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Academic

- Employers' Perception towards Competencies for Hiring Business Graduates in Bangladesh: Myth and Reality
- Victimization of Construction Workers in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study on Construction Area in Tangail.
- Physical Health Hazards of the Child Labour Working in the Welding Sector in Rajshahi City of Bangladesh
- State of Labour Dispute in the RMG Sector of Bangladesh

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- Importance of Domestic Workers protection and Welfare Policy during COVID-19 pandemic situation

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Editorial

Covid-19 situation is swallowing our livelihood every day. The world is trying to fight the pandemic and new challenges are coming in and abroad. For coping up with this situation we have to focus on safety first. To save our lives, workforce and economy are the priorities in this regard. It is not a challenge that could be solved by a single country or nation, rather it is a global crisis that should be addressed by the World community.

In Bangladesh, RMG is considered as lifeline of economy. However, RMG has been home to numerous disputes in recent years, and often is chosen by the workers as their best instrument to achieve their claims. To create a win-win situation for the betterment of all parties, it is necessary to avoid labour dispute. In order to know how labour dispute can be avoided or reduced, it is essential to know previous trends, and the state and nature of these disputes.

Besides RMG, the Construction industry is one of the emerging employment generating sectors in Bangladesh. The nature of work recognizes the sector as a less mechanized and more labour intensive industry so far. Having a notable contribution in GDP, the sector has also been criticized for decent work deficits. Therefore, it is necessary to know the nature and responses of victimization of construction workers with a focus on the occupational health and safety issues of the workers and developing a set of recommendation accordingly.

We have been observing for a long time that Child labour is a very common as well as hurtful issue in Bangladesh. As per Labour Law, no child shall be employed or permitted to work in any occupation or establishment. However, it has seen that underprivileged children become involved in various risky and harmful jobs for meeting up their basic needs.

Findings on above mentioned issues are discussed in different articles on this journal. Besides, Domestic Workers issues during COVID-19 pandemic situation and perception towards competencies for hiring business graduates in Bangladesh and the reality are discussed in different articles. We hope these will help researchers, academicians, students and trade union leaders for their knowledge development.

We thank our partners for their support and cooperation regarding publication of this journal.

Md. Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan
Editor

Academic Part

Employers' Perception towards Competencies for Hiring Business Graduates in Bangladesh: Myth and Reality

¹Mafi Rahman

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Abstract

The main objective of the study is to find out the gap between Employers' Perception towards Competencies for Hiring Business Graduates in Bangladesh and the reality. Based on convenient and purposive sampling, a total of 200 respondents were selected for this study. Data were collected through survey method with the help of survey instrument. Employers' expected skills from the business graduates have been measured using Five Point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) to rate their levels of expectations and performance. The study identifies 34 competencies which can be acquired by the business graduates. Study findings show that there is significant gap/difference between employers' expectation and actual performance of business graduates in Bangladesh. The findings also identified the barriers to skills development of the business graduates in Bangladesh and provided possible recommendations. The research hypothesis developed in this study was supported by the study findings. The findings from this study can be a significant help to the universities in developing competitive business graduates and industries at improving human capital capabilities.

Keywords: Employers' perception, Business graduates, Competencies, Knowledge and skills, Convenient and purposive sampling.

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1.0. Introduction

In an increasingly competitive world, human resource has become a cutting-edge factor. It is the only resource that has a vital role in ensuring dynamism and vitality. Most of the HR managers say, the right person at the right job with the correct targets in the right environment will produce the better results within the stipulated time. We believe that the real difference between success and failure in an organization can be very often traced to the question of how well the organization brings out the great energies and talents. For this reason, the employers look for those graduates who possess different competencies. Employers value these graduates more than those of traditional employees as they can help the organization meet the challenges and survive in this competitive business world.

It is essential to hire people with the right competencies as, human capital is seen to have a positive effect on an organization's performance. The employers' demand for diverse range of competencies in fresh graduates will be fulfilled if the industry and universities collaborate with each other. It will help to create competent and capable graduates who will possess the skills that are essential for contributing to the organizations' competitiveness (Pang *et al.*, 2019).

Evidence shows that, universities were seen to be more concerned with theoretical knowledge rather than the practical business knowledge. This made them too detached from the business world. They were also seen to be more inclined towards research which is not at all relevant to the practical business world. As a result, they were unable to prepare their students in order to mitigate the challenges of business landscape in competitive world. This led to the graduates' lack of some of the relevant skills for obtaining employment in the organizations (McMurray *et al.*, 2016). Today, universities of many countries are considering the employers' demands and requirements from the fresh graduates and offering courses accordingly. These courses are imparting relevant subject knowledge to the students which is developing their competencies and preparing them for the workplace and ultimately helping the business graduates to make a smooth transition from student to employee (Saeed, 2015).

1.1. Review of Related Literatures

SL	1.
Title	Do Employability Skills for Business Graduates Meet the Employers' Expectations? The Case of Retail Islamic Banks of Bahrain
Author(s) and Institute(s)	Noor Al-Shehab ¹ , Mukhtar AL-Hashimi ¹ , Araby Madbouly ² , Sameh Reyad ³ , Allam Hamdan ³ , ¹ College of Business and Finance, Ahlia University, Manama, Bahrain, ² Muscat College, Muscat, Oman, ³ College of Business and Finance, Ahlia University, Manama, Bahrain.
Journal	Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, 2020.
Research Type	Descriptive
Findings	Employability is a graduate's combination of understandings, skills, achievements, and personal attributes which help him/her to get a job. These skills help the graduates to achieve occupational success and contribute positively to the economy. It has been observed that the employers' expectations and requirements regarding employees' skills and employability level vary according to different business sizes, sectors, economic conditions, and countries. These needs of employers and skills of graduates need to be taken into account while shaping the skills assessment plans.

SL	2.
Title	Competencies for Fresh Graduates' Success at Work: Perspectives of Employers
Author(s) and Institute(s)	Elvy Pang ¹ , Michael Wong ² , C. H. Leung ¹ , John Coombes ³ , ¹ The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, ² University of Waterloo, Canada, ³ Hang Seng Management College, Hong Kong.
Journal	Industry and Higher Education, 33(1), 2019.
Research Type	Descriptive

Findings	It is seen that the ability and output of the employees influence the performance and output of the organization. For this reason, the employers depend on employees, especially competent business graduates, for increasing their competitiveness. As a result, the competencies of the graduates gained increased attention from professional bodies, researchers, higher education, and public. Competencies have been categorized into two types: hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are the technical knowledge needed to do a job and soft skills are behavioral in nature and related to personal interactions.
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SL	3.
Title	Competencies Needed For 2015: Employers Preference in Business Graduate Selection
Author(s) and Institute (s)	Laila Zaman, Business Administration Department, East West University.
Journal	Review of Integrative Business & Economics Research, 4(3), 2015.
Research Type	Descriptive
Findings	Employers expect to get competent business graduates. For meeting this expectation of them, they rely on the universities. Competent business graduates act as the driving force of the organizations and for this they are wanted by the companies. Employers expect the universities to shape these business graduates as, it is easier to shape them according to the demand of the employers than those who are already shaped in a particular field. In spite of having academic and technical skills, most of the business graduates are not getting the suitable jobs as they don't have the basic skills known as work readiness skills. For this, they are unable to meet the employers' expectations.

SL	4.
Title	Factors Impact Business Graduates Employability: Evidence from Academicians and Employers in Kuwait
Author(s) and Institute(s)	Abdullah AL-Mutairi ¹ , Kamal Naser ² , Muna Saeid ¹ , ¹ Arab Open University- Kuwait branch, Kuwait, ² Financial and Economic Advisor, Kuwait Fund.
Journal	International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences, 3(4), 2014.
Research Type	Descriptive
Findings	The disparity between number of vacancies in job market and supply of business graduates is motivating the universities to develop their academic programs and teaching methods so that they can provide such knowledge and skills to the students which will enrich their employability. The policy makers at both university level and country level need to work together to formulate the education strategies in a way that will satisfy the market demand.

SL	5.
Title	The Impact of Collaboration Between Industry and Academia on SME Growth
Author(s) and Institute(s)	Elaine Collinson & Leonie Quinn, University of Strathclyde, UK.
Journal	Journal of Marketing Management, 18, 2002.
Research Type	Descriptive
Findings	The graduates can make important contributions to the organizations as they are learning such things in universities which are making them prepared for the corporate world. Like, the deadlines given to their assignments will make them committed and give them the ability to finish their work before the deadlines. This contribution of the graduates is now understood by the small firms. For this reason, the linkage between

	universities and small firms increased rather than between universities and large organizations. It has been found that there are some methods of linking between the industry and higher education institution. These are: curriculum development and teaching, training, assessment, research and development, technology and innovation transfer, management consultancy, provision for services or facilities, and placement programs.
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SL	6.
Title	'Technology Transfer' and the Research University: A Search for the Boundaries of University-Industry Collaboration
Author(s) and Institute(s)	Yong S. Lee, Department of Political Science, Iowa State University, USA.
Journal	Research Policy 25, 1996.
Research Type	Descriptive
Findings	It is seen that the culture of universities is different from that of industries. This creates various barriers for both of them. But this cultural difference needs to be respected rather than criticized. Also, it is the responsibility of the industries to clarify their expectations from the academics so that it becomes easier for the academics to act accordingly. This might help to mitigate the existing boundaries of university-industry collaboration.

1.2. Problem Statement and Justification of the Study

Globalization and information technology advancements are dynamically changing the markets and making it more competitive. This is making employers want those business graduates as their employees who can make a difference and add value to the workplace. But difficulty of employability of these graduates exists as they lack the knowledge and skills wanted by the employers. So, it is necessary to find out the employability skills that the employers

want from business graduates (Al-Shehab *et al.*, 2020). The graduates join the organization with the expectation of performing according to the formal education they received from their university. Their performance mismatches with employers' expectation as, the employers expect the graduates to possess diverse skills and experience. In between these two parties are the universities whose responsibility is to prepare the students for this competitive employment market (Jusoh *et al.*, 2011).

The literature review showed some gap between knowledge and skills demanded by employers, and knowledge and skills transferred by university among the business graduates. This gap induced the researchers to undertake the present study.

1.3. Objectives

The main objective of the study is to analyze the employers' expectations towards competencies of the business graduates and the actual performance of business graduates in Bangladesh. To attain the main objective, the specific objectives are:

- i. To find out the employers' perception towards competencies of the business graduates.
- ii. To identify the actual performance of the business graduates.
- iii. To analyze the gap between the employers' expectations towards competencies and actual performance of the business graduates.

1.4. Hypothesis

The hypothesis formulated for this study is as follows:

- H₁: There is a significant difference between the employers' expectations of knowledge and skills, and actual performance of business graduates in Bangladesh.

H₀: There is no significant difference between the employers' expectations of knowledge and skills, and actual performance of business graduates in Bangladesh.

2.0. Research Methods

2.1. Study Design

To collect data for the study, survey method was used. To determine the clarity and relevancy of the survey questions, a small-scale pilot test was conducted.

2.2. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Convenient and purposive sampling techniques have been used to do the study. A total of 250 employers from different organizations located in Dhaka were selected as a sample of this study.

2.3. Survey Instrument

As no existence of standard scales related to present study has been found, comprehensive literature review has been done to identify employers' perception towards competencies for hiring business graduates in Bangladesh, and prepare the survey instrument. Based on existing literature survey and pilot testing, 34 competencies of business graduates were identified which have been considered as a focal guide in this study. The survey instrument has been developed while keeping in mind that the instrument is short and practical to administer in terms of the amount of time required to complete this study. For ensuring consistency, the scale has been adapted from Parasuraman *et al.* (1985). The study used Five-Point Likert Scale, ranging from very low (1) to very high (5). The survey instrument was structured having first part consisted of respondents' personal data, and later parts concentrated on all the items of independent (competencies) and dependent (employers' perception towards quality of business graduates) variables.

2.4. Data Collection Procedure

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. For primary data collection, the researchers directly contacted with the respondents. First, the contact was made via emails and phone calls in which survey purpose and general outlines were introduced. Then the researchers emailed the respondents the online survey's link which contained a cover page introducing the study and the researchers, and assurance of confidentiality. Secondary data were collected from sources like relevant articles and journals from Google Scholar.

2.5. Data Analysis

The collected data were tabulated, interpreted, and simplified to make them eligible for the research purpose. All collected raw data were entered into SPSS (Version 20) for statistical analysis. Then the analyzed data were arranged into an Excel file for summarization.

3.0 Findings

The findings of the study have been discussed under the subsequent heads:

3.1 Respondents' Profile

A total of 250 survey instruments were distributed to managers of 50 organizations, including banks, service and manufacturing industries in Bangladesh and 200 completed survey instruments were received for the study. The total response rate is 80%. Respondents' characteristics are presented in Table-1.

Table-1: Respondents' Profile

Items	Attributes	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	120	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Female	80	40.0	40.0	100.0
Educational Level	Under-Graduation	76	38.0	38.0	38.0
	Post-Graduation	116	58.0	58.0	96.0
	PhD	8	4.0	4.0	100.0
Designation	Assistant Manager	60	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Manager	112	56.0	56.0	86.0
	Head of Department	12	6.0	6.0	92.0
	Managing Director	16	8.0	8.0	100.0
Years of experience in current company	1-10 years	48	24.0	24.0	24.0
	11-20 years	52	26.0	26.0	50.0
	21-30 years	80	40.0	40.0	90.0
	Above 30 years	20	10.0	10.0	100.0
Age	0-30 years	40	20.0	20.0	20.0
	31-40 years	60	30.0	30.0	50.0
	41-50 years	76	38.0	38.0	88.0
	51-60 years	20	10.0	10.0	98.0
	Above 60 years	4	2.0	2.0	100.0

Majority of the respondents are male (60%) and holding post-graduation degree qualification (58%). Most of them hold the “manager” designation (56%). The respondents have been working for more than 20 years with the current organization (40%) and their age is over 40 years (38%).

3.2. Reliability Analysis

Table-2 shows Cronbach's Alpha value for each competency used in the study. All the values of Cronbach's Alpha were more than 0.7 which indicate that the competencies used for each variable are highly reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2006; Nunnally, 1978; Cronbach, 1951).

Table-2: Cronbach's Alpha Value

Item	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	
		Expectation	Performance
Communication Skills	1	.961	.962
Leadership or Management Skills	1	.962	.962
Adaptability to Changes	1	.962	.962
Aptitude for Knowledge Acquiring Skills	1	.962	.962
Teamwork Ability	1	.962	.961
Creativity or Innovative Skills	1	.962	.962
IT or Computer Skills	1	.962	.962
Planning and Organizing Skills	1	.961	.961
Decision Making Skills	1	.962	.961
Problem Solving Skills	1	.962	.961
Knowledge about Corporate World	1	.962	.961
Stress Taking Ability	1	.961	.962
Conceptual Knowledge	1	.962	.962
Presentation Skills	1	.962	.962
Punctuality or Timeliness	1	.962	.962
Research Skills	1	.962	.962
Reporting Skills	1	.962	.962
Interpersonal Skills	1	.961	.961
Critical Thinking Skills	1	.961	.962
Ability to Prioritize Work	1	.962	.962
Moral Values and Integrity	1	.962	.962
Conflict Resolution Skills	1	.961	.962
Quick Learning Ability	1	.962	.962
Cultural Intelligence	1	.962	.962
Dependability	1	.963	.963
Honesty	1	.962	.963
Evaluation Skills	1	.962	.961
Numerical Skills	1	.962	.962
Analytical Skills	1	.961	.962
Diversity Awareness Ability	1	.962	.961
Persistence	1	.962	.962
Resourcefulness	1	.962	.962
Value Improving Skills	1	.961	.962
Versatility	1	.962	.962
	Total Items: 34		

3.3. Gap Analysis

The result of comparison between expectation and reality on business graduates' performance as perceived by employers based on mean scores are shown in the following table:

Table-3: Comparison and Paired Samples T-Test for Differences between Expectation and Reality on Business Graduates' Performance as Perceived by Employers in Bangladesh

Skills	Expectation			Performance			Correlation	Sig.
	Mean	Sd.	Std. Error Mean	Mean	Sd.	Std. Error Mean		
Communication Skills	3.900	0.730	0.052	3.120	0.767	0.054	0.488	0.000*
Leadership or Management Skills	3.360	0.868	0.061	2.820	0.686	0.048	0.447	0.000*
Adaptability to Changes	3.640	0.796	0.056	2.800	0.723	0.051	0.328	0.000*
Aptitude for Knowledge Acquiring Skills	3.860	0.665	0.047	3.080	0.660	0.047	0.300	0.000*
Teamwork Ability	3.940	0.787	0.056	3.300	0.642	0.045	0.314	0.000*
Creativity or Innovative Skills	3.500	0.808	0.057	3.020	0.709	0.050	0.333	0.000*
IT or Computer Skills	3.520	0.576	0.041	3.120	0.684	0.048	0.453	0.000*
Planning and Organizing Skills	3.420	0.697	0.049	2.860	0.723	0.051	0.396	0.000*
Decision Making Skills	3.300	0.924	0.065	2.780	0.809	0.057	0.331	0.000*
Problem Solving Skills	3.400	0.665	0.047	2.840	0.733	0.052	0.173	0.014*
Knowledge about Corporate World	3.080	1.113	0.079	2.700	0.946	0.067	0.500	0.000*
Stress Taking Ability	3.560	0.986	0.070	2.840	1.010	0.071	0.313	0.000*
Conceptual Knowledge	3.520	0.757	0.054	2.900	0.576	0.041	0.166	0.019*
Presentation Skills	3.680	0.950	0.067	2.980	0.951	0.067	0.438	0.000*
Punctuality or Timeliness	3.820	0.996	0.070	3.080	0.690	0.049	0.372	0.000*
Research Skills	3.200	0.851	0.060	2.580	0.725	0.051	0.397	0.000*
Reporting Skills	3.640	0.716	0.051	2.960	0.693	0.049	0.173	0.014*
Interpersonal Skills	3.680	0.788	0.056	3.140	0.634	0.045	0.452	0.000*
Critical Thinking Skills	3.240	0.791	0.056	2.780	0.758	0.054	0.223	0.002*
Ability to Prioritize Work	3.540	0.832	0.059	2.940	0.761	0.054	0.305	0.000*
Moral Values and Integrity	4.000	0.827	0.058	3.280	0.635	0.045	0.268	0.000*
Conflict Resolution Skills	3.300	0.730	0.052	2.720	0.635	0.045	0.442	0.000*
Quick Learning Ability	3.920	0.660	0.047	3.060	0.615	0.043	0.061	0.388
Cultural Intelligence	3.500	0.610	0.043	2.880	0.684	0.048	0.289	0.000*
Dependability	3.260	0.892	0.063	3.220	0.703	0.050	-0.060	0.402
Honesty	4.060	0.837	0.059	3.300	0.783	0.055	-0.028	0.698
Evaluation Skills	3.340	0.712	0.050	3.040	0.600	0.042	0.250	0.000*
Numerical Skills	3.360	0.593	0.042	3.040	0.633	0.045	0.283	0.000*
Analytical Skills	3.360	0.821	0.058	3.000	0.777	0.055	0.536	0.000*
Diversity Awareness Ability	3.300	0.808	0.057	2.920	0.660	0.047	0.384	0.000*
Persistence	3.500	0.730	0.052	2.960	0.633	0.045	0.000	1.000
Resourcefulness	3.440	0.806	0.057	2.860	0.750	0.053	0.102	0.149
Value Improving Skills	3.600	0.827	0.058	3.040	0.566	0.040	0.206	0.003*
Versatility	3.420	0.779	0.055	2.960	0.664	0.047	0.305	0.000*

**Significant in 95% confidence level*

From Table-3 it can be inferred that there is a significant gap/difference between the employers' expectations of the mentioned competencies and actual performance of business graduates in Bangladesh, at 5% (0.05) level of significance, except the competencies like quick learning ability, dependability, honesty, persistence, and resourcefulness.

