

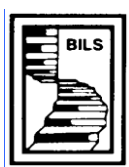
# **A Situation Analysis Study**

## **Workers Rights & Gender Based Violence in the RMG and TU capacity to Deal with These**



**January 2018**

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## **Acronyms**

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
BBS	-	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BGMEA	-	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BKMEA	-	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BILS	-	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
BLA	-	Bangladesh Labour Act
CBA	-	Collective Bargaining Agent
CBO	-	Collective Bargaining Organisation
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
DoL	-	Department of Labour
DIFE	-	Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment
EPZ	-	Export Processing Zone
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
FNV	-	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging
GBV	-	Gender Based Violence
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GSP	-	Generalized System of Preference
GTZ	-	German Technical Cooperation Metro Group
ILO	-	International Labour Organisation
INGO	-	International NGO
MoLE	-	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoLPA	-	Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs
MoWCA	-	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MP	-	Member of Parliament
MWB	-	Minimum Wage Board
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTUC	-	National Trade Union Confederation
OHS	-	Occupational Health and Safety
PC	-	Participation Committee
RMG	-	Ready Made Garment
SC	-	Solidarity Center
SCF	-	Social Compliance Forum
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal
TCC	-	Tripartite Consultative Council
TU	-	Trade Union
TUF	-	Trade Union Federation
USD	-	USA Dollar
WWA	-	Workers Welfare Association

## Executive Summary

This study explores rights of workers and GBV in the RMG and role and performances of trade unions in dealing with them. Based on qualitative approaches, data collected both from primary and secondary sources. Study findings are analysed from a right based framework particularly following two popular traditional methods such as stakeholders' analysis and problem tree analysis.

It is analyse in the Stakeholders' analysis section that workers particularly women workers are the main right-holder stakeholders in the entire domain of analyses. Among right bearer stakeholders, Plant level Union, TU, CBO, PC, WWA, RMG TUFs, NTUC, International TUs, BGMEA and BKMEA, DIFE, DoL, industrial police, local police and administration, and local government, MPs, Ministry of Commerce, MoWCA, MoLPA & Parliamentary Standing Committees on MoLE, MoWCA & MoLPA, Brands/buyers, a number of NGOs/CSOs and media are analyse most important and influential. Apart from these, role from the EU, USA, UN, ILO and a number of INGOs is analyse important in study issues.

It is analyse in the 'Problem Tree Analysis' section that workers particularly women workers are not used to claim their rights at workplace. Job insecurity, force/harassments, social and economic vulnerability and poverty are analyse four main reasons for this. Job insecurity is particularly manifested from poor job records, indiscriminate practice of dismissal/discharge/firing and laid-offs and factory lock outs, factory closure and lack of skills and education and workers organization. Secondly, it is analyse that TUs cannot effectively defend RMG workers rights. There are only a few plant level unions and women leaders. There is serious inequality in skills and capacity between two parties in the factory based bargaining processes. RMG TUFs particularly perform collective protest/movement and mediatory role in settling workers claim in which, employer is always the target. This of TUF's role is intolerable to the employers. Thirdly, employers are very much authoritative towards workers aspects of rights as well as have a negative attitude to the unionization aspects. Fourthly, governance mechanisms are employers friendly and largely non-responsive to workers issues. There are too many institutions, actors, factors and processes. There is little coordination between and among them. Roles and responsibilities are not always clear and accountability arrangements are largely missing. Including all these there is manifested a situation in which RMG workers are deprived of rights and GBV continued as it is.

Service documentation is rather poor. Less than 10% workers get appointment letter. There is fraud in service book maintenance. There is poor wage practices, long overtime hours at night and fraudulence in recording and payment. Workers may need to work in the holidays to avail festival leave. Maternity leave and benefits are mostly arbitrary curtailed. OHS is supply chain driven in which building and fire safety tops the workers aspects of OHS. Coercion/force is largely practiced in the production processes. Sack/dismissal/discharge is a routine job. There is threat, false criminal charge, arrest, detention, blacklisting and others following any protest or movement.

It is further analyse that gender division of labour and discrimination in wage practices are common in which young and good looking women are often the main beneficiaries. Gender based Violence particularly occur at three main levels i.e., i) at factories, ii) in the street, and iii) at community. GBV

has its different types and forms based on three main levels and mainly include shouting, expletives/Gali, hair pulling, hitting, use of sexually offended vocabulary, expressing of illicit proposal, sitting at machines and unwanted touching, standing very close and pinching and kissing, sexual exploitation, vulgar comments, whistling grabbing, groping, shoving, defamation, forged marriage, rape, picking up, and murder. There is no women friendly reporting/complaining system and GBV is seldom reported.

Union related activisms are more or less resisted. Application submission and awarding of union registration is high following industrial accident. Both application submission and union registration decrease drastically during normal time and on the other hand rejection of application increases ever. Reportedly, many of the newly formed trade unions are gone inactive. It is difficult to hold election on a regular basis. A number of leaders are sued on claims of criminal acts like property damage, theft and unlawful assembly. Probability of workers unrests is always on a worrying stage.

Given these analyses this study has recommended the following:

- ➔ It is needed to act on increasing rights claiming ability of workers. For this, it is important that employment, income and social security of workers are properly taken care of. To address employment security an independent RMG employment commission can be thought off. A just wage structure can be the immediate first step to address income security of workers. Thirdly, there is a clear need for adopting a number of special and different treatments to address social security of RMG workers.
- ➔ To enable TUs to effectively defend rights the first and foremost prerequisite is that factories have unions and CBOs. TU cannot be replaced by either PC or WWA and there need to be uniqueness of application of trade union in all policies/laws. Secondly, there is a clear need to continuous capacitating and equipping of trade unions/CBOs with knowledge, skills and resources. Intolerance to unionisation aspects by the employers needs addressing. Efforts to be taken to ensure that RMG TUFs are increasingly following democratic practices within themselves and there is less political division between and among them. Social dialogue can be emphasized to influence macro level social and economic policies.
- ➔ It is important that participatory assessment of prevailing situation and practices and needs and priorities of workers and that of RMG capacity is made first before any effective planning is done. Knowledge generation need to be an ongoing process for couple of years and there is a clear need to introduce transparent mechanism for systematic documentation of a number of RMG related information based on a prior set of indicators that agreed by all main parties. Reactive one shot of a thing to any emerging crisis may not help in the long run.
- ➔ Another important priority is analyse to continuous sensitizing and influencing of RMG employers to bring about desired changes at workplace. To bring about sustainable changes in business rules, attitude, behavior and practices it is a must that RMG employers do endorse the same and are involved in the change processes. This further requires a medium to long-term perspective. There needs to be consistent participatory efforts to involve RMG employers in analysing socio-economic security of workers from a sustainable RMG perspective. Bypassing or

overlooking RMG employers must not bring any solution.

- ➔ A responsive government and governance is analyse need to be an honest priority. Government must decide and commit first to achieve a sustainable RMG. Once decision is achieved, immediate step is to be taken to participatory review and agreeing and thereby to bring about necessary consistency and conformities in existing laws and practices. Side by side, law execution deserve furthermore strengthening.

Secondly, there needs to be clearly set roles, responsibilities and accountability arrangements for different Institutions, actors, factors and processes and functional coordination mechanism established between and among them. Arbitration and conciliation practices are to be consistent and systematic. TU registration system needs easing with less control. TUs can be legally assigned a watchdog role in all of these.

- ➔ To protect RMG women workers from GBV, special and different treatments need to be taking both at factory and community levels. In policy/rules, protection of GBV is to be made a binding functional responsibility by the plant level unions. Secondly, it is important that plant level unions have sufficient women leaders. Thirdly, alternative GBV reporting channel, authority and investigation processes are to be created and executed. At community level, local community and local government and civil society engaged protection mechanism is analyse effective and expected at this stage.

## **1.0 Chapter One**

### **The Setting, Objectives, Methodology & Analysis Plan**

#### **1.1 The Setting**

RMG industry has achieved an exponential growth for last couple of decades. Starting from export earnings of around 0.03 billion USD only in the late seventies, it has now raised to more than 28 billion USD which is more than eighty percent of the country's total export earnings. An estimated around 3.2 million workforce is employed in the RMG (BBS, 2017). More importantly, it is the largest formal sector women employers in the country and child labour is one of the lowest in the RMG industry. Virtually, RMG is now the number one industry in Bangladesh. Available estimates suggest that RMG's contribution to GDP has risen from 3% in 1991 to 13% in 2015.

First phase of RMG growth is done excellently. Now, it is a second crucial phase in which slow but sustainable growth is important. Bangladesh is not too experienced in this. Besides, both global and national context and focuses are changing rapidly. Globalization aspects like SDGs and its issues of decent work, safety and security of workplace, environmental safety and mitigation aspect of climate change are increasingly in focus. Government has strong commitment to comply with them and to continue with the SDG set targets and processes. That means Bangladesh's RMG is now under tight scrutiny by a number of global and regional governances and processes like the UN, the ILO, the Global Sustainability Compact and others. From a trade perspective, Bangladesh is now ranked in the second highest position in the global market share of RMG export with its current market share of 6% only. There are a number of countries having marginal gaps in the market share are competing with Bangladesh. Relevantly, labour rights standards and practices in the Bangladesh's RMG is increasingly in attention and focus by a number of globally influential actors/stakeholders like brands, buyers, consumers, international trade unions, trade bodies, NGOs/CSOs and media, who have both stake and strong ties with the global RMG value chain. China, the number one RMG exporting country which alone has 39 per cent share of the world RMG export market is far beyond any competition with Bangladesh. In a time with advanced information technology it is really tough to increase market share of RMG export ignoring ever growing concerns and emphasis of the relevant actors in the value chain on labour rights standards and practices. This is what reflected by a number of global actions and reactions in last couple of years. On June 2013, the US has suspended long-time Generalized System of Preference (GSP) benefits for Bangladesh in a symbolic response to dangerous conditions in the RMG industry. A "sustainability compact" was agreed and signed between the EU and Bangladesh in 2013 aiming to address labour rights concerns in the country's RMG industry. The progresses under sustainability compact is under a continued scrutiny and review by the EU. The ACCORD and Alliance for Bangladesh's workers safety have been initiated to ensure fire and building safety.

At national level, Bangladesh is gradually moving to the status of a lower middle income economy shifting from the status of a least developed economy. Export earnings from the RMG and foreign remittances by the Bangladeshi migrant workers are two of its main economic bases for growth and development. To successfully transform to a middle income economy, a sustainable RMG is thus a

must. Though, the national accounts of the RMG industry is not in any comfort zone for last few years. Against a set target of 50 billion export earnings by 2021, there has been a continuous lessening of earning price of products though volume of export is on an increasing trend. On the other hand, a series of industrial incidences that occurred in the last few years, have shaken the entire world. Rana Plaza was collapsed on 24 April 2013 had caused 1136 deaths, 2500 injured and another 379 were gone missing. Firing incidence in the Tazreen Fashions held on 24 November 2012 had caused 112 deaths and more than 200 were injured. Tampaco Foils factory firing incidence on 10 September 2016 had caused 40 deaths, 40 injured while 11 were missing completely. Apart from these, workers unrest and violence and repression have been a common practice now a day in which the role of the trade unions is controlled strictly. On the other hand, there has been an increasing pressure from relevant stakeholders in the value chain to address important aspects of labour rights. So far, compliance cost is born by the producers only.

Given these backdrops, it is though important at this stage to emphasize on newer value added products, regional market capturing, and reshaping of trade policy perspectives and associated other financial controls and regulations at the macro level, the core emphasis at micro level need to be on workers right and industrial relation aspects. Employment particularly of women employment in the formal sector is the most value additive aspect in the entire domain of the RMG production. Unless there is sustainable change in the lives of this bulk of women workers, sustainable outlook to the entire industry may suffer in the long run like Srilanka. At the same time, we need healthy cooperation between employers and workers to agree on priority issues affecting working environment at large.

This study is a small endeavour from the part of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS to sketch a concise summary of the prevailing situation of the RMG workers particularly of women workers and of the persisting industrial relations. Initially, the study is project need driven. This is part of the BILS-FNV Netherland partnering project titled “Social Dialogue, gender equality and decent work in Bangladesh” which is being implemented in Bangladesh since November 2016. However, because of the amount of efforts given and of the depth of its analyses, this study is expected to be equally useful to a number of other stakeholders connected in the RMG value chain.

## **1.2 Study Objectives**

- A) To assess persisting situation of worker’s rights and the aspects of gender violence and discrimination in the country’s RMG Sector
- B) To assess the capacity of the Trade Unions to deal with RMG Workers’ rights particularly of women workers’ rights.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

This study endeavors to analyse the following four main research questions:

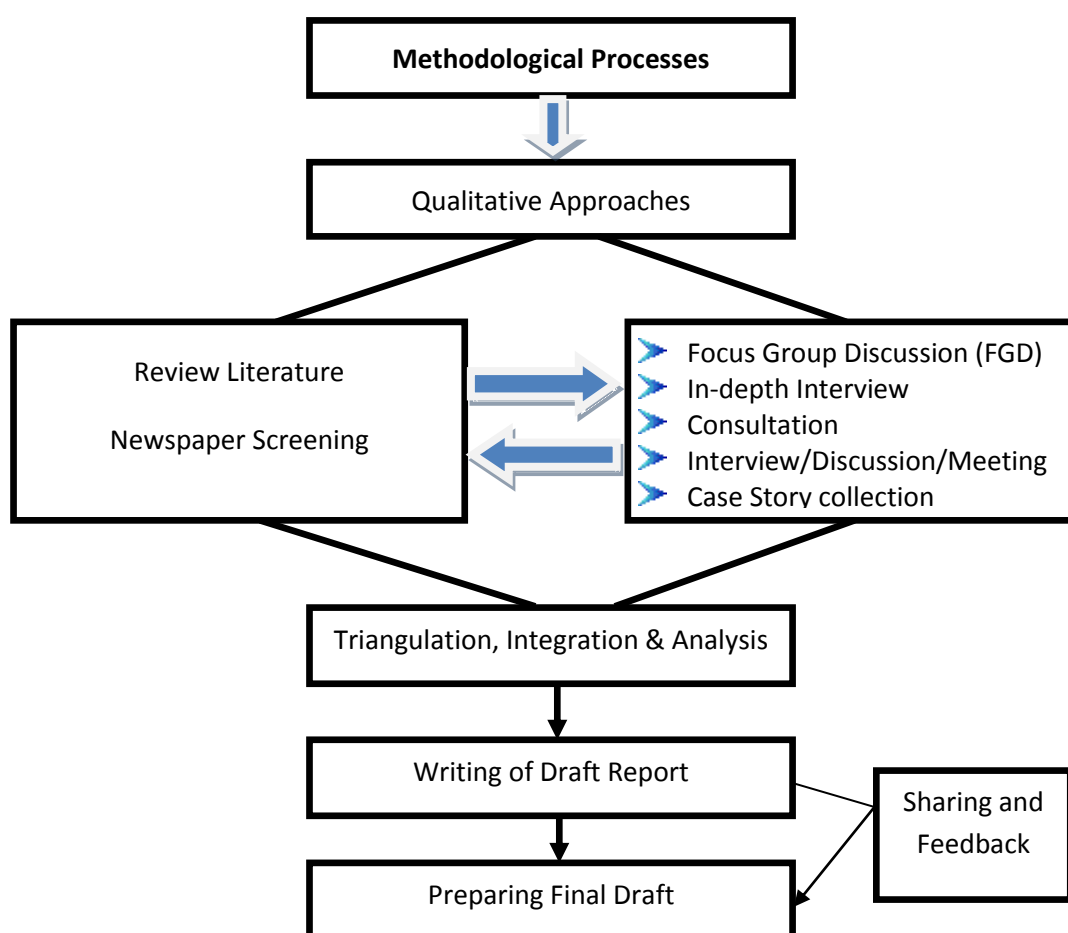
- A) Do the workers claim rights? If so, then what are the enabling factors? If not, then what are the issues that restricting them from claiming of their rights?
- B) Do the right bearer stakeholders particularly trade unions defend rights? If so, then what are the enabling factors? If not, then what are the issues that restricting them from defending rights?

- C) How do the workers, TUs and CSOs perceive the attitude of the employer towards governing workers' rights, gender discrimination and violence and TU practices?
- D) Do the governance is responsive to the study issues at RMG sector? If yes, then what are the analyses of responsiveness? If not, then what are the important analyses?

#### 1.4 Methodology

This study is predominantly premised on qualitative paradigm of researches. Information is collected both from primary and secondary sources. Survey reports from authentic government and private sources, published and non-published research documents, seminar/conference papers and proceedings, articles, presentations, digital documents available in social media and daily newspapers are mainly sourced for collection of secondary information. Primary information is collected from greater Dhaka district only. Four main apparel hubs are covered from greater Dhaka. They are i) Ashulia from Savar, ii) Gazipur, iii) Narayanganj, and iv) Dhaka.

The methodology of this study broadly included Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Interview, Consultation, Newspaper Screening and Literature Review. A set of pre-developed checklists are used for collecting data from primary and secondary sources. Different checklists are used to collect data from different stakeholders and sources.



#### Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD is emphasized to collect data from RMG sector women workers. Issues around worker's rights at workplace, gender discrimination and violence at both workplace and community are primarily

addressed in the FGDs. A second emphasis in the FGDs was to know about worker's perspective of TU's capacity in defending workers rights particularly of gender rights. A total of 12 FGDs are conducted. All including 100 workers were present in the FGDs. FGD participants were simultaneously women workers and members of either a basic union or solidarity members of an area based trade union federation.

To ensure representativeness of sampling a three stages process are followed to select FGD participants. At first stage, 12 RMG sectoral Trade Union Federations (TUFs) are selected of them six were from BILS's affiliated TUFs and the rest six were from IndustriALL affiliated TUFs. Based on volume of members, 2 top ranged, 2 middle ranged and 2 low ranged TUFs are selected from each of BILS and IndustriALL affiliated TUFs. At second stage, each of the selected 12 TUFs are asked to nominate 1 functional factory based or area based trade union from their affiliated trade unions. Thus, a total of 12 factory based/area based trade unions are selected. At third stage, taking women workers members from these 12 factory based/area based trade unions 12 FGDs are conducted.

### **In-depth Interview**

In-depth interview is emphasized to collect information from the trade union leaders. Same issues were addressed in the in-depth interviews as of FGDs but with an alternative emphasis. More clearly, in the in-depth interviews primary emphasis was to explore trade union capacity in dealing with workers' issues with particular focus on women workers' issues. And the secondary emphasis was to capture the Trade union's perspective of the underlying situation of workers' rights and those of gender discrimination and violence.

12 in-depth interviews are conducted with the trade union leaders. Selection of 12 trade union leaders for in-depth interviews was same to that of first stage followed in the FGDS to select RMG sectoral Trade Union Federations (TUFs). More specifically, based on the number of members, 2 top ranged, 2 middle ranged and 2 low ranged TUFs are selected from each of BILS and IndustriALL affiliated TUFs. Then their official representatives were interviewed in-depth going to their respective offices. Each of these interviews last plus-minus 2 hours. Since, primary focus was to ensure capacity analysis, an institutional mapping approach was followed and thus multiple participants were interviewed in every sitting.

### **Consultation/Meeting**

Consultation meeting is emphasized to collect information from the cluster committee which is particularly a recent initiative by the IndustriALL Bangladesh to ensure coordination and cooperation among the TUs who are working on RMG issues. Four cluster committees are functional in four different RMG hubs in and around greater Dhaka city.

