

## **BILS English Bulletin**

### **Jan-Mar, 2021**

#### **International Women's Day 2021 observed**

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2021, BILS and different networks organised various programmes in different parts of the country including Dhaka on March 8, 2021, keeping in front of the slogan 'Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world'

**Umbrella Rally, Discussion meeting and Folk song in Dhaka:** With the support of International Labour Organisation and Oxfam in Bangladesh, BILS organised an umbrella rally on March 8, 2021 at Mukhtangon in the Capital. At the same time, a number of folk singers along with a well-decorated truck organised by the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) under the Securing Rights of Women Domestic workers in Bangladesh project performed awareness songs about the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015 and the truck toured various areas of Dhaka city.



Domestic Workers' Rights Network-DWRN Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain, Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh General Secretary and BILS Advisory Council Member Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Jatiya Sramik League Joint General Secretary Firoz Hossain, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation President Shamim Ara, Jatiya Sramik Jote Working President Abdul Wahed, Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress secretary Pulak Ranjan Dhar, IndustriAll Bangladesh Council-IBC General Secretary Quamrul Hasan, BILS Director Nazma Yesmina and National Trade Union Federation leaders, Human Rights, Labour Rights and Civil



Society Organizations representatives and hundreds of domestic workers were present at the rally.

Underscoring the significance of International Women's Day, the speakers said that there is no alternative to the struggle to establish women's rights. Although some rights have been established through struggle, but domestic workers have not yet been included in the labour law. The speakers said that domestic workers live a very inhuman life. They do not have any specific working hours, place of residence, weekly holidays or maternity leave. There is no fixed salary for them. Therefore, besides recognizing domestic labour as a profession, it is necessary to include them in the labour law.

The speakers also said that domestic workers are being deprived of their rights and are being tortured in various ways. It is imperative to sign the ILO Convention-189 to ensure the rights and dignity of domestic workers, to recognize them as workers and to organize them as skilled manpower, to ensure their rights and protection.

Speakers at the rally demanded the proper implementation of "Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2015" for the protection of domestic workers; to provide training at the local level with more emphasis on skill development and language and education for women migrant workers who want to go abroad; to take effective initiatives and implement activities for the social and economic rehabilitation of women migrant workers returning from abroad; to ensure exemplary punishment to the criminals who are responsible for torturing domestic workers, including the proper treatment of abused domestic workers and fair compensation to the families of injured workers and killed workers.

A discussion meeting and Folk Song on domestic worker protection and welfare policy, 2015 organized by BILS' Securing Rights of Women Domestic Workers in Bangladesh (Suniti Project) at Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Auditorium of the National Museum, Dhaka on that afternoon.

The meeting was chaired by BILS Joint Secretary General Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, while Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Labour and Employment Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan, MP was present as the chief guest. BILS Director Nazma Yesmin acted as moderator. The song was performed by Alam Dewan and his team. Hundreds of domestic workers, organisers, trade union leaders, civil society members and representatives of development organizations from different parts of the Capital were present on the occasion.

Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan, MP, said women's rights are not a favor, they deserve it. Domestic workers are also our sisters or relatives so we have to ensure their rights and dignity. For this, everyone has to work unitedly. Noting that the labour law is being amended, she said an application would be made to the Prime Minister if necessary to include domestic workers in the labour law.

**Chattogram:** A discussion meeting was held at JM Hall, Chattogram on the role of those concerned in rehabilitating the socio-economic status of the returning migrant women workers. Academician Tahirin Sabur was present as the chief guest at the discussion meeting chaired by BFTUC leader Rekha Rani Barua. ICMPD Country Director Md. Ikram Hossain and BILS-LRSC



Chairman A M Nazimuddin was present as special guest. TUC Chattogram District President Tapan Dutta and BILS Deputy Director M A Mazid also spoke on the meeting. In addition, women's gatherings and rally was held at the city's Press Club premises to ensure women's rights, equality and dignity. BILS LRSC Chairman AM Nazim Uddin led the rally while hundreds of women workers and trade union leaders participated in the rally.

**Jashore:** BILS organised a discussion meeting at Upzilla Conference hall, Chougacha, Jashore. Upozilla UNO Engineer Md. Anamul Haque was present as chief guest.

**Faridpur:** BILS organised a discussion meeting at Jashim Uddin Hall, Faridpur. Faridpur District Comisioner Atul Sarkar was present as chief guest.

**Manikgonj:** BILS Organised a discussion meeting and human chain in Manikgonj. Speakers in the human chain demanded to provide training at the local level with greater emphasis on skills development and language education for women migrant workers who want to go abroad and to take effective initiatives and implement activities for the social and economic rehabilitation of women migrant workers returning from abroad.

## **Reflection workshop held on ILO Convention 190**

BILS and Care Bangladesh jointly organised a reflection workshop titled, “ILO Convention 190 for the Elimination of Gender based Violence at Workplace: Achievement, Challenge and Way Forward” on March 1, 2021, at Asia Hotel and Resort.



The main objectives of the workshop were to share experience of the participants on taken initiatives under this project, continuous initiatives of Trade Union leadership for the implementation of ILO Convention 190 as a part of project activity, to develop a concept about their learning and to finalise the recommendation taken from the participants in order to define the way forward.