3.4. Barriers to Skills Development of the Business Graduates in Bangladesh

The employers ranked the barriers that come in the path of skills development of the graduates in Bangladesh. The barriers are listed in Table-4 according to their rank:

Table-4: Barriers to Skills Development of the Business Graduates in Bangladesh

Ranking	Barriers
1	Inadequate qualified and experienced faculties at university level.
2	Politicization of faculties.
3	Student politics.
4	Financial constraints.
5	Communication barriers.
6	Lack of professionals' involvement in academic program.
7	Absence of professionals' involvement in university curriculum committees.
8	Absence of academics in professional bodies.
9	Inefficient administrative mechanism.
10	Poor time management.
11	Lack of modern lab facilities at universities.
12	Attitude problem in resource sharing between university and industry.
13	Inadequate logistics support.

4.0. Conclusion

4.1. Recapitulation and Policy Implication

The purpose of this study was to find out the gap between employers' perception towards competencies for hiring business graduates in Bangladesh and the reality. The study compared various competencies a business graduate can possess, to find out the differences between expectation and reality on business graduates' performance as perceived by employers. The present study identifies 34 competencies which can be acquired by the business graduates. Among 34 competencies, 29 of them have significant gaps/differences between expectation of them and actual performance of business graduates in Bangladesh. Only 5 of the competencies which are- quick learning ability, dependability, honesty, persistence, and resourcefulness, got no significant difference. So, the hypothesis that has been developed for this study was accepted/confirmed.

The paper highlighted the barriers that come in the path of skills development of the graduates in Bangladesh. The study has pinpointed the following strategies that are needed to mitigate the existing gap:

- Regular trainings, workshops, seminars, and round table conference need to be arranged to enhance the knowledge and experience of the faculties. Training is also necessary to make the administrative mechanism efficient.
- If politicization exists in the faculties, it should be removed as far as possible. In case of student politics, proper rules and regulations need to be imposed to control the situation.
- Government tax concessions for industries linking with universities are needed to be done. Government needs to provide financial support to the universities for ensuring modern lab facilities and adequate logistics support in order to produce better business graduates. Financial support needs to be given to the students for removing their financial constraints.
- Communication barriers can be reduced by developing the soft skills of business graduates with the help of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

- Highly skilled professionals need to be kept in teaching programs as adjunct faculty and involved in university curriculum committees for formulating need-based curriculum.
- Invite the academics in different professional bodies like Institution of Engineers Bangladesh, Institute of Architects Bangladesh, Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management, Bangladesh Medical & Dental Council, Bangladesh Judicial Service Association, National Academy for Educational Management, Pharmacy Council of Bangladesh, and so on.
- Business students need to be made alert regarding the significance of time management. This can be done by making them meet the deadlines of their assignments.
- The academia and industry people have to jointly organize informal meetings on different issues of corporate world.

4.2. Limitations

There were five limitations in the study. *Firstly*, a small number of sample size has been taken from small geographical area for this study. *Secondly*, the survey instrument can be developed based on discussion with the experts in the relevant fields. *Thirdly*, the survey instrument has been constructed with Likert scale. So, there exist the chance of central tendency bias and social desirability bias. *Fourthly*, engineers and medical graduates are also hired by the organizations. But this study considered the business graduates only. *Finally*, this research has been conducted only in Bangladesh. So, it may not be a representative one in other developing countries.

4.3. Scope for Further Study

Based on the findings, data produced, literature review, and references of the existing studies, the following further researches may be considered:

- Employer Satisfaction with graduate skills in Bangladesh.
- Role of faculties to impart quality education in HEIs of Bangladesh.

- University-Industry Collaboration to enhance the quality education in Bangladesh.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

In this competitive employment market, the universities in Bangladesh need to revisit their curriculum to make it a blend of both theoretical and practical knowledge so that their business graduates can compete with other countries' business graduates. It is hoped that this study will act as a guide for the authorities of different universities to identify the competencies that the employers of different organizations in Bangladesh want from the business graduates. Then, the universities will be able to set such curriculum which will help the business graduates acquire those knowledge and skills that are expected by the employers. The universities' initiatives are not enough to enhance the business graduates' competencies. This study will also help the industries and Government to take necessary steps in order to develop business graduates according to the needs of the job market. The academia and industry people need to collaborate with each other, and the Government of Bangladesh need to provide necessary support to both of them.

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Victimization of Construction Workers in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study on Construction Area in Tangail.

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Abstract

The Construction industry is one of the emerging employment generating sectors of Bangladesh. The nature of work recognizes the sector as a less mechanized and more labour intensive industry. Having a notable contribution in GDP, the sector has also been criticized for decent work deficits. Besides the existence of social and economic exploitation, ensuring the legal rights of the workers has become a major consideration. Underlying the background, this paper aimed to know the nature and responses of victimization of construction workers (CW) with a focus on the occupational health and safety issues of the workers and developing a set of recommendation accordingly. Based on the approach of the quantitative study, the non-probability sampling method was followed to collect data from primary source. The individual construction worker was chosen as the unit of analysis. This study explored that a significant number of construction workers experienced victimization and mostly faced economic deprivations. Notably, this study explored significant health and safety hazard of workers in the construction sector. Alarming, most of the workers are not well-informed about their legal rights and remedy.

Keywords: Construction workers, victimization, labour rights, response on victimization

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1. Introduction and background of the study

Construction industry in Bangladesh like other developing countries has been considered one of the most impactful sectors in generating employment opportunities and contributing national growth. But there is little appreciation of the amazing role that the construction industry plays for the development. The position of the construction sector in relation to other sectors in the GDP and the incremental increase in the share of GDP shows that the composition was 7.6 percent in 2016-2017 while the target was 4.76 percent (BBS, 2018). This sector of Bangladesh has witnessed a huge GDP growth of 8,068.14 BDT Million in 2019. According to the statistics of Real Estate Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB), the total manpower of the construction industry is 3.5 million and this sector is still expanding (Zitzman, 2020). According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2018), 2.98 million people across the country now work in the construction sector. But construction workers, one of the main contributors to this emerging sector of a developing economy, are extremely ignored due to insufficiency of simulator and supportive wages, safety and security, care and food which make them vulnerable at their works (Jamal M.U.A.M.,2015). Construction workers, even non-workers such as pedestrians and children are victims of construction works, sometimes. Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies (BILS) reveals in Workplace Safety Report 2018 with regard to accidents and violence at work place that found 161 workers were killed, and 137 workers were injured in construction sector in a single year. The rate is alarming and proves absence of proper safety guidelines to be followed or maintained by the employers. It also indicates to the absence of functional protective law and the victimization of workers in different forms (Hossain, M. J. et al., 2017). The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2009) reports that at least 108,000 fatal accidents occur each year at construction sites worldwide, equivalent to one death every ten minutes. From various statistics of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Jamal, M. U. A. M. (2015), showed that the construction workers constitute only 4.4 percent of the total workforce but the number of fatalities in the construction sector is about 16 percent of all the deaths in different workplaces in Bangladesh. A study conducted by Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit

(RMMRU) on workplace accidents of construction workers in Dhaka city which explored that 58 workers died falling from height alone in 2012. The study mentioned that 95 percent workers had no knowledge about the National Labour Act, and 94 percent workers mentioned that they were not aware of any collective bargaining, while 73 percent favored forming a trade union (RMMRU, 2013). RMMRU expressed that around 80 percent construction workers work in a risky environment and without any safety measures in the capital city. It is identified that absence of safety equipment or training, exposure to harmful chemicals, hazardous conditions, noisy working environments, dust, lack of proper accommodation and toilet facilities, etc. are the main causes for workplace accidents and hazards. People that are involved in construction sector often do not have professional training and mostly bound to work without taking any safety measures and take risks their life. As construction sites are open and easily accessible, general people including children are easily exposed to hazards in the construction site (Hossain, M. J. et al., 2017).

A profile, prepared on the basis of a survey of 1.03 lakh establishments by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, found 2.96 lakh violations of labour laws in workplaces across the country. In 2016-2018, the nation was deeply concerned and indicates intense abuse and sheer disregard for the country's labour rights (New Age, Nov 05, 2019). In 2017, about 179 people died from accidents in the Bangladeshi construction industry, and in 2016 and 2015, 145 and 172 people died, respectively.

Section 108 of the Labour Act, 2006 has empowered workers in getting twice of their basic salary in the context of overtime duty. Besides workplace safety and health issues are also ensured by the guideline of the act. Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) hardly play any role or develops any plan and policy for the betterment of the workers (Biswas V. K., 2014). And, it is a matter of concern that due to our economy being heavily dependent on Ready Made Garments (RMG) export and concomitant international pressure on labour conditions standards are focused on this sector thus most of our efforts of ensuring labour rights seem to have been directed towards the RMG factory workers (Ahmed N. 2017).

We are living in the postmodern era where human rights or equal rights are burning issues and it is widely believed that all the people are equal in the eyes of laws. But in our country the workers of the construction sector are in an inhuman situation (Biswas V. K., 2014). There are thousands of workers employed in numerous sectors like construction sector who contribute significantly to our economy. It's time to regulators, entrepreneurs and to all of us to realize the condition and fulfill our responsibility to protect and promote the rights of the workers. Underlying the context, this research was conducted under the framework of two central research questions; what are the natures of victimization of construction workers? And how do the victims response to the victimization at construction site? Following these contexts, this study identified mainly the nature and response of workers victimization at construction site.

2. Objectives of the study

The overall purpose of the study is to explore the working conditions of construction sector in Bangladesh with a view to fulfill the knowledge gap in the relevant field and to contribute in policy development. Significantly, the study will find out the overall situation of worker's victimization in their workplace and to know the status of occupational health and safety at workplace. More specifically, the objectives of the study are; (a) to know the nature of victimization of Construction workers(CW); (b) to identify the responses of victimization of CW; (c) to focus the health and safety issue of CW; and (d) to put forward some suggestions based on findings.

3. Methodology of the study

This study is based on empirical data collected following the quantitative research approach. Having the evidence of notable number of ongoing construction works as well as the absence of sufficient scientific research work in the sub-urban area, the Tangail municipal area has been selected as a research area. Since the study area was Tangail municipal area and the central observation of the study is the construction workers thus the population of this study are the workers who were working within this area under any

construction company or working site. As the total number of population was unknown consequently non-probability sampling method was used to select the respondents. Particularly, using the purposive sampling method 60 (Sixty) construction workers were selected as respondents following the convenient sample choosing method.

Quantitative sample survey method was used to collect the primary data considering its appropriateness for measuring self-reported beliefs and behaviors. The structured questionnaire tool has been used to obtain data from the respondents. Data were collected through interviewing technique because it allowed the study to reach the highest response rate and permission of the lengthy questionnaire. The questions were constructed to measure both the dependent and independent variables. Both close ended and open ended questions were used for the data collection. The descriptive approach was the main data analysis method of the study. Statistical based computer software named SPSS was used for analyzing the data. The results are presented in frequency tabulation, percentage and in graphical presentation. The highest ethical standards are maintained to collect and interpret the data with the direct presence of the researcher. The relatively small sample means that the findings presented are not generalizable to the wider population of construction workers in Bangladesh.

4. Findings and analysis

This section of the paper presents the findings of the study, according to the research objectives. The findings derived from the empirical level are discussed with the supports of existing knowledge based on review of literature available where necessary.

4.1 Socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents

Age, sex, religion, and marital status of the respondents

Age and gender have a good deal of relevance for physically demanding jobs (Landy, F. J., 2001). So age, sex, religion, and marital status are important variables describing the demographic characteristics of construction workers.

Table 1: Age, sex, religion, and marital status of the respondents

	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age of the respondents (years)	11-17	5	8.3
	18-24	26	43.3
	25-31	17	28.3
	32-38	4	6.7
	39-45	6	10.0
	46-52	2	3.3
	Total	60	100.0
Sex of the respondents	Male	100	100
	Female	00	00
	Total	100	100
Religion of the respondents	Islam	54	90
	Hindu	6	10
	Total	60	100
Marital status of the respondents	Married	32	53.33
	Unmarried	28	46.67
	Total	60	100

Age is an important variable to describe and understand any kind of victimization according to the life span of the respondents, particularly identify the involvement of children and adult. According to Children Act, 2013 any risky work is prohibited for the child. The labour law, 2006 also prohibited the child works, but like other informal sector there is a visible of child workers in construction works. Among 60 respondents, the child age group 11-17 year (Children Act, 2013) holds 8.3 percent. The other findings of this study show that most of the respondents belong to the age category or youth group of 18-24 years (43.3%). The minimum percentage of age category is 46-52 year (3.3%). Other respondents are in the age group of year 25-31 years (28.3%), 32-38 years (6.7%), and 39-45 years (10.0%). In this study, 100 percent of the respondents are male, the percentage of women is zero because female workers were not available there. Though the ratio of women workers (60.8%, CPD, 2018) is larger than male ratio in Ready Made Garments sectors, the female adjustment of construction workers is lower than male. According to the Sectorial Composition of Employment by Gender (2003) the composition between male and female in construction works are 4.2 and 1.

Educational background of the respondents

Since education is a key factor of our living hood, knowing the educational background of construction workers may be helpful to describe their present scenario of working condition.

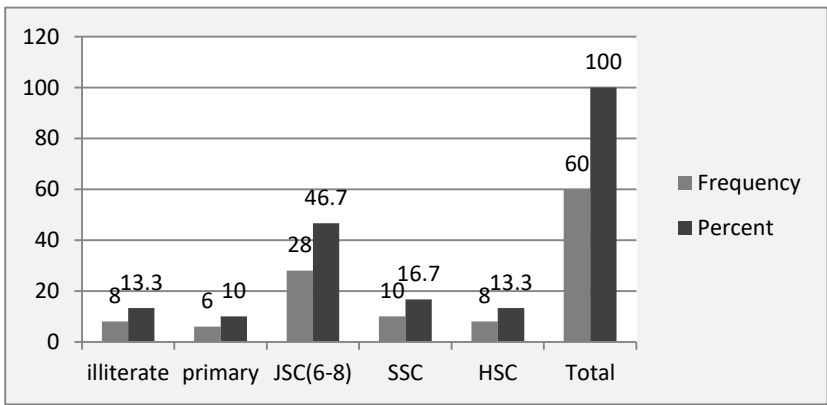


Figure 1: Educational background of the respondents

Figure 1 reveals that, among total 60 respondents of this study, 13.3 percent were illiterate, which indicates lower (less than half) percentage of illiterate than the whole country illiterate percentage which is 27.1 percent (UNESCO 2017). And the majority of the workers (46.7%) have completed only lower level of secondary school. Only 10 percent workers had completed primary level.

Origin of the respondents

This study was conducted on the workers who work under the construction company. Since, construction company work throughout the country, there has observed the varied origins of the workers who comes from different districts and different areas.

Table 2: Living area of the respondents

Origins Area		Frequency	Percent
District	Tangail	28	46.67
	Bogra	12	20
	Dinajpur	9	15

	Gaibandha	7	11.67
	Nilphamari	4	6.67
	Total	60	100.0
Area	Rural	47	78.33
	Urban	13	21.67
	Total	60	100.0

Among the total population of the study, most of them came from outside the district of working place, which we can term as temporary migration for work and the share is more than 53 percent. This table also shows that most of them originated from North Bengal areas, particularly from Rajshahi and Rangpur Division. Significantly, one fifth of workers are from the Bogra district. But considering the single origin most of the respondents are from Tangail (46.7 percent). Area based distribution showed, among the total 78.33 percent live permanently in rural area.

Monthly family income of the respondents

Income is an important indicator of well-being and happiness. The Minimum Wage Board had set the minimum wage Tk. 9,982.50 monthly gross pay including basic pay Tk. 6,950, house rent Tk. 2,432.50, medical allowance Tk400 and travel allowance Tk. 200 for the construction workers in 2012 and the day-basis workers in the sector, the board had set Tk. 375 as the daily minimum pay (New Age, 2020).

Table 3: Monthly family income of the respondents

Income Range (BDT.)	Frequency	Percent	Minimum	Mean	Maximum
5000-8000	3	5.0	6600	14410	21000
8001-11000	6	10.0			
11001-14000	14	23.3			
14001-17000	26	43.3			
17001-	8	13.3			

20000					
20001-23000	3	5.0			
Total	60	100.0			

Periodically this study found the average incomes of the respondents are Tk. 14410 ranging from the 6600 to the maximum amount 21000 Tk. This income reflects the earnings of mid-level workers as they mostly represented in the sample. Specific analysis showed that a larger share of the respondents (43.3 Percent) earn between 14000 to 17000 Taka. Whereas only 18 percent workers mentioned that they earns between 17000 to 23000 Tk. Notably, around 38 percent workers' income belongs to less than 14000 Tk. Another study revealed that, in most cases, the developers pay sardar based on the progress of work and are not concerned about the rate at which contractors pay the workers. Workers are often paid khorak (subsistence allowances) rather than proper wages. The promise that the shortfall will be paid at the end of the contract helps the sardar to retain control over workers (Abrar, C. R., Reza, M., & Sward, J., 2014).

4.2 Working experiences and involvement with workers' association

This part focuses on the knowledge of workers on legal rights and their involvement with workers' association which are mainly formed to protect and promote the rights of the workers and ensure safety against any forms of suppression or violations of legal rights.

Table 4: Working experiences and involvement with workers' associations

	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Working experiences (years)	1-4	24	40.0
	5-8	12	20.0
	9-12	12	20.0
	13-16	2	3.3
	17-20	8	13.3
	21-24	2	3.3
	Total	60	100.0

Knowledge about legal rights	Yes	18	30
	No	42	70
	Total	60	100
Known about labour court	Yes	00	00
	No	100	100
	Total	60	100
Membership of trade union	Yes	8	13.3
	No	52	86.7
	Total	60	100

Maximum 40 percent of the respondents had only 1 to 4 years works experience where only 3.3 percent workers mentioned that they are working with 21 to 24 years of work experience in construction site. Only 30 percent respondents simply know (only heard) about the labour act and no one of them heard about the labour court. This is a clear indication of the workers' ignorance about their legal rights. Similarly, this study found only 13.3 percent are the member of trade unions. But different study claimed that other working sector likes transport, RMG etc. Industry have comparatively better memberships of trade union though not satisfactory for all the sector. Particularly, in transport sector more than 90 percent workers are the members of any trade union (Daily Star, 2018). Thus the inadequate knowledge about their rights and ways of defending their suppression is unknown to most of the construction workers.