On 25 July 2017, consultation meeting was held with the cluster committees. It was a long discussion for around 3 hours based on a pre-developed independent checklist. 14 TU leaders from 4 cluster committees participated the meeting. The key focus of this consultation meeting was to understand the effectiveness of this new initiative to dealing with the RMG workers issues and of the underlying governance and accountability mechanisms in that. This is expected to help drawing a number of capacity development indicators for the TUs working on RMG workers rights.

### **Interview/Discussion/Meeting**

Interview/discussion/meeting is emphasized for conducting series of one to one meeting held with a number of right bearer stakeholders such as national trade union leaders, CSO/NGO representatives, experts/academics and employers.

It was particularly to cross-check the validity/authenticity of a number of concerns that were expressed in the FGDs and in-depth interviews and to explore expert opinions/views behind those. For example, among others, it was expressed in both the FGDs and in-depth interviews that TUs cannot effectively respond to issues of the RMG sector women workers. Having this backdrop, opinions/views were particularly sought from the national trade union leaders, CSO/NGO representatives, experts/academics and employers of the underlying/hidden reasons for this and of the remedies. Thus, it has been possible to draw an objective analysis of the situating prevailing on issues of RMG workers particularly of women workers and of the capacities of the TUs dealing with RMG workers rights.

### **Newspaper Screening**

Newspaper screening is particularly emphasized to get gender violence related information prevalent both at RMG factories and in the communities. Since, formal reporting of gender violence is insignificant. Apart from this, a few broad-based indicators like job loss in the RMG and accidents & unrest and TUs role in these are also covered from newspaper screening. These help to draw a complete picture of the RMG situation and to ensure necessary triangulation of information collected from primary sources. 13 national news dailies are screened for the period of January to December 2016. They are the following:

1. The Daily Prothom Alo
2. The Daily Sangbad
3. The Daily Independent
4. The Daily Noya Diganta
5. The Daily Janakantho
6. The Daily Observer
7. The Daily Jugantor
8. The Daily Ittefaq
9. The Daily Samokal
10. The Daily Kalerkantho
11. The Daily New Age
12. The Daily Daily Star
13. The Daily Financial Express

There was clear effort to avoid double counting of same information. Data collected from newspaper screening is processed and analyzed by using Microsoft Excel in computer. Descriptive analysis is made finally.

## Literature Review

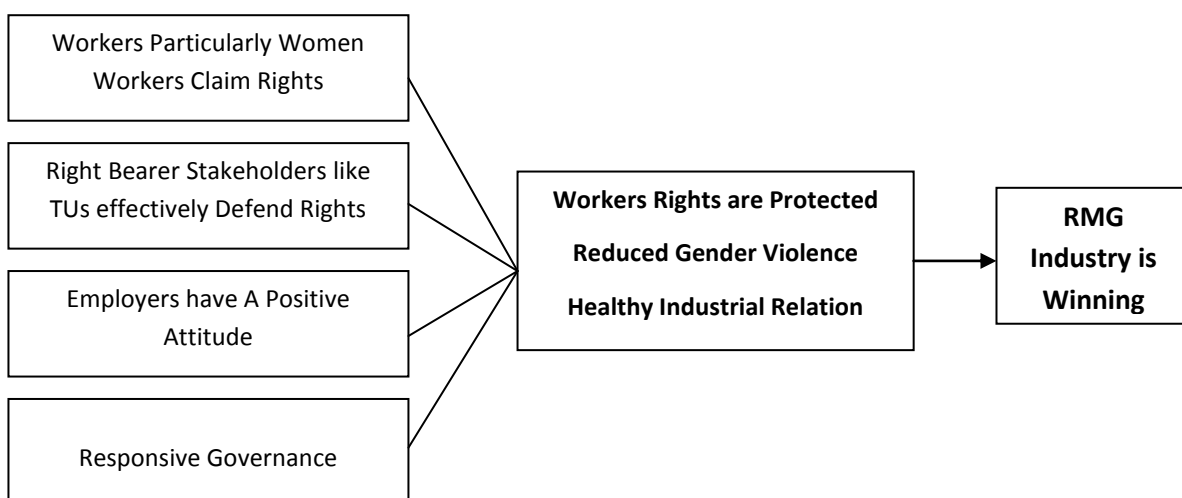
Literature review was a continuous process throughout the entire lifecycle of the study. Two different sets of literature are particularly reviewed i.e., 1) study/research papers and journal articles, and 2) Policy/Law review.

Review of study/research papers and journal articles is done at 3 stages. At first stage, 2 research assistants read through of all available literatures on a random basis. Study/Research reports and articles available in the internet and those of already collected ones in the BILS's library are mainly covered in this. Thus, it was possible to short listing of 20 contemporary main study/research reports and articles for reviewing in detail at a later second and third stage. Study/research/articles detailing RMG workers situation with particular focus on gender violence and discrimination was the dominant criteria followed for short-listing. At a second stage, a fast-cut scanning of all short-listed literatures is done. Thus, it was possible to determine a right based analysis plan and to develop a number of checklists to collect primary information from different stakeholders and sources. Behind the analysis plan, information gaps that deserve exploring under present research are also identified. At a third stage, a detailed literature review is done to bring about necessary triangulation of information collected from primary and secondary sources. Thus, it has been possible to ensure an integrated analysis of findings of both primary and secondary information throughout the entire writing.

Side by side, there continued an independent process of reviewing important labour related policies and laws from a gender lens. Expert opinion is finally sought on main issues/weaknesses that came out of the review.

### 1.5 Analysis Plan

To ensure a simple understanding of the situation, two popular traditional analytical tools/techniques i.e., A) stakeholder analysis and B) problem tree analysis are particularly used. A right based perspective of analysis is however considered at large. Based on a first-cut scanning of the available literature a simple right based construct of analysis plan is thought off as under:



It is thus conceptualized that 1) if the right holder stakeholders particularly workers/women workers do claim rights, 2) if the right bearer stakeholders like TUs, CSO/NGOs effectively defend rights, 3) if the employers have a positive attitude, and 4) if there is a responsive governance then there is a

winning RMG industry in which workers' rights are protected, women workers are less discriminated and there prevails a healthy industrial relation.

Alternatively, when 1) right holder stakeholders are not in a position to claim rights, 2) right bearer stakeholders cannot effectively defend rights, 3) employers have a negative attitude and 4) there is less responsive governance, then there is a non-healthy industrial relation prevails in which gender violence and discrimination continued high and workers are less entitled to rights.

## 2.0 Chapter Two

### Study Findings: Stakeholders Analysis

#### 2.1 Introduction

From a right based perspective, there are two main types of stakeholders such as 1) Right Holder Stakeholders, and 2) Duty/Right Bearer Stakeholders. Given the research objectives, this study finds the RMG workers particularly women workers as the right-holder stakeholders. Among duty bearer stakeholders there is however identified both individual stakeholders and institutions. TUs, employers & BGMEA, Brands/Buyers, CBO, Participation committee, safety committee, Government (MoLE & DOL, DIFE, Parliamentary Standing Committee, MPs), NGO/CSOs working on labour rights & gender issues, Consumers, ACCORD & safety Alliance and media are identified main duty bearer stakeholders.

#### 2.2 Stakeholders Analyses

Brief narratives for every individual stakeholders and institutions are given below:

##### **Workers & Women Workers**

Different sources available are giving different counting of work forces in the RMG industries. DIFE has published a full database of 4841 RMG factories in 2017 (DIFE 2017). According to this data base, 2,155,453 workers are currently employed in the RMG industry of them 43% are men and 57% are women. The same database has documented that out of 4,841 factories 4,056 are in greater Dhaka district which has employed 1888669 workers of them nearly 55% are women and 45% are men (DIFE 2017) as shown in the following table:

**RMG Factories & Workforce in Greater Dhaka District**

District	Factories	Male	Female	Total
Dhaka	1,975	342,450	507,436	849,886
Gazipur	1,305	393,081	414,610	807,691
Manikganj	4	2,309	4,478	6,787
Narayanganj	740	104,406	115,375	219,781
Narsingdi	17	480	430	910
Munshiganj	2	0	0	0
Nawabganj	1	0	0	0
Tangail	12	1264	2350	3614
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,056</b>	<b>843,990</b>	<b>1,044,679</b>	<b>1,888,669</b>

**Source: Authors counting based on DIFE's RMG Factories Database**

As per BGMEA documentation, there are 4,482 RMG factories employing about 4 million workforces of them 3.2 million are women (BGMEA, 2017). Labour Force Survey of the government which ever counts the biggest sample sizes in Bangladesh has documented that there are 3137000 workforces employed in the RMG factories of them 1699000 are men and 1,438,000 are women (QLFS, 2017).

Only DIFE has Districts-wise documentation of RMG factories and respective distribution of workforces. DIFE's documentation of number of factories looks

authentic and acceptable since a full list of factories is available. However, counting of number of workforce is significantly low to that of other estimates/counting. On the other hand, BGMEA counting of number of workers and women workers is significantly higher to that of other estimates/counting. From the counting of the Labour Force Survey, RMG has significantly large men workers (around 55%) than women workers (around 45%), which is quite misleading. During entry and closing hours of the RMG factories in different industrial locations in Dhaka city it is observed in the study that RMG factories have quite a large number of women workers than men workers. These findings have been supplemented in all interviews and FGDs.

Skill and education gaps are one of the highest among RMG workers. 100 women workers do participate in 12 FGDs conducted under this study. Analysis shows that nearly half (48%) of women workers have studied between six to ten grades and more than one-quarter (27%) have studied between one to five grades only. There were 15% women workers who can sign only.

Aged women workers are analysed on a decreasing trend in the RMG sector. Of the 100 women workers participated in 12 FGDs, 99% were below 42 years of age, 94% were below 37 years, 75% were below 32 years, and 3% were below 18 years of age.

Age Category	Percent (%)
Bellow 18	3.%
18 – 22	26%
23 - 27	17%
28 - 32	29%
33 – 37	19%
38 – 42	5%
43 - 47	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Level of Education	Percent (%)
Can Sign Only	15%
Class 1 to 5	5%
PSC Pass	22%
Class 6 to 10	48%
SSC Pass	7%
HSC	3%
HSC+	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **Line Chief, Supervisor and Production Manager**

Mid Level Staffs such as Supervisor, Line Chief, Floor in-Charge, and Production Manager have a great role in protecting workers rights, gender based violence and occupational health and safety at workplace. For every 70-100 workers working in a line there is 2/3 supervisors. Their main responsibility is to supervise work from table to table. There is a Line Chief in every production line and Supervisors are reportable to him/her. Line Chief is responsible to finalise the sample design and layout of the product and to manage production outputs for a particular line of works. Line chief is reportable to a Floor in-Charge who reports to a production manager. Production manager is responsible for managing of production for the entire floor.

Thus, Supervisor, Line Chief, Floor in-Charge, and Production Manager are direct supervisors to workers in the production processes. Logically, they are the first reporting authority by the workers on any matters of disputes and rights. Though, there is persistent critic on their role. Reportedly, in most of the cases these mid level staffs are responsible for workers' problems and sufferings.

#### **Trade Union**

Considering scope and relative merit of the study, Trade Union is analysed the main duty/right bearer stakeholder to defend RMG workers' rights. From the perspective of the FNV's project under consideration, along with workers, trade union

constitutes the primary stakeholders. From a rights perspective, defending of right from this stakeholder is vital for right entitlement of workers and reducing of discrimination and gender based violence at workplace.

This study has come across a number of TU structures and practices in the county's RMG sector. These include among others Plant Level Union, RMG TUFs, NTUC/NTUF, CBO, PC, WWA, Area based Committee, and Cluster Committees.

#### **Plant Level Union**

Among all TU structures and practices, Plant Level Union is basic and most influential to defend workers rights. This is legal formal workers' organization (registered) in a factory for the purpose of regulating the relations between workers and employers, and between workers and workers (BLA, 2006). Out of 4841 RMG factories, reportedly **602 factories/establishments** have Plant Level Unions<sup>1</sup>. A different estimate suggests that 60 factories with new unions are closed down and more than 50 newly registered Plant Level Unions are gone inactive (Solidarity Center, 2017). If we deduct these 110/112 trade unions than there are roughly 490 Plant Level Unions in the entire RMG industry. DoL has confirmed that 261 Plant Level Unions are affiliated to different RMG TUFs which have altogether 110379 workers as their members. According to this estimate, on average, every single union covers around 423 members. As per this count, 490 basic unions have altogether 207270 workers as their members. That means only around 10% RMG factories now have trade unions. In case the national labour force survey data of a total of 3137000 RMG workforces are counted, then only around 6.5% RMG workers are organized into Plant Level Unions.

Secondary information suggests that in 2013, just after Rana plaza collapse, there started a stiff competition among RMG TUFs to facilitate the formation of Plant Level Unions in the RMG factories. Out of 602 Plant Level Unions, 430 are registered onward 2013. Although, around 900 unions applied for registration, nearly 50% applications are rejected (Solidarity Center, 2017).

<b>Years</b>	<b>Trade Unions (Cumulative)</b>
<b>January, 2013</b>	131
<b>September, 2014</b>	367
<b>October, 2016</b>	522
<b>October, 2017</b>	602
<b>Source: Authors compilation based on Two different sources (Dr Moazzem K.G, 2016 &amp; DOL)</b>	

Application submission for union registration however is marked a declining trend in recent years, down to 53 only in the year 2017, compared with 392 in 2014 (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2017). Routine rejection of applications on arbitrary ground is one of the main reasons for this. Data shows that the rejection rate for union applications stands at around 50% for last couple of years.

Mentionable also, EPZ labour law doesn't allow workers to form and join Plant Level Unions. The government did adopt Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for union registration in May 2017.

<sup>1</sup> S M Anamul Hoque, Joint Director of Labour, Divisinal Labour Office, Dhaka stated the same in a face to face interview at BILS Office.

It is further analysed that there is a legal binding that any establishment level union must cover at least 30% of its workers as signatory members. It is difficult for the RMG TUFs based at factory outside to organize at least 30% workers into union. Consequently, expansion of Plant Level Union is encompassing a great challenge now a day.

Year	Rejection (%)	Reasons
2013	34%	Minimum threshold of 30% has not been met, worker signatures on membership forms do not match those on salary sheets,
2014	46%	
2015	69%	
2016	39%	
2017	47%	
Source: Authors Compilation Solidarity Center		

The role of a Collective Bargaining Agent is central to all TU structures and practices to defend and protect workers' rights at workplace.

#### Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA)

As per section 202 of the labour law, when there is more than one trade union in a factory, workers will vote for electing one of the trade unions as their representative bargaining agent. But, when there is only one trade union in a factory it will automatically perform the role of a collective bargaining agent. According to Mr. S M Anamul Hoque, Joint Director of Labour, "there are now **602 CBAs** in the RMG industry". He further informed that there is no known RMG factory where there is more than one Plant Level Union. In a rather different estimate, it is observed that during 2013 to 2017 a total of fourty one (41) collective bargaining agreements are signed in the RMG industry against a submission of fifty-nine charter of demands only.

Year	CBA signed	COD Submitted
2013	1	4
2014	5	19
2015	21	19
2016	4	12
2017	10	5
	41	59

Source: Authors compilation based on data provided in a SC's Paper

#### Participation Committee

According to Bangladesh Labour Act, an elected workers participation committee is a must for all factories having more than 50 workers. In absence of a Plant Level Union in a factory, participation committee is supposed to perform the role of a collective bargaining agent. Anecdotal information suggests that till October 2016, only 236 participation committees have been formed in the RMG factories.

#### RMG TUFs

Five Plant Level Unions from same industry/sector covering two administrative divisions can join and form a Trade Union Federation (TUF). In Bangladesh, TUF is often alternatively termed as industrial trade union or sectoral trade union. A few of the TUF having wider coverage and comparatively large number of members are reputed as National Trade Union Federations. In absence of sufficient number of Plant Level Unions, the role of TUF is increasingly getting importance in the RMG industry.

DoL has confirmed that there are now 48 registered TUF s in the country's RMG sector. Among them, 27 are registered with the head office and the rest 21 with the Divisional office of Dhaka. RMG TUFs reportedly maintained area offices in the main industrial hubs and have solidarity members. Solidarity members are independent RMG workers from the location of the area offices of the RMG TUFs and cannot be members of any Plant Level Unions which are affiliated with that RMG TUF.

Apart from these, there is reportedly another 6/7 RMG TUFs which are not registered with the DoL. Structurally and functionally, these are same like RMG TUFs. They have their affiliated factory based unions, area offices and solidarity members. Reportedly, they are different segments of left-oriented politically like minded activists and workers who have organized themselves through these TUFs.

## **NTUC**

Twenty trade unions based at more than one industrial sector can join and form a National Trade Union Center. They are often termed as National Trade Union Federation. NTUCs have an important role in the RMG sector in forming collective opinion and influencing national and global opinion and shaping policies/laws. BILS affiliated 12 NTUCs are very much popular at national context in channeling RMG workers issues to national and global level. They are the following:

- 1) Jatiya Sramik Federation (JSF)
- 2) Jatiya Sramic League (JSL)
- 3) Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramic Dal (BJSD)
- 4) Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra (BTUK)
- 5) Bangladesh Labour Federation (BLF)
- 6) Bangladesh Free Trade union Congress (BFTUC)
- 7) Bangladesh Mukto Sramik Federaion (BMSA)
- 8) Jatiyo Sramik Jote (JSJ)
- 9) Bangladesh Sramik Federation (BSF)
- 10) Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation (BJSF)
- 11) Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh (JSJB)
- 12) Bangladesh Sangjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF)

## **International Trade Union**

International trade unions are increasingly performing an effective role in influencing RMG related consumers, global governances and brands and buyers and pressurizing employers to upheld workers rights including trade union right.

In the interviews with RMG TUF's leaders following international trade unions are frequently referred as effective role players in dealing with workers' rights and to that of trade union rights in the country's RMG sector:

- UNI global union
- UNI europa global union
- IndustriALL global union
- IndustriALL european trade union
- International Trade Union Center (ITUC)
- Confederation of Syndicate European Trade Union
- World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)

## **Cluster Committee**

Reportedly, 14 RMG TUFs those are affiliated with the IndustriALL Bangladesh have organized themselves into four cluster committees with a view to 1) better coordination in organizing and 2) avoiding of conflict among TUFs. These four cluster

committees are at four study locales in Dhaka as listed under:

#### **Dhaka**

- National Garments Workers Federation – NGWF
- Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation – BGIWF
- Federation of Garments Workers -FGW
- Bangladesh Apparels Workers Federation - BAWF

#### **Ashulia-Savar**

- Bangladesh Textile and Garments Workers League (BTGWL)
- Bangladesh Garments, Textile & Leather Workers' Federation - BGTLWF
- Shadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation (SBGSKF)
- Somnilito Garments Sramik Federation - SGSF

#### **Tongi-Gazipur**

- United Federation of Garments Workers - UFGW
- Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union Federation (BIGUF)
- Bangladesh Revolutionary Garment Workers Federation - BRGWF

#### **Narayanganj**

- Bangladesh Federation of Workers Solidarity - BFWS
- Garments Tailors Workers League – GTWL
- Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Karmachari Federation – BJSKF

Though not effective still, cluster committees are analysed can play an important role in area based organizing and mobilization.

#### **Employers**

In fact, it is the employers who are the main investors in the RMG as well as major profit takers. BGMEA and BKMEA are two of their legal associations in Bangladesh. The role from the BGMEA and BKMEA is most important and influential in all aspects of workers' welfare and rights fulfillment, gender violence and discrimination prevention in the RMG factories and in effective functioning of the TUs.