BAWF General Secretary Tahmina Rahman, FGW General Secretary China Rahman, BJSF President Shamim Ara, BMSF Acting General Secretary Shahidullah Badal, BFTUC Secretary Pulak Ranjan Dhar, JSJ Working President Md. Abdul Wahed, BFTUC Office Secretary Shahida Parveen Shikha, BILS Executive Council Member Nasrin Akhter Dina, BILS Director Kohinoor Mahmood, CARE Bangladesh Team Leader Babul Azad, CARE Bangladesh Advocacy and Evaluation Officer Imran Hossain among others were present at the workshop.

## **Divisional level consultation meeting held on ILO Convention 190**

BILS, with the support of CARE Bangladesh organised a divisional level consultation on ILO Convention 190 for the Elimination of Gender based Violence at World of Work on January 13, 2021 at Press Club Conference Hall in Khulna.

The meeting was organised aiming to eliminate gender-based violence at workplace in both of formal and informal sector.



Main objectives of the meeting were to inform the leadership of National Trade Union Federations in Khulna division about ILO Convention 190 for the elimination of gender-based violence at workplace and to involve the leadership in the field level activities for raising awareness among the workers both of formal and informal sectors.

The meeting was presided over by Khulna SKOP Joint Coordinator and Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh Khulna division President Khalid Hossain. Khulna SKOP Joint Coordinator Ranajit Kumar Ghosh, Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal Khulna Metropolitan City General Secretary Md. Mozibor Rahman, BILS Director Kohinoor Mahmood, BILS Senior Programme Officer Monirul Kabir, CARE BD PWWB Project Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Md. Imran Hossain among others present at the programme.

Participants took part in the discussion while they drew some recommendations in order to define the way forward for the implementation of ILO Convention 190.

### **Opinion sharing meeting with Journalists on ILO Convention 190**

BILS, with the support of CARE Bangladesh organised an opinion sharing meeting with the participation of Journalists of various media on February 17, 2021 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

The main objectives of the meeting were to inform the participants about ILO Convention 190 for elimination gender-based violence at workplace and to inspire them for reporting on this issue in order to raise awareness among the workers of all sectors and draw the attention of government for the ratification of this Convention.



BILS Vice Chairman Anwar Hossain chaired the meeting, while BILS Secretary Abul Kalam Azad acted as moderator. Labour Rights Journalist Forum General Secretary and BSS Senior Reporter Ataur Rahman, Dhaka Union of Journalist-

DUIJ President Quddus Afrad, Daily Ittefaq Senior Reporter Al Mamun, Bhorer Khagoj Senior Reporter Kawsar Hossain among others were present at the meeting

BILS Director Kohinoor Mahmood explained the current situation of gender-based violence at workplace in Bangladesh. She focused on the number of violence and harassment occurred at workplace in 2020, various initiatives taken by government in order to protest this kind of violence. Regarding this she highlighted the necessity of the implementation of ILO Convention 190 and the contribution of Journalist to bring out the issue in the limelight. BILS Director Nazma Yesmin discussed about all the articles and areas of ILO Convention 190 where she mentioned several incidents as examples.

Some recommendations came from the meeting such as to reduce the level of labour exploitation, to define the working hour and ensure the issue of overtime of the workers, to expand the discussion through raising awareness, to involve media personnel more in this regard, to organise seminar and daylong training programme with the journalist in order to provide knowledge on ILO Convention 190.

## **Call for enact law to prevent sexual harassment at workplace and ratification of ILO Convention 190**

Leaders of trade unions, civil society and human rights organisations urged to enact law and ensure proper implementation and ratification of ILO Convention 190 referring the High Court guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment at workplace. Speakers said this at a consultation meeting organised by Gender Platform Bangladesh on March 31, 2021 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.



BILS Advisory Council member Mesbahuddin Ahmed chaired the meeting while Parliamentary Standing Committee Member on Ministry of Primary and Mass Education Shirin Akhter, MP was present as chief guest. Bangladesh Labour Federation Executive Director Ashraf Uddin acted as moderator and AWAJ

Foundation Executive Director Nazma Akhter delivered the welcome address. Jatiya Sramik Federation President Quamrul Ahsan, Domestic Workers Rights Network-DWRN Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain, Fair Wear Foundation Country Representative Bablur Rahman, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation President Shamim Ara, Kormojibi Nari Director (Programme) Sunzida Sultana, Sramik Karmachary Oikya Parishad-SKOP representative Md. Abdul Wahed and Pulak Ranjan Dhar, BILS Executive Council Member Nasrin Akhter Dina were present at the meeting among others. BILS Director Nazma Yasmin presented the concept paper on ILO Convention-190 and Awaaj Foundation Legal Adviser Nahida Anjum Kona presented the draft law on prevention of sexual harassment at workplace. Representatives of National Trade Union Federations, Human Rights and Workers Rights organisations and Civil Society and Govt. officials were also present at the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Shirin Akhtar, MP, said that the constitution of Bangladesh speaks of human rights for all citizens. She said women are more aware than before but this awareness will come only when men will be equally aware. She further said that every organisation should pay attention to the implementation of the law in their respective organisations.

Speakers at the meeting said everyone needs to change their perspective from their respective positions. They called upon all to work together for the enact law for the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace and ratify ILO Convention-190.

Mentioning that there is a law in the country against sexual harassment in the Penal Code, BILS Advisory Council member Mesbahuddin Ahmed said that It is not only the law that needs to be implemented and enforced, for this, everyone has to work unitedly and advocacy and publicity arrangements need to be made to raise awareness, he added.

