

Status of Women Participation in TUs in the RMG Industry

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**BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF
LABOUR STUDIES – BILS**

**3F - UNITED FEDERATION
OF DANISH WORKERS**



Women Participation in Trade Unions in Garment Industry

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ACRONYMS

BGMEA	:	Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BGIWF	:	Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation
BILS	:	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
BKMEA	:	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BRGWF	:	Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation
BTGWL	:	Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League
EC	:	Executive Committee
EPZ	:	Export Processing Zone
ETI	:	Ethical Trading Initiative
FGD	:	Focus Group discussion
FoA	:	Freedom of Association
GBV	:	Gender Based Violence
ILO	:	International Labor Organization
NGWF	:	National Garment Workers Federation
NTUF	:	National Trade Union Federation
RMG	:	Ready Made Garments
TU	:	Trade Union
TUF	:	Trade Union Federation
UFGW	:	United Federation of Garments Workers
WTO	:	World Trade Organization
3 F	:	A Danish United Federation of Workers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research endeavored to study the real status of women involvement in unions and in leadership positions in the RMG industry and the respective trends and causes. The 3F-United Federation of Danish Workers South Asia Regional Office provided with necessary support. Specially, 3F's five (5) partnered NTUF's programs and interventions dedicated to promote women representation in the unions of RMG industry in Bangladesh are researched in-depth. More particularly, we look in-depth into 1) the current status of unionization and women participation and the respective trends, 2) the space and efforts that the 3F partners unions have created to increase women's representation in TUs, and 3) the challenges and gaps for poor participation of women in TUs. Apart from others, we mainly hear from the working women the reasons for underrepresentation at the leadership level and the entire labor movement and the way forward.

This research is premised completely on qualitative research approach and respective tools and techniques. Information is collected from both primary and secondary sources. Project and partnership documents and limited relevant literature are sourced for collection of secondary information. Primary information is collected from factory level women workers, women leaders, 3F partners' 5 TUFs, women committee leaders and 3F and BILS. The methodology broadly included Focus Group Discussions, In-depth Interview, Consultation, Meeting and Desk-based Review. We particularly addressed through this research five broad-based research questions such as 1) What are the statuses of women participation in unions, 2) What opportunities (space and efforts) are available in federations to increase women's representation, 3) What are the challenges and gaps at union level to increase women participation, 4) What are the challenges and gaps at women workers level, and 5) What are the ways forward.

Research findings

Industry status: Bangladesh now has a reduced number of RMG factories ever counted. The number of factories has been almost at a standstill for the last couple of years. Product quality improvement and automation have been two increasing emphasis recently.

Employment status: Both total employment and women employment are researched on a declining trend in the last couple of years. Increased automation and not increasing factories are considered two main reasons for this.

Status of TU: Currently, only around one-tenth RMG factories have TUs. It is further estimated that more than one-third TUs in the RMG factories are now inactive and nearly one-quarter are semi-active. Election irregularity, leaders sacked, management hostile attitude, factories with TUs closed down, application rejection, 20% coverage requirement for registration, harassment, Job loss and anti-union law for EPZ are reported main reasons for this.

Workers participation into TUs: Only around 6.5% RMG workers are organized into TUs. In a certain factory which has a trade union, only 41% workers have joined as members in the union and the rest 59% are not part of any union.

Women in TU: Of the unionized workers per factory on average 40% are women workers and 60% are men workers. Among the union leaders, only around one-third are women leaders and two-third are men leaders. A declining trend of both women leadership and women participation into TUs also are marked. Reduced factories and employment, excessive workload, management hostile attitude and socio-cultural reasons are reported main reasons for this.

Space/efforts to increase women representation in unions

Two (2) types of space and efforts, our research finds from the existing TUFs, to increase women participation into TUs such as 1) Efforts and practices, and 2) Structures and processes. Of the efforts and practices, we again find A) some Activities and practices, and B) some Legal efforts.

Activities and practices

Three different types of activities and practices are detected further such as 1) Project driven activities/practices, 2) General activities/practices, and 3) Innovative activities/practices.