4.3 Information about Job and Recruitment

This section discloses the appointment procedure of the workers, payment methods, working nature and training.

Table 5: Information about Job and Recruitment

Variables	Characteristics	Percentage (%)
Recruited by	Constructors	68.3
	Foreman	31.7
Working Contract /Agreement	Written	00
	Verbal	100
Nature of payment	Daily	100

	Weekly	00
	Monthly	00
Type of work/Designation	Foreman	6.7
	Rod mistry	55.0
	Raj mistry	16.7
	Helper	21.7
Training on work	yes	00
	no	100

The findings explain the present scenario of workers' recruitment and nature of job in the construction site. According to the findings, most of the workers recruited through the contractor or sub-contractor (68.3%) and 31.1 percent were hired through the foreman (himself also a worker). The study also found 100 percent of the workers work on a daily basis, though almost all of them have to finish a period of works (e. g. until finish a building). This finding also indicates the statement "Roughly 90 percent of workers engaged in informal sector work on 'NO WORK NO PAY' basis, which means, a worker gets paid only for the days he/she works and receives no wages for the days he/she remains absent from work for whatever reason" (Chowdhury, S. 2017). The majority of the respondents were 55 percent named "Rod Mistry" (works for Rod welding, Column building, and works relate to the iron in construction building). The foreman (6.7%), also himself works as a worker is one kind of sub-contractor. Like other informal sector in Bangladesh these workers (100%) also did not get any formal training, though they must get safety training from their employer (Section-72 (3), Labour Act, 2006).

Another significant finding about the nature of agreement revealed alarming scenario. The percentage of written agreement is clearly zero, which indicates the clear violation of national labour law. Section 5 of BLA 2006 (Amendment, 2013) states that no employer shall employ any worker without giving such worker a letter of appointment and every such employed worker shall be provided with an identity card with photograph.

According to a research conducted by the Migrating out of Poverty Research Program Consortium, around 69 percent of workers surveyed have casual (non-regular) employment with no written contract—meaning that their access to paid work is variable. Among the remainder, 24 percent have regular employment with no written contract, and 7 percent have some form of contract (Abrar, C. R., Reza, M., & Sward, J., 2014).

4.4 Violation of Legal Rights

Daily working hours and Overtime

There are many studies have already explored the nature of legal violation of workers' rights in Bangladesh. Refereeing the National Occupational Safety and Health Profile's prepared by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments based on the survey of 1.03 lakh establishments recruitment and job conditions, child and teenage workers, maternal welfare benefits, occupational health, occupational safety, occupational injuries, compensation and safety committee, welfare measures, working hours and holidays, wage payment, social security (group insurance, provident fund and profit sharing) discrimination, workplace abuse are 13 different types of categories of violation are classified by a research. The source showed 26 percent of violations occurs over recruitment and job conditions and it is the highest number of violations, while openings in working hours on holidays, occupational safety and occupational health come to be identified as major areas of labour law violations in workplaces (New Age, Nov 05, 2019).

Table 6: Violation of Legal Rights (Working Hours)

Variables	Hour	Percentage (%)
Working hour (Daily)	9-10	30.0
	10-11	66.7
	11-12	3.3
	Total	100
Extra working hour Without payment	1.00	30.0
	2.00	66.7
	3.00	3.3
	Total	100

Adequate working time arrangements constitute an essential part of decent work. For a paid-employment job, hours paid for refers to the time for which employees have received payment from their employer during a specified reference period (ILO, 2012, 2013). The table no-4 of this study reveals that 66.7 percent workers have to work about 10-11 hours per day that means from 70 to 77 hours per week as 100 percent workers works on a daily basis (Table 3). Section 102 of BLA 2006 (Amendment, 2013) ‘No adult worker shall ordinarily be required or allowed to work in an establishment for more than forty-eight hours in any week’. According to ILO Decent Work Indicators (ILO, 2012, 2013), Employment in Excessive Working time (EEWT) provides information about the share of employed persons whose hours actually worked exceed 48 hours per week. It is an indicator of exposure to overwork. The section 100 of the Labour Act, 2006 (Amendment, 2013) of Bangladesh state that no adult workers shall ordinarily be required or allowed in an establishment for more than eight hours in any day. But the table attached above state that 30 percent, 66.7 percent, and 3.3 percent workers have to do extra work of respectably 1, 2, and 3 hour in a day. This indicates to legal rights violation towards the construction workers. And by this extra working practice the workers become victims in two ways. One is working extra hours beyond legal standards and without payment of overtime in real sense which is an economic deprivation, according to the Labour Act, 2006 (Amendment, 2013), section 108 which ensures the payment of overtime (double of regular work payment) or extra working time.

Daily Wage of the workers and economic deprivations

Table 7: Legal rights violation (daily payment)

Tk.	Frequency	Percent
201-300	7	11.7
301-400	12	20.0
401-500	18	30.0
501-600	18	30.0
601-700	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

According to minimum wage board decision, the minimum wage for construction workers is 9882 Tk. per month (26 working days) which is applicable to all forms of labour market of construction work and for the day-basis workers in the sector, the board set Tk. 375 as the daily minimum pay (New Age, 2020). But this study found about 12 percent (Table 5) of construction workers get only 201 to 300 Tk. Though the findings show the average payment 480.33 Tk. which is larger than the minimum wage rate it is the effect of having the more representation of the skilled workers in the study sample. On the other-hand, the amount set by the Minimum Wage Board 8 years back is not representing the real wage of the workers. In particular, still the workers getting less pay after working more than the legally prescribed hours. Comparing the inflation and other economic indicators the wage of the construction workers is still lower than the expected to lead a decent life.

Overtime payment and deprivation

The BLA 2006 (Amendment 2013) confirms about the payment methods of workers overtime wages and directly imposed the provision on it.

Table 8: Experience of overtime

Experience of overtime	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	76.7
No	14	23.3
Total	60	100.0

76.7 percent respondents (Table 6) of this study stated that they had to perform overtime (extra works after regular work with payment) works on the employer demands.

Table 9: Over Time Hours (per day)

Over time (Hours per day)	Frequency	Percent	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
4.00	10	21.7	4.00	5.50	4.92
4.50	2	4.3			
5.00	19	41.3			
5.50	15	32.6			
Total	46	100.0			

As mentioned earlier that the workers have to work minimum 9 hours in a day, which is one hour more than the legally prescribed duration of work and sometimes they have to work up to 1 hours per a day (Table 4). Besides this regular duration, the workers also have the experiences of overtime duty with a minimum duration of 4 hours (Table 7). Though this is a paid work, but sometimes they had to perform overtime on demand of the employers. There is very limited option to skip the overtime works if the employer asks for work. Thus, from the health and psychological aspect, it is really one kind of victimization. Alarmingly, one third of the workers who experienced overtime had to work up to 5.5 hours in overtime schedule on a day after regular work.

Table 10: Overtime payment (Average over time hour)

Over time amount (Tk.)	Frequency	Percentage
101-150	5	10.9
151-200	8	17.4
201-250	26	56.5
251-300	4	8.7
301-350	3	6.5
Total	46	100.0

According to section 108 of BLA 2006 (amendment 2013) where a worker works in an establishment on any day or week for more than the hours fixed under this Act, it ensures the payment of overtime (double of regular work payment) or extra working time. But there is no fixed hourly rate of overtime payment mostly. Instead the workers are paid a lump-sum amount which also varies according to the position of the workers. Mostly, the workers were paid with their regular wage rate for their overtime work. 56.5 percent workers (among the workers who have done overtime) got payment only Tk. 201-250. The workers received less than the prescribed amount and regularly victimized both economically and physically.

4.4 Experiences of victimization

Workers in the workplace are subjected to mental and physical harassment, verbal abuse, torture and sexual harassment and economically deprived (BILS, 2018). A survey report conducted by

BILS (2018) reveals that about 40 percent of the garment workers and 30 percent of the construction workers endure mental harassment (due to verbal abuse and the likes). More than one-fifth (21.7 %) in the garment industry and 8.4 percent in the construction sector mentioned that they have experienced or faced physical harassment and torture.

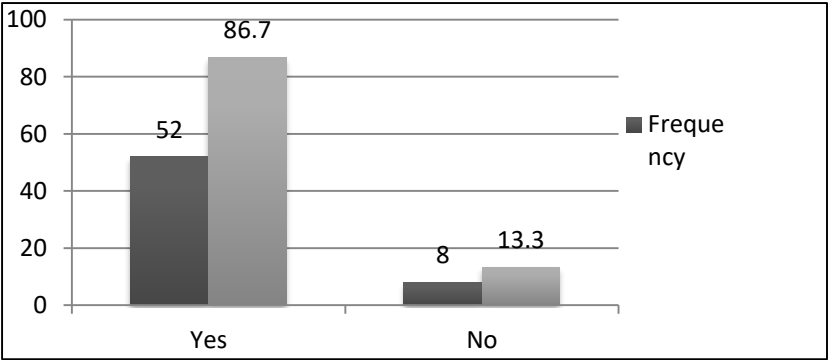


Figure 2: Experience of victimization in construction works

The analysis of this study reveals that a large number (86.7%, Figure 6) of the respondents had experience different types of victimization and only 13.3 percent workers stated that they had never experienced any types of victimization related to their work. The following section of the paper undercover the issues of victimization at work.

4.4.1. Types of victimization

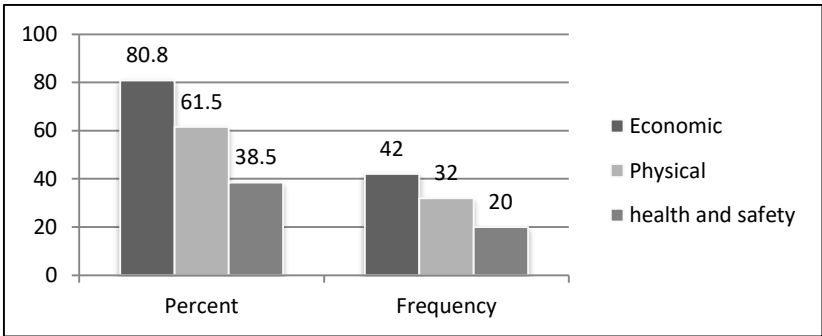


Figure 3: Types of victimization

The outcomes of this study disclose that 80.8 percent of the total victims of respondents experienced economic victimization and 61.5 percent and 38.5 percent victims respectively experienced the physical, and occupational health and safety related victimization. More specifically, the study identified the nature of economic victimization at work.

Table 11: Types of economic victimization

Types	Responds	Frequency (of economic victims)	Percent (of economic victims)
Delayed payment of wage	Yes	35	83.3
	No	7	16.7
	Total	42	100.0
Experiences of Denial/ Refusal of wage payment (Not Paid)	Yes	29	69.0
	No	13	31.0
	Total	42	100.0
Waiting period for nonpayment	Yes	15	35.0
	No	27	65.0
	Total	42	100.0

According to the section 121 of BLA (amendment 2013), every employer shall be responsible for the payment to workers employed by him on all wages required to be paid. But this research says of total victims the economic victims belong to the highest rate (Figure 7). And among them 83.3 percent became victims with late wage payment (duration given in Table 12) and 69 percent were experienced of not getting any payments after work (amount given in Table 14) and 35 percent of the victims stated that they had experienced waiting for a certain period due to nonpayment of work.

More specifically, the analysis of economic victimization revealed that who experienced delayed payment among them more than 42 percent workers had to wait for minimum one month to one and half

months. The data also showed the workers sometimes also had to wait up to 3 months for their due payment.

Table 12: Economic victimization (Delayed wage and amount of non-payment wage)

Delayed period of wage payment	Month	Percentage (of victims who got wage at late)
	1-1.5	42.5
	1.5-2	27.4
	2-.2.5	15.6
	2.5-3	14.5
	Total	100
Amount of Nonpayment wage	Amount Tk.	Percentage (of victims who didn't get wage)
	3000-6000	38.7
	7000-10000	19.4
	11000-14000	16.1
	15000-18000	6.5
	19000-22000	19.4
	Total	100.0
Duration of waiting for work due to nonpayment	Days	Percentage
	1-15	54.76
	16-30	28.57
	31-45	16.54
	Total	100

Another finding says 38.7 percent workers of economic victims didn't get about 3000-6000 Tk. of their wages and 19.4 percent didn't get about 19000-22000Tk. About 55.0 percent victims had to wait for 1-15 days before restarting their work due to nonpayment.

Types of physical and mental injury related victimization

Workplace accident and assault statistics reported that thousands of workers are being injured and killed each year due to the work related accidents, where the construction industry has recorded more than forty percent of the occupational injuries and fatalities (Safety and Rights Society report, 2015).

Table 13: Types of physical victimization

Types of Physical Victimization	Responds	Frequency (of physical victims)	Percent (of physical victims)
Assault	Yes	11	34.4
	No	21	65.6
	Total	32	100.0
Verbal abusing	Yes	28	87.5
	No	4	12.5
	Total	32	100.0
Accident	Yes	26	81.3
	No	6	18.8
	Total	32	100.0

Table 13 discloses the nature of physical victimization of construction workers. 34.4 percent workers of victims were victimized by physical assault (threat or attempt to physically strike) by their employer. 87.5 percent of them victimized through verbal abuse (miscall, revile, gibe etc.) and 81.8 percent were the victims of accident (minimum 3 days removed from works) in the workplace. Though this report only shows a small representation of workplace accident but in reality the situation is much more critical. A nationwide cross sectional survey stated that 139 unintentional injuries in construction site were found and among them, 97.5 percent were nonfatal and 2.5 percent were fatally injured. Among the cases, 92.6 percent were male and 7.4 percent were female (Hossain, M. J. et al., 2017). The study revealed the incidence of injury in construction site was found to be 16.96/100,000 population per year. Of the injured 81.6 percent were working on the construction site during the incident. With a chance of 12.46 times greater than that of women, males are more vulnerable. With a monthly income of less than \$100, about 84.1 percent of the injured were from low socio-economic conditions. Common injuries include cut by sharp weapon 29.0 percent, the injury caused by falling objects 22.3 percent and fall injury 21.7 percent. Moreover, among the injured 65.0 percent were daily labourers and 1 percent of the casualty continued to have lifelong persistent problems with disabilities (Hossain, M. J. et al., 2017).

In Bangladeshi construction projects, this accident scenario reflects a weak level of construction safety (Ahmed, S., 2019). A study on health and safety issues among construction workers in Bangladesh showed that about 87 percent of participants did not receive any health and safety training and did not wear safety equipment when they were working. About 57 percent of the participants had a history of injury. The study also found that the main reasons for the non-use of safety equipment were lack of safety equipment, motivation and training (Mamin, F. A., Dey, G., & Das, S. K. 2019).

Treatment facilities of workers in workplace accident

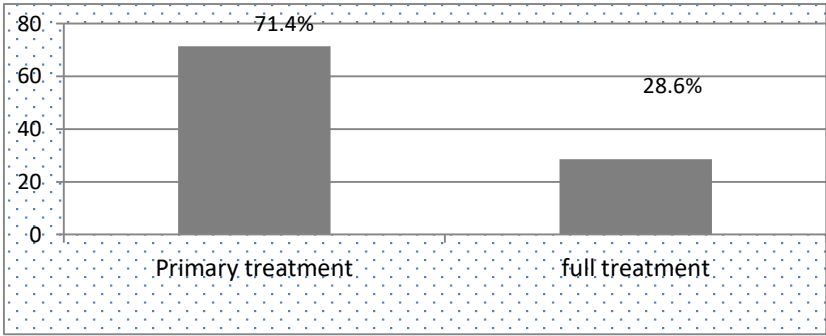


Figure 4: Treatment of workers in workplace accident

The BLA 2006 (amendment 2013), section 89 (1) states that there shall be a first-aid appliance, in every establishment be provided and maintained. Subsection (7) of section 89 states that the employer is liable for full treatment, if an accident occurs in working time, until full cure. But the findings show the vulnerabilities and avoiding tendency of the employers to provide treatment facilities to the workers. Specifically, though in 71.4 percent cases the workers received primary treatment, but 28.6 percent victims receive only complete and well treatment (Figure 4) facilities.

Types of occupational safety and health related victimization

Occupational safety and health is one of the concerning issues in the area of labour research. A significant number of researches have already conducted on this issues but most of them are mainly concentrated on the RMG sector of Bangladesh. However, there are

some statistics developed every year by labour right organization to visualize the situation of workplace accidents in Bangladesh which presents partially the situation of occupational safety and health situation of the construction sector of the country. Bangladesh Institution of Labour Studies reported, from year span of 2005-2016 a total 1,196 people death on the construction site. The construction industry witnessed 147, 134, 161, and 143 deaths in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 (The independent, 2018; The Daily Star, 2018). Additionally, they suffer from dust allergies, various skin diseases (40%), respiratory problems (71.6%), backaches (58.2 %) and more others (Odhikar, 2020). According to the statistics of OSHE foundation (2019) 156 construction workers were died in the construction sector.

Table 14: Types of health and safety victimization

Types	Responds	Frequency (of health and safety victims)	Percent (of health and safety victims)
Less safety equipment	Yes	14	70.0
	No	6	30.0
	Total	20	100.0
Unhealthy sanitation	Yes	20	100
	No	00	00
	Total	20	100
Unhealthy living condition	Yes	20	100
	No	00	00
	Total	20	100

This study reveals the similar result. Islam and Roy (2019) identified the construction sector as one of the most vulnerable sectors regarding occupational accidents. Refereeing the World Health organization the author noted that most of these sites in Bangladesh as unsafe, hazardous and dangerous. RMMRU states that about 80 per cent construction workers in the capital city work in a risky environment and without any safety measures (RMMRU, 2012).

Chapter 6 (section 61-78), BLA 2006 (amendment 2013) confirms the safety management issues in the workplace. Section 62 confirms arrangement fire safety, section 78(a) (1) states to supply of personal safety equipment and section 78(3) ensures to training of safety of workers.

But the respondents (70%) of this research confirmed that they didn't get the proper safety equipment in their work place. Most of the employer doesn't provide them any PPE such as gloves or head padding to support workers health. Mostly the PPE is self-made (58.9%) by the workers (The independent, 2018; The Daily Star, 2018). 100 percent (Table 15) of health and safety related victims stated they had experiences of the unhealthy sanitation system and living condition. There are specific direction in BLA 2006 (amendment 2013), the section 91-93 states to the establishment of healthy sanitation and water system and proper living system (rest room etc.) which is not followed properly.