This is to be mentioned that Gender Platform is a coalition of non-government and labour organisations. BILS also Member of this platform.

## **BILS-CSO Network Meeting held**

BILS, under its' DGB-BW project organized a meeting of its' LRSC-Civil society network entitled "Sromik Shanghoti Forum" on March 24, 2021 at Hotel Asian SR, Chattogram.



The meeting reviewed the earlier activities of "Sromik Shanghoti Forum" and unanimously agreed that all the member organizations have to come forward and take joint initiatives in terms of establishing regional workers' rights, opposing illegal lay-off, termination and misconduct with workers amid Covid-19.

The meeting was presided over by BILS-LRSC Coordination Committee Member and TUC Chattogram President Tapan Datta. Senior Journalist and Sub-editor of The Daily Suprovat Bangladesh Subash Dey, BILS-LRSC Centre Coordination Committee Chairman A M Nazimuddin, Member Secretary Md. Safar Ali, Ex. president of Chattogram Union of Journalist Nazimuddin Shaymol, BLAST representative Advocate Zinnat Amin, BNPS representative Sharif Chowan, SANGSAPTOK representative Liton Chowdhury, OSHE representative Md. Saiful Islam, YPSA representative Md. Jahedul Islam, Awaz Foundation representative Md. Alauddin, BILS officials Rizwanur Rahman Khan, Fazlul Kabir Mintu and Sharmin Akter also spoke on the occasion. The meeting was moderated by BILS-LRSC Senior Officer Pahari Bhattacharjee.

## **Workshop held on drafting National Action Plan for implementation of Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015**

BILS SRDW project in cooperation of Oxfam in Bangladesh and Domestic Workers Rights Network-DWRN organised a workshop titled "Drafting of National Action Plan (NAP) for implementation of domestic workers protection and welfare policy, 2015" on March 28, 2021 at CIRDAP Auditorium in the capital.



Main objective of the workshop was to drafting the National Action Plan with the support of the policy makers, government officials, representatives of local government and local administration, trade unions, civil society, NGOs, human rights organizations, academicians and media.

Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment Dr. Md. Rezaul Haque was present as chief guest at the workshop. BILS Joint Secretary General Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan was in the chair, while DWRN Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain acted as moderator. DWRN Member Secretary and BILS Director Nazma Yesmin delivered the welcome address. Former Additional Secretary and World Bank Consultant A.B. M Khorsed Alam, Bangladesh National Women's Lawyers Association-BNWLA President Adv. Salma Ali, Director of the Department of Labour Md. Bellal Hossain Shiekh, Socialist Workers Front President Razekuzzaman Ratan, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation President Shamim Ara, DUJ President Quddus Afrad, Dhaka North City Corporation Representative A M Foysal Uddin, Uttara Ladies Club General Secretary Professor Brig. Gen. Razia Khanom, Gulshan Ladies Club Secretary Tahera Muzaffar, Oxfam in Bangladesh project Coordinator Gita Rani Adhikary and Labour Rights Journalist Forum General Secretary Ataur Rahman participated at the workshop. BILS Executive Council member Shakil Akhter Chowdhury was present as the facilitator.



### **Advocacy Meeting held with NTUC Leaderships on SNV-Inclusive business model for RMG**

BILS organised a advocacy meeting with NTUC leadership titled “Advocacy Meeting held with NTUC Leaderships on SNV-Inclusive business model for RMG” on March 23, 2021 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

Main objectives of the meeting was



explaining the SNV-Inclusive business model for RMG to NTUC leaders and to draw recommendations regarding what initiatives should be taken by TUs to make this model successful for the RMG workers.

BILS Vice Chairman Anwar Hossain chaired the meeting and BILS Executive Council Member Shakil Akhter Chowdhury acted as a moderator. BILS Life Member Shamsunnahar Bhuinya MP present as Special Guest. While Somajtantrik Sramik Front President Razequzzaman Ratan, Jatiya Sramik Federation President Quamrul Ahsan, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation President Shamim Ara, Bangladesh Trade Union Sangha General Secretary Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh General Secretary Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation General Secretary Md. Mozibur Rahaman, Bangladesh Sramik Federation General Secretary AAM Fayez Hossain, BILS Director Nazma Yesmin were present.

### **Workshop held on TU Policy analysis issues on COVID-19**

BILS, ILO and NCCWE jointly organised a two day long workshop on Trade Union Policy Analysis Issues on COVID-19 on February 18, 2021 at Asia Hotel and Resort, Topkhana Road, Dhaka.



NCCWE Member Secretary Naimul Ahsan Jewel chaired the workshop and BILS Executive Council Member Md. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury acted as a moderator. Department of Bangladesh Studies of Rajshahi University Professor Jakir Hossain was the resource person for the workshop and presented the summery and the key recommendations from the TU position paper. Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra President Shahidullah Chowdhury, BILS Advisory Council Member Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Samajtantrik Sramik Front President Razequzzaman Ratan, Bangladesh Trade Union Shangha General Secretary Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh President Saifuzzaman Badsha, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation President Shamim Ara, BILS Director Kohinoor Mahmood and Nazma Yesmin were present at the workshop.

