

Status of Decent Work and Workers' Rights: A Study of Seven Industrial Sectors in Chattogram



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Status of Decent Work and Workers' Rights: A Study of Seven Industrial Sectors in Chattogram

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the study was to see the pertaining situation of worker rights from a decent work lens. We have studied seven industrial sectors from Chattogram such as readymade garments, construction, healthcare, restaurant, aluminum, beauty parlor, and transportation (three-wheelers). We carried out a survey with samples from workers and businesses, spanning all seven sectors. About 400 workers are surveyed at random. Twenty KII are conducted to gather qualitative data from stakeholders, including employers, TU leaders, academicians, CSO, journalists, Government agencies, etc. Moreover, three FGDs are conducted, two of which involved workers and one of which involved firms and stakeholders. Several unforeseen contingencies, including identifying the samples, always unfavorably affect targeted primary data collection in this study. From the start of the project, we were behind the schedule due to the very challenging research topic. Despite the limitations, we were able to complete the data gathering effectively.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

To some extent, we have found a diversified summary of the results. From the investigation, the researchers observed few stimuli work for such heterogeneity. In the questionnaire survey, workers were concerned and careful about their answers. They were cautious about their position. For example, in child labor issues, they were reluctant to admit that they were under-aged or that their organization recruits workers treated as a child. That means they are afraid that if they accept, they are not equal or above 18 years, they may lose their job, or their referred persons will not be employed in the organization.

However, FGDs comprise workers, employers, and trade union leaders. Respondents in FGDs were more open to answering the questions and revealing the aggregate facts. Moreover, FGD members were careful to answer because all stakeholders were at the roundtable dialogue with appropriate evidence to encounter their answers.

Again, KII respondents were mixed of employers, trade union leaders, and other right bearer stakeholders. In this investigation, the practice of complying with the labour law was found not up to the mark.

¹Prof. Dr. Mohammed Jamal Uddin is the lead investigator and corresponding person.

After synthesizing all, we observed the following key finding of the study:

First, regarding working hours, all seven industries comply more or less with labor law. Working hours in the hotel-restaurant and construction industries are typically 10 to 12 hours a day. In our study, we considered all those hotel restaurants that are not well structured or established, having no air conditioning facilities and no chain services in the town. Thus, these hotels are operated for almost 24 hours and are more concerned about minimizing costs to sustain in the competitive market. Therefore, paying attention to comply labour laws is not their concern due to cost minimization and the abundance of labor forces. Again, transport workers are more likely to be professional than laborers. They rent vehicles and work more hours to earn more money. So, extended working hours are their choice, not an obligation.

Second, our studied industries depict that the average wages of the workers (Tk.13,473) are higher than the minimum national wage of Tk. 8,000 for workers. We also have found in the FGDs and KII that existing wage rates are insufficient to support a family with five members requiring Tk.18,000 per month to maintain minimum subsistence of life. So, the workers fail to maintain a decent life with the scanty amount of money received as a monthly wage. In restaurants, aluminum, and beauty parlor, employee wages/salary is based on daily customer transactions, performance, and production. Also, in these industrial sectors, the subcontractor severely interrupts the rights of the workers.

Third, the appointment letter and ID card concern those organizations where a large number of workers are working (RMG) or deal with sensitive equipment that demands high security (health diagnostics). Due to informal nature of the sectors, no appointment letters or ID cards are ever given to restaurant, aluminum, or beauty parlor employees. In some formal sectors, an ID card is given, but the joining date is not mentioned. The joining letter is sometimes kept by employers, particularly in the health sector. However, the transport sector was an exception. This is because we consider a driving license as a driver's ID card; without extreme exception, no driver is allowed to run vehicles without a driving license.

Fourth, Survey respondents admitted that they had seen instances of workers' on-the-job injury compensations. However, trade union leaders in FGD and KII opine that authority always tends to avoid compensation or settle down informally to save money. Except beauty parlors, on-job-injury payment is reported for all other six sectors. Workers get the treatment expenses on the first day or one time but not for complete recovery during the period of injury/accident. Although there is a clause for death compensation in the event of an accident on company property (Tk.2 Lakh), the

employer manages it by paying less. Workers receive treatment costs and facilities for first-time accidents but not further care.

Fifth, regarding the maternity protection of the workers with leave and pay, it is observed that RMG and health diagnostic complied with the law moderately. Still, the other sectors are unsatisfactory regarding this issue. Having a policy for four months of paid maternity leave, sectors like formal in nature only provide 2 to 3 months of unpaid leave, which is abusive to women workers. Also, women may feel pushed to leave their jobs after becoming pregnant to avoid receiving maternity benefits.

Sixth, gender discrimination is apparent in aluminum and construction. In these two industries, women are less employed and paid less than male employees. However, in other sectors, there is no significant evidence of gender discrimination in wages, promotions, or behavior toward employees.

Seventh, child labor is a burning issue for all sectors, and all sectors are less intended to admit they have child labor. We did not find significant evidence of child labor in the survey. However, trade union leaders and other respondents in FGD opine that, except for health diagnostics, all sectors have child labor. The proportion of child labor is more significant in hotel-restaurant and aluminum than in other sectors.

Eighth, occupational safety, and facilities in the working environment like enough space, light, and air, are reported relatively satisfactory in the studied industrial sectors.

Ninth, there is hide-and-seek between and among employers, workers and trade union leaders regarding participation in the trade unions. Employers fear workers' participation in trade unions will hamper the organization's working environment. Trade union leaders opine that employers do not like trade unions because they bargain for workers' rights and force the authority to due payment of workers. Workers do not like to disclose their participation in a trade union or are afraid to join in trade union because they think that if authority knows it, they may lose their job. Except only a very few, workers in general reported that trade unions in the studied industrial sectors do not exist. Some well-reputed construction employers believe that trade union harms the company's development.

Tenth, the participation of young and women in decision-making is frustrating. The majority of the respondents opined that there is no involvement of the young and women in trade unions, and they cannot stand to raise their voices in favor of many women and young workers in the industry. The youth and the female workers are not interested in joining trade unions due to social, political, and family pressure.

Eleventh, due to subcontracts, the employers fail to practice labour laws, particularly in the construction sector. Also, the practice of labour laws has not been found up to the level in some industries like hotels, aluminum, and beauty parlors due to their informal nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Respondents have recommended the following recommendations for addressing existing issues to ensure workers' rights and a decent work environment:

Policy Recommendation to Government:

- i. Conduct research and generate appropriate knowledge base regarding the issues for the companies' noncompliance with labour laws and take the prompt and effective initiative to revise the laws from time to time based on national interests.
- ii. Establish a strong and effective monitoring and evaluation cell to ensure labor law compliance.
- iii. Play the collaborator's role and make a partnership with all stakeholders to enjoy mutual benefits.
- iv. Speed up the union registration process and make sure they fulfill the obligations that have been established.

Policy recommendation to Trade Union

- i. Start dialogue and/or regular meetings with employers for better working conditions and the health of the industries so that it is possible to find out a way to compensate the workers, including wages/salaries and fringe benefits based on the ability of the employers and productivity of the workers by complying labour laws.
- ii. Support the government and/or regulatory agencies and to the extent possible take part with them to better implement the labour laws.
- iii. Most importantly, union leaders must make workers/employees aware of labour laws and workers' rights. Also, help workers improve/upgrade their skills through outsourced and hands-on training at the organization.

Policy recommendation to Employers/Employers


- i. Own your workers/ employees and create a platform of mutual trust by having regular meetings to ensure/realize mutual benefits. Also, make your workers train them on the necessity of their understanding about the betterment or productivity of the company and how the role of workers can make the organization sustainable.

- ii. Ensure a better working environment for the workers to enhance their productivity and be sincere in compensating them fairly or based on efficiency as well as a necessity (if possible).
- iii. Concentrate on social protection and mitigate grievances of the employees/ workers.
- iv. Most importantly, the existing rivalry relationship between the workers needs to be converted into a cordial collaborative environment from which mutual benefits can be enjoyed by both groups.

Policy recommendation to Employees/Workers

- i. Educate yourself on your rights and entitlement in the workplace. In order to build awareness, they can form peer groups or join a group of workers in the organization and move into a group to raise their voices. Also, they can keep in touch with the trade union leaders in their same nature of work or profession for their mutual benefits or rights.
- ii. In the era of the techno world, there is every possibility to be replaced by technology or auto machines for the workers in their jobs. Therefore, they need to retain the demand for their services even in the techno world paradigm shift. To keep themselves demandable, they continuously need to upgrade their skills or acquire new skills to suit the auto environment in the industry or labour market.
- iii. Besides the requirement of minimum wages/salaries, the bargaining of wages should also be based on the efficiency of workers to make their services sustainable in the competitive techno-labor market.
- iv. Collective effort can make a better environment for work. The working environment's cleanliness and hygiene factors depend on the workers.
- v. Most importantly, the existing rivalry relationship with the employers/employers needs to be converted into a cordial collaborative environment from which both the groups can enjoy mutual benefits.

The research was conducted over a small sample of 400 workers with a sub-sample range from 30 to 100 workers from the seven selected sectors. Certainly, a larger sample would have always been better. There were both resources and time constraints. However, we might add here that we are confident of the robustness of the findings on two grounds –400 samples for aggregate analysis were sufficiently large, and findings from each of the seven sectors truly represent the aggregate level findings as there is no significant variance. Second, the study is limited to Chattogram. Therefore, it may not represent the national level.



Finally, we believe that both governmental and non-governmental organizations should speak out about it to raise awareness of the rights and obligations of the general public and among employers and employees. In most of the workers' rights, different stakeholders, especially government, employers, and trade associations, should take a quicker and more concerned look and thoughts on it.

Introduction:

The idea of "decent work" (a comprehensive concept of work and the workplace) was first proposed by the director-general Juan Somavia in 1999 at the IL (International Labour) conference meeting (Anker, Chernyshev et al. 2003, Ghai 2003). The concept of decent work encompasses the equal right of men and women in the working environment with adequate opportunity, appropriate remuneration, safety, security, social recognition, and dignity. It incorporates workers' rights in the formal economic sectors and covers unregulated wage workers, self-employed, and home workers. Thus, from the prescription of ILO, there are four apparent dimensions of decent works. These are 1) Dignity in the workplace (promotion and other rights at work), 2) Confirmation of gender equality and social equality, 3) freedom of association and collective bargaining, and 4) right to remuneration and social security (Ghai 2003, Di Fabio and Kenny 2019). In many international supply networks, there have been widespread abuses of workers' rights. Production workers in different sectors frequently endure precarious working circumstances, such as continuously low pay, extensive and typically forced overtime, dangerous workplaces, and restrictions on their ability to organize unions and engage in collective bargaining (Anner, 2020).

Developing countries are crawling in economic development and trying to get sustainable development at a reasonable timeframe keeping pace with world economic development. However, debate arises about whether this approach is at the cost of the quality of workers' life, security, and opportunity. Countries with comparatively cheap labour opportunities are drawing more attention to concerned authorities like ILO. As Bangladesh is one of the least developed countries (one of the 48 least developed countries-UN committee for development policy, 2016), situational analysis of workers in different industrial sectors is worth considering for research (Khan, Bartram et al. 2018). Continuous escalation of the SDGs index, such as 109th country out of 165 countries in 2021 from 120th country out of 157 countries in 2017 (Iqbal 2021), drawing researchers' attention to the workers' rights, security, and social position in Bangladesh. Thus, it is time demand to examine the situation of workers in different industrial sectors of Bangladesh. This research covered seven industrial sectors only from Chattogram City Corporation areas, namely, 1) RMG, 2) Construction, 3) Hotel & Restaurant, 4) Health & Diagnosis, 5) Small Transport, 6) Beauty parlor, and 7) Aluminum goods making industry. This research has examined in details workers' security, safety, health protection, social recognition, gender discrimination, and the role of trade unions, etc. More particularly, it is a situation analysis of selected industries in applying decent work practices as prescribed by ILO.

The recent accident in the container depot at Sitakundu (June 4, 2022) had a death casualty of 41 people, including 12 firefighters, shaking the regulators and rethinking Chattogram regarding the safety and security of workers, health support, and other facilities in the working environment (ReliefWeb 2022). All these circumstances created turbulent conditions for the labor market in different industries in Chattogram. Further, the labor-intensive sectors in Chattogram usually attract daily laborers from across the country (primarily the North Bengal of the country). Those laborers often gather in set locations in different areas to be picked up by contractors. Thus, as a commercial city of Bangladesh, migrating the workforce from outside of Chattogram increases the workers' density on the one hand and the vulnerability of workers' rights, safety, and security issues on the other. Since Chattogram plays a role as the country's economic backbone, thus workers' concerns are directly linked to sustainable workforce supply and economic growth. This research has made a sharp analysis of the current situation of Chattogram particularly in implementing decent work aspects.

Study Objectives

General Objective

This research aims to identify the present status of overall decent work and workers' rights situation in the seven selected industrial sectors in Chattogram (RMG, Construction, Hotel-Restaurant, Health-Diagnostic, Small Transport, Beauty Parlor, and Aluminum Goods Making Industry).

Specific Objectives

- To identify the status of legal entitlement of the workers like wage, working hours, appointment letter, ID card, compensation, maternity protection, etc.
- To identify the Trade Union (TU) situation including the status of collective bargaining and the status of Youth and Women participation in the union.
- To identify the status of gender discrimination and gender-based violence in the workplace.
- To identify the status of social protection of the workers in the studied sectors.
- To identify the status of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in the studied sectors.

Decent Work and Workers' Rights

In light of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, workers of Bangladesh are entitled to some specific rights. They are very much related to decent work. The following are a few notations of the labour Act related to the current study.

- a) **Right to have appointment letter and identity card:** Every employee has the right to get an appointment letter and a photo identity card from the employer. Chapter two (section 5) of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 mentioned that,

"Letter of Appointment and Identity Card: 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."

- b) **Right for leave in need:** Chapter two (section 10) points out that employees have the right to have leave in their need. An employee will apply for leave, and the concerned authority will issue a leave order within 7 days of application or 2 days before commencement, whichever is earlier. It means that every employee has to have leave with a proper reason explaining in the application for leave.