Similar studies have found that construction workers, especially men, had a poor nutritional intake. According to the authors, the poor nutritional intake was evidenced by regular consumption of unhealthy foods such as fatty foods, sugar sweetened beverages and fizzy drinks, and in general, foods of questionable nutritional quality and safety. Poor nutritional intake leads to increased risk of obesity, which leads to the development of chronic and non-communicable diseases and which in turn leads to deterioration of health and invariably, to low employee performance in terms of safety performance and quality. And unhealthy eating results in weakened immune system, increased susceptibility to diseases and infections, depression (which adversely affects concentration) and mental illness (Okoro, C. S., Musonda, I., & Agumba, J. N. 2014). Research has shown that construction workers' unhealthy eating affects their safety performance on construction sites and found that construction workers were breadwinners to large families and were poorly paid and this results in daily but often insufficient consumption of main foods such as rice, beans and potatoes. Meat consumption was rare amongst these workers because they could not afford meat (Okoro, C. S., Musonda, I., & Agumba, J. N. 2015).

4.5 Responses of victims towards victimization

People respond their victimization in varieties of ways. Access to justice for any form of victimization depends on how the victims responses towards their victimization. This study also tried to explore how the construction workers responded after being victimized.

Table 15: Responses of victims towards victimization

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Try to deter	10	19.2
Organize movement	2	3.8
Stopped working	11	21.2
Nothing	29	55.8
Total	52	100.0

According to the findings, the respondents who had been victimized in different ways among them a majority of the workers (55.8%) did not have any responses towards their victimization whether formal or informal. But 21.2 percent of them stopped working when they faced victimization and 19.2% try to deter the victimization somehow and only 3.8 percent tried to organize movement.

Table 16: Complaint on victimization

	Responds	Frequency	Percentage
Complain on victimization	Yes	4	7.7
	No	48	92.3
	Total	52	100.0
Authority	Trade union	2	50.0
	Construction company	2	50.0
	Total	4	100.0

A very few number, only 7.7 percent victims complained to authorities and among them 50 percent complaint was lodged to the respective trade union they belongs and 50 percent was in the construction company they worked for. No one complained to the police, and 92.3 percent (of victims) remained silence which means no complain to anyone. The study also explored the reasons of not making any complaint against their victimization.

Table 17: Reasons for not complaining

Responds	Frequency	Percentage
Not given much importance	16	33.3
Uncertainty of justice	32	66.7
Total	48	100.0

Findings reveal that the reasons of not complaining against the party is the uncertainty of justice. More than two third (66.7 percent) victims believe that the complaint will not solve the problem and 33.3 percent didn't give any importance on this matter. From the table 14 and 15 it has been realized that the majority of the victims didn't complain to any legal authority and most the reason behind this is the lack of proper understanding about the legal remedies as well as ignorance about the justice system. This finding supports the low self-identification of victims of workers explanations toward the victimization which mainly use as an explanation for labour trafficking victimization. This explanation says that although labor exploitation has been criminalized, as human trafficking, also known as labour trafficking, forced labor, or modern slavery, globally, many cases remain undetected. Low self-identification suggests that victims of labour migration don't see themselves as a victim since they have consciously left their country of origin in search of work (Meeteren, M. and Hiah, J., 2019). This assumption also works for the vulnerable workers in this sector.

4.6 Support after victimization

Though it is expected norms and also from the legal point of view that the victims will be compensated for their victimization, but the scenario in the construction sector is totally different.

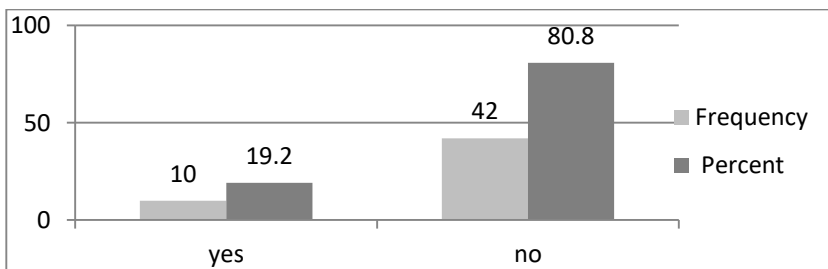


Figure 5: Help after victimization

This bar chart shows the findings about the situation of getting support after being victimized. Particularly, only 19.2 percent of the total victims received economic support and 80.8 percent replied negatively in terms of receiving any supports or facilities after being victimized.

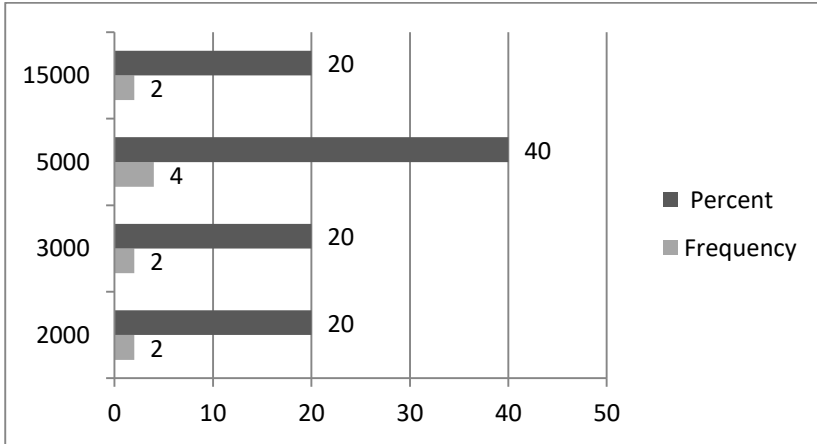


Figure 6: Economic help after victimization

This bar chart (Figure-6) of revealing that the victim who received financial support among them 40 percent workers received Tk. only 5000, and 20 percent received Tk. 15000 from the construction company (see also Figure 5) and 20 percent received Tk. 2000 only for their victimization. But the Labour Act 2006 (Amended) clearly directs the compensation at least for the workplace accident. The law says that the compensation is payable for death, permanent disablement as well as temporary disablement as defined in the Act in a specified amount under Section 151 of the Act.

5. Association between education and type of workers with victimization at workplace

This study also examined several associations between different variables among them it found a significant relationship in two dimensions; level of education and types of workers.

Cross Table 1: Association between education and victimization at workplace

education		Victimization at workplace		Total
		Yes	No	
Primary	<i>f</i>	6	0	6
	%	100.0	0.0	100.0
6-8	<i>f</i>	24	4	28
	%	85.7	14.3	100.0
SSC	<i>f</i>	10	0	10
	%	100.0	0.0	100.0
HSC	<i>f</i>	4	4	8
	%	50.0	50.0	100.0
illiterate	<i>f</i>	8	0	8
	%	100.0	0.0	100.0
Total	<i>f</i>	52	8	60
	%	86.7	13.3	100.0

From the row percentage of cross table-1 it is revealed that maximum respondents 24 (85.7%) were from the education level of class six to class eight who experienced of victimization at the workspace. The minimum respondents 4 (50%) of the victims belong to the group who passed the Higher Secondary. This association indicates higher the level of education may lower the rate of victimization.

Cross Table 2: Association between nature of work and victimization at workplace

Nature of work		Victimization on workplace		Total
		Yes	No	
Foreman	<i>f</i>	2	2	4
	%	50.0	50.0	100.0
Rod-mistry	<i>f</i>	29	4	33
	%	87.9	12.1	100.0
Raj-mistry	<i>f</i>	8	2	10
	%	80.0	20.0%	100.0
Helper	<i>f</i>	13	0	13
	%	100.0	0.0	100.0
Total	<i>f</i>	52	8	60
	%	86.7	13.3	100.0

From the row percentage of cross tabulation the study found that maximum respondents 29 (87.9%) were ‘Rod Mistry’ who became victimized. The minimum respondents 2 (50%) of victimization were from the type of ‘foreman’ who got victimized. It seems that sometimes the foreman works in favor of the employers or perform duty as a representative of the employer which may lead them lower level of victimization than the other.

6. Conclusion

This study explores the pattern and nature of construction workers’ victimization. Different types of victimizations are identified, such as economic, physical, health and safety issues and violation of legal rights in their present working place. Firstly, this study identifies the deprivation of legal right of construction workers focusing long working hour, overtime, nonpayment and fewer payment of overtime, late payment of wages, inadequate safety equipment, poor living condition etc. Secondly, the pattern of victimization is identified. The study found that violation of legal and economic rights are the most common type of workers victimization. Verbal abuse, physical assault and workplace accident for lacking of safety equipment are also common in the nature of victimization. Less treatment in accident and poor sanitation system are also explored as health related victimization. The result shows that very few victims complained about their victimization. Particularly, the study found that respondents have less knowledge on their legal rights and most of the respondents don’t know about the labour act, labour court, and only few of them are the members of trade union.

Based on this study of existing conditions at the construction sites following recommendations can be made to improve the situation. First of all, there needs a joint partnership between the construction company and government to ensure the monitoring of the implementation of labour law and legal rights of workers. The government should strengthen the DIFE or either establish a new enforcing body or nominate an existing body to enforce the labour law by ensuring regular inspection without any excuse of institutional limitations. The Real Estate Housing Association (REHAB) can play a vital role by strictly maintaining the law (BLA, BNBC) and by enforcing its members to ensure the legal rights and human rights of workers. The supervision of a project manager is very much

important that the workers properly get their needs and use the safety equipment, nothing but some supervision by government and awareness can reduce the workers' victimization at workplace. Increasing knowledge about law, trade union among the workers can make the workers aware of their legal rights so that they will be able to respond their victimization in a legal way. The Government should form Minimum Wage Board to review the wages periodically and ensure the punishment for non-compliance of the regulations. In association with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), the government should take proper steps to train up the workers on various issues such as safety training. The National Trade Union Centers and sectorial trade unions should be more pro-active to expand their activities in the sub-urban area and support the activities of existing union in the suburban area. The trade unions should play proactive and effective role to educate and equipped the workers about their rights and process of access to justice. A comprehensive database of the construction workers and Construction Company may increase the formalization of this sector.

However, finally we can assert that due to the time and budget constrain this study was conducted in a short period of time and this study was entirely based on views and responses of the workers. Results are analyzed only from survey data. One of the most significant limitation of this study is the absence of female respondents. It is supposed that women workers get more victimized than men. So this can be leading scope for future study. Another scope for further study is study on workers who are working under many government projects and find out the level and nature of victimization.

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Physical Health Hazards of the Child Labour Working in the Welding Sector in Rajshahi City of Bangladesh

Md Akhtar Hossain Mazumder¹

Abstract

Underprivileged children become involved in various risky and harmful jobs for meeting up their basic needs. Welding sector, by nature, is unsafe for adolescents. But the number of child labour is increasing in this industry in the major cities of Bangladesh like Rajshahi city. The study was conducted to determine the physical health hazards of child labours working in the welding sector in Rajshahi City. Primary data have been collected from 202 respondents who are currently working in the welding sector in Rajshahi City. Parents' Financial crisis is found as the core reason for working in the welding sector in Rajshahi City. Besides, gross income of the family, separation of parents, single parenting, sudden orphan hood, family demand etc. are other causes of being involved in such threatening work. To minimize such child labour, based on the findings, a set of policy suggestions has been developed.

Key-words: Child labour; Poverty; Rajshahi City; Welding Sector; Working Children.

1. Introduction

Child labour is considered as a burning issue in all over the world. This issue is acute in low and lower middle-income countries where social security or safety net for livelihood is abominable. Bangladesh is facing this predicament for her socio-economic circumstances. The report of National Child Labour Survey Bangladesh 2013 depicts that

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3.45 million children are working in the country between the ages of 5-17 years where 1.28 million are working in a hazardous working sector including mining, construction, manufacturing, service industries, hotels, fast food establishments, domestic service, and so on (BBS, 2016). Bangladesh is having the second largest child labour forces in South Asia. The survey also shows that 0.26 million children are engaged in notified hazardous works that are menacing and noxious. The problem of child labour in Bangladesh has been prevailing since ancient time in different forms and natures. But the dimension of this problem has changed over time and socioeconomic structure of the society. In other words, the problem of child labour directly depends on the socio-economic condition of a country particularly of a society. It is observed from the newspaper that poor parents compel their children to work to supplement the family income. That is why, it is increasing in our country day by day. It has come to discuss first in Bangladesh in early 1990's when a large number of child labour involved in the garment sector in a very worst of the working environment put the USA and others foreign buyers in a position to refuse to import garments from Bangladesh due to this reason (Rahman, 2014). Then the Government of Bangladesh has ratified ILO convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour and also has been working to eliminate all types of child labour from the society along with non-governmental organizations. As a result, the intensity of child labours has declined slightly from the country but overall, the present scenario of child labours is not satisfactory. Till now, child labour in Bangladesh is a critical issue and the incidence of child labour in Bangladesh is still the second highest among the countries of South Asia (Khan & Lyon, 2015). Many reasons are working behind child labour, the cycle of poverty is one of the largest contributing factors to child labour and it is mostly appearing in Bangladesh. Child labour engaged in the formal and informal sectors in Bangladesh. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of educational attainment, lack of family bond and unconscious parents about education are mentioned as the basic reasons of child labour by Hossain (Hossain, 2012). Micro and macro factors are contributing to child labours. Household and

enterprise employers constitute the micro factors whereas macro factors include social, political, economic, natural calamity, weak infrastructure and global macro volatility. Employers demand to deploy child labour as they depend on casual workers to keep investment low. On the other hand, families suffering from poverty are on the supply side of child labour (Lim, 2002). The children are engaged as labour in different sectors of our country. But welding is one of the risky sectors for the children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC) Committee has expressed concerns over the employment of children in welding, transportation, auto workshop, tobacco factory and battery recharging (Khondkar, 2017). It has been estimated that 246 million child workers aged 5-17 were involved in child labour, of which 171 million were involved in work that by its nature is hazardous to their safety, physical or mental health, and moral development (ILO, 2016). Long hours, low or no wages, poor food, isolation and hazards in the working environment can severely affect children's physical and mental health. Child labourers are also vulnerable to other abuses such as racial discrimination, maltreatment, and sexual abuse. Some works, such as domestic labour, are commonly regarded as an acceptable employment option for children, even though it too poses considerable risks. The children's life is adversely affected for long-time by this type of hazardous and dangerous works. This type of hazardous work is not the only obstacle to physical growth and mental development of a child but also, it's a great impediment to the long-term development of a society. Excessive labour, unhealthy working environments, and the presence of dust inside the body with breathing create various diseases such as Bronchitis, Tuberculosis, and skin diseases. As a whole it is highly threatful for psycho-physical development for the children. It has become a great concern to the sociologists, social worker, civil societies, and policymakers as well as to government. But future prospects of a country depend on the children. It is quite impossible to develop the country of ignoring this section of people. So, it is needed to take a research-based policy and guideline to incorporate the vulnerable children to mainstream of the society. This article will try

to focus on these issues. The main objective of the study is to determine the physical health hazards of child labours working in the welding sector of the Rajshahi City of Bangladesh. And the specific objectives of this study are to know the socio-economic profile of the child labours; to explore the prime reasons of being involved in such hazardous job; and to identify the hazards associated with child labours' physical health.

2. Data and Methods

The data used in this article were collected through a cross-sectional study conducted in the welding sector of Rajshahi city, Bangladesh using quantitative approach. Survey method was applied with a semi-structured interview schedule. Rajshahi city is divided into 30 wards. Welding shops are there in almost every ward but the frequency is relatively higher in four Wards (23, 24, 25, 27 and 29) considering the larger concentration (Bari. A, Islam. R, et. al, 2019). In almost every welding shop, child labourers of different ages were found working. As a result, the welding shops of these five wards were included purposively so that enough number of child labourers available for the study. Since the purpose of the study was not to present a statistically significant findings rather to present the indicative picture of the child labourers working in the welding sector a sample size of 202 was arbitrarily fixed and interviewed from the selected five Wards; 40 from each of four and 42 from one. Survey was continued in each ward until the number of sample quota fulfilled for that ward. The survey was conducted in March, 2017. Descriptive statistics are usually used for organizing, presenting and analyzing data. Considering the objectives and nature of data, descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the data by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3. Research Findings and Analysis

3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Child Labourers in Welding Sector

Some basic socio-demographic characteristics of the child labourers working in the welding sector have been presented in table-1. Among the total child labours, 55% are belonging to the age group 16-17 years where 34% child labours are between 13-15 years. But almost 11% child labours are below 12 years which is alarming. The mean age of the child labours are 15.26 years. 91% child labours have attended school before starting work in the welding sector but this study reveals also that 92.6% of the child labours are not attending school at present. Among the child labours who have attended in a school, 60% reached up to primary level of education and 35% studied up to secondary level of education. In case of the birth orders of the child labours in the family, 46.5% are the first child of their parents followed by 30.7% and 16.8% are second and third child of the family respectively. 83.7% child labours live with their parents which means they are in social chain and command till now. On the other hand, 11.4% child labours live only with their mother and some of them live with their uncle, aunt, brother or sister, or other relatives' house.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Child Labourers in Welding Sector

Categories	Number of Child Labour	Percent
Age (Year)		
10-12	22	10.9
13-15	68	33.7
16-17	112	55.4
Total	202	100
Ever Attended School		
Yes	183	90.6
No	19	09.4
Total	202	100
Level of School Reached		
Illiterate (never attended school)	19	09.4

Up to Primary	113	55.9
Up to Secondary	70	34.7
Total	202	100
Current School Enrolment Status		
Yes	15	07.4
No	187	92.6
Total	202	100
Birth Order		
First (1 st)	94	46.5
Second (2 nd)	62	30.7
Third (3 rd)	34	16.8
Fourth (4 th)	8	4.0
Fifth (5 th)	4	2.0
Total	202	100
Living Arrangement		
With Parent (Father and Mother)	169	83.7
With only Father	2	1.0
With only Mother	23	11.4
With Grand Parent	2	1.0
With Others	6	3.0
Total	202	100

3.2 Family Related Information of the Child Labourers

Table-2 presents family related information of the child labourers working in welding sector. 78% child labourers come from the medium size family (4-6 members) followed by the large size family with more than seven members (12.4%). 87% child labours reported that their father and mother both (parent) are alive but 1.5% child labours mentioned that both of their father and mother are expired already. At the same time, the study finds some child labours whose only father or mother is alive. As we know that, educational status of the parents has a significant influence on their child and the study finds very poor educational status of the parents of child labours. 55% fathers and 49.5% mothers of the child labours have no formal education at all. 33.7% father and 32.2% mother of child labours have completed primary level of education. The percentage of fathers and mothers who

completed secondary level of education are 10.9% and 18.3% respectively. In case of respondent's father occupation, 65.8% percent of child labours reported that their father is working as day labour followed by Rickshaw Puller (15.8%). 6.1% father of child labours are unemployed. On the contrary, almost 90% mother of child labours is house wife and only 7.7% is working as day labour.

