, occupational health and safety, job market situation, industrial relations, conflict resolution, wages, employment generation, workers migration and social safety net in Bangladesh.

The guidelines to the contributors for the manuscripts preparation and submission are mentioned below:

1. The submitted manuscript should be original and contributing to some new dimensions in the concerned fields noted and is not published or under consideration for publication elsewhere.
2. Each manuscript is first reviewed by the editorial board to judge its thematic suitability for publication, the selected ones are then sent to reviewer(s) for 'double blind' peer review. Based on the recommendation of the peer review, the editorial board decides the acceptability, revision or rejection of the manuscript.

3. The paper should include an abstract, which is not more than 150 words.
4. The Keywords used in the article should appear at the beginning and which should not exceed five in number.
5. Manuscripts to be considered for publication must be written in correct English and be submitted in accordance with the prescribed format. Articles must be free from all kinds of grammatical mistakes.
6. The author should retain a copy of the manuscript for his/her own reference.
7. Three (3) copies of article(s) are to be submitted to the Editor of the Journal in font size 12 (twelve) of Times New Roman on A4 size paper.
9. The figures & diagrams should be commensurate with the font size of the article.
10. Manuscripts will be accepted for publication on understanding that they are subjected to editorial revision.
11. The manuscript should be typed, double spaced throughout (excepting the abstract) with wide margin, on one side of the paper only.
12. If the manuscript is accepted finally for publication, the author(s) will be asked to submit their copies in final form in a Formatted CD, incorporating the changes and corrections as suggested by the reviewers.
13. The length of the manuscript should not exceed 5000 (five thousand) words and Book Review should not exceed 1000 (one thousand) words.
14. The manuscript should begin from the second page and the first page should contain the title, name of the author, his affiliation, address, telephone & fax number, and e-mail address.
15. References should be numbered consecutively in the text and grouped together at the end of the paper.
16. References should be set out in alphabetical order of the author's last name in a list at the end of the article.
17. Observations to help clarify text or give additional information should be given as End Notes at the end of the article. All End Notes should be numbered and the numbers should correspond to the numbers given in the main body of the text.

18. The responsibility for opinions expressed in the published articles or other comments rests with the author(s).
19. A copy of the journal will be sent to the author(S) free of charge.
20. The copyright of the paper will be reserved by the BILS once it is accepted for publication in the journal. The authors must obtain permission from the BILS authority for publishing it elsewhere.
21. All editorial communications should be made to the following address:

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BILS

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS was established in 1995. The main objectives of BILS are follows :

- To help in strengthening the democratic functioning of the trade unions and to improve their services towards the society.
- To assist the trade unions in Bangladesh for becoming self-reliant through education, training, research, campaign and communication among them and other social partners as well as civil society.
- To provide various support to the trade union movement in Bangladesh and to participate effectively in the development process of the country.
- To assist the increased participation and representation of women and young workers in trade unions.
- To eliminate all kinds of discrimination between male and female workers.
- To improve occupational health and safety situation and worker's welfare as a whole.
- To brighten the image of the trade union movement in Bangladesh and to increase the organised workforce & consolidate the strength of trade union movement.
- To establish greater unity in labour movement of Bangladesh.
- To undertake multifaceted activities for human resource development.
- To introduce programmes for productivity and good industrial relation.