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# Labour

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## Academic

- Organising the Informal Economy Workers: A BILS Study of Rickshaw Pullers in Dhaka City
- Organizing informal sector workers in Bangladesh: An anatomy of present condition and challenges of organizing domestic workers
- Industrial disorder in Bangladesh: Causes, impacts and policing
- Violence against Street Children: A Study in Dhaka North City Corporation
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- The Role of Newspapers in Recovering the Rights of Garment Workers: A Study on Bangladeshi Newspapers

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BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF LABOUR STUDIES-BILS

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## Editorial

The shape and size of labour market in Bangladesh is changing day by day due to the demand of supply chain and nature of the economy. Employers and workers are contributing equally for economic development. But it is unfortunate to see that rich become richer and poor get poorer. “Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2016” published by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) shows that the poorest five percent had 0.78 percent of the national income in their possession back in 2010, and now their share is only 0.23 percent. In contrast, the richest five percent, who had 24.61 percent of the national income six years back, now has a higher share, 27.89 percent to be precise.

Workers are giving relentless effort to continue productivity in a view to keep revolving the wheel of economy. In spite of that, they suffer more to ensure basic requirement for their livelihood. Hundreds of reasons stand behind their sufferings, while inequality plays a major role there. Economic inequality, gender inequality, big distance between government and non-government jobs and formal and informal sectors could be mentioned in case of these.

The distance between government and non-government jobs, formal and informal sectors and men and women workers considering workers’ rights are widening day by day, while the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh authorizes the State to remove social and economic inequality and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens in order to attain a uniform level of economic development.

We hope to see the end of this situation and expect that workers dignity and fare share will be ensured in Bangladesh. Articles that published on the present issue have tried to analyse different situations in a view to focus causes and effects of inequality and way forward.

We thank Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), LO-FTF Council and Mondiaal FNV for their support and cooperation regarding publication of this journal.

Md. Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan

Editor



# Academic Part





# **Organising the Informal Economy Workers: A BILS Study of Rickshaw Pullers in Dhaka City**

Md. Rezaul Karim, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>  
Khandoker Abdus Salam<sup>2</sup>

## **Abstract**

*Rickshaw is the most popular and widely used transport throughout Bangladesh and even in Dhaka city. Rickshaw, as transport, has some remarkable advantages such as employs large number of unskilled rural migrant labours, less fare, suitable for move on all roads, free from fatal accident, pollution free and environment friendly, and so on. However, it is often blamed for traffic jam in Dhaka city. It is only because of this, instead of development of the rickshaw sector, the overall policy is to phase out rickshaw from Dhaka city. Rickshaw pulling is an arduous work. Yet there is least respect for human rights and dignity for them. This study explores various problems of rickshaw pullers as well as seeks to formulate recommendations by observations, interviews and analysis.*

## **Introduction and background**

In Dhaka city, 60 percent of the residents use rickshaw for commuting. Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) the only rickshaw licensing authority issued 79,554 rickshaw licenses until stopped in 1986. But, nowadays, in Dhaka city, the actual number of rickshaws is estimated to be 1.1 million. Thus, the sector employs large number of unskilled labours as it is characterized by small investment, easy entry, cash income, no special skill needed, available everywhere and simple rules of engagement. It is estimated that nearly 1.5 million rickshaw pullers of Dhaka city and their family members are dependent on rickshaw pulling.

They are neglected and harassed by the law enforcing agencies, passengers and workers of motorized vehicles and, in some cases,

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rickshaw owners. Usually, they live a substandard life in Dhaka city, away from their family for months together. So, their right as labour is a major issue. Moreover, these huge number of rickshaw pullers are being deprived of basic facilities and basic rights as labour. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS, in partnering with Danish Trade Union Development Agency of Denmark, comes forward with an initiative to improve the well-being of the rickshaw pullers of Dhaka city. As part of this initiative, the present study was conducted as a baseline survey to know the overall condition of the rickshaw pullers of Dhaka city with a purpose to use the findings as the basis for making a realistic plan to improve the rights situation and ensure the security of the rickshaw pullers of Dhaka city.

## **Methodology of the study**

The study adopted a cross-sectional design and mainly quantitative in nature. Data were collected through survey of 200 rickshaw pullers from four Police Stations (Badda, Hazaribag, Jatrabari and Shajahanpur) of DCC. Qualitative data were collected from 20 garage owners and City Corporation Executives and Traffic Police. Quantitative data were processed and analysed using SPSS software and qualitative data were analysed and placed under appropriate sections of the report.

## **Key Findings**

### **Socio-economic profile of the rickshaw pullers**

Residential status: All rickshaw pullers of Dhaka city are unskilled and migrated from rural area. Majority of them live in Dhaka without family and visit rural home regularly. So, limiting rickshaw in Dhaka city would risk their livelihood and make these people more vulnerable. Socio-economic characteristics: The average age of the rickshaw pullers is 37 years conducive for an arduous job like rickshaw. However, five percent of the rickshaw pullers found aged beyond 60 years indicating their helpless condition and deserves attention for ensuring their security. Almost all rickshaw pullers are married. Thus, they have family members dependent on them. As 60% of them educated, it would be a facilitating condition for modernizing the sector. Monthly average family income of the rickshaw pullers is BDT13382/- of which 68% comes from rickshaw pulling. Rickshaw pulling is the only occupation of nearly 90% of the

rickshaw pullers indicating their sole dependency on the sector. Rickshaw pullers are having extremely poor asset base. About one-third has no land and on average they own only 13.05 decimals of land.

Living arrangement in Dhaka city: The usual residence of the rickshaw pullers in Dhaka is either rented house (52%) or rickshaw garage (47%), both are of appalling condition. The dreadful living condition of the Dhaka city rickshaw pullers has been revealed through the fact that average number living in a room is 21 and space available per person is only 28 sq. ft. Almost all (97.4%) of them reported that ventilation of their house is not enough at all.

Food arrangements: Less than half of the rickshaw pullers' source of food is family while others are mess and hotel. It is important that 82% of the rickshaw pullers addicted in smoking. They spent, on average, BDT46.2 per day for smoking.

## **Work conditions**

Rickshaw pulling as occupation: On average Dhaka city rickshaw pullers are engaged in rickshaw pulling for 12.6 years and more than 80 percent started rickshaw pulling in Dhaka city. Before started rickshaw pulling, majority (57.1%) was engaged in day labourer followed by petty business 13.8%, agriculture 12.1%. The major reasons behind turned as rickshaw puller are 'did not get any job' and 'don't need capital & skill'.

Time in the year pull rickshaw and frequency of rural home visit: Dhaka city rickshaw pullers regularly visit their rural home in every five months. However, usually, they pull rickshaw throughout the year. While in Dhaka, 62% pull rickshaw seven days and 28% six days in a week. They pull rickshaw for one shift daily, on average nine hours.

Rest and activity during leisure: Rickshaw pullers, during work, rest in every 107 minutes, i.e., in average nine hours of rickshaw pulling in a day; they rest for about five times. They have no fixed place for rest. Usually it is roadside tea stall or under tree. Dhaka city rickshaw pullers have 15 hours daily for sleep, rest and other activities. Almost all of them either rest or sleep during leisure. Thus, there is a scope of engaging the rickshaw pullers in training and organizational activities.

Food and drink during rickshaw pulling: Rickshaw pullers need frequent food and drink during rickshaw pulling as it an arduous job. Usual place of food during rickshaw pulling is totally unsafe as more than ninety percent take their food and drink from temporary roadside hotels.

### **Conditions of rickshaw pulling**

Ownership of rickshaw: Almost all (96%)) Dhaka city rickshaw pullers do not own rickshaw. Being a migratory, owning and maintaining a rickshaw in Dhaka city is not possible either. They hire rickshaw on rent, average BDT113/- per day. They do not require any written contract or security deposit. Almost all (96%) owners bear the maintenance cost and keep the rickshaw fit. In case of accident, however, majority of the rickshaw pullers require to bear all repair cost.

The rickshaw garage: Rickshaw pullers rent rickshaw from garage owners. A garage owner has number of rickshaws, may range from twenty to hundreds. Garage owners adopted this business for employment and living as it requires minimum investment, produces reasonable profit, less complexity and relatively easy operation, independent business, etc. Twenty percent of the rickshaw pullers reported they do not receive any facility from garage. However, majority reported receive facilities of rest and living despite the quality is not good.

According to the garage owners, they face varieties of problems in running garage like rickshaw pullers absconded after taking loan or in case of rickshaw stolen/snatched, rickshaw pullers cause accident as they have no training, members of different organisations cause problem and claims extortion, sometimes face scarcity of rickshaw pullers, rickshaw stolen/snatched, rickshaw license is not available and harassment by law enforcing agencies.

Garage owners also reported some personal problems of the rickshaw pullers they know like too much loan at home, family disorganization, involved with gambling, visit sex workers, face accommodation problem in Dhaka, etc.

Income from rickshaw pulling and rickshaw: Dhaka city rickshaw pullers, on average, earn gross minimum income of BDT364.8 and

maximum income of BDT695.8 per day. The net average daily income of the Dhaka city rickshaw pullers is BDT371.7 with minimum of BDT100/- and maximum of BDT800/-. Rickshaw owners reported that after bearing all related expenses their net income per rickshaw per day ranges from BDT 30/- to 80/-; that is an average about 55/-.

### **Legality of rickshaw & rickshaw pullers**

Rickshaw license: There are more than one million unlicensed rickshaws operating in the streets of Dhaka city. Strategies adopted by the garage owners in this regard are: have few genuine licenses on rent and have tickets (compelled to) in exchange of regular subscription from different organisations having connection with power structure but no legality. Rickshaw pullers know these tickets as rickshaw license.

Nearly half of the garage owners never visited DCC for any purpose. The rest half visited DCC mainly for the purpose of license but received nothing.

Rickshaw pullers' training and driving license: There is no provision of providing driving license to the rickshaw pullers. However, this needed as knowledge about traffic rules is essential for plying rickshaw on the city streets like Dhaka. Rickshaw pullers should be provided with driving license upon successful test on basic skills of rickshaw pulling and knowledge about traffic rules and other relevant subjects.

### **Occupational safety and hazards**

Fitness of rickshaw: Rickshaw pulling itself is an arduous occupation. In addition, there are issues of safety and hazards in it. First, keeping the rickshaw fit is the most important for safety of rickshaw pullers as well as for passengers. Dhaka city rickshaw pullers (92%) mentioned that their owners take necessary measures to keep the rickshaw fit which is a good part.

Confinement of rickshaw pullers: Rickshaw pullers frequently face confinement. Nearly half of them experienced confinement 5.8 times on average during rickshaw pulling in Dhaka. Major causes of confinement were 'signal violation' and 'driving on VIP roads'. Rickshaw pullers kept confined, on average, about 51 minutes and

released through bribing or without any penalty. They have also experienced tire puncture and/or take away passenger seats by the LEAs.

Traffic accident faced: Despite not fatal, rickshaw pullers faced frequent accidents.

On average, rickshaw pullers faced accident with another rickshaw or bus for average 6.1 times during the whole period of rickshaw pulling in Dhaka. During accident rickshaw pullers usually do not receive any compensation and receive help from passerby, owners and other rickshaw pullers.

Rickshaw stolen or snatched: One-fourth of the Dhaka city rickshaw pullers lost their rickshaw one or more times due to stolen or snatched. In case of rickshaw stolen or snatched, rickshaw pullers are usually requiring compensation; 35% reported full and 53% partial. Incidence of illness and treatment of the rickshaw pullers: Incidence of disease found endemic among the Dhaka city rickshaw pullers; 94 percent reported suffered from one or more diseases caused by rickshaw pulling. Fever is the most common disease followed by cough and cold, pain, weakness, jaundice, dysentery/diarrhea, etc. Almost all (96.2%) rickshaw pullers receive treatment from quack doctor or take medicine from pharmacy indicating their extreme vulnerability.

### **Behaviour of the related people with rickshaw pullers**

Passenger: All rickshaw pullers reported that they faced misconduct of passengers. These are: physical assault, belittle, scold, paid unjust or quarrel over fare. It is evident that 63.7 percent rickshaw pullers faced physical assault.

Police: More than ninety (91%) percent of the rickshaw pullers mentioned that they faced different kinds of misconduct from police like scold, belittle, physical assault, pinch tires, take away rickshaw seat, compel sitting holding ear, etc.

Rickshaw owners: Unlike passenger and police, majority of the rickshaw pullers

(60%) reported faced no misconduct from rickshaw owners while 40 percent reported faced misconduct of owners like belittle, scold, torture in case of delay returning rickshaw, etc. It appears that there is

an amiable relation between the owner and rickshaw pullers with exception in some cases.

### **State of rights and organisational involvement of the rickshaw pullers**

Awareness about the labour rights of the rickshaw pullers: None of the Dhaka city rickshaw pullers know any of their rights as labour. However, garage owners mentioned different rights of the rickshaw pullers, such as, appropriate and cheap accommodation, training, driving license, ID card, dress, dignity, treatment facility, polite behavior, rational fare, loan, organize, etc.

Organisational involvement of rickshaw pullers: There are organisations without any legal authority exploiting the absence of DCC's control over rickshaw sector. More than half of the rickshaw pullers know the name of such organization but almost none of them never had any contact with them. None of these organisations play any role for the welfare or protect the rights of the rickshaw pullers. Again, none of the rickshaw pullers found member of any organization. However, 62% of them feel that they should have organization for the purpose of help in need, savings and receiving loan, safety of the rickshaw pullers and so on. They mention the temporary living status of the rickshaw pullers as major obstacle to form organization. Some other obstacles are rickshaw pullers not interested, opportunistic organisers, owners do not want, etc.

### **Recommendations**

It is evident from the findings of the present study that Dhaka city rickshaw pullers are deprived of all rights and facilities as labour and subject to many discriminations and hazards at work. They live in almost inhuman conditions and, at work, they have no occupational safety and they face many hazards. Most importantly, they are totally unaware about their rights as labour and not organized or members of any organization. No initiatives have been found for protecting the rights and welfare of the rickshaw pullers. Moreover, there is no policy to modernize and improve the sector. Rather, despite having number of important positive aspects, the sector faces negative treatment identified as major cause of traffic jam only. However, as rickshaw sector employs more than a million unskilled labour in Dhaka city and a huge population survives on this sector, the sector should not be left unattended. Based on the findings of the present



study the following recommendations are put forward to improve the state of the rights of the rickshaw pullers. The recommendations are grouped into two, i.e., for BILS and for the respective authorities.

## **Recommendations for BILS**

It has revealed from the study that for realization of basic rights and ensure the welfare of the Dhaka city rickshaw pullers, organize them is a must. BILS, as an organization of major trade unions of the country, can play a vital role in organizing the rickshaw pullers. Furthermore, BILS can conduct advocacy with the respective authorities to adopt appropriate policies and actions to modernize the rickshaw sector and improve the conditions of rickshaw pullers. The following specific steps are recommended for BILS. Organise the rickshaw pullers: There are 13 national trade unions (TUs) associated with BILS. These TUs have their rickshaw wings too. However, as evident, participation of rickshaw pullers in these TUs is extremely poor. Rickshaw pullers identified their migratory status as major obstacle to become a member of any organization. BILS, with the help of representatives of the TUs, should prepare a realistic strategy to organise the migratory rickshaw pullers in these TUs through workshops.

Train the TU workers: Rickshaw pullers have identified the organisations operating (mostly with no legal authority) in the rickshaw sector as not sincere to their problems. This has developed a negative attitude about TUs among the rickshaw pullers. BILS should undertake a training programme for the TU workers responsible for organizing and work with rickshaw pulling for their well-being. Mobilize for realizing rights: BILS should prepare action plan to mobilize the rickshaw pullers and organizers in a disciplined way to realize their rights and welfare of the rickshaw pullers.

Train and counsel the rickshaw pullers: Rickshaw pullers are totally unaware about their rights. Yet none of them has any training from anywhere about the traffic rules and other legal issues. This causes problems in the traffic system of the city as well as safety of the rickshaw pullers. Moreover, rickshaw pullers face many occupational hazards and personal and familial problems. BILS should arrange well designed training and counselling programme for the rickshaw pullers including the following components.

- ☐ Traffic rules
- ☐ Rights as labour
- ☐ Responsibilities of the rickshaw pullers
- ☐ Savings and expense
- ☐ Refrain from smoking & drug addiction
- ☐ Family life

**Advocacy with authorities:** Many authorities related to the rickshaw sector. These are DCCs (North & South), Local government representatives (Counselors), Ministry of labour, Ministry of home affairs, Ministry of health, Law enforcing agencies, Ministry of planning, etc. It is evident that improvement of rickshaw sector and realization of their labour rights and welfare depends on these authorities. So far, these authorities have found not responsive enough about the issues related to the rickshaw sector and rickshaw pullers. BILS, along with the TUs, requires advocating these authorities to adopt policies and actions to modernize the rickshaw sector as well as improve conditions of the rickshaw pullers and include in their citizen's charter.

Advocacy and help the garage owners: Rickshaw garages are the usual place of stay in Dhaka city for the migratory rickshaw pullers. They spent majority of their time in garage. Thus, any programme targeted to these migratory labourers should be garage-based on practical considerations. Furthermore, facilities in the garages fell short of even minimum standard. Garage owners do not have any formal arrangements with the rickshaw pullers. Despite that, it is evident that garages can play a vital role in organizing the rickshaw pullers and ensure their well-being.

Garage owners were also found very positive in this regard. BILS should work with the garage owners so that they provide better facilities for the rickshaw pullers and introduce formal arrangements. It is to be noted here that, rickshaw garage owners are also facing various problems in operating their business and the income they incur through this business is not that much high. So, BILS may require extending both technical and financial help to the garage owners in this regard.

Campaign for courteous behavior with the rickshaw pullers: Rickshaw pullers face impolite behavior from passengers, LEA

members, motor drivers and others. As human being and engaged in arduous job, rickshaw pullers deserve sympathetic behavior from all concerned. This is their right too. BILS should launch campaign with all concern (passenger, LEAs, garage owners, community people, etc.) using different channels including mass media to encourage behaving politely with the rickshaw pullers.

Campaign for eradicating misconception about rickshaw sector: As evident, rickshaw sector is facing negative treatment from authorities as well as other stakeholders. However, there are important positive aspects of this sector. BILS should campaign focusing the positive aspects of the rickshaw sector.

Prepare a comprehensive policy: BILS should take initiatives to formulate a comprehensive policy to modernize and improve the rickshaw sector and ensure the rights and wellbeing of the rickshaw pullers involving all concerned stakeholders like rickshaw pullers, garage owners, TUs, government and local government bodies, etc. BILS should work as a coordinating body.

Extend BILS programme in other cities of the country: The present study was confined to Dhaka city only. However, numbers of rickshaw pullers in other cities of the country such as, Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Barisal and others are much more than Dhaka city. It can be assumed that rickshaw sector and rickshaw pullers throughout the country face, same issues related to labour rights and wellbeing like Dhaka. So, it is recommended that BILS extend the present program to all rickshaw pullers of Dhaka city as well as throughout the country, especially in large cities. BILS should took initiative to prepare a database for the rickshaw pullers throughout the country.

### **Recommendations for different authorities**

The major role of BILS is to organize rickshaw pullers and advocacy with concerned authorities. However, it is imperative that relevant authorities (DCCs, Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives, Ministry of labour, Ministry of home, Ministry of health, Law enforcing agencies, etc.). It is evident that improvement of rickshaw sector and realization of labour rights and welfare depends on these authorities are supposed to act for the purpose. So, the following recommendations are made to the relevant authorities.

- 1) Prepare a policy by each authority including the aspects covered by the specific agency.
- 2) Insert rickshaw sector policy and services into the citizen's charter of the respective agencies, such as DCC.
- 3) Create a data base for the rickshaw sector (directly and indirectly involved) for Dhaka city as well as all over the country.
- 4) Prepare rickshaw stands with hotel and toilet facilities at different points of Dhaka city.
- 5) Separate lane for rickshaw in major streets of Dhaka city & enforce that strictly.
- 6) Provide new rickshaw license & establish discipline in the sector.
- 7) Provide driving license for the rickshaw pullers.
- 8) Subsidized residential arrangements for the rickshaw pullers in Dhaka city.
- 9) Fix the rickshaw fare rationally and enforce.
- 10) Introduce formal arrangements in the sector.
- 11) Stop the activities of unlawful organizations intruded into the sector.
- 12) Ensure easy access of rickshaw pullers in government hospitals for better treatment.
- 13) Rickshaw garage owners should be provided technical, material and financial assistance so that they can provide better services to the rickshaw pullers.
- 14) Train the rickshaw pullers on different issues.
- 15) Creation of credit fund for rickshaw pullers.
- 16) Introduce insurance scheme (general & health) for the rickshaw pullers.
- 17) Create a welfare fund at DCC for the rickshaw pullers who become destitute due to accident and or other casualties.
- 18) Campaign to eliminate negative attitude towards rickshaw among citizens; involve media for such campaign.
- 19) Develop appropriate motorized rickshaw through research which is already in operation in different areas of Dhaka city despite prohibited by the authority.

# **Organizing informal sector workers in Bangladesh: An anatomy of present condition and challenges of organizing domestic workers**

Mostafiz Ahmed<sup>1</sup>

## **ABSTRACT**

*Initiatives to organize the domestic workers are not remarkable in Bangladesh despite the fact that some efforts have been taken in recent time to bring them under organization. This paper primarily intends to know the state of the domestic workers' organizing efforts along with identifying the challenges and problems of this process. Using the data collected from primary sources it has been observed that organizations work for domestic workers are in poor state and present organizing efforts are facing challenges which are social, political, economic, and cultural in nature. To overcome the challenges and strengthen the organizing activities this paper recommends a three-point strategy – creating a favorable environment; attracting more domestic workers to organizations; and capacity-building of existing organizations.*

**Key Words:** *Informal Sector, Domestic Work, Domestic Worker, Organizing*

## **INTRODUCTION**

'Right to organize' is one of the fundamental rights of the workers all over the world and the key to ensure many other rights also. Various international instruments relating to workers' rights protection – ILO Conventions; Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – have entitled workers to enjoy this right. According to these instruments all workers have the right to establish and join organizations of their choice to promote and defend their respective interests and to negotiate collectively. However, informal sector

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workers are mostly deprived of enjoying this right, and this right enjoyment condition of domestic workers is worse.

Generally the term ‘informal sector’ implies to those sectors where the work and employment of the workers are mostly unregulated by the legal provisions. Initially the term “informal sector” was used to describe the activities of the working poor who were working very hard but who were not recognized, recorded, protected or regulated by the public authorities (ILO, 2002). By nature informal sector rarely comes with adequate wage, good working condition, and social protection (ADB and BBS, 2012). According to the seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), “employees are considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is, in law or in practice, not subject to labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits (advance notice of dismissal, severances of pay, paid annual or sick leave, etc)” (Raihan, 2010). Besides, Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation Act 2006, has identified informal sectors as those private sectors where the work and conditions of work are not determined and regulated by the existing labour law and where the scope of becoming organized is very limited. Noteworthy, all these characteristics of informal sector are widely seen in the case of “domestic work”.