- c) **Right to have Death benefit by nominee or dependents:** Section 19, Chapter two of Bangladesh labour act 2006 depicts that

"If a worker dies while in service after a continuous service of not less than three years, his nominee or in the absence of a nominee, his dependent shall be paid by the employer a compensation at the rate of thirty days wages for every completed year of service, or for any part 29 thereof in excess of six months or gratuity, if any, whichever is higher, in addition to any other benefit to which the deceased worker would have been entitled had he retired from service: Provided that if such worker is covered by any compulsory insurance scheme of the establishment, or, if any compensation is payable for such death under chapter XII, the worker shall be entitled to whichever is higher."

- d) **Right to have notice and benefits the employee earned before termination:**

"The employer may terminate the employment of a permanent worker, otherwise, then in the manner provided else-where in chapter two, by giving to him in writing- (a) one hundred and twenty days' notice, if he is a monthly rated worker; (b) sixty days' notice, in case of other workers.Where the employment of a permanent worker is terminated under this section, he shall be paid by the employer compensation at the rate of thirty day's wages for every completed year of service or gratuity, if any, whichever is higher, in addition to any other benefit to which he may be entitled under this Act."- Bangladesh Labour Act-2006.

That means every employee has the right to have advance notice and the benefit the employee has earned as per his/her employment agreements.

- e) **Right to have benefited from the provident fund:**

"No worker, who is a member of any provident Fund, shall be deprived due to

retrenchment, dismissal, removal, discharge or termination of service of the benefit of the provident Fund including the employer's contribution thereto, if he is entitled to it under the rules of that Fund." -Bangladesh Labour Act-2006.

f) Prohibition of employment of children and adolescents:

As per the labour act, no employer is allowed to employ children and adolescents in the workplace. In no circumstances children are permitted to work in any establishment. Adolescent, in certain circumstances, is allowed if and only if he has a certificate of fitness issued by a registered medical practitioner (Bangladesh Labour Act-2006, Chapter three, section-34). However, adolescents are allowed to work more than 5 hours day-30 hours a week in any factory, and 7 hours a day -42 hours a week in any establishment. In all cases, working hours will be between 7 am and 7 pm. (Section -41, Chapter three, Bangladesh labour act – 2006). A child who has completed 12 years may work in certain circumstances. But the work for children must be safe for their Health and will not conflict with their school time and attendance (section 44, chapter three).

g) Right to, and liability for, payment of maternity benefit:

"(1) Every woman employed in an establishment shall be entitled to and her employer shall be liable for, the payment of maternity benefit in respect of the period of eight weeks preceding the expected day of her delivery and eight weeks immediately following the day of her delivery: Provided that a woman shall not be entitled to such maternity benefit unless she has worked under the employer, for a period of not less than six months immediately preceding the day of her delivery. (2) No maternity benefit shall be payable to any woman if she has two or more surviving children at the time of her confinement, but in that case, she shall be entitled to the leave to which she would otherwise be entitled."- Section 46, Chapter four.

That means a woman worker completing her tenure of work for six months or more will be entitled to maternity benefits of six months with pay.

h) Right to work in a healthy and hygienic environment:

Sections 51-60, chapter five of Bangladesh Labour Act-2006, signifies workers' rights in a healthy and hygienic environment. The workplace should be a need for and clean surface, there must be sufficient lights and air circulations, and there must be an arrangement for pure drinking water, latrines, urinals, dustbin, and spittoons. In a word, any establishment should have a good arrangement for a healthy and hygienic working environment.

i) Right to have a safe working environment:

"(1) If it appears to the Inspector that any building or part of a building or any part of the ways, machinery or plant in an establishment is in such a condition that it is dangerous to human life or safety, he may serve on the employer of the establishment an order in writing specifying the measures which, in his opinion, should be adopted, and requiring them to be carried out before a specified date. (2) If it appears to the Inspector that the use of any building or part of a building or of any part of the ways, machinery, or plant in the establishment involves imminent danger to human life or safety, he may serve on the employer of the establishment an order in writing prohibiting its use until it has been properly repaired or altered." -Section 61, Chapter six.

Moreover, sections 62, 63, and 64 of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 specify the precautions against fire, machinery fencing, and moving machinery for worker safety. Chapter six explains the rights of the worker to work in a safe working environment.

j) Right to have welfare facilities in the establishments:

Chapter eight of Bangladesh Labour Act-2006 specifies the welfare activities like first-aid appliances, safety record book, washing facilities, canteens, rooms for children, compulsory group insurance having worker more than 200, shelters, etc.

k) Right of working hours and leave:

Bangladesh Labor Act 2006 restricts the working hours of workers in the establishment. Chapter nine of labour act also specifies the interval for rest and meals, maximum weekly working hours, arrangement for weekly holidays, compensatory weekly holidays, night shifts, extra allowance of overtime, limitation of work hours for women, etc. This chapter specifies the workers' right to rest for a day and a week. Right to have payments for extra work and working hours restriction for women workers considering their safety while entering the establishment and leaving for home.

Methodology

This research has employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and methods in collecting data from the employers, workers, trade unions, and other relevant stakeholders.

The quantitative approach for descriptive and inferential statistics collects data using the survey method. A structured questionnaire for relevant variables consisting of dichotomous, polychotomous, multiple response, Likert scale, and some open-ended

variables is used to collect respondents' data. Socio-economic and demographic variables like gender, age, marital status, working station, nature of the job, job position, working experience, educational status, monthly wages earned, etc., were considered for analysis. To assess decent work, compliance with legal issues per the Bangladesh Labor Law-2006 for the segments of wage, working hours, appointment letter, ID card, compensation, and maternity protection were considered.

For qualitative data collection, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII), and Case Study methods are particularly adopted. Apart from these, an in-depth desk-based review of secondary resources is administered. We reviewed the different national regulations, such as Labor Act, 2006 (amendment 2018), Bangladesh National Labor Policy 2012, Bangladesh Labor Welfare Foundation Law 2006, and other related national policy instruments as well as international policy instruments such as -International Labor Standards, SDG (special focus was given on Goal 8) along with other relevant instruments available.

Data Collection and Sample

Data were collected from each sector proportionately covering gender. However, some industries are male-dominated, like construction and Hotel-restaurant, some are female-intensive, like beauty Parlor, and some are mixed with males and females. Experienced field investigators comprising male and female university students from the law and social science faculties were recruited to assist in conducting KIIs. The data collector experienced training sessions by our expert members in the research team to easily comprehend our instrument, record responses, and minimize response and non-response errors during the data collection procedure. Moreover, our research team members conducted FGD and KII and keenly monitored the data collection process. After data cleaning and filtering, we finally had 392 respondents' data for analysis.

Table 1: Total Sample and Sector-Wise Sample Structure

Industry	No. of Respondents
RMG	103
Construction	53
Hotel-Restaurant	46
Heath-Diagnostics	69
Small Transport	52
Beauty Parlors	39
Aluminum Goods	30
Total	392

We did field editing and in-house editing to check any inconsistency in the responses to clean and filter the combined data before analysis, confirming the data's consistency and reliability.

FGD and KII:

We conducted three FGDs, with the first two FGDs consisting of worker representatives from homogeneous industries. The third FGD involved persons with managerial positions in different sectors but with similar backgrounds. Under the KII plan, government officials, NGOs, CSOs, and TUs based in Chattogram were interviewed.

Study Area and Sampling

The survey was conducted in three large areas of Chattogram city, with Bandar thana being the first. The reasons behind choosing this area include a high concentration of RMG workers. Most RMG factories in the city are located in the CEPZ of Bandar Thana. The other sectors are equally present in this Thana. We also collected data from the main downtown of Chattogram city. This allowed us to interact with concentrated hotels and restaurants. Finally, we surveyed the Chattogram Medical College, Mehedibagh, Muradpur, Oxygen, and Panchlaish areas to collect information from respondents working in the health and diagnosis sector, aluminum goods, and beauty Parlors. These study areas provide an excellent opportunity to KII respondents from the other three targeted sectors: small transport, hotel and restaurant, and construction. We follow a purposive sampling method to choose the survey participants.

Data Analysis

The data file was made in SPSS with the collected data, and comprehensive analyses like descriptive statistics in general and inferential statistics were performed. The study covers univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis to explore the prevailing scenario in the working establishment of the workers and identify the associated factors for the presence or absence of a decent working environment.

Ethics

The interviewers first informed the respondents of the purpose of the study and explicitly asked for their consent before starting the KII. The respondents have also been informed that the data will not be used for purposes other than the study. They can refrain from answering questions anytime during the KII. The respondents' anonymity and confidentiality have been assured.

Survey Findings: Status of Decent Work and Workers' Rights

The subsequent section explore the survey findings:

Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 2 (Page 22) represents the percentage of male and female residents belonging to Chattogram and outside Chattogram and their educational status, say, Illiterate, Primary, secondary, Higher secondary, graduate, and above of the respondents according to the overall and sector wise.

Of our respondents, about 69% were male and 31% female. We opt for random sampling to avoid purposive sampling errors. We did not find any female workers in construction, hotel and restaurants, and small transports in industry-wise ratio. The gender proportion of RMG and the health diagnostic sector are close to equal size. However, beauty parlors are female-dominated, and the aluminum industry is male-dominated due to their work nature. The permanent resident status of overall respondents equals Chattogram and out of Chattogram. We focused on this issue to address the labor migration to Chattogram. Our study finds that most of the labor force in construction, hotel-restaurant, and aluminum goods are migrant workers from other districts. However, two third of the respondents in health sectors and beauty parlors are from the Chattogram district. Respondents from the remaining industries are of equal size concerning their home district status. The respondents' educational status (in percentage) has been presented in the bottom part of the Table 2 (Page 23) particularly the frequency of respondents concerning their education level. Other than health diagnostics and beauty parlors, more than 60% of workers did not attain secondary education. Most illiterate workers are from small transports and aluminum goods, about 35% and 33%, respectively. The maximum number of graduates are working in health diagnostics and beauty parlors out of seven sample industries. Although a few graduates work in the RMG sectors, no graduate respondents were found in the remaining four industries.

Table 3 (Page 23) presents the marital status of the respondents; overall, 68% of respondents are married, and 30% respondents are unmarried, and the rest 2% are the widow and divorced. However, in sector analysis, the highest percentage of married workers (94%) was found in the small transport sector, and the highest percentage of unmarried workers (57%) was found in hotel-restaurant.

Table 4 (Page 23) shows the overall age of workers and sector-wise respondents' age, where 31 years (app) were found in all sectors with the most aged groups recorded in small transport (36 years) and the least aged group reported in hotel-restaurant (25 years).

Table 2: Overall and sector-wise percentage distribution of respondents according to different background characteristics

Characteristics	Overall	RMG	Construction	Restaurant	Health	Transport	Parlor	Aluminum
Gender								
Male	69.1(271)	48.5(50)	100(53)	100(46)	58.0(40)	100(52)	5.1(2)	93.3(28)
Female	30.9(121)	51.5(53)	-	-	42.0(29)	-	94.9(37)	6.7(2)
Home District of								
Chattogram	50.0(196)	44.7(46)	26.4(14)	34.8(16)	78.3(54)	46.2(24)	76.9(30)	40.0(12)
Outside Chattogram	50.0(196)	55.3(57)	73.6(39)	65.29(30)	21.7(15)	53.8(28)	23.1(9)	60.0(18)
Educational status								
Illiterate	16.6(65)	15.5(16)	9.4(5)	19.6(9)	7.2(5)	34.6(18)	5.1(2)	33.3(10)
Primary	47.7(187)	53.4(55)	67.9(36)	56.5(26)	20.3(14)	53.8(28)	23.1(9)	63.3(19)
SSC	17.1(67)	17.5(18)	18.9(10)	10.9(5)	23.2(16)	11.5(6)	30.8(12)	3.3(1)
HSC	9.9(39)	7.8(8)	3.8(2)	13.0(6)	20.3(14)	-	20.5(8)	-
Graduate and above	8.7(34)	5.8(6)	-	-	29.0(20)	-	20.5(8)	-

Note: Value in parenthesis represents the number of respondents.

Table 3: Overall and sector-wise marital status of respondents as background characteristics

Marital status	Overall	RMG	Construction	Restaurant	Diagnostic	Transport	Parlor	Aluminum
Unmarried	29.8(117)	31.1(32)	30.2(16)	56.5(26)	33.3(23)	5.8(3)	30.8(12)	16.7(5)
Married	67.9(266)	67.0(69)	69.8(37)	39.1(18)	60.9(42)	94.2(49)	66.7(26)	83.3(25)
Widowed	1.8(7)	1.9(2)	-	4.3(2)	4.3(3)	-	2.6(1)	-
Divorced	0.5(2)	-	-	-	1.4(1)	-	-	-

Table 4: Overall and Sector wise mean age of respondents

	RMG	Construction	Restaurant	Diagnostic	Transport	Parlor	Aluminum
Over all							
Mean age	30.97	28.55	25.02	34.77	36.37	31.38	34

Table 5: Overall and Sector wise mean and standard deviation of family size according to gender

Overall and sector-wise	Gender	No. of respondents	Mean	Standard deviation
Overall	Male	271	5.26	1.899
	Female	121	4.34	1.333
RMG	Male	50	4.64	1.793
	Female	53	4.49	1.295
Construction	Male	53	5.45	1.749
	Female	-	-	-
Hotel-Restaurant	Male	46	4.74	2.049
	Female	-	-	-
Health-Diagnostic	Male	40	5.30	2.090
	Female	29	4.45	1.429
Small transport	Male	52	5.69	1.365
	Female	-	-	-
Beauty parlor	Male	2	5.00	1.414
	Female	37	4.05	1.311
Aluminum goods	Male	28	6.00	2.293
	Female	2	4.00	1.414

Table 5 (Abovo) presents the mean and standard deviation of family size, which express the respondent's family size. The mean and standard deviation indicate that the family size is not abnormal, and there is no outlier effect in the sample.

Table 6 (Page 25) represents that the mean total experience for male respondents is higher than their female counterparts when we consider the overall sectors, but in the individual industry of RMG, we find that the mean total experience of the female is higher than their male counterparts.