#### **BGMEA**

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) is the largest employers association in Bangladesh representing the woven garments, knitwear and sweater manufacturers of Bangladesh. BGMEA has now 4363 employers as their members. The President is the highest executive authority of the association and is backed by a 35-member elected Board of Directors. There is a bi-lateral (TU & Employers) Conciliation-cum-Arbitration Committee in the BGMEA to solve labour issues. This committee does not take any charge and tries to solve the disputes that arise between the owner and the employees of the factory before referring the matter to court.

#### **BKMEA**

Bangladesh Knit Manufacturers Association (BKMEA) is the apex trade body representing the Knitwear manufacturers of Bangladesh. BKMEA is led by the President and is backed by a 27-member Board of Directors. BKMEA has now 2030 knitwear employers as their members. Apart from regular trade and facilitation role, BKMEA perform a number of development activities in partnering with a number of both national and global governments and NGOs. Among development partners, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Metro Group, Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, JICA, UNIDO, BRAC, and Ministry of Finance are worth mentioning.

Development activities include among others productivity enhancement, improving social compliance, promoting workers welfare, and training and development.

## **Government**

Following government institutions and processes reportedly have important role and influences on issues around RMG workers rights, GBV and gender discrimination, and those of issues around TU:

**DoL under the Ministry of Labour and Employment:** Among others, one of the prime responsibilities of DOL is to look after the TU related aspects of industrial relation. Application receiving, assessment, registration, rejection, conducting election, conciliation, arbitration are reportedly their main responsibilities. Dol is consistently critic for its absolute authority to accept and deny TU registration of any kind.

**DIFE under the Ministry of Labour and Employment:** DIFE is reportedly the most important and influential government authority to look after the aspects of workers' rights and GBV and Gender discrimination and health and safety at workplace. There are now 258 general Inspectors, 58 Health Inspectors and 58 Safety Inspectors employed at DIFE who take regular monitoring and supervisory visit to Factories. Very recently DIFE has created a RMG related database to ensure public data on RMG industry.

**Ministry of Commerce:** Ministry of Commerce particularly looks after governance perspectives which are more connected to import-export related interests of commerce of the RMG value chain. Since, RMG constitute more than 80% of export earning, connecting to export interest it's opinion, advice, guidance are main in governing both macro-policy perspectives and micro behavioral aspects related to RMG value chain.

**Industrial Police:** It is a specialized police force created in 2010 to ensure safety and security of industries, to uphold the rule of law, to prevent labour unrest and to bring the criminal to justice. Apart from its Headquarter in Dhaka, currently, there are four units of industrial polices. They are the following:

1. Industrial Police 01- Dhaka
2. Industrial Police 02- Gazipur
3. Industrial Police 03- Chittagong
4. Industrial Police 04- Narayanganj

To ensure justice to industrial disputes and to protect TU leaders and workers from different industrial violence and harassment, the impartial role from the industrial police is reportedly very much important.

**Local Administration particularly local police station:** To prevent industrial disputes, gender based violence particularly at community level and on the way to office and return to home at night the role from the local police station is reportedly the main.

**Local government & Member of Parliament (MP):** Local government has a very strong role to play in curbing industrial violence and preventing gender based violence at community level. It is through the local government and MPs that the government exercises their authority during industrial disputes and the trade unions

mostly have faith and respect to them.

**MoWCA, MoLPA & Parliamentary Standing Committees on MoLE, MoWCA & MoLPA:**

Regarding policy and law formulation, reformulation, and elimination processes specifically related to workers rights, GBV & Gender discrimination and those of trade union rights centering round RMG sector, role and influence from the mentioned authority and institutions of the government is something like by-default. Reportedly, these authority and institutions in most cases play a swinger but opportunistic role meaning a comparatively impartial role and finally support the strong party.

**Labour Court** Regarding issues of serious violation of workers right and gender based violence at factory level and those of disputes related to trade unions and industrial relations when conciliation and arbitration have failed both at factory and at DOL, labour court is the ultimate destination point. Currently, Bangladesh has 7 labour courts in operation. Of them 3 are in Dhaka, 2 are in Chittagong, and 1 in each of Rajshahi and Khulna Divisions. In case disputes are not settled in the labour court, 'Labour Appellate Tribunal' is the final option for judicial settlement.

**Buyers/ Brands** Apparel business continues to remain a highly buyer-driven value chain. Anecdotal evidences suggest that buyers/brands consume more than 60% of the total profit generated in the RMG value chain. Relevantly, buyers/brands have strong and influential role to play to ensure that workers particularly women workers at the lowest end of the apparel value chain are protected.

Around 300 globally reputed buyers/brands are sourcing RMG products from Bangladesh. Broadly, they can be categorized into two i.e., 1) Buyers/Brands from the EU, and 2) North American Buyers/Brands. More specifically, USA, Germany, UK, Spain, France, Italy, Canada, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Japan, Australia, Poland, Sweden, Czech Republic, and Turkey are the major buyers of Bangladesh's garments products.

**Consumers** Consumers are an important market agent in the global apparel value chain. They are increasingly evincing more concern for labour rights, compliance and safety and security at work place. Consumers usually prefer to purchase products from reputed brands. 'Ethical Purchasing Practice' is however an emerging emphasis at global level.

**The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh** The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (the Accord) was signed on May 2013 is a five year legally binding agreement between global brands and retailers and trade unions designed to ensure building and fire safety of the RMG factories. 221 apparel brands, retailers and importers from over 20 countries in Europe, North America, Asia and Australia, two global trade unions, and eight Bangladeshi trade unions and four NGO witnesses have signed the ACCORD.

ACCORD is making regular inspections of building and fire safety of the sourcing factories and making those reports public. Accord has so far inspected 1620 RMG factories. 98 RMG factories have been suspend implying that signatory companies are required to terminate business with these supplier's factories.

**Alliance** The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance) was organized in 2013, is a

<b>for Bangladesh Worker Safety</b>	<p>legally binding, five-year commitment to improve safety in Bangladeshi RMG factories through a collaborative process. This process involves brands/buyers, the U.S. and Bangladeshi governments, policymakers, NGOs, members of civil society, and organized labor.</p> <p>The Alliance has so far suspended 158 factories from the Alliance compliant factory list for failing to make progress in ensuring a safe working environment.</p>
<b>Social Dialogue Institutions</b>	There are a number of institutional practices of social dialogue persistent in the country now centering round RMG industry. These of the social dialogue institutions have often important and influential role to play on issues of workers' rights and gender based violence and discrimination and on industrial relation. A brief detailing of the main social dialogue institutions are given below:
<b>Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC)</b>	It is a 60 members' tripartite council headed by the Honorable Labour Minister and function under the authority of MoLE. Its main role is to examine the texts of ILO conventions and recommendations and to suggest accordingly required amendments in the prevailing laws and practices and to recommend to the government the ratifications of conventions.
<b>Minimum Wage Board (MWB)</b>	A 6-Members tripartite Board including 2 workers representatives, 2 employer representatives, 1 independent member and headed by the Chairman (District Judges) under the authority of MoLE. Minimum Wage board recommends minimum rates of wages for the workers. Thus, it has an important role to play to deal with wage discrimination and wage increase.
<b>Crisis Management Committee</b>	A 10-members tripartite committee headed by the joint Secretary of the MoLE. Crisis management Committee works to resolve labour unrest and instability through discussion with employers, workers and workers representatives. Regarding healthy industrial relation the role from this taskforce is important.
<b>Social Compliance Forum</b>	A 31-members multi-stakeholders forum headed by the honorable commerce minister. Main role is to take into account of the status of compliance issues at RMG factories like safety and security, working hours, weekly holiday and welfare of workers.
<b>Task force on Labour Welfare in RMG</b>	A 11-members tripartite taskforce headed by the honorable secretary of the MoLE and function under the authority of the Ministry of Commerce. Main role is to prepare short term, midterm and long term work plans to address prevailing social compliance issues related to RMG workers. The role from this task force is important particularly regarding workers rights.
<b>Task force on Occupational Safety in RMG</b>	A 14-members tripartite taskforce headed by the joint secretary of the ministry of housing and public works. Main role is to prepare short term, midterm and long term work plans on aspects of fire safety, building safety, environment and security safety. For OHS matters, this taskforce can play an important role.
<b>National Tripartite Committee for the Fire</b>	A 16-members tripartite committee functions under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Its main role is to monitor the implementation of national tripartite Plan of action on building and fire safety and security in the country's Garments factories. Role from this committee is important particularly on the issues

<b>and Building Safety</b>	of building safety and fire safety and security.
<b>NGO/CSO</b>	There are a number of national and international NGOs/CSOs working relentlessly on RMG issues. Their role is very much important in organizing, educating and mobilizing workers, sensitizing employers and media and influencing governance processes. Besides, they are consistently working on knowledge generation and performing emergency responses during humanitarian crises in the RMG.
<b>EU, USA, UN, ILO</b>	EU, USA, UN, and ILO can play an important think-tank and watchdog role in provisioning and protecting of RMG aspects of workers' rights and GBV.
<b>Media</b>	The role from media is analyse particularly important to make knowledge and build opinion to pressurize and influence relevant main stakeholders from both country and abroad.

## **3.0 Chapter Three**

### **Study Findings: Situation Analysis**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This third section of the report details the persisting situation of two main issues considered under the study. More particularly, the situation of workers' rights specifically women workers rights and relevant violence and discriminations prevailing in the country's RMG sector and the role and capacity of the TUs in dealing with workers issues which came out of the primary and secondary sources of information are analysed in this section. A synthesis presentation of primary and secondary information is considered throughout entire section of analyses. A brief summary of the macro RMG perspectives and priorities, a diagnosis of labour rights in the RMG, a trend analysis of the situation of worker rights and a timeline analysis of trade union perspectives are given separately. This is expected to give a complete understanding of the situation.

#### **3.2 Bangladesh's RMG: Perspectives and Priorities**

- RMG export is marked a strong growth between 1995 and 2012. World market share of RMG exports is doubled during this time.
- Since 2009, Bangladesh is ranked the second highest position in world's garment export. Bangladesh's share of manufacturers in exports reached to 90.5% in 2013 compared with only 26.2% for LDCs.
- The growth in export earnings has mostly been a volume driven one. In over a decade, Bangladesh's top 5 woven items lost unit prices to the tune of 30-80% and the knit items around 10-25% (Mustafiz, 2016).
- Productivity in the country's RMG sector is marked a rise of about 10-12% between 2005 and 2013. (Mustafiz 2016 & Moazzem and Sherin 2015).
- Low wage and low skill based success in RMG export growth is already in its peak.
- Rapid export growth in future will require capturing higher market shares in existing strengths. Penetrating into newer and dynamic markets, such as China, India, Japan and producing higher value garments can be two important options in this.
- However, to sustain and accelerate export growth it is a must to give increase emphasis on economic and social security of workers. For this, increasing of wage and skill improvement is a must.
- Following a series of fatal incidents in the RMG, the issue of building and fire safety is a key area of focuses by a number of influential global governances and trade unions for last couple of years. Connecting to this, external pressure is running high to act on labour rights standards and processes. These are related to reputational risks of RMG export. It may not be possible to advance in RMG export growth ignoring all of these in coming years
- SDG and its goal 8 on decent work is an emerging emphasis for the RMG industry which states, promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all by 2030. Goal 8 will be reviewed at the high level political forum in 2019.

Bangladesh is one of the 40 countries which have volunteered to report on the SDG implementation progress. The likelihood of addressing decent work and compliance assurance related tasks, on a sustainable basis is rather low. Markets act for profit maximization. Workers related costs are simply by passed in the market processes. International guidelines/buyers practices are not always open.

### **3.3 A Diagnosis of the Situation of Labour Rights in the RMG Industry**

Both primary and secondary information have confirmed that there are a number of improvements/successes in the area of workers' rights in the RMG industry for last couple of years. Declaration of minimum wage for 3 times onward 2006, review and updating of labour laws, developing and execution of labour rules, and establishing of Workers Welfare Foundation are among others a few of the remarkable progresses over time. Apart from these, now Bangladesh has more than fifty percent compliant RMG factories with international standard, building and fire safety of the RMG factories is increasingly on a acceptable stage as well as there has been an increasing initiative to ensure green environment in a number of factories.

Along with the mentioned macro level achievements there also reported a number of micro level progresses of workers' rights though the pace is rather slow. Comparatively more workers are now getting appointment letter, service book, and ID card. There has been an increasing practice of maintaining regular working hours and attendance register. More workers are now entitled to maternity leave and benefits and there has been a slightly liberal attitude on leave practices. Gender violence and discrimination is comparatively silent and less visible than past. Personal protection equipments are increasingly in use and a large number of factories now have medical attendants and emergency health care facilities. Factories have now more collective bargaining agents, trade unions, participation committees and safety committees to negotiate and bargain with the employers.

In spite of all these, there further identified a number of workers' rights situation in which there is serious scope and space to improve upon. An inner diagnosis of the issues/problems of workers' rights violation in the RMG sector that came out of study findings is given below:

#### **3.3.1 Inappropriate Job Records**

Job recording is important since it enables legal documentation on service rights. Appointment letter, identity card, service book and attendance register are in practice in the RMG sector for job recording purposes. Still, Job recording is reported not up to the mark. Workers and TU leaders indiscriminately expressed their concerns on different practices of job recording. Most concerns are expressed regarding appointment letter. Only 6% FGD participants were satisfied on prevailing situation of appointment letter issuance. 29% however have reported serious irregularities in issuing appointment letter. Main concerns are expressed as under:

- Don't give appointment letter;
- It is all verbal, no official document is given on appointment;
- Often need to sign in papers which are prepared by the management and content is never known;
- After serving at least one year, appointment letter is given;

- Few of the workers are quite ignorant about appointment letter
- Appointment letter will not make any difference.

These of the stated findings are supplemented further by the Trade Union Federations (TUFs). Out of 12 TUFs were interviewed, 7 were on the opinion that only 5% workers get appointment letter now a days. 3 Federations however opined that currently, around 70% are getting appoint letter. The next most uneasiness is persisted on service book maintenance. In a satisfaction-dissatisfaction parameter, it can be considered as fifty-fifty. Cheating in recording of overtime and working hour, not giving service book, management is the sole authority of keeping and maintaining service book, few of the workers are ignorant of service book and relevant calculations and recording are among others the main reported irregularities in maintaining of service book. Maintenance of attendance register and issuance of ID card though are reported in a comparatively satisfactory stage. Only 7% women workers in the FGDs reported that ID card is not given. Few women workers have reported that joining date in the ID card is often forged. This is particularly to ensure that workers have worked less number of years than real. Apart from these, in a limited number of factories there is a practice of gate pass to enter into the factory.

*“I signed on the appointment letter, but they didn’t handover it. What was written I don’t know”, says FGD participant Ms. Mousumi, working as a Helper at Ajmat Fashion Garments, Mirpur*

*“On the day of joining, I need to submit my national ID and other papers to the factory authority. But, I was not given ID card or any papers. They assured me verbally to continue my job”, says Ms. Marufa, working as a Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion Zirabo, Ashulia*

### **3.3.2 Poor wage**

Poor wage is reportedly the number one reason for workers to be consistently trapped in poverty cycle while on the jobs. Prevailing minimum wage in the RMG industry is BDT5300 only which is very much poor and unacceptable. It is far below from decent wage and living. RMG sector minimum wage was last reviewed in 2013. Inflation recorded as 7.3%, 6.4%, 6.2% and 6.5% in the succeeding years of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. There has been an ever increasing price hike of the essential commodities like food and others for last couple of years. House rent and utility services have been more than double. Though, option was available, no wage review takes place onward 2013. Data from Newspaper screening suggests that altogether 136 labour unrests/movements had taken place during January to December 2016 only, of them, 44.12% were due to poor wage.

*“It is not possible to maintain livelihoods with current salary. Commodity prices are sky-rocketing. At least 10,000.00 taka will do for subsistence living. There are other disturbances as well. Salary giving is irregular. Every month, need to argue with the factory authority regarding payment of wage”, says FGD participant Jewel Akhter, currently employed as a ‘Packing Operator.*

*“There is no space to speak for wage increase. If we place it to Management, they simply give warning. If any workers go beyond this they first offer two days leave. After*

*the leave, he/she is denied entry into the factory and the worker lost job completely”, says FGD participant Ms. Sima Akter, working as a Helper at Chun z Knit Ltd.*

### **3.3.3 Irregularities in Practices of Overtime**

Both workers and trade union leaders have reported serious irregularities in overtime related practices. Three broader areas of irregularities are particularly marked such as 1) continue overtime for long hours at night, 2) fraudulence related to recording of overtime hours and 2) fraudulence related to payment. Following practices reportedly are common:

- Women workers need to continue overtime unto 10/12 pm at night
- During emergency shipment, there is often need to continue overtime over night
- When overtime continued unto 2/3 am at night, workers need to present the factory by regular working hour in the morning
- Less overtime hours of work is recorded than actual
- Overtime payment is not always on time

*“We are doing overtime till 12.00 pm in almost every days in a month. Sometimes, overtime continue till late night up to 2/3 am”, says Sathi Akter, working as a Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion Zirabo, Ashulia.*

*“Overtime is not fixed. It may be unto 10 pm or 11 pm or 12 pm at night. They cut overtime’s money. If we do 100 hours’ overtime, they pay only for 50 hour’s. If we make any complain the supervisor will say, ‘maybe you did some mistake’ or ‘if you have any confusion about overtime calculation, you can go out from the factory”, says FGD participant Sumi, now working as a Sewing Operator at Edward Fashion Ltd.*

### **3.3.4 Extra workload and leave facility is restricted**

There is an increasing pressure on management by both buyers and TUs to maintain regular working hours. Given this situation, there is an increasing practice of giving a production target. Unless production target is fulfilled, workers are not allowed to leave factories. Secondly, there is an increasing practice to consistently pressurize workers to fulfill production target by regular working hours. As a result, workload is ever increasing. Usually, 1/2 extra hours of work is common and workers do not complain most on this. There is however dissatisfaction like that while on toilet, even they are often monitored of the time passes. There is absence and workforces are reducing day by day, workers still need to perform entire quantity of works or even more than before.

Giving of one day leave in a week is increasingly in practice. However, leave related issues are reportedly regulated more now a day and there are a number of emerging tricky practices in this. Workers may need to work in the holidays or perform extra workdays to avail festival leave and public holiday. When one day leave is taken, there may be recording that three days leave are taken. To avail sick leave, prior advice from the medical attendants is reportedly an increasing practice. Now, medical attendant in the factory who is a relative to employer or managed otherwise is instructed not to advice for sick leave. Maternity leave is often strategically practiced to dismiss pregnant workers of their jobs and to sieve maternity benefits. However, good leave practices in a number of compliant factories are not unlikely.

*“On the Sob-e- Barat, the authority made us to do night duty, we could not pray”, Says FGD participant Ms. Sajeda, now working as a Sewing Operator at SB design Ltd., Mirpur*

*“We cannot get a leave day on Friday. On leave days, just before the Eid Day, they have always extra work for us”, says FGD participant Ms. Monika, working as Sewing Operator*

*“It is a regular practice that workers perform 1/2 extra hours of works without payment (Fao Khatni). Workers now a day have taken this as usual and don’t mind.” Says Mr. Nurul Islam, General Secretary, United Federation of Garments Workers*

### 3.3.5 Supply Chain Driven OHS

There is an increasing emphasis on the issue of occupational health and safety in the RMG sector. This is particularly following a series of firing and building collapsing incidences that have occurred in last couple of years. Of them, Rana Plaza collapse on 24 April 2013, and firing incidences of Tazreen Fashions and Tampaco Foils respectively on 24 November 2012 and 10 September 2016 are worth remembering. These three incidences altogether have cost 1288 deaths, 2740 injuries and another 390 plus missing. One of the important reactions was that on June 27, 2013, the US President announced the suspension of benefits under the GSP program for Bangladesh on the grounds of not taking steps to afford internationally recognized worker rights to workers in the country. This reaction by the US Government has been followed by a number of collective initiatives on OHS matters. European brands and buyers formed the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety while North American brands and buyers initiated a platform namely the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety and the National Tripartite Action Plan for Building and Fire Safety was adopted by the government of Bangladesh. These of the initiatives have contributed significantly to reduce workplace casualties. Data from 13 national newspapers screening for the period of January to December 2016 of the workplace casualties of the RMG industry evident the following:

#### Accident RMG Workers-2016 (January- December)

Types of accident	Number of Incidents	Death		Injured	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Electrocution</b>	3	1	1	5	0
<b>Explosion</b>	2	1	0	6	0
<b>Fire in Factory</b>	5	2	2	5	0
<b>Boiler Blast</b>	2	3	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>Road Accident</b>	40	10	11	151	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>140</b>

Stated table has analysed that total death was 10 including 3 women and 7 men in the year 2016. Electrocution, explosion, factory firing and boiler blast were the main types of incidences. Casualties from external incidence particularly from road accident is recorded an increasing trend.