Informal sector in Bangladesh constitutes a significant part of the economy and plays important role in employment creation, production, and income generation (Raihan, 2010). The labour market of the Bangladesh is overwhelmingly occupied by informal sector workers, 87.5 percent of total labour force (BBS, 2011), where domestic workers are a significant and an inseparable part. “Domestic work” is defined as “work performed in or for a household or households” that involves a range of tasks, including cooking, cleaning the house, washing and ironing the laundry, general housework, looking after children, the elderly or persons with disabilities, as well as maintaining the garden, guarding the house premises, and driving the family car; and a “domestic worker” is “any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship” (ILO, 2011). ‘Domestic work’ as occupation is widely prevalent in Bangladesh and ‘domestic workers’ are one of the most marginalized and highly vulnerable working communities in the country. It is one of the oldest and most important occupations for millions of women around the world (ILO, 2010) and domestic work is a heavily female-dominated sector: women account for 83 per cent

of all domestic workers (ILO, 2013). In the context of Bangladesh, this sector is mainly occupied by women and children, especially girls. However, there is dearth of reliable and specific data on the number of domestic workers in Bangladesh. According to Labour Force Survey-2006 there were 331,000 domestic workers in Bangladesh (BBS, 2008). Nevertheless, the latest Labour Force Survey (2010) of the country does not provide any estimation in this regard. But general calculation estimates that the number of domestic workers is about 2 million in Bangladesh (BILS, 2011).

The large numbers of domestic workers of the country are one of the most deprived sections from worker-rights point of view. They are not protected by the current labour law of the country and thus established labour standards are not seen practiced for them. Domestic workers do not have formal employment contract with their employers and the provisions of 8-hour daily work, weekly holiday, maternity leave etc are all dream to them. Besides, they are not organized also although the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has provided its citizens with the right to form association or union (GOB, 2011). Because the right to organize is an enabling right in that it paves the way for the exercise of a range of other rights at work (ILO, 2004), the unorganized nature of the domestic workers and non-availability of their organization to protect rights and bargain collectively are among the prime reasons of their poor condition and rights deprivation despite the fact that initiatives to bring domestic workers under organization have been started in the country. The first initiative to organize the domestic workers was taken in 2001 when National Domestic Women Workers Union (NDWWU) was established. At present the NDWWU is organizing domestic workers in different locations of Dhaka city. Five years after establishing NDWWU another major initiative, to protect and promote the rights and dignity of the domestic workers and to organize them, was seen in 2006 when Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN) was formed including trade unions, NGOs, and human rights based organization and with the active support of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS). Along with many objectives DWRN aims at raising strong voice of domestic workers and creating awareness among them to be organized and vocal for their own rights. Recently with the support of DWRN several national trade union federations of Bangladesh have started organizing activities of the domestic workers.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The broad objective of this paper is to know the existing situation of organizing efforts for the domestic workers in Bangladesh. In this regard the paper in particular tries to explore two issues – firstly, status of the domestic workers’ organizations; and secondly, the challenges and problems of bringing domestic workers under organization. Besides, recommending necessary actions for strengthening organizing efforts for domestic workers is another aim of this paper.

## **METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF**

This paper is based on primary sources. Information have been collected, through FGDs and interviews, from all the organizations presently carrying out organizing activities for domestic workers of the country. Two separate checklists, one for FGD and another for interview, were developed prior to conducting the FGDs and interviews. Total nine FGDs were conducted with the domestic workers of different organizations, one with each organization– Mohila Sramik League (JMSL), Jatiyo Sramik Jote Bangladesh (JSJB), Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Federation (BJSF), Bangladesh Labour Federation (BLF), Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra (BTUK), Bangladesh Sramik Federation (BSF), Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (BJSJ), Jatiyo Sramik Jote (JSJ), and National Domestic Women Workers Union (NDWWU). Besides, total nine interviews were conducted with the organizers, one organizer from each organization, of domestic workers.

## **DOMESTIC WORKERS’ ORGANIZATIONS: PRESENT STATUS**

Organizing domestic workers in Bangladesh is a contemporary issue, though the practice of domestic work is age-old. Present status of the organizations of domestic workers has been portrayed in the following sections in terms of membership, structure, financial strength, decision making process, and activities of the organizations.

**Total Member and Length of Membership:** Since organizing domestic workers is a recent issue, the existing organizations are yet to enlist members at a large volume, except the NDWWU. Members of NDWWU have claimed, during FGD, that there are about 12,000



members in their organization. Apart from this organization, the numbers of members in all other organizations vary from fifty to one-hundred. In each case, BLF, JSJB and JSJ have fifty members. Total number of members of BSF is fifty-five. Participants from BJSF and BTUK respectively have claimed that they have seventy and eighty members in their organizations. Besides, FGD participants from JMSL have informed that so far they have been able to enlist one hundred members in their organization. The length of organization membership is also very short. It has been observed that domestic workers' membership length generally varies from six months to one year, except for members of NDWWU. Membership length of the members of NDWWU varies from six months to twelve years. Besides, very few membership of BTUK have also claimed that they have two years long membership.

**Structure of the Organizations:** Marked variation has been observed in the structure of the executive committees of domestic workers' organizations. The number of executive committee members of the organizations varies from five to thirty. BLF and BJSF both have five-member executive committee in each case; however the designations of the committee members are different. Five-member executive committee of BLF is comprised of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary, Organizing Secretary, and Publicity Secretary; whereas the executive committee of BJSF has been formed including Convener, Joint-Convener, Secretary, Joint-Secretary, and Cashier. JMSL and JSJ have executive committees comprised of thirty members and twenty-one members respectively. In the thirty-member committee of JMSL along with President, Vice-president, General Secretary, Organizing Secretary, and Publicity Secretary there are twenty-five general members. On the other hand, in 21-member executive committee of JSJ the key positions, along with ten general members, are – Chairman, Vice-chairman, General Secretary, Joint Secretary (2), Treasurer, Housing and Public Works Secretary, Publicity Secretary, and Cultural Secretary. The executive committee of BTUK includes President, Vice president, Secretary, and General Members. The central committee of NDWWU is comprised of 30 members. One-third members of the central committee are not domestic workers, and rest two-thirds are domestic workers.

It is important to note that executive committee members of these organizations are not elected by direct voting, rather they are selected informally. On the other hand, JSJB and BSF have not yet been able to form any executive committee.

**Financial Contribution of the Members to Organizations and**

**Funding:** None of the domestic workers' organizations has paid members. Thus the financial capacity and sustainability of the organizations is very poor in the country, and organizations are almost completely dependent on the funds provided by DWRN. Generally DWRN provides a lump sum Tk. 1500 to conduct a monthly meeting of the organizations. During special occasions (day observance, human chain, protest-rally etc) DWRN provides some additional funds. Besides, organizers of the organizations sometimes contribute personally to carry out the tasks of organizations. The statements of the workers (FGD participants) also admit this fact. *"We do not pay any money to our organization. Our organizers arrange money and spend it for our organization activities"* – members of BLF have informed. This voice was echoed by all the workers in all FGDs. Organizers also have informed that since domestic workers have very little income it becomes a burden on them to pay a regular contribution. *"Because of financial constraints we cannot take programmes independently"* – say many organizers. An organizer also adds in this regard – *"I proposed to the workers to pay Tk.20 monthly, but no one agreed to pay"* (FGD, BLF). Only the executive committee members contribute Tk.10 monthly, general members do not contribute for organization.

**Decision Making Process:** A participatory decision making process is absent in most cases and the decision making process is centralized, i.e. the organizers of the organizations mainly take decisions and sometimes they take decisions in consultation with some senior/regular member. It is the matter of fact that domestic workers rely completely on their organizers to make decisions on various issues. Members of JMSL, BJSF, and NDWWU have informed that generally the executive committee members take decision and they just follow those. Members of BJSF state – *"Normally our five executive members decide everything about our welfare"*. On the other hand, members of BLF, JSJB, BSF, and JSJ have claim that they generally do not take part in the decision making

process in their organization but when any problem arises in their areas they take part in decision making for deciding necessary actions and ways to implement them. Besides the members of BKTU claim that every member of this organization takes part in decision making, however the executive committee members are pioneer for decision making. They also inform that sometime DWRN also provides some idea for decision making.

**Activities of the Organizations:** Despite having weaknesses and limitations organizations of the domestic workers are taking different types of activities with active support of DWRN. From the discussions with domestic workers and organizers it has observed that organizations currently are taking two types of activities – regular activity and occasional activity. Besides few organizations have some other activity not common to the activities of all other organizations.

**Regular Activity:** Regular activity of the organizations is only limited to holdings meetings. Generally each organization arranges a monthly meeting where organizer of the organization, executive committee members, and general members participate. On an average 15-30 members take part in these meeting. Besides, some organizations arrange more than one meeting. BJSF regularly arranges two meetings and often more based on necessity. JSJB and BJS often arrange two meetings. In these meetings organizers generally inform workers about worker rights, labour law, and human rights issues as well as many other issues affecting domestic workers. Organizer and members of BJSF inform that they often invite local political person, school teacher, and employer and other respectable persons in their locality in their meeting to sensitize them on domestic workers’ issues. *“We arrange meeting including the participation of local political leaders, doctors, community leaders and discuss before them about our problems, ILO convention, Labour Law to let them know our concerns as well as to seek their support and cooperation in our movement”* – sates Salma Akter, organizer of BJSF.

**Occasional Activities:** Apart from regular activity, all organizations undertake different types of activities based on the situation and demand. These activities include day observance, protest rally,

human chain, poster/leaflet distribution, victim support, demonstration etc.

Workers of all the organizations have informed that they take programmes to observe special days relating to the rights of the workers. In this regard domestic workers inform that they have so far arranged programmes to observe May Day, International Women's Day, and Human Rights Day. On these occasions sometimes they organize rally in their localities and they always take part in the programmes organized nationally by DWRN. Protest rally is arranged especially when any serious incident of domestic worker's rights violation takes place in their own localities or in any part of the country. FGD participants have claimed that when they come to know about any severe violation (e.g. physical torture) in their locality they try to organize rally against the incident. On the other hand, organizations also organize protest rally for incidents which do not take place in their locality when news of the violation and oppression is published in newspapers or telecast on television channels.

Organizations of the domestic workers often form human chain as part of their peaceful movement. Organizations so far have formed human chains focusing on the issues like getting recognition as workers; inclusion in labour law; rights of weekly holiday, minimum wage, and maternity benefit; mark of protest against killing and other oppression against domestic workers and bringing the perpetrators under punishment, etc. Each organization often arranges human chain in their own locality on violation of domestic workers' rights in their area, and for common demands and issues of the domestic workers all organizations collectively organize human chain. To raise consciousness on domestic workers' issues among the common people organizations often distribute leaflets, stick posters, and hang banners in different places to attract attention of the people on the issues of the domestic workers. Noteworthy, because of financial constraints organizations do not print leaflets/poster or prepare banners by themselves, DWRN is supporting organizations in this regard. Organization members just participate in distribution of these materials.

Existing organizations often provide support to the victim domestic workers in different ways – helping domestic workers to get back due wage; moving collectively to get compensation from employer;

providing counseling to the tortured workers; collecting funds for the victim worker etc. Organizations and members also arrange, though less frequent, demonstration for torture against domestic workers. During FGD participants recalled an incidence when they all marched towards the local police station to protest against torture of a domestic worker.

***Organization-specific Special Activities:*** Members of BJSF by their own initiative have started savings scheme. Many members are now participating the scheme. Every member saves a specific amount of money every month. NDWWU has formed *Nari Nijatan Protirodh Committee* (Committee on Prevention of Oppression against Women) to protect domestic workers against dowry, divorce, and child marriage. Issues of child domestic workers are also looked after by this committee since many girls are engaged in this occupation. This committee arranges protest rally against torture and also provides training to the women domestic workers on issues like women right and equal rights. NDWWU also operates night school for domestic workers. This school sits at 8-9 pm on Friday and Saturday every week so that domestic workers can attend after finishing their work. Basic reading and writing techniques are taught in this school.

## **CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZING DOMESTIC WORKERS**

Organizing efforts of the domestic workers of Bangladesh are not free from challenges and problems. Number of factors, which are social, political, economic, and cultural in nature, creates challenge and barriers to the organizing process of the domestic workers in the country. Following section has focused on the issues, explored in this paper, as major challenges in organizing process.

**Domestic Workers are out of the Coverage of the Labour Law:** ‘Rights to organize’ of the workers are closely associated with the status of a person as worker and their coverage in nation legal instrument. However the prevailing labour law of the country has left domestic workers out of the coverage. Consequently domestic workers of the country are deprived of enjoying rights given in labour law including the trade union rights.

**Access to Permanent (live-in) Workers is Difficult:** A large number of the workers stay permanently at their employers' houses. These workers rarely get chances to participate in TU activities, even to meet with other people. In this situation organizing efforts of the domestic workers are facing a big trouble. Despite efforts from the side of the organizers very few permanent workers have joined with the existing organizations. It is even a very tough task to make any contact with these types of workers. Sometimes employers do not want to give access to talk to them. It could not be ignored that employers' primary concern is the security of the workers. Most of the workers of this type come from villages and they are not familiar with urban environment and do not know roads and avenues. In this situation employers do not want to let him/her go outside and meet with unknown persons.

**Nature of Work:** Domestic workers of the country do a hard labour all through the day. Part-time (*chuta*) workers work at several houses and perform several tasks in each house. Most of the part-time workers start work at 7/8 am in the morning and, based on work-load, they finish work at different times – 2 pm, 3 pm, 6 pm, and even 8 pm. And after returning home they need to carry out the household tasks. They always face difficulties to bring balance between work at employers' house and their own household tasks. On the other hand permanent (live-in) workers remain busy from dawn to night, even till mid-night. They start work around 6 am but there is no fixed time when they can finish their work, sometimes they are to work till 12 am or even more. And they hardly get chances to come out. Thus the domestic workers of the country are over burdened with work and because of which they are in many cases reluctant to spend time for organization activities.

**Attitude of Employers:** Employers often create obstacles so that domestic workers cannot participate in organization activities and most employers do not hold positive attitude in this regard. Employers create problems in many ways. Workers have claimed that there is possibility of losing job when they go out to participate in the organization activities. Sometimes employers cut their wages for the day/s when they attend outside activities of the organizations. Many employers even discourage workers or even force them so that they do not go outside to participate organization activities. *"I told my*

*employer that we had a human chain and for that I need leave for a short period, but my employer did not allow me to go.” – Camely Begom, a part-time (chuta) domestic worker depicted employer’s attitude in this way. Domestic workers have also claimed that often employers impose extra work when workers inform them about their outside programmes.*

**Still Many Workers Lack Awareness:** Many workers still do not realize the importance of being organized. They are not even aware about their rights and issues. And they are not aware about what the organizations/organizations of the domestic workers are doing. Thus bringing them into organization/organization is really a hard task. Lolita Begom, member of JMSL, have informed that – *“Many workers are not joining organization because they think that to be organizationized is not necessary for doing domestic work. They think that they are just domestic worker and they have not enough time to spoil for meeting or human chain”.*

**Negative Social Attitude:** Despite progress in eliminating negative attitude towards women’s work in Bangladesh still women domestic workers of the country face negative attitudes when they come out and gather together to participate activities of their organizations. *“When we go outside to join activities, many of our workers face stalking, sometimes they are hear even slang words. As a result sometimes they lose interest to participate out-door activities of the organizations”*— claim many workers during FGDs. Besides stalking on roads and facing slang words/unwanted comments, domestic workers often face a negative attitude from the household members, especially from husbands. Husbands do not like their wives’ engagement at outside home and workplace. Thus many husbands try to deter their wives (domestic workers) from participating in some particular type of programmes e.g. human chain, protest rally, demonstration.

**Developing Leadership among the Domestic Workers:** Domestic workers are organized by those who are not from this occupation. Occupations where the organizers of the organizations are from vary a lot. On the other hand, domestic workers have very low level of education, and the awareness level among the workers on labour rights and organizing issues is also not satisfactory. Besides domestic

workers also lack training on organizing. These is also less motivation among the workers to take leadership, rather they prefer to rely on the organizers. All these have made developing leaders among the domestic workers tough.

**Dependency on Organizers:** Domestic workers' organizations in the country are not self-dependent. Workers largely depend on the organizers to make decisions. Except one or two all other organizations have no activity of their own. They just participate in activities designed by DWRN. In almost every case organization's general members depend on their organizer for finance and other decision concerning any activity.

**Financial Dependency:** Organizations completely depend on outside sources to finance its activities. Especially organizations depend on DWRN in this regard. None of the organizations has any general member who contributes financially for her organization. Thus bringing financial independence of the organizations already existing in Bangladesh is major challenge for effective organizing efforts of the domestic workers in the country.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Domestic workers' organizing situation is still in poor state in Bangladesh. Very few of the domestic workers of the country have now come under organizations. Number of organizations is also few and organizing activities are only Dhaka, the capital city, based. Organizations also lack financial strengths and very few workers participate in the decision making process of their organizations. Besides, the legal environment is not conducive fully to facilitate domestic workers' organizing activities. There are also obstacles and barriers from the side of the families of domestic workers and community people. On the other hand, despite limitations, workers have desires to be united and many of the domestic workers realize the needs and benefits of being organized. In this situation domestic workers' organizing efforts of the country require considering multifarious factors to become successful in this process. This paper suggests, in light of the findings, a three-point strategy to strengthen the organizing efforts of the domestic workers of Bangladesh. The three-prong strategy includes – *first*, creating a favourable



environment; *second*, attracting more domestic workers to organizations; and *third*, capacity-building of existing organizations. To create favourable environment for organizing the domestic workers of the country the legal instrument must be strengthened by bringing domestic workers under coverage of the existing labour law. Ratification of ILO convention 189 is also necessary for the favourable environment since ratification of this convention would be facilitative to establish and ensure organization rights of the domestic workers specifically. Besides, initiatives must be taken to bring change in attitude of family and society towards women's participation in activities of the organizations.

Organizing efforts of the domestic workers of the county certainly will not be fruitful with few members. In order to bring more domestic workers under organization domestic workers' awareness raising, concerning their rights and importance of being united to attain rights, is necessary. Besides, existing organizations and organizing efforts must incorporate burning and popular issues of the domestic workers in the overall organizing process and organizations must show their ability to contribute to address domestic workers' problems at workplace. In this regard special attention must be given to the issues of permanent (live-in) workers. Additionally, along with mobilizing activities organizations should initiate some other activities which domestic workers think beneficial for them (e.g. tailoring training, savings co-operative).

Finally, for capacity-building of the existing organizations attention must be given to ensure financial self-dependency. Organizations in this regard could introduce membership fees and monthly contribution, considering the capacity of the domestic workers. Not only the financial self-dependency but also leadership development and money management training, especially for the executive committee members, are also necessary for organizations' capacity strengthening. Moreover, proper arrangement and system must be developed so that workers' opinion is reflected in decisions taken by organization leaders. In this regard selecting executive committee members through direct voting must be given emphasis.

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# Industrial disorder in Bangladesh: Causes, impacts and policing

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## Abstract

*An industrial disorder may be defined as a situation where there is an upset in industrial relations mostly resulted from the conflict between management and workers in the terms of employment. In the past few years, it has become a growing concern for the industrial sector of Bangladesh. Industrial disorder has been taking place in many forms throughout the years in our country. The present study analyzes the patterns, causes, impacts and responses of law enforcement agency which is termed as policing of the industrial disorder in Bangladesh. This paper concludes with a recommendation to conduct study to know the situation after 2013, Post Rana Plaza period to compare the effectiveness of qualitative change made during this time.*

**Keywords:** Industrial disorder, Strike, Industrialization, Victimization, Policing industry

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## **1. Introduction and Context of the Study**

Industrial disorder is one of the significant issues that hinder the development of the industrial sectors of a country. The term industrial disorder can be conceptualize an outcome of a breakdown of governance in the workplace (Maitland, 2017 ). Among the several forms and causes of industrial disorder, industrial dispute as a cause plays a central role. Industrial disorder may include industrial disputes and conflicts which are an unavoidable part of industrial relations because of the differences of interests.

According to The Bangladesh Labour Law, 2006 [Section 2 (62)] ‘the ‘industrial dispute’ means any dispute or difference between employers and employers or between employers and worker or between worker and worker which is connected with the employment or non-employment or the terms of employment or the conditions of work of any person” (Hossain and Akhter, 2015). However, Taher (1997) describes that an industrial dispute mainly indicates to the gap of a proper industrial relation. Similarly, We also argue that the poor industrial relation is the main cause of industrial disorder as well. Among the different forms of industrial relation, this study mainly focuses on the issue of workers and owners relation. Beside this industrial dispute, over the years the industrial realm of the country has experienced several types of conflict, violence and disagreement which we included as industrial disorder. Furthermore, the study contends that industrial relations deals with people at work or that industrial relations is concerned with many problems related to employer- employee relation (Taher, 1997). According to Kumar, the industrial relation is associated with bargaining between the own party and the trade union on wage and other conditions of service.

The above definitions clarifies that worker unrest and industrial dispute also depend on worker - owner relationships. Furthermore, industrial disorders may be occurred as disagreement or controversy between management and workers regarding the distribution of wages, working conditions, union recognition or other employment matters. For instance, while the issues of conflict are submitted to the management for negotiations, they take the form of industrial disputes (Taher, 1997) and consequently the unsolved industrial dispute results industrial disorder.

On the other hand Taher (1997) expressed that there is always a conflict between worker and owner or worker and manager on each party's self-interest. He told that negative relation doesn't occur between workers, however, it occurs between worker and owner. The history of industrial relation shows that Industrial conflict is a continuous process and it remains between the capitalist and the workers which consequently result industrial disorder. The conflict will remain until the workers will not be able to get their descent wages (Faruque, 2009) and sometimes suppressed by different means.

The statistics demonstrate that worker unrest, which in a form of industrial disorder frequently has been experienced by some of the industrial sectors in Bangladesh. The disorder remains from the very early period of industrialization in Indian sub-continent. After the independence, industrialization grew rapidly subsequently workers unrest and the disputes also emerged quickly in different industrial sector of Bangladesh. After 1947, on the birth of Pakistan the foreign investors got the great opportunity in establishing industry and businesses rather than the native youths. The topmost elements were provided by this continent and the foreign investors hold the managerial position. They got the land and especially the labour force at very cheap rate. After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, the foreigners left the country, but they left the traditional rules of suppressing and dominating the workers. Later with the gradual adoption of a free market economic policy accelerate the process of privatization and as result a notable number of industrial, trading and other institutions were transferred to the private sector. In 1971, the number of the industrial dispute was 9 but in 1972 it was 39 in number. From 1972 to 1994, the total number of industrial disputes reported case was 956, about 1957785 workers were involved in these disputes and 9138737 working days were lost (Taher, 1997).

Statistics from the study of Hossain and Akhter (2015) demonstrates that during the period of 2008 to 2014 on an average 259 case of industrial disputes occurred in different sectors and on an average, there have been around 175 cases of collective disputes raised against the violation of labour standards and rights in RMG sector. It is, however evident that in the years 2008, 2009, and 2013 the number of incidences observed in RMG sector more than the average incidences e.g. 209, 179 and 199 respectively. The lowest number of disputes (138 incidences) was raised in the year 2011 (Hossain and Akhter,

2015). Hussein (2016) stated that most of the owners of the RMG factories are reluctant to pay necessary facilities to the worker which is a major cause of industrial dispute.

This industrial dispute has been identified by the major causes of industrial disorder in Bangladesh. While looking for the forms of industrial disorder in Bangladesh, literature finds that the most common form includes road work stoppage, blockades, demonstrations, sit in protests and protest marches, confinement of authority, human chain, and damage to factory and other property. Among those, during the period of 2006 to 2010 the most common forms of industrial disorders reported as sit in protest and protest marches (96 percent) followed by the work stoppage (89 percent) (Hossain and Akhter, 2015). The main concern of this study is to find the patterns and causes of the industrial disorder.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The major objective of the study is to find out the overall situation of industrial disorders in Bangladesh during the specific period of time. Underlying the major objectives the study was conducted focusing the following specific objectives are (i) to identify the nature and common causes of industrial disorders in Bangladesh; (ii) to specify the effects of industrial disorder in Bangladesh; (iii) to know about the policing of industrial disorder and (iv) to analyze the different responses and views about industrial disorders.