Table 6: Overall and Sector wise mean and standard deviation of total experience and experience in the industry according to gender

Gender	Descriptive Statistics	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel- Restaurant		Health- Diagnostic		Small transport		Beauty parlor		Aluminum goods	
		Exp**	E*	Exp**	E*	Exp**	E*	Exp**	E*	Exp**	E*	Exp**	E*	Exp**	E*	Exp**	E*
	Mean	11.26	6.07	7.60	4.77	10.48	2.63	8.28	3.17	11.46	7.11	14.53	10.01	19.50	5.50	17.21	10.99
Male	N	271	271	50	50	53	53	46	46	40	40	52	52	2	2	28	28
	S.D	9.26	6.37	7.22	5.22	7.40	2.95	7.98	3.49	11.27	6.44	8.75	7.83	17.68	6.36	10.38	6.69
	Mean	9.53	4.71	9.81	3.40	-	-	-	-	9.22	5.91	-	-	9.34	5.66	10.00	4.25
Female	N	121	121	53	53	-	-	-	-	29	29	-	-	37	37	2	2
	S.D.	7.23	4.74	7.67	3.91	-	-	-	-	7.63	5.41	-	-	6.52	5.04	7.07	2.47

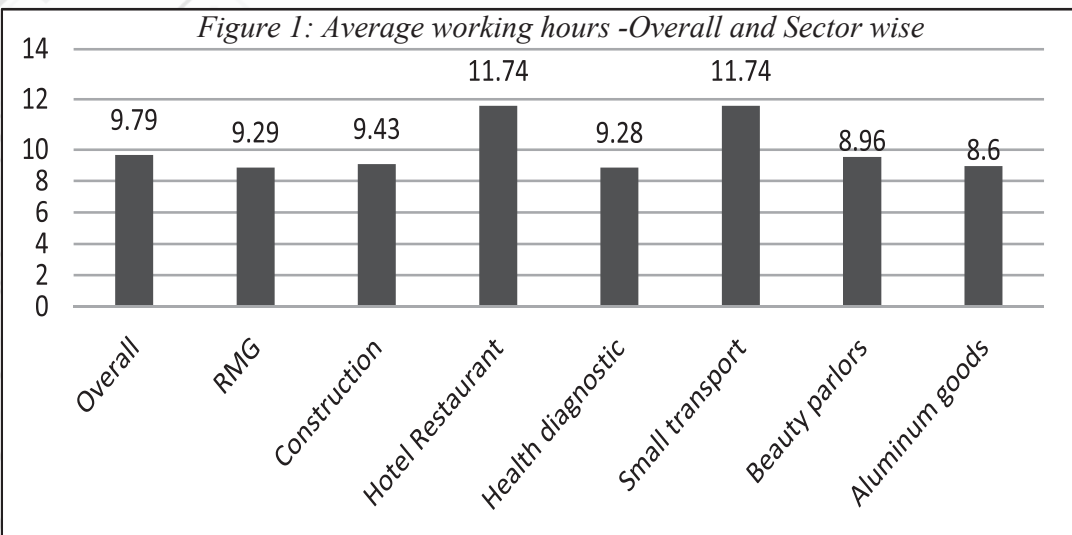
Note: Exp** & E* refer to Total experience and Experience in the industry, respectively. Descriptive Statistics N and S.D denote Sample size and Standard deviation, respectively.

Assessment of Practices of Labour Law

Table 7: Assessment of labour law-2006 and practice of the law in terms of different rights of the workers

Percentage/Mean								
Worker's right	Overall	RMG	Construction	Hotel Restaurant	Health diagnostic	Small transport	Beauty parlors	Aluminum goods
1. Work Hour	9.79	9.29	9.43	11.74	9.28	11.74	8.96	8.6
2. Wage	13473	12038	18089	12586	10743	16676	11866	14391
3. Appointment Letter								
Yes	40.3	73.5	9.6	10.9	76.8	5.8	38.5	3.3
No	59.7	26.5	90.4	89.1	23.2	94.2	61.5	96.7
4. ID card								
Yes	59.8	78.4	22.6	15.2	100	100	33.3	3.3
No	40.2	21.6	77.4	84.8	0	0	66.7	96.7
5. Compensation (For on job injury)								
Yes	60.7	78.6	77.4	52.2	66.6	NA	48.7	90
No	39.3	21.4	22.6	47.8	33.4		51.3	10
6. Maternity protection (Leave with pay)								
Yes	32.4	55.3		6.5	69.5		35.9	16.7
No	67.6	44.7	NA	93.5	30.5	NA	64.1	83.3

Table 7 depicts workers' rights, focusing on working hours, wages, appointment letters, ID cards, compensation for job injury, and maternity leave with pay for women workers. Aggregate figure from 7 selected industries explores that workers are working 9.79 hours in their workplace on average. Their average monthly wage taking is Tk.13,473 only.



The above figure (Figure-1) displays that the average working hours for the workers in hotels and restaurants and small transports are higher compared to other study sectors like RMG, construction, health diagnostic, Beauty parlors, and Aluminum goods.

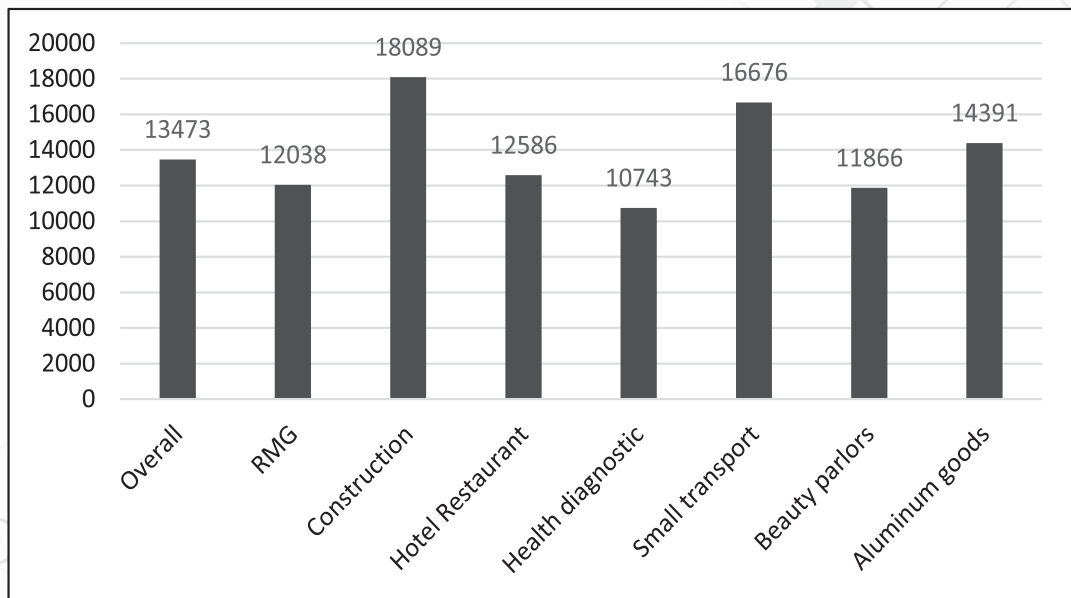


Figure 2: Wages of Workers-Overall & Industry-wise

Figure 2 shows that out of 7 industries, construction and small transport workers are getting highest wages, and health and diagnostic workers are getting lowest wages.

A possible reason behind such a scenario is that most small transport workers work as professionals. They operate a rental taxi and independently earn money from the passengers. No fixed salary or payment applies to them. Again, construction workers are hired daily at a bargaining wage rate. Due to the shortage of the day labor workforce, the wage rate is high, and we find the monthly wages of workers considering an average of 25 working days in a month. Other than these two industries, other industries' wages are closer. However, wages of aluminum goods workers are positioned above industry averages due to their high payment. This is because of the risky work nature and expertise demanded in the industry.

Figure 3 below shows that 60% of workers have Job-related ID cards representing their social and organizational recognition.

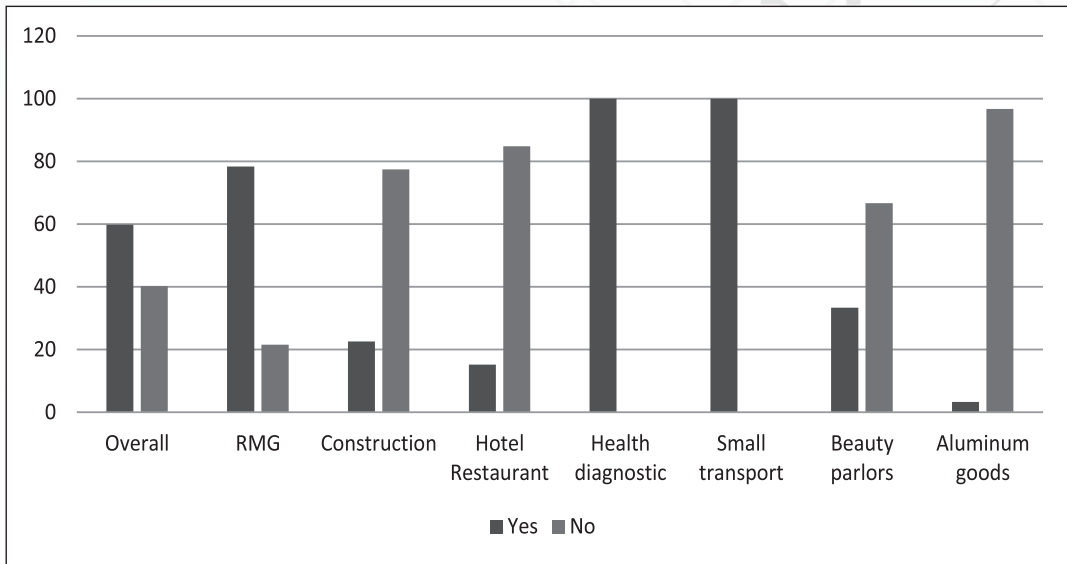


Figure 3 : Percentage of workers getting ID cards-Overall & sector-wise

Although 60% of the workers are getting compensation for a job-related injury, industries are lagging behind the national policy in implementing maternity benefits. 67.6 percent of workers are yet to get maternity benefits from their workplaces.

Table 8 (Page 29) shows that most industry workers believe they enjoy weekly holidays except hotel-restaurant. In the construction industry, respondents with positive and negative opinions are approximately equal in size. Although all industries enjoy weekly holidays, service-oriented industries like hotel-restaurant and construction, are less likely to have weekly holidays as they work all day to render services. However, laborers can enjoy shifting facilities to work in service sectors. However, respondents of all industries agreed that they are deprived of enjoying government holidays due to excessive work pressure in the industry.

Workers have the right to have an appointment letter from the appointing organization or the employer. However, except RMG and health diagnostics, all other industries are not complying with this right of a worker. Even 10 % of construction, aluminum goods, and small transport industry workers do not have formal appointment letters from the concerned authorities.

In the case of ID cards, Health and diagnostics and small transports have 100% compliance with identity cards. This is because the health sector is dealing with sensitive issues, and unauthorized access may risk lives, leading to employers becoming more concerned about employees' ID cards. Again, as small transport workers are independent, we consider their driving licenses their identity cards. As no driver can run the vehicle without a license, we get 100% compliance in small transport.

Table 8: Overall and sector-wise percentage distribution for weekly holidays and other leaves (right)

Item	I can enjoy a weekly holiday at my job							
Responses	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel Restaurant	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	72.4	27.6	96.1	3.9	54.7	45.3	26.1	73.9
No. of Respondents	287	108	99	4	29	24	12	34
Responses	Health-Diagnostic		Small Transport		Beauty parlor		Aluminum	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	87.0	13.0	53.8	46.2	69.2	30.8	96.7	3.3
No. of Respondents	60	9	28	24	27	12	29	1
Item	I need to work in govt. holidays							
Responses	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel Restaurant	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	77.7	22.3	43.7	56.3	87.0	13	97.8	2.2
No. of Respondents	304	87	45	58	46	7	44	1
Responses	Health-Diagnostic		Small Transport		Beauty parlor		Aluminum	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	97.1	2.9	86.3	13.7	92.3	7.7	73.3	26.7
No. of Respondents	67	2	44	7	36	3	22	8

From the perspective of on-job injury, most workers are getting compensation other than beauty parlors. Compensation for job injury is not relevant in small transport because there is no appointing authority, and the working nature is independent. Moreover, they are not concerned about insurance. Again, we did not find any case where workers get injured at beauty parlors.

However, respondents replied that few workers got compensation due to sudden death unrelated to job performance. Figure 4 depicts that about 32.4% of workers are getting compensation for their on-job injuries. After aluminum, RMG and the construction industry move ahead in worker rights for compensation, whereas beauty parlors lag sample industries with the formal payment structure. An organization with women

workers must confirm maternity protection for women workers as per Bangladesh Labour Law. However, the actual picture of the industries does not show they comply with the regulatory issues. No industry can confirm that 70% of the workers enjoy maternity protection (leave with pay). We did not find data on maternity protection for construction and small transport. This is because no female worker was found in small transport. And for the construction industry, only a few workers are women, and as they are hired daily, maternity protection does not apply to them.