Table 2: Family Characteristics of the Child Labourers in Welding Sector

Categories	Number of Child Labour	Percent
Family Size		
Small Family (1-3)	19	9.4
Medium Family (4-6)	158	78.2
Large Family (≥ 7)	25	12.4
Total	202	100
Status of Parent's Aliveness		
Both Alive	176	87.1
Only Mother Died Before	03	1.5
Only Father Died Before	20	9.9
Both Died	03	1.5
Total	202	100
Father's Educational Status		
No Formal Education	111	55.0
Primary	68	33.7
Secondary	22	10.9
Higher Secondary	1	0.5
Total	202	100
Mother's Educational Status		
No Formal Education	100	49.5
Primary	65	32.2
Secondary	37	18.3
Total	202	100
Father's Occupation		
Day Labour	133	65.8
Rickshaw Puller	32	15.8
Others	03	1.5
Unemployed	11	5.4
Died Before	23	11.4
Total	202	100
Mother's Occupation		

House Wife	175	86.6
Day Labour	15	7.4
Others	6	3.0
Died Before	6	3.0
Total	202	100

3.3 Work-related Information of the Child Labours in Welding Sector

Reasons of involved in Welding Sector: Regarding the reasons for being involved in welding sector, 40% child labours have mentioned that they have involved in the welding sector due to force of their parents. On the other hand, 30.2% child labours engaged in this hazardous work willingly to support their family and for additional income (8.4%). But dropout from the school or lack of interest on the study is a serious concern behind being involved as a child labour because their parents could have engaged them in work so that the children are not becoming involved with bad peer in one hand and, on the other, become skilled in some work. The study also reveals that 21.3% child labours have involved in welding sector due to the same reason.

Age of Child Labours at the Time of Joining in Work: The study finds that 57.4% child labours have started working at the age of 12-14 years followed by 9-11 years (27.7%). But 3.5% child labours have started working at the very early stage of their life like 6-8 years age only. The mean starting age of child labours is 12 years.

Length of Work in Welding Sector: In case of length of work in welding sector, the study finds that 33.2% child labours are working since last 2-3 years where 31.7% are working since last one year. 28.7% of child labours are working in the welding sector since more than 3 years.

Working Day and Hours: The daily working hours of child labours of welding sector is almost the same as other labours. The study finds that in average, a child labour works almost 10 and half hours for everyday and in a week, they have to work averagely 65.26 hours which is much more than the working hours described in the Child Labour Act of Bangladesh. On the other hand, 97.5% child labours work six days in a week and 1.5% mentioned that they work all the days of a week. Working duration in a day is also important issue for the child labours working in the welding sector. Less duration of work helps them to involve others activities such as sport, entertainment etc. But from the

study data, it has seen that 51.5% child labours work 10-12 hours per day whereas 35.6% child labours work 8-10 hours in a day. Not only this, 8.4% child labours of welding sector work more than 12 hours daily. The data of weekly working hours shows that 34.2% of child labours works 50-60 hours followed by 31.2% in 60-70 hours. 5.4% of them work less than 50 hours in a week where 26.7% works 70-80 hours per week. However, according to the child labour acts of Bangladesh, a child labour of 14 years age and below are not allowed to work more than 40 hours in a week.

Beginning and Ending Time of Work: 83.7% of the child labours begin their work at 9-10 AM of everyday morning while only 2.5% start their work after 10 AM. But 13.9% child labours come to their workplace before 9 of the morning for starting work. In case of the ending time of work, 70.8% of the child labours close their work at 7-8 PM in almost every day. But 25.2% said that they stay at the workplace after 8 PM for closing the work.

Sleeping Hours: In case of respondents' sleeping hour at night the study finds that 60.4% child labours sleep more than 8 hours and 27.2% enjoy almost 8 hours in sleeping but 12.4% sleep less than 8 hours.

Wages of Child Labours: 75.7% of the child labours got their payment in weekly basis where 4.5% and 15.3% got daily and monthly basis payment respectively. On the contrary 4.5% child labours are working without any payment. 48% of the child labours get less than five thousand taka per month as their wages from the workplace. 21.3% earn 3-5 thousand taka monthly and 18.3% get 5-8 thousand taka for every month.

Table 3: Work Related Information of the Child Labours

Characteristics	Number of Child Labours	Percent
Reasons to Involve at Work		
Forced by Parents	81	40.1
To Help Family	61	30.2
For Additional Income	17	08.4
Dropout from School or Lack of Interest on Study	43	21.3
Total	202	100

Child Labours' Age at Starting Work (Year)		
6-8	7	3.5
9-11	56	27.7
12-14	116	57.4
15-16	23	11.4
Mean = 12.27 years; Standard Deviation = 1.89		
Length of Work in Welding Sector (Year)		
One	64	31.7
2-3	67	33.2
4-6	58	28.7
7-10	13	6.4
Total	202	100
Working Days per Week		
<6	2	1.0
6	197	97.5
7	3	1.5
Hours of Work in a Day		
< 8	9	4.5
8-10	72	35.6
10-12	104	51.5
> 12	17	8.4
Mean Hours= 10.49 Hours; Standard Deviation= ± 1.41 hours		
Working Hours per week		
< 50	11	5.4
50-60	69	34.2
60-70	63	31.2
70-80	54	26.7
>80	5	2.5
Total	202	100.0
Mean Working Hours= 64.51 hours; Standard Deviation= ± 9.42 hours		
Beginning Time of Work		
Before 9 AM	28	13.9
9-10 AM	169	83.7
After 10 AM	5	2.5
Ending Time of Work		
5-6 PM	8	4.0
7-8 PM	143	70.8
After 8 PM	51	25.2
Total	202	100
Sleeping Duration (Hours)		
< 8	25	12.4
8	55	27.2

> 8	122	60.4
Total	202	100
Mean Sleeping Time=8.91hours; Standard Deviation= 1.29		
Mode of Payment		
Daily	09	04.5
Weekly	153	75.7
Monthly	31	15.3
Without Payment	09	04.5
Total	202	100
Amount of Payment (in BDT)		
< 3000	97	48.0
3000-5000	43	21.3
5000-8000	37	18.3
Above 8000	16	7.9
No Money/Payment	9	4.5
Total	202	100

3.4 Nature of the Work Carried out by the Child Labours in the Workplace

In welding sector, child labours have to do multiple types of procedural works. The majority of the respondents are engaged in soldering (86.1%), cleaning (80.2%), painting (63.4%) cutting (36.6%). Some of the respondents had to engage in sharpening (13.9%), hammer beating (4.0%) and polishing (1.5%). Most of the respondents (79.7%) reported that they had to carry out orders of the employers which were not actually connected to welding activities.

Table 4: Distribution of the Child Labours by the Nature of Work Carried out in Workplace

Nature of Work	Yes %	No %	Total (N=202)
Soldering	86.1	13.90	100
Cutting	36.6	63.40	100
Sharpening	13.9	86.10	100
Hammer Beating	04.0	96.00	100
Polishing	01.5	98.50	100
Cleaning	80.2	19.8	100
Painting	63.4	36.6	100
Others	79.7	20.30	100

3.5 Common Health Problems and Treatment of the Child Labours in Last Three Months

When the child labours were asked about their experience of being affected by cold and fever, 45.0% reported that they have experienced of being affected by cold and fever during last 3 months. In case of visiting doctors or physicians during their health problems, 67.8% child labours said that they had no experience to visit doctor or physicians for health problems whereas 32.2% of them had experienced of visiting the doctors or physicians on regarding issues. When it was about the experience of visiting emergency department of hospital for their health problems, 97.5% child labours answered negatively. On the other hand, only 2.5% child labours said that they had experienced of visiting emergency department of hospital for their health problems which imply that their health condition is not much concerning to visit such kind of department.

Table 5: Experiences of Common Health Problems during last 3 months

Status	Number	Percent
Experienced cold and fever during last 3 months		
No	111	55.0
Yes	91	45.0
Total	202	100
Visit to Doctor		
Yes	65	32.2
No	137	67.8
Total	202	100
Visit to Hospital's Emergency Department		
Yes	5	2.5
No	197	97.5
Total	202	100

3.6 Health Hazards Experienced by the Child Labours

Overwhelming majority of the child labourers in welding sector (84.2%) experienced minor cuts. Among them, the frequency of occurring minor cuts is sometimes for 97% child labours. Another 3% experienced minor cuts in frequently. Table-6 also shows that total 80.2% child labours experienced fatigue in their workplace and among them, 99.4% experienced this health problems for sometimes.

Approximately 6 out of every 10 child labours (58%) felt body pains and the frequency of feeling body pains is 95.7% and 2.5% for sometimes and frequently respectively. In case of experiencing bad cuts or bruises, the overwhelming majority of child labours (92.6%) said that they had never experienced bad cuts or bruises in their workplace though 7.4% experienced bad cuts or bruises at the time of working in workplace. Almost same result has been found in case of experiencing burns or scalds in the body of child labours. 91% child labours said that they never experienced this type of health problems in their working life though 9% has the experienced of burns or scalds in the body and most alarmingly among them 27.8% child labours experienced such type of health problem frequently. Experiencing breathing difficulty of the child labours due to the work pressure and work environment is one of the most concerning issue for health and the study also finds that total 8.4% child labours have breathing difficulty problems. Among them, 88.2% feel this problem for sometimes but 11.8% face this problem frequently.

Table 6: Status of Experiencing Health Hazards Directly Related to Welding Work During Last 1 Year

Health Hazard	Presence of Problem		Degree of Problem	
	No	Yes	Opinion	Percentage
Experiencing Minor Cuts	32 (15.8%)	170 (84.2%)	Sometimes	97.05
			Frequently	02.95
			Total	100
Experienced Fatigue	40 (19.8%)	162 (80.2%)	Sometimes	99.4
			Frequently	0.6
			Total	100
Felt Pains in Body	85 (42.1%)	117 (57.9%)	Sometimes	95.7
			Frequently	04.3
			Total	100
Experienced Bad Cuts or Bruises	187 (92.6%)	15 (7.4%)	Sometimes	93.3
			Frequently	06.7
			Total	100
Experienced Burns or	184 (91.1%)	18 (8.9%)	Sometimes	72.2
			Frequently	27.8

Scalds in Body			Total	100
Experienced Breathing Difficulty	185 (91.6%)	17 (8.4%)	Sometimes	88.2
			Frequently	11.8
			Total	100

3.7 Others Health Issue of the Child Labours

Regarding others health issue of the child labours, the study identifies some unpleasant truth regarding this issue. Due to the unhealthy lifestyle and nature of heavy work in the workplace, the child labour faced different types of physical health problems. Table-7 shows that among the interviewed child labours, 38.6% mentioned that they don't have any kind of problems in the teeth but 23.3% are always facing some problems in their teeth such as sensitivity or toothache followed by 20.3% and 17.8% faced sometimes and often this problem respectively. But a little better condition has been observed in case of vision problem of the child labours. 42.1% of the child labours are free from any types of vision problems but almost 29% faced problem in their vision like tears in the eye, blurred vision etc. in sometimes. The alarming situation is that 9% child labours faced always problems in their eye. Almost same situation has been found for hearing and headache problems of child labours because of the very noisy environment in workplace and due to the lack of sufficient rest. 46% of the child labours didn't have hearing problems whereas 17.3% always face this problem means they can't hear someone clearly. Headache is also the most common problems among the child labours as the data shows, 30.7% of the child labours sometimes experienced headache and 14.4% often experienced this problem followed by 13.4% who always experienced headache.

Table 7: Other Health Issue of the Child Labours

Physical Problems	Presence of Problem		Degree of Problem	
	No	Yes	Opinion	Percentage
Dental Problem	78 (38.61%)	124 (61.39%)	Sometimes	33.06
			Often	29.03
			Always	37.90

			Total	100.0
Vision Problem	85 (42.08%)	117 (57.92%)	Sometimes	49.57
			Often	34.19
			Always	16.24
			Total	100.0
Hearing Problem	93 (46.04%)	109 (53.96%)	Sometimes	36.70
			Often	31.19
			Always	32.11
			Total	100.0
Headache	84 (41.58%)	118 (58.42%)	Sometimes	56.88
			Often	26.61
			Always	24.77
			Total	100.0

3.8. Nature of Treatment Taken by the Child Labours

As to resorting treatment procedure due to injury in work place, 18 of the respondents (8.9%) said that they did not take any treatment whereas 9 of the respondents (4.5%) went to the local healer. 8 of the respondents (4.0%) said that they had taken care of it by themselves and the same number of respondents said that they had received first aid from their working place. Only 5 of the respondents (2.5%) said that they went to a clinic or hospital.

Table 8: Nature of Treatment Taken by the Child Labours in Case of Injury

Treatment Status	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total N=202
Did not take any treatment	8.9	91.1	100%
Self-Care	4.0	96.0	100%
Received First Aid from Working Place	4.0	96.0	100%
Went to a local Healer	4.5	95.5	100%
Went to a Clinic or Hospital	2.5	97.5	100%

3.9 Abuses of Child Labour in the Welding Sector

Physical abuse like beaten, kick, push etc. are very common both in the workplace and residence of the child labours and they have had to face it regularly by their parents or employer or co-workers. More than one-third (34.2%) of the child labours admitted that they were rushed to beat if they made any mistake and in this mentioned regard, they are abused by their employer and coworker. Whereas 24.3% of the child labours mentioned that their employer, coworkers and parent beat them violently if they did not listen to them. 24.3% of the child labours said that they experienced violent/harsh method for punishment from their parents or employer or coworkers. 21.8% of the child labours said that they are being kicked and pushed by their coworker if they did any mistake. 17.8% child labours said that they got injured and had bruises and fractures due to the punishment given by their coworkers and others. 44.1% of the child labours claimed that they are being forced to do very hard work by their employers and others.

Table 9: Physical Abuses of Child Labours in the Welding Sector

Nature of Physical Abuse	Status of Abuses		By Whom		
	Yes	No	Parent	Employer	Coworker
Rush to beat you if made a mistake	69 (34.2%)	133 (65.8%)	23.8%	40.5%	35.7%
Beat violently if not listen to him	54 (26.7%)	148 (73.3%)	23.3%	43.3%	33.3%
Use harsh methods to punish (with burning, or hot tools) if disobeyed him	49 (24.3%)	153 (75.7%)	38.5%	30.8%	30.8%
Kick and push if did any mistake	44 (21.8%)	158 (78.2%)	23.1%	26.9%	50.0%
Get injured and have bruises and fractures because of punishment	36 (17.8%)	166 (82.2%)	26.3%	31.6%	42.1%
Forced to do very hard work	89 (44.1%)	113 (55.9%)	23.2%	39.3%	37.5%

4. Discussion

This is a cross sectional study with an aim to assess the physical health hazard of the child labours working in the welding sector of Rajshahi City, Bangladesh. The study presents a comprehensive overview of the child labour working in the welding sector of Rajshahi City and provides an idea about the whole country as well. Based on the previous result, the discussion part has focused on the physical health hazards of the child labours working in the welding sector. Besides that, the study has also identified some key factors which are responsible for child labour in Rajshahi City. So, the findings in terms of effects of the child labours in this study are discussed from the physical and socio-demographic point of view.

The study shows that among the total respondents of this study, more than half of the child labourers (55.4%) are belonging to the age group 16-17 years followed by the 13-15 years age group of 33.7 percent (68 of 202). The present study is also in line with the study conducted by Tripathy (1989), Dhillon and Arora (2001). Their study also revealed that majority of child labours were from the age group of 12 to 15 years. On the basis of present study as well as some other studies conducted on child labour, it can be seen that majority of child labours fall in the age range 10-15 years.

In the welding shop, the child labours are doing heavy work in almost every time and which is responsible for their physical and psychological vulnerability. A study of Ambeddkar et al. (1999) entitled “Effects of child labour on growth of children” reveals that the height, weight and mental level of child labourers and school going children are not same and the study finds a significant difference among these two groups. The study also identified very harmful effects on child labours’ physical and mental health who has been working from the very early ages and it’s also effect on the overall development of a child.

Among the total child labours, 92.6 percent are not attending school right now. The data of their schooling status shows that 9.4% never attended in any school and 56% have attended up to primary school. Most of the child labours are illiterate or having very low educational status. Lack of proper education and illiteracy are one of the main causes of child labour in Rajshahi City as well as the whole country.

Family profile of the child labours has been identified as one of the key factors which forced a child to become a child labour. The study finds

that 78% child labours come from the medium size family (4-6 members). As we know that, educational status of the parents has a significant influence on their child and the study finds very poor educational status of the parents of child labours. 55% fathers and 49.5% mothers of the child labours have no formal education at all. 33.7% father and 32.2% mother of child labours have completed primary level of education. In case of respondent's father's occupation, 65.8% percent of child labours reported their father to be day labours followed by Rickshaw puller (15.8%). 6.1% father of child labours are unemployed. On the contrary, almost 90% mothers of child labours are house wives and only 7.7% is working as day labours. From the above-mentioned information, we can conclude that majority of the family of child labours are economically downtrodden which usually forced their children into work to supplement their household's income. These findings were quite similar to the study conducted in Faridpur District of Bangladesh by Rana and Das (2014).

Regarding the reasons for being involved in welding sector, 40% child labours have mentioned that they have involved in the welding sector due to force of their parents. On the other hand, 30.2% child labours engaged in this hazardous work willingly to support their family and for additional income (8.4%).

Regarding the age of child labours at the time of joining to work in welding sector, the study revealed that 57.4% have started working at the age of 12 to 14 years and 3.5% child labours have started working at the very early stage of their life like 6-8 years age only. Another very important information about the length of working in welding sector has also been placed in this study and data shows that 33.2% are working since last 2-3 years where 31.7% are working since last one year. Additionally, the result of the present study revealed that every child labour works almost 10.5 hours daily and 97.5% child labours work six day in a week. More specifically, the study finds that 51.5% child labours work 10-12 hours per day whereas 35.6% child labours work 8-10 hours in a day. Not only this, 8.4% child labours of welding sector work more than 12 hours daily. Long working hour of the child labours has negative impact on regular school attendance, normal social interaction, physical and psychological development and emotional support from their family. The study conducted by Bharti (2013) and another study by Sumaiya (2002) also discussed about the worst condition of child labour working for long hour without rest

which breed their feeling of frustration and inadequacy. Bantola et al. (2019) stated in their study that child labours working at construction and welding sector suffer from both physical and psychological effects on their health.

Regarding the types of work of the child labour, the study finds that most of the child labours engaged in multiple works of welding shop like soldering (86.1%), cleaning (80.2%), painting (63.4%) and cutting (36.6%). Some of the respondents are also engaged in sharpening (13.9%), hammer beating (4.0%) and polishing (1.5%). The study also revealed the information about the wages of child labours. Majority of the child labours (75.7%) got their payment in weekly basis where 4.5% and 15.3% got daily and monthly basis payment respectively. On the contrary 4.5% child labours are working without any payment. 48% of the child labours get less than five thousand taka per month as their wages and 21.3% earn 3 to 5 thousand takas monthly and 18.3% get 5-8 thousand takas for every month. The study conducted by Gyawali et al. (2012) found that 28% child labours earned 5 to 10 thousand per month and 17% earned 1500-2500 per month. Similar findings have been found in the study of Uddin et al. (2014) conducted in Sylhet City of Bangladesh. Child labours are typically paid lesser than adults in all varieties of jobs even though they perform the same work and even have to work beyond normal working hours (Bharti and Agarwal, 2013).