Primary data however, analysed that ***RMG workers emphasis of the occupational health and safety are under emphasised by both buyers and national actors.*** These among others include sufficient and appropriate PPEs, lightening and space at workplace, primary health care, maternal and child health and care and medical attendance, drinking Water & Sanitation, hygiene practices, hazards & protection,

compensation to occupational Victims, and health security/insurance. These are reportedly more connected to day to day physical wellbeing of the workers and thus have a greater production relation and in the long run it impacts income and economic security as well.

#### **Buyers Emphasis**

Certified fire doors  
Automatic fire alarm  
Fire separations and protected exits  
Fire load  
Electrical connections and earthing (grounding) systems  
Dust accumulation and electrical wiring  
Electrical substations  
Overloaded electrical phases  
Electrical systems  
Lateral stability in the structure  
Structural drawings  
Load plans of the building

#### **Workers Concerns of OHS**

<b>PPEs</b>	PPEs are available in the compliant factories; Factories have one sizes PPEs to use by all; No PPEs or low quality PPEs are supplied; PPEs are for showing, when there is a scheduled audit, PPEs are supplied and taken aback soon the audit team has left the factory; Workers are reluctant to use PPEs
<b>Workplace Environment</b>	Workplace is often too hot and humid; Few factories lacks sufficient lighting and air; Factories have narrow passage; Workplace is often over crowded
<b>Health Care &amp; Medical Attendance</b>	Medical attendant in most cases lack medical education and skills; Primary Health care and a few essential drugs are available now a days
<b>Drinking Water &amp; Sanitation</b>	Drinking water is not always safe in the non-compliant factories; Few factories have unhygienic sanitation arrangements;
<b>Hygienic practices</b>	Health and hygienic practices are often buyers visit driven;
<b>Hazards &amp; Protection</b>	Thinner, asbestos, acid and spot lifter are continuously in use in the dying factories; Apart from this, there are ergonomic hazard and sound pollution; Over lock machine produces serious dust; No training opportunity to protect from associated hazards; DIFE is less attentive to these issues;
<b>Compensation to occupational victims</b>	Lump-sum/very poor compensation to occupational death; No/ or partial compensation to injuries; No rehabilitation support
<b>Health Check-up</b>	Health check-up which is a must to get job is an economic burden to workers.

### 3.3.6 Denial Maternity Benefits

Pregnant women are encouraged to resign. After child birth women on maternity leave are often refused to resume office. Apart from these, there is indiscriminate reporting that maternity-benefits are more or less arbitrary curtailed leading to furthermore economic vulnerability to women workers. In the interviews, TU leaders have reported that half of all complains lodged by the women workers with the TUFs are on maternity protection.

*“I was pregnant and I was suffering from fever and requested to the management for leave. But, they did not grant me leave. Rather, made a slang comments, ‘it is because of greediness for money that you peoples are always pregnant’”, says an FGD participant Marjina Akter, Swing Operator, Mandol Fashion at Zirabo, Gazipur.*

*“According to law, a woman worker is supposed to avail 16 weeks’ maternity leave with payments. But, the common practice is that the employers pay a lump sum amount and assure her to rejoin work after delivery. But, after delivery, they are mostly refused to resume job”, says Mr. Md. Rafiq, President, Jatiya Darji Sweaters Sramik Federation.*

### 3.3.7 Right to Trade Union is resisted

Workers right to trade union is restricted. Both workers and trade union leaders have reported that except a very few instances employers are in general very much intolerable to organizing and trade union rights of workers. Dismissal, discharge, and termination of workers on account of organizing relevant activities and discontinuation of elected members of the trade unions from the establishments are indiscriminate. Apart from these, irregularities in election, factory closure and dysfunctional trade unions on the ground of continued non-cooperation and resistances by the employers and management are common. Stakeholders’ analysis section has made it clear that only around 5/6% RMG workers are organized into trade union. Again, this is an estimation only based on available sources of information. Many of the trade unions are reportedly inactive and are gone dysfunctional. It is really difficult to trace out effective CBOs or trade unions in the RMG factories. Another important concern is that RMG industry do not provides accommodation to its workers. Workers live in scattered in different slums and squatter settlements. Living place based organizing is thus difficult again.

*“Labour unions are all in papers, we don’t see them anywhere. There may be labour unions only when workers are united. But, there is no any unity among them. Instead, now, the owner, general manager and product manager altogether bargain with us, and we loss”, says Ms. Sharmin, an FGD participants, now employed at Tuing Swing Garments factory at Bauniabad, Lalmati, Mirpur.*

*“TU involvement is strictly prohibited in most of the factories. I think, only 1% RMG workers are organized into trade unions. Now a day, employers are rather interested to form participation committee as alternative to TU. It is an employer-biased committee. They select all the members”, says Ms. Shamima Nasrin, President, Shadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Kormochari Federation*

Secondly, participation committees are reportedly in most cases employers driven, inactive and serve the purpose of the employers. Provision of law for electing at least fifty percent members of the committee through secret voting is seldom respected. There are even reporting that very few participation committee members who have acted on workers interest have been tactically harassed or fired.

*“There is hardly any authority to discuss on worker’s welfare. I was so-called chairman of a participation committee. But, when I protest and raise my voice in favor of the workers, they tactically discontinued me from the factory. The admin said you need to give initial in a white paper to lodge a complaint. I felt worried and restrained from filing any written complaint against authority”, says FGD participant Ms. Sathi Akter, a RMG worker in the Mandol Fashion, Zirabo, Ashulia, Gazipur.*

*“Some RMG factories have participation committees. They are mostly inactive. According to Law, participation committee need including 50% worker’s representatives and 50% employer’s representatives. Workers will elect 50% of their representatives by secret voting. But, in practice, the employers do select all members and the committee is never entitled to do collective bargaining.” Says, Nurul Islam, General Secretary, United Federation of Garments Workers*

### **3.3.8 In-equal & Poor Compensation Practices**

RMG has one of the in-equal and poorest compensation practices for occupational victims. Legally binding compensation amount is BDT 100000 (USD1250 app.) and 125000 (USD 1565 app.) only respectively for dead and permanently disable industrial victims (BLA, 2013). This is very much indecent and embarrassing and thus unacceptable to any set standards.

Cash benefits given to victims and their legal claimants as compensation in the aftermath of different industrial incidences were analysed different and very much in-equal. No set rules were particularly followed. Dead, injured and missing in Rana Plaza Case received respectively BDT 7851560, BDT 3508167 and BDT 3767523 to the tops. In Tazreen Fashions firing incidence Dead and injured received respectively BDT 3120841 and BDT 1803000. In Rowshan Akhter versus Bangladesh Beverage case, High Court verdict was to paid victim’s (Mozammel Hossain Montu) family BDT 16900000. Whereas, in Tampaco firing incidence, BDT 1,00,000 was paid as compensation to every family of deceased victims.

Reporting procedures and those associated with claiming and receiving of compensation are very much lengthy and time consuming and there is little space for rehabilitative care to retain victim workers into employment and normal life. Apart from this, there are a number of ambiguities and inconsistencies persisted within laws/acts and they contradict on a number of matters between and among them. There is no uniform definition of compensation, dependent, family and claimants in different laws. Ambiguity also prevailed regarding calculation basis, compensation claiming procedures, and on disbursing authority and procedures.

### **3.3.9 Coercions/Forces/Harassments**

Coercion/harassment to workers is a common practice in the RMG industry. Security personnel, line chief, supervisor, production manager, administrative officers and employers are all reportedly

involves in harassments/coercions to workers. However, it is the immediate supervisory authorities in the production processes do the most harassments/coercions. On the other hand, it is the helper, suffers the most of all coercions/harassments. Following is a listing of a number of common types of coercions/forces/harassments:

- No one is allowed to leave until production target is met either it is 7, 8, 9, or 10 pm at night
- Compulsory couple of extra hours of work and overtime
- Slang language/bawdy speech in loud voice for silly mistakes
- Firing during pregnancy and illness
- Maternity benefits cut
- Dominant and commanding voice
- Accusation of theft
- Recording fewer work hours and overtime than actual
- Recording more leave days than actual
- Discharge/dismissal/sack all on a sudden
- Monitoring of refreshment time
- Forcing to tell lie to buyers/inspectors
- Physical abuse/torture/treats and disgraceful ousting from factories in disobedience/protest
- Blacklisting on criminal charges and hanging out photos at factory gate

*“In silly mistakes, the authority used to kick, punch and use bawdy speech to workers. ‘I will see it’ is the only action follow in case of complaining”, says FGD participant Ms. Rahima, working as Sewing Operator at Ajmat Fashion Garments.*

*“If anyone claims for maternity leave the authority tells them to go out from the factory. If anybody rest a while the authority sometimes use so bawdy speech that we want to go out from the factory. If anybody becomes sick she is sent to home but no break time is given before sickness”, Says FGD participant Ms. Salma Akter, now working as a Sewing Operator at SB design Ltd. Mirpur.*

*“Filing of cases against so many unnamed workers became a severe threat to workers, especially the sacked workers, as police might arrest any of them in the cases”, says Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati President Taslima Akter.*

### **3.3.10 Rampant and Targeted Dismissal**

It is evident from qualitative data that targeted dismissal is continued on a random basis in the RMG industry. There is hardly any care to any rules/laws in this. Employers’ interest is upheld always in such a targeted dismissal. Dismissal mostly followed without prior notification. Verbal informing is often practiced. Following reasons are reported main in targeted dismissals:

- When there is increased dues to pay, respective worker is simply targeted to fire

- Claim for pecuniary dues like overtime payment, maternity benefits often lead to firing
- Comparatively advanced workers having good knowledge on labour laws/rules are always the main target for firing
- Information of trade union involvement or any act therein is followed by targeted dismissal
- Refusal of illicit proposal from top management/employers often lead to targeted dismissal
- Pregnant women are encouraged to resign
- After child birth women on maternity leave are often refused to resume office
- Usually, more dismissal occurs just before the religious festivals such as Eid-ul Fatar and Eid-ul-Azha.

There is even reported practice that particular women worker left the factory after day's work was denied entry into the factory in the very next morning. These all indicate that workers are always under threat of firing. On the other hand, there is yet a long queue in the gate to get jobs. Thus, RMG workers are seriously in-secured to their jobs.

*"We were forced out of the factory step by step. In the beginning workers were quite at dark that management was selectively blacklisting a number of them. Following this, there started a practice to send 10/12 workers in a group to work in other floors or nearby buildings and to take back them again to their respective floor. It was basically to traumatize workers. Then one day all on a sudden, we came to know, a group of workers have been asked to resign. They were finally forced out taking initial in the blank papers. It was like that first break off the confidence and then forced out so as to act easily and workers cannot organize and protest. They were forced out as if they were thieves. Many of the workers thus got fired, few were highly experienced. Even, dues were not paid. They informed successive dates to clear dues and change every times. Dues are not paid yet.", said Ms Jesmine, RMG worker from Opex Styles Limited, Mirpur, Dhaka.*

### 3.3.11 Indiscriminate Practice of Factory Lock-out & Lay Off

The practice of factory lock- out and laid off workers are rampant. Data obtained from screening of 13 national news dailies suggest that on average, lay off along contributes nearly one-fifth of all industrial disputes. Protest against lay off/lock out are followed by a number of harassments like threats, false criminal charges, arrests, detention, blacklisting and others.

*'10 cases are filed with the police station accusing 1,500 workers, including 150 named workers, of vandalism, looting, threatening other workers and assaulting factory officials', said Mr. Mohsinul Kadir, Ashulia police station officer-in-charge.<sup>2</sup>*

Reporting Year	% of Contribution of Lay Off to Industrial Disputes
2012-2013	18.8%
2015	12.7%
2016	22.9%

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.newagebd.net/article/6159/index.php>

### **3.3.12 Random Job cuts/loss on a Large Scale:**

This is another important source of fear for job insecurity. Large scale job loss on a random basis is an emerging concern in the RMG industry for last couple of years. This is particularly associated with factory closure, factory shifting and workers unrest. Two reasons are identified main for factory closure i.e., i) inability to perform OHS related corrective measures as prescribed by the ACCORD & Safety Alliance and ii) loss of buyers and market. Anecdotal evidences suggest that more than 1500 factories have been closed down in last couple of years resulting an estimated of around 225000 job losses. 1600 RMG workers reportedly were fired following only 2016 workers unrest that had taken place in Ashulia, Dhaka.

*‘About 1,600 workers have been sacked and 10 cases have been filed following the labour unrests till today’, said Mr. Shah Mizan Shafiur Rahman, Dhaka superintendent of police, at a press conference at Ashulia on December 26, 2016.<sup>3</sup>*

Another important reason for large scale job loss reportedly is factory shifting. In the current context and time, shifting of factory only 20/30 kilometer away from the previous location, which is permissible by law, means a huge cost to workers. It is particularly associated with employment of household members, child education, and accessibility, increase time and cost and security in commuting. Unless, there is serious livelihood obligation, women workers do not dare to join the factory in a new location which is 20/30 kilometers away from her living place. Thus, factory shifting always associated with a large scale job loss workers every time.

### **3.4 Women workers in the RMG: An Analysis of Gender Based Violence & Discrimination**

In the previous section of analyses, the status of rights of women workers though are given focus, gender based violence and discriminations that the RMG sector women workers are confronting today are less prioritized. For this, a completely different section is considered. This section provides a detail analysis of the gender based violence and discriminations of the women workers in the RMG industry.

It is clear from primary and secondary sources of information that women workers in the RMG do tackle gender based violence at three main levels i.e., i) at work place, ii) In the street, and iii) in the community. Following is a detail analysis on this:

#### **3.4.1 At Workplace**

Gender violence such as shouting, expletives/Gali, hair pulling, hitting, use of bawdy speech and sexually offended vocabulary and body language are common at workplace. These are reportedly to discipline women workers particularly to meet production target and individual target and to meet deadlines. Among other gender based violence at workplace, winking, staring, whistling, expressing of illicit proposal, intimidating, bullying, sitting at machines and unwanted touching, standing very close and pinching and kissing, and denial/cheating with maternity benefits and service benefits are reported main. These are rated as completely gender abuses. Supervisors, linemen, line chiefs, and production managers are the main accused in these. Non-compliant factory workers have reported higher incidents of such gender based violence.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.newagebd.net/article/6159/index.php>

A second type of gender based violence at factories is sexual exploitation. Tempting or threatening women workers into giving sexual demands is reportedly a widespread practice. Often, they are mutually reciprocal of service benefits. The most likely time for sexual abuse inside the factory is at night particularly after work ends when to go for home. It is to mention in this connection that there is no different security arrangement for women to work at night shift. Management staffs including employer are the main culprits in these who abuse their power and authority to sexually exploit women. Coworkers reportedly have no courage to assault women workers sexually inside the factory. Although, it is evident from newspaper screening that out of 12 cases of rape of RMG women workers occurred during January to December 2016 at community level, at least in two instances coworkers were the main culprits.

*“Sometimes they touch the body intentionally. When there is a good relation with the line chief, it is ok. But, if not, and the respective worker try to refuse, it followed rude behavior. Helpers are to face more oppressions than other workers. The owner comes to the floor and chooses good looking women. Then the line chief calls on her to the owner’s room. They appoint young girls so that they cannot protest against management”, said FGD participants Kolpona, working as a Helper at Sinha Knit & Denim Ltd.*

*“The line chiefs frequently touch body intentionally. Sometimes, Production Manager does the same. They acted like it is a fun. Women workers often protest and shout. There is no authority to see this”, said FGD participant Ms. Salma Akhter, working as a Swing Operator at SB design Ltd.*

*“The supervisor in a number of occasions sends me into the room of GM and PM. Sometimes, they offered me illegal proposals. But, I refused. Now, they don’t approve my works as ok”, says FGD participant Ms. Kajol, now working as a Sewing Operator at Silver Fashion Design Ltd.*

### **3.4.2 In the Street**

Workers are vulnerable to gender based violence in the street particularly on the way to factory and way back to home from the factory. The risks are different depending on the time and on the mode of commuting. Vulgar comments like, what is your rate, how much will you go etc., and whistling and groping, and pinching are reportedly common at day time. Local goons, striders, rickshaw pullers, cigarette sellers, and small grocers are main wrongdoers in these.

Secondly, abuses like grabbing, groping, shoving, and pinching are common at public buses. Conductors and helpers are the main culprits in grabbing and groping. When getting in and off from buses, helpers frequently grab and grope women workers. While, in case of shoving and pinching, passengers are the main offenders.

*“Women workers are vulnerable in the public buses. Women workers indiscriminately report us, bus conductor and helper take hold of women workers when get in and off from the buses. Home owner/son of owner will never cease an opportunity to exploit*

women workers sexually”, says Ms. Shamima Nasrin, President, Shadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Kormochari Federation.

Thirdly, workers are seriously vulnerable on the way back to home in the evening when there is inadequate lighting and at middle of night after serving overtime. Enquiry and searching, physical and sexual exploitations, rape, picking up, and murder are the main reported risks at night. Mostly, local goons, security guards and coworkers are the main perpetrators in these. It is the law enforcers allegedly involved in the enquiry like ID checking, enquiring and listing personal and family information and others and searching. There is even reporting that women worker has negotiated with local goons to give into sexual demand to encounter consistent threat of insecurity and vulnerability in the street. Data obtained from screening of 13 national newspapers showed that 12 RMG workers were either raped or gang raped, and at least 3 were murdered while in the dark-street during January to December 2016 only. At least, in 3 incidences of rape, coworkers were the main perpetrators, and in rest of the cases local goons were the perpetrators.

Nature/Types	No.	Perpetrators
<b>Rape</b>	12	3 by Coworkers 9 by Local Goons
<b>Murder</b>	3	Goons
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	

*“The stalker disturbs us on the way and off the way to office. They throw bad comments and offered for relationship”, says Ms. Marjina, an FGD participant, currently employed as a Folding Man in the Nishad Garments Ltd.*

*“Sometimes, house owners and their sons are the main culprits. They hire local gangs to sexually abuse women workers”, says an FGD participant, Fatema, currently employed as Sewing Operator in the Emam Dying Ltd.*

### 3.4.3 In Community

Giving of illicit proposal, defamation, physical abuse, sexual exploitation by cheating and forged marriage, rape, picking up, and murder are reportedly main types of gender based violence at community level. It is the local goons who are reported main culprits in most of the cases. While in case of forged marriage and physical abuses coworker cum husband is the main culprit. This is reportedly a widespread practice. The co-workers hide their premarital status and got married with their colleagues and thus exploit women workers sexually. Women workers in the FGDs frequently expressed that they are less protected at community level and their participation in the decision making processes is restricted.