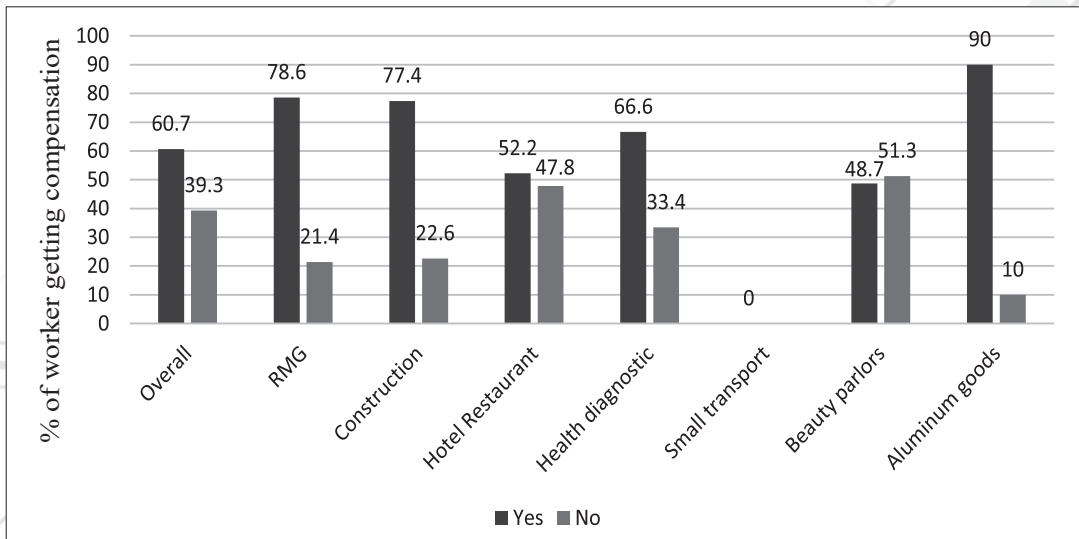


Figure 4: Worker getting compensation for on-job injury- overall and industry wise

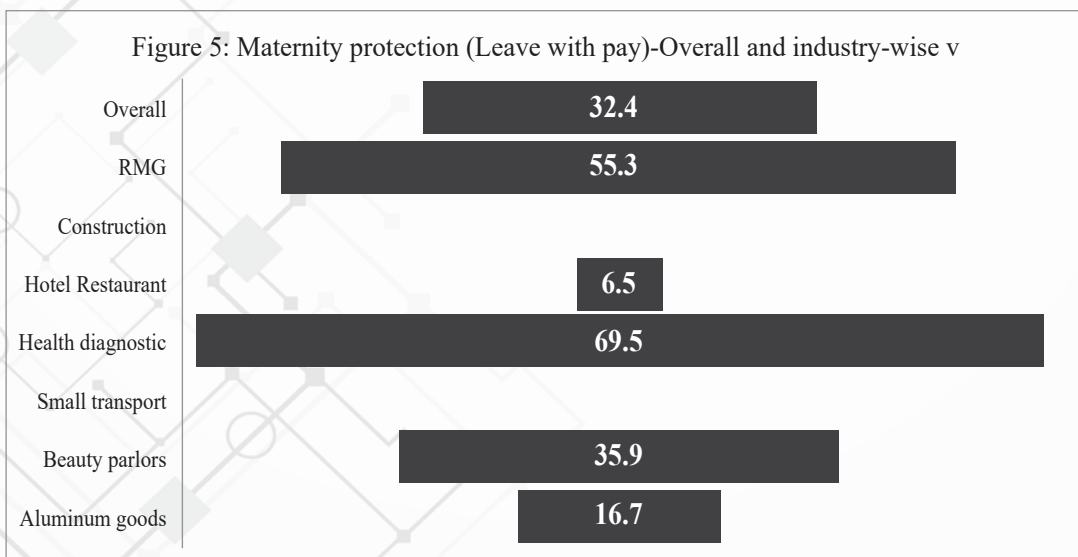


Figure 5: Maternity protection (Leave with pay)- overall and industry-wise

Table 9: Overall compliance with Labor rights

Worker's right	Percentage/Mean							
	Overall	RMG	Construction	Hotel Restaurant	Health diagnostic	Small transport	Beauty parlors	Aluminum goods
Work Hour	9.79	9.29	9.43	11.74	9.28	11.74	8.96	8.60
Status	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Wage*	13473	12038	18089	12586	10743	16676	11866	14391
Status	>average	>average	>average	>average	>average	>average	>average	>average
Appointment Letter	40.3	73.5	9.6	10.9	76.8	5.8	38.5	3.3
Status	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low
ID card	59.8	78.4	22.6	15.2	100	100	33.3	3.3
Status	Moderate	High	Low	Low	Full	Full	Low	Low
Compensation (on-job injury)	60.70	78.6	77.4	52.2	66.6	NA***	48.7	90.0
Status		High	High	Moderate	Moderate	NA***	Low	High
Maternity (Leave with pay)	32.4	55.3	NA	6.5	69.5	NA	35.9	16.7
Status	Low	Moderate	NA	Low	Moderate	NA	Low	Low

Gender Discrimination:

Our study also focuses on gender discrimination issues in aggregate data and sector-wise. Table 10 (Page 32) shows the summary statistics of male and female workers in aggregate and sector-wise.

* According to Trading Economics (<https://tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/minimum-wages>) minimum average wage of workers in Bangladesh in 2022 is BDT. 8000/- per month.

** In the case of issuance of appointment letters, having ID cards, compensation in injury, and Maternity protection of workers, low grade compliance having less than 50%, moderate between 50-75 %, High more than 75%, and Full having 100% of workers getting appointment letters and have ID cards.

*** NA refers to not applicable to the issue in the concerned industry.

Table 10: Overall and Sector wise mean wage and standard deviation of wages according to gender

Overall and Sectors	Gender	Respondents	Mean wage	Standard deviation
Overall	Male	269	14736	8264
	Female	121	10682	3961
RMG	Male	50	13787	4253
	Female	53	10388	2946
Construction	Male	53	18090	5266
	Female	-	-	-
Hotel-Restaurant	Male	45	12587	16929
	Female	-	-	-
Health-Diagnostic	Male	40	11639	3908
	Female	29	9507	4835
Small transport	Male	52	16677	4093
	Female	-	-	-
Beauty parlor	Male	2	9800	8202
	Female	37	11978	
Aluminum Goods	Male	27	14705	3784
	Female	2	11500	2121

In Table 10, we observe significant differences in the wages of male and female workers in the aggregate data. Also, the standard deviation of male workers are more prominent than that of female workers. It means that male workers are getting higher wages than their female counterparts. Also, the wage deviation among male workers is higher than their counterparts.

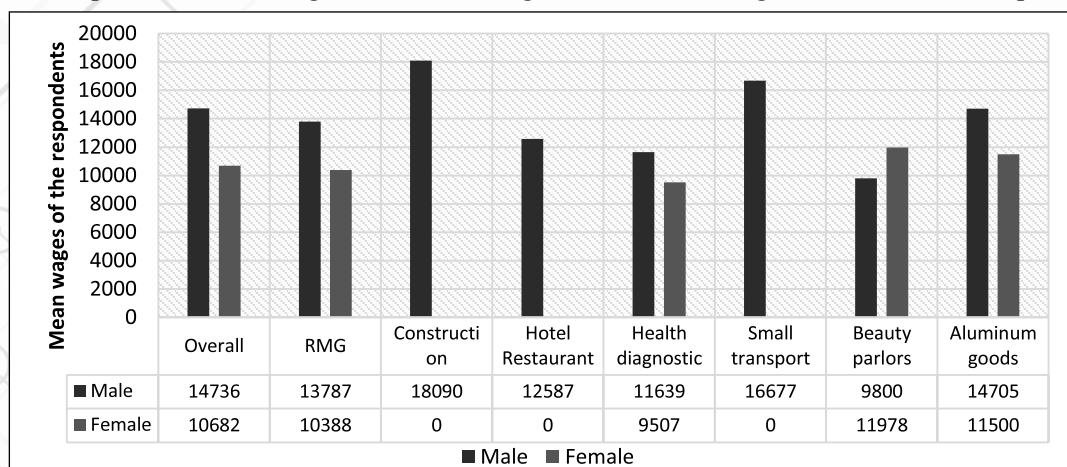


Figure 6: Gender discrimination concerning wages

However, industry-wise wages are as wide as overall wage differences between male and female workers. This is because the three industries, construction, hotel-restaurant, and small transports, have no female workers in the sample.

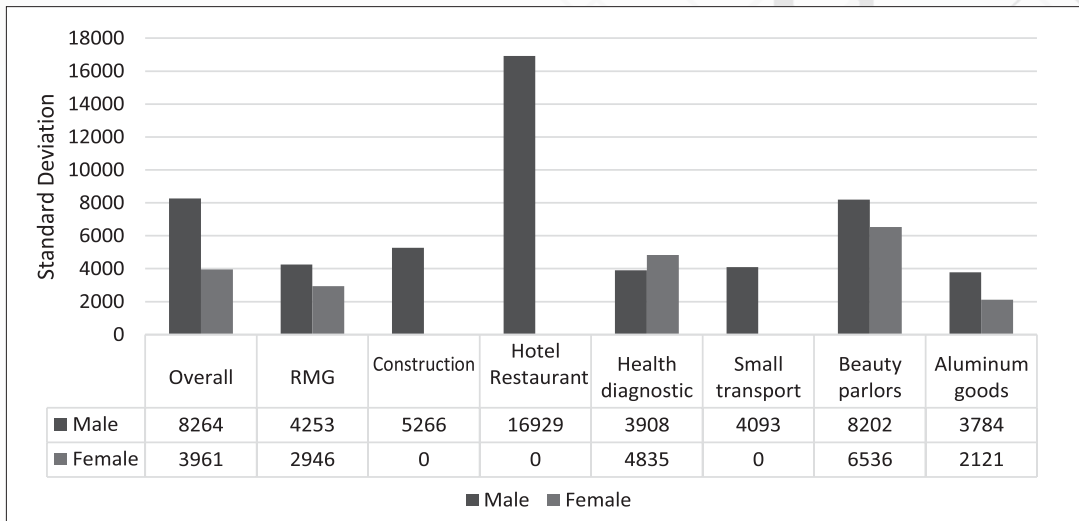


Figure 7: Standard deviation of wages between male and female workers

Again, the standard deviation of hotel-restaurant workers is much higher than other industries that have significant influence over the aggregate data set. Again, no. of male respondents in the beauty parlor and female respondents in aluminum goods are insignificant compared to their counterparts.

Table 11: Overall and Sector-wise mean and standard deviation of working hours according to gender (Gender discrimination)

Overall and sector-wise	Gender	No. of respondents	hours	Standard deviation of working hours
Overall	Male	269	9.99	2.042
	Female	121	9.35	2.261
RMG	Male	50	8.98	1.378
	Female	53	9.58	1.692
Construction	Male	53	9.43	1.587
	Female	-	-	-
Hotel-Restaurant	Male	46	11.74	1.612
	Female	-	-	-
Health-Diagnostic	Male	40	9.15	2.167
	Female	29	9.45	3.301
Small transport	Male	52	11.44	1.754
	Female	-	-	-
Beauty parlor	Male	2	10	2.828
	Female	37	8.91	1.971
Aluminum goods	Male	28	8.50	1.036
	Female	2	10	2.828

Other than aluminum, all other industries show similar working hours among male and female workers.

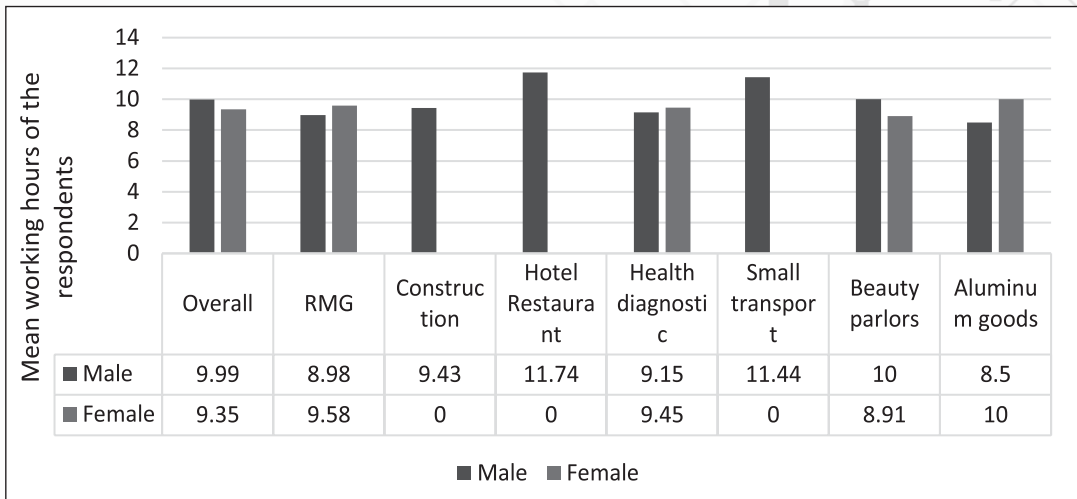


Figure 8: Gender discrimination concerning working hours

We have found the difference is insignificant because the mean differences between male and female workers are smaller than the standard deviation of the corresponding workers. So, the differences are feasible. Again, no industry is avoiding the labor law concerning permissible working hours limit. However, since workers of small transport are not job holders or working under any organization, they are working spontaneously and as per their requirements. Thus, labor law violation does not apply to them.

We did not find significant differences in opinion regarding gender discrimination. For example, most respondents replied that male and female workers are getting equal wages in the workplace. It means that there is no gender discrimination in the payment of the workers. Similarly, most respondents replied that they believe female workers are not humiliated and deprived of promotion opportunities.