The childhood labour indeed has debilitating effects on the physical health of the children and thereby causes negative affect on their physical growth. Since the major portion of them come from insolvent families and they are nutritionally unfit to tackle the discomforts of hard work. Consistent with the results shown by Khair (2005), we can come to the conclusion that the physical damage largely depends on the job type and the number of hours worked. For example, our survey showed that 45% child labours have experienced cold and fever during last 3 months. In case of visiting doctors or physicians during their health problems, 67.8% child labours said that they had no experience to visit doctor or physicians for health problems whereas 32.2% of them had experienced of visiting the doctors or physicians. Overwhelming majority of the child labourers in welding sector (84.2%) experienced minor cuts and 80.2% child labours experienced fatigue in their workplace. Approximately 6 out of every 10 child labours (58%) felt body pains. Experiencing breathing difficulty of the

child labours due to the work pressure and work environment is one of the most concerning issue for health and the study also finds that total 8.4% child labours have breathing difficulty problems. A study conducted in the brick kiln factories of West Bengal (Das, 2015) revealed that 77% Child labours of brick kiln factories experienced fatigue or exhaustion, 54% have experienced minor cuts or bruises and 62.8% felt pain in the body. So, it can be said that severity of physical health problems of the child labours of welding sector are relatively higher than the child labours of brick kiln factories due to the nature of work in welding sector.

Due to the unhealthy lifestyle and nature of heavy work in the workplace, the child labour faced different types of physical health problems. Among the interviewed child labours, almost 61% were facing teeth problems, 57.9% were facing vision problems, and 54% were facing hearing problems. Headache is also the most common problems among the child labours as the data shows, 30.7% of the child labours sometimes experienced headache and 14.4% often experienced this problem followed by 13.4% who always experienced headache.

Regarding the physical abuse of child labours, the study revealed that 34.2% admitted that they were rushed to beat if they made any mistake, 24.3% mentioned that their employer, coworkers and parent beat them violently if they did not listen to them. 24.3% experienced violent method for punishment, 21.8% claimed that they were kicked and pushed by their coworker if they did any mistake. 17.8% child labours said that they got injured and had bruises and fractures due to the punishment given by their coworkers and others.

So, from the above-mentioned data it's very clear that most of the child labours were suffering from different types of physical problems such as dental problem, vision problem, hearing problem etc. for the unhealthy and unsafe environment of the workplace of welding shop. So, the study indicates that in the welding sector, children are at great risk of injuries, burns and infection. Heavy load in the workplaces may permanently damage their physical growth of different parts of the body.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

We cannot deny that child labour is a sheer reality and very common scenario in Bangladesh like many others developing country of the world. Low socio-economic conditions along with some other causes

are forcing child labour to accept such a dangerous and hazardous work where they are continuously facing different types of physical health problems. This article depicts the same situation that about half of the total child labours have experienced physical abused in their workplace or residence by their owners, coworkers, and even by their family members. Not only that they are generally not getting medical services, many times not even in cases of workplace accidents. As per the finding of the present study will be able to identify the effective services and formulate a policy and plan for the child labours working in the welding sector of Bangladesh. Eliminating child labour is clearly a goal of the government of Bangladesh in the long run. As we know that The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has already taken various steps to eliminate all forms of child labour, particularly all types of hazardous work. The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE), Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, other government organizations and field level agencies are implementing these initiatives. If the existing Acts, rules and regulations are reorganized and the plan of action is adopted and implemented, our children would obviously grow up as "enlightened human beings". Supervision and monitoring of the government concerned authority should be stronger. Safety measure requirements for all child labours, including safe working environment and use of protection devices that include safety helmet, working shoes, workable gloves, masks, and protecting glass should be ensured. And finally, the opportunity of education and recreation for every child for the physical and mental development should be ensured. Different media like television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards etc. can play an important role to decrease and discourage child labour in the country to a considerable extent.

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State of Labour Dispute in the RMG Sector of Bangladesh

Md. Ziaur Rahman¹

Abstract

Labour dispute is occurred in almost all organization where people works for other in paid employment. It creates lose-lose situation and affects the interest of both the labourers and employers negatively. Bangladesh's readymade garment (RMG) sector has been home to numerous disputes in recent years, and often is chosen by the labourers as their best instrument to achieve their claims historically. To create a win-win situation for the betterment of all parties, it is necessary to avoid labour dispute. In order to know how labour dispute can be avoided or reduced, it is essential to know previous trends, and the state and nature of these disputes. To do so, a questionnaire survey has been conducted on 384 workers of grade IV to grade VII of RMG sector. Five focus group discussions and eight key informant interviews also have been conducted to triangulate the data. The findings indicate that at the initial stage, almost all labour disputes were spontaneous, although later on, labourers became united and initiated many organized movements. Almost all of these disputes primarily initiated with the claim of wage increase or payment of outstanding wages, bonuses or overtime dues and later on, other demands were included. In case of location, Dhaka is the most disputant area followed by Gazipur and Narayanganj. The labourers of knit and sweater factories are more chatterer than the labourers of other factories. The male and less educated workers have more tendencies to involve in dispute than female and more educated workers.

Keywords: Labour Dispute, Labour Union, Readymade Garment, Workers' Involvement, Strike, Picketing, Lockout

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1. INTRODUCTION

Labour dispute is a state of situation which occurs due to actual or perceived disagreement among people working together regarding needs, values and interests. Labour dispute (LD) is a state of disagreement over a particular issue or group of issues over which there is conflict between workers and employers, or about which grievance is expressed by workers or employers, or about which workers or employers supports other workers or employers in their demands or grievances (ILO 1993). It may be related to terms and conditions of employment, work or working environment or not. It may be related to how profits should be distributed among parties, how work should be done and how long and hard people should work. It is found in all sector of the country. Readymade garment (RMG) sector is more LD prone sector than any other sector of Bangladesh.

The RMG sector emerges in 1978 due to policy shift of Bangladesh government (Momen 2007). The government policies were to attract more FDI in private sector for industrialization and foster export earnings which persuaded giving more emphasis on the interest of the investors while interest of the labourers were neglected. The labourers of RMG sector showed their protests and involved in different LDs different times against the negligence of the government as well as the employers. The massive LD of 2006, 2010, 2012, and 2016 are some examples of such protests. On an average 259 LDs occurred in different sector of Bangladesh during the period 2008 to 2014 while the average number LD in RMG sector is 175 (Hossain 2012). Another study report prepared on the basis of news paper reports shows that on an average 280 LDs occurred in different sector of Bangladesh during the period 2015 to 2019 out of which 44.17 percent dispute occurred in RMG sector (BILS 2019). These data indicate that LD still prevalent in RMG sector.

The LD prevalent in RMG sector due to lack of harmonious industrial relations between employers and labourers (Mohiuddin 2014). There are so many reasons behind this lacking. The employers provide inadequate wages and benefits to labourers to lead their daily lives (Hossain 2012, Moazzem and Arfanuzzaman 2018). They do not pay overtime payment as per laws (Hossain 2012). Although they are paying less, they do not pay that wage and overtime payment at

times (Rahman, Bhattacharya and Moazzem 2008, Kamal, Billah and Hossain 2010). When new wage scale comes in effect, they do not implement this new scale (Hossain 2012). They suddenly retrench labourers or close down their factories without any notice and compensation (Ahmed, Raihan and Islam 2013, Choudhury and Rahman 2017). They misbehave, beat and punish labourers for silly mistakes (Himi and Rahman 2013, Islam and Ahmed 2014), force labourers to do overtime work or night duty, and force labourers to work extra hours without any pay (Ahmed, Raihan and Islam 2013, Hasan, Islam and Arifuzzaman 2015). They do not provide any leaves as per law (Hasan, Islam and Arifuzzaman 2015, Choudhury and Rahman 2017). Poor working conditions (Kamal, Billah and Hossain 2010, Himi and Rahman 2013), absence of trade union (TU) (Khan 2011, Islam and Ahmed 2014), rumors (Khan 2011, Hossain and Afroze 2012), aggressive behaviour of workers (Bhuiyan 2013), violent role of police, lack of training and promotion opportunities (Ahmed, Raihan and Islam 2013, Himi and Rahman 2013) and too much work load (Ahmed, Raihan and Islam 2013) are also responsible for LDs.

The LDs adversely affect the employers as well as the labourers. The employers are affected as their production is hampered, machinery are damaged, needs more time to send good to buyers, and their image in international market is demolished. The labourers are affected as they lose their wages and jobs, police and external miscreant beats them, and employers file cases against them. All these effects hamper economic growth and development of the country which is needed to attain sustainable development goals (SDGs). Bangladesh is committed to attain SDGs by alleviating poverty, hunger, inequality through ensuring decent works, peace and justice by 2030. For attaining SDGs, she has to take effective measures to reduce LDs to a minimum level in the 14.07 percent gross domestic product (GDP) contributory and 84 percent export earning contributing RMG sector (Islam, Rakib and Adnan 2016). For taking effective measures, it is necessary to know: what is the historical legacy of LDs in the RMG sector? Is strike only form of LD has chosen by labourers? Are all labourers personally involved in LDs?

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to find out the state of labour disputes in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. The specific objectives are:

- a) To highlight the historical scenario of labour disputes in RMG sector since inception;
- b) To know different forms of disputes has chosen by workers in RMG sector;
- c) To find out the main reasons of workers being involved or being inactive during disputes.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed research approach has been used to fulfill the purpose of the study where both qualitative and quantitative data has been analysed. For analysing quantitative data descriptive statistical tools has been used. For the envisaged purpose, together with secondary literature, primary data have been collected from labourers, mid-level management, owners of RMG sector, human resource (HR) experts, trade union leaders and members of civil society. W.G. Cochran's statistical formula for known population has been used to determine the sample size of primary data (W.G. Cochran 1977) (Annex-1). A questionnaire survey of 384 respondents has been conducted among the labourers of grade IV to grade VII of RMG sector as they are comprised of semi-skilled and unskilled labourers who most likely involve in disputes. Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram districts are purposively chosen as sampling area as almost all factories (97 percent) are located in these four districts (BGMEA, 2018). For distributing the sample, at first, respondents are distributed on the basis of proportion of number of factories among four districts (Annex Table 1). Then each district's respondents are subdivided into three factory type wise i.e. woven, knit and composite. The number of respondents fall on each factory type is then subdivided into two gender type i.e. male and female. At last, each gender type respondents are distributed among grade IV to grade VII labourers on the basis of their proportion. Five focus group discussions (FGDs)—two in Dhaka, one in Gazipur, one in Narayanganj, one in Chattogram, and eight key informant interviews (KIIs) have been conducted to fulfill the purpose.

The paper comprises three sections. The historical features of LD in RMG sector has been analysed in the first section, the second section is concerned with the nature and characteristics of LD of current period, and in the third section, tendency of labourers to personally involve in LD and reasons behind this tendency has been analysed.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LABOUR DISPUTES IN RMG SECTOR

The LD of an organization depends on the historical background of the region where it has been operating, previous organizational culture and the workers perception about the organization regarding its social responsibilities. The employers' behaviour regarding labourers' rights is shaped by the cultural history of the region in general and of the organization in particular. The labourers' responds towards employers' decision also depend on legacy of values and norms they have got from the working environments. The RMG factories are of no exception. The labourers of RMG sector act in a way they have learnt from the regional social and cultural forces which was attributed in colonial period and later, in the Pakistani period. For ease of discussion, this section has been divided into four sub-sections—early period of RMG sector, multi-fiber agreement period, pre-Rana Plaza collapse period and post-Rana Plaza collapse period.

4.1 Early Period of RMG Sector (1980s-early 1990s)

As a member of infant industrial sector the labourers RMG sector were very much vulnerable, and trade unions and resources needed for worker's movement were limited at the early stage of this sector. There were only six trade union were in operation in early 1990s (DoL 2019). The main reasons behind this vulnerability were government policy change to foster industrialization through encouraging privatization and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), emergence of the sector during military regime, feudal mindset of the employers, and scattered first generation labourers who mainly come from rural areas in search for employment. Due to bad public image regarding trade union, the political parties also do not show much interest in forming trade union or to protect labourers' rights. The labourers were completely exploited during this period without having any trade union (Rahman 2011).

With the development of RMG sector labourers started to show their protest in a scattered way with their scanty resources within the factories where they engaged although they were uncoordinated, confused and amateur. In contrary, the employers put in different strategies to restrain labourers to be united. Sometimes employers enticed labourers to promotion or better benefits when disputant situation arises but afterward, they bought some of these labourers and sacked the others for creating these situations. Sometimes they hired external mastans to punish disputant labourers and then sacked them without providing any payments (Rahman 2011). Due to lack of resources, labourers collect money from NGOs and political parties, uses offices of some leftist political parties and in return, they has to join the processions of political parties. Gradually, labourers of one factory got acquainted with labourers of some other factories and could develop their network, and started to show sympathy with actions taken in the neighboring factories.

During this period, three visible characteristics of LDs can be identified. First, due to an infant manufacturing sector, labourers suffered from huge resource crisis and trade union was absent in essence. Second, LDs were limited within the factory. Finally, all kinds of LDs were oppressed by the employers. These types of LDs continued in this sector until a fire incident occurred in Saraka garment factory.

4.2 Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) Period

In the 1990s, only four registered and ten unregistered trade union federations were in operation in RMG sector (Bhattacharya 1998). As almost all federation leaders were affiliated with political parties for their personal interest, name and fame rather than the interest of the labourers, the labourers bored about trade unions and their leaders which built mistrust among them and instigated them for voluntary labour movement for guarding their wages and benefits. Compassionate LD began to come out after fire incident incurred in Saraka garment in Dhaka on 27 December, 1990 which claimed no less than 25 workers` lives. The labourers from neighboring factories along with the labourers of the factory under fire started demonstration claiming compensation for the injured and deceased labourers to the employers (Custers 1997). On 1st January 1991 about fifty thousand labourers captured the streets claiming 1st January as

mourning day and submitted a five point set of demand to chief advisor of the government (Rahman 2011).

The situation deteriorated when disputant labourers tried to instigate the labourers of Cheung Hing sweater factory to participate in demonstration while employer of the factory took oppressive measures and gunfire on procession which result in death of another labourer. The arrogant labourers ransacked the factory and burnt it. Many factories bound to suspend their works due to continual protest of the labourers. Although the dispute was voluntary, it assisted the labourers to be organized and they able to form a committee with 101 members from 42 RMG factories named Garment Workers Employees Unity Council (GWEUC) (Rahman 2011).

In 1993, the labourers began to show agitations claiming some demands including revision of minimum wage. The government set up a tripartite committee led by Labour Minister and other two members would be chosen from employers and labourers in order to scan any breach of labour laws and evaluate labourers` claims due to a strike called in 1994 (Khanna 2011). The government of Bangladesh was on pressure due to United State (US) government imposed condition of allowing trade union in Export Processing Zone (EPZ) areas and raised a bill called Harkins Bill to prohibit imports at US market from regions where child labour employed. At the same time, some local trade union federation like National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) began to organize garment labourers and began to announce programs nearer to general labourers` demands. In 1995, RMG labourers began a labourers` movement with a common motto “No more labour slavery: total leave on Friday is a must” (Khanna 2011). However, the employers applied their conventional repressive measures to suppress this movement and sacked no less than 500 employees for their connection with federation leaders; many labourers were retrenched without showing any reasons. About ten RMG factories bound to shut down with due payments of wages and overtimes and about one hundred factories delayed in paying outstanding wages and overtime for four months (Khanna 2011).

As there was high inflation in the economy which brought hardship in their lives, the labourers were simultaneously engaging different LDs although the owners were on uncompromising mindset. The recurring LDs force the employers to formulate a bipartite committee

with the representatives of labourers in order to settle labourers' problems including wages and benefits, workers' unions and factory operations at factory level (Faruque 2009). At the same time, EPZ labourers declared a strike demanding full trade union rights at Savar. The labourers further called strikes in May 2000 for their wage cut. The owner of Ring Shine factory asked for the law enforcing agencies that charged on the huge crowd of thousands of labourers and resulted in at least two labourers were dead and another hundreds were injured (Khanna 2011).

In 2000, the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) had pointed out 24 kinds of breach of labour laws by the employers and it suggested 24 alterations in the laws (Hasan 2006). The government revised the wages for the labourers but the employers filed a writ petition against the increase of wages and High court declared this wage increase illegal (Hasan 2006). The continual pressure of international agencies especially from US government for allowing unions at EPZs forced the Bangladesh government to amend its EPZ laws in 2004 providing labourers of EPZs to form workers associations and welfare committees. But representatives for workers' welfare committee were initially selected by the management though it was shown that they had been selected by a formal election (FIDH 2008).

During this phase, five visible characteristics of LDs can be identified. First, labourers involved in voluntary but some sort of coordinated LDs. Second, labourers able to develop their networks and formed some unions. Third, trade unions and their federation were unable to ensure labourers legitimate rights for their connection to some political parties. Forth, EPZ's labourers initiated some LDs in parallel to outside labourers of RMG sector. Finally, almost all LDs were wage-based disputes initiated by the RMG labourers. The demand for better wages and benefits were persistent during the following period.

4.3 Pre-Rana Plaza Collapse Period

As the commodity prices were continuously increasing and the wages were fixed 10 years earlier, the labourers of RMG sector were in hurdle for passing their daily life. The labourers claim of better benefits was oppressed by the employers. In 2005, various TUs, NOGs and a wing of British council intensified pressure to revise

wages and benefits for labourers by forming coalition. A number of incidents like fire at Shaan Knitting, building collapse in Savar, fire at Spectrum and KTS factory of Chattogram at that time intensified the LDs (The Daily Star 2005, The Daily Star 2007, and The Daily Star 2010a). Many politicians and human right activists also participated in the procession with labourers for changing this critical situation of RMG labourers (Mohammad 2011). Although the labourers built a common platform and formulated a ten point demand, LDs flare out at FS factory with a claim of releasing three detained labourers (Tamanna 2010). In May 2006, disputes turn into massive form and flare out the whole Dhaka city, labourers ransacked around 300 RMG factories claiming an end of employer oppression, set free of all arrested labourers, better wages and benefits, holidays as per laws and immediate settlement of all outstanding dues (The Daily Star 2006). The female labourers played important role in these disputes.

During this time, four important alliances were in operation in RMG sector all of which rejected their connection in these LDs although SKOP and some minor leftist parties indirectly supported the labourers in the disputes. Due to concurrent LDs the government proposed to fix the minimum wage at Tk.3000. But the employers rejected the proposal which caused further series of LDs. In June 2006, LDs flare out among 4000 RMG factories all over the country, some factories were set fire and hundreds factories were vandalized by the labourers that force the employers to sign a tripartite MoU among employer, labourers and government (The independent 2006b, The New Age 2006). In October, the government declared minimum wages at Tk.1662.50 which was much lower than the labourers claims of Tk.3000 brought dissatisfaction among labourers (The Independent 2006a). The EPZ labourers began to show their agitations by getting united of 69 units in March 2008. To protect working environment the government amended EPZ laws that changed all labourers associations and committees into “Workers’ Welfare Societies” (Bdnews24 2009).