*“A large number of women workers now a day get abused sexually by the co-workers. Co-workers hide their premarital status, build relation with women workers and got married to them. Mostly, these marriages are breakups sooner cheating are exposed. It is the women workers ultimately got victimize”, says Mr. Nahidul Hasan Noyon, General Secretary Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation*

#### **3.4.4 Complaining of Gender Based Violence**

Unless there is serious issue of gender violence like rape and resulted health casualties, gender based violence is seldom reported. Absence of women friendly complaining mechanism and trade union, socio-cultural mind construct and ultimate consequences of social and economic vulnerability are reportedly the main reasons for under or no reporting of gender violence. Disclosure of gender violence is often caused firing of respective women worker from the factory. TUFs have confirmed that almost cent percent of all complains that are lodged by the women workers are on issues of maternity leave & benefits and on wage & service benefit. There is again a reported tendency to all concerned stakeholders including trade unions to stay away from very few serious issues of gender based violence like rape or to redirect the same for legal adaptation.

The more precarious a worker's job is, the more likely she is to be subject to sexual harassment. Precarious job means precarious living and associated vulnerability and poverty. Gender based violence and associated implications like tension, job loss, health injury, treatment, safety and security are all may escort to furthermore economic insecurity and vulnerability. It is the worker herself and her family needs to born the most of the cost in these. Workers' voice or claim to gender based violence, in the workplace and community, is thus restricted by the extent of their job security and socio-economic vulnerability and poverty. Instead, socio-economic vulnerability profoundly influenced women workers' views that the possibility for justice is limited.

#### **3.5 Gender Discrimination**

At factory level, four types of gender discrimination are reported main. Firstly, there is gender division of labour. Women mostly employed as helper or operator. Secondly, there is discrimination in promotion and other services benefits. Thirdly, there is wage discrimination. Fourthly, women workers are discriminated in the leadership position. Men are not always the beneficiaries because of the stated discrimination practices. Comparatively young and good looking women workers reportedly are the main beneficiaries in many instances. While in the community women RMG workers are simply treated as a low status citizen.

Like gender violence, gender discrimination do causes economic vulnerability and poverty. Reportedly, discriminatory practices cause economic losses to women workers. When the respective situation is prevalent for a long period of time, it contributes to poverty as well.

*"She is differently treated as a woman. She is not evaluated on the basis of her capacity to production. This of employers' perception encouraged them to offer women workers a discriminated wage", says Mr. Abdur Razzak, Vice President, National Sromik Jote Bangladesh.*

*"When a women worker has good physic and outlook her salary will get increase. However, reality is totally different for others. They shall commit always that salary will increase, leave day will be given, but, when time comes, there is always excuse to disagree them all", says FGD participant Ms. Ruma Begum, working as a Swing Operator at DEKO Fashion Ltd.*

### 3.6 Situation of Labour Rights in the RMG Industry: A Trend Analysis

In the previous two sections a descriptive analysis of labour rights situation and gender based violence are given. This may not give a linear thought of understanding of the analyses of findings. Given this backdrop, this section provides a trend analysis of the persisting situation of labour rights in the RMG industry. Based on primary and secondary sources of information, a comparative analysis of labour rights situation along with gender based violence and discrimination is considered between two different time period i.e., a) situation that prevailed 3 years before, and b) situation are prevalent in last 3 years. To ensure a simple understanding of the situation summary findings have been provided in a tabular form.

**Trend Analysis: Situation of Labour Rights in the RMG Industry**

Labour Rights	3 Years Before	Last 3 Years
<b>Appointment Letter</b>	▶ Less than 10% workers get appointment letter	▶ More than 10% workers get appointment letter
<b>Service Book</b>	▶ Few workers were satisfied	▶ Around half of the workers are satisfied
<b>ID Card</b>	▶ Less emphasis in issuing ID card	▶ More than 80% workers get ID card
<b>Attendance register</b>	▶ Less emphasis in maintaining Attendance Register	▶ Increased emphasis in maintaining Attendance Register
<b>Working Hour</b>	▶ A couple of extra works was a regular practice before the signing of the ACCORD.	▶ Line chiefs/supervisors need to work up to 8/9 o'clock at night. Otherwise, there is increasing emphasis in maintaining regular working hours.
<b>Overtime</b>	▶ Fraud continued in recording of time and payment	▶ Fraud continued in recording of time and payment
<b>Job Security</b>	▶ Indiscriminate discharge/dismissal/ sack/termination without prior notice ▶ Fraud continued in clearing benefits/dues	▶ Indiscriminate practice continued but prior notice giving increased ▶ Fraud continued in clearing benefits/dues
<b>Leave</b>	▶ Sick leave, annual leave, public holidays were almost non-existent. ▶ Only, 20-25% compliant factories were different	▶ Slightly liberal attitude but with increased regulation. ▶ Almost 50% compliant factories are different
<b>Maternity leave &amp; benefits</b>	▶ There was fraud and harassment in almost cent percent instances.	▶ Few good practices are there ▶ Fraud & harassment continued to a large scale.
<b>Wage</b>	▶ Poor	▶ Very poor and unacceptable

<b>Gender Violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Loud and visible</li> <li>▶ No reporting except serious issues and consequences</li> <li>▶ No agreed and effective practices by the TU/CBA to deal with.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Continued but silent and less visible</li> <li>▶ No reporting except serious issues and consequences</li> <li>▶ Increased NGO emphasis on alternative reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Discrimination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Continued gender division of laboring and serious discrimination in wage, promotion &amp; leadership role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Continued gender division of laboring and discrimination in wage, promotion and leadership role</li> </ul>
<b>Safety &amp; security of workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Poor building and fire safety and security before the ACCORD &amp; Alliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Significant improvement in the building and fire safety and security after the ACCORD/Alliance</li> </ul>
<b>Occupational Health &amp; Safety (OSH)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Emerging priority</li> <li>▶ Less medical facilities at workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Diverted priority to building &amp; fire safety</li> <li>▶ Medical attendants &amp; facilities increased</li> </ul>
<b>Trade Union Involvement &amp; Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Intolerance continued,</li> <li>▶ Very few registered TU</li> <li>▶ Very few women leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Intolerance continued</li> <li>▶ Increased number of registered TU</li> <li>▶ More women leaders</li> </ul>
<b>Participation Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employers initiated, controlled &amp; biased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ PC as alternative to TU is increasingly favoured</li> </ul>
<b>Government and Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employers friendly</li> <li>▶ Less manpower, office and strength</li> <li>▶ Very poor supervision of factories</li> <li>▶ Unfair practices continued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Non-responsive</li> <li>▶ Increased manpower, office &amp; strength</li> <li>▶ Poor supervision of factories</li> <li>▶ Unfair practices continued</li> </ul>
<b>Legal/Policy regime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Proliferation of review/change/amendments of laws/policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Law/policy review/change is a less priority</li> </ul>

### 3.7 Perspectives of Trade Union in the RMG: A Timeline Analysis

This section provides a timeline analysis of the perspectives of trade union for last five years. Starting from 2013, trade union perspectives are considered up to 2017.

#### Trade Union in 2013

- ✎ There is marked a significant growth in trade union registration in 2013 following most tragic Rana Plaza Collapse. 187 new trade unions (96 in 2013) were registered increasing the total number of unions from 136 to 323.

- ✎ Trade Union application rejection rate was lowest (34%) in 2013 among all five years.
- ✎ The role of trade union was welcome by both employers and government and acted in close proximity to overcome Rana Plaza crisis.
- ✎ Trade Unions were vocal against anti union discrimination and their performances were more visible
- ✎ Anti-union discrimination reportedly was the lowest in 2013
- ✎ Some cases of unfair labour practices are accepted, investigated and cases filed in the Labour Courts by the Joint Directorate of Labour. It is though unclear whether any sanctions were ever imposed for any of these violations.
- ✎ The amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act that was adopted in July 2013 continue to fall well short of international standards with regard to freedom of association and collective bargaining. High minimum membership requirement, limitations on the right to elect representatives in full freedom, numerous limitations on the right to strike and broad administrative powers to cancel a union's registration are among others the main shortfalls in the amended labour law.

#### **Trade Union in 2014**

- ✎ High growth trend of trade union registration that started in 2013 is continued throughout entire 2014. Factually, highest number (275) of trade unions was registered in 2014 in the RMG.
- ✎ Reportedly, 30 trade unions were gone inactive and another 30 dissolved in 2014.
- ✎ 46% of all trade union applications filed were rejected. A substantial number of applications remain pending well past the 60 day limit.
- ✎ Linkage building with international TU is discouraged.
- ✎ Employers' initiative in forming company unions is marked an increasing trend in 2014.
- ✎ Increased number of collective bargaining agreements was signed with factory management.
- ✎ In the later part of 2014, there is marked an increasing trend in anti-union acts. Many of the newly formed trade union leaders had suffered retaliation. A few were brutally beaten and hospitalized. There is even reporting that entire executive board was sacked. Law enforcement was almost nowhere in evidence.

#### **Trade Union in 2015-2016**

- ✎ There is marked a significant decreasing trend in trade union registration. A total of 155 TUs were registered during 2015-16, where, it was 275 in 2014 only. 69% of all trade union registration applications were rejected in 2015.
- ✎ Series of unrests/demonstrations occurred for higher wage which were followed by a wave of repression against trade unions.
- ✎ Many of the trade union leaders were sued under provisions of an emergency powers law. Additional claims were filed alleging property damage, assault, and unlawful assembly.

- ✎ Labour unrest caused closing of roughly 60 garment factories. 1,600 workers were either suspended or dismissed or sacked or forced to resign.
- ✎ Police in couple of instances raided the offices of unions and worker rights NGOs and disrupted their activities. There is reporting that police officer disrupted collective bargaining training and interrogated participants about the training. In a few cases, the police threatened TU leaders to face legal consequences.

Anti-union discriminations and harassments	Situation
Dismissals/Discharge/Sack	Continued
Blacklisting	Continued
Transfers	Continued
Threads	Continued
Physical and mental abuses	Continued
False criminal charges	Continued
Arrests	Rampant when there is unrest
Detention	Rampant when there is unrest
Remedy/Redress	
Labour Inspection	Inadequate, biased, corrupt
Police & Industrial Police	Employers friendly, corrupt
	Lacks credible investigation
Judicial system	Time consuming

- ✎ The landlords terminated the lease of a few trade union office buildings owing to pressure from the industrial police.
- ✎ Major international brands initially denied to attend the Dhaka Apparel Summit held on 25 February, 2016 due to the Ashulia crackdown on workers and TU leaders.
- ✎ BGMEA and government representatives reached an agreement with the IndustriALL Bangladesh Council in early 2016, to release all detained workers on bail. The criminal charges though remain pending.

### Trade Union in 2017 (47%)

- ✎ Harassment, intimidation and retaliation to trade union leaders are continued
- ✎ Police successively failed to ensure credible investigations into cases of anti-union violence.
- ✎ Decreasing trend in trade union registration is continued. Up to October 2017, only 50 unions are registered with the DoL.
- ✎ The government continues to reject trade union registrations for no legal reason. Up to October 2017, 47% applications reportedly are rejected. Some of the unions are told not to bother applying as their applications will be rejected.
- ✎ Honourable Prime Minister has warned publicly domestic and foreign critics of the working conditions in Bangladesh as “conspiracy” against the RMG sector.
- ✎ Honourable Commerce Minister has warned publicly to take actions against trade unions for giving critical information of the labour situation in Bangladesh to foreign governments.

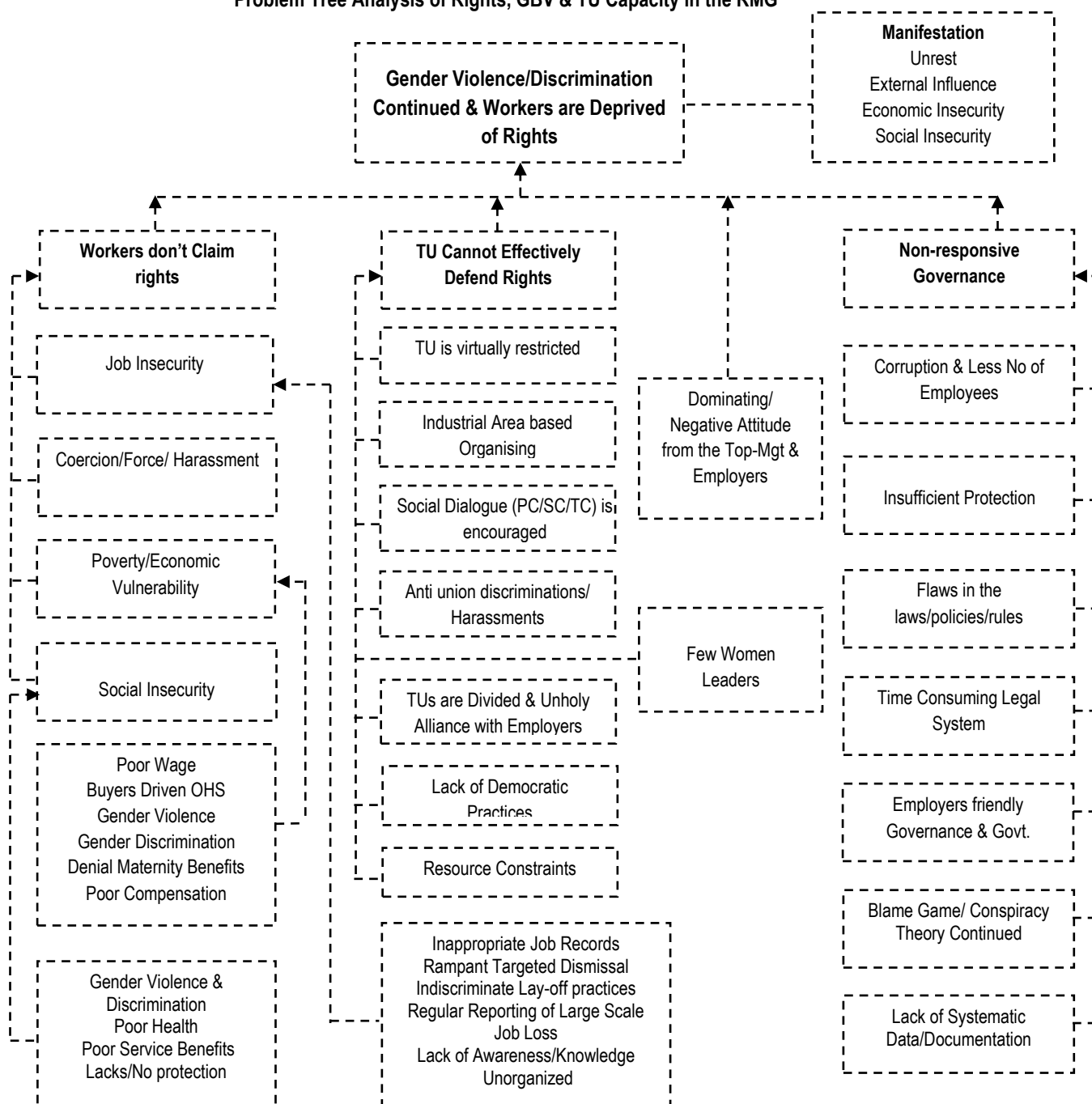
## 4.0 Chapter Four

### Rights, GBV & TU Capacity in the RMG: A Problem Tree Analysis

#### 4.1 The Problem Tree

This section of the report provides a problem tree analysis of the situation of workers' rights and GBV in the RMG and TU capacity to address them. Considering a rights perspective of analysis, the core emphasis is given in analyzing of underlying situation those are associated with claiming and defending of rights. More particularly, persisting situation of rights claiming and defending, related enabling and disabling factors and forces and their consequences are analysed in detail. To ensure a logical coherence building of analysis of understanding among different actors, factors and processes a traditional problem tree analysis is considered at large.

**Problem Tree Analysis of Rights, GBV & TU Capacity in the RMG**



#### 4.1.1 Workers don't claim rights

From rights perspective, claiming or voicing for rights is the important first step for entitlement of rights. Information/knowledge is one of the main enabling factors for this. Information/knowledge empowers workers as well as acts as a stimulus to voice for rights entitlement. There are a number of other enabling factors like economic and social empowerment and support and linkage with the right defending stakeholders and networks. This study has explored that though RMG workers particularly women workers are often aware of their legally entitled rights now a days, they are not claiming them to the respective authority. Job insecurity, force/harassments, social and economic vulnerability and poverty are identified four main reasons for not claiming of rights by the workers at workplace.

##### **Job Insecurity**

Job insecurity is identified one of the main reasons for not claiming rights. Women are more insecure in terms of job security. Poor service documentation, random dismissal/discharge/firing, indiscriminate laid-offs and factory lock outs, random job cuts and factory closure and unawareness and lack of organization from the part of the workers are reportedly the main reasons for job insecurity among workers.

There is a poor practice of issuing appointment letter and ID card and maintenance of service book. It is often difficult to ensure identity of a worker. Secondly, workers are always under threat of firing and there is a long queue in the gate to get jobs. Thirdly, lay off and lock-out practices and factory closure and large scale job cuts are indiscriminate. Protest against these are associated with furthermore vulnerability like firing, force and physical and legal abuses. Workers have living experiences on these. These reportedly have caused developing a sense of insecurity among common workers that employers have unlimited power and authority while, on the other hand there is zero protection for their jobs. Because of these, claiming of rights by the workers is reportedly significantly low now a day. Until, workers are exposed to the highest intolerable situation, they usually do not go on claiming rights. Apart from these, RMG workers are largely unorganized and unaware. Only around 10% factories reportedly have trade unions and many of them are inactive and arranged. There are serious education and skill gaps among RMG workers. Nearly half of workers reportedly have under V (Five) grade of education and around one-fifth is virtually illiterate or can sign only. In such a situation, lacking required education, awareness and organization, there is always a sense of insecurity among workers. Keeping job alive is thus become the ultimate priority, let alone, claiming job rights. Because of this unorganized element they simply don't feel empowered to voice for their rights.

*"The authority dismissed us from jobs without uttering a single word. We were denied our service benefits. The authority hired local goons. A few of us get assaulted physically since we protest. A few of the workers were dismissed at factory gate, taken aback their ID cards and gate passes, and were denied entry into the factory premise. Police was present at the factory gate, and was protecting all unlawful assembly by the workers", says Helena, an FGD participant, currently employed as an Operator in the Chu Chein Ltd.*

### **Fear to Coercions/Forces/Harassments**

Reportedly, coercions/forces/harassments are persistent since the beginning of the industry. There is hardly any difference over the years though there were some protests/movements in the middle years. When there is coercion/force/harassment in a compliant factory, workers just felt undone. To adapt to these situation, there is a growing tendency that workers usually don't defend particularly to avoid retribution from the employer in the long run. It is frequently expressed that workers can manage a job in other factories with similar salary and benefits unless there is a serious resistance by the employer. Resulted consequence has been a decreasing trend of claiming of rights by the workers in the RMG industry in recent years.

*“Employers threaten workers, if you lodge a complaint to the federation or union, we will be hanging up your photo's in every compliance factory and you don't get a job at any factory”, says Mr. Md. Rafiq, President, Jatiya Darji Sweaters Sramik Federation.*

### **Poverty/Economic Vulnerability**

RMG workers are in a situation of consistent poverty and need. This is one of the important reasons for not claiming rights by the workers. Analysis suggests that RMG workers are trapped into a cycle of economic vulnerability/poverty. It is because of economic vulnerability/poverty that the comparatively backward sections are coming to join RMG jobs, a bulk of them are women. Secondly, because of a number of poor job conditions like poor wage and job benefits, gender violence and discrimination, workers are consistently on a hand to mouth situation throughout entire job period. Workers' ever gloomy phases, dirty clothes, poor appearances all evident the same. Thirdly, in spite of serving a number of years, workers are still remaining in the same economic vulnerability situation. There is hardly any instance that a RMG worker came out of poverty/vulnerability after his/her retirement from the RMG job. Thus, remaining in a consistent threat of poverty and economic vulnerability it is really difficult to claim for rights to the white colour officers or employers. On the other hand, claiming rights may lead to further more vulnerability like job loss and thus loss of even subsistence income for a time being.