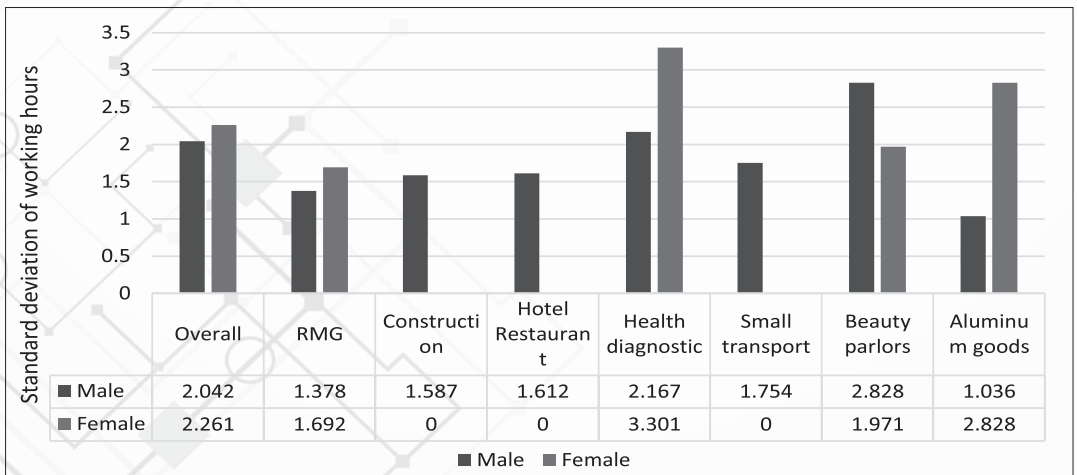


Figure 9: Standard deviation of wages between male and female workers

Table 12: Percentage distribution of respondents according to their opinions regarding gender discrimination (Overall)

Items	Discrimination Status	
	Yes	No
Male and female workers get equal wages in consideration of position and experience	62.1	37.9
Female workers are being undermined or humiliated	10.6	89.4
I feel deprived in consideration of the promotion	29.3	70.7

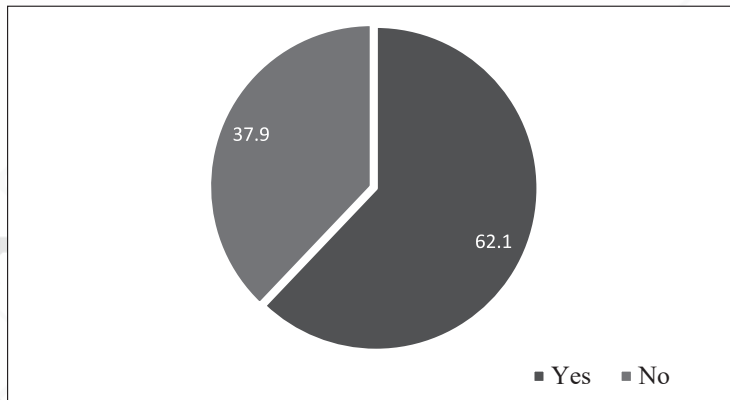


Figure 10: Percentage distribution of respondents who gave opinions regarding male vs. female wages

The summary of the statistics shows that although there is discrimination in the payment structure, there is no significant discrimination in promotion opportunities and behavior toward employees.

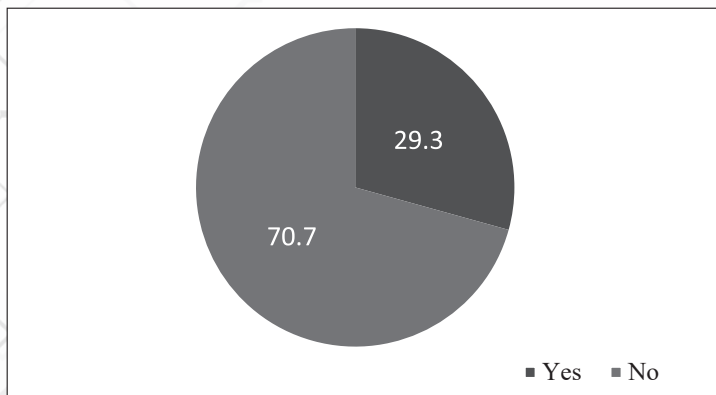


Figure 11: Percentage distribution of respondents who gave opinions regarding women's humiliation in the workplace

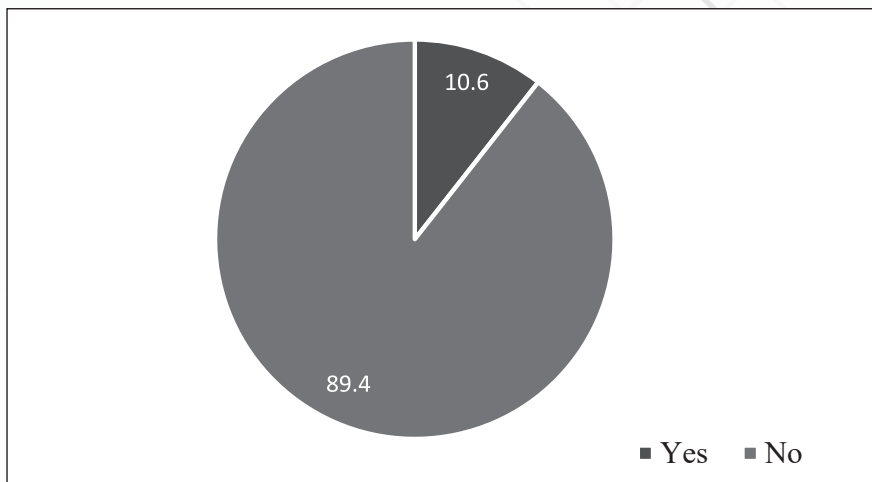


Figure 12: Percentage distribution of respondents who gave opinions regarding deprivation in promotion

Figure 8-12 depicts the pictorial (bar diagrams and pie charts) depiction of gender discrimination concerning wages, behavior toward employees, and promotion opportunities.

Table 13 (Page 37) reports the responses and discrimination status from the percentage replies of the respondents. Most of the sectors opine differently than the aggregate results. In aggregate outcomes, we have found no evidence of gender discrimination. However, in sector-wise results, we observe that other than RMG and Health, the remaining sectors, like construction, Hotel-restaurant, and aluminum, opine that there is gender discrimination concerning wages (See Figure 7). Positive and negative opinions in beauty parlors are almost close to each other.

Table 13: Sector-wise discrimination status according to different items

Item	Male and female workers get equal wages in consideration of position and experience															
	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel Restaurant		Health-Diagnostic		Small Transport		Beauty parlor		Aluminum	
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	73	27	40	60	36	65	83	17	83	17	-	-	54	46	32	68
Item	Female workers are being undermined or humiliated															
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	17	83	23	78	-	-	17	83	10	90	-	-	-	-	-	-
Item	I feel deprived in consideration of the promotion															
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	37	63	40	60	24	76	37	63	30	70	-	-	15	85	6.6	93
Discrimination Status																
Item	Male and female workers get equal wages in consideration of position and experience															
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	27	73	60	40	65	35	27	73	17	83	-	-	46	54	68	32
Item	Female workers are being undermined or humiliated															
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	17	83	23	78	-	-	17	83	10	90	-	-	-	-	-	-
Item	I feel deprived in consideration of the promotion															
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	37	63	40	60	24	76	37	63	30	70	-	-	15	85	6.6	93

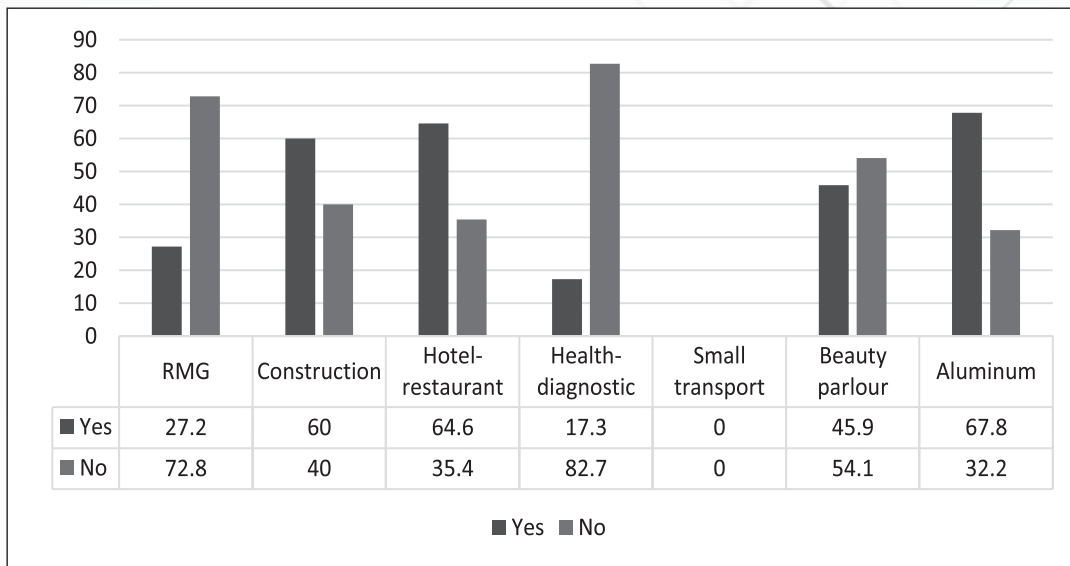


Figure 13: Discrimination status for different sectors according to wages among male versus female

Now the question may arise why aggregate data behave differently. This is because most respondents are from RMG, Beauty parlors, and Health. Almost 54% are from these three sectors.

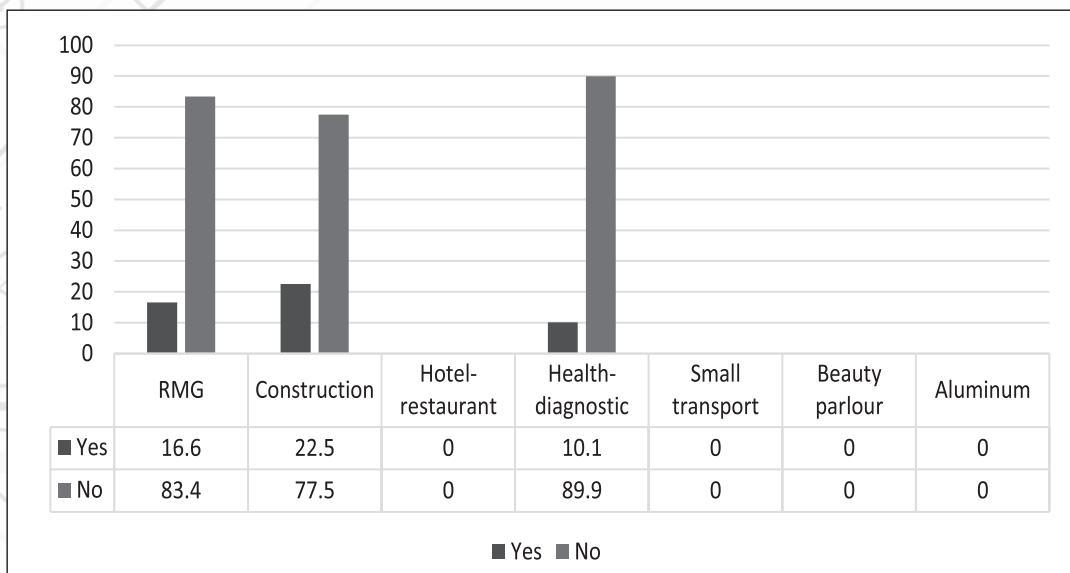


Figure 14: Sectorwise discrimination status regarding the humiliation of women in the working station

None of the sectors (majority opinions-See Figure 8) believe women are humiliated in the working station. We did not find any regular workers in hotel-restaurant and aluminum. Also, no female workers have been found in small transport.

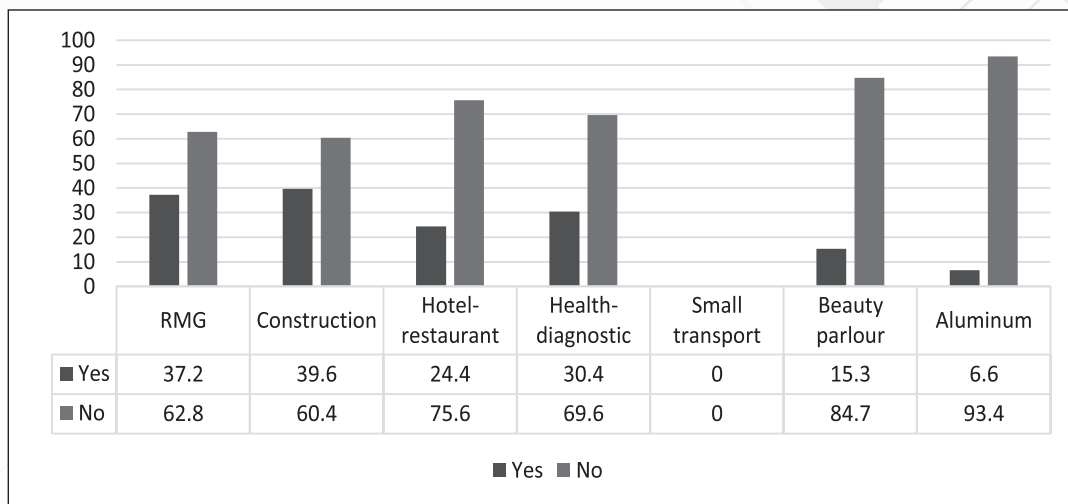


Figure 15: Sector-wise discrimination status in terms of promotion

Again, almost all sectors believe women are not depriving their promotion opportunities because of gender biases.

Status of Child Labour in the Subject Industries:

According to Bangladesh Labor Law 2006, any person under the age of 16 years will be treated as a child, and any organization appointing such a person will be accused of using child labor and subject to mentioned punishments. Although the law strictly prohibits the appointment of child labor in the industry except for a few exceptions; however, in reality, most of the sectors are evidencing the use of child labor in the workplace.

Table 14: Overall & sector-wise percentage distribution of the opinion regarding child labor

Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel-restaurant	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
26.8(105)	73.2(287)	32(33)	68(70)	11.3(6)	88.7(47)	45.7(21)	54.3(25)
Health- diagnostic		Small transport		Beauty parlaour		Aluminum	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
2.9 (2)	97.1(67)	48.1(25)	51.9(27)	2.6 (1)	97.4(38)	56.7(17)	43.3(13)

Note: The numerical figure shows the percentage of respondents, and the value in parenthesis represents the number of respondents.