## **Consultation workshop held on trade union strategic position on workers' rights amid covid-19 pandemic**

BILS, ILO and NCCWE jointly organised a Consultation workshop held on trade union strategic position on workers' rights amid covid-19 pandemic on February 06, 2021 at BILS Seminar hall, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

To finalize and prepare the comprehensive and strategic common TU position paper on policy advocacy.

NCCWE Chairman and Jatiya Sramik League Acting President Noor Kutub Alam Mannan, BILS Advisory Council Member Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Trade Union Shangha General Secretary Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, NCCWE Member Secretary Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation President Shamim Ara, Department of Bangladesh Studies of Rajshahi University Professor Jakir Hossain, BILS Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, Executive Council Member Pulak Ranjan Dhar among others were present at the workshop.

Another consultation workshop on same issue was organised on January 17 BILS Seminar Hall, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

## **Trainers Training held for Non-RMG Sector on OSH**

BILS ILO and NCCWE jointly organised a two day long Trainers Training for Non-RMG Sector on OSH on March 6-7, 2021 at Banquet Hall, Hotel 71, Dhaka.

NCCWE Chairman and Jatiya Sramik League Acting President Noor Kutub Alam Mannan Chaired the programme while NCCWE Member Secretary Naimul Ahsan Jewel, BILS Executive Council Member Shakil Akhter Chowdhury, Jatiya Sramik Jote General Secretary Nurul Amin, Bangladesh



Free Trade Union Congress Secretary Pulak Ranjan Dhar, Bangladesh Trade

Union Kendra Office secretary Shahida Parvin Shikha, Jatiya Sramik League Womens affairs Secretary Promila Podder, Shamajtrantik Sramik Front General Secretary Ahsan Habib Bulbul, and BILS Youth Team Members were present at the training.

### **Lobby meeting with Chairperson of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Women and Children Affairs**

A lobby meeting with the Chairperson of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Women and Children Affairs of National Parliament Meher Afroz, MP was held on February 15, 2021 at Awami League Party Office, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

The meeting was organised to discuss about the inevitability of the ratification of ILO Convention 190 for the elimination of gender-based violence at workplace and to submit memorandum to the Chairperson and two MPs. Member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry



of Primary and Mass Education Shirin Akhter, MP and Member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Labour and Employment Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan, MP; BILS Directors Kohinoor Mahmood and Nazma Yesmin, BILS-CARE Bangladesh Project Coordinator Fariba Tabassum and BILS Information Officer Mamun Or Rashid were present in the meeting.

BILS Director Kohinoor Mahmood explained the urgency of implementing ILO Convention 190 considering the current situation of Bangladesh and the initiatives as well as activities taken by BILS in order to raise awareness among workers while BILS Director Nazma Yesmin highlighted various initiatives taken by government to protest gender based violence and related laws.



Standing Committee on Ministry of Women and Children affairs Chairperson Meger Afroz, MP shared her experience regarding the violence and harassment against women in our society. Considering the current situation she appreciated BILS and Care Bangladesh for taking this initiative. In the fruitful discussion she defined some way forwards to work effectively with this issue for. She assured at her end to raise the issue at parliament in the next assembly. Mentioning the issue as a continuous process of practice she emphasized to work on this until its ratification.

## **Workplace Situation Report 2020**

Considering the workplace situation and labour market, BILS publishes a survey report on the basis of news published in different national newspapers regarding workplace accident, violence and workers' unrest. Regarding this, analysing the workers condition at workplace in 2020, workers' unrest in RMG sector has become the crucial fact. We tried to highlight the issues in our report as how much unrest occurred in which sector and the reasons behind the unrest. Besides, we also tried to focus the issues of violence and accident at workplace.



In 2020, 729 workers were killed and 433 were injured in workplace accidents. 596 workers were tortured, of which 232 were tortured at workplace and 364 outside the workplace. A total of 593 workers unrest took place in different sectors, out of which 264 workers unrest took place in the readymade garments sector. This information was presented in the review meeting titled “Newspaper Based BILS Survey-2020 on workplace situation in Bangladesh” organised by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS on January 9, 2021, at Mawlana Mohammad Akram Kha Hall of National Press Club, Dhaka.



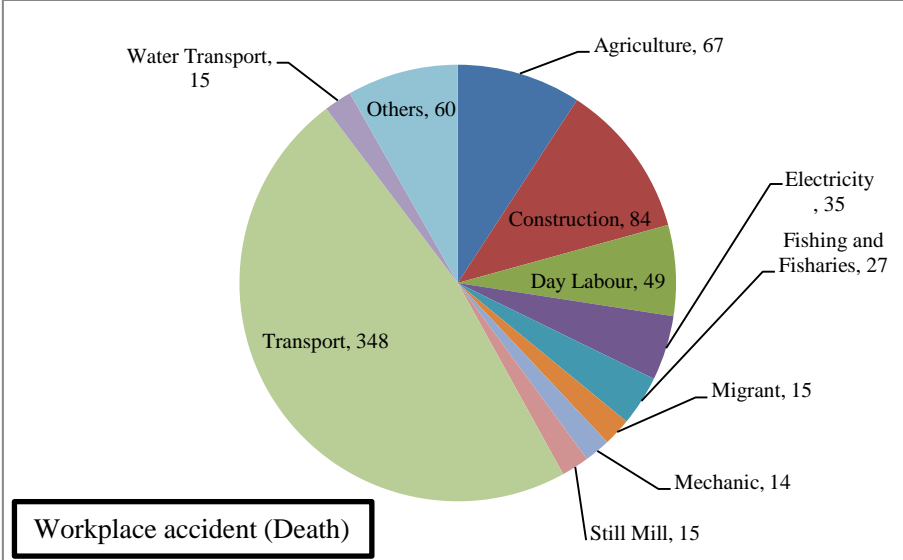
The meeting was Chaired by BILS Vice Chairman Shirin Akhter, MP. BILS Executive Council Secretary Abul Kalam Azad acted as a moderator. BILS Vice Chairman Anwar Hossain and Amirul Haque Amin, Advisory Council Member Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Executive Council Member Shakil Akhtar Chowdhury, DUJ President Quddus Afrad, Bangladesh Labour Rights Journalists Forum General Secretary Ataur Rahman, BILS Director Kohinoor Mahmood and Nazma Yasmin were present at the meeting. BILS Deputy Director Md. Yusuf Al Mamun presented the survey report.