## **3. Methodology of the study**

This study has been conducted using the content analysis method of secondary research, presenting the data following the quantitative approach. It analyses the secondary data collected from the newspaper contents about the industrial disputes published during the time period of July, 2012 to June 2013. This study used the data for the period of 2012-2013 because the major qualitative changes in the labour regime of Bangladesh have been started just after the 2013 taking urges from the century shocking Rana Plaza Collapse (the shocking industrial disaster caused the death of more than 1100 workers in RMG sector). The data before the initiatives of qualitative changes in the labour regime of Bangladesh is essential to compare the situation of industrial relations after the implementation of several legal and institutional initiatives. Having the absence of such adequate and comprehensive

study before the period of 2013 that analyses the situation of industrial disorder arises from different conflict in industrial relations in Bangladesh. The result can be used to compare and evaluate the effectiveness of current intervention in labour market of Bangladesh after the 2013. Given the nature of the present study, it was required to collect data from the different newspaper sources.

In conducting the present study, scientific research methods for collecting and analyzing data were used. Details of which have been presented below:

The descriptive research design has been followed in conducting the present study. Here, data have been collected from some secondary sources which include daily newspapers. Every single incident of industrial disorder published in the selected newspapers has been considered as a unit of analysis. Information was collected from many aspects of an incident. The present study purposefully selected every single news of industrial dispute to analyze. Among all national daily newspapers, three newspapers were selected based on their well recognition, acceptance, maximum publications and considering their coverage of the labour related news. Particularly, the study includes; (i) The Daily Prothom Alo (July, 2012- June, 2013), (ii) The Daily Star (July, 2012- June, 2013) and (iii) The Daily Jugantor (July, 2012- June, 2013) are the sources of data collection.

A preset checklist was used for collecting data. First, data were collected from the newspapers and cross-checked method were used to reduce the double counting of data. In that case the same news was counted as one incident the data collected through checklist were analyzed by using the univariate and bivariate tools and techniques of statistics. The data were processed and analyzed using Special Program for Social Statistic (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Frequency distribution, percentage, and cross tabulation statistical techniques were used for the presentation of the results of the analyses.

#### **4. Results and Discussions**

This section of the study presents the findings analyzing the data collected from the selected newspapers. The result section at the beginning presents the situation of industrial disorders, according to months, days, place of occurrences, working sectors, the participation of workers. Then the following sections of the paper describe the

outputs and workers' responses to industrial disorders, the major causes and nature of policing to minimize the workers agitations.

#### 4.1 Situation of the industrial disorders in Bangladesh

**Table 01: Information about industrial disorder during July, 2012 to June, 2013**

Information		Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Incidents per month	2012	July	26	11.6
		August	19	8.5
		September	12	5.4
		October	24	10.7
		November	14	6.3
		December	13	5.8
		Sub-total	108	48.30
	2013	January	10	4.5
		February	3	1.3
		March	15	6.7
		April	21	9.4
		May	23	10.3
		June	44	19.6
		Sub-total	116	51.80
	Total	224	100	
Incidents per day		Saturday	57	25.1
		Sunday	33	14.8
		Monday	46	20.6
		Tuesday	21	9.4
		Wednesday	33	14.8
		Thursday	25	11.2
		Friday	9	4.0
		Total	224	100.0
Place of incidences		Dhaka	83	37.1
		Narayanganj	58	25.9
		Gazipur	54	24.1
		Chittagong	4	1.8
		Others	25	11.2
		Total	224	100
		RMG Workers	201	89.7
		Steel Workers	2	0.9
		Jute Workers	5	2.2



Disorder happened in the sectors	Tea Workers	2	0.9
	Bidi Workers	4	1.8
	Rubber Workers	3	1.3
	Others	7	3.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Identity of workers participated	Workers from the Same Industry	198	87.9
	Participation of externals (specific)	26	12.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100</b>
Number of industries from which the workers' participated in a incident	Two industries	9	52.9
	Three industries	3	17.6
	Four industries	2	11.8
	Five industries	3	17.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Newspaper Survey**

The above frequency table points out the selective information about incidence occurred from July, 2012 to June, 2013 including incidents per month, incidents per day, the place of those incidences, working sector, identification of workers and amount of workers' participated industries. According to the newspaper survey, the highest 51.80% incidents occurred in the first half of 2013 than 48.30% occurred in the last half of 2012. The most incidents have been occurring for the demand of the standard minimum wage. Similar findings were established earlier in industrial and criminological literature. Islam et. all (2013) have also pointed out that because of the global recession, unfavorable trade policies, internal security concerns, the high cost of production due to increase in the energy costs, different safety issues specially fire, etc. currently this industry is facing great challenges in its growth rate while this manufacturing sector earned \$19 billion in the year to June 2012, one of the impoverished nation's biggest industries.. More specifically, it has been noticeable that the maximum

19.6% industrial disputes occurred in June and thus the Government of Bangladesh had been compelled to declare the standard minimum wage structure though still it is debatable after being revised one more time. In case of incidents per day, it has been noticeable that the maximum 25.1 % incident occurred on Saturday at the beginning of the week.

The distribution of the incidents, according to the districts reveals that 37.1% incidents had been occurring in Dhaka followed by 25.9% in Narayanganj, 24.1% in Gazipur, 1.8% in Chittagong and 11.2% has occurred in other districts of Bangladesh during July 2012 to June 2013. Literally, these districts are the major industrial zone of Bangladesh which experienced the maximum number of incidents in comparison to others. On the other hand, one of the rapidly growing industries, RMG sector, which has earned \$19 billion foreign currency in the year to June 2012 and raised to \$40.2 billion in FY 2018-19, according to the sources at Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), which is 1.2 percent higher than the target set by the government. Unfortunately, this RMG sector experienced the highest 89.7% upset during the study period. In terms of committing disorder about 88% of the participant workers were from same industries and in 12.1% cases there were involvement of workers from the other industries. Specifically, in maximum cases (52.9%) participants of the disorder were coming from the two industries. But at that situation the goal of both industries has been identified as same likely as demand for the minimum standard wage.

In general, the industrial disorder in Bangladesh is responded by the workers and affected parties mostly in some of the common forms like strikes, road blockade, clash with law enforcement authority, vandals, demonstrations, human chain and so on. The table 02 provides an understanding about the common forms of responses arises from industrial conflict and disagreement. This table presents the findings from the multiple count of the responses. Because in most of the cases the disorder takes more than one form. The workers agitations were expressed in a multiple ways rather than practicing a single form of disorder.

**Table 02: Common Forms of industrial disorder**

<b>Common Forms of incident</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lock Factories	8	3.6
Clash with Police	35	15.6
Roadblock	140	62.5
Vandalizing Vehicles	71	31.7
Vandalizing Factories	60	26.8
Vandalizing furniture and equipment's	58	25.9
Hurled Brick Bats and Stones	22	9.8
Mass Demonstration	28	12.5
Arson	3	1.3
Strike	164	73.2
Others	6	2.7

**Source: Newspaper Survey (Multiple Counts)**

This table interprets the form of disorder as the responses arise from the conflicts that the above data represents that maximum of 73.2% and 62.5% incidents, workers practices, the most common form strikes and road blockade respectively considering the quick and comparatively earliest responses which can bring the attention of the maximum within a short period of time. The workers also followed some other violent forms likely as 31.7% by vandalizing vehicles, 26.8% by vandalizing factories, 25.9% by vandalizing furniture and equipment's of the factories. In 15.6% case the parties involved in clashes with police, 12.5% incidents showed the evidence of mass demonstrations, 9.8% cases involve the hurled brick bats and stones, 3.6% incidents were experienced locking factories, and in very few cases, 1.3% experienced Arson, and 2.7% practices the others.

In this regard Jakir (2010) observed long-standing deprivation of basic human needs often force, particularly for the garment workers to follow the path of violence. Many studies have explored both the economic and non-economic factor works as a push factor of industrial disputes in Bangladesh. The study findings regarding the causes of disputes in the industrial sectors have been explained in the following table.

**Table 03: Causes of disorder**

<b>Cause of Violence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pay Hike	75	33.5
Due Wage	60	26.8
Layoff	42	18.8
Workers' Suppression	17	7.6
Bonus and Overtime	37	16.5
Dismissal of Officials	4	1.8
Victimization of TU Leader or Colleague	21	9.4
Extending Holidays	13	5.8
Closing Factories Without Prior Notice	16	7.1
Relocating Factories	4	1.8
Safe Working Environment	7	3.1
Extension of Maternity Leave	1	0.4
Medical Allowance	6	2.7
Others	20	8.9

**Source: Newspaper Survey**

Pay hike was the main cause of industrial disorders which was responsible for the commission of maximum 33.5% disputes. Besides the 26.8 % for disorders arose for due wages while 18.8% for the layoff were also major causes of the industrial disorders. Other causes include; 7.6% for the worker suppression, 16.5% of the bonus and overtime, 1.8% for the dismissal of officials, 9.4% for the victimization of TU leader or colleagues, 5.8% for the extending holidays, 7.1% of the closing factories without prior notice, 1.8% of the relocating factories, 3.1% for a safer working environment, 0.4% for the extension of maternity leave, 2.7% of the medical allowance and 8.9% disorders have been committed to the others causes than the mentioned. Whatever the causes the results of the disputes and disorders are enormous. Besides the notable amount of economic losses, it results number of fatalities. Rightfully pointing out and referring (Khan & Taher, 2008), Absar (2012) explained that in the context of developing countries, industrial relations has been influenced by features such as high exploitation of workers, low level of worker participation in decision making, government and political

interferences, high rate of illiteracy of workers, low level of employment, low level of awareness among the laborers regarding rights, laws, and trade unionism, and low labor productivity.

**Table 04: Effects and Causalities Reported by Media**

<b>Reported by Media</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Average</b>
Death	1	3	3	-
Injured	48	1	100	19.06
Destruction: Vehicles	14	1	50	11.29

**Source: Newspaper Survey**

The frequency table states that all of the incidents of industrial disorder which were reported by selecting media of which the total number of killed people was 3 (three), while the average report of injured was 19.06 where the maximum injured was 100 in a single event and the average report of the destruction of vehicles was 11.29 whereas the maximum destruction was reported as 50. Due to the lack of proper reporting of the amount of financial cost the total economic cost of the disorder was unavailable.

Considering the nature and extents of the disorders, the controlling authority uses police or other law enforcement agencies mitigate the problem at the first hand. The study found most of the time the police or law enforcement authorities uses different kinds of forces to control the disorders. The use of force includes a wide range of methods, including a verbal warning to the physical assault.

In addition, an industrial disorders resulting stoppage of work means a stoppage of production, which may cause the losses of business relationship with the contracting buyers as well as increases the average cost of productions. The employers may also be liable to compensate the buyers. Besides, the immediate economic effects some other non-economic, psychological and social consequences may also arise. Loss due to destruction of property, personal injury and physical intimidation or inconvenience have also resulted a huge loss of the industry.

**Table 05: Policing industrial disorders**

<b>Police response towards disputes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Baton Charge	73	46.2
Tear Shell	44	27.8
Rubber Bullet	38	24.1
Mediation	29	18.4
Water Canon	2	1.3
Positive Response	11	7.0
No reaction	13	8.2
Resist Workers	78	49.4
Arrested the Workers	2	0.9

**Source: Newspaper Survey (Multiple counts)**

From the above findings, it is estimated that of the total disorders in 46.2% cases, police conducted baton charges, 27.8% cases, they are thrown tear shell, 24.1% cases shoot the rubber bullet, 1.3% cases the used water cannon to control the agitation of the workers. There was also evidence that in 18.4% disorders solved by the mediation initiative of law enforcement agencies. The study also found that in case of 8.2% disorders, there was no reaction of the law enforcement agencies. Notably, in case of 49.4% disorders, law enforcement agencies tried to resist the worker from violation at the first hand initiative and in case of 7.0 % disorders law enforcement agencies positively respond to workers' demands.

#### **4.2 Bivariate analysis of findings**

This section of the paper analyses the findings using the differential statistics relating different variables like place of incidents and time of incidents, forms of incidents according to time, place and industrial sector.

**Table 06: Association between month of occurrence and place of incidents**

Year	Month	Place of Incident					Total
		Dhaka	Narayanganj	Gazipur	Chittagong	Other Districts	
		Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	
2012	July	4 (4.8%)	11(19.0%)	6 (11.1%)	-	5 (20.0%)	26 (11.6%)
	August	5 (6.0%)	6 (10.3%)	5 (9.3%)	1(25.0%)	2 (8.0%)	19 (8.5%)
	September	5 (6.0%)	4 (6.9%)	1 (1.9%)	-	2 (8.0%)	12 (5.4%)
	October	9 (10.8%)	7 (12.1%)	5 (9.3%)	-	3 (12.0%)	24 (10.7%)
	November	6 (7.2%)	3 (5.2%)	2 (3.7%)	1(25.0%)	2 (8.0%)	14 (6.3%)
	December	6 (7.2%)	3 (5.2%)	3 (5.6%)	-	1 (4.0%)	13 (5.8%)
2013	January	7 (8.4%)	2 (3.4%)	1 (1.9%)	-	-	10 (4.5%)
	February	1 (1.2%)	-	2 (3.7%)	-	-	3 (1.3%)
	March	2 (2.4%)	8 (13.8%)	2 (3.7%)	-	3 (12.0%)	15 (6.7%)
	April	5 (6.0%)	5 (8.6%)	8 (14.8%)	2 (50.0%)	1 (4.0%)	21 (9.4%)
	May	12 (14.5%)	3 (5.2%)	7 (13.0%)	-	1 (4.0%)	23 (10.3%)
	June	21 (25.3%)	6 (10.3%)	12 (22.2%)	-	5 (20.0%)	44 (19.6%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>83 (100.0%)</b>	<b>58 (100.0%)</b>	<b>54 (100.0%)</b>	<b>4 (100.0%)</b>	<b>25 (100.0%)</b>	<b>224 (100%)</b>
Calculated value of <i>Lambda</i> ( $\lambda$ )= 0.121							

**Source: Newspaper Survey**

This cross table reveals relationships between the place of the incident and the month of the occurrences which indicates the exact months when the highest proportion of total incidents occurred in the given period of the study. The analysis showed that June of 2013 experienced the highest incidents (19.6%) of industrial disorder and of which the highest 25.3% occurred in Dhaka city while the lowest incidents (1.3%) occurred in February of the same year. It is highly noticeable that only that time there was no commission of industrial disputes in Narayanganj. Lambda ( $\lambda$ ) with the value of only 0.121 that means the association between the place of the incident and year of the

occurrences is slightly weak. So it can claim that place of incident slightly depends on the time of the occurrence.

**Table 07: Association between types of incident and place of incidents**

Common forms of Incidents	Place of Incident					Total
	Dhaka	Narayanganj	Gazipur	Chittagong	Other Districts	
	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	
Lock Factories	2 (2.4%)	2 (3.4%)	3 (5.6%)	-	1 (4.0%)	8(3.6%)
Clash with Police	16 (19.3%)	8 (13.8%)	8 (14.8%)	-	3 (12.0%)	35 (15.6%)
Road Block	53 (63.9%)	33 (56.9%)	34 (63.0%)	3 (75.0%)	17 (68.0%)	140(62.5%)
Vandalizing Vehicles	29 (34.9%)	16 (27.6%)	19 (35.2%)	-	7 (28.0%)	71 (31.7%)
Vandalizing Factories	19 (22.9%)	17 (29.3%)	18 (33.3%)	-	6 (24.0%)	60 (26.8%)
Vandalizing furniture and equipments	17 (20.5%)	18 (31.0%)	18 (33.3%)	-	5 (20.0%)	58 (25.9%)
Hurled Brick Bats and Stones	10 (12.0%)	5 (8.6%)	7 (13.0%)	-	-	22 (25.9%)
Mass Demonstration	14 (16.9%)	4 (6.9%)	8 (14.8%)	-	2 (8.0%)	28 (12.5%)
Arson	-	1 (1.7%)	-	-	2 (8.0%)	3 (1.3%)
Strike	61 (73.5%)	39 (67.2%)	42 (77.8%)	3 (75.0%)	19 (76.0%)	164 (73.2%)
Others	2 (2.4%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (4.0%)	6 (2.7%)

**Source: Newspaper Survey**

The cross-tabulation analysis between common forms of incident and place of the incident shows that the highest number of incidents almost in every form of disorders excepts vandalizing vehicles and furniture occurred in Dhaka where the Chittagong experienced the lowest. Gazipur is the second top of experiencing different types of disorder and agitations. The strike and road blockade is the dominating form in every industrial place where there is a variation of frequencies.



**Table- 08: Association between working sector and place of incidents.**

Working Sector	Place of Incident					Total
	Dhaka	Narayanganj	Gazipur	Chittagong	Other Districts	
RMG Industry	82 (98.8%)	57 (98.3%)	53 (98.1%)	2 (50.0%)	7 (28.0%)	201 (89.7%)
Steel Industry	-	-	-	-	1 (4.0%)	2 (0.9%)
Jute Industry	-	-	-	-	4 (16.0%)	5 (2.2%)
Tea Industry	-	-	-	-	2 (8.0%)	2 (0.9%)
Bidi Industry	-	-	1 (1.9%)	-	3 (12.0%)	4 (1.8%)
Rubber Industry	-	-	-	-	3 (12.0%)	3 (1.3%)
Others	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.7%)	-	-	5 (20.0%)	7 (3.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>83 (100%)</b>	<b>58 (100%)</b>	<b>54 (100%)</b>	<b>4 (100%)</b>	<b>25 (100%)</b>	<b>224 (100%)</b>

The findings reveal the relationship between the place of the incident and working sectors; alarmingly 89.7% disputes occurred in the RMG sector which have been considered as the prime source of national income. Significantly, of the total maximum 98.8% incidents have occurred in Dhaka followed by the Narayanganj and Gazipur. And the disputes in other industrial sectors, mainly took place outside of Dhaka likely as the industry of steel, jute, tea, body etc.

### **4.3 Views and Responses of industrial stakeholders on disputes and workers agitations**

Assessment of the views of the major industrial stakeholders like employers, workers and trade unions is another major objective of the study. Undoubtedly the role of the employers and workers is highly important in the industrial harmony as owner and superior authority of the industry and the workers are the essential factor of production. The maximum industrial disorders occurred due to the unsolved demand of the various issues related to work and benefits mostly arises from the workers and trade unions.

By observing the different incidents of the industrial disputes and disorders, it is clear that the employer showed a variety of attitudes mostly negative in different industrial disputes and workers demand. In case of the disputes arises for the pay hike or low salary or demands of the bonus and overtime, the employers show a different altitudes claiming that the incapacity of the industry to increase the wage. Sometimes they identify the low production is the main cause of industrial incapacity and irrational expectation about the worker demands. Sometimes they assure the demands and promises the payment of wages and benefits on time, but the failures of fulfillment of the promise results the disputes. In case of layoff, sometimes the employers do not respond properly and sometimes claimed that the inability to continue the industry. In case of closing factories without prior notice also explain the similar reasons. But there is also an example of optimism to fulfill the demands sometimes. Thus, both the positive and negative attitudes of the employers exists about the workers demand.

On the other hand, though the workers have been considered as the main strength of the industry, but the deprivation and lower standard of work are the common facts of their lives. According to the workers' view, their wages are comparatively low, according to the working hours, in some cases, the wages are not paid regularly. The demand of legal rights is one of the major underlying causes in maximum industrial disputes and behind disorders, the workers claimed. The demand of overtime and festival bonus on time and on just rate results the strike, sometimes. In workers view, unsolved demand of ensuring the safety at work, tiffin fee, and medical allowance are also important issues for resulting disputes and disorders. The workers are more likely to protest and sometimes respond violently due to unwanted and sudden notice on the closing of factories without any prior notice. In many disorders, the workers say about their deprivation by the layoff without any causes.

The trade unions, which are the legal representatives of the workers in a factory or industrial sector fight for ensuring the legal demands and rights of the workers. According to their views, the unions raise voice against any injustice and support the legal demands of the workers. In many cases the union leaders face harassment by the employers and police due to supporting the workers' rights.

## 5. Conclusion

The study finds that industrial disorder is results from the dysfunctions of industrial relations which create a situation of upset both inside and outside of the industry. The failure of settlement of industrial disputes and sometimes the illegal practice results different forms of disorders. The present study contends that the two most common reasons for the existence of industrial disorder are pay hike (33.5%) and due wage (26.8%). The study also outlines that the most common form of expression of the disorder are striking (73.2%) and road block (62.5%). Regarding participation of the workers, 87.9% workers have participated in their own disputes while 12.1% workers in other industries have participated in disputes of surrounding. The findings indicate that industrial disorder harms both parties; employees and employers, and are always against the interest of both employees and the employers. Besides the negative impact on the society, it predicts direct effect on the economy of a country.

While exploring the repos of law enforcement authorities towards the disorder, it has been found that law enforcement officials used several deterrent techniques; such as baton charge, using tear shell (27.8%), rubber bullet, etc. After analyzing the report of media, it is estimated that almost 100 individuals including garment workers, law enforcement officials and general peoples are injured due to such disorders and 3 were killed.

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# Violence against Street Children: A Study in Dhaka North City Corporation

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## Abstract

*Street children, an indigent portion of our population who are deprived of basic rights, marginalized from mainstream society and suffering from violence. The purpose of the study is to identify the nature and causes of violence against street children. The study was conducted in five areas of Dhaka North City Corporation with 80 street children aged between 6 to 12. The study recommends that the government should take necessary measures to ensure a secure lifestyle, protection and rehabilitation for those children.*

**Key words:** *Street children, life style, poverty, violence, victim*

## 1. Introduction and Background of the Study

The term street children has been defined through various efforts. In 1986, UNICEF developed a suitable conceptual viewpoint to differentiate street children into three groups based on the range to which they are attached with the streets. The first is children at risk which mentions children from poor street families that live at home and work on the street for their families; the second type is children on the street, which refers to children who play and work on the street, who keep contacts with their family and stay at home at night; and the third is children of the street, which denotes children who work and live on the street without regular contact with their family members (Black, 1996).

On the authority of United Nation's approximation, there are about 150 million street children worldwide (Kamruzzaman, Hakim, 2017). The

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existence of street children can be found in almost every part of the world and the majority of them reside in the urban areas of developing countries. In recent years, the problem has been becoming much worse due to economic problems, political changes, social unrest and degradation of values, family separations and conflicts, natural disasters and the epidemic spread of diseases (Chowdhury, 2017). Nearly half of the world child population can be found in the Asia-Pacific region with large numbers of street children. The children on the street, or children who previously lived on the street, are being used in a variety of occupations including sex industry, beggar, shoeshine boy or flower seller, rubbish picker, sweat shop worker, petty criminal, etc. The Asia and Pacific region has diversified economic and political systems that consist of totally different contexts as a result of which children unluckily become dwellers of the streets (Chowdhury, 2017). Now the problem looks very alarming for Bangladesh.

A street children in Bangladesh is someone for whom the street has become his or her habitual abode and source of livelihood; and who is imperfectly sheltered, administered or directed by accountable adults. It is assessed that more than 600,000 street children are living in Bangladesh, among them 75% live in Dhaka city. Currently the population in this country has increased and the number of street children has also increased to an assessed 4 million. With increasing landlessness in rural areas and consequent large scale rural-urban migration, the number of floating people in urban areas of Bangladesh is on the increase. In Bangladesh, street children lack the proper requirements of life and they are tagged as severely deprived children. These severe deprivation can be found with their not having the adequate services in the provision of shelter, sanitation, water, information, nutrition, education, and health etc. (Rahman, 2015).