### **Social Insecurity**

Social insecurity is consistently high among RMG workers. Women workers are more vulnerable to social insecurity. They are migrated poor men and women from the rural agrarian communities. In low paid slums/squatter settlements they have managed a temporary living. Very often, total family or a number of them are living together in a single room (Habib, 2014). They are not covered by any social security programmes. Education and skills are one of the lowest in them. Because of economic vulnerability and poverty, their next generation is also in consistent threat of no/low education and skills. They are vulnerable to poor health and hygiene practices. Gender based violence is prevalent high among them and they are no way protected either in the community or on the street and at factory. Being in such a social insecurity situation coupled with economic vulnerability, job insecurity and threats and having seriously unorganized, it is too disempowering to them to claim for rights.

#### **4.1.2 Trade Unions Cannot Effectively Defend Rights**

From a right based perspective, defending of right by the trade union is an important second step for entitlement of workers' rights. It is however analysed in this study that the TUs in the RMG industry are yet to any sustainable position to effectively defend RMG workers rights. Their role in defending

gender based violence and gender discrimination is furthermore squeezed. Following reasons are identified main for their disability to effectively defend rights:

### **Factory Based TU is virtually restricted**

Plant level unions are legal entity to defend rights of workers at factory level. They are the elected representatives and placed inside the factories. In practice, this of defending rights of trade union is neglected in the RMG industry and is discouraged to a large extent. Study data has analysed that union related activisms are strictly regulated in most of the RMG factories. Only a limited number of factories have trade unions, few of them are arranged, and few are gone dysfunctional. Election do not held regularly. A significant number of elected president, secretary and members of trade unions are either fired or terminated or charged with criminal offences. Act of organizing is controlled strictly. Any act of involvement with the trade unions at any level is penalized. Workers who are educated or knowledgeable on labour law or are vocal on labour matters are punished and discontinued. Mobilizing 30% workers to form plant level union is thus often become a nightmare only.

*“If workers try to form a committee in the factory, the management first mark them, then, take initial in a white paper, and lay off from the job”, says FGD participant Ms. Monika, working as a Quality Controller at Classic Fashion Ltd.*

Only a limited number of plant level unions those are active today are struggling continuously to survive. Their power, authority and mandate are restricted. There is too many issues on wage and services benefit to deal with. There is no established mechanism to report gender violence as well as lacks any recognized means dealing with them properly. There are only a few women leaders in the trade unions. It is the managerial staffs who are in most cases relative to employers or the employers themselves are the main culprits in sexual exploitations. They are highly educated, authoritarian and rich. On the other hand, plant level union leaders do not have any quality education and poor and vulnerable. Including all these there has been manifested a situation in which gender violence and gender discrimination are always persisted high but with a less priority to the plant level unions and others and/or the issue is lost completely from their agendas.

*“We have 21 basic unions in RMG sector but, they are not able to do their works. Elections do not held regularly, after every two years, the employers are reluctant. Unions’ concerns are consistently neglected in this. Some factories have terminated the president and the secretary. At least 2/3 members have been terminated in each case. So many legal cases are still running. Only around 20% factory based TU’s are active though not in full”, said Ms. Papia Akter, Organizing Secretary, Bangladesh Biplobi Garments Sramik Federation*

*“Usually, we do not go to the employer’s office. You know, sometimes they blamed us a terror and dictate police to file false cases.”, said Md. Rafiq, President, Jatiya Darji Sweaters Sramik Federation*

*“TU/CBA engaged arbitration is rare. Employers don’t trust Unionists”, said Mr. Abdur, Razzak, Vice President, Jatyos Sromik Jote Bangladesh*

### **Industrial area based Organising**

In absence of strong factory based trade unions there is developed a tendency to industrial area based organizing of RMG workers directly into industrial Trade Union Federations (TUF). In this case, unionized member is treated as solidarity member. They are not members of any factory based trade unions. Rather, they are solidarity members with the area offices of the industrial Trade Union Federations (TUF). Like regular members of a trade union, solidarity members give monthly subscription and take part in day to day meetings and activities of the NTUF. These are mostly RMG workers who felt it insecure for their jobs to join and form plant level unions.

Mostly, NTUFs have their own constitutions, executive committees, a moderate resources base and a number of trained and reputed leaders. They have their office spaces both at Dhaka and at industrial hubs, regular staffs and other material resources. Many of the NTUFs have their development projects running in which NGOs are the main funding partners. They have strong connection and networking with the BGMEA and BKMEA, government, buyers and brands, NGOs and CSOs, national and international governance processes and with the international trade unions.

However, the main problem through TUF based organizing is that they are not factory-based. They cannot bargain with the factory authority on day to day issues of workers. They are simply outsiders into inside stories of factories. Given this limitation, their role is more directed towards collective protest/movement/demonstration/mobilization in which employer is always the main target. Secondly, in collective actions, respective issue is comparatively large and known like wage review, large scale job cuts, or big accidents and casualties and mostly, there is huge financial involvement in these. Simply, there is space for backdoor settlement. There are a number of such popular stories running in the industry today that the respective TUFs' leaderships were managed to serve employers interest. Once managed, such an unusual relation may continue for long. However, it is worth noting that there is serious inequality between two parties in this relation. Employers are the most rich and sophisticated elites who have strong representation in the government and influential role in the governance processes. On the other hand, many of the TUFs' leaders were only vulnerable RMG workers in a few years back. To encounter vulnerability they have deliberately linked to the political processes as well as connected themselves with the NGOs/CSOs, ITUCs and Brands and Buyers. These of TUF's new roles and added influences are intolerable to the employers as well as have caused creating a serious negative image about them. Whatever be the publicly held relation, employers simply don't trust them and are always ready to make their life a hell. Even, there is reportedly a continued spreading of a message by the management at factories that sectoral trade union leaders are external agents to destroy the industry.

A second main role played by the TUFs is mediatory role in settling disputes between employers and workers. It is solidarity members or any RMG worker connected by them or member of a trade union which is affiliated with the TUF, who are in a dispute with the factory authority, may lodge complain directly with the TUFs. Reportedly, a TUF on average receives 15 to 20 complains a month, mostly related to wage and cash benefits. There is no particular cell/department or any systematic procedure to deal with complains. It is the President of the TUF who in most cases the sole authority to advise the general secretary to hear and register complain. No complain register is maintained. In case the dispute moves to the court, individual filing is maintained. Mediatory roles include among others giving grievance notice and legal notice to the employer and sitting and conciliation, giving

arbitration notice to the BGMEA and taking part in the arbitration and conciliation processes, and managing lawyer, filing suit in the labour courts and ensuring follow-up in the legal processes. Legal notice is usually sent to the particular employer who is not a member of the BGMEA. When it is a legal matter, lawyer's cost is born by the worker. The usual practice is that lawyer gets 30% of the cash benefits that the complaint is finally entitled by order of the court. TUF gets plus minus 10% as cost from all cash benefits received by the complaint either from arbitration or court order. Reportedly, it takes on average two (2) months to get an end result through arbitration processes and for legal system it takes two (2) to three (3) years. Again, in the mediatory role, employer is always the main target. Secondly, TUFs need to come in direct contact with the employers in all arbitration and legal matters. This is reportedly causing developing a serious rivalry outlook among employers towards TUFs.

### **Social Dialogue is Favored**

On the one hand, trade union is restricted. On the other, there is sporadic area based organizing. Meanwhile, there is a recent emphasis to promote social dialogue in the country's RMG sector. Literally, the concept is a European origin and is in wider practice in the Western European countries particularly to ensure effective social and economic policies which are contributory to decent work creation through a practice of continued cooperation and acts between and among three parties in the industrial relation i.e., workers/trade unions, employers and government. In effect, it includes a whole range of activities covered under healthy industrial relation building such as discussions, consultations, negotiations, collective bargaining, information exchange and joint actions. As per practices, it is often bipartite between employers and workers and to the extent tripartite between and among employers, workers and the government. What is important is that now a day, social dialogue is a central element in the External and Development Cooperation policies of the EU to follow by its partner countries. In the country's RMG sector, social dialogue is though getting emphasis and popularity as one of the four pillars of the decent work agendas of the ILO which is further connected to the SDG target and achievement processes.

*"We don't know what is the role of a Participation Committee", says FGD participants Sufia, a RMG workers from Mirpur area*

*"Our factory has a safety committee. But, there is no opportunity to form trade union. Safety committee will work for safety related issue. Instead, they always work for the welfare of the factory management", says FGD participant Fatema, a Sewing Operator at Emam Dying Ltd*

*"Our factory doesn't have any trade union. If any problem arises, we inform the supervisor. Sometimes, we inform the Production Manager. That's all what we can do. We cannot get any solution. There is a PC committee in our factory. But, it is only for showing, a public figure. It don't perform any activities, just, keeping as a sample", says FGD participant Helena, an Operator at Chuchein Garments Ltd.*

Study data though has analysed that there is no unique meaning of understanding on social dialogue and there is a number of ambiguities persisted on this among different RMG related stakeholders. Commonly, there is a tailor made understanding of meaning of social dialogue in which multi-

stakeholders dialogues, institutions and processes are perceived key in social dialogue particularly to encounter non-pecuniary issues in the workplace. At practice level, there are however, both multipartite and tripartite arrangements and practices of social dialogue. The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC), Crisis Management Committee, Social Compliance Forum, Task force on Labour Welfare in RMG, Task force on Occupational Safety in RMG, National Tripartite Committee for the Fire and Building Safety, Workers Welfare Association, and Safety Committee are the main social dialogue institutions and processes at practice level. These are all national level institutions and processes and individually conduct a couple of meetings only a year. Even, meetings are irregular and discuss only a number of routine issues. There is even indiscriminate allegation that important decisions regarding the industry is often taken in these social dialogue institutions and processes without due consent from the workers and trade unions. Thus, these are a least interest to either workers or trade unions. Workers are more concerns with their day to day cash benefit related issues at work place in which trade union is perceived the best performer. Less restricted trade union with increase cooperation from the employers is further viewed as best option to deal with workers' rights and gender violence and discriminations at workplace, which is a serious lacking now. On the other hand, employers are increasingly in favour of social dialogue as a substitute to trade union. Trade unions and NGOs/CSOs however hold the view that social dialogue can best be complementary but must not substitute to trade union.

#### **Few women leaders and skill gap in dealing gender issues**

Although RMG has more women workers, there are only a few women trade union leaders. Except women leaded TUFs, women leaders are just the rhetoric participants in the central committee meetings whose main role is to say only yes to what president says and at the day's end along with others to ensure a lump-sum pecuniary benefits. Their voice is seldom heard or respected.

Secondly, gender violence and discrimination is a less priority to the trade unions. There is no different reporting arrangement for gender violence and discriminations in the factories. Leaders are not expert or trained dealing with gender violence and discrimination. Comparatively small factories where violation is reported most are out of any particular target to initiate trade union by the TUFs. There is even reporting of sexual abuses of women leaders by the men leaders within trade unions. In the trade union offices, women leaders are to share common toilet or publicly held toilet with men.

#### **Important other weaknesses related to TU**

Unholy TUF-Employers allies, political division of trade unions, lack of democratic practices, and resources constraints are among others few of the main reported weaknesses that disable trade unions to effectively defend workers' rights and gender violence and discriminations.

Few TUFs maintain unholy allies with the employers and in return get benefitted financially. This is reportedly to create a rhetoric arrangement of TU practices within the factory to encounter supply chain related pressure/demand on this. It is further reported that local agents of a few brands/buyers are often in unholy allies with the employers and overlook such false arrangements of trade unions. This is particularly to ensure timely production, more production within less time and thereby to ensure increase profit taking. Another important drawback in trade union practices is that

mostly TUFs are politically divided. They have a political identity and need to serve political purposes as well, even if their activism goes against workers. Besides, there may be political grouping and conflicts and competition to respond to some issues and someone's issues and to competing for gain whereas to overlook others.

Another important weakness is that there is a serious lack of democratic practices within TUFs. Everything is fresh and fair in the documents. There is a central committee consisting of around 30/35 members. In a few trade unions, there is an executive committee. Trade unions have more than 10% women members in the central committees. In case of women-led trade unions, women representation is often 50% to 60% in the central committee. In spite of all these, what is apparent from analysis is that TUFs are mostly one-man driven. It is the president whose opinion, views, guidance, direction, and leadership is all in the course of actions. Rest of the arrangements are mostly to bring about legality to what is done in the course of action. Apart from these, TUFs have resource constraints. Members' subscription is very much insignificant and irregular. Except 1/2 members, majority need to perform on a voluntary basis.

Given these realities of weaknesses, it is really difficult for trade unions to effectively defend workers' rights, let alone defending gender violence and discriminations. Instead, whatever efforts are there, they are all on serious cash-benefits related matters. Next to this, significant efforts are reported on collective actions accompanying like-minded unions.

*“There are some yellow unions in a number of factories. It is through backdoor settlement between the employers and RMG TUFs leaders that these rhetoric arrangements of trade unions are made. Whereas, it is really difficult for us to perform organizing tasks”, says Ms. Marium Akter, Vice President of Bangladesh Textile Garments Industries Workers League*

#### **4.1.3 Negative and Dominating Attitude by the Employers**

Stakeholders analysis section has analysed that employers are the most important and influential stakeholder in the RMG production chain. It is mainly based on their efforts, intelligence, and investment that the RMG industry is given its present look. Relevantly, they have the most significant role to play in addressing workers' rights and gender violence and discriminations at workplace. Unfortunately, this is not the case in practice.

Study data has analysed that insensitive, intolerance, and authoritarian attitude by the employers is one of the important flaws behind violation of workers' rights and those of gender violence and gender discrimination in the workplace. Among others, following negative attitude of the employers are reported main:

- Employers have little care about law;
- Employers hire goons to 'tight' unruly workers;
- Employers are dominating and commanding;
- Few employers have unholy allies with the TUFs;
- Employers are very much intolerant to trade union related activism;
- Employers are insensitive towards TUFs;

- Employers bribe inspectors and law enforcing agencies as well as influence investigation reporting in their favour;
- Employers encourage social dialogue like Participation Committee & Workers Welfare Association as an alternative to trade union;
- Top management is mostly relatives to employers;
- Employers influence and dominate workers representation in the Participation committees;

*“PM, GM, Line Chief are all relative to each other; There is no use lodging a complaint; For disobedience/silly mistakes, bawdy speech is common; Everyone does the same; The beautiful woman gets more salary”, says FGD participant Ms. Sheuli, working as a Sewing Operator in MARK-2000 Ltd.*

For a sustained RMG and ever continuing its growth, a new positive outlook from the employers is a must. This is a totally changed context and time than what was in early 1980s and throughout 90s, 20s and unto 2010s. This was particularly the emerging and flourishing first phase and was less connected and less competitive. It was possible to overlook workers issues being in the bottom end of the RMG manufacturing chain and to maximize profit by any means. Now, it is a more connected and competitive second phase. Bangladesh is now the second largest RMG exporter in the world market. Recently, it has progressed to a lower-middle income economy. RMG has employed millions of workforces. Due to series of firing and building collapsing incidences and related large scale casualties in last couple of years, RMG is already in the center of focus by the most influential stakeholders in the RMG supply chain and by the important global governments and processes. Pressure is ever looming high at all corners to address workers issues. To achieve a sustainable RMG, a satisfied, healthy and committed workforce is a must. Being the most important and influential stakeholder in the RMG manufacturing chain, employers sensitivity and positive endorsement of workers’ rights and union aspects is thus appear a number one priority at this stage which is missing completely unto this time.

#### **4.1.4 Non-responsive Governance**

From a right perspective, responsiveness from the part of the governance processes is important for entitlement of rights. This section provides an analysis of the respective governance mechanisms and their responsiveness in governing labour rights and gender violence and gender discrimination. Based on study findings, two broad spectrums of governance mechanisms are particularly analysed such as i) Institutional practices of Governance, & ii) Governance of policies/laws.

##### **Institutional Practices of Governance**

At first stage, particularly at factory level, ongoing institutional practices of governance mainly include a number of bipartite arrangements i.e., Trade Union, Participation Committee, Workers Welfare Association and Safety Committee and DIFE’s inspection of factories. Trade union and CBO led collective bargaining though is most effective in governing labour rights and gender violence and discrimination, efficient trade union practices are almost non-existence. As already analysed, employers in general have a negative attitude and union related activisms are resisted to a large extent. There are only a few functional trade unions and CBOs and there is serious lacking of bargaining capacity among the leaders. Secondly, there is participation committee in a number of factories, mostly EPZ based, exact number is never known. This is open secret now that participation

committees are employers dominated and serves the employers interest. Workers in general have a least interest to these. Thirdly, there is no reporting of Workers Welfare Association in the RMG factories up to study period. Fourthly, the role of safety committee is a routine one mostly limited to discussion and visit to fire safety issues only. Fifthly, there are still too few labour inspectors to demand. Reporting on labour inspection is infrequent and very often incomplete. Labour inspectors don't have any authority to penalize law violators. They can at best report the violation to the courts. According to section 124a of the amended labour law, labour inspector or any of his/her designated authority enjoy the right to ensure conciliation on matters of reported irregularities regarding payment of dues including wages. Upon receipt of the application, concerned officer is responsible to perform the mediatory role and to bring binding solution to the reported issue within next twenty days. However, this section is yet to hardly in any practice and labour inspectors and workers are not conscious of the same. Mentionable also, DoL enjoys absolute discretionary power to register TU and rejection of registration related application is always too high. Documentation is rather poor and not updated in most of the time.

At second stage, particularly outside the factory, there are three main types of institutional arrangements of governance practices i.e., i) DoL led arbitration ii) RMG TUF mediated settlement, and iii) BGMEA led conciliation and arbitration. When factory based TU/CBO is unable to solve particularly a collective issues of interest it is supposed to refer to the DoL for conciliation and arbitration. This is a tripartite mechanism and there is opportunity for appeal/review for once. All including it takes around two/three months to successfully solve a dispute through DOL led arbitration processes. At the same time, there is a practice that RMG TUFs do the mediatory role with the employers to settle individual workers' issues of disputes. This is a bipartite mechanism. Upon on receiving of a complaint from a worker, respective employer is given a written notice to bilaterally discuss and settle the issue. In case, it is not solved, the issue is usually passed on to the BGMEA led Conciliation-Cum-Arbitration Committee. This is a 33 members committee including 1 Chairman, 10 Co-Chairmen (Employers), 11 BGMEA representatives (employers) and 11 RMG TUFs representatives formed in 1997. BGMEA led arbitration processes on average take two months to reach to a final discharging stage.

At a third stage, when DoL and BGMEA led arbitration processes are not succeeded to resolve a dispute, respective issue is usually followed to the labour court. Apart from this, individual worker can directly file cases to the labour court on any matter of industrial disputes. Notably, workers mostly win in the labour court verdicts. Still, only an insignificant number of disputes do come to the labour courts. Less number of court, physical accessing of court for comparatively a long period of time up to three years, lengthy and cost involvement, lack of education/ knowledge and fear to the complexities of the judicial processes are reportedly the main reasons for this.