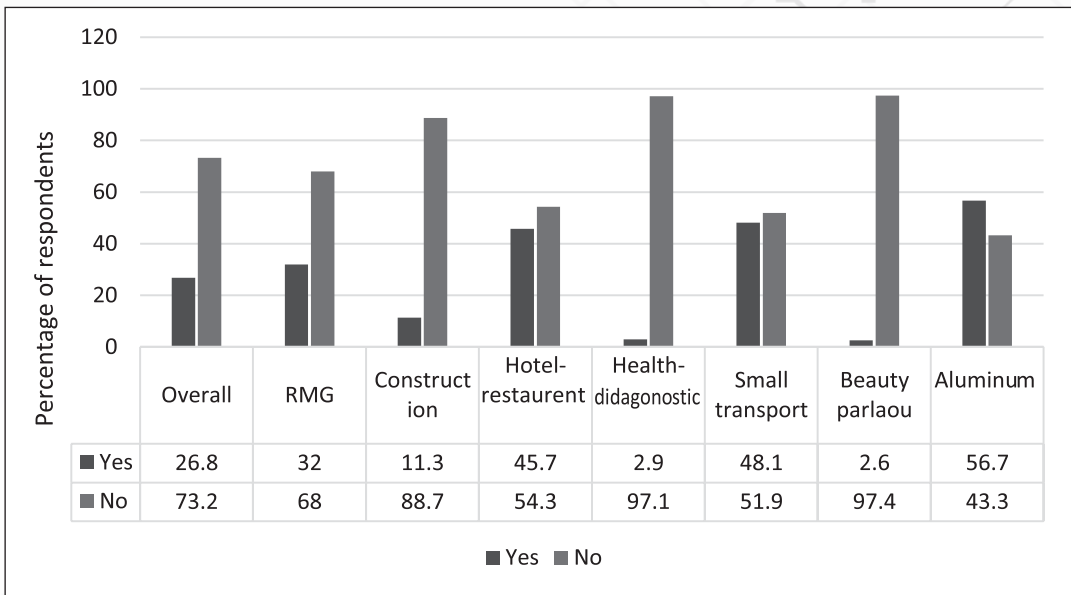


Figure 16: Respondents’ opinion regarding Child Labor

Although most of the respondents believe there is no use of child labor in their industry, positive opinion reveals that child labor exists in the studied sectors. Not all industries use child labor, but there is evidence of using child labor.

Our Focus Group Discussion (FGD) also reconfirms that children are appointed and working in the industries. One of our focused group participants was also under the coverage of child age. However, among the studied industries majority of the respondents in health diagnostics and beauty parlors opine that there is no child labor in their industry. However, respondents are almost equal regarding child labor in hotel-restaurant and the aluminum industry in their opinions.

Social protection and safety:

Table 15 reveals the workers' opinions regarding the privileges of festival bonuses that they enjoy during Eid day or Durga puja. The results in the overall data file showed that most workers got the festival bonuses and the percentage stands at 83 percent overall. The respondents in RMG, Hotel and restaurant, Health and diagnostic, Beauty parlor, and aluminum opined that they could enjoy festival bonuses. Our FGD study depicted that the bonus is 50% of the basic wage they gain. In the construction sector, 66 percent of workers opined that they do not get a bonus and the rest 34 percent said they get a bonus. It is observed that there is no provision for a bonus for the transport sector. Since this sector is more like a profession than a structured job, the outcome is expected.

Table 15: Overall and sector-wise percentage distribution for festival bonus

Industry	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel Restaurant	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Opinion	83.2	16.8	89.2	10.8	34.0	66.0	84.8	15.2
Percentage	282	57	91	11	18	35	39	7
Respondents	Health-Diagnostic		Small Transport		Beauty Parlor		Aluminum	
Opinion	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	97.1	2.9	-	-	94.9	5.1	100	-
Respondents	67	2	-	-	37	2	30	-

Occupational health and safety:

Table 16 reveals occupational health and safety in the workplace under the issue of the prevalence of enough space, light, and air in the workspace. The overall result is satisfactory with the percentage of 91.3% that claims that the industries maintain safety in the workplace. The percentage in the category of “yes” for the sectors RMG, Construction, Hotel and restaurant, health and diagnostic, small transport, Beauty parlor and Aluminum are 61.2, 88.7, 84.8, 95.7, 100, 100, and 56.7 respectively. Labour law regarding occupational health and safety is compiled under this issue.

Table 16: Overall and sector-wise percentage distribution for occupational safety and work environment

Item	We have enough space, light, and air in our workspace							
	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel Restaurant	
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	91.3	8.7	61.2	38.8	88.7	11.3	84.8	15.2
Respondents	326	18	63	40	47	6	39	7
Responses	Health-Diagnostic		Small Transport		Beauty Parlor		Aluminum	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	95.7	4.3	100	-	100	-	56.7	43.3
Respondents	66	3	4	-	39	-	17	13

Status of Trade Union:

The trade union is the bargaining agent in any industry. At aggregate level, only 27% organizations have trade unions, Aluminum sector (93%) the highest and the hotel-restaurant sector the lowest (7%). Due to the nonexistence of the trade unions' proper role in the industry, workers are unaware of their rights and scarcely dare to claim when their rights are violated. When any worker is terminated without any show cause notice, and he is terminated unheard, it is a violation of the worker's rights as well as human rights. The employer usually does this under section 26. If the trade union raises its voice on this issue and fights for justice in favor of the deprived and aggrieved worker, there would be a chance for social justice, and workers would be more productive and could get rid of exploitation and injustice.

Table 17: Overall and sector-wise percentage distribution for having trade union

Item	We have a trade union in our organizat							
Responses	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel Restaurant	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	26.5	73.5	16.9	83.1	24.5	75.5	7.1	92.9
Respondents	96	266	15	74	12	37	3	39
Responses	Health-Diagnostic		Small Transport		Beauty Parlor		Aluminum	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	11.6	88.4	45.8	54.2	22.9	77.1	93.3	6.7
Respondents	8	61	22	26	8	27	28	2
Item	Women and Young workers can participate in decision making							
Responses	Overall		RMG		Construction		Hotel Restaurant	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	10.8	89.2	15.7	84.3	8.5	91.5	6.5	93.8
Respondents	37	305	14	75	4	43	2	30
Responses	Health-Diagnostic		Small Transport		Beauty Parlor		Aluminum	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentage	11.5	88.5	2.1	97.9	2.9	97.1	26.7	73.3
Respondents	7	54	1	47	1	34	8	22

It is very frustrating that the role of the women and young in the decision making processes are largely ignored. Though 50% of our country's people are women and young people are part of the demographic dividend, they should not be ignored in decision-making. Their decision would benefit the majority of the people working in the organization

Relationship between Wages and Experience

Table 18: Correlation matrix between monthly wages, total experience, and experience in this industry

Overall/Sectors		Monthly wages	Total experience	Experience in this industry
Overall	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.164***	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.092*	0.607***	1
RMG	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.194**	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.227**	0.601***	1
Construction	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.516***	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.041	0.092	1
Hotel-Restaurant	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.005	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.016	0.579***	1
Health-diagnostic	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.022	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.007	0.68***	1
Small Transport	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.04	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.099	0.516***	1
Beauty Parlor	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.486***	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.197	0.616***	1
Aluminum	Monthly wages	1		
	Total experience	0.454***	1	
	Experience in this industry	0.663***	0.774***	1

***, **, * denotes correlation coefficient significant at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 18 depicts the coefficient of correlation between the monthly wages of the workers, their total experiences, and the working experience in the current industries. We also displayed the significance of the test with the help of the t-test and its associated p-value. The study reveals a positive relationship between the monthly wages of the workers and their total experiences, but the relation is observed to be weak. The findings showed that as experience increases, the wage increases, but the pattern is not as rapid as the workers expect. The P-value for the test is observed to be 0.001, indicating a strongly significant relationship between monthly wages and the total experiences of the workers. When we compare the relationship of wages with experience in the current industries, then P-value showed that it is insignificant at 5% level of significance but significant at 10 % level of significance. It is to be noted that the coefficient of correlation along the diagonal of Table 18 is all equal to 1 because each variable is perfectly correlated with itself.

We also observed the correlation coefficient and P-value between the factors according to different sectors like RMG, Construction, Hotel-Restaurant, Health and diagnostic, small transport, Beauty parlor, and Aluminum.

In the RMG sector, the correlation coefficient is obtained to be positive but weak. The pattern is the same for total experience and experience in the current industry. In both cases, P-value shows that hypotheses are significant at 5% level of significance.

The relationship between the workers' monthly wages and total experiences is moderately positive for the construction sector. P-value is observed to be strongly significant, indicating that as experience increases, the wage increases in the construction sector.

In hotels and restaurants, the results show that there is no linear relationship between the workers' monthly wages and total experiences, and the p-value is found to be highly insignificant. This scenario is also found in the current industry's relationship between wages and experience.

Health and diagnostic and small transport sector display the coefficient of correlation between monthly wages and total experience and experience of the workers in the current industry, same insignificant relation obtained in hotels and restaurants.

In Beauty parlors, there is a near-moderate relationship between wages and total experience and a weak relationship between wages and experience in this industry. The former case is found to be highly significant, but the latter is insignificant.

In the Aluminum sector, there is a near moderate relation between wages and total experience and moderate relation between wages and experience in this industry. The P-value shows that the relationship is strongly significant in both cases.

Factors Influencing Wages

Table 19: Multiple linear regression analysis (overall) taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors

Predictors	Unstandardized regression coefficient	Standardized regression coefficient	P-value
Age of the respondents	-121.805	-.177	.024
Total experience	257.150	.301	.000
Average working hours	-21.302	-.006	.903

Table 19 describes the influence of the age of the workers, total experience, and average working hours on the dependent variable monthly wages gained by the workers. The unstandardized regression coefficients show that the average wage of the workers is increased by Tk. 257.150 for one more year of experience. The P-value indicates a highly significant influence of the total experience of the workers on the gaining of monthly wages.

When we consider the age of the workers as the predictor of monthly wage gained, the finding shows that monthly wage is reduced by Tk. 121.805 for the increase of age by one year. The result is found to be significant at 5% level of significance.

The average working hours of the respondents are observed to be highly insignificant to the monthly wages gained by the respondents.

When we compare the standardized regression coefficient to assess the most important predictor and rank them accordingly, we take the absolute value of the standardized regression coefficient and have found that total experience is the most leading predictor, which is followed by age, and average working hours has become the least important predictor.

Table 20: Multiple linear regression analysis taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors in RMG Sector

Sectors	Predictors	Unstandardized regression coefficient	Standardized regression coefficient	P-value
	Age	-10.961	-0.025	0.882
RMG	Total experience	113.037	0.212	0.197
	Average working hours	-56.310	-0.022	0.829

Table 20 reveals that there is no significant influence of the age of the respondents, total experience, and average working hours on the dependent variable monthly wages. The result shows that if the experience is increased by one year, the monthly wage gained by the workers is increased by Tk. 113.037, and age and average working hours negatively influence the workers' monthly wage. When considering standardized regression coefficients, the total experience is the top leading predictor, followed by age and then by working hours of the respondents.

Table 21: Multiple linear regression analysis taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors in Construction Sector

	Predictors	Unstandardized regression coefficient	Standardized regression coefficient	P-value
	Age of the respondents	-322.717	-.547	.002
Construction	Total experience	638.291	.897	.000
	Average working hours	-586.359	-.177	.121

Table 21 represents the influencing factors on the monthly wage of the construction sector workers. The total experience is observed to be a highly significant predictor in changing the workers' monthly wages. The unstandardized regression coefficient reveals that for one year of change in workers' experience, the average monthly wage is increased by Tk. 638.291. The standardized regression coefficient indicates that experience is the leading and the average working hour is the least influential factor in changing the workers' monthly wages.

Table 22: Multiple linear regression analysis taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors in Hotel-Restaurant Sector

	Age of the respondents	-290.410	-.147	.586
Hotel-Restaurant	Total experience	270.712	.127	.637
	Average working hours	-1377.219	-.130	.408

Table 22 shows no significant influence of the predictors' age, total experience, and average working hours on the monthly wage of the workers.

Table 23: Multiple linear regression analysis taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors in Health-Diagnostic Sector

	Predictors	Unstandardized regression coefficient	Standardized regression coefficient	P-value
	Age of the respondents	-110.353	-.337	.096
Health Diagnostic	Total experience	120.907	.271	.163
	Average working hours	121.524	.074	.570

Table 23 for the health and diagnostic revealed that total experience and average working hours positively influence the monthly wage of the workers. It is found that for one year increase of the workers, the monthly wage is increased by the amount Tk. 120.907, and for one more working hour wage is increased by Tk. 121.52, but both variables are insignificant.

Table 24: Multiple linear regression analysis taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors in Small Transport Sector

	Age of the respondents	63.338	.155	.404
Small transport	Total experience	-29.643	-.063	.738
	Average working hours	99.289	.043	.777

Table 24 for small transport shows that working hours positively influence the monthly wage of the workers. If the worker drives the transport one more hour, he is expected to get Tk. 99.289 more as monthly wage. Age is also found to have a positive influence on monthly wages. But the variables age, experience, and average working hours are insignificant predictors. Standardized regression coefficients indicate that age is the leading, followed by small transport and average working hours.

Table 25: Multiple linear regression analysis taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors in Beauty Parlor

	Predictors	Unstandardized regression coefficient	Standardized regression coefficient	P-value
	Age of the respondents	102.004	.200	.506
Beauty parlor	Total experience	186.749	.310	.304
	Average working hours	394.051	.177	.236

In beauty parlors, Age, total experience, and average working hours show a positive influence in predicting the changing of the monthly wage of the workers, and these variables are found to be insignificant. The standardized regression coefficient shows that total experience is the leading predictor, and then age and average working hours are the least.

Table 26: Multiple linear regression analysis taking the monthly wages of the workers and the total experience, ages, and working hours as the predictors in Aluminum Sector

	Age of the respondents	-197.166	-.624	.101
Aluminum goods	Total experience	370.116	.985	.013
	Average working hours	-1111.875	-.357	.031

When we study aluminum goods, it is observed that total experience has a positive effect, but age and average working hours negatively affect the workers' monthly wages. In this case, total experience and average working hours are observed to be statistically significant in changing the monthly wage of the workers.

Complimentary Evidence from Key Informant’s Interview (KII)

A key informant is a person who keeps essential information and can be named as a professional source of information (Marshal, 1996). The key informant interview was conducted with individuals who were chosen because they were experts on the subjects of the study and had a wealth of work experience in the field of work and health. In this section, we incorporate all the findings of KII means in-depth KIIs with the employers to compliment and validate the **results of section 6 and section 7**.

The **key informants’ interview (KII)** of the employers and (Trade Unions) TU leaders also deliver similar primary data about the scenarios of workers in different sectors to some extent concerning decent work and workers' rights. By taking qualitative data based on the KIIs, we identified the situation of workers regarding decent work and worker's rights based on employment opportunity, earnings, working hours, occupational safety and safe work environment, social security, and other benefits (monetary benefits), Equal Opportunity/ Gender discrimination issue, trade union, combining (Balancing) work and family life.