In Bangladesh major problems of street children includes insecure life, physical and sexual abuse by adults of the immediate community, harassment by law enforcing agencies, no or inadequate access to educational institutions and healthcare facilities; and lack of decent employment opportunity while thousands of children on the streets of Bangladesh are being denied their rights according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which recognizes that every child is entitled to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development

(Chowdhury, 2017). Children living on the streets are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Many of them work, often in hazardous and low-wage jobs, to support themselves and their families. Due to low family income and unemployment of parents, many families depend on their children's earnings to survive. Children who live on the street are also vulnerable to other forms of exploitation and frequently find themselves the victims of sexual abuse, physical torture, and trafficking. Extensive criminal networks make substantial profits by engaging children in commercial sex work, smuggling, stealing, and the distribution of drugs and weapons. Following the hardship and abuse of life on the streets, many children suffer trauma and psychosocial disorders. Children living on the streets are often abused or oppressed by police, who frequently beat them, ask for bribes, take away their valuables and implicate them in false charges. Ordinary members of society keep discriminatory looks at the children, which further isolates them from the general Community.

Children are the most vulnerable to be victimized. They may be victimized by adults and other children, by family members (parents, siblings, other relatives); by friends and acquaintances and by strangers. Therefore the current study finds out the causes of violence and nature of violation against street children around Dhaka North city Corporation in Bangladesh.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of the study are:

- i. To know the nature of violence against street children in Dhaka north city corporation.
- ii. To find out the forms of violence on street children.
- iii. To identify the causes of violence against them.

## **3. Theoretical explanation of street children victimization**

The term routine activities means any recurrent, prevalent activities which provide for the basic population and individual needs, whatever biological or cultural origins including formalized work, leisure, social interaction, learning – which may occur at home, in jobs or other activities away from home. Cohen and Felson focus on the routine or

everyday activities of people, such as going to work, pursuing recreation, running errands, and the like. It is through routine activities that offenders come into contact with suitable victims and targets. The three main categories of variables identified by Cohen and Felson are: (1) motivated offenders, (2) suitable targets of criminal victimization, and (3) lack of capable guardians of persons or property. Two presences (offender and target) and one absence (capable guardian) make the best crime setting. The convergence of these three conditions invites a criminal act to occur (Adler, 2004).

Children are the most valuable assets of any country because they hold a large number of its population and the progress of a country deeply rooted in the development of children. But more than 600,000 children are living at streets in Bangladesh and 75% of them live in capital city Dhaka. But children are not meant to be living in the streets. Daily activities, living conditions, risk taking behavior, poor livelihood of street children lead them to street victimization and their vulnerable situation can be best described by routine activities theory of victimization. In the light of the above theoretical explanation, it can be said that, street children are the most suitable target to be victimized by adults and other children, by friends and acquaintances and by strangers, by law enforcement agencies who act as motivated offenders by knowing the fact that they are the children of street, living alone in the streets and have no guardian to protect them. Some social factors such parent's premature death, bigamy of fathers, less care, negligence as lack of guardianship penetrates children to migrate into the streets and suffer violence towards and abuse within the household and local community, inhuman tortures of the step mother and father, unknown person and relatives which make them suitable targets. That's why this theory is relevant to conduct and evaluate my research and findings.

Secondly, we employed lifestyle theory in our research for the following ground. A lifestyle theory of victimization was developed by Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo in 1978. Lifestyles are patterned, regular, recurrent, prevalent, or routine activities (Robinson, 1997). Lifestyles consist of the activities that people engage in on a daily basis, including both obligatory activities and discretionary activities. Lifestyle theory argues that because of changing roles and schedules, people lead different lifestyles. Variation in lifestyle affect the number of situations with high victimization risks that a person experiences. We find out from Lifestyle model that lifestyles, which



encompasses differences in various demographic factors (e.g., age, sex, marital status, family income, and race), affect daily routines of people and thus vulnerability to criminal victimization. The lifestyle theory of victimization centers on a number of specific propositions that outline the essence of the theory. The propositions are as follows:

(1) The probability of suffering to personal victimization is directly related to the time that a person spends in public places particularly at night. Most of the street children live in different streets, launch terminals, bus stations, railway stations, markets, footpaths, parks at night and become suitable victims of violence. (2) The probability of being in public places, particularly at night, varies as a function of life style. Homelessness, abundance by family force street children being in public places at night. (3) An individual's chances of personal victimization are dependent upon the extent to which the individual shares demographic characteristics with offenders such as sometimes street children are associated with drug addicted children. (4) The probability of personal victimization, particularly physical violence increases as a function of the proportion of the time that an individual spends among nonfamily members. Many of the street children involves in begging, rag picking, hawking small goods, selling flowers, newspapers, cooli or minti with their bosom friends, employers and also sleep with them (Adler, 2004).

These risky lifestyles, miserable conditions, uncertain livelihood make street children more vulnerable to violence against them and this life style theory of victimization is best related to identify the nature and causes of violence against street children of my study.

#### **4. Methodology of the study**

The area of our study was Dhaka North City Corporation. This area has been chosen considering a lot of street children (estimated 75%) living or working on the street and suffering from violence in Dhaka city (Rahman, 2015). The population of our study was the street children of Mohammadpur, Mohakhali bus terminal, Dhanmondi, Mirpur and Airport Railway Station areas in Dhaka North City Corporation. The non-probability sampling method was used to frame the street children from the study places because actual population of street children are unknown. Considering the nature of study and length of time the sample size was determined to 80 from five areas of Dhaka North City Corporation. For collecting data, sampling

technique was non-probable purposive type. The purpose and nature of interview was explained to the street children. Whoever experienced any kinds of violation was included as a respondent. A questionnaire was constructed containing both the closed and open ended questions. Data was collected through face-to-face interview with the respondents. Data have been input and analyzed according to similarities and dissimilarities through computer with the help of SPSS program and MS Excel 2013. The frequency distribution tables, pie charts, diagrams etc. have been showed to make the analysis.

## 5. Results and Discussion

In this section, the findings have been analyzed from the collected data and the findings provide demographic information, nature, causes and forms of violence against street children.

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents.**

<b>Sex of the Respondents</b>		
Boys	46	57.5
Girls	34	42.5
Total	80	100.0
<b>Age of the Respondents</b>		
6-8	28	35.0
9-11	29	36.3
12-14	23	28.8
Total	80	100.0
<b>Religion of the Respondents</b>		
Muslim	55	68.8
Hindu	11	13.8
Did not know	14	17.5
Total	80	100.0
<b>Education qualification of Respondents</b>		
Illiterate	51	63.8
Letter knowledge	16	20.0
Primary education	13	16.3
Total	80	100.0

### Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents (Continued).

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Current place of living</b>		
Mohammadpur	15	18.8
Dhanmondi	15	18.8
Mohakhali	15	18.8
Dhaka Railway Airport Station	20	25.0
Mirpur	15	18.8
<b>Total</b>	80	100.0
<b>Places from where they have come</b>		
Rural area	40	50.0
Urban area	3	3.8
Slum	28	35.0
Did not know	9	11.3
<b>Total</b>	80	100.0
<b>Family members of respondent</b>		
Mother	13	16.3
Father	2	2.5
Brother	9	11.3
Sister	8	10.0
Relatives	3	3.8
No one	8	10.0
Mother and Father	7	8.8
Mother and Sister	7	8.8
Mother and Brother	8	10.0
Mother, Father and Brother	6	7.5
Mother, Father, Brother and Sister	4	5.0
Mother, Father and Sister	4	5.0
Brother and Sister	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	80	100.0

### Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents (Continued).

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Occupation of respondent's father</b>		
Rickshaw Puller	5	6.3
Farmer	1	1.3
Beggar	5	6.3
Day Laborer	2	2.5
Roadside shopkeeper	1	1.3
Driver	3	3.8

Cook	2	2.5
Carpenter	1	1.3
Hawker	2	2.5
Total	22	27.5
<b>Occupation of respondent's mother</b>		
Housewife	5	6.3
Beggar	14	17.5
Day Laborer	8	10.0
Toilet Cleaner	3	3.8
Tokai	3	3.8
Domestic Worker	6	7.5
Hawker	1	1.3
Tannery worker	1	1.3
Garland maker	2	2.5
Flower Seller	1	1.3
Cook	1	1.3
Garments Worker	1	1.3
Road Cleaner	3	3.8
Total	49	61.3

Table 1 indicates that in this study the total number of respondents are 80, from them about 57.5% are male and 42.5% are female. It shows that the highest number of respondents (36.3%) belongs to the age group of 9-11 years, 35% belongs to age of 6-8 years, while the lowest number of respondents (28.8%) belongs to the age group between 12-14 years. Another study stated that among the street children, 25% were 5 to 11 years, 48.7% were between age of 11 to 14 years (Ahmed, 2003). The Table reflects that among the total number of respondents, 68.8% are Muslim, 13.8% are Hindu and 17.5% respondents even did not know their religion, while another study depicted that 84% were Muslim (Rahman, 2015).

Literacy rate was very poor among the street children. About 63.8% respondents are illiterate or had no education, while another study stated that 49.6% of them were illiterate and primary school going (Chowdhury, 2017). 16.3% boys and girls have primary education and completed any of the grades - I, II, III, IV and V. Table indicates that among them only 20% just have elementary education. At the time of data collection about 4.8% street children were going to NGO run schools. Another previewed literature demonstrated that 61% street children never went to school, 30% had gone to formal schools and

12% to non-formal schools (Ahmed, 2003). Though both government and non-government organizations have been implementing several programs to provide primary education to the poor and vulnerable children living at the city for a long time, sampled street children were still backward and neglected in this case because of insufficiency, poor management quality and failures of the drop-out centers to bring them back from street lives.

It also shows that 18.8% street children are living now at Mohammadpur, 18.8% at Mohakhali, 18.8% at Dhanmondi and also 18.8% at Mirpur; while in Dhaka Railway Airport Station the living rate is 25% in Dhaka North City Corporation. It finds out that the highest number of respondents (50%) belongs to rural areas; 35% are from slum areas; 11.3% respondents even don't know that from where they have come actually and the lowest number of respondents (3.8%) came from city areas.

Among the street children, only 8.8% have both mother and father; 16.3% are living with their mother; 2.5% have relationship with their father; 11.3% are living with brother and 10% with sister. 3.8% of respondents are living with their relatives, while another study stated that 9.8% came with relatives (Chowdhury, 2017) and about 10% respondents have no connection with any family members. This miserable situation can be related to the theoretical framework that has been showed in previous chapter explaining street children are the most suitable target to be victimized by knowing the fact that they are the children of street, living alone in the streets and have no guardian to protect them according to routine activities theory.

From the table 1, it represents that most of the 6.3% of the respondent's father occupation is rickshaw puller and beggar, while the majority of the respondents' mother occupation is beggar (17.5%). Moreover, only 2.5% of the respondent's father is day laborer and 10% of the respondent's mother is day laborer. Table also shows that 7.5% of the respondent's mother are domestic worker and 3.8% of the respondent's father are driver. It also presents that while 2.5% of the respondent's father are hawker, then 1.3% of the mother are hawker. Another study showed that also most of the parents of the street children were from poorest family and occupied in day labor and small business (Ahmed, 2003).

**Figure 1: Types of Work of the Respondents**

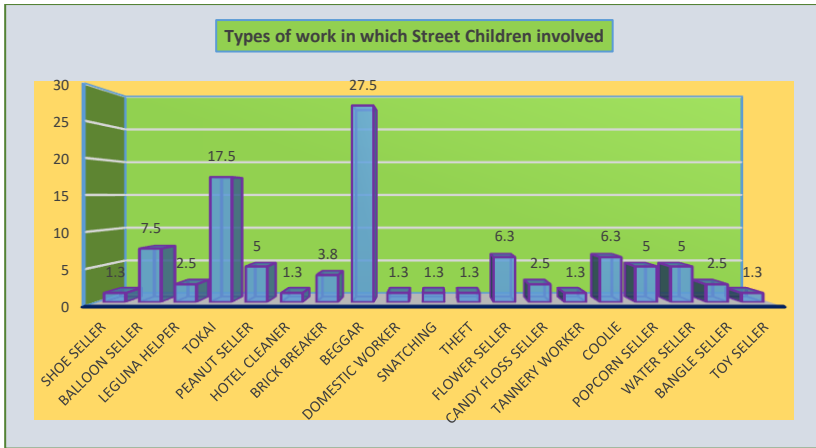


Figure 1 represents the work categories on which they live on. Street children managed their daily livelihood by multiple activities. It shows that the highest number of respondents (27.5%) are beggar, while one study stated that 63.41% children involved in begging (Kamruzzaman, Hakim, 2017) but another paper stated that 9.6% were beggar (Chowdhury, 2017); 17.5% street children were rag picker, while other study revealed that 8% of them involved in rag picking (Chowdhury, 2017); 7.5% of the respondents are involved in balloon seller and 6.3% are worked as flower seller and coolie, while another research showed 8.8% sold flowers and 32.8% worked as coolie (Chowdhury, 2017).

Figure also shows that 1.3% of the respondents are engaged in snatching and also 1.3% in theft because a study in this purpose stated that streets are places of both opportunity and violence for street children and described the street children as either victims or delinquents of other forms of violence (Aufseeser, 2017). The chart also presents that street children are doing respectively shoe selling (1.3%), tempo helper (2.5%), peanut selling (5%), hotel labor (1.3%), brick breaking (3.8%), popcorn (5%) and water selling (5%) for their livelihood, while another literature stated that 17% were beggar, 13% rag picker, hotel labor (8%) and tempo helper were 7% (Rahman, 2015). On the other hand, one study stated that 66.22% among all street children involved in street related job (Ahmed, 2003). The involvement of street children in works can be justified by both of my previewed routine activities and life style theories. Cohen and Felson

focus on the routine or everyday activities of people, such as going to work, pursuing recreation, running errands, and the like and lifestyles consist of the activities that people engage in on a daily basis, including both obligatory activities and discretionary activities which are obvious for street children to work for earning.

**Figure 2: Reasons for Working**

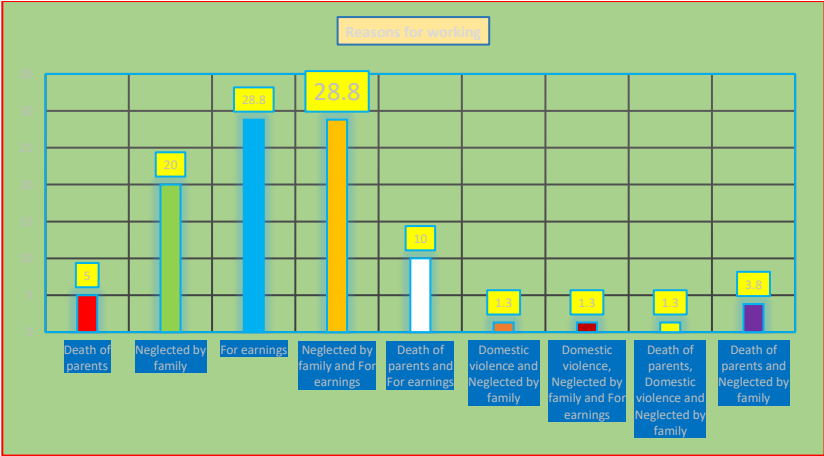


Figure 2 can be showed that the majority of the respondents (28.8%) are involved in work for both neglected by family and for earnings and also 28.8% of the respondents work for only earnings. Again, the figure shows that 20% of the street children work outside because of negligence of the family members, Moreover, 5% of the respondent engage in work due to death of parents, while another paper said that 14% street children were living in the street due to parent’s death (Rahman and Rahman, 2013) and 10% of them find a way of earnings because of parent’s death. And 1.3% of street children go outside to work because of domestic violence and being neglected. Also another researchers revealed that the poverty and abuse by family members as main cause for joining the work. Some of these reasons can be justified by previously discussed theoretical framework that parent’s premature death, bigamy of fathers, less care, negligence as lack of guardianship penetrates children to migrate into the streets.

**Table 2: Working Experience, Working Hours and Income of the Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Duration of involvement in those works</b>		
5-15 months	42	52.5
16-26 months	21	26.3
27-37 months	9	11.3
38 months to above	8	10.0
Total	80	100.0
<b>Per day working hours of respondents</b>		
3-6 hours	37	46.3
7-10 hours	28	35.0
More than 10 hours	13	16.3
Total	78	97.5
<b>Daily earnings of respondents (In Taka)</b>		
1-100	31	38.8
101-200	24	30.0
201-300	19	23.8
301-400	6	7.5
Total	80	100.0

From the table 2, it can be stated that 52.2% of the respondents have work experience for 5 to 15 months, while 10% of the street children have been working for 38 months to above which are the highest and lowest respectively. Among the respondents 46.3% are working for 3-6 hours; 35% for 7-10 hours and 16.3% of them are doing work for more than 10 hours and another research also showed that daily working hours of street children were 5 to over 12 hours in a day (Ahmed, 2003). Street children earn little money, rarely fed themselves thrice in a day, and lead a life from hand to mouth with the amount of money earned daily by diverse activities.

One study stated that their average income was 43.33 BDT (Rahman and Rahman, 2013). A major portion of my respondents (38.8%) earn amount between 1-100 TK, while another research showed that child worker earned daily total 172 TK (Kamruzzaman, Hakim, 2017), while only 7.5% street children get money between 301-400 TK. In one study it stated the average weekly earnings were 287.6 TK. One previewed



literature also showed that 41.6% of street children earned money less than 50 TK, 24% earned 51-100 TK, 15.2% earned 151-200 TK and 7.2% earned more than 200 TK (Chowdhury, 2017).

**Table 3: Living Condition of the Respondents**

<b>Frequency of meal time</b>		
3 times	25	31.3
2 times	48	60.0
1 times	7	8.8
Total	80	100.0
<b>Sources of daily meal</b>		
Family	27	33.8
Relatives	6	7.5
Owner	12	15.0
By oneself	35	43.8
Total	80	100.0
<b>Places of sleeping</b>		
Home	9	11.3
Street	41	51.3
Slum	30	37.5
Total	80	100.0
<b>Sleeping acquaintance</b>		
Family	50	62.5
Relatives	7	8.8
Friends	10	12.5
Coworkers	4	5.0
Family and Friends	6	7.5
Friends and Coworkers	3	3.8
Total	80	100.0
<b>Materials of sleeping</b>		
Bed Sheet	1	1.3
Straw Mat	10	12.5
Pillow	2	2.5

Nothing	21	26.3
Bed Sheet, Straw Mat and Pillow	21	26.3
Straw mat and Pillow	16	20.0
Bed Sheet and Pillow	9	11.3
Total	80	100.0

The families of street children are very poor with a scarcity of wealth and resources and unable to fulfill basic necessities. They do not have a minimum financial capability to buy clothes and no money to buy food daily. One study stated that they lived with their earning money, get food from the street food vendors or by stealing or begging food from hotels or restaurants (Rahman, 2015). About 31.3% of the respondents can take meals thrice a day, but 8.8% reports to take just once and twice (60%) a day, while a study identified that about 57% street children were able to eat three times a day and 4% had less than two meals a day (Ahmed, 2003). It always depends on their abilities to earn and liberty to spend money. Among the respondents 43.8% have to manage their own meal, and 15% get meal from their owner where they work. Street children spend nights on those streets they think petty safe. They sleep with their friends mainly on the footpaths of streets, bus stand, major premise, and railway station. Both males and females are seen sleeping in these places. About 21.3% of the respondents state that they remained in groups sleeping at night with their bosom or inmate friends and one study also stated that 22% slept with their bosom friends in groups (Rahman, 2015). Another literature also showed that 22.4% children lived in different street (Chowdhury, 2017). And 11% of the respondents sleep with their family members, while other study showed 27% slept with their family (Rahman, 2015).

In case of some street children, sleeping mates were different such as coworkers (5%), relatives (8.8%) etc. at their slum houses, while 23% of children slept with their employers, relatives in slum houses (Rahman, 2015). Another previewed literature showed that 73% street children used their present place as permanent sleeping place, 61.9% sleep with other children and 33% sleep alone (Ahmed, 2003). Among all the respondents, about 26.3% of the street children have nothing to sleep with; 12.5% use straw mat; 11.3% use bad sheet and pillow,

while another study stated that 42% do not use any bed, 25% use jute cloth and 16% use bed sheet in the time of sleeping (Ahmed, 2003).

These information of the respondents can be best relate to the two propositions of life style theory defining (1) The probability of suffering to personal victimization is directly related to the time that a person spends in public places particularly at night. Most of the street children live in different streets, launch terminals, bus stations, railway stations, markets, footpaths, parks at night and become suitable victims of violence. (2) The probability of being in public places, particularly at night, varies as a function of life style. Homelessness, abundance by family force street children being in public places at night.

**Figure 3: Reasons for Becoming Street Children**

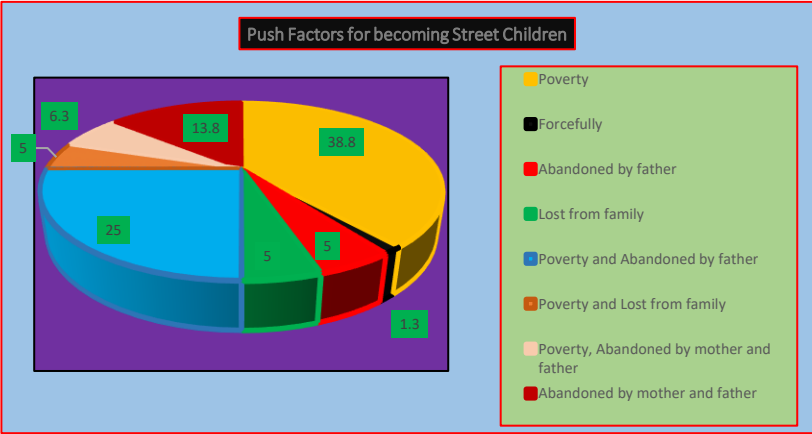


Figure 3 demonstrates that 38.8% of the respondents become street children due to poverty, while another previewed literature also stated that poverty (41%) was the main reason for street children to stay and work on the streets (Chowdhury, 2017). 25% due to both poverty and abandoned by their father, while 5% only abandoned by father and 13.8% because of abandoned by both mother and father. For these reasons street children are leading a miserable life without guardian and facing violence on the streets. Another literature also stated that poor quality of education, the conflicting relationships of the family such as polygamy and remarriage, lack of economic opportunities penetrated children to migrate on the street (Wazed, 2010).

A large number of our respondents also became street children because of their father’s remarriage. Even 5% of the respondents are living on the street because they lost their family. A study also mentioned economic poverty which made causes for children to abandon their family and move to the streets (Conticini, Hulme, 2007). Reason for becoming street children can be best described by routine activities theory that among three major concepts street children lack of capable guardianship because they are abandoned and neglected by their family, get less care and forced to work by their parents.