### **Workplace accident and OHS**

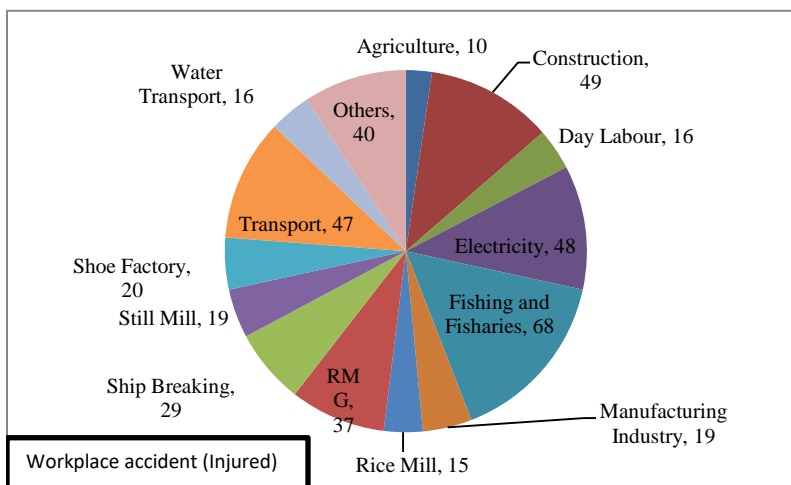
According to the survey, 729 workers died in workplace accidents in 2020, of which 723 were male and 6 were female. According to the sector, the highest number of 348 workers died in the transport sector. The second highest number of 84 workers died in the construction sector. The third highest number of 67 workers died in the agricultural sector. Besides, 49 day laborers, 35 in electric sector, 27 in fisheries and fisheries workers, 15 in steel mill workers, 15 in water transport workers, 14 in mechanics, 15 in migrant workers and in other 60 workers were killed such as brick kiln, hawker, rice mill, ship breaking Etc. sectors. It may be mentioned that in 2019, 1200 workers died in various sectors due to workplace accidents, out of which 1193 were male and 7 were female. According to the sector, the highest number of deaths occurred in the transport sector at 516 people. The second highest number of workers killed was 134 in the construction sector. The third highest number of workers killed was 116 in the agricultural sector.

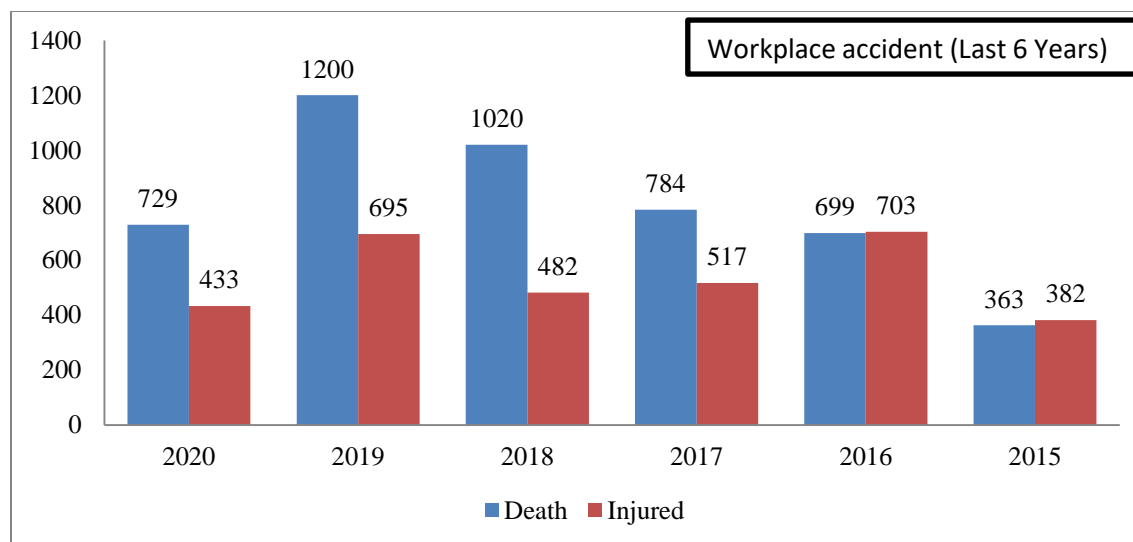
Workplace Accident (Death)	
Agriculture	67
Construction	84
Day Labour	49
Electricity	35
Fishing and Fisheries	27
Migrant	15
Mechanic	14
Still Mill	15
Transport	348
Water Transport	15
Others	60