A number of LDs were instigated in late 2008 and 2009. In 2008, a female labourer became seriously ill and later died in hospital and six labourers were killed during demonstration claiming their outstanding wages in 2009 (The Independent 2008, Mohammad

2011). The LD took a massive form when labourers of Nassa factory began demonstrations demanding Tk.5000 as minimum wages (Banglanews24 2010). When employers took repressive measures through police, it flared out in the Ashulia area. In July 2010, the government assured to revise the wage structure due to increasing number of disputes. The government declared the minimum wage at Tk.3000 which was much lower than labourers' demand which created frustration among labourers that instigated another disputes while 30 factories were ransacked (Bdnews24 2010a). In October 2010, the state deployed a new police unit named 'industrial police' to protect industrial areas (The Daily Star 2010b).

However, many employers also denied to execute new wage structure and were following old structure which intensified LDs in different factories. The Korean company Youngone Ltd. had to shut down its all 11 units due to continuous LDs (Bdnews24 2010b). On June 12, 2012 labourers again began a LD in Ashulia area demanding increase of wages by Tk.2000 as Tk.3000 is not enough to lead their daily life. The demonstration continuously extending as large number of labourers was suspending their jobs and was participating in the disputes. The disputes were in effect for five days as employers, labourers and government could not reach an agreement. The employers were not ready to increase wages as it pushed them to unfavourable market competitions. The employers closed down all factories at Ashulia areas and restart operation on 21 June due to government request. During disputes 400 labourers were got hurt and 350 vehicles and 130 factories were vandalized by agitated labourers (The Daily Star 2012).

During this period, four visible characteristics of LDs could be identified. First, the labourers of the RMG sector applied their whole power to get their claims effective. Second, the LDs became devastating as both the owners and labourers were inflexible on their claims. Third, the labourers were comparatively united and dispute of one firm was rapidly answered by the dispute of other firms. Finally, both the EPZs and non-EPZs labourers initiated LDs at a time in parallel to each other on a same ground. The features of these disputes were persistent in the post-Rana Plaze collapse period.

4.4 Post-Rana Plaza Collapse Period

As the labourers of RMG sector were unsatisfied with their wages and recurrently engaging themselves in LDs, the incident of Rana Plaza collapse on April 2013 intensified their claims. The labourers left their jobs and captured the streets on Savar area and began demonstration to express their sympathy and claimed capital punishment of the responsible persons. On September the labourers began to show demonstration claiming wage hike at Tk.8114 at Gazipur. The dispute took massive form when a politician underpinned labourers' claims. The dispute sustained for a week and about four hundred factories closed down for an unknown period (The Daily Star 2013b). The dispute turned into destructive again in November when employer tortured a women labourer in Gazipur. The agitated labourers ransacked the factories; almost hundred firm shut down; the law enforcing agencies took repressive actions which resulted in two labourers dead and some other wounded (The Daily Star 2013a).

The government announced new wage structure for RMG labourers which were rejected by both the labourers and owners. The labourers rejected it as it was below to their expectations and the owners rejected it as Accord and Alliance started their operations and they has to invest much in safety and security purposes. From January 2014 the owners began to sack its existing labourers to reduce labour cost to execute new wage structure. In 2014, no less than four hundred units were shut down and almost 150 thousands labourers lost their employments (Ovi 2014). During 2015, a number of LDs were initiated in Ashulia, Tongi, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Savar demanding outstanding wages, overtime dues, Eid bonuses, restarting of shut down factories; restoring of sacked labourers.

On December 11, 2016 the labourers in Ashulia began a LD claiming wage hike at Tk.16000 with the instigation of the Garment Shramik Front. The labourers captured the streets and vandalized factories. The employers closed down 60 factory units and sacked about 1600 labourers (The Daily Star 2016). The claim for wage hike was continued in various garment factories as civil society and international agencies supported their claims. Due to pressure from different stakeholders, government announced a new wage structure where minimum wage was fixed at Tk.8000 (Bdnews24 2019). But the labourers denied accepting the wage structure as the wage was

not as high as was expected and the wage in the upper grades were not adjusted properly. The government then revised the wage structure again to remove frustration of upper grades.

During this period, four visible characteristics of the LDs could be identified. First, the labourers incorporated the matter of working terms and conditions, safety and security at work with the claim of wages hike at their demands as local and international pressure in this regard was increased. Second, the government included harder terms and conditions in the amendment of labour laws regarding safety and security at workplace such as establishing alternative exit point and keeping it open during operations, providing personal safety equipments to the labourers, establishing health care centre, introducing compulsory group insurance for the labourers. Third, huge number of labourers was sacked due to close down of factory, financial inability of the employers or for balancing costs with high wages as Bangladeshi producers lost their image in the international market for Rana Plaza collapse and was failing to get further purchase order. Finally, some workers' federations like Garment Shromik Trade Union Kendra (GSTUK), Garment Shromik Odhikar Andolon (GSOA), Garment Shromik Front (GSF) were formally or informally assisting workers' leaders in their movements.

5. NATURE OF LABOUR DISPUTES IN RMG SECTOR

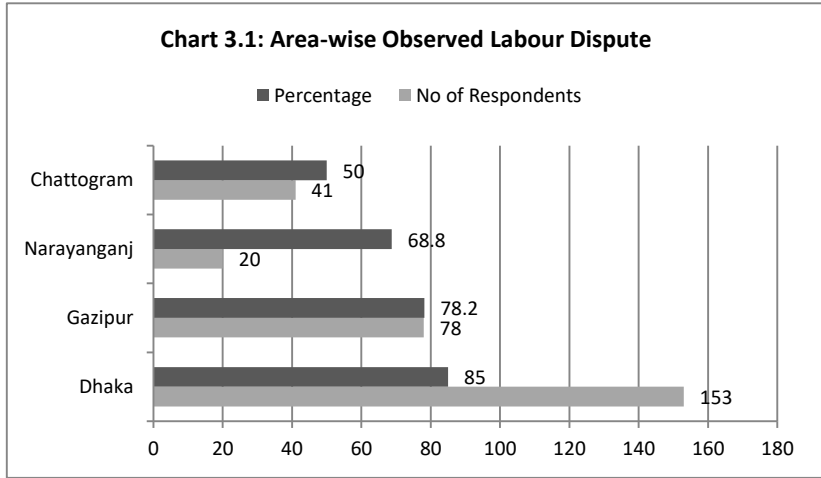
There are several stages of LDs. It may be latent, it may be perceived or it may be expressed by the either parties. The labourers of RMG sector consider the situation as dispute when it is responded aggressively by the opposite party. However, the situations which are not responded by the other party may be aggravated and answered in a dangerous form (Pondy 1967). In the RMG sector, situations are considered as dispute when labourers stop their works or become aggressive or violent. The questionnaire survey conducted to find out the nature of LDs shows that about three forth workers have seen LDs at their workplace. The lowest number of dispute seen by a labourer is one while the highest number is 67. On an average a labourer has observed 4.27 times LD in his working life at RMG sector.

On the other hand, 92 labourers (24 percent) have never seen LDs at their firms. Those who have never seen LDs at their firm, 32.6 percent of them tell that LD never occurred at their firms, 44.6

percent tell that as company provides all benefits to them they had not needed to go for LD and 5.4 percent labourer tell that there are good relations with management. In contrary, 13 percent labourer tell that they are frightened in involving in any disputes as they may be dismissed and 4.3 percent tell that as the workplace is watched over by the external local miscreants employed by owners to avoid any kind of disputes. The data specify that better labour-management relations or better facilities are the basic reason behind non-observation of LDs in RMG sector.

5.1 Area-wise Labour Dispute

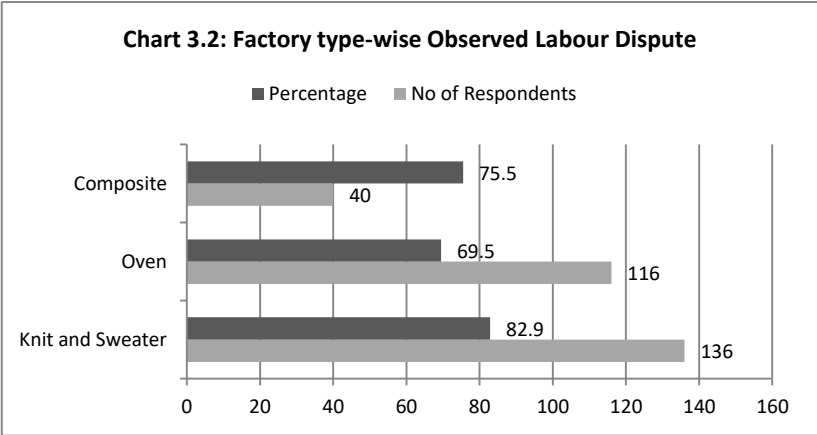
Dhaka is the most dispute prone area in the context of geographical location where rate of dispute observed by labourers is 85 percent. Gazipur is the second dispute prone area where rate of dispute is 78.2 percent succeeded by Narayanganj and Chattogram districts where rate of dispute is 68.8 percent and 50 percent respectively (Chart 3.1). The claim is supported by the CPD-RMG study 2016 where it was



claimed that over 39 per cent of labour unrest took place in Dhaka, followed by 28.28 per cent in Gazipur and about 25 per cent in Narayanganj (Munni 2017). As almost 50 percent RMG firm are located in Dhaka and historically Dhaka is the pioneer for any type of movement, almost all LDs began at Dhaka first then it extended to other areas later (FGD-4).

5.2 Factory Type-wise Labour Dispute

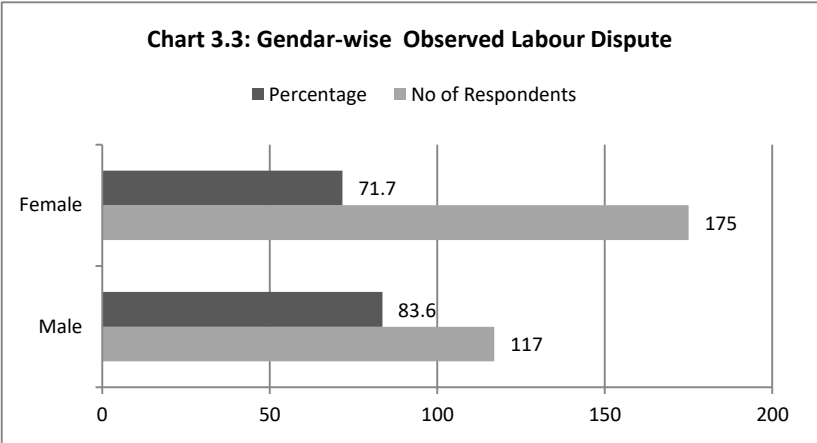
In the context of factory type, knit and sweater factories are the most disputant where rate of dispute observed by labourers is 82.9 percent accompanied by composite and woven factories where the rates are 75.5 percent and 69.5 percent respectively (Chart 3.2). As some of the knit and sweater firms employ labourers on piece rate basis and



offer lower rate after completing the works, the labourers more frequently become agitated due to their low paying (FGD-3).

5.3 Gender-wise Labour Dispute

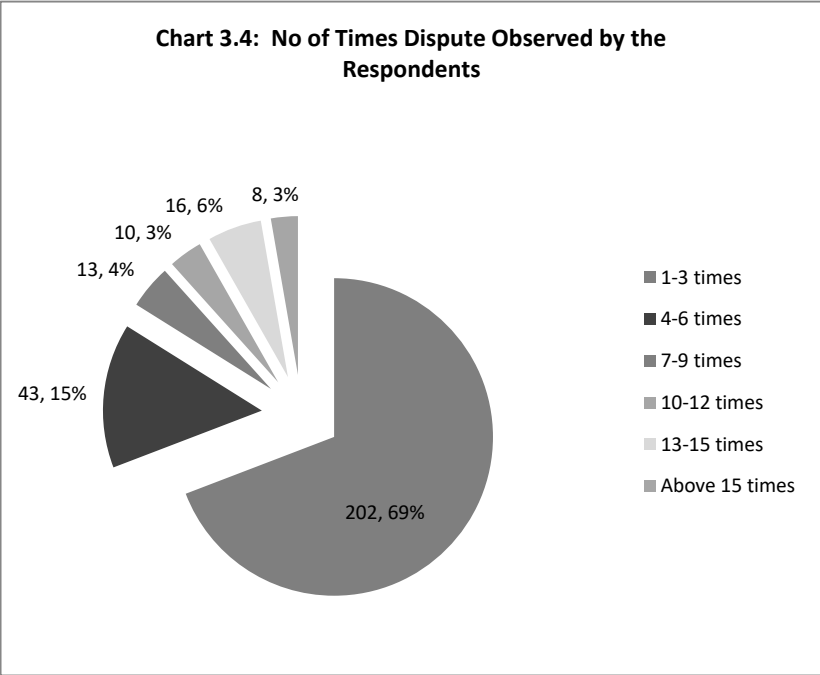
In the context of sex, the rate of dispute observed by male labourers is higher than the dispute observed by female labourers. The survey data shows that 83.6 percent male labourers observed LDs at their



workplace while the rate is 71.7 percent for female labourers (Chart 3.3). The male labourers are relatively more educated more vocal and more extrovert than women labourers. The male labourers usually chat in a tea stall, exchange views with each other and become more informed regarding laws and their rights which act as a stimulator in their minds that motivate them to engage in disputes (FGD-1).

5.4 Frequency of Labour Dispute

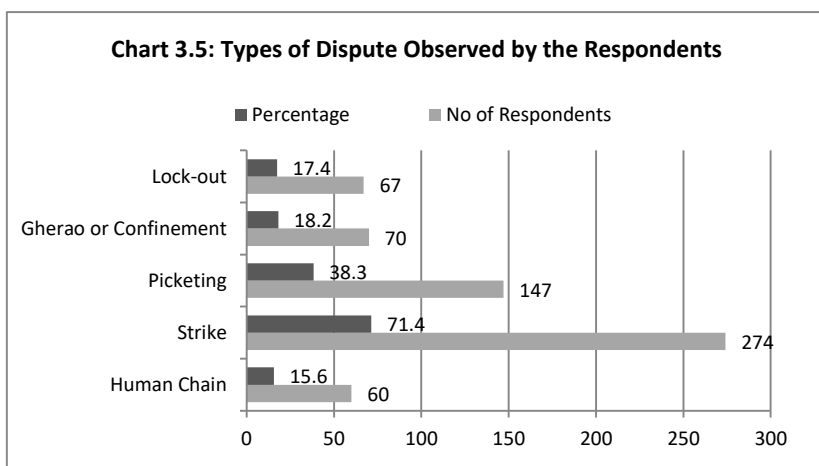
In the context of frequency of LDs, the survey data shows that 69.2 percent labourers observed one to three times LDs at their workplace while 14.7 percent observed four to six times and 16.1 percent observed more than six times LDs at their firms (Chart 3.4). The



survey data also shows that average length of service of labourers at their current firm is 3.12 years while the average length of service at RMG sector is 6.94 years which indicate that almost all labourers do not pursue their jobs at RMG sector for a long time. They search for better jobs at RMG sector or other sectors and shift their job there which is the major cause of few observations of LDs by labourers.

5.5 Forms of Labour Disputes

There are several forms of LDs which could be chosen by the disputant party to show their agitations. It may be strikes, lockout, human chain, picketing or confinement of authorities. The forms of LD preferred by the RMG labourers are shown in chart 3.5 that indicates that strike is the most popular form of LD. About 71.4 percent labourers observed strikes at their workplace while the rate is 38.3 percent for picketing. The claim is supported by the industrial dispute report 2015 of BILS where it was claimed that out of 148 labour dispute at RMG sector, 65 percent were strike (including general strike, road block, mass demonstration), 22 percent picketing



(including clash with polices, vandalizing factories, vehicles, furniture or equipments) and only 1.4 percent confinement of authority (BILS 2015).

The RMG workers prefer strike because it is the easiest way to express their agitations by stopping their works and it is also safest way as the external miscreants or police cannot intervenes their activities. They primarily choose strike to bring owners to bargaining table by creating pressure on him/her by stopping their works. When the owner do not come to bargaining table to discuss the matters and take repressive measures then labourers become frustrated and go for picketing or other destructive measures (FGD-1, 2 & 4).

Human Chain: The rate of human chain (HC) is very low in RMG sector in relation to other types of LDs. The survey data shows that

only 15.6 percent labourers observed HC at their working life. On an average, labourers observed 2.62 times HC at their working life with a variance of 3.29. On an average each HC stayed for 2.39 hours with a variance of 2.41 hours. The labourers of Dhaka district observed most HCs where the rate of observed HC was 17.8 percent followed by the labourers of Chattogram, Gazipur and Narayanganj districts where the rates were 14.5, 13.6 and 12.5 percent respectively. However, the labourers of knit and sweater factories observed more HCs where the rate of HC was 22.6 percent compared to the labourers of woven and composite factories (table 1). In case of gender, the male labourers observed more HCs than the female labourers. The rate of HC observed by male labourers was 19.3 percent while the rate for female labourers was 13.5 percent. From the viewpoint of grade of labourers, the labourers of grade IV observed more HC than other grades. The rate of HC observed by the labourers of grade IV was 21.9 percent while the rate was 18.4, 12 and 8.2 percent for the labourers of grade V, VI and VII respectively.

Strike: The rate of strike is very high in RMG sector in relation to other types of LDs. The survey data shows that 71.4 percent labourers observed strikes at their workplace. On an average, labourers observed 2.76 times strikes at their workplace with a variance of 8.02. On an average each strike stayed for 25.36 hours. The labourers of Dhaka district observed most strikes where the rate of observed strikes was 82.2 percent followed by the labourers of Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram districts where the rates were 70, 62.5 and 46.8 percent respectively. Again, the labourers of knit and sweater factories observed more strikes where the rate of strike was 78 percent compared to the rate of strike observed by the labourers of woven and composite factories where the rate of strike were 66.5 percent and 66 percent respectively. In case of gender, the male labourers observed more strikes than the female labourers. The rate of strikes observed by male labourers was 75.7 percent while the rate for female labourers was 68.9 percent. From the viewpoint of grade of labourers, the labourers of grade IV, V and VI observed more strikes where rates of strike were 74.6, 74.5 and 73.3 percent than the labourers of grade VII where the rate was 62.9 percent.

Picketing: The rate of picketing is not as high as the rate of strike in RMG sector of Bangladesh. The survey data shows that only 30.7

percent labourers observed picketing at their working life. On an average, labourers observed 2.81 times picketing at their working life with a variance of 7.83. On an average each picketing stayed for 3.49 hours with a variance of 4.52 hours. The labourers of Dhaka district observed most picketing where the rate of observed picketing was 45 percent followed by the labourers of Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram districts where the rates were 39.1, 31.3 and 21 percent respectively. Again, the labourers of knit and sweater factories observed more picketing where the rate of picketing was 42.1 percent compared to the rate of picketing observed by the labourers of woven and composite factories where the rate of picketing were 35.3 percent and 35.8 percent respectively. In case of gender, the male labourers observed more picketings than the female labourers. The rate of picketings observed by male labourers was 41.4 percent while the rate for female labourers was 36.5 percent. From the viewpoint of grade of labourers, the labourers of grade IV observed most picketing where rate of picketing was 49.1 percent followed by the labourers of grade VI, V and VII where the rates were 42.7, 38.8 and 21.6 percent respectively.