**Figure 4: Places of Victimization**

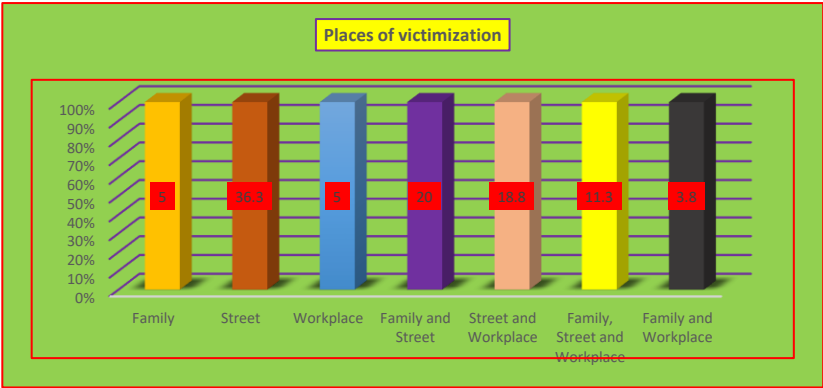
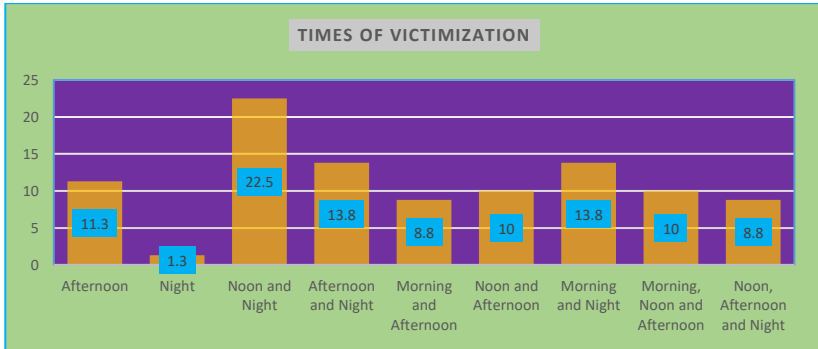


Figure 4 demonstrates that majority of respondents (36.3%) experience violence on the street, while 20% of the victims face violence in both family and street but another study stated that 13.1% street children face violence in family (Chowdhury, 2017). It also shows that 18.8% of abuse commit on both street and workplace. Moreover, 5% violence take place in both family and workplaces respectively. Also according to an empirical research, some social factors such as violence towards and abuse of children within the household and local community penetrated street migration of children (Conticini, Hulme, 2007).

It can be best explained by life style theory that the probability of being in public places and unhealthy family environment. Homelessness, abundance by family force street children being in public places and the probability of personal victimization, particularly physical violence increases as an individual spends among nonfamily members.

**Figure 5: Times of Victimization**



From the figure 5, it can be seen that most of the street children (22.5%) face violence at noon and night. 11.3% of the respondents are abused during afternoon. During afternoon and night the victimization rate is 13.8% which also goes for morning and night. It can be best explained by life style theory that the probability of being in public places, particularly at night, varies as a function of life style. Working and living outside at different times without any guardian make street children more vulnerable to motivated offender.

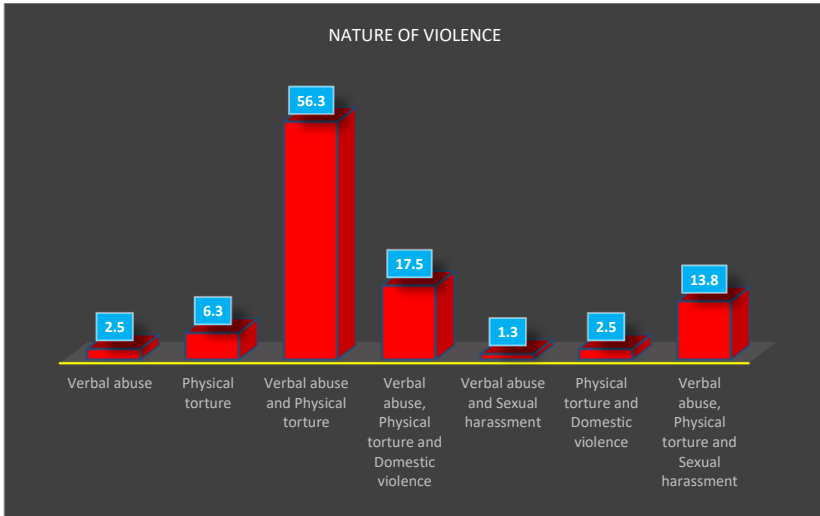
**Table 4: Frequency of Being Abused**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Frequency of being abused</b>		
1-3 Times	25	31.3
4-6 Times	45	56.3
7-9 Times	10	12.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 6 states that the highest numbers of respondents (56.3%) are victimized for 4-6 times,

While 31.3% of street children face violence 1-3 times and 12.5% respondents are abused for 7-9 times.

**Figure 6: Nature of Violence**



Street children are more vulnerable to violence because of their life style. This figure shows that among the respondents 56.3% are the mostly effected by verbal abuse and physical torture both, while another research also stated that 80.8% street children were either physically or sexually abused (Chowdhury, 2017). 17.5% of the street children are facing verbal abuse, physical torture and domestic violence at their home, street and workplace. Moreover, 13.8% of the respondent are being victimized by verbal abuse, physical torture and sexual harassment, and only 6.3% are facing physical torture. A previewed literature also stated that most of the street children became victims of physical torture, sexual abuse, human trafficking (UNICEF, 2007). Violence faced by street children can be justified thorough routine activities theory that only three easily understandable concepts are used to explain the incident of violence, e.g. (1) motivated offenders, (2) suitable targets of criminal victimization, and (3) capable guardians of persons or property. Two presences (offender and target) and one absence (capable guardian) make the best crime setting for street children.

**Figure 7: By Whom Experienced Violence**

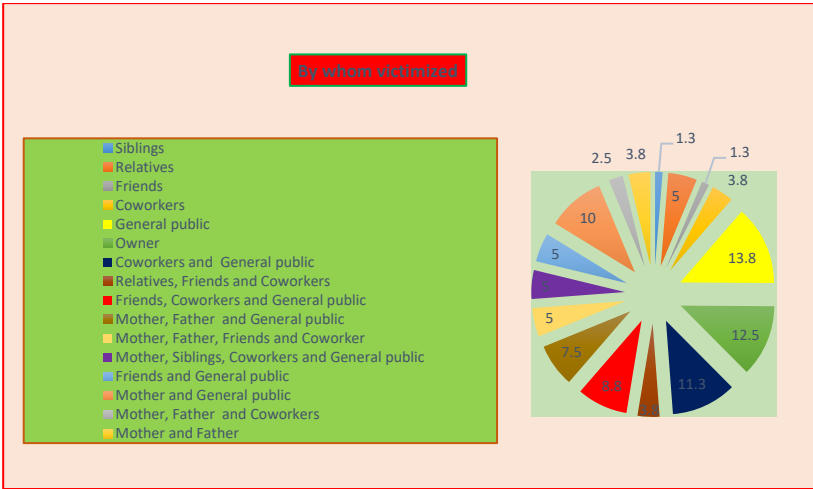


Figure 7 presents that the most of the street children (13.8%) are victimized by general public as they stay on the street without guardian and a previewed literature also stated that street children experience harassment, verbal abuse, exclusion from the public (Boundillor, 2006). Besides that 12.5% of the respondents are abused by their owner where they work. 11.3% of the respondents are the victimized by both coworkers and general public during works. Moreover, 5% of the street children are abused by their relatives and 3.8% are tortured by their parents. 10% street children are tortured by both mother at home and general public at street. And 7.5% of the respondents face violence by mother, father at home and general public on the street. Vulnerable target, lack of guardian, risky life style of living or working on the street at different times of day give the best opportunity to motivated offender such as general public, owners, friends, coworkers, relatives and even parents and siblings to abuse them.

**Table 5: Sex and Age of the Abuser**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Sex of abuser</b>		
Male	26	32.5
Female	3	3.8
Male and Female	51	63.8

Total	80	100.0
<b>Age range of abuser</b>		
Young	4	5.0
Middle aged	33	41.3
Old	1	1.3
Young and Middle aged	29	36.3
Middle aged and Old	11	13.8
Young, Middle aged and Old	2	2.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 5 shows that most of the respondent (63.8%) are abused by both male and female and 32.5% are abused by only male, while 3.8% of the respondents are abused by only female. The highest number of respondents (41.3%) are victimized by middle aged people and 36.3% of the street children are abused by both young and middle aged people. Moreover, 13.8% street children are victimized by middle aged and old people.

**Table 6: Use of Force to Join in Work**

<b>Force to work</b>		
Yes	70	87.5
No	10	12.5
Total	80	100.0
<b>Influenced or forced by</b>		
Mother	25	31.3
Father	5	6.3
Friends	1	1.3
Group leader	8	10.0
Relatives	5	6.3
Siblings	5	6.3
Mother and Father	10	12.5
Total	59	73.8



Table 6 shows that among the respondents 87.5% are forced to work without their willingness and a research conducted in Egypt about street children also revealed that 93% of them forced harassment or abuse. Most of the street children (31.3%) are forced by their mother because their father leave them and their do not have enough money to feed them. 12.5% of the respondents are forced to work both by their parents. 10% street children face force at work by their owner or group leader.

**Figure 8: Types of force**

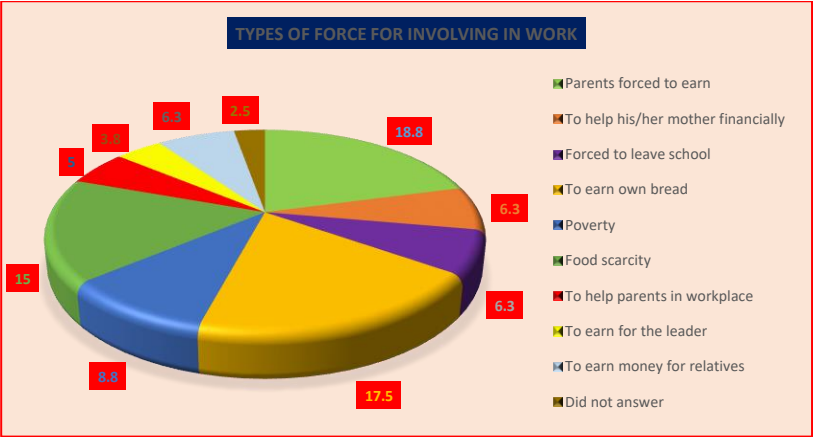


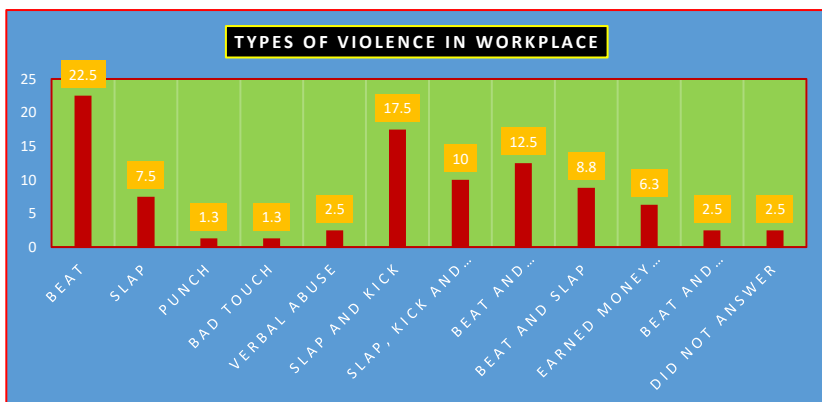
Figure 8 represents the types of force which street children face to involve in work. 18.8% of the respondents are forced to earn by their parents, while another paper said that 7% were forced to earn for family needs (Rahman and Rahman, 2013) and an international article stated only 2% were pressurized by their parents (Stojadinovic, 2015); 6.3% for helping their mother financially; 6.3% are forced to leave school, while one study stated that 82% children stopped school in order to work (Ahmed, 2003); 17.5% of street children are for earning their own bread; 8.8% are involved in work because of poverty and 15% are forced due to food scarcity. 3.8% and 6.3% of the respondents are forced to work due to earn money for their group leaders and relatives respectively. This conditions can be explained with lifestyle model that poor lifestyles, which encompasses differences in various demographic factors (e.g., age, sex, illiteracy, poverty, and scarcity), affect daily routines of people and thus vulnerability to criminal victimization.

**Table 7: Violence against Street Children in Workplace**

<b>Violence in workplace</b>		
Yes	76	95.0
No	4	5.0
Total	80	100.0

From the table it states that about 95% of the respondents are abused or tortured in their workplaces.

**Figure 9: Types of Violence in Workplace**

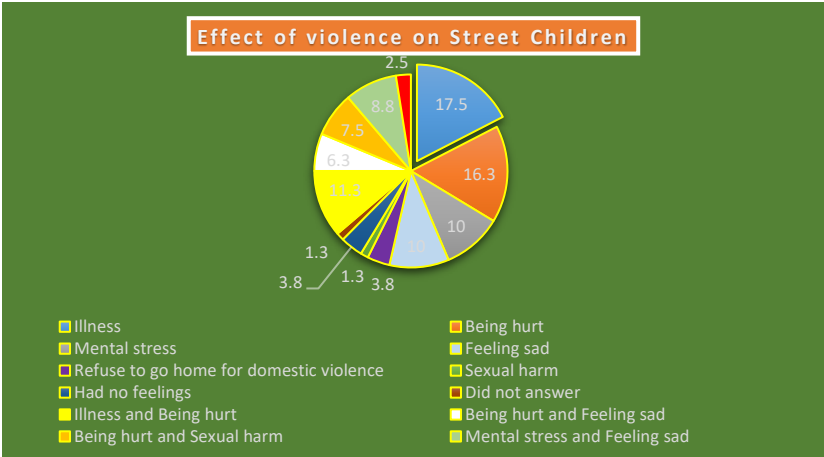


The diagram shows that most of the children (22.5%) face beating; 17.5% of street children are abused by slap and kick, while 7.5% are abused by only slap. Moreover, 12.5% respondents face beating and verbal abuse and 10% are abused by slap, kick and bad touch. 8.8% of the respondents experience beat and slap in their workplace. And 6.3% of the street children are tortured by their senior street children who snatch their earned money in the workplace and a study in this purpose stated that streets are places of both opportunity and violence for street children and described the street children as either victims or delinquents of other forms of violence (Aufseeser, 2017).

This findings also fits with routine activities theory following street children are the most suitable target to be victimized by adults and other children, by friends and acquaintances and by strangers in workplaces who act as motivated offenders, living alone in the streets

and have no guardian to protect them as lack of capable guardianship penetrates children to suffer violence towards and abuse within the workplace. It can also be described by lifestyle theory that many of the street children involves in begging, rag picking, hawking small goods, selling flowers, newspapers, coolie or minti with their bosom friends, employers and also sleep with them and face violence.

**Figure 10: Effect of Violence**



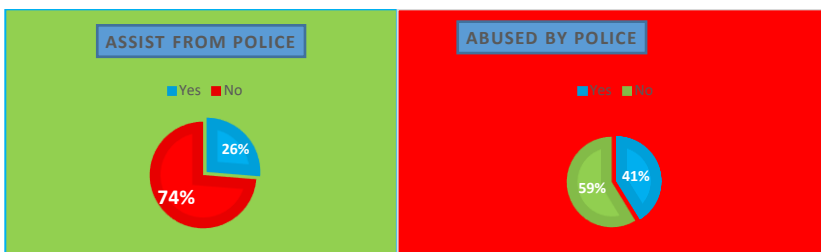
From the pie chart it displays that 17.5% of the respondents suffer from illness; 16.3% are being hurt; 10% street children go through both mental stress and sadness respectively. Another previewed literature also showed that 44% street children were suffering from various illness, injury and stress (Chowdhury, 2017). 1.8% of the respondents are sexually harmed and 3.8% of them even refuse to go home due to domestic violence. One study also revealed that 78% of street children were suffering from various diseases and physical weaknesses (Rahman and Rahman, 2013). 7.5% of the respondents which are mostly girls are sexually harmed and get hurt, while 2.5% go through mental stress due to sexual harm. Another research also stated that more than 73% street children suffers from effect of violence and diseases (Ahmed, 2003). A study of UNICEF, 2007 also stated that many children were suffered from trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychological disorders and behavioral problems. Most of the respondents are suffering from effects of violence due to their daily activities and poor life conditions.

**Table 8: Drug Abuse**

<b>Involvement with drugs</b>		
Yes	20	25.0
No	60	75.0
Total	80	100.0
<b>Types of drugs</b>		
Cigarette	10	12.5
Liquor Substance	3	7.5
Solid Substance	6	3.8
Total	19	23.8

Table 8 discloses that 25% of the respondents are involved with drugs, while another previewed literature stated that 29% were drug addicted (Rahman and Rahman, 2013). Among them 12.5% take cigarette; 7.5% drink liquor and 3.8% take solid drugs, while another paper identified 74% smoked cigarettes, 26% used ganga, cannabis and phensydiles (Rahman and Rahman, 2013). This findings fits with lifestyle theory that an individual's chances of personal victimization are dependent upon the extent to which the individual shares demographic characteristics with offenders because sometimes street children are associated with drug addicted children.

**Figure 11: Role of Police**



From the pic chart it states that only 26% of the respondents get help from police, while 41% of them are abused by police instead. Though 59% of street children are not abused by police, but 74% of them also

do not get assistance rather police use physical violence by asking for bribes and for materials which they used to live (Ali, 2014).

**Figure 12: Types of Abuse by Police**

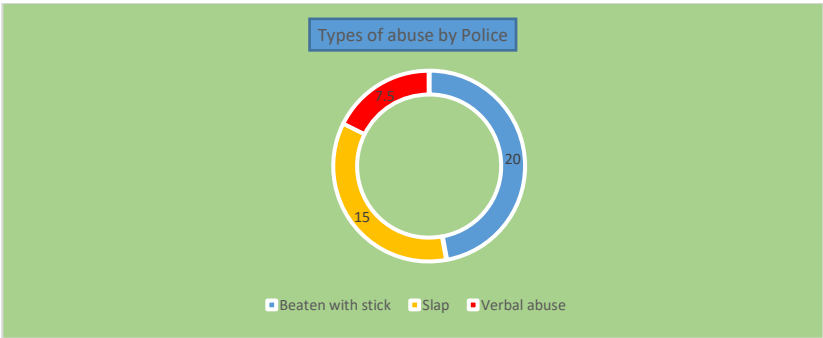


Figure 12 shows that 20% of the street children are beaten by police; 15% are abused by slap and 7.5% are abused verbally, while another literature also stated that many of them were beaten, asked for bribes, taken away their materials, accused in false charges, arrested for vagrancy and dropped to prison (Rahman and Rahman, 2013; UNICEF, 2007). It can be said that street children are the most suitable target to be victimized by law enforcement agencies who act as motivated offenders by knowing the fact that they are the children of street, living alone in the streets and have no guardian to whom they will be liable.

**Figure 13: Assistance from Authorities**



This figure states that most of the street children (36.3%) get non-governmental help, while only 8.8% get governmental help. And a huge amount of respondents do not get any help (51.3%).

## **6. Summary and Conclusion**

Children living or working in the street is the curse for the society affecting the total image of the country. The study findings demonstrate that poverty and abandoned by family are the foremost reasons behind imposing the children to stay and work on street. Their routine activities such as involvement with work, unsafe work places, duration of working hours and their lifestyle such as staying and sleeping outside at night with outsider and living under extreme poverty, unhealthy family environment make them vulnerable target to abuse by motivated offender without capable guardianship. The study also identifies various forms of violence they have faced in their daily life and also shows types of violence they experience in their workplace. Regarding violence, most of the street children are suffering from different types of verbal, physical and sexual harassment. A portion of street children are also abused by police who are the protector of law and peace of people. But street children are facing violence in all sphere of their life such as family, workplace and street instead of getting any legal support, financial help, food and education facilities. They are seriously deprived of their basic rights and remain as a underprivileged population leading a hopeless life. So, good governance along with NGOs should come up with their helping hands to secure their life, to advance their lifestyle and to reduce the violence against street children.

## **7. Recommendations**

This study suggests such recommendations that can help to recover the miserable condition of street children and to reduce violence against them as permanent living place and support from parents is required. Besides, financial support, education system and adequate food facilities should be provided by government. Criminal justice system should ensure better treatment to street children and proper punishment for abuser. Moreover, child labor should be prohibited and people should be more affectionate and kind to them. Besides these, assistance

from non-governmental authorities is also required to minimize the vulnerable situations of them.

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# **Review of National Trade Instruments: Perspective of Inclusive Growth Full & Productive Employment & Decent Work**

Md. Manirul Islam 1

## **Abstract**

*What role for trade policies to address inclusive growth, full and productive employment and decent work and what are the missing links in the trade policies in addressing them – these were the main research questions. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies – BILS has just conducted a review of a number of national trade policies. What is apparent from the review is that inclusive growth, productive employment and decent work are not auto choice with growth and trade. There are a number of positive elements in the national trade policies and Bangladesh has achieved consistently high rate of GDP growth for last couple of years. It is though frequently critique that a jobless and in-equal growth has been achieved. To overcome this, it is important that elements of inclusive growth, productive employment and decent work are pushed into trade instruments. Trade Union can perform a critical role in this.*

## **Introduction**

Inclusive growth, full and productive employment and decent work are few of the most hot development issues today. Sustainable Development Goal 8 reads, “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” Relating to this, the trade, more particularly export and import, is unequivocally given one of the core emphases worldwide. More trade means more production and thus more establishment and employment. More employment means more income and consumption. More consumption means rising of domestic demand. Rising of domestic demand leads to more import

1. Institutional Affiliation: Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies -BILS

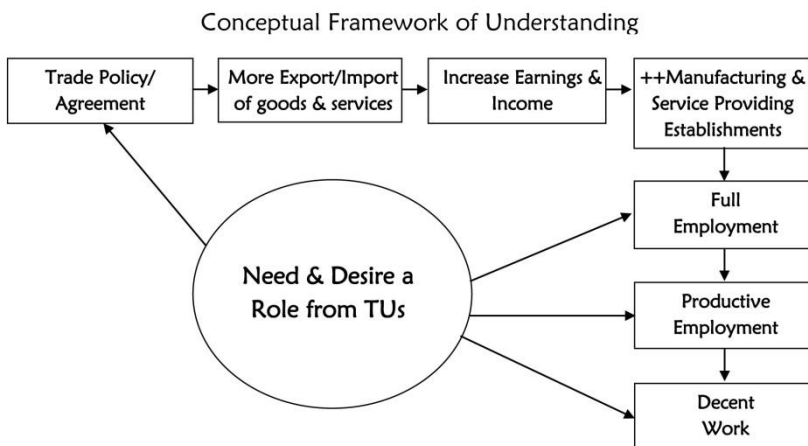
and/or establishing of additional factories/ establishments. More import leads to more competition and thus goods and services are available and increasingly cheaper. On the other hand, more factories/establishments mean additional employment and income. A cyclic effect of all these gradually leads to full employment. When there is full employment, the likelihood of productive employment and decent work are the highest.

Trade contributes to growth directly. Countries having higher rates of GDP growth has higher rates of growth in trade as a share of output (Ventura, J. 2005)<sup>1</sup>. However, increase growth does not necessarily mean inclusive growth, productive employment and decent work. This is what reflected from the Bangladesh's experience of growth. Bangladesh has achieved a high rate of GDP growth for last three consecutive years. Despite this, there is a persistent critic that the high rate of GDP growth didn't add new jobs to the economy. Instead of full employment, it has resulted in a phenomenon of jobless growth, which has deepened existing inequalities and social exclusion.

Given this situation, it is appeared important that trade policies/agreements are influenced at its formation stage to address the elements of inclusive growth, productive employment and decent work into the trade led growth processes. Trade policies should accompany provisions and reforms for human capital investment, social protection, protection for just and favourable working conditions and wage, access to finance and markets by the poor & so on. As such, it is equally important that trade unions perform a critical role in the trade policy/agreement formulation processes. For this, knowledge generation is an essential first step. With this end in view, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies – BILS has just conducted a review of a number of main trade instruments. The perspective was to look into trade instruments of the aspects of inclusive growth, full and productive employment and decent work. This article details partial study findings particularly those are obtained from the review of national trade policies.

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2 Ventura, J. (2005), A global view of economic growth, Handbook of economic growth, Retrieve at <https://repositori.upf.edu/bitstream/handle/10230/1248/849.pdf?sequence=1>



## Methodology

The methodology broadly included desk-based review of trade policies and trade literatures, expert interview and consultation. Among others, the export policy 2018-2021, the National Industrial Policy 2016 and the trade aspects from the Perspective Plan 2010-2021 are reviewed extensively.