Respondents' Profile of the KII

We have conducted an in-depth KII with the employers of 20 samples in Chattogram in the sectors of RMG, Health, Hotel, Construction, Aluminum, and Beauty- Parlor. Most of them are of their long experiences in the organization as service holders and employers. They have a clear picture of the worker’s rights and decent work. Conversations with the respondents give us more insights into labours' present conditions and address the issues that create gaps between the stakeholders. The whole team members were presented in every session. Two of us were in conversation with the employer and the rest members involved with the write-up. The findings of the KII validate our research objectives.

Key Issues of the Key Informant’s Interview (KII)

Table 27: Key Issues of KII

The key issues we discuss in the KII are as follows:	
Employment Opportunity:	▪ Open advertisement or not:
	▪ Age limit of the entry-level workers/employees:
	▪ Educational qualifications of the entry-level workers/employees:
	▪ Male-female ratio:
	▪ Appointment Letter & ID Card:
	▪ Having any workers below 16/18 years: If so, any benefits like the economy, easy to recruit/manage
	▪ Preference in recruitment: Workers/employees’ education vs. experience; why

Workers/Employees' Compensation:	▪ Pay a) Averageb) Min....., c) Max.....
	▪ Cash or bank pay system:
	▪ Any regular increment and festival bonus provision:
	▪ Any extra monetary rewards for good performance:
	▪ Adjustment of wages with the rising inflation/cost of living:
	▪ Do workers/employees bargain/request higher pay? How do you deal with them?
Working Hours:	▪ Working hours: a) Average ... Hrs , b) Min ... Hrs , c) Max ... Hrs d) Lunch break/Leisure
	▪ Provisions for: a) Overtime, b) Leave, c) Weekly holidays
	▪ Do you think the prevailing working hours in your industry are sufficient or should be changed?
Occupational Safety and Safe Work Environment:	▪ Fire exit, fire extinguisher, fire drill, water nozzle, etc.
	▪ First aid & Treatment of injury in the workplace
	▪ Washroom/Toilets (hygienic & sufficient), Childcare, Canteen facilities, transport facilities (especially female workers/employees at night).
	▪ Workplace environment: space, light, air, temperature, noise.
	▪ Women sexual harassment/Complaint cell: how do you manage? ▪ Did you have any untoward incidents that you experienced in your organization?
Social Security and Other Benefits (Monetary Benefits)	▪ Provident fund
	▪ Welfare fund
	▪ Retirement benefits
	▪ Maternity benefits
	▪ Compensation/treatment cost for accidental injury or death of employees/workers
	▪ In case of downsizing/terminating any worker/employee: who comes first- high pay experienced worker/employee or low pay less experience one? In this case, does s/he get full pay?
	▪ In case of leaving leave, what is the system of your organization? Any experience? Any negotiation with the worker/employee or free to leave?
Equal Opportunity/Gender Discrimination Issue	▪ In promotion of job
	▪ In the enhancement of wages or in providing other facilities.

Role of Employees/Workers' Association or Trade Union	▪ Does your organization have trade unions/workers' or employees' associations? How is the union formed, and what role does the union play in your organization?
	▪ How do you see the existence of such an association? Evaluate or comment, please.
	▪ Does the presence of such an association a threat to the employer? Why?
Child Labor Issue	▪ How do you see the matter of child labor in an organization?
	▪ Are they cheaper or economy, or easy to manage/recruit?
Combining (Balancing) Work and Family Life	▪ Do you think your organization is more flexible towards workers balancing their family life and working station? How?

Analysis of the KII Findings

Employment Opportunity:

Our KII research revealed that health diagnostic centers employ two different categories of personnel: operational and management. All including between 50 and 60 employees work in a center. Employers favor experience over education when hiring, yet they adhere to a minimal standard of education, such as SSC or HSC. They consider some conditions for the sister, lab technician, and word boy. Say, for instance, that sisters and nurses need a diploma course. According to necessity, they must maintain a balance between men and women. They favor (nurses) sisters, especially in the OT. There is a male/female selection ratio in the diagnostic phase, with the male receiving higher precedence. The personnel must obtain letters of appointment and identification. However, the employer preserved the letter of joining. They never hire someone younger than 16 or 18; instead, they often hire people between 20 and 25.

KII data further revealed that issuance of ID cards and appointment letters are practiced at large in the RMG industry (preserved by the company). The situation in the other sectors is however reported worse. Workers in hotels, aluminum, and beauty salons never receive an appointment letter, we find.

Workers/Employees' Compensation:

In the hotel, aluminum, and beauty parlor industries performance and labor frequency determine salaries. No customer, no payment. No work, no pay. However, workers of these sectors are still in a better position to maintain their level of living than RMG because they are receiving enough money from consumer tips. A comparative analysis

of the small and medium categories of the construction industry reveals that workers are in a difficult situation due to indirect employment by the contractors.

RMG, Construction, and Health sector workers reportedly get a yearly festival bonus of 50% of their salaries. No employer made a pay adjustment for inflation. Additionally, the workers have no liberty/voice regarding salary increases. For big construction firms, the practice is often entirely different. Employer of a significant construction company said to us,

"...I had 35 years of experience in the construction sector... There are two types of workers: those on my payroll and those hired on a contract basis. I always prioritize skill above education when hiring new employees. Everyone receives an appointment letter and an ID card. My recruitment strategy relies mostly on personal contracts rather than advertisements. ... Minimum payment is 15,000 taka and the maximum is 35,000taka per month on average. My employees are not pressured to stay with the company once they leave and are paid their dues. I have introduced a retention plan of my own. For job safety, every day, I will pay Tk. 20, and each employee will pay Tk. 20. At the end of the year, particular employees shall receive a payment for the entire contribution.

That means large construction companies and RMG follow labour law better than any other industry. The outcomes of some KII on various businesses, such as the restaurant, aluminum, parlor, and RMG, are fascinating too, as we have mentioned here:

"Several of my employees have been with me for 12 years. Because I give my employees some facilities, they feel at ease working with me. Although there isn't a workers' association in my salon, we employers do have an association that allows us to attend training sessions to raise the performance of our staff. Some of our employees are skilled and productive, and they are paid according to performance", says one Beauty Parlor employer.

A restaurant employer from the Muradpur area talk on his style of hiring staff as follows:

"This is my family business, established around 45 years before...we have only 2/3 women staff and the rest are men....I hired employees through personal contacts from those who have worked in the restaurant for the last 20 years. Staff payment is sufficient. Since it is a restaurant, it is open 365 days a year....Daily earnings for female employees are Tk 200, but their monthly pay is Tk 7500. Although we have an employer association, the workers do not. We maintain fire extinguishers, and I also provide my employees lodging and compensation in the event of an accident".

Working Hours:

8 hours' work a day is more or less practiced in the health, RMG, and beauty parlor sectors. 9.00 am to 5.00 pm is general time. After 5.00 pm, work is treated as overtime. Workers willingness is main, no pressure for overtime work is reported. But there is huge pressure for construction, hotel, and aluminum workers. 10 to 12 hours is a very common practice in these sectors. Except hotels and beauty parlors, other sectors have weekly holidays and 10 to 14 days of casual leave yearly.

“My uncle started the business started in 2011...I joined in 2019, sooner my MBA completed....we have 15 office staffs and 600 operating employees..... 70% are women.....2 production floor...my role is a merchandiser in the commercial department.....I appoint workers from the network.....no advertisement is required...no workers below 18 years..... in the quality section, minimum level of education is SSC or above.... at the operating level no education is mandatory. In the sub store, female workers are mandatoryStore in charge must be male. We issued ID card but no appointment letter.....Skilled workers often bargain a little....we usually pay an operator tk.10000 a month, helper gets tk.7000 to tk. 9000.....8.00 am to 5.00 pm is the factory time.....lunch break is 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.....any work after 5.00pm is considered as overtime.....Maximum 3 hours of overtime work is allowed.....We have fire extinguishers, every year 1st of June a trial session is administered.... We allow maternity leave for 4 months without pay.....We arrange a get together each year where the family members of our workers join and enjoy the pleasing moment with the fest. In our country, we are one of the best export-oriented firm”, says one RMG employer from Eidgah Kacha Rastar More

Occupational Safety and Safe Work Environment:

Fire exit, fire extinguisher, fire drill, water nozzle, first aid, injury treatment, washrooms, sanitary toilet, sufficient washrooms, childcare, canteen, and transportation facility are among others few of the key concerns for occupational health and safety. Our KIIs suggest that hotel-restaurant, construction, and aluminum sectors clearly fall short of these occupational health and safety arrangements in the workplace. Medium to big RMG factories, parlors, and health diagnostic centers have better safety arrangements than others.

Social Security and Other Benefits (Monetary Benefits):

Basically, when it comes to social security, we strive to understand the benefits associated with provident funds, welfare funds, retirement benefits, maternity benefits, and compensation/treatment costs for accidental injury or death of employees/workers. Social security benefit is one of the lowest in the studied seven industrial sectors. Most industries do not provide retirement benefits. There is irregularity in the maternity protection of benefits.

Equal Opportunity/Gender Discrimination Issue:

RMG has an overwhelming majority of women operators. The construction, aluminum, and health industries have disproportionately less number of women employees. The construction sector is a worst case scenario, we found, in any aspect of gender discrimination. Subcontractor reportedly victimizes women workers of their payment.

Role of Employees/Workers' Association or Trade Union:

Employers have a negative attitude to allow a workers association in their domain. There is a lack of awareness too among employers on this. One employer from the health industry claimed that union members only protect their interests, not those of the workers. Employers from large, well-known construction sectors said to us that they don't want any trade unions in their establishments since the work environment can harm negatively. Few construction employers claimed that the nature of the work in their sector don't permit trade union practices.

Child Labor Issue:

Our KII data suggests that most of the sectors have child labor. Construction and aluminum factories have child labor below 15 years of age. In the hotel-restaurant, for table cleaning and washing, small street boys are appointed temporarily, not permanently. These children assist the seniors in the hotel. In the aluminum industry, children are selected to wash the utensils made of aluminum. In small transport, little boys are employed as helpers.

Combining (Balancing) Work and Family Life:

KII data suggests that in the low level of the society there is only a little consciousness on work-life balance.

Qualitative Analysis – Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The group discussions were conducted by adopting the methodology suggested by Kitzing (1995) and Krueger and Schkade (2008). Eight to twelve participants joined a moderated conversation who were allowed to debate liberally on the aspects of worker's rights and decent work in their industry. It was a heterogeneous mix of participants consisting of RMG workers, nurses from health diagnostic centers, CNG drivers (small transport), construction labor, hotel-restaurant workers, workers from beauty parlors, workers from aluminum industry, and trade union leaders of each sector. The moderator was extremely sympathetic to disparagements and proposals to inspire any kind of answer, optimistic or undesirable. A person was also registered as a soundless eyewitness of the focus groups to take thorough transcriptions of any conversation between the participants, mainly of non-verbal communications such as facial terminologies. Every focus group discussion continues for about two hours and is typically recorded with the contributors' permission.

In the FGDs, all participants were enthusiastic to express their real-life experiences, feelings, desires, opinions, expectations, and real pains. We came to find out the real scenario of the present situation regarding the worker's rights and decent work in Chattogram. By using qualitative data from the FGD, we were able to quickly determine the situation concerning workers' rights and the ability to perform decent work based on employment opportunities, wages, working hours, workplace safety, other benefits (financial benefits), issues with equal opportunity and gender discrimination, trade unions, and combining these factors (Balancing). We looked at several disheartening yet essential findings from the different sectors.

In the table (28) below, we have précised the widespread issues of workers' rights and decent work at a glance concerning different sectors as they appeared from the focus group discussions.

Table 28: Comprehensive issues of worker's rights and decent work at a glance from FGD (Worker's & TU perspective)

Issues	Sectors	RMG	Health	Beauty Parlor	Aluminum	Construction	Hotel-Restaurants	Small Transport
Appointment letter, ID card		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Wages		6k to 10k	6k to 12k	7k to 9k	8k to 9k	10 k to 12 k(8k o 9k)	12 k to 15k	26k to 65k
Working Hour		8 to 9	7 to 8	8 to 10	8 to 9	10 to 12	10 to 12	12
Leave (Weekly and Govt. HD)		1 weekly, 14 (GH)	1 weekly, 18(GH)	1 weekly	1 weekly 10(GH)	2 weekly	No weekend	1 weekly
Extra Working Hour s (OT)		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Breakfast and Lunch Break,		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Festival Bonus,		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Issues of Other Benefits-								
Medical Expenses For Injury		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Any Personal/ Social Expenses		No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Allowances/Leave for Sickness		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Loan and Welfare Facilities		No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Housing & Retirement Benefits		No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Benefits of Job Leave,		No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Death Compensation.		Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Issues of Work Environment-								
Work pressure		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Childlabor		Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sanitary facilities,		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Friendly/healthy environment		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Fire Extingusher, emergency		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Inhumation and harassment		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maternity leave with pay		Yes Without Pay	Yes Without Pay	Yes Without Pay	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Issues of Trade union, youth, and women participation								
Trade Union Awareness		No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Youth/Women Participation in TU		No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Complying with Labour Contract

Table 28 shows that the status of complying with contracts is better in the RMG and Health Diagnostic industry.

“Yes, I have an appointment letter and an ID card.....I earned tk. 10,000 a month.....each and every year I get an increment of tk 250 to 500usually, I am allowed one day leave a week but now it is 2 days a week for a special reason.....I get 14 days of casual leave in a year....I get bonuses, which amounts 50% of my salary.....in the morning between 10.00 am to 10.15 am, there is a break time, and for launch 01 hour break is allowed...depending on order and work volume 2 to 3 hours of overtime work is allowed,....for the last six months, since there is no extra order, I didn't get an opportunity to do overtime or to earn an income from this.”, says one RMG worker in a FGD.

Another one worker from the health sector says to us in a FGD the following:

“I work in a diagnostic center...I have only an ID but no joining date is mentioned..... I am to attend work at 8 am in the morning.....I worked for two shifts regularly from morning, noon and night shift. Every shift covers 6 hours. It's comfortable.... Monday is my holiday....only ICU staff get a break time.....I didn't get any increment for the last 2 years....bonus amounts 50% of my salary.... In the initial days of the covid-19 severity I had been sick...I got treatment free of cost”.