In 2020, 433 workers were injured in workplace accidents, of which 387 were male and 46 were female. A maximum of 68 workers were injured in the fisheries sector. In the second highest construction sector, 49 workers were injured. Besides, 48 workers were injured in electric sector, 47 in transport sector, 20 in shoe factory, 16 in water transport sector, 37 in readymade garment industry, 29 in ship breaking industry, 16 in day labour, 19 in manufacturing industry, 19 in steel mill and 10 in agriculture. Besides, 40 workers were injured in other sectors. It may be mentioned that in 2019, 695 workers were injured in various workplace accidents, out of which 678 were male and 17 were female. The highest number of 132 workers were injured in the fisheries sector, followed by 117 in the construction sector. The third highest number of workers injured was 104 in the transport sector.



Workplace Accident (Injured)	
Agriculture	10
Construction	49
Day Labour	16
Electricity	48
Fishing and Fisheries	68
Manufacturing Industry	19
Rice Mill	15
RMG	37
Ship Breaking	29
Still Mill	19
Shoe Factory	20
Transport	47
Water Transport	16
Others	40





### Workplace violence

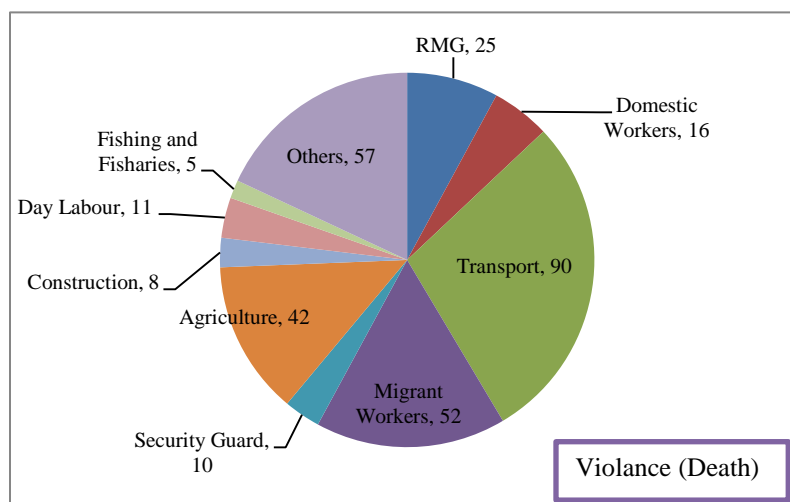
According to a newspaper survey, 596 workers were tortured in 2020. Of these, 316 were killed, 229 were injured, 8 were missing, 24 committed suicide, 14 were rescued and 5 were not mentioned. Of these, 454 are male and 142 are female workers. Of these, 232 were tortured in the workplace and 364 outside of the workplace.

The highest number of 109 workers was victims in the transport sector, of which 90 were killed, 13 injured, 4 workers committed suicide and two abducted workers were rescued by the police with their hands and legs tied. The second highest number of 78 workers was victims in the readymade garment industry. Of these, 3 were tortured at workplace (1 killed and 2 injured) and the remaining 75 were tortured outside of the workplace. Of these, 25 were killed, 48 were injured, 1 was missing, 3 workers committed suicide and 1 did not mention the type of torture.

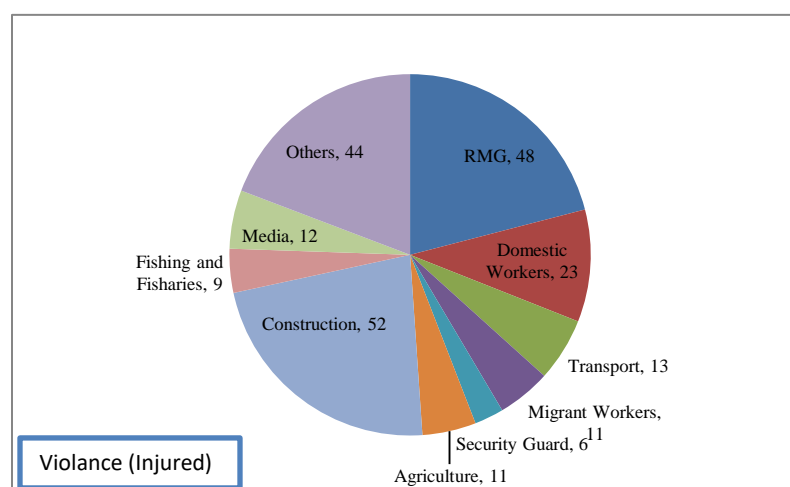
On the other hand, in the migrant sector, 65 workers were victims, of whom 52 were killed, 11 were injured, one was missing and one did not mention the type of torture. In the construction sector, 63 workers were victims, of which 8 were killed, 52 were injured and 3 committed suicide. In the agricultural sector, 57 workers were victims, of whom 42 were killed, 11 injured, 1 missing, 3 committed suicide and 1 abducted worker was rescued. In the domestic workers sector, 44 workers were victims, of whom 16 were killed, 23 were injured, 4 committed suicide and 1 did not mention the type of torture.