It was really difficult to determine the decisive factors into trade instruments for inclusive growth, full and productive employment and decent work. To overcome this, based on the set of indicators are developed to measure Sustainable Development Goal 8, a tailor made list of indicators is developed and followed. Below is listed the broad-based indicators are particularly followed for review and analyses:

- Trade policies have included strategies to contribute to national growth and development processes (Macro-economic management reforms/investment strategy/trade reforms)
- Trade policies have included strategies to increase national economic productivity (Diversification/Value-addition/labour intensive production/technological up-gradation)

- Trade policies have supported developing new policies to achieve inclusion, productive employment and decent work (SMEs development/Wage increase/Decent job)
- Trade policies have promoted efficient resource consumption & environmental protection
- Trade policies have promoted full & productive employment & decent work (income rise/ reduce discrimination/promotion of safe working environment/skill enhancement)
- Trade policies have strategized to reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education & training
- Trade policies have included strategies to eradicate forced labour, slavery, trafficking & child labor
- Trade policies have promoted and protected labour rights and safety of migrant workers
- Trade policies have promoted sustainable tourism that creates job & promote local cultures
- Trade policies have promoted financial capacity building and widening of financial services

## **Important Definitions:**

### **Inclusive Growth**

Inclusive growth indicates a situation when the growth includes all e.g., men, women, child, young, old, disable, marginalized, and people from all casts and religions.<sup>2</sup> SDG incorporate view is that when the growth rate is consistently high such as 7+, this can includes all.<sup>3</sup>

### **Productive Employment**

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- 3 UNs (2013), Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2013 Turning the Tide: Towards Inclusive Trade and Investment, Chapter 8: Linking Inclusive Growth and Trade and Investment, p95, Retrieve at <https://lawsdocbox.com/Immigration/80490004-Asia-pacific-trade-and-investment-report-2013.html>
  - 4 Indicator 8.1: ‘Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries’.

Employment yield sufficient returns to labour to permit a worker and his/her dependents a level of consumption above the poverty line<sup>4</sup>.

### **Decent Work**

Decent Work includes 4 pillars<sup>5</sup> such as 1) Fundamental Principles at Work, 2) Decent Employment, 3) Social Security and 4) Social Dialogue

### **Trade Policies/Agreements**

Trade policies/agreements include terms and conditions in relation to import and export of goods and services.

### **Inclusive Growth from a Trade Perspective**

Trade (a) enabling poorer people to compete in a globalized world market by increasing their productivity; (b) ensuring that the benefits are shared in the most equitable manner; (c) ensuring that poor people, women and other disadvantaged groups can draw benefits from exports and that equality within the country and between social groups, regions and genders can be promoted; (d) shielding vulnerable groups from the impact of trade liberalization when this threatens their livelihoods; and (e) ensuring that the liberalization of goods and services effectively contributes to these objectives.<sup>6</sup>

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- 5 ILO (2012), Understanding Deficit of Productive Employment and Setting Targets A Methodological Guide, Chapter 2: Concepts and Definitions, p3, paragraph 3, International Labour Office, Geneva Retrieve at [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_177149.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_177149.pdf)
  - 6 International Training Centre of ILO, Decent Work, Retrieve at [https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:31gsiY6pHCoJ:https://www.itcilo.org/pt/the-centre/programmes/atividades-dos-trabalhadores/recursos/decent-work-booklet\\_pt+&cd=18&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=bd](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:31gsiY6pHCoJ:https://www.itcilo.org/pt/the-centre/programmes/atividades-dos-trabalhadores/recursos/decent-work-booklet_pt+&cd=18&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=bd)
  - 7 UNs Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (2013), Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2013 Turning the Tide: Towards Inclusive Trade and Investment, p97, Thailand Retrieve at <https://lawsdocbox.com/Immigration/80490004-Asia-pacific-trade-and-investment-report-2013.html>

## **How Trade Instruments Can Contribute to Inclusive Growth, Productive Employment & Decent Work**

- Reduction in prices from import and competition raises real incomes of the poor households<sup>7</sup>.
- Increase income by both employment and lower price help to raise living standard.
- Import causes availability of more products and cheap price. Variety of products available to the poor and lower cost of living helps to gain large income and welfare<sup>8</sup>.
- If these gains are invested in health and education, trade shall also improve long-run development outcomes.
- Trade undermines rents are previously earned by monopolies and cartels.
- Trade barriers (Agriculture/Fisheries) in overseas markets that limit access for a country's exports tend to be regressive, falling most heavily on the poor. Tariffs usually are higher (i) on goods produced in rural and more remote areas, (ii) on goods produced by informal enterprises, and (iii) on goods in which women are more heavily involved in production.
- Agricultural and fisheries policies (Subsidy/restriction) impact market access and food price developments, affect poor farmers and poor consumers.
- Small holders based in rural/remote locations face particular challenges in complying with public and private standards for agricultural and food products resulting low prices for their products and thus reduce incentive to produce for the market.
- Trade helps to drive female employment.
- Export industries are usually labour intensive.
- Jobs in export sectors have better pay and conditions than those in the informal sector<sup>9</sup>

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8 Faijgelbaum, P. and A. Khandelwal (2016), Measuring the Unequal Gains from Trade, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*

9 Jerry Hausman (2003), Sources of Bias and Solutions to Bias in the Consumer Price Index, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter, 2003), pp. 23-44, American Economic Association  
Retrieve at <https://economics.mit.edu/files/5408>

10 World Bank and WTO (2015), *The Role of Trade in Ending Poverty*

## Findings: Review of National Trade Policies & Literature

### Export increase is a top priority

The perspective plan has set that export rise to 38.8 Billion USD by 2015 & further to 82Billion USD by 2021<sup>10</sup>. The same plan has set that the share of export to the GDP is raised to 22% in 2015 and further to 26% in 2021<sup>11</sup>. The export policy 2018-2021 has set a target to raise export earnings to 60 billion USD by the year 2021.<sup>12</sup> It is reviewed that export didn't increase as per target. The export is raised to only 36.7 billion USD in the fiscal year 2017-18. The share of export is raised to around 13% of GDP in the fiscal year 2017-2018<sup>13</sup> against a set target of 26%<sup>14</sup> by 2021. Secondly, export is concentrated on RMG roughly around 83.5%<sup>15</sup>.

**Table: Trend of Export Earning**

Year	Export Value (Billion USD)	Annual Change
2017-2018	36.7	5.81%
2016-2017	34.7	1.16%
2015-2016	34.3	9.77%
2014-2015	31.2	3.39%

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2018<sup>16</sup>

Mentionable that the 91 million Vietnam has an export volume of USD 170 billion; Indonesia exports USD 220 billion with a population

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11 The Perspective Plan 2010-2021, p20, table 3.1

12 The Perspective Plan 2010-2021, p39, table 5.3

13 Article 1.1.2 of the Export Policy stated the same.

14 Author's calculation based on data is given in the Bangladesh Economic Review 2018. In chapter 2, page 16, table 2.2 it is given that Bangladesh's GDP at market prices was BDT 22504790000000 in 2017-18. In chapter 6, p82, table 6.3 it is noted that Bangladesh's export earning was 36668 million USD in the fiscal year 2017-2018.

15 The Perspective Plan 2010 – 2021, p39, table 5.3

16 Bangladesh Economic Review 2018, Chapter 6, p82, table 6.3

17 Bangladesh Economic Review 2018, Statistical Appendices, P 344, Appendix 49.2, Dhaka

of 258 million; the Philippines has a population of 101 million and exports USD 90 billion.<sup>17</sup>

### **Diversification of Export is a Top Emphasis**

There are special chapter and comprehensive policy directives in the national industrial policy and in the export policy on export diversification. The government has allocated several thousands crore BDT through budgetary allocation in last couple of years to encourage export diversification. These include among others cash incentives on export in new markets and export by the SMEs and cash incentives on utility services like electricity and gas usage.

Export diversification is though dissatisfactory up to this stage. The contribution of new products to the overall export growth between 2005 and 2015 was less than 5% in comparison to 78% for Malaysia, 42% for Vietnam, 25% for Sri Lanka and 20% for India.<sup>18</sup> There is inconsistency among different policy directives. The National Industrial Policy has set 7 high priority sectors and 24 priority sectors as such have directed a number of special privileges for these. A number of sector-specific privileges are also mentioned. On the other hand, the export policy has set 13 high priority sectors and 19 special development sectors as such have mentioned a number of common privileges for these. No collective mechanism is in place to ensure implementation, supervise and assess cumulative implications from diversified policy directives targeting diversification of export.

#### **National Industrial Policy 2016**

- Special privileges for 7 high priority sectors and 24 priority sectors
- Case to case basis incentives and facilities for industries are located in special economic zones
- Special incentives to establish backward and forward linkage industry

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18 Mohammad A Razzaque (2019), Revitalising Exports Bangladesh needs a strategy of export diversification complemented by a policy of maximising overall exports, The Daily Star, Dhaka Retrieve on 01/07/2019 at <https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/building-modern-economy/revitalising-exports-1536607>

19 See supra note 17



- Special privileges for SMEs development
- Act on increasing internal market capacity
- Initiate State recognition to successful entrepreneurs

### **Export Policy**

- Article 4.3.1 & 4.4.1: 13 high priority and 19 special development sectors
- Article 5.2. Forming an Export Promotion Fund to support export diversification
- Article 5.7. Motivational incentives for exporting new products having at least 30% value addition
- Article 4.1. Product and service specific Business promotion council
- Article 5.28.9. Product and Service specific Development Council.
- Execution of 'one district one product programme'

### **The Perspective Plan**

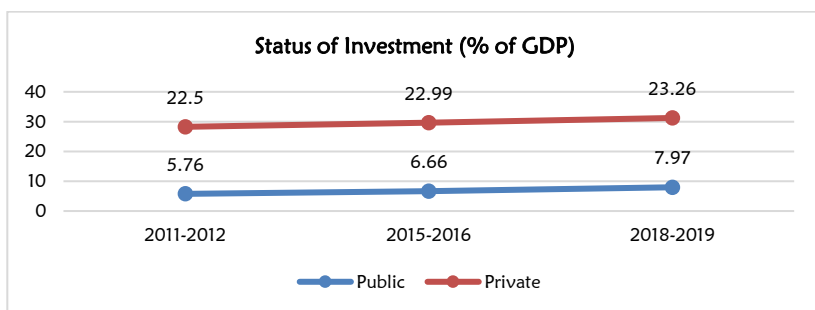
5 strategies are prescribed for export diversification

- **Product diversification** – introducing range of new products.
- **Geographical diversification** – widening the range of destination markets.
- **Quality diversification** –moving up from low end to high end products.
- **Goods-to-services diversification** - expand non-merchandise exports.
- **Intermediate goods diversification** – diversifying manufacturing base into backward linkage industries producing a wide range of intermediate goods

## **Considerable boost up of private investment is a priority**

Bangladesh has yet to any separate investment policy. In the national industrial policy, sector-wise different investment incentives and facilities are prescribed. Among them, tax exemption and/or low tax rate, tax holiday facility, avoidance of double taxation, tariff elimination and/or reduction, subsidized utility prices, one stop services facility, facility to transfer back total profit and dividend, quota for investing in capital market, duty drawback facility, loan facility against buying/selling of contact, bonded warehouse facility

and facility to sell 10% export product in the domestic market are main. The Perspective Plan 2010-2021 has set a target to raise private investment at 25% of GDP by 2015 and further at 31.5% of GDP by 2021.



Source: Budget Speech 2019-2020 & Bangladesh Economic Review 2018<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding, private investment is consistently low in Bangladesh. Private investment was 22.5% of GDP in 2011-2012, which is raised to only 23.26% of GDP in 2017-2018.

Public-private partnership project is rather poor.

Bangladesh has a gross national savings of 27.42% of the GDP<sup>20</sup>. Higher savings against a lower investment indicates that though investment is available, there must be some lacking in other else. Lack of investment-friendly environment is considered one of the main reasons for this. Regarding business environment, the World Bank's 2019 Doing Business index has ranked Bangladesh 176th among 190 countries<sup>21</sup>. According to Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya<sup>22</sup>, there are 4 main reasons for under private investment i.e., 1) money

20 Budget Speech 2019-2020 given on 13 June 2019 & Bangladesh Economic review 2018, Chapter 2, Page 23

21 Bangladesh Economic Review 2018, Chapter 2, p22, table 2.7

22 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Country Tables, P 156, Washington Retrieved on 02/09/2019 at [https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/Annual-Reports/English/DB2019-report\\_web-version.pdf](https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/Annual-Reports/English/DB2019-report_web-version.pdf)

23 <https://www.prothomalo.com/economy/article/1195681/cÖe,,w×-evo‡jI-n‡”Q-bv-Kg©ms⁻,vb>

laundering to overseas countries, 2) investing in African States, 3) expensive consumption by a little portion [Bangladesh is 5<sup>th</sup> in Asia in consuming BMW car], and 4) lack of collective macro-economic management. This low private investment is reviewed one of the main causes for jobless growth in the economy<sup>23</sup>.

### **SMEs development is a priority:**

Loan without collateral and single digit interest rate, 15% of all loan is for women entrepreneurs, encouraging sub-contacting/outsourcing to local SMEs, one village one product policy, promotion of fair price and market access, encouraging public-private partnership and widening of support for training, market linkage and market expansion are among others the main policy directions in the national industrial policy for SME development.

SME development is yet to any pleasing state. Between 2012 and 2019, 51% medium-sized industries and 4% micro industries have disappeared whereas the small industry has increased around 50%. Available estimates further suggest that employment in the SMEs has reduced to 158983 in 2019 from 1780021 in 2012.

**Table: Status of Industry**

Industry	2012		2019	
	Size	Employment	Size	Employment
Micro	17,384	271644	16,689	263720
Small	15,666	738801	23,557	1127841
Medium	6,103	1041220	3,014	461142

Source: BBS (2013)<sup>24</sup> & BBS (2019)<sup>25</sup>

24 <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/article/6768/> বিনিয়োগশূন্য-প্রবৃদ্ধির-ফাঁদে-দেশ

25 BBS (2013), Survey of Manufacturing Industries 2012, Chapter II, p13, table 2.1.1, Dhaka Retrieve on 15/07/2019 at <http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/Latest Reports/SMI-%202012.pdf>

26 BBS (2019), Survey of Manufacturing Industries Preliminary Findings May 2019, Dhaka Retrieve on 15/07/2019 at <http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs>.

The definitions are given to medium and small industry is reviewed one of the key impediments for SME development. A good number of privileges are meant for SME development is particularly explored by the relatively well off investors.

Category <sup>26</sup>	Manufacturing Industry	Service Sector
<b>Medium Industry</b>	<b>Fixed asset:</b> 15-50 crore BDT, addition to land and factory value <b>Employment:</b> 121-300 workers <b>RMG:</b> At best 1000 workers.	<b>Fixed asset:</b> 2-30 crore BDT, addition to land and factory value <b>Employment:</b> 51-120 workers
<b>Small Industry</b>	<b>Fixed asset:</b> 75 lakhs - 15 crore BDT, addition to land and factory asset value <b>Employment:</b> 31-120 workers	<b>Fixed asset:</b> 10 lakhs - 2 crore BDT, addition to land & factory value <b>Employment:</b> 16-50 workers
<b>Micro Industry</b>	<b>Fixed asset:</b> 10 lakhs - 75 lakhs BDT, addition to land and factory asset value <b>Employment:</b> 16-30 workers	<b>Fixed asset:</b> <10 lakhs, addition to land & factory value <b>Employment:</b> At best 15 workers
<b>Cottage Industry</b>	<b>Fixed asset:</b> <10 lakhs BDT, addition to land and factory asset value <b>Employment:</b> At best 15, including family members	

**Source:** The National Industrial Policy 2016

### **MFN & Preferential Access Liberalization of trade in goods and services are followed to increase export earnings:**

Manufacturing trade liberalization particularly has followed preferential access liberalization. Most-favoured-nation (MFN) treatment and preferential access are two common practices for liberalizing trade in agriculture and natural resources. Available estimates suggest that trade openness was highest in 2012 and

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portal.gov.bd/page/745673c8\_c7ed\_49bc\_a4e2\_e7b05fe7a9d4/Preliminary%20Findings.pdf

27 Article 3.3.3-11, The National Industrial Policy 2016

slightly reduced over time. Trade (export and import) was 48% of GDP in 2012 which has reduced to 38% of GDP in 2018<sup>27</sup>.

Trade openness has been followed by tariff liberalization. Tariff levels & a number of tariff rates have been reduced significantly over time. Maximum rate of tariff has been reduced to 25%. The un-weighted tariff rate reduced from 70% in 1992 to 12.3% in 2011. The MFN unweighted average tariff rate reduced from 57.2% in 1992 to 14.4% in 2015 (Moazzem K. G. & Reza M. M. 2018). The policy of low tariff on raw materials and capital goods and high tariff on finished product is followed. Import restrictiveness is relatively high on agricultural products and is taxed at a higher rate. Apart from these, there is only limited opening of service sectors.

### **Explicit Policy Commitment on Full & Productive Employment, Decent Work & Inclusive Growth**

National trade policies have included explicit policy commitments on full and productive employment, decent work and inclusive growth. 2 main goals out of 3 are set in the National Industrial Policy, are on productive employment and inclusive growth. In the export policy there is specific policy commitment to devise and execute a Standard Unified Code of Compliance. The Perspective plan has prioritized unemployment reduction and improving of living standards to the tops.

#### **National Industrial Policy 2016**

- **Article 2.1 (Goal)** ....achieve industrial growth and massive employment;
- **Article 2.3 (Goal)** ....contribute to inclusive growth throughout creating quality and productive employment in the industrialization processes

#### **Export Policy**

- **Article 4.5.9** ....permit duty-free import of equipment for setting up a compliant industry;
- **Article 4.1** .... formation of product and service specific

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28 World Bank (2018), World Development Indicators, Retrieve on 09/01/2019 at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS?locations=BD>

business promotion council to oversee among others compliance requirements;

- **Article 6.1.4** ....formulating of a Standard Unified Code of Compliance RMG Industries;

### **Perspective Plan**

- Significantly improve living standards of the population by drastically reducing unemployment and poverty, riding on substantially higher output and export growth.

Coherent action strategy is though missing. Except RMG, Bangladesh lacks any successful labour-intensive industrialization strategy. Bangladesh has achieved 3.4% real wage growth in the last 10 years, which is lower than the median growth of 3.7% in South Asia<sup>28</sup>. 85.1% are informal employment in which wage increase was around 24.7% from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015. During the same time, Consumer prices index goes up around 32.6%. That means labourers' income actually decrease to around 7.9%.<sup>29</sup> In the perspective plan, there is mentioning to drive manufacturing sector growth for at least another decade based on a low-cost laboring<sup>30</sup>.

### **A high growth target is set**

The perspective plan has set a target to raise the GDP growth to 8.0% by 2015, and further to 10.0% by 2021<sup>31</sup>. It has further planned to change the sectoral composition of output approximating 15% for agriculture, 37% for industry, and 48% for services by 2021<sup>32</sup>. The

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29 ILO (2018), Global Wage Report 2018/19 What Lies Behind Gender Pay gaps, P122, Geneva

30 Dr. Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, প্রবৃদ্ধি হিসাবের গরমিল দূর হবে কবে?, The Daily Prothom Alo, 20 May 2019

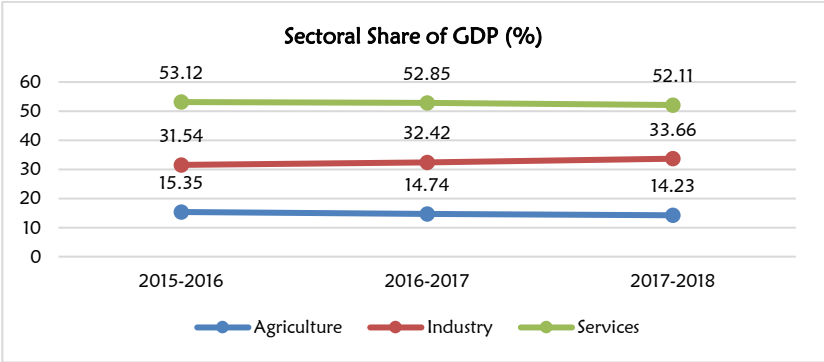
31 The Perspective Plan 2010-2021, p37, paragraph 1, 2nd line reads, "Low-cost labor with growing skills gives Bangladesh potential competitive advantage in most labor-intensive activities which will continue to drive manufacturing growth for at least another decade."

32 The Perspective Plan 2010-2021, p20, table 3.1: Key Macroeconomic Indicators

33 The Perspective Plan 2010-2021, P37

National Industrial Policy and the Export policy have included objectives to contribute to the national growth processes.

Bangladesh has achieved well above 7% GDP growth for last 3 consecutive years. In the last fiscal year 2018-19, it has achieved 8.13% GDP growth. World Bank has ranked Bangladesh among the world's top five growing GDP.



**Source:** Bangladesh Economic Review 2018<sup>33</sup>

Despite all these, inequality shows a rising trend. The Gini coefficient of income, which is a popular measure of income inequality, rose from 0.458 in 2010 to 0.482 in 2016<sup>34</sup>. The income of the lowest 5% households has decreased to 0.23% in 2016 from 0.78% in 2010. The income of top 5% has increased to 27.89% in 2016 from 24.61% in 2010<sup>35</sup>. The rate of poverty reduction has decreased to 1.2% points annually during 2010-2016 from 1.7% points during 2005-2010<sup>36</sup>. Per day food calorie intake has been lessened to 2210.4 K. Cal in 2016

34 Bangladesh Economic Review 2018, Chapter 2, p21

35 BBS (2017), Preliminary report on HIES 2016, p27-28, table 7: Percentage distribution of income accruing to household in groups and gini co-efficient HIES 2016 & HIES 2010

36 BBS (2017), Preliminary report on HIES 2016, p27-28, table 7: Percentage distribution of income accruing to household in groups and gini co-efficient HIES 2016 & HIES 2010

37 BBS (2017), Preliminary report on HIES 2016, p40, table 15: Poverty Head Count Rate (HCR) 2000-2016

from 2318.3 K.Cal in 2010.<sup>37</sup> National consumption has reduced to 76.07% of GDP in 2018-19 from 77.17% of GDP in 2017-18.<sup>38</sup>

### **Manufacturing sector growth is emphasized high for Industrialization and Employment**

The target of raising the industrial share of GDP at 37% by 2021 is particularly based on a robust manufacturing sector growth with a stipulated raise of its share of GDP at 28%. Available estimates suggest that the share of manufacturing industry has risen to 22.85% of GDP in 2017-2018 from 17.75% of GDP in 2010-2011.<sup>39</sup> Industrial sector's share of GDP has risen to 33.66% in 2017-18 from 27.38% in 2010-11.<sup>40</sup>

Despite these progresses, the manufacturing employment represents a dismal picture. Manufacturing sector employment is now only 14.4%<sup>41</sup> of total employment which was 16.40% in 2013<sup>42</sup>. Available estimates further suggest that employment in both the RMG and leather industry, two main export-oriented sectors, has reduced in the last couple of years. Employment in the manufacturing sector is almost double in the East Asian high growth economies, roughly around 25-30%. Of all manufacturing employment, 89.5%<sup>43</sup> are informal employment.