Construction industry has a different hiring practice. Mostly, third party independent contractors appoint and supply workers for the construction firms. Thus, workers are very often deprived of getting better employment deals as such compliance with the labour law is only limited. One construction worker says to us in a FGD,

“Usually, I work from 8.00 am to 6. Pm daily. Sometimes, work hours lingered up to 10 pm late at night. I never got an opportunity to meet my original employer.....For the last 2 previous months I worked 18 days and 26 days respectively, but yet to be paid. This month I work for 18 days and get a payment of tk.8, 000 only. Daily helpers get tk 400 to 500 per day and the mason gets tk.700 to 800 per day. In Sylhet, Moulvibazar, one of my known workers was died by electric shock during construction work, the employer gave his family tk 50,000, after the movement of our own association. We have an association where we save our money for ourselves. If any accident occurs we provide the financial benefit. In my workplace, there are some workers aged below 16 to 18 years who belong to very poor families.Out of 10 workers in a project, at least 4 to 5 will be 16 years or below. Women are discriminated against wage payment. For roof molding, more women are hired, they are given only a very poor payment like tk. 150 to 200 per day.”

Aluminum is a promising industry in Chattogram. This industry has employed a good number of workers. Compliance with the labour contracts didn't find satisfactory in the FGDs. Workers work for long hours. Wage inequality is a regular practice. Good performer is offered a better payment.

“We work from 9 am to 6 pm regularly. Depending on workload, we often need to work till 10:00 pm at night...Seniors earn between tk. 8000 to tk. 9000 per month.....few children work who get tk. 300 per day. Those who can produce better outputs earn between tk. 12000 to 15000 a month. Those who are newly recruited are paid only tk. 1000 to Tk.2000 a month Per worker is paid tk. 12 for morning time snacks and tk. 15 for launch.I have been working for the last 18 years. Once in the past, I was injured by an accident. My employer gave me a small amount for treatment.In social programmes like marriage, employers usually give some cash assistance to the respective worker..... Out of 6 of us work, 2 are below 16 years of age. There is no trade union. But, we have an association where we preserve some money for our betterment.....because no one is there to help in the crises”, says one Aluminum factory worker

In general, as analysed from FGD data, except for RMG and health sector, rest of the five sectors have no practice to issue either an ID or appointment letter to the workers. FGD data on working hour and wage practices are almost similar to that of the survey findings. Serious irregularity is however reported on maternity protection. Maternity leave without pay is practiced in the RMG, health and beauty parlor industry and for the rest of the four sectors no maternity protection is reported.

“I don't have an ID card nor was I issued an appointment letter.... I work 12 to 14 hours daily... We are not entitled to eat the same meal we prepared for the guests.....Waiter or boy earns Tk.300 per day..... I get tk.700 per day....Our hotel has employed a couple of children for cleaning, washing and serving water on the table. They are paid poorly.....if anyone takes leave, wages are deducted from his income.....We enjoy only 10 days leave a year particularly during 2 Eid festivals....The main income source is tips from the guest..... Per day we earn tk. 200 to 250 as tips. Senior workers often take away tips money from the child workers.....Small accidents are common..... Employer support first aid and medical treatment..... We have union.... Unions often bargain for better compensation to our occupational injuries.....Our workplace is very hot, dark and dirty..... Often workers seek help from the union to resolve any unwelcoming issues with the employer”, says a General Secretary of a Hotel and Restaurant Union

Regarding Working Environment

One RMG worker and one construction worker reported to us in the FGDs that they had never seen or met their employer. Except for this, FGD data regarding working environments best supplement survey findings. There marked a significant difference in the wages between men and women. Harassment, humiliation, and deprivation are reported common in the studied industries.

“I have been sewing for the last 21 years but have never seen my employer..... I never get any help from my employer during my sickness. There are no rules and regulations in my workplace. I never heard about a union. We are harassed physically by male co-workers. This is very common in the garment industry”, says one RMG worker

Regarding Trade Union

FGD data suggests that TU is more or less unwelcome in the studied sectors. Very few workers we find have trade union involvement. The participation of youth and women in the trade unions is rather low.

Summary of Findings and Policy Recommendations:

Findings combining Questionnaire Survey, KII, and FGDs

Although it is expected that all findings of the study will be the same, to some extent, we have found a diversified summary of the results. From the investigation, the researchers observed few stimuli work for such heterogeneity. In the questionnaire survey, workers were concerned and careful about their answers. They were cautious about their position. For example, in child labor issues, they were reluctant to admit that they were under-aged or that their organization recruits workers treated as a child. That means they are afraid that if they accept they are not equal or above 18 years, they may lose their job, or their referred persons will not be employed in the organization.

However, FGDs comprise workers, employers, and trade union leaders. Respondents in FGDs were more open to answering the questions and revealing the aggregate facts. Moreover, FGD members were careful to answer because all stakeholders were at the roundtable dialogue with appropriate evidence to encounter their answers.

Again, KII respondents were a mix of employers, trade union leaders, and other significant informants. In this investigation, the practice of complying with the labour law was found not up to the mark.

After synthesizing all findings, we observed the following key finding of the study:

- i. Regarding working hours, labour law is better complied with. Exceptions were found in hotel-restaurants, construction, and the transport sector. Working hours in the hotel-restaurant and construction industries are typically 10 to 12 hours a day. In our study, we considered all those hotel restaurants that are not well structured or established, having no air conditioning facilities and no chain services in the town. Thus, these hotels are operated for almost 24 hours and are more concerned about minimizing costs to sustain in the competitive market. Thus, paying attention to comply with labour laws is not their concern due to cost minimization and the abundance of labor forces. Again, transport workers are more likely to be professional than laborers. They rent vehicles and work more hours to earn more money. So, extended working hours are their choice, not an obligation.
- ii. Our studied industries depict that the average wages of the workers (Tk.13,473) are greater than the minimum national wage of Tk. 8,000 for workers. We also have found in the FGDs and KII that existing wage rates are insufficient to support a family with five members requiring Tk.18,000 per month to maintain minimum subsistence of life. In restaurants, aluminum, and beauty parlors, employee wages/salary is based on daily customer transactions, performance, and production. Also, here the subcontractor severely interrupts the rights of the workers.
- iii. The appointment letter and ID card concern those organizations where a large number of workers are working (RMG) or deal with sensitive equipment that demands high security (health diagnostics). No appointment letters or ID cards are ever given to restaurant, aluminum, or beauty parlor employees. In some formal sectors, an ID card is given but the joining date is not mentioned. The joining letter is sometimes kept by employers, particularly in health sectors. However, the transport sector was an exception. This is because we consider a driving license as a driver's ID card; without extreme exception, no driver is allowed to run vehicles without a driving license.
- iv. In terms of on-the-job compensation, all the sectors are found to be moderately satisfactory. Still, there is a tendency to avoid compensation or deprive workers of their right to get compensation for injury. Questionnaire survey respondents admitted that they had seen instances of workers' on-the-job injury compensations. However, trade union leaders in FGD and KII opine that authority always tends to avoid compensation or settle down informally to save money. All sectors have an instance of on-job-injury payment except beauty parlors. Workers get the treatment expenses on the first day or one time but not for complete recovery during the period

of injury/accident. Although there is a clause for death compensation in the event of an accident on company property (Tk.2lac), the employer manages it by paying less. Workers receive treatment costs and facilities for first-time accidents but not further care.

- v. Regarding the maternity protection of the workers with leave and pay, it is observed that RMG and health diagnostic complied with the law moderately. Still, the other sectors are unsatisfactory regarding this issue. Having a policy for 4 months of paid maternity leave, sectors like formal in nature only provide 2 to 3 months of unpaid leave, which is abusive to women workers. Also, women may feel pushed to leave their jobs after becoming pregnant in order to avoid receiving maternity benefits.
- vi. Gender discrimination is apparent in aluminum and construction. In these two industries, women are less employed as well as paid less than male employees. However, in other sectors, there is no significant evidence of gender discrimination in wages, promotions, or behavior toward employees.
- vii. Child labor is a burning issue for all sectors, and all sectors are less intended to admit they have child labor. We did not find significant evidence of child labor in the questionnaire survey. However, trade union leaders and other respondents in FGD opine that, except for health diagnostics, all sectors have child labor. The proportion of child labor is more significant in hotel-restaurants and aluminum than in other sectors.
- viii. Trade unions are bargaining agents and intermediates between authority/employers and labor. All employees have the right to participate in trade unions. There is hide-and-seek between employers and workers. Employers fear workers' participation in trade unions will hamper the organization's working environment. Trade union leaders opine that employers do not like trade unions because they bargain for workers' rights and force the authority to due payment of workers. Workers do not like to disclose their participation in a trade union or are afraid to join in trade union because they think that if authority knows it, they may lose their job. The study reveals that trade union in the industrial sectors does not exist, according to the opinion of most of the respondents, and only a few respondents opined in favor of the existence of trade union in the sectors studied. Some well-reputed construction employers believe that trade unions harm the company's development.
- ix. The participation of young and women in decision-making is frustrating, as our study finds. The majority of the respondents opined that there is no involvement of the young and women in trade unions, and they cannot stand to raise their voices in favor of many women and young workers in the industry. The youth and the female workers are not interested in joining trade unions due to social, political, and family pressure.

- x. Regarding occupational safety, facilities in the working environment, like enough space, light, and air, are relatively satisfactory, as per the respondents' opinion in the study of industrial sectors.
- xi. Due to subcontracts, the employers fail to practice labour laws, particularly in the construction sector. Also, the practice of labour laws has not been found up to the level in some industries like hotels, aluminum, and beauty parlors due to their informal nature.

Policy Recommendations

Respondents in the survey, KIIs and FGDs have voiced to us a good number of policy recommendations to address current difficulties. Only the relevant recommendations that in our analysis appear can be useful for addressing existing issues are considered here.

Policy Recommendation to Government:

- v. Conduct research and generate appropriate knowledge base regarding the issues for the companies' noncompliance with labour laws and take the prompt and effective initiative to revise the laws from time to time based on national interests.
- vi. Establish a strong and effective monitoring and evaluation cell to ensure labor law compliance.
- vii. Play the collaborator's role and make a partnership with all stakeholders to enjoy mutual benefits.
- viii. Speed up the union registration process and make sure they fulfill the obligations that have been established.

Policy recommendation to Trade Union

- iv. Start dialogue and/or regular meetings with employers for better working conditions and the health of the industries so that it is possible to find out a way to compensate the workers, including wages/salaries and fringe benefits based on the ability of the employers and productivity of the workers by complying labour laws.
- v. Support the government and/or regulatory agencies and to the extent possible take part with them to better implement the labour laws.
- vi. Most importantly, union leaders must make workers/employees aware of labour laws and workers' rights. Also, help workers improve/upgrade their skills through outsourced and hands-on training at the organization.

Policy recommendation to Employers/Employers

- v. Own your workers/ employees and create a platform of mutual trust by having regular meetings to ensure/realize mutual benefits. Also, make your workers aware/train them on the necessity of their understanding about the betterment or productivity of the company and how the role of workers can make the organization sustainable.
- vi. Ensure a better working environment for the workers to enhance their productivity and be sincere in compensating them fairly or based on efficiency as well as a necessity (if possible).
- vii. Concentrate on social protection and mitigate grievances of the employees/ workers.
- viii. Most importantly, the existing rivalry relationship between the workers needs to be converted into a cordial collaborative environment from which mutual benefits can be enjoyed by both groups.

Policy recommendation to Employees/Workers

- vi. Educate yourself on your rights and entitlement in the workplace. In order to build awareness, they can form peer groups or join a group of workers in the organization and move into a group to raise their voices. Also, they can keep in touch with the trade union leaders in their same nature of work or profession for their mutual benefits or rights.
- vii. In the era of the techno world, there is every possibility to be replaced by technology or auto machines for the workers in their jobs. Therefore, they need to retain the demand for their services even in the techno world paradigm shift. To keep themselves demandable, they continuously need to upgrade their skills or acquire new skills to suit the auto environment in the industry or labour market.
- viii. Besides the requirement of minimum wages/salaries, the bargaining of wages should also be based on the efficiency of workers to make their services sustainable in the competitive techno-labor market.
- ix. Collective effort can make a better environment for work. The working environment's cleanliness and hygiene factors depend on the workers.
- x. Most importantly, the existing rivalry relationship with the employers/employers needs to be converted into a cordial collaborative environment from which both the groups can enjoy mutual benefits.

Limitations

Like all other studies, this study has some limitations. First, the study was conducted over a small sample of 400 workers with a sub-sample range from 30 to 100 workers from the seven selected sectors. Certainly, a larger sample would have always been better. The resource constraint of the sponsoring organization put us in a constraint. However, we might add here that we are confident of the robustness of the findings on two grounds –400 samples for aggregate analysis were sufficiently large, and findings from each of the seven sectors truly represent the aggregate level findings as there is no significant variance. Second, the study is limited to Chattogram. Therefore, it may not represent the national level.

Conclusions

This research has made a situation analysis of selected industrial sectors in the Chattogram focusing on Decent Work and Workers' Rights aspects. From the study of the selected industries, this study finds few major insights. Firstly, although the workers' wages are above the national average wages of laborers, this is insufficient to maintain an average family of five members. Trade union leaders also opine that this wage needs to be revised to maintain a minimum standard of living and to align with decent work. Secondly, other than RMG and Health, no other industries are showing their concern about the issuance of appointment letters and ID cards. This is against the rights of workers. Without proper ID cards and appointment letters, workers cannot get their legal rights or claim their relationship with the appointed firms. Finally, our industries are also lagging in confirming maternity benefits of workers with pay and implementing no child labor work conditions. In addition to the workers' survey, both KII and FGDs confirm that while the overall situation is not ideal, many employers and employees in the research sector are concerned about the issue of workers' rights and decent employment after doing the study work. Many trade union leaders are considering the issue and bringing it up in various forums like BILS. However, as researchers, we believe that both governmental and non-governmental organizations should speak out about it to raise awareness of the rights and obligations of the general public and among employers and employees. In most of the workers' rights, different stakeholders, especially government, employers, and trade associations, should take a quicker and more concerned look and thoughts on it.

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