At a different fourth stage, when there is unrest or the issue is a comparatively macro one like wage review, Members of parliament and national government are engaged in the negotiation processes. These processes reportedly always favour the employers. A large number of legislators are RMG employers and there is persistent tendency among national government to view the role of NGO, INGO and ITUs as conspiracy against Bangladesh's RMG. Industrial police reportedly, cannot perform independently during unrest. They are particularly used by the employers and government to

objectively harass workers and trade union leaders. On the other hand, there is grouping, lobbying and competition among different NOGs/CSOs led processes and there is never a coordinated effort to collectively influence the governance processes to protect RMG workers of their rights and to uphold healthy trade union practices. NGO's role is rather limited now a day to protect women workers at community level.

*“The garment sector was hit by conspiracies hatched by national and international players since exporters and the government announced a target to earn \$50 billion from apparel exports by 2021,” says honourable Commerce Minister Mr. Tofail Ahmed while addressing a roundtable styled “Current situation of the garment industry and a way out”, organised by the BGMEA at the Westin Dhaka on 04 Oct, 2017<sup>44</sup>.*

Governance of GBV at community level is rather poor. Many of women workers have been physically and sexually abused at community level either by local goons, or house owners or coworkers. There is further reporting of GBV at Household level. Local police do the routine works. RMG women workers' is never a particular interest or attention to them. There is indiscriminate reporting that local goons have strong tie with the police, local administration and political leaders and are protected by them. There is a loophole in marriage governance and a large number of women came to know about her spouse's first marriage at a later stage and are cheated. Local government though have influence and role in governing community level violence, reportedly are not mobilised to protect RMG women workers at community level.

What is apparent from the above stated analyses is that there is no uniqueness of the underlying institutional practices of governance. Rather, there are too many institutions, actors, factors and processes. There is little linkage and cooperation among different institutions, actors, factors and processes. Roles and responsibilities of different actors and institutions are not always clear. Gender violence and gender discrimination is never a priority to any of the institutions or practices and there is serious lacking of effective reporting of gender issues inside the factories. There is a deliberate tendency to bypass or undermine the role of trade unions in all ongoing efforts and processes. While, on the other hand, women workers are more vulnerable to GBV at community level in which they are not protected at all. Overall, ongoing institutional practices and processes are not gender friendly and is non-responsive to workers perspective of industrial relation in the RMG.

*“Inspectors do not inspect factories properly. Now, DIFE has more inspectors. It is good that there is now more employment with government job. Factory inspection mechanism though didn't benefit from this”, says Mr. Nurul Islam, General Secretary, United Federation of Garments Workers (UFGW).*

*“Government is not serious about Trade Union. It is not a priority agenda to the government. The relation between RMG employers & government is too strong. Like employers, workers don't have equal access to public institutions”, says Mr. ZM Kamrul Anam, President, Bnagladesh Textile and Garments Industries Sramik League*

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<sup>44</sup> The Apparel News, retrieved at <http://www.theapparelnews.com/article/1132/index.html>

## **Governance of policies/laws**

There has been a proliferation of formulation, reformulation/amendments, omission/elimination and execution/enactment of labour laws/policies in Bangladesh for last couple of years. In place of no policy and rules and multiplicity and in-coherence in laws, there is now available a set of policies and rules and a unique labour law to govern labour rights. Legally, workers are now entitled to form TU, PC and WWA and to get appointment letter, service book, leave, maternity benefits, safety and security at workplace and so on. There are however reviewed a number of non-responsive elements in the pertaining labour policies/laws and law execution is reportedly one of the lowest practices. A brief scrutiny of the flaws of important policies/laws is given in the following:

### **Labour Policy 2012**

No unique form of labour organization is particularly proposed in the policy. Rather, Article 13 has prescribed three different forms of workers organizations such as TU, WWA & PC. Thus, the role of organizing and industrial dispute settlement through trade union is tactically undermined in the industrial relation processes.

Particular commitment though expressed in Article 19 to address women workers rights and discrimination, there is no even mentioning of the term 'gender violence' in the entire policy document.

### **Labour Law 2013 (Amended)**

34 sections in the BLA 2006 are completely bestowed on trade union and industrial relation matters and another 23 sections dealt with disputes settlement. Still, the revised labour law is consistently critic to fell well short of international standards with regard to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The law permits to form simultaneously trade union, PC and WWA in the same factory though there is hardly any difference of roles and responsibilities. Employers may facilitate forming of a Participation Committee and stand against trade union. According to section 179 (2), a plant level union must cover 30% of all workforces in the factory as its members. Without employer's endorsement and support, it is virtually impossible to unionise 30% workers inside the factory. Regarding PC, the right to elect representatives in full freedom is restricted. To some extent, legal restriction is created on the right to strike [Section, 211(8)]. Section 23 (amended) permit employer to terminate a worker on ground of disorderly behavior or vandalizing. This section is indiscriminately in use to terminate workers having involvement with union related activisms. There is a very negligible fine amount in the law for employers in case of inability to discharge TU related role in accordance with the law. On the other hand, DoL is given the sole authority to either approve or reject of a trade union's application.

Protection from GBV and discriminatory practices are nearly unaddressed in the Law. According to section 332, misconduct to women workers is prohibited in the workplace. Section 307 has provisioned for negligible penalty for this. There is no even mentioning the term 'GBV' in the entire law. According to section 109, on consent, women workers can even work up to dead of night. However, there is no provision in the Law for extra protection or security arrangement while working at night and on the way back to home at the dead of night. Apart from these, there is huge space for misinterpretation of explanations given in between sections 45 to 50

that governs the maternity protection of women workers.

**Bangladesh Labour  
Rules-2015**

As usual, missing standards in the labour law particularly regarding freedom of association, collective bargaining and GBV protection are all persisted in more elaborate forms in the Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015. Apart from this, a few of the rules are consistently criticised.

According to rules 169 (2), in case there is 20% or more women workers in an establishment, at least 10% members in the executive committee of a trade union need to be women. This means, when there is 80% women in an establishment the same provision of 10% can do. The issue of GBV reporting and respective formal arrangement dealing with them inside the factory is thus strategically bypassed in the rules.

Though it was a popular demand by the time, the issue of job loss related to factory shifting is more or less unaddressed in the Labour Rules 2015.

**The EPZ Workers'  
Welfare Association  
and Industrial  
Relations Act-2010**

There is vague in the Act and the formation of workers welfare association is ultimately dependent on the willingness of the employers. Secondly, protection from GBV and its reporting is a missing priority in the functionality of the EPZ Worker' Welfare Association.

**Nari O Shishu Nirjaton  
Daman Ain-2003**

Section 09 (Section:375 of the Penal Code) assert that the victim should prove himself as a rape victim. There is always lack of evidence and legal process is consistently lengthy.

## **5.0 Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Export-earning from the RMG is one of the main engines of growth of Bangladesh's economy. Millions of workers are employed in the RMG industry, majority of them are women. To ensure a sustained growth in the economy, it is thus important to achieve a sustainable RMG. For this, a sustainable, productive and committed workforce is a must. Unless, there is a sustainable change in the lives and livelihoods of its bulk of women workers, sustainable outlook to the entire industry may suffer. For this, a decent employment, income and living is analyse a must. If RMG can offer workers the same, it is simple that they will shoulder the main responsibility to bring about a sustainable RMG. Healthy industrial relation is equally important to achieve a sustainable RMG. There need to be both sufficient means and space to discuss and decide between employers and workers on priority issues and improvements.

This study endeavors to explore persisting employment, income and living status of the RMG workers and respective industrial relation aspects. More specifically, status of rights of workers and GBV in the RMG and role and performances of trade unions in these are studied in-depth. Based on a qualitative paradigm of research, data collected both from primary and secondary sources. A right based perspective of analysis is considered at large. Under a right based framework, two popular traditional analysis methods are particularly followed i.e., stakeholders' analysis and problem tree analysis. To ensure consistency of analyses and understanding a summary analysis of the macro RMG perspectives and priorities, a diagnosis of labour rights in the RMG, a trend analysis of the situation of worker rights and a timeline analysis of trade union perspectives are considered further.

Stakeholders' analyses have made it clear, workers particularly women workers are the main right-holder stakeholders in the entire domain of analyses under present study. Claiming of rights from this stakeholder is important first step for right entitlement and protecting of GBV. This act of right-claiming is to be backed up by a number of right bearer stakeholders, institutions and processes. Among all right bearer stakeholders, TU is analyse the most important and influential. There are a number of TU structures and practices. These include Basic Union/TU, CBO, PC, WWA, TUFs, National Trade Union Center/Federation, and international TUs. Defending of rights from the basic union, PC, WWA, CBO is analyse most important and effective at factory level. TUFs can play an effective role in organizing and educating of RMG unions and workers. When there is no plant level unions, TUFs can perform the role of a right defender. NTUC's role is particularly important to influence social dialogue institutions and processes to influence macro policy perspectives. Role from the International trade unions is important and effective in influencing consumers, global governances and brands and buyers and pressurizing employers to upheld workers rights including trade union right. BGMEA and BKMEA, two main RMG employers' associations, are analysed the second most important and influential right bearer stakeholders. They are the planners, entrepreneurs and major profit takers in the RMG manufacturing chain. Only positive endorsement from this stakeholder is reportedly half way done.

At government level, DIFE's role is analyse most important in monitoring of rights at workplace. DoL is the supreme authority to govern industrial relation and union aspects. Protecting of workers' rights including trade union rights and GBV particularly at industrial hubs and at community level, role from the industrial police, local police and administration, and local government is analyse most important. In settling large scale industrial unrests, role from the MP is analyse most influential. Role from the Ministry of Commerce, MoWCA, MoLPA & Parliamentary Standing Committees on MoLE, MoWCA & MoLPA are analyse important on matters of policy/laws governance. Labour court is analyse the last destination point for settling unresolved industrial disputes and main sexual exploitations. Around 300 buyers/brands, who are sourcing RMG products from Bangladesh, are another most important and influential right bearer stakeholders to influence protection of workers' rights & TU rights and GBV at both factory level and macro governance level. Consumers' ethical purchasing practice means a lot in these. Apart from these, role from the EU, USA, UN, ILO and a number of INGOs is analyse important in the study matters.

Problem tree analyses however have confirmed that workers particularly women workers seldom claim their rights to concerned authority. Job insecurity, force/harassments, social and economic vulnerability and poverty are identified four main reasons for not claiming of rights by the women workers. Poor job records, indiscriminate practice of dismissal/discharge/firing and laid-offs and factory lock outs, factory closure and lack of skills, education and workers organization are analysed main reasons for job insecurity. There is hardly any difference in the practice of coercions/forces /harassments over past. Workers are in a situation of consistent poverty and need because of a number of poor job conditions like poor wage and job benefits, gender violence and discrimination. There is hardly any difference of status of workers even after serving couple of years in the RMG job. Social insecurity is rather high and social protection is one of the lowest for RMG workers.

Secondly, it is analyse in the problem tree that TUs in the RMG are yet to any suitable place to effectively defend RMG workers rights. There are only a few plant level unions and women leaders. There is serious inequality in skills and capacity between two parties in the factory based bargaining processes. GBV is neither a priority nor a mandate to plant level unions. Though RMG TUFs are comparatively strong and have a number of skilled and reputed leaders, they are simply outsiders into inside stories of factories. Their role is more directed towards collective protest/movement and to some extent they perform mediatory role in settling workers claim of benefits. In both of these roles, employer is always the main target. This of TUF's role is intolerable to the employers. There is a continued propagation that sectoral trade union leaders are external agents to destroy the industry. On the other hand, there is a recent emphasis to promote social dialogue. There is a tailor made understanding prevail on this and multi-stakeholders dialogue, institutions and processes are increasingly in practice in the name of SD like SCF. These are a least interest to either workers or trade unions. Apart from these, there are unholy allies between TUFs and Employers, political division of trade unions, lack of democratic practices, and continued resources constraints.

Thirdly, it is analyse that employers mostly have a negative and authoritarian attitude towards the workers issues of interests and they are very much insensitive and intolerant to unionization aspects. There is a large practice to hire goons or to influence local administration to 'tight' unruly workers. For a number of legal bindings, organizing of workers into unions and its functional effectiveness is ultimately dependent on the willingness of the employers. As an alternative to TU, employers are

always on a move to promote PC and WWA and social dialogue in the RMG. They have little care to laws/rules and the very limited financial penalty described in the law is never any obligation or burden to them.

Fourthly, it is analysed that two of the broad spectrums of governance mechanisms such as i) Institutional practices of Governance, & ii) Policies/laws are employers friendly and largely non-responsive to workers and trade union aspects of governance. There are too many institutions, actors, factors and processes like the DIFE, the DoL, BGMEA and RMG TUFs led arbitration and conciliation, the labour court, industrial police, EPZ authority, local government and local police and administration. Besides, MPs & national government deliberately involve in the large-scale negotiation processes like wage review and workers unrest. There is no institutional linkage and cooperation between and among them. Roles and responsibilities are not always clear and accountability arrangements are largely missing. There are shortcomings of manpower and experts and other resources. There is a deliberate tendency to bypass/undermine the role of TUs in all ongoing efforts and processes and to view the role of NGO, INGO and ITUs as conspiracy against Bangladesh's RMG. GBV is never a priority to any of the institutional practices. Documentation is rather poor and not updated most of the time. Secondly, there are a number of non-responsive elements in the pertaining labour policies/laws such as different forms of workers organizations can exist simultaneously, workers can be terminated any time on ground of disorderly behavior and there is no even mentioning of GBV in any policies/laws. Laws/policies are complex, there is ample scope for misinterpretation of explanations and law execution is one of the lowest practices.

Thus, on the one hand, workers don't claim rights and on the other hand, TUs cannot effectively defend rights. In addition to these, employers have a negative attitude and governance institutions and processes are largely non-responsive. Including all these there is manifested a situation in which RMG workers particularly women workers are deprived of their rights including TU rights and gender discrimination and GBV continued as it is. Study findings suggest that only around 10% RMG workers get appointment letter. There are irregularities in calculations, recording and maintaining of service book. There is a subsistence wage practices. Overtime may continue long hours at night. There is fraudulence in recording of overtime hours and payment. Workers may need to work in the holidays to avail festival leave. Maternity leave and benefits are mostly arbitrary curtailed. OHS is supply chain driven in which building and fire safety tops the workers aspects of OHS. Coercion/force to workers is an indispensable part in the supervisory elements of the production processes. Dismissal/discharge/termination of workers is a routine job. Factory lock-out and laid off workers are practiced largely. Protests are usually followed by series of threats, false criminal charges, arrests, detention, blacklisting and others. There is one of the in-equal and poor compensation practices for occupational victims.

Gender division of labour and discrimination in wage and other services benefits like promotion are common. Young and good looking women workers are often the main beneficiaries. Women workers are subject to GBV at both work place and community. GBV like shouting, expletives/Gali, hair pulling, hitting, use of sexually offended vocabulary, expressing of illicit proposal, sitting at machines and unwanted touching, standing very close and pinching and kissing, sexual exploitation, vulgar comments, whistling grabbing, groping, shoving, defamation, forged marriage, rape, picking

up, and murder are continued as always. There is no women friendly reporting/complaining system and GBV is seldom reported.

Union related activisms in both factories and at industrial hubs are under strict supervision and control as well as resisted to the tops. There is marked an abnormal trend in the TU registration practices. Application submission and achieving of union registration is peculiarly high following any industrial accident. In normal circumstances, application submission and union registration decreases drastically though rejection of application increases ever. Many of the newly formed trade unions are gone inactive. Harassment, intimidation and retaliation to trade union leaders are common. A number of leaders are sued on claims of criminal acts like property damage, theft and unlawful assembly. In the midst of all these, workers unrests are common and its future possibility and probability is always on a worrying stage.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Given the stated analyses of findings, based on a number of advices/suggestions obtained in the FGDs, consultations and interviews and with a view to promote RMG workers rights including unionization rights and to protect women workers from GBV this study recommends the following:

- ➔ An important first emphasis need to be to increase RMG workers of their rights claiming ability. For this, the first pre-requisite is to act on creating employment, income and social security of workers. To ensure income security there is no alternative of an appropriate wage structure that is supplementary to a decent and sustainable living. There however, needs to be special and different treatment to address social security of workers. This may include group insurance, health insurance, pension scheme, rationing, initiative to sell food to workers in subsidized price, transportation facility, accommodation facility, opportunity and support to skill and efficiency enhancement, education and health support to their children and safeguarding of women workers from GBV both at factory and community level. Already established Social Welfare Fund can be one option to ensure a number of the mentioned social benefits. To address employment security related issues, strong trade union is analyse a must. An independent RMG employment commission to oversee all aspects of human resources planning for the RMG industry can also be thought off. This commission can be assigned with the overall human resources planning, execution and regulatory responsibilities for RMG industry
- ➔ To ensure a sustainable RMG with better addressing of workers' rights and reduced GBV, effective defending of rights from the part of the trade unions is analyse a second most important priority. For effective defending of rights, it is analyse a first prerequisite that factories have unions and CBOs. It is further expressed by workers, TUs, and NGOs/CSOs that trade union cannot be replaced by either PC or WWA and there should be uniqueness of application of trade union definition and forms in all policies/laws. Next to this, there is analyse a clear need that trade unions/CBOs are capacitating and equipping with knowledge, skills and resources on a continuous basis. Until, there is union/CBO in the factory, RMG TUF is analyse can perform an effective mediatory role to defend workers rights with the factory management. Apart from this, during workers unrest and large scale RMG crisis, role from the RMG TUFs is analyse effective. However, there is a need to ease the ever intolerable attitude among the employers towards RMG TUFs. It is further analyse a need that RMG TUFs are increasingly following democratic

practices within themselves and there is less political division between and among them. In present Bangladesh context and reality, social dialogue can be emphasized at macro level particularly to influence macro social and economic policies in which role from the RMG TUFs and NTUCs are more desirable. One thing need to be clear, social dialogue cannot be the alternative of trade union practices. This will only create mistrust/distrust among all parties involved and will hamper a sustainable RMG growth.

- ➔ To efficiently perform all of the above set priorities, there is a clear need to participatory assessing of prevailing situation and practices and needs and priorities of workers and that of RMG capacity to address those. Authentic data and systematic documentation is clearly missing. Planning based on partial information may not bring any sustainable solution. Knowledge generation need to be an ongoing process for couple of years and there is a clear need to introduce transparent mechanism for systematic documentation of a number of RMG related information based on a prior set of indicators that agreed by all main parties. Reactive one shot of a thing to any emerging crisis may not help in the long run.
- ➔ Another important priority is analyse to continuous sensitizing and influencing of RMG employers to bring about desired changes at workplace. By default, employers are the first party right bearer stakeholder in the RMG manufacturing chain. To bring about sustainable changes in business rules, attitude, behavior and practices it is a must that RMG employers do endorse the same and are involved in the change processes. This further requires a medium to long-term perspective to follow. It is really difficult for them to agree on a less profit making path. Any sudden or reactive one shot of a thing must not help. There needs to be consistent participatory efforts to involve RMG employers in analysing socio-economic security of workers from a sustainable RMG perspective. Bypassing or overlooking RMG employers must not bring any solution.
- ➔ A responsive government and governance is analyse need to be an honest priority. Government must decide and commit first to achieve a sustainable RMG. Once, decision and commitment is achieved, there need to be created a responsive and supportive governance mechanisms to achieve that. For this, immediate step is to be taken to participatory review and agreeing and thereby to bring about necessary consistency and conformities in existing laws and practices. Side by side, law execution deserve furthermore strengthening.