### **Special Emphasis on Resources Use Efficiency & Environmental Protection**

The export policy has offered a number of duty and tariff concessions for importing of environment friendly and safety technology. The National Industrial Policy has incorporated comprehensive policy guidelines on this. Bangladesh now has at least 10 world best green

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38 BBS (2017), Preliminary report on HIES 2016, p37, table 13

39 Bangladesh Economic Review 2019, Chapter 2, p20, Table: 2.7: Consumption, Savings and Investment (As percent of GDP)

40 Bangladesh Economic Review 2018, Chapter 2, p20

41 Bangladesh Economic Review 2018, Chapter 2, p21

42 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, p50, table 6.5

43 BBS (2015), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2013, p54, table 6.4

44 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, Annex 1, p205, table S87



RMG factories. Environmental protection is however not up to the mark in the leather and ship breaking industry. It is due to environmental concern that the tannery industry in Bangladesh is gradually losing both of its export and employment.<sup>44</sup>

#### **Export Policy**

- **Article 5.11.4** .....duty free import of equipments and chemicals related to setting-up of Effluent Treatment plants and Air Treatment Plant
- **Article 5.28.12** ..... exporting firms will be encouraged to acquire quality assurance- related ISO 9000, environmental regulations-related ISO 14000, food safety (FSMS)-related ISO 22000 and fuel and energy-related ISO 5001

#### **Industrial policy**

- **Article: 2.5.4** ....emphasize zonal industry building and development of industrial cluster to ensure efficient usage of resources
- Special facilities to import & use of environment friendly production technologies
- Recognition/awarding of innovation and environment friendly technology
- Emphasis on public awareness raising & involving NGOs & others for environment promotion
- First environmental impact assessment and then decision
- Encourage establishing of Effluent Treatment Plant

### **There is an emerging Emphasis on Tourism Among All Trade in Services**

The perspective plan has targeted to develop Bangladesh as an exotic tourist destination in Asia and increase tourism's contribution to GDP from 0.70% to 2% by 2015 and then to 5% by 2021.<sup>45</sup>

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45 Ahmed Rajib & Kormoker Shuvanker (28 August 2019), ১৬ বছরের ব্যর্থতার চক্রে চামড়াশিল্প, The Daily Prothom Alo, Dhaka

46 The Perspective Plan 2010-2021, p38

## Crosscutting Issues

### Trade Policy Documents are Fat and Complex

The Export Policy is a 38 pagers policy document. It has 8 objectives and 31 strategies. Instead of objective specific policy prescriptions and time bound strategies, there are 8 general chapters including all objectives thus very much complex in understanding. The National Industrial Policy is a 49 pagers document. It has 3 goals and 10 objectives. Throughout policy documents it has been further prescribed to formulate 24 different sets of policy recommendation, 2 plans, 2 new policies, 2 sets of standards, 1 rules, 3 different sets of strategies, 7 reforms in existing policies/laws, 1 map and 6 researches. Apart from these, there is prescription for establishing/construction of 17 new structures. Unless, these are completed it is difficult to implement the national industrial policy to its fuller length.

<b>Review of the National Industrial Policy 2016</b>		
<b>Prescribed Tasks</b>	<b>Tasks/Pending</b>	<b>Specification</b>
	Policy-Recommendations	24 new sets of policy-recommendations
	Plan	2 new plans
	Policy	2 new policies
	Map	1 new map
	Rules/Standard	2 sets of standards/principles
	Rules	1 new rules
	Strategy	3 new strategies
	Updating/Reform	7 new reforms
	Curriculum	1 Curriculum Development
	Services	Uninterrupted electricity, Gas & Fuel, One Stop Service
	Manpower	7500 Entrepreneurs each year (5.1)
	Construction/Establishment	Industrial Park, Common Facility Centre, Design Center, BSIC Help Centre (Each Upazila), Agriculture and processing centre (Countrywide), Land Bank, Cluster/Monotype Industrial City, Special Economic zone in the Districts, Private Economic Zones, Technology Incubator Center, Invention of new bio agricultural technology, Effluent Treatment Plant, Central Effluent

	Treatment Plant (CETP), Sewerage Treatment Plant, Industrial Tribunal
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There is limited application of the national trade policies and their intention is often question-marked. Article 1.3.03 of the Export Policy reads, “This Policy shall be applicable in all places in Bangladesh except for the Export Processing Zones”. Article 1:3.04 says, “Any tax-and-tariff-related decision announced in the National Budget and by the National Board of Revenue shall prevail over the Export Policy”. Article 1.3.05 says, “whatever is stated in this Policy, any specific order related to export issued by the government shall prevail over this Policy”.

### **There is mismatch in the macro-financial management**

The tax-GDP ratio is only 8.6%, which is one of the lowest in the world. A large number of potential taxpayers remain outside of the tax-net or pay a little amount of taxes. A number of industrial sectors, capable of paying taxes, are either fully exempted from paying taxes or enjoy the privileges of paying a substantially reduced amount of taxes. There is a flat tax rate for all which is too high for the lowest category tax payers. More than two-thirds of the government revenue comes from indirect sources in which VAT is a main. It is again the lowest category tax payers pay the most VATs. Tax exemption, evasion, and even provisions of whitening of black money have become a prevalent practice. A series of scams have crippled the stock market and the banking sector, forcing the state to continuously recapitalise the banks at the expense of the taxpayers.

The government has limited ability to spend more on the social sectors. In 2010, the public expenditure on education and health in proportion to GDP were 2.1 % and 0.5%, which by 2016 came down respectively to 1.5% and 0.4%. The high degree of rent-seeking activities in the public revenue and expenditure systems also contribute to enhanced inequality.

### **Employment is not in any pleasing state**

The rate of youth (15-24) unemployment is high, 12.3%<sup>46</sup> which was only 6.32% in 2000. 29.8% (12.28Million)<sup>47</sup> of youth population is

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47 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, p70, table 8.4

not in education, employment or training. Among highly educated (Graduate & above), more than 15%<sup>48</sup> are unemployed. Among the employed, 7.2 million<sup>49</sup> are unpaid family workers and more than 26.9million<sup>50</sup> are own account worker thus mostly unpaid. The proportion of working age population not in the labour force is also high, 41.8%<sup>51</sup>, which is one reason why the unemployment rate looks deceptively low on paper. Job creation is slow. Between 2013 and 2017, the average annual growth of jobs was only 0.9%. Dr Selim Raihan in a recent estimate shows that employment elasticity declined over time, from 0.54 in 1995-2000 to 0.25 in 2010-2018. There is growing concern that millions of formal sector's jobs are at risk in coming years because of the impending fourth industrial revolution.

### Current employment status

Sectors	Number (Million)	%
Agriculture	24.7	40.6%
Industry	12.4	20.4%
Service Sector	23.7	39%

Source: BLFS 2016-17

### Conclusion

There is want for inclusive growth, full and productive employment and decent work. There is wish too. At least, review of our trade policies say us the same. Quite a few objectives and strategies are covered in the trade policies on them. Economy has witnessed a shift from exporting of primary goods and raw materials to exporting of manufactured goods and services. The garment has overtaken traditional export items like jute and tea. Labour intensive & export oriented industry has developed. Import substituting industry has

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48 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, p84, table 9.8

49 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, p69, table 8.3

50 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, Key Findings, Serial 9, pxiii

51 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, p53, table 6.10

52 BBS (2018), Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-17, p40, table 5.2

developed. Labour wage does increase several times in the last few years. The economy has transformed from aid to a trade dependency.

However, the missing link is that the wish for inclusive growth, full and productive employment and decent work didn't properly transform into trade policies. Overall employment growth is insignificant. Manufacturing sector employment is rather poor. Except the RMG, labour intensive production is achieved only a little. Employment growth in the SMEs is negative. Export concentration on the RMG is too high. Labour wage is consistently below the living wage line. Jobless growth and non-productive wage didn't suffice creating of decent jobs.

It is thus concluded that the aspects of inclusive growth, full and productive employment and decent works are not auto choice with trade and growth processes. To bring about optimistic changes in line with these, it is analysed important that these aspects are deliberately pushed into trade policies. There is a clear need to go for 1) formulating of a few new trade policies (the investment policy/the employment policy/Sector and Product specific), 2) to reformulate a few existing policies to bring about more specification and consistency in these (macro-economic management, trade reforms, identification of priority sectors and incentives, diversification, value addition, technological up-gradation, SME definition, wage labour and working condition), and finally 3) to ensure a transparent and accountable mechanism to implement the trade policies. In all three areas, engagement and an effective role from the trade union is highly desirable.

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# Civil Society





# **The Role of Newspapers in Recovering the Rights of Garment Workers: A Study on Bangladeshi Newspapers**

Sanjida Khoshnoor Khan<sup>1</sup>

## **Abstract**

*The garment industry has an important role in export trade. This sector is making significant contribution to the earning of foreign exchanges and GDP. Where the garment industry is fondly praising in the country, the condition of the workers who are involved with this industry is inconclusive. The workers become bounded to go with the movement for their payable wages. Besides, there are fears of losing their jobs. If this vast population become aware of these issues nationally, most often it is possible to solve the problem. And it is the responsibility of the media to provide the accurate information to the public and create awareness among mass people. These aspects will be discussed furthermore in this research.*

**Key words:** Ready-Made Garments, Trade Union, Export Processing Zone, Collective Bargaining agency, General Diary, Officer-in Charge

## **Introduction:**

Newspaper has to present all kind of news, such as- national, international, political, economic, social, crime, corruption, law and irregularities. Here the journalists work on behalf of the truth, becoming friends of the people. In these newspapers, journalists cover the news of politicians, players, stars and others, as well as the working workers came up. Today's human civilization has been built in the hands of millions of working people who have been living in the age of millennia.

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1 Independent Researcher

Currently, there are 3 million workers in Bangladesh. Such civilization is the result of the labour of millions of labourers. These civilized societies are based on the labour of these workers. All the improvements, progress, glossiness, majesty all over the world are behind all the sweaty memories of a worker's personal and collective endeavor. But those who have given labour to the ages, have sweat, they cannot consume the result of given labour in any time. Rather, they have become 'slave' of the civil society. At the same time, the representatives of civil society exploit the workers in every step. They are often victims of discrimination.

Among the many types of labour sector, garments industry is one of the leading sectors in Bangladesh. For my research I chose the 'Ready Made Garment' sector. Because the main driving force of the economy of Bangladesh is 'ready-made garments'. RMG industry is the prime driven economical force of Bangladesh. Here, I want to disclose how much impact of RMG sector on our economy as well as how much productive of this industry through this research. As part of this research, Bill's press clipping was used as secondary data.

It is necessary to be concerned about the life system, socio-economic status, including civilization of the workers who have contributed their physical and mental work to establish the civilization. In all the countries, in all the profession of the world have some irregularities. They protest about it. Bangladesh is not exceptional too. Rather, the rate in Bangladesh is comparatively high. There is a conflict between owners and workers almost in every garment factory that happened all the year with fair wages, wage increases, due wages, bonuses, extra work hours and retrenchment of workers. Also, accident, torture, and sexual harassment at workplace are always a casual affair. These create labour unrest. Results - Block, strike, human chain, protests etc. To highlight these internal and external events of the garment industry in the public and the world, the carriers of the civilized society – newspaper is one of the mediums.

According to the American writer, Mark Twain, *"A newspaper is not just for reporting the news as it is, but to make people crazy enough to do something about it"*. Does the newspaper is only informing the society, or has the ability to make the community aware through its writing; it is also need to be focused. On the other hand, for the purpose of preserving and promoting the interests of workers, the

'Trade Union' organized in democratic way that plays a role in different situations, this study will also highlight on it.

### **Importance & Purpose of the Study:**

Bangladesh is known as the smallest state in South Asia in the vast geography, where the volume is less than the population. People of developing Bangladesh are considered as human resources. Due to the geographical position and being hard working people the number of people in the labour sector is high. 56.5% of the total population works in the labour sector, which is more than half of the total population. The economy of Bangladesh is going through a structural change; the economy is gradually becoming dependent on the industry. The overall development of a country depends on the industries of the country. The garment industry is one of the three main export sectors of Bangladesh. This industry has earned such fame in the world as well as solving unemployment problems, employment and contributing to the economy of the country.

In the current society, all the profitable part is enjoyed by the rich classed people of the society. Bangladesh's foreign exchange earnings are 34 billion US Dollars per year. There is only \$795 of a garment worker's annual income (according to the 2013 Wage Board estimation).

As a result, the profitability of the owners is huge. Undoubtedly the garment industry is the potential industry of Bangladesh. As a result, the economy of our country is going to increase and Bangladesh can establish itself in the world map. 80% of foreign income comes from the industrial sector and this industry is standing as a result of the untiring efforts and hard work of the working people. The number of working people employed in this profession is also not less. About 4 million people are involved in this industry (Mintu, 2018). For whose work or efforts changed in the entire economy, how much is their interests being fulfilled or done? For whom the wheel of income is going to be active, does anyone asks for it?

Labour and the right of labourer is the basic right of human. No one gives the right to anyone; it has to be done manually. To earn the right is needed to create a favorable environment. In this case, media can play a favorable role in creating favorable environment. One of the features of the democratic state is "Freedom of Press". The duty of the press is to display all of issues of the country to the people

independently and neutrally. Besides, press needs to make the society aware about the issues. It is noteworthy that many people have questioned how many newspapers play a role in achieving the rights of working people through their writings. This article will try to show about press works. In preparing these news, which issues the journalists have raised and demonstrated? Are they reporting in transparent way?

### **Research Methodology:**

This study has been done in two ways - content analysis and interview. According to the study, the number of news about the recent labour unrest generated in the garment industry sector that published in the newspaper have been collected. Then, some news have been carefully analyzed by randomly picking from published news for its qualitative analysis. Finally, interviews of two trade union leaders and two journalists of the concerned sector have been added with the results of the acquisitions and qualitative analysis.

### **Population & Sampling:**

This study has been done with secondary data. The press clippings of BILS have been used as secondary data. The press clippings have been taken as three years- 2016, 2017 and 2018. In this case, all the newspapers that included in press clipping have been considered as samples. As the labour conditions of the garment industry have been monitored, the work has been done on the 'movement and strike' part of press clippings.

### **Results & Discussions:**

Garment industry is a huge potential sector in Bangladesh. There were 3500 garment factories in 2000-01 fiscal years. With the increasing demand for this sector, the number of factories has also increased. The number of factories stood at around 6,000 in the fiscal years of 2012-13. However, after the collapse of Rana Plaza on April 27 in 2013, the risky factories were getting closed under the direction of the concerned authorities of BGMEA. By obeying all the rules including the Accord Alliance, the total number of established RMG garment factories in Bangladesh is about 4,600.

According to the statistics, the number of labourers associated with the ready-made garment sector in the financial years 2009-10 was about 1.8 million. With the growth of the garments sector, huge employment has also increased. By the end of the fiscal years 2011-12, it has grown to 4 million. Till the last fiscal year, the number of workers, who are working in this sector, is 4 million.

The garment industry was established in Bangladesh in the 80s. In 1985, the wages of the garment industry workers were tk 542 per month. In 1994, the wages of the workers were fixed at tk 930 by raising the amount of tk 388. After four years, in 2010 the minimum wage of RMG workers is fixed at tk 3,000. After a period of 3 years, the minimum wage for workers is increased again. It is increased from tk 2,300 to tk 5,300. In 2018, the Minimum Wage Board Commission has fixed the minimum wage for the garment workers is tk 8,000.

The minimum wage for the workers of 7th grade is fixed at tk 8,000. The highest wages for the workers which is 1st grade was fixed at tk 18,257. The wage structure is determined by adding tk 350 as transportation allowance, tk 600 as medical allowance, tk 900 as food allowance and 50% of basic wages as house rent with their basic wages.

Various countries of the world, including Asia, are associated with this sector. According to the statistics, the average hourly wage for Turkish workers is \$USD 2.68. In Mexico, the hourly payment is \$USD 2.32. Chinese workers get \$USD 2.07 an hour which is the highest wages rate in Asia. The hourly wage rate for workers of Pakistan is \$USD 0.62, India \$USD 0.57, Sri Lanka \$USD 0.55 and Vietnam \$USD 0.49. Compare to other countries, the labour wage rate of Bangladeshi workers is much lower which only \$USD 0.39 for an hour.

Demand of the foreign buyers is high in this market due to low labour costs of Bangladeshi workers. Bangladesh exports readymade garments to different countries of Europe, including the United States and Canada. According to the statistics, in 2016 Bangladesh exports \$USD 17,946.87 million worth of textile products to European countries only. From this sector, Bangladesh has earn \$USD 18,695.61 million in 2017 and \$USD 20,584.45 million in 2018. In 2017, Bangladesh has faced abatement in the US and non-traditional market. But in 2018 Bangladesh was able to overcome its rash.

The growth rate of the ready-made garment sector was 7.76% in 2016. The rate was dropped to 1.90% in 2017. But in 2018, the growth rate has pointed to 12.71% which is increased nearly 11 times.

### **Findings:**

News that is related to garment sector published in the newspaper more than any other industrial sector. According to the research, in the last three years, 336 labour disputes or labour unrest occurred in the garment industry sector. Among these, around 147 occurred for the demanding arrears of wages. Protestation for worker-retrenchment and closure of the factories as well as demanding for increase in wages, overtime, Eid bonuses, allowances, compensations and safe workplace- these all the incidents of labour unrest have been published as the form of news. Bangladesh's ready-made garment sector is always at the top of the discussion as a major sector of employment and the main sector of foreign income.

In the study, here the news for qualitative analysis are separated about labour disputes in accordance of how newspapers treat the news and present them. In this case it is seen that- the news of arrears, overtime, wage increase, factory closure and protests of workers were published in the headline as “workers movement, demonstration, vandalism, collision, chase shuffle”. In the published news, there are the descriptions of protests, vandalism, blockage, picketing and workers’ collision with police.

In some news reports ‘rumor’ is mentioned as the reason for the incident. The authority declared that news as ‘rumor’. According to the authority as a source of information and without any verification of the incidents, reporters report this news under the headline as ‘rumor’.

During Eid, workers and leaders organize meeting and rally on the demand of paying their bonus before Eid. In the news, there are the description of where it has been, who were present there, who gave speech were describe in the news.

Under the headline- "Demanding for the withdrawal of false litigation", it is seen that- police filed the accusation of the owners. But they do not accept the accusation of the workers. But why do not

police accept the complaints of the workers, reporters do not raise the question about it.

When owners get the news of formation of a trade union, they try to discharge the workers from their job. It is seen from the news that, if any leader leads the workers and try to fulfill any demand, false cases filed against him. In other word, the biggest obstacle to the formation of trade union is the risk of being discharged from job.

Most of the news, it is seen that there are no statements from the owners. Many times, authorities try to avoid the reporters and do not want to give any statements. Sometimes, the authorities cannot be contacted even after trying. These issues are not clearly presented in the news.

### **Unrest or Disputes:**

According to the research, workers unrest incident was occurred in number of 50 in 2016, 43 in 2017 and 54 in 2018. Besides, 122 numbers of worker unrest incidents was occurred against retrenchment and factory closures in 2016. In 2017, there were 91 number of worker unrest incidents has occurred in this sector but in 2018, which up to 123 of numbers in the whole country.

News articles were researched about the garments sector which is published in various newspapers from 2016 to 2018. Some of that news is presented as research data. Some inconsistencies are found, by analyzing that news. Journalists and labour leaders were interviewed on inconsistent issues. Journalists and leaders have discussed on these issues in their interviews and shared their opinions.

**Due Wages:** The news which is related to the claims for arrears of wages shows that, the authorities are not paying their workers' wages on time. Workers are going for movements and strikes with this issues. In many cases, the authorities have escaped by closing their factories without giving prior notice and the payment of the workers. This is also the reasons for disputes. According to journalists, there are problems with arrears in small and medium sized factories. And according to labour leaders, whatever the size of factories, the authorities must pay timely payments to avoid dissatisfaction. In some news, it shows that reporter can contact with the owner. Some



of the news shows that, the owner is not available to the reporter. However, in some news it is not mentioned that whether the reporter was able to contact with the owner or not. In order to maintain the neutrality of the news, it must be mentioned in the news.

**Worker Retrenchment:** News about labour retrenchment is also widely published in the newspaper. The news mentions how many workers have been trimmed, from which factory, and the excuse of trimming. There has been a mixed reaction between labour leaders and journalists over the news of the workers' layoffs. In the news of the workers' layoffs, it is reported that the rules of pruning are not followed properly by the authorities and workers are being pruned with the false accusations. In the news, the owners cited various incidents including misconduct of workers, chaotic attitudes, factory vandalism and theft of goods. The workers' allegations against the layoffs are also highlighted in the news. However, the labour leaders cited the formation of trade unions as the main reason for the workers' termination. According to them, when the workers demanded the formation of a trade union, the authorities start to think themselves as unsecured. But, the termination of workers are how much logical, that are not discussed in the news. On the other hand, according to Muhib, reporter of Samakal, it is not true that all the workers are being trimmed for forming a trade union. Because of, the number of trade unions in the factory is constantly increasing.

**Rumor:** According to labour leader Sirajul Islam Rony, a small issue turns into a chaos due to the lack of a proper industrial policy. Workers cannot rely on the authorities. Besides, they do not get reliable labour leaders as there is no effective trade union. At that time, they become angry over any issue and create rumor, which later turns into a labour movement. In the news of rumors, there are the descriptions of reason of worker unrests and the results. But the authenticity of the original incident is not verified. Even if the reporter verifies the authenticity, it is not mentioned in the news. In that case, this phenomenon of dissatisfaction is questioned. However, the journalists claim that the verification was not mentioned for various reasons, but the report was published after cross-checking.

**Eid Bonus:** News which is about Eid bonus is often printed as stand alone. But, getting the bonus on the job is a fundamental right of the workers. The arrangement of Eid for these low-income families

depends on the extra money in the name of bonus. News published in the form of stand alone cannot play a strong role in recovering the rights of the workers. Besides, the news of Eid bonus is very simple. Reports are made with the information of who, where, when the meetings are being held, and their demands and labour leaders' statements. But according to the reporters, now the trend of news has changed. It is reported that the percentage and which factories did not pay their workers' bonus and allowance. This news comes to the notice of the BGMEA authorities. Then they can force the factory owners to pay the bonus of the workers.

**Factory Closure:** The owner closed the factory when they become failure to pay the dues or to avoid any unpleasant situations. Later, it causes even greater dissatisfaction. These reports mention the protests that followed the closure of the factory. Most of the news did not mention the reason for the closure of the factory. The news is printed as long as the effect of the workers unrest is lasts. But in reality, the war with the unemployed life of a labourer is begins. But the images of the struggling life are not revealed any more.

**Harassment or Torture:** All kinds of information are presented in the news of harassment or torture of workers. The reports present the comments of the employers and the workers. The demands of the both parties are different. As usual, the authorities have denied the allegations of the workers and gave their comments.

**False Allegation:** In the news, it is seen that, the owners filed a case against the workers at the police station. But the workers demanded that these cases are false and the police did not take their case when they went to sue the owners. As a next step, the workers step into the streets demanding that to withdraw these false cases. In the news, there are no statements of the owners. According to the journalists, they always do try to contact with the authorities. But the context of communication is often not mentioned unless the statement is received. According to labour leaders, it is not that, the case is not taken at all. Most of the time, the workers do not want to make a written complaint and they cannot furnish the information needed to make a case.

**Wage Hike:** Wage discrimination is a regular issue in garment factories. Besides, the price of goods increases in the market at

different times of the year, house rent increases and the deficit cannot be met from the monthly income of the workers. The workers demand for hiking the wages and vandalism took place if the authorities refused to accept it. The workers become trimmed later who were involved with the unrest. Labour leaders say in this regard, wage of this sector is determined by the wage board. And the wage board forms after five years. Therefore, untimely movement creates an unpleasant situation.