It may be mentioned that in 2019, 1292 workers were victims due to torture. Of these, 332 workers were killed, 810 were injured, 67 were missing, 26 committed suicide and 57 did not mention the type of torture. In 2018, 764 workers were victims in torture. Of these, 279 workers were killed, 263 workers were injured, 170 workers went missing and 31 workers committed suicide.

Violence (Death)	
RMG	25
Domestic Workers	16
Transport	90
Migrant Workers	52
Security Guard	10
Agriculture	42
Construction	8
Day Labour	11
Fishing and Fisheries	5
Others	57



Violence (Injured)	
RMG	48
Domestic Workers	23
Transport	13
Migrant Workers	11
Security Guard	6
Agriculture	11
Construction	52
Fishing and Fisheries	9
Media	12
Others	44



### **Industrial relations and workplace unrest**

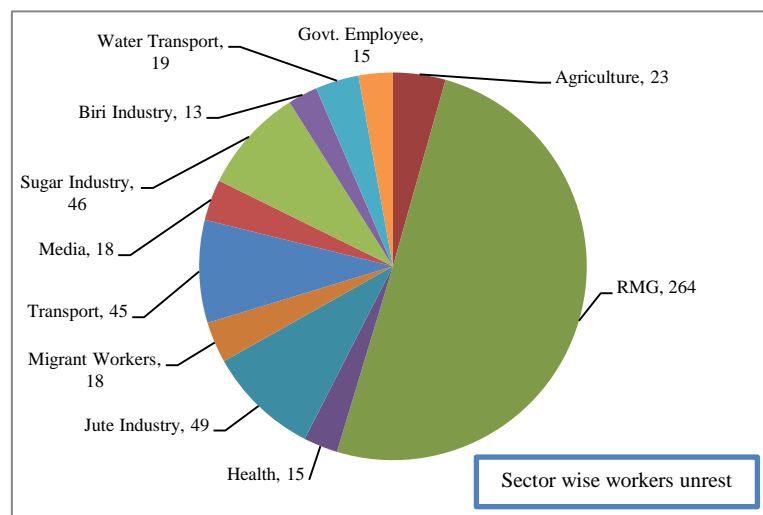
In 2020, a total of 593 workplace unrest took place in different sectors. The highest number of 264 workplace unrest took place in the readymade garments sector. The second highest number of 49 workplace unrest took place in the jute industry. Besides, 46 workers in sugar industry, 45 in transport sector, 23 in agriculture sector, 19 in water transport sector, 18 in media, 18 in migrant workers, 15 in government employee, 15 in health sector, 13 in bidi industry and 68 in other sectors. It may be mentioned that in 2019, a total of 434 workplace unrest took place in different sectors. The highest number of 134 workplace unrest took place in the readymade garments sector. The second highest number of 68 workplace unrest took place in the jute

industry. Besides, there were 61 workplace unrest in the transport sector, 26 in the media, 18 in agriculture, 17 in hawkers, 15 in the water transport sector, 11 in the education sector, 9 in the tea industry and city corporations and 66 in other sectors.

During the workplace unrest, 99 workers were injured. Among the injured were 64 male and 35 female workers. In the highest 54 workers were injured in garments industry. Besides, 31 workers were injured in spinning mill, 12 in jute industry and 2 in tea industry.

According to the survey, a maximum of 176 workers unrest took place for demanding arrears of wages. Besides, 138 workers were dissatisfied with their demands, 115 with their rights, 45 with their demands for reopening closed factories, 34 with their demands for bonuses, 30 with their demands for lay-offs, 29 with their demands for allowances and 26 with other demands.

Sector wise workers unrest	
Agriculture	23
RMG	264
Health	15
Jute Industry	49
Migrant Workers	18
Transport	45
Media	18
Sugar Industry	46
Biri Industry	13
Water Transport	19
Govt. Employee	15

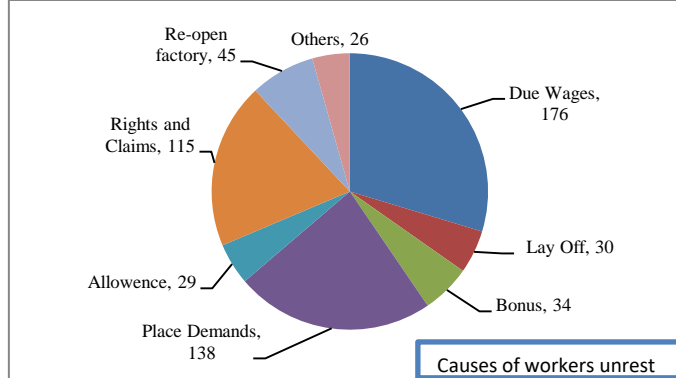


Due Wages	176
Lay Off	30
Bonus	34
Place Demands	138
Allowence	29
Rights and Claims	115
Re-open factory	45
Others	26



According to the survey report 154 incidents were occurred demands. 108 were occurred

and claim, 54 were occurred demanding due wages, 37 were occurred Due Wages and Allowance, 14 for Lay Off, 14 for Due Wages & Placed Demands, 8 were occurred for Workers Death, 5 were occurred for Factory Closure without Prior Notice and 35 for others issues.