Secondly, there needs to be clearly set roles, responsibilities and accountability arrangements for different Institutions, actors, factors and processes and functional coordination mechanism established between and among them. Arbitration and conciliation practices are to be consistent and systematic. TU registration system needs easing with less control. TUs can be legally assigned a watchdog role in all of these. Governance as a reactive controlling agent to emerging difficulties must not help.

- ➔ To protect RMG women workers from GBV at both factory and community, a number of special and different treatments need to be taken. To address GBV at factory level, first of all, in policy/rules, protection of GBV is to be made a binding functional responsibility by the plant level unions. Secondly, it is important that plant level unions have sufficient women leaders. Thirdly, alternative GBV reporting channel, authority and investigation procedures to be created and executed. A trade union led or buyers led multi-stakeholders authority is preferred in this.

At community level, local community and local government and civil society engaged protection mechanism is analyse expected at this stage.

*“If any buyers come to our factory, the authority pretends that we get everything that we want. But, reality is totally different. It is totally hidden to buyers. It is better that they know our real situation. It may act positively if we get a scope to talk to buyers secretly. Or, buyers can investigate secretly. If we do inform them publicly our real situation, we will loss our job”, says FGD participant Ms. Ruma, working as a Sewing Operator at Deco Apparels Garments Ltd.*

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The EPZ Workers' Welfare Association and Industrial Relations Act-2010

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Checklist for FGD

#### Checklist for FGD

Participants: Women Workers/Union Members from RMG Factory

#### A. JOB SECURITY

- Recruitment process and dismissal process
- Appointment letter [Prevailing situation (No./%)/Any change over past]
- Service Book [Prevailing situation (No./%)/Any change over past]
- ID card [Prevailing situation (No./%)/Any change over past]
- Job Loss/Increase [Quantity because of OHS initiative of the Accord/Termination/Lay Off/New establishment/More income/Others]
- Conflict resolution  
Process/Who involves/How

#### B. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- Working Hours [How many hours need to work/Rest time/Baby Feeding time/Time for Refreshment]
- Leave Status [Weekly holiday/Public Holiday/Sick Leave/Causal leave]
- Chemical Usage & Safety [Jeans fattening & drying/Dying/Others/Safety mechanisms]
- Boiler related [Number & usage/Involvement/Safety & Security]
- Health & Hygiene [Drinking water/Toilet Arrangements/Hand Wash]
- Safety & Security [PPE/Fire Safety/Alternative Passes/Primary Health care]

#### C. WAGE & BENEFITS

- Wage & Overtime [Prevailing Wage/Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction/Reasons/Expectation/How]
- Compensation [Workplace casualties/Gratuity/ Provident Fund/]

#### D. INDUSTRIAL RELATION

- TU Rights
- Participation Committee/ Freedom of Association/Trend (Increasing/Decreasing)
- Role & Importance
- Expectation

#### E. GENDER VIOLENCE

- Nature & Features  
Types/Number/Trend (Increasing/Decreasing)/Reasons/Perpetrators
- Gender Discrimination & Maternity Protection  
Wage discrimination/Gender Division of Labour/Maternity Leave/Maternity Benefit

#### F. GOVERNANCE OF RIGHTS VIOLATION INCLUDING GENDER VIOLENCE

- Process  
Reporting/Complain Process/Institutional mechanisms (Internal compliance committee & effectiveness)/Main Stakeholders/Complain Resolving (Process & Time)/Appeal/Review
- Policy/Legal Framework  
Policies/Laws/Labour court/Nari O Shishu Daman Ain/CPC/High Court Verdict/Other legal safe guard
- Role of TU/Importance of TU
- Expectation

## Appendix 2. Checklist for In-depth Interview

### Checklist for In-depth Interview

Participant: RMG TUFs Leaders

#### A. Regarding Workers Rights, Industrial Relations, Gender Based Violence & Discrimination

##### a) About RMG Workers' Rights

- Issues & Practices [Job security, Wage & Payment, Leave & Rest, Working Hours & Overtime, OHS, Working conditions, Compensation, TU Rights, & Social safety]
- Trends [Past, Present & Future]
- Opinion/Views/Recommendations

##### b) Industrial Relation

- Unionisation aspects [Organising, TU formation, CBO, CBA]
- Collective Bargaining [Issues, Actors, Factors & Processes]
- Participation Committee & Workers Welfare Association [Structure, Function, Effectiveness, Perception/Views]
- Arbitration & Conciliation [Issues, When, Where & How]
- Dispute Resolution [Number & Nature, Actions & Processes, Resolution]
- Impediments/Barriers
- Opinion/Views/Recommendations

##### c) Social Dialogue

- Common Understanding
- Functional Modality [Bi-partite, Tripartite, Multipartite, Issues, Processes]
- Effectiveness
- Perception/View & Recommendation

##### d) Gender Based Violence & Discrimination

- Nature, Number & Frequency of Violence
- Nature, Number & Frequency of Discrimination
- Where, When, How by Whom
- Impacts/Consequences
- Protection [Laws & Provisions, Reporting, Procedures, Participation]
- Opinion/Views/Recommendations

#### B. Regarding Trade Union Capacity

- Organizing Aspects [Forms/Types of organising, When, Where, How & By Whom]
- Unionization Aspects [Forms/Types of Union, Structure & Functions, Women Leadership, Impediments, Opportunities]
- Trade Union Governance [Policy/Laws & Provisions, Application, Rejection, Registration]
- Bargaining/Negotiation and Arbitration & Conciliation [Number & nature of Complaints, Recording & Documentation, Functional Modality, Impediments]
- Mobilisation Aspects [What, How, Impediments, Opportunity]
- Strengths and Weaknesses [Bargaining and Negotiation, Leadership Role, Networking & Lobbying, Dealing with GBV & Discrimination, Material & Financial Resources]
- Opinion/Views/Recommendations

## **Appendix 3. Checklist for Consultation Meeting With the Cluster Committee**

### **Checklist for Consultation Meeting Participants: Cluster Committee Members**

#### **◆ About Cluster Committee**

- ❑ Formation (Time/Members/Women Representation)
- ❑ Constitution/Manual/Guidance
- ❑ Goal/ objective
- ❑ Scope of Work
- ❑ Governance
- ❑ Mandate / Accountability

#### **◆ Activities/Role/Functions of the Cluster Committee**

- ❑ Activities/Role/Functions (Regular & Optional)
- ❑ Coordination mechanisms (Cluster Committee to Basic Unions and Within Cluster Committees)
- ❑ Nature/Features/Types of Collective Action (What/How/Where/When)
- ❑ Social Events (Why/When/How)
- ❑ Limitations (Structural/Manpower/Materialistic/Financial/External)
- ❑ Achievements (Satisfaction & Dissatisfactions and Reasons)
- ❑ Expectations/Recommendations

#### **◆ Regarding Protection of Workers' Rights and Gender Violence**

- ❑ Experience/knowledge on workers' rights situation
- ❑ Experience/knowledge on gender violence
- ❑ Functional modality of the Cluster Committee in case of rights violation (Reporting Channel/Governance/Actions/Follow-up)
- ❑ Achievements
- ❑ Limitations
- ❑ Recommendations/Expectations

## Appendix 4. Focus Group Discussions & Participants

### FGD- 01

Venue : Merul Badda, Dhaka  
Date : 15<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
Time : 5.00- 8.00 pm  
Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
Gate Keeper : Md Rafique, SDSSF, BJSF.

### Participants

1. Jhorna, Age-20, Sewing Operator
2. Najma Begum, Age-35, Sewing Operator
3. Masuma, Age-18, Sewing Operator
4. Hosne Ara, Age-35, Quality Inspector
5. Kolpona, Age-32, Helper
6. Sherin, Age-35, Sewing Operator
7. Kisuara Noor, Age-21, Helper
8. Anjana, Age-26, Helper
9. Shaju, Age-40, Sewing Operator
10. Feroja, Age-45, Operator

### FGD- 02

Venue : Mirpur  
Date : 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
Time : 5.30  
Facilitator : Md. Kamruzzaman Fahim  
Gate Keeper : Coordinator- Shardar Khorshed

### Participants

1. Josna Begum, Age-30, Sewing Operator at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd
2. Aleya Begum, Age 35, Sewing Operator at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd
3. Lubna Akter, Age 27, Quality Inspector at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd.
4. Jesmin Shela, Age 29, Quality Inspector at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd.
5. Kakoli, Age 24, Quality Inspector at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd
6. Nazma, Age 26, Quality Inspector at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd.
7. Shema, Age 24, Quality Inspector at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd.
8. Farida, Age 38, Sewing Operator at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd
9. Ambia, Age 22, Sewing Operator at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd
10. Feroja, Age 22, Helper at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd.
11. Shelpi, Age 30, Sewing Operator at Sinha Net and Demins Ltd

**FGD- 03**

Venue : Asulia, Savar  
 Date : 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
 Time : 5.30-7.30 pm  
 Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
 Gate Keeper : Abu Jafor Razib

**Participants**

1. Shelpi Akter, Age-28, Sewing Operator
2. Nahida Afroj, Age-26, Finisher, Quality Section
3. Bilkis Begum, Age-30, Sewing Operator
4. Sabrina Begum, Age-32, Finisher, Quality Section
5. Pakhi Begum, Age-32, Sewing Operator
6. Najma akter, Age-28, Sewing Operator

**FGD-04**

Venue : Zirabo, Ashulia  
 Date : 21/07/2017  
 Time : 6.00-8.30 pm.  
 Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
 Gate Keeper : Tuhin Chowdhury, BGTWTUF, BTUC.

**Participants**

1. Sathi Akter, Age – 22, Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion
2. Marufa, Age – 20, Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion
3. Mithila Akter, Age - 19, Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion
4. Marjina Akter, Age - 30, Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion
5. Moni Akter, Age - 21 , Sewing operator at Mandol Fashion
6. Lipi Akter, Age - 24 , Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion
7. Eti Begum, Age -22, Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion
8. Sharmin, Age- 20, Sewing Operator at Mandol Fashion

**FGD-05**

Venue : Khilkheth  
 Date : 22<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
 Time : 3.00-8.30 pm  
 Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
 Gate Keeper : Baby Pathan, BJSJSF, BLF

**Participants**

1. Beauty Akter, Age – 30, Sewing Operator at Rakjilaxmi Fashion
2. Parveen, Age-30, Finisher, Quality Section at Ben Heaven Garment Factory
3. Mahmuda, Age-20, Sewing Operator at Mohammodi Group Garment factory
4. Nargis, Age-30, Finisher, Quality Section
5. Rina, Age-32, Sewing Operator

6. Monika, Age - 28, Sewing Operator
7. Moina, Age - 28, Sewing Operator
8. Sumi Akter, Age - 28, Sewing Operator
9. Kajol, Age - 26, Sewing Operator

#### **FGD-06**

Venue : Bauniabad, Lalmati, Mirpur  
 Date : 22th July 2017  
 Time : 5.30-7.30 pm  
 Facilitator : Shajib Dey

#### **Participants**

1. Shakila Akter, Age-18, Helper at Tuhin Fashion.
2. Laboni, Age-18, Helper at Deco Appearance garment.
3. Rajia, Age-23, Sewing Operator at Deco Appearance garment.
4. Rajoni, Age-15, Helper at Deco Appearance garment
5. Morium, Age-16, Helper at Deco Appearance garment
6. Bokul, Age-20, married, she has been working garments factory for 1.5 years as operator in swing sector. Sewing Operator at New Fashion garment.
7. Sheuli, Age-24, Sewing Operator at MARK-2000 Ltd. garment.
8. Rupali, Age-14, Helper at MARK-2000 Ltd.
9. Fatema, Age-30, Sewing Operator at Protik Appearance garment.
10. Ruma, Age-28, Sewing Operator at Deco Appearance garment.
11. Sharmin, Age-19, Operator, Qualitative section at Tuing Swing garment.

#### **FGD- 07**

Venue : Mirpur  
 Date : 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
 Time : 5.30-7.30 pm  
 Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
 Gate Keeper : Foysal Hossain Rumon, JUSL.

#### **Participants**

1. Lipi, Age-40, Sewing Operator
2. Nurjahan, Age-30, Finisher, Quality Section
3. Mahamuda, Age-39, Sewing Operator
4. Nipa, Age-37, Finisher, Quality Section
5. Tania, Age-31, Sewing Operator
6. Sufia, Age-40, Helper
7. Asma, Age-35, Sewing Operator
8. Jhorna, Age-37, Sewing Operator
9. Rokeya, Age-35, Sewing Operator
10. Mst. Moli, Age-28, Sewing Operator
11. Tania Akter, Age-24, Sewing Operator
12. Jesmin, Age-35, Sewing Operator

**FGD: 08**

Venue : Satarkul, North Badda, Dhaka  
Time & Date : 6-8 Pm, 26/07/17  
Facilitator : SM Kamruzzaman  
Gate Keeper : Md. Atikur Rahman

**Participants**

1. Popy Akter, Age – 29, Packing Operator
2. Jowel Akter, Age – 35, Packing Operator
3. Mahmuda Akter, Age – 35, Packing Operator
4. Aklima Akter, Age – 36, Packing Operator
5. Marzina Akter, Age – 36, Packing Operator
6. Sima Akter, Age – 36, Packing Operator

**FGD- 09**

Venue : Mirpur  
Date : 27 July 2017  
Time : 9.00pm -11.00 pm  
Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
Gate Keeper : Ruma Rahman, BJGSD, BJSD

**Participants**

1. Rima, Age-35, Sewing Operator at Mark Decaine garments.
2. Rahima, Age-30, Sewing Operator at Ajmat Fashion garments
3. Bisakha Rani, Age-30, Store Keeper at Ajmat Fashion garments
4. Asha Rahman, Age-34, Sewing Operator at Ajmat Fashion garments.
5. Shina Age-35, Sewing Operator at Clemon garments
6. Rokeya, Age-26, Sewing Operator at Standard group garments.
7. Mousumi, ge-19, Helper at Ajmat fashion garments.
8. Hosna, Age-19, Sewing Operator at Ajmat Fashion garments.
9. Fatema, Age-35, Sewing Operator at Mark – 2000 Ltd. garments

**FGD- 10**

Venue : Mirpur-2, Dhaka  
Date : 28<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
Coordinator : Salauddin Shwapon, President, BRGWF.

**Participants**

1. Fahima Akter, Age-30, Sewing Operator at SB design Ltd.
2. Sahinur, Age-30, Helper at SB design Ltd.
3. Sajeda, Age-19, Sewing Operator at SB design Ltd.
4. Runu, Age-19, Helper at SB design Ltd.
5. Salma Akter, Age-25, Sewing Operator at SB design Ltd.
6. Mina Akter, Age-30, Sewing Operator at SB design Ltd.

**FGD- 11**

Venue : Hitir Pool, BTGWL Office  
Date : 29/07/2017  
Time : 4.00-6.30 pm.  
Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
Gate Keeper : Mariom Akter, GS, BGTWL.

**Participants**

1. Sumi Akter, Age – 20, Sewing Operator at Edward Fashion
2. Fatema Khatun, Age – 21, Sewing Operator at Emam Dying Ltd
3. Kajol, Age – 22, Sewing Operator at Silver Fashion Design Ltd
4. Bulu Begum, Age – 35, Finishing Operator at Switch Tex
5. Marjina Akter, Age – 27, Folding Man at Nishad Ltd garments
6. Alo Begum, Age – 36, Helper at Silver Fashion Design Ltd

**FGD- 12**

Venue : Topkhana, Naya Palton, Dhaka  
Date : 30<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
Time : 2.30- 4.30  
Facilitator : Shajib Dey  
Gate Keeper : Faridul Islam, Asst. GS, NGWF.

**Participants**

1. Helena, Age - 33, Operator at Chuchein Ltd.
1. Morjina, Age-22, Operator at Chuchein Ltd.
2. Mohija, Age-25, Sewing Operator at Chuchein Ltd.
3. Khudeja, Age-22, Operator at Chuchein Ltd.
4. Yesmin, Age-26, Folder man at Chuchein Ltd.
5. Najma, Age-25, Operator at Chuchein Ltd.

## Appendix 5. In-depth Interviews & Interviewees (Trade Union Leaders & Others)

### List of Interviewees

Interviewees	Date	Time	Place
<b>Nurul Islam</b> , General Secretary United Federation of Garments Workers (UFGW)	04-07-2017 <b>Tuesday</b>	11.00am- 12.30pm	Topkhana
<b>Nahidul Hasan Noyon</b> , General Secretary Sommilito Garment's Sramik Federation (SGSF)	04-07-2017 <b>Tuesday</b>	5.00pm-7.00pm	Mohakhali
<b>Shahida Parvin Shikha</b> , Office Secretary Bangladesh Trade Union Center (BTUC)	05-07-2017 <b>Wednesday</b>	11.30am-1.30pm	Topkhana
<b>Abdur Razzak</b> , Vice President Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh (JSJB)	07-07-2017 <b>Friday</b>	12.00am-2.00pm	Bangabandhu Avenue
<b>Md. Rafiq</b> , President Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation (BJSF)	08-07-2017 <b>Saturday</b>	4.30pm- 6.45pm	Shegunbagicha
<b>Adv. Delowar Hossain Khan</b> , President Bangladesh labour Federation (BLF)	09-07-2017 <b>Sunday</b>	5.00pm- 7.00pm	Matijheel
<b>Hazi Mohammed Shahidul Islam</b> , President Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Garments Sramik Dol (BJGSD)	12-07-2017 <b>Wednesday</b>	4.30pm- 6.30pm	Palton
<b>Shamima Nasrin</b> , President Shadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Kormachari federation	14-07-2017 <b>Friday</b>	12.00pm- 2.30pm	Mirpur
<b>Kazi Rahima Aktar Shathi</b> , President Jatiya Garments Sramik Oikka League (JGSOL)	18-07-2017 <b>Tuesday</b>	6.00pm- 8.15 pm	Mirpur
<b>Papia Akter</b> , Organizing Secretary, Bangladesh Revolutionary Garmnet Workers Federation (BRGWF)	19-07-2017 <b>Wednesday</b>	10.30am - 1.00pm	Mirpur
<b>Z M Kamrul Anam</b> , President, Bangladesh Textile Garments Workers League (BTGWL)	29-07-2017 <b>Saturday</b>	11.00pm- 1.00pm	Hatirpul
<b>Amirul Haque Amin</b> , President National Garment's Worker Federation (NGWF)	30-07-2017 <b>Sunday</b>	4.30pm- 6.30pm	Palton
<b>Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed</b> Executive Director Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies- BILS	30-08-2017	5.00pm-6.00pm	BILS
<b>Nazrul Islam Khan</b> Secretary General Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies- BILS	15-09-2017	3.30pm-4.30pm	BILS

## Appendix 6. Consultation Meeting & Participants

**Consultation Meeting**  
**25 July, 2017**  
**Seminar Hall, BILS**

SL	Name	Designation and Organisation
1	Z. M. Kamrul Anam	President, BTGWL
2	Iffatara Shelly	Vice President, BTGWL
3	Jahanara	Organiser, BJSKP
4	Hasina Akter	Organiser, BFWS
5	Joly	Organiser, AGWF
6	Shahanaj Parvin	Organiser, BIGUF
7	Nd. Shabuj Hossain	Organiser, BAWF
8	Md. Rafique	Organiser, NGWF
9	Yahia Rahman	Organiser, SGSF
10	Hadayet ul Islam	President, BJSKP
11	Mobarok Khan	Acting General Secretary, BRGWF
12	Md. Maud Rana	Organiser, BGTLWF
13	Shamima Nasreen	President, SBGSKF
14	Morium Akter	Organiser, BTGWL

#### **For Contact**

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Please feel free to contact respective editor at [manirul@gmail.com](mailto:manirul@gmail.com) for any further information, clarification and feedback on this study report