Journalists and labour leaders have expressed their views about the fear of retrenchment of the workers in the formation of trade unions. Everyone has given logic in favor of their views. According to the research, currently there are about 5,000 garment factories including small and large in this country. Although, there are many garment factories in this country but the number of trade unions are only 661. And the number of active trade unions is actually less. With the right of EPZ workers to trade union, the government approved a new law called 'Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act, 2018'. The Bangladesh government gave final approval to the draft of the law at the regular meeting of the cabinet on December 3, 2018. Under the new law, EPZ workers are getting the opportunity to form the trade unions. That is, the workers of 8 EPZs in the country did not have full independence to form the trade unions.

Most of the dissatisfaction that arises throughout the year in the garment sector, mostly due to the arrear wages. According to Tapan Saha, a labour leader, most problems will be solved only if the workers be paid their wages on time. Besides, if the workers are given full freedom to form a trade union, then things like worker satisfaction will be reduce greatly. Labour leader Sirajul Islam Rony also made the same comment. According to him, the number of trade unions in the sector is increasing day by day, but the number of active trade unions is much lower. And there is less awareness among the workers about trade unions because of the risk of losing jobs in the formation of trade unions and workers are also indifferent to be united.

Labour leaders express mixed reactions about the freedom of press. According to Tapan Saha, only dishonest journalists behave as biased. But according to Sirajul Islam Rony, the activities of journalists depend on the ideals and beliefs of the owner of the media

house. However, in their words, journalists are trying their best to earn workers' rights and playing a vital role. The situation of the RMG sector, international images of this sector and including all the issues about the sector have come up for discussion at the national and international level with the help of the journalists.

American novelist Mark Twain compared the newspaper to the sun. As the sun shines to remove the darkness from the world every day, newspapers are printed every day to remove the darkness of the society. The newspaper is as true as the sun. Only the media have the power to expose the irregularities of society, the weaknesses of the administration, and the inconsistencies of different sectors. Workers will fight to recover their rights for their own needs. Newspapers and journalists cannot give back the workers' rights. However, as subsidiary, newspaper can play the vital role. And it is not possible without the journalists and the newspapers. Because, when the common people become aware, the way of gaining the rights of the workers becomes easier.

### **Recommendations:**

This research focuses on "The role of newspapers in recovering the rights of readymade garment workers". It shows that how newspapers are playing roles in protecting the rights of the garment workers. There is also some deficiency in this research. Due to the large and important sector, many parts of it's could not be discussed. In that case, fellow researchers can research on these topics.

### **For the fellow researchers:**

1. Trade unions are an integral part of the readymade garment sector. The position, function and role of trade unions in RMG sector can be researched.
2. A case study can be done on the living conditions and current image of the RMG workers affected by the accident.
3. Work environment, wage discrimination, workplace accidents can be studied.
4. Presentation of newspapers or media about any industry and workers can be researched.

### **For the Reporters:**

1. Change the trend of presentation of the news.
2. Do not exaggerate the news headlines to make it catchy.
3. The news should be presented based on cross check and statement which provided by both sides.
4. It should be mentioned in the news, if it is not possible to contact with the second party.
5. Due to numerous events, old news cannot be followed up for long. However, without forgetting it can be followed-up 2/3 times in a month in accordance of its importance.

### **Conclusion:**

From 1965 to 2019, connection between the garment industry sector and Bangladesh is been from many years. In the long run, this industry has changed a lot. Changes also came in the social system and public life. However, the life of workers is stuck in there where it started. The country continues to move forward with the developed world, but the workers lives are far behind from that. Still the workers have no ability to keep pace with the progress. But those who are moving forward may be forgetting that in exchange for whose labour the luxurious empire is being created.

Every year, there are around 2 million labour-expectant young people in Bangladesh. But the state can generate only 0.2 million job opportunity. So, around 0.7 to 1 million people are migrating overseas in an effort to change their destiny. Out of the 63.4 million workers in the country, only 10.2 million are in the institutional sector, the rest is work in the non-institutional sector. Of these, 30 million are in the agricultural sector. There are about 5 million workers in the transport sector, 4 million in the garment sector, 3 million in the construction sector and the remaining 1 million in other sectors.

There are rules for determining the minimum wage of the workers through the wage board only in 43 sectors. Workers, working in the rest of the sectors do not have a fixed wage guarantee. Textile sector is one of these 43 sectors. In spite of having a wage board, labour disputes in the textile sector are common occurrence. As such, the plight of labourers in other sectors is out of imagination. In the

words, journalists are friends of the people. Journalists can highlight the status of workers through their writing.

After all, sustainable democracy means mass media. Because of, under the dictator, independent media can provide a lot of service to the people. In the Mahabharata it is said, "People do rebellion for beauty." Nowadays, the beauty of society is practiced in exchange for the chaotic and unusual life of the workers. As the newspaper claimed to be a mirror of the society should talk about the beauty of the workers. Because of newspapers have the powers to create public opinion.

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# Trade Union





# **The Crisis of Jute Industry: Measures to Overcome it**

Shahidullah Chowdhury<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction:**

As an outcome of a long-time struggle and movement, a number of positive steps were taken in 2009 for resolving the crisis of Bangladesh jute industry. The BJMC management council was formed. The management council consisting of jute mills-experienced persons succeeded in overcoming the crisis to some extent. Utilising practical expertise, they adopted some policies paving way for BJMC mills to go into production. An overall improvement in jute industry was seen under their supervision. As a consequence, a tolerable situation came back to the industry within four years spanning from 2010 to 2013. During the period, workers had no grievances. But, the management council was formed on contract basis. On the one hand, its term expired as per contract. On the other hand, the Minister In-charge of the Ministry of Jute was changed. Retired army officers replaced the contractual management council officials. Because of wrong planning, wastage, corruption and plundering that was committed by these inexperienced officials, unwanted political interference increased. As a result, disbursement of wages of workers and employees, payment of gratuity and provident fund (PF) of retired persons as well as payment of all other dues was stopped. Workers and employees plunged in extreme poverty. In a sub-human living condition, they were compelled to wage a do-or-die movement for their mere survival.

During post-2009 period, the mills that had no liabilities again plunged into multifarious crises. Their production came to an all-time low. The overall situation in the glorious jute industry frustrated the countrymen.

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With a view to utilising the potentials of jute and jute industry of Bangladesh, a pen picture covering all issues is drawn below:

The latest situation of BJMC till September 30, 2018:

The total number of BJMC-owned mills stood at 32. Of them, 22 mills were in operation, three others remained inoperative and another faced closure.

Six jute mills were brought under BJMC anew, but they remained closed as they faced trial.

The mills are: Dhaka Jute Mills Limited, A R Howlader Jute Mills Limited, Fauji Jute Mills Limited, Taj Jute Backing Limited, Sultana Jute Mills Limited and Co-operative Jute Mills Limited.

The total number of looms of mills under BJMC is 10835, operation worthy-9552, inoperative-1283.

The number of BJMC-budgeted looms (Till September 30'18 of current 2018-19 fiscal year) is 7734. Of them, 4991 looms are in operation.

The total manpower in BJMC in the month of September '18 was 35,992. They included working officers, employees, teachers and workers.

BJMC's total manpower (till 2018)	
Officers	1,156
Employees	2,336
Teachers	139
Workers (permanent)	20, 608
Replacement	6,169
Total	35, 992

BJMC's net jute purchasing target was 17.90 quintal in 2018-19 fiscal year.

As many as, 1.58 lakh quintals (8.83%) of jute worth Tk 70.9 crores were purchased till September 30. The total amount of current arrear dues, including that of last year: Tk 495.0 crores.

BJMC's production target till September 30 of ongoing 2018-19 fiscal year was 42330 metric tonnes, against which 22636 metric tonnes (53.48%) of production was achieved.

BJMC-produced products are Jute Hessian, Sacking, CBC and other products such as Jute Yarn, Geo-Jute, Basket, Blanket, Mat, Tape, tea made of jute leaf and Sonali Bag et cetera.

BJMC-produced non-jute products are Straw Board, Paper Tube, Jute Plastic products and machinery parts that are used in jute industry.

During current 2018-19 fiscal year, BJMC's export target: 14189 metric tonnes worth about Tk 1323.16 crores. During the first quarter (September 30, 2018) of current fiscal year, the export target was 35474.25 metric tonnes worth about Tk 330.81 crores, against which 6951.08 metric tonnes of production worth about Tk 69.74 (46.67%) was achieved.

Presently, the total stock (till September 30, 2018) of various jute products such as Jute Hessian, Sacking, CBC and others stood at 76770.93 metric tonnes worth about Tk 747.20 crores.

During 2018-19 fiscal year (till September 30, 2018), BJMC had imparted training on E-filing, computer, modern office management to 124 personnel.

In a bid to make jute industry more dynamic, BJMC's 18 projects are now under implementation. Of them, nine projects are being financed by the government, while six are being funded by BJMC's own fund and three others under PPP. The total cost of 18 projects amounts to Tk 5110.4 crores.

Till September 30, 2018, BJMC's total debt was Tk 2506.65 crores.

The amount of BJMC's loss was Tk 143.73 crores (provisional) till September 30 of current 2018-19 fiscal year. Till September 30, 2017 of past 2017-18 fiscal year, the amount of BJMC's loan was Tk 119.8 crores (provisional).

Production and export of Bangladesh and India (Domestic and foreign) (2010-2016)

## Bangladesh

Fiscal year	Export					
	Hessian	Sacking	CBC	Yarn	Others	Others
2010-11	20.94	84.11	6.50	0	6.30	127.85
2011-12	21.72	93.27	3.90	0	7.89	126.78
2012-13	30.08	129.66	8.12	0	11.54	179.40
2013-14	28.88	33.28	10.11	0	13.15	85.42
2014-15	31.86	68.52	6.88	0	11.12	118.38
2015-16	15.26	54.28	7.21	0	8.36	85.21
%(+/-) 2010-11 2015-16	-27.13	-35.47	+12.4 6	0	+32.70	-27.70
Domestic use						Total export & domestic
Hessian	Sacking	CBC	Yarn	Others	Total	
3.86	17.39	1.88	0	3.43	26.56	144.41
2.54	9.60	1.43	0	3.14	16.71	143.49
2.77	21.50	1.59	0	2.17	28.03	207.43
1.54	29.92	2.50	0	2.97	36.93	122.35
3.43	18.12	2.65	0	1.97	26.17	144.55
9.16	29.09	2.72	0	3.47	44.44	129.65
+137.31	+67.28	+44.68	0	+1.17	+67.32	-10.22

## India

Fiscal year	Export					
	Hessian	Sacking	CBC	Yarn	Others	Total
2010-11	52.10	54.10	3.40	71.50	6.20	187.30
2011-12	56.40	93.90	2.50	59.70	5.70	218.20
2012-13	41.20	84.70	1.90	35.50	5.20	166.50
2013-14	44.30	86.90	2.50	37.80	6.70	178.20
2014-15	33.40	26.00	2.30	36.70	6.90	105.30
2015-16	34.60	17.50	2.40	21.00	6.00	81.50
%(+/-) 2010-11 2015-16	-33.59	-67.65	-29.41	-70.63	-3.23	-56.49

Domestic use						Total export & domestic
Hessian	Sacking	CBC	Yarn	Others	Total	
177.40	1004.40	0.80	77.50	51.40	1311.50	1498.80
185.00	1125.00	1.20	71.30	46.40	1428.90	1647.10
156.60	1144.70	0.70	68.50	44.20	1414.70	1583.20
160.70	909.40	0.40	69.20	58.90	1198.60	1376.80
173.00	901.40	0.30	57.30	51.70	1183.70	1289.00
156.70	851.40	0.90	37.30	44.40	1090.70	1172.20
-11.67	-15.23	+12.50	-51.87	-13.62	-16.84	-21.79

**Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association**  
**Year-wise export of Bangladeshi jute goods and raw jute**  
**(Quantity: Tonne/lakh bale (raw jute), Valuation: In crores)**

	2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Amount	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation
BJSA	183,625	558.00	189,679	584.00	219,334	625.00	251,832	956.00
BJMC	215,591	642.42	166,411	523.11	138,719	438.59	121,941	392.92
BJMA	30,901	110.55	32,860	121.11	39,300	135.35	32,800	135.00
Total	430,117	1310.97	388,950	1228.22	397,353	1198.94	406,573	1483.92
BJA	14,11	375.00	25.19	518.00	19.05	455.00	17.04	563.00
Total		1685.97		1746.22		1653.94		2046.92

	2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009	
	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation
BJSA	261,438	1162.00	285,499	1335.19	337,482	1581.61	304,056	1497.93
BJMC	128,623	504.47	101,236	435.20	102,036	487.00	88,628	429.75
BJMA	70,773	346.00	77,515	386.09	85,556	440.40	80,716	429.98
Total	460,834	2012.47	464,250	2156.48	525,074	2509.01	473,400	2339.66
BJA	24.47	977.00	24.43	914.15	28.71	1033.40	17.49	921.00
Total		2989.47		3070.63		3542.41		3260.66

	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013	
	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation
BJSA	380,335.77	2548.73	394,389.68	3396.17	458,210.27	3367.02	516,252.00	3496.26
BJMC	104,418.28	643.75	141,633.71	1221.96	123,599.00	1028.35	177,037.00	1363.19
BJMA	113,604.00	746.14	82,178.00	681.52	113,983.00	919.76	148,427.00	1114.31
Total	598,358.05	3938.62	618,201.39	5299.65	695,792.27	5315.13	841,716.00	5973.76
BJA	15.68	1130.84	21.12	1906.76	22.86	1540.66	22.55	1436.45
Total		5069.46		7206.41		6855.79		7410.21

	20113-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017	
	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation	Quantity	Valuation
BJSA	559,378.59	3474.33	543,469.37	3675.06	551,334.55	4029.81	558,705.39	4381.40
BJMC	85,133.00	628.78	117,952.00	821.06	85,217.75	656.51	87,792.00	785.58
BJMA	145,265.00	959.25	154,870.00	1121.92	189,240.00	1451.78	199,057.00	1622.60
Total	789,776.59	5062.36	816,291.37	5609.04	825792.30	6138.10	845,554.39	6789.58
BJA	9.84	706.05	10.49	816.74	11.38	1054.40	16.39	1342.72
Total		5768.41		6425.78		7192.50		8132.30

	2017-2018	
	Quantity	Valuation
BJSA	566,358.13	4650.87
BJMC	85,900.77	829.22
BJMA	179,969.00	1543.66
Total	832,227.90	7023.75
BJA	13.80	1294.65
Total		8318.40

## Bangladeshi jute and related information

1. Land under jute cultivation	: About 14.75 lakh acres
2. Production on an average	: 78 lakh bales (1.40 million tonnes)
Previous balance (carried over)	: 9 lakh bales (0.16 million tonnes)
Total	: 87 lakh bales (1.56 million tonnes)
3. Internal use	: 61 lakh bales (1.12 million tonnes)
4. Raw jute export on an average and valuation	: 14.00 lakh bales (0.25 million tonnes)
Price	: Tk1199 crores
5. Number of jute mills	: Under BJSA 94 (12 closed) Under BJMA 165 (42 closed) <u>Under BJMC 26 (One closed)</u>
Total	: 285 (55 closed)
6. Number of working people	: BJSA : 75,000 : BJMA : 66,000 : <u>BJMC : 63,000</u>
Total	: 2,04,000
7. Average output of jute goods	: BJSA : 5,53,000 BJMA : 2,83,000 metric tonnes (MT) <u>BJMC : 2,12,000 MT</u>
Total	: 10,48,000 MT
8. Internal use	: BJSA : 25,000 MT (Yarn, Twine) : BJMA : 75,000 MT (Sacking, Hessian) : <u>BJMC : 37,000 MT (Sacking, Hessian)</u>
Total	: 1,37,000 MT
9. Foreign export and valuation	: BJSA : 5,55,000 MT Tk 4205 crores BJMA : 1,94,000 MT Tk 1536 crores <u>BJMC : 87,000 MT Tk 720 crores</u>
Total	: 8,36,000 MT Tk 6461 crores
10. No. of spindles in spinning mills	: 2,49,036 installed. Of them 195,055 are in operation
11. No. of looms in jute mills	: BJMC : Hessian 6232. Of them 2600 are in operation Sacking 3696. Of them 2535 are in operation CBC 1000. Of them, 396 are in operation
<u>Others</u>	: <u>95. Of them, 20 are in operation</u>
Total	: 11023. Of them, 5548 are in operation
BJMA	: Hessian 6510. Of them



2236 are in operation  
 Sacking 8175. Of them  
 3270 are in operation  
 CBC 831. Of them, 70 are in operation  
Others 495. Of them, 200 are in operation  
 Total : 16011. Of them, 5776 are in operation

BJSA : Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association  
 (Private-owned)  
 BJMA : Bangladesh Jute Mills Association  
 (Private-owned)  
 BJMC : Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation  
 (State-owned)  
 CBC : Carpet backing cloth

\*\* 1 acre=0.405 hectre, 1 bale= 180 kilogram, 1 mt=5.56 bales

Year-wise export of jute goods of BJMC, BJMA and BJSA  
 Quantity: Lakh metric tonnes

Fiscal year	BJMC	BJMA	BJSA	Total
1983-84	2.90	1.85	0.28	5.03
1984-85	2.72	1.65	0.36	4.73
1985-86	2.77	1.88	0.25	4.90
1986-87	3.04	1.80	0.44	5.28
1987-88	2.51	1.74	0.55	4.80
1988-89	3.01	1.67	0.49	5.17
1989-90	3.26	1.66	0.63	5.55
1990-91	1.76	1.47	0.70	3.93
1991-92	2.74	1.70	0.77	5.21
1992-93	2.93	1.16	0.84	4.93
1993-94	2.55	0.18	0.92	3.65
1994-95	2.77	1.04	1.03	4.84
1995-96	2.71	0.77	1.05	4.53

1996-97	1.92	0.91	1.09	3.92
1997-98	1.60	0.76	1.16	3.52
1998-99	2.20	0.79	1.30	4.29
1999-2000	2.01	0.67	1.44	4.12
2000-01	2.23	0.42	1.61	4.26
2001-02	2.15	0.31	1.83	4.29
2002-03	1.66	0.33	1.89	3.88
2003-04	1.38	0.39	2.19	3.96
2004-05	1.22	0.33	2.15	4.06
2005-06	1.29	0.70	2.61	4.60
2006-07	1.01	0.77	2.85	4.63
2007-08	1.02	0.85	3.37	5.24
2008-09	0.88	0.80	3.04	4.72
2009-10	1.04	1.14	3.80	5.98
2010-11	1.41	0.82	3.94	6.17
2011-12	1.24	1.14	4.58	6.96
2012-13	1.77	1.48	5.16	8.41
2013-14	0.85	1.45	5.59	7.89
2014-15	1.18	1.54	5.43	8.15
2015-16	0.85	1.89	5.51	8.25
2016-17	0.88	1.99	5.59	8.46
2017-18	0.86	1.80	5.66	8.32

It is evident that Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association started its journey with eight factories that now rose to 95. At present, 75,000 workers are employed in the industry. Because of success of the entrepreneurs of this industry, 2001-2002 fiscal year's export of 1,83,625 metric tonnes now rose to 5,66,358.13 metric tonnes worth Tk 4,650 crores and 87 lakhs.

Thirty-four factories were under Bangladesh Jute Mills Association. Presently, the number of factories rose to 162. However, 34 factories faced closure. A total of 70,000 workers are working in the factories. The owners of this industry too achieved progress by overcoming extreme crisis through elevation of exports from 30,901 metric tonnes in 2001-2002 fiscal year to present 1,79,969 metric tonnes.

Last year, Bangladesh Jute Association exported 13.80 lakh bales of jute worth Tk 1,294 crores 65 lakhs by fulfilling internal demand.

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) earned Tk 642 crores and 42 lakhs by exporting 2,15,591 metric tonnes of products in 2001-2002 fiscal year. The export volume shrank to 85,900.77 metric tonnes in 2017-18 fiscal year. Its valuation was Tk 829 crores 22 lakhs that is far behind all other associations.

Jute industry is the main industry of Bangladesh. This industry had a glorious past and tradition. The spirit of Liberation War and struggle for democratic rights are closely knitted to this industry. As jute industry is an inspiration for the nation, no citizen will accept any harm to this industry. With a view to overcoming the crisis, I put forward several suggestions:

1. BJMC's present production, domestic sale proceeds and foreign export earnings are not in consistent with the administrative structure. In a bid to bring reforms, the basic structure should be reconstituted with the help of experienced and devoted persons. The existing additional divisions having no utility should temporarily be closed. It is possible to bring down the structural cost to a minimum of 30 (thirty) percent.
2. The factories that are in operation need structural reforms. As the structures built on the basis of the Enam Commission report their necessity expired. So, three out of seven posts should be deleted. In the meantime, the government has decided to implement the Wage Commission, but the mills lack the financial capability. In a bid to materialise the recommendations of the Commission, new machineries should be installed by introducing upgraded

technology on an urgent basis. This will enable each worker to operate two or more machines. As a result, wages of workers will increase, but comparatively the production cost will not rise. Trade unions should play a responsible role to accomplish the task. The unions cannot involve themselves in any commercial activity beyond legally recognised activities.

3. While conducting business and commercial activities, the mill management should remain out of the political influence. In this regard, the government high-ups should have to play an important role.
4. The government, in the meantime, has planned to invest an amount of Tk 6,000 crores for modernising 18 jute mills (six of them to be funded from BJMC's own fund, three from PPP fund and nine to be financed by the government). It is evident from all information that it is not possible to take initiatives to modernise all the 18 mills simultaneously, rather it should be done step by step by initially taking five mills and using the upgraded technology and machinery of standard companies. We are suspicious so that BJMC does not have to face the 2009 consequences. In that case, the government must have to move forward cautiously. Development is a continuous process that must be started through backward linkage and initially the millside needs an improvement. In that case, unhindered supply of necessary instruments and services will have to be ensured for at least 10 years by the company that would supply machineries. This will have to be done by signing contracts with the company.
5. Bangladesh has made two epoch-making inventions involving jute and jute industry. Common people are yet to know the genome code of jute and Sonali bag. More research work should be conducted in this field and at the same time the capacity of research should be increased for achieving success in the competitive global market through improved use of jute. In that case, the budget needs to be increased. Production of Sonali bag,

marketing and its practical utility and demand also needs to be increased. Then another new door will be opened for jute. Both the mill management and the CBA should collectively move forward to utilise the opportunity. Management capacity, structural power needs to be increased that should be applied skillfully, firmly and with accountability.

6. Conclusion: The nation will not accept any initiative for extinction of our beloved jute industry (public sector). With our limited wisdom, it is our realisation and conviction that we shall be able to overcome the crisis of jute industry thereby opening a door for making it profitable provided we undertake programmes based on the aforementioned recommendations. The basis of our conviction is that Bangladeshi jute goods have been able to dominate the world market facing all odds. Bangladesh has grabbed it successfully the deteriorating state of India in international markets. Facing hundreds of obstacles in jute industry, the country earned 10 crores of dollars through export and it is possible to double the amount within 2021. It is imperative to take an initiative in this regard on an emergency basis. All of us should do our duty collectively.

Source:

1. Director General, Jute Directorate,
2. Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC),
3. Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA),
4. Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJSA),
5. Bangladesh Jute Association (BJA),
6. Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA).

Translated by Z. A. M. Khairuzzaman, Senior Sub-Editor, The Daily Sun.

## **Publication Policy**

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

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

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

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

1. The submitted manuscript should be original and contributing to some new dimensions in the concerned fields noted and is not published or under consideration for publication elsewhere.
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3. The paper should include an abstract, which is not more than 150 words.
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6. The author should retain a copy of the manuscript for his/her own reference.
7. Three (3) copies of article(s) are to be submitted to the Editor of the Journal in font size 12 (twelve) of Times New Roman on A4 size paper.
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16. References should be set out in alphabetical order of the author's last name in a list at the end of the article.
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21. All editorial communications should be made to the following address:

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# **BILS**

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

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