2019, Placed rights

## BILS report on domestic workers situation: 44 domestic workers tortured in 2020

In 2020, a total of 44 domestic workers were subjected to various forms of torture in Bangladesh. Of them, 16 were killed, including 12 mysterious deaths. 12 people were raped, 12 were severely tortured due to physical injuries and four committed suicide. The data were presented in a virtual meeting titled “Workplace situation and legal protections for domestic workers in 2020” jointly organised by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS, Campaign for Popular Education-CAMPE, Hellotask, Nari Maitree, RedOrange and UCEP Bangladesh under Oxfam in Bangladesh and Global Affairs Canada-funded ‘Suniti’ project (Securing Rights of Women Domestic Workers in Bangladesh) on the rights, dignity and protection of domestic workers on January 31, 2021.

Speakers at the review meeting stressed the need to discourage child labour in domestic work, saying it was important to introduce registration of domestic workers in every police station and ward commissioner’s office so that the administration and local government could quickly communicate with the government about their assistance in times of disaster. They also said that the legal protections for domestic workers would be clearer if they were considered separately in law and policy as full-time and part-time according to their type of work. The speakers demanded full implementation of the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015, their inclusion in the Labour Law and ratification of ILO Convention-189 entitled Decent Work for Domestic Workers.



BILS Joint Secretary General and Bangladesh Trade Union Center General Secretary Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan chaired the webinar. Domestic Workers Rights Network-DWRN Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain acted as moderator. DWRN Member Secretary and BILS Director Nazma Yesmin presented the key note paper. Bangladesh Employers Federation Labour Advisor Kazi Saifuddin Ahmed, World Bank Consultant and Former Additional Secretary ABM Khorshed Alam, Bangladesh Labour Rights Journalist Forum President Quazi Abdul Hannan, Nari Nari Maitree Executive Director Shaheen Akhtar Doly, BILS Deputy Director and Project Coordinator Md Yousuf Al Mamun among others addressed the meeting. Two domestic workers, Brishti and Nuresha, described their experiences at the meeting.

Presenting the keynote paper, BILS Director and Domestic Workers' Rights Network Bangladesh (DWRN) Member Secretary Nazma Yesmin said that 2020 was a critical year due to the COVID-19 situation. The biggest challenge this year was to ensure decent work for domestic workers. Despite the fear of death during the COVID-19 period, the torture of domestic workers added another level of panic for them. She highlighted the findings of a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies-BILS on the basis of daily newspaper reviews. She noted that the Domestic Workers Welfare Policy needs to be re-examined considering the inclusion of domestic workers in labour laws, determination of their working hours, and opportunity for workers rest and the right to organise. She also said that it is possible to take the activities from the divisional level to the district and upazila level by activating the central monitoring cell under the Ministry of Labour and Employment for the implementation and assurance of domestic worker protection and welfare policy. She noted that domestic workers, like workers in the institutional sector, need to have appointment letters, fixed working hours and fixed wages.

Bangladesh Employers Federation labour adviser Kazi Saifuddin Ahmed said, workers would not be benefitted if the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy could not be turned into law. Referring to those who are on the Labour Law Amendment Committee to discuss the issue, he said that if there is a law, it will be possible to ensure a fair trial for all tortures.

World Bank Consultant and Former Additional Secretary ABM Khorshed Alam, said full time domestic workers are most frequently abused among domestic workers. He said there should be separate policies for those who work part-time and those who work full-time. He said child domestic workers should be discouraged and called on the government to come forward in this regard. Noting

that domestic workers did not get significant benefits under social security during the COVID-19 situation, he said it would have been easier to ensure this benefit if there was a database of domestic workers with an identity card.

Bangladesh Labour Rights Journalists Forum President Quazi Abdul Hannan said, the image of domestic violence in newspapers was not the overall picture. The actual image is much more horrible. He mentioned that only cases of torture or hospitalization were reported in the newspapers. Noting that for a long time during the COVID-19 situation, domestic workers were restricted from entering various residential buildings, he said, during this time, the workers were unemployed and living a dehumanised life. He said ratification of ILO Convention-189 would make it much easier for migrant domestic workers to seek protection in the countries where they work.

Nari Maitree Executive Director Shaheen Akhtar Doly, said that Nari Maitree is arranging training for domestic workers through this project. More publicity is needed in this regard. She said a list of domestic workers needs to be prepared at the police station and ward level.

DWRN Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain called for the revoke of what is mentioned in sub-section 3 (na) of section 1 (4) of the Labor law, which does not apply to domestic workers.

Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan said it was time to recognise domestic workers as workers and include them in the labour law. He demanded to ensure the right of domestic workers to form trade unions.

### **BILS leaders mourn the death of renowned columnist, researcher, journalist and writer Syed Abul Maksud**

BILS leaders mourn the death of renowned columnist, researcher, journalist and writer Syed Abul Maksud. On behalf of BILS family Chairman Md. Habibur Rahman Shiraz and Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan have expressed their condolences over the death of Syed Abul Maksud.

Expressing deep condolences on behalf of



the BILS family over the death of Syed Abul Maksud, Chairman Md. Habibur Rahman Shiraz and Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan said that Syed Abul Maksud has always worked for the overall welfare of the hard working people. He has played a significant role in creating public awareness on various national issues through his writings for the welfare of working people. He will be remembered for all his special activities. His death has caused irreparable damage to the country and the nation, including the working people. The leaders said Syed Abul Maksud's literary and research work will be remembered by the nation forever.

They extend their deepest sympathies to the bereaved family, seeking the forgiveness of his departed soul.

It mentioned that Syed Abul Maksud died on February 23, 2021. He was 74.