Gherao or Confinement of Authority: The rate of gherao is very low in RMG sector in relation to other types of LDs. The survey data shows that only 10.9 percent labourers observed gherao at their working life. On an average, labourers observed 1.30 times gherao at their working life with a variance of 0.97. On an average each gherao stayed for 4.06 hours with a variance of 2.95 hours. The labourers of Dhaka and Gazipur district observed most gherao where the rate of observed gherao was 20 percent for both districts followed by the Narayanganj and Chattogram districts where the observed rates were 18.8 and 9.7 percent respectively. However, the labourers of knit and sweater factories observed more gherao where the rate of gherao was 21.3 percent compared to gherao observed by the labourers of woven and composite factories where the rates were 15.6 and 17 percent respectively. In case of gender, the male labourers observed more gherao than the female labourers. The rate of gherao observed by male labourers was 23.6 percent while the rate for female labourers was 15.2 percent. From the viewpoint of grade of labourers, the labourers of grade IV observed most gherao where the rate of gherao was 28.9 percent followed by the grade V, VI and VII where the rate of observed gherao were 18.4, 14.7 and 8.2 percent respectively.

Lock-out: Lock-out is the employer's action in response of labourers' protests. Sometimes the employers go for lock-out to suppressed labourers' protests and force them to return on works. The survey data shows that 17.4 percent labourers observed lock-out at their working life. On an average, labourers observed 1.30 times lock-out at their working life with a variance of 0.576. On an average each lock-out stayed for 7.85 days. The labourers of Dhaka district observed most lock-out where the rate of observed lock-out was 21.1 percent followed by the Gazipur, Chattogram and Narayanganj districts where the observed rates were 15.5, 12.9 and 12.5 percent respectively. Still the labourers of knit and sweater factories observed more lock-out where the rate of lock-out was 20.7 percent compared to lock-out observed by the labourers of woven and composite factories where the rates were 15.0 and 15.1 percent respectively.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents who observed different kinds of labour disputes at their workplace

		Types of Labour Dispute Observed										Total Number of Respondent Interviewed
		Human Chains		Strikes		Picketing		Gherao or Confinement		Lockout		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Area-wise Distribution	Dhaka	32	17.8	148	82.2	81	45.0	36	20.0	38	21.1	180
	Gazipur	15	13.6	77	70.0	43	39.1	22	20.0	17	15.5	110
	Narayanganj	4	12.5	20	62.5	10	31.3	6	18.8	4	12.5	32
	Chattogram	9	14.5	29	46.8	13	21.0	6	9.7	8	12.9	62
Factory Type-wise Distribution	Knit or Sweater	37	22.6	128	78.0	69	42.1	35	21.3	34	20.7	164
	Oven	15	9.0	111	66.5	59	35.3	26	15.6	25	15.0	167
	Composite	8	15.1	35	66.0	19	35.8	9	17.0	8	15.1	53
Gender- wise Distribution	Male	27	19.3	106	75.7	58	41.4	33	23.6	33	23.6	140
	Female	33	13.5	168	68.9	89	36.5	37	15.2	34	13.9	244
Grade-wise Distribution	Grade-IV	25	21.9	85	74.6	56	49.1	33	28.9	31	27.2	114
	Grade-V	19	19.4	73	74.5	38	38.8	18	18.4	18	18.4	98
	Grade-VI	8	10.7	55	73.3	32	42.7	11	14.7	14	18.7	75
	Grade-VII	8	8.2	61	62.9	21	21.6	8	8.2	4	4.1	97
Total		60	15.6	274	71.4	147	38.3	70	18.2	67	17.4	384

6. WORKERS` INVOLVEMENT IN LABOUR DISPUTES

No LD occurs without involvement of labourers. However, all labourers do not actively participate in LD due to their difference in morale, mentality and personality. The survey reveals that 60.7 percent labourers personally involved in LDs out of which 73.4 percent involved in only strikes, 16.7 percent involved in all forms of LDs and 7.3 percent involved in both strike and human chain. Only 1.3 percent labourers involved in picketing. As picketing is treated as injurious form of LD, labourers involved in picketing do not want to take responsibility of it which result in low rate of picketing. The male labourers more actively participate in LDs than the female labourers as 67.9 percent male labourers actively participate in LDs while the rate for female labourers was 56.6 percent.

Educational qualification of labourers has a negative correlation with their personal involvement in LDs. The rate of personal involvement is high with less educated labourers and vice versa. The survey data shows that the labourers who are functionally literate 70.6 percent of them participate in LDs while the rate gradually decrease with upper level of education and the rate is 33.3 percent for labourers having degree or upper level of educational qualifications. Like dispute observed by labourers, the labourers of knit and sweater factories and of grade IV are more actively participate in LDs.

6.1 Reasons for Involvement

The easiest way for employers in highly competitive international markets is to reduce costs by reducing labour costs or to increase productivity by increasing production targets. They try to increase productivity by increasing production targets. They force labourers to complete their targets even after their working hours. They do not want to provide leaves. They often harass or retrench labourers due to their absenteeism for illness. They misbehave with labourers and use slang languages for slight mistake. They even do not pay their wages and other payments in times. These types of situation force the labourers to respond against employers. They primarily abandon their jobs to call on owners to talk with labourers. But the owner neither visits their factories nor consults with labourers. Two or three days later the labourers become more aggressive and begin destructive activities to force the owner to consult with labourers (FGD-II & III). Instead of consultation owner closes down the factories which intensifies the disputes.

6.2 Reasons behind Remaining Inactive

As all labourers do not participate in LDs, some of the labourers remain inactive in disputes. The survey data shows that 51 percent of the labourers who have not actively involved in labour disputes says that as the employers provide all type of benefits in time they never needed LD and 29.8 percent of them do not involved in LD as they do not like any kind dispute in workplace. However, 9.9 percent labourers tell that they have not involved as dispute never occurred at their factories and 9.3 percent tell that they would be dismissed if they would have participated in any disputes.

7. CONCLUSION

The labourers of RMG sector had been depriving of their fair payments and rights from the very beginning of the sector. At the beginning of RMG sector, the government policy was to strengthen the private sector by increasing foreign direct investment. The government also restricted labour movements several times by enforcing laws. The labourers also failed to organize massive labour movement until 2005 due to lack of resources, lack of unity, lack of leadership, owners` repression and resistance and most importantly dread of dismissal as the job in the RMG sector was important to them most of whom were female and had come from backward families from villages. A series of incidence during 2005-2006 instigate them to involve in some spontaneous movements against the owners` oppressions, the prime claim of which was to increase wages. A large number of LDs have been organized during the period 2006 to 2018, the main claim of which was also to increase wages.

The labourers of RMG sector are even now fighting to secure their rights by organizing different LDs and involving themselves in these disputes and protest against employers' actions although state has altered the labour laws several times. The survey data shows that most of the disputes observed in Dhaka district followed by Gazipur and Narayanganj Districts. The labourers of knit and sweater factories observed more disputes than the labourers of composite and woven factories. The male labourers also observed more disputes than female labourers. Strike is the most popular form of labour dispute as it is considered relatively safer by labourers as no external party can influence strike. More than sixty percent labourers have personally involved in strikes for securing their demands. The

educational qualification of labourers has negative correlation with LDs. The labourers with high educational qualification are less likely to involve LDs. In contrary, some labourers never involve any type of LD as their employers provide all kinds of benefits to them as per laws.

The employers should give more emphasis on making the labourers educated through proper training to avoid dispute at their institutions. The government has to give more emphasis the labourers of Dhaka and adjacent areas of Dhaka district especially the male labourers of knit and sweater factories on formulating their policies to avoid LDs. Due to complexity to reach to employers, their opinion has not been incorporated in this research and the finding of the study is dependent on the opinions of the labourers of RMG sector. As the study was intended to find out the state of LD in RMG sector, the causes and consequences of these disputes are not highlighted here and there is ample scope to find out the causes and consequences of LDs for future researchers.

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ANNEXES

Annex-1: Sample size determination

According to the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), the RMG sector at present employs around 2.2 million workers.² A study shows that 75.81 percent of the total workers are of grade IV to grade VII.³ To obtain a representative sample, the following statistical formula will be used for known population size $N = 2200000 \times 75.81\% = 1667820$.⁴

$$n = \frac{\frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N}{2}}{(N - 1)e^2 + \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{2}}$$

Where,

n = sample size

Z = the value on the Z table at 95% confidence level = 1.96

e = sampling error at 5%

p = maximum variability of the population at 50%, i. e., (0.50)

$q = 1 - p = 0.50$

Assuming, $p = 0.50$ (maximum variability) and 95% confidence level the resulting sample size is estimated as follows:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 \times 1667820}{(1667820 - 1)(0.05)^2 + (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5} = 384.07 \cong 384$$

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- 2 Jakir Hossain, Mostafiz Ahmed & Jahurul Hasan Sharif, "Linking Trade and Decent Work in Global Supply Chains in Bangladesh," *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung* (February, 2018), 33. In one estimate (EC 2016), the number of RMG sector employed workers is 4.2 million. The official statistics, however, differ. According to the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, the RMG industry at present employs around 2.2 million workers (DIFE 2015).
 - 3 Haque, A.K.E. & Bari, E. *Garment Workers in Bangladesh: Social Impact of the Garment Industry*, (Dhaka: Asian Center for Development, 2015), PP. 9-11.
 - 4 William Gemmell Cochran, *Sampling Techniques*, 3rd ed., (New York: Wiley, 1977), 76.

Annex Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by using Probability Proportional to Estimated Size

Area wise Respondents		Factory Type wise Respondents	Sex wise Respondents	Grade wise Respondents			
Existing Proportion ⁵	No. of Respondents	Existing Proportion ⁶	No of Respondents	Existing Proportion ⁷	No of Respondents	Existing Proportion ⁸	No of Respondents
Dhaka 46.89%	180	Woven 43.31%	78	Male (29%)	23	G-4 (32%)	07
						G-5 (24%)	06
						G-6 (14%)	03
						G-7 (30%)	07
			Female (71%)	55	G-4 (27%)	15	
					G-5 (26%)	14	
					G-6 (23%)	13	
					G-7 (24%)	13	
		Knit 42.51%	77	Male (45%)	35	G-4 (32%)	11
						G-5 (24%)	08
						G-6 (14%)	05
						G-7 (30%)	11
			Female (55%)	42	G-4 (27%)	11	
					G-5 (26%)	11	
					G-6 (23%)	10	
					G-7 (24%)	10	
		Combine d 14.18%	25	Male (30%)	08	G-4 (32%)	03
						G-5 (24%)	02
						G-6 (14%)	01
						G-7 (30%)	02
			Female (70%)	17	G-4 (27%)	05	
					G-5 (26%)	04	
					G-6 (23%)	04	

- 5 BGMEA. As the factories of other districts are excluded from the study which comprises 3.07 percent factories, the author rounded up the percentages.
- 6 BGMEA. There are 1956 (43.22%) woven producing, 1920 (42.42%) knit and sweater producing, 641 (14.16%) knit and woven producing factories and 9 other factories in Bangladesh which are listed BGMEA. As the factories of other category are excluded from the study, the author rounded up the percentages.
- 7 Haque, A.K.E. & Bari, E. *Garment Workers in Bangladesh: Social Impact of the Garment Industry*, (Dhaka: Asian Center for Development, 2015), PP. 9-11.
- 8 Ibid, 16. Compiled by researcher.

						G-7 (24%)	04			
Gazipur 28.59%	110	Woven 43.31%	48	Male (29%)	14	G-4 (32%)	05			
						G-5 (24%)	03			
						G-6 (14%)	02			
						G-7 (30%)	04			
						G-4 (27%)	09			
			Female (71%)	34	G-5 (26%)	09				
					G-6 (23%)	08				
					G-7 (24%)	08				
					Knit 42.51%	47	Male (45%)	21	G-4 (32%)	07
									G-5 (24%)	05
		G-6 (14%)	03							
		G-7 (30%)	06							
		G-4 (27%)	07							
		Female (55%)	26	G-5 (26%)		07				
				G-6 (23%)		06				
				G-7 (24%)		06				
				Combine d 14.18%		15	Male (30%)	05	G-4 (32%)	02
									G-5 (24%)	01
		G-6 (14%)	01							
		G-7 (30%)	01							
		Female (70%)	10		G-4 (27%)				03	
					G-5 (26%)	03				
					G-6 (23%)	02				
					G-7 (24%)	02				
					Narayan ganj 8.27 %	32	Woven 43.31%	14	Male (29%)	04
G-5 (24%)	01									
G-6 (14%)	01									
G-7 (30%)	01									
Female (71%)	10	G-4 (27%)	03							
		G-5 (26%)	03							
		G-6 (23%)	02							
		G-7 (24%)	02							
		Knit 42.51%	14	Male (45%)				06	G-4 (32%)	02
G-5 (24%)	01									
G-6 (14%)	01									
G-7 (30%)	02									
Female (55%)	08						G-4 (27%)		02	
			G-5 (26%)	02						
			G-6 (23%)	02						
			G-7 (24%)	02						
			Combine d 14.18%	04			Male (30%)	01	G-4 (32%)	01
G-5 (24%)	00									
G-6 (14%)	00									
G-7 (30%)	00									
Female (70%)	03	G-4 (27%)							01	
		G-5 (26%)		01						
		G-6 (23%)		00						
		G-7 (24%)		01						
		Chattogr am 16.25%		62			Woven 43.31%	27	Male (29%)	08
G-5 (24%)	02									
G-6 (14%)	01									

						G-7 (30%)	02
				Female (71%)	19	G-4 (27%)	05
						G-5 (26%)	05
						G-6 (23%)	04
						G-7 (24%)	05
		Knit 42.51%	26	Male (45%)	12	G-4 (32%)	04
						G-5 (24%)	03
						G-6 (14%)	02
						G-7 (30%)	03
				Female (55%)	14	G-4 (27%)	04
						G-5 (26%)	04
						G-6 (23%)	03
						G-7 (24%)	03
		Combine d 14.18%	09	Male (30%)	03	G-4 (32%)	01
						G-5 (24%)	01
						G-6 (14%)	00
						G-7 (30%)	01
				Female (70%)	06	G-4 (27%)	02
						G-5 (26%)	02
						G-6 (23%)	01
						G-7 (24%)	01
Total	384		384		384		384

Trade Union

Importance of Domestic Workers protection and Welfare Policy during COVID-19 pandemic situation

¹Shahida Parveen Shikha

The number of working women in Bangladesh is increasing day by day. So there is no reason to think that they do not have problems at work. The women workers of our country are working by overcoming various social obstacles. Fighting is another name for life, so women workers survive by fighting. Although women workers are considered as an integral part of the working people of the society, they are not socially free from social exploitation, discrimination, deprivation and injustice.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic situation has endangered human life. COVID-19 is changing the reality of our lives. We are all living in a big mess. The country's economy is facing the most disasters. Has had a negative impact on the economy. Economic activity stagnated. Sitting at home without work is a great threat to the workers. These working people have to deal with various problems. Extreme disasters have befallen the lives of working women in particular.

Women workers are severely neglected in their workplaces. Their conditions are completely different than that of male colleagues. As a woman, she has to face many discriminations. We find in many studies that informal workers account for 43% of GDP, with domestic workers, home construction workers, and home base workers contributing much more. Among these informal workers, the condition of domestic workers is the most deplorable. Every day when we open the newspaper we see the news of inhuman torture on domestic workers. According to newspaper reports, the incidence of rape, torture and murder of domestic workers during the transmission of COVID-19 is alarmingly high.

According to a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in 2015-16, the number of domestic workers is about 10

1 Trade Union affiliation with Bangladesh Trade Union Centre.

lakh 89 thousand. Of which 80% women are involved in this work. According to the survey, 69.7% of these workers work in urban areas and about 37.3% in rural areas. According to the data of Labour Force Survey 2016-17, the total number of workers involved in domestic work in the country is about 13 lakh. According to the International Labour Organization, the number of domestic workers in Bangladesh is about 3.2 million. Among them, the number of child domestic workers is 4 lakh 20 thousand, of which 75 percent are considered to be female children. On 16 June 2011, at the 100th session of the International Labour Organization (ILO) General Conference, the organization held a convention on the decent work of domestic workers. Initiatives were taken to observe this day (Convention 189, Domestic Workers Convention 2011).

The Ministry of Labour and Employment of our government formulated the "Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2015" in view of various organizations raising various works, movements and demands to improve the living standards of domestic workers.

Many good things have come up in the policy. But these are not being implemented. Because there is no legal basis for the policy, if someone does not abide by it, he will not be brought under the law. Again, the Monitoring Cell that the Ministry of Labour was supposed to have is not effective. So we have always demanded a policy legal framework.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment formulates this policy. In order to remove a domestic worker from the job, it has to be informed one month in advance. If the domestic worker also wants to leave the job, the employer must be notified one month in advance. Provision has been made to pay one month's wages if the domestic worker is immediately removed from the job. It has been asked to inform the concerned police station about the matter with her picture by hiring a full-time domestic worker. The policy further states that if a domestic worker commits a crime, action can be taken under the existing law, but the employer cannot punish him physically or mentally. The minimum age of domestic worker should be 14 years. But light work has to be done. In addition, in order to keep a 12-year-old as a domestic worker, the employer must discuss with his legal guardian in the presence of a third party. In that case, it is necessary to ensure that the child's health is not endangered and that he has the

opportunity to receive education. Domestic workers in the country will get 18 weeks maternity leave with pay, which must be paid to the employer. The government needs to launch a helpline to help domestic workers. In addition, if a domestic worker files a case alleging sexual harassment and torture, physical and mental abuse, the government will handle the case. Again there will be a supervisory cell under the Ministry of Labour to implement the policy. If a domestic worker is a victim of deprivation or abuse, he / she can complain to the Monitoring Cell, Human Rights and Domestic Workers' Organization by telephone, orally or in writing. The policy includes rest and leave arrangements.

Considering above points and according to the ILO Convention-189, domestic workers must be recognized as workers. It is a demand of time.

Publication Policy

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

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

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

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

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

3. The paper should include an abstract, which is not more than 150 words.
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5. Manuscripts to be considered for publication must be written in correct English and be submitted in accordance with the prescribed format. Articles must be free from all kinds of grammatical mistakes.
6. The author should retain a copy of the manuscript for his/her own reference.
7. Three (3) copies of article(s) are to be submitted to the Editor of the Journal in font size 12 (twelve) of Times New Roman on A4 size paper.
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10. Manuscripts will be accepted for publication on understanding that they are subjected to editorial revision.
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14. The manuscript should begin from the second page and the first page should contain the title, name of the author, his affiliation, address, telephone & fax number, and e-mail address.
15. References should be numbered consecutively in the text and grouped together at the end of the paper.
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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.