Project driven activities/practices: Five types of development project driven activities and practices are identified such as 1) Participatory Problem/issue analysis through workshop/meeting, 2) effort to form new TU, 3) reactivation of old TUs, 4) efforts/activities inside factory and in the community to influence general women workers to join TUs, and 5) Capacity building of TU leaders. These activities and practices are reportedly of great interest to the TUFs leadership. Our research could not sort out any best single activity.

General efforts/activities: Having women workers, a core target, TUFs in general reportedly perform three general activities such as 1) provide some services, 2) defend rights violation, and 3) organize campaigns. Support services cover among others, legal aid, reproductive health services and others. Apart from these, defending against GBV, harassment, maternity issues, and discrimination and campaigning for women workers' rights protection are reported common. These are reportedly beneficial to the women workers. But their strength and influence on women workers to join TUs cannot be decided.

Innovative efforts/activities: Facilitating family members visit to TUF and meeting and special influencing allowance to women leaders are two main reported innovative activities. These reportedly have been very useful to influence women workers and leaders to join and intensify their involvement with TUs.

Legal Efforts

Two legal efforts, our research finds, are widely in practice to increase women participation in TUs such as 1) TUF Constitution, rules, and meeting resolution, and 2) Gender policy.

Constitution/Rules-regulations/Meeting resolution: Four main legal efforts are identified through constitutional and regulatory practices such as 1) reserving a certain % of women in programs and movements, 2) reserving a certain % of women member while forming a new union, 3) reserving a certain % of women leaders in the executive committee, and 4) reserving a certain % of women leaders in other powered structures like the women committee.

Gender Policy: Of the five TUFs covered under this research, two have formulated and executed a gender policy written in English. Participation in policy formulation is mixed-satisfactory. Gender policy awareness is not at any acceptable level. Participation in the implementation stage is rather weak. Women increasing into TUs related policies/guidelines/strategies are missing. Mostly, policies are only mere descriptive statements, specification and time-line are missing.

Considering ILO Convention 190 and adding women members increasing criteria, we set seventeen indicators and too assess the policy effectiveness. These include among others, indicators for 1) increasing women representation, 2) increasing women leaders, 3) gender violence protection, and 4) anti-discrimination and equality protection. Aggregate total analysis suggests that BTGWL's gender policy is only 32% effective and for NGWF policy, the effectiveness status is 53%.

Structures and processes to increase women representation

2 types of structural arrangement are identified to promote women participation in the TUFs such as 1) Space creation in the existing structure and processes particularly in the executive committee and 2) Establishing and enacting new structure and processes like the women committee/wing.

Executive Committee as existing structure: TUFs have on average 46% women members in the ECs. BIGWF has the highest number of women in the EC, UFGW, NGWF and BRGWF an average, and the BTGWL the lowest. Few women EC members are not vocal, & their level of understanding were dissatisfactory. Active participation of women members/leaders in the EC meetings is not reported. Increasing women members and/or women issue is not a routine agenda in the EC meeting.

New structure and processes: As for new structure and processes, two types of women committees/wings are mainly identified such as 1) central committee, and 2) area committee. BTGWL, NGWF, & BRGWF have both a central committee and area level committee. UFGW has only a Central Women Committee. BIGWF has only area level committees. Mostly, central women committees are rhetoric set-ups. Meetings aren't held regularly. Committee members are unaware about their roles and functionality. Few area level committees/wings reportedly engage in mobilizing women workers to join unions.

Women participation in TUs: Challenges/barriers

Two different sets of challenges/barriers have been particularly identified that restricting proper and effective participation of women in the trade unions such as 1) challenges/barriers with the existing structures and processes, and 2) women centric issues

Structure and process related: Associated with structures and processes, our research has identified the following eight (8) main challenges/barriers that restricting existing women leadership to effectively participate in the trade unions:

- 1) Structural barriers (1/2 persons show, nepotism, favoritism, discrimination)
- 2) Too much informalization
- 3) Central women committees are not functioning properly
- 4) Policy/strategic guidelines are missing
- 5) Limited financial capability

- 6) Negative attitude towards TUs
- 7) Sexual violence inside trade union structures
- 8) Non-responsive judiciary to women union leaders matters

Challenges/barrier to get involve by women in TUs: Associated with 1) less representation of women workers in trade unions than men and 2) decreasing trend of women workers participation in trade unions, our research has identified following eleven (11) main women centric causes:

- 1) Socio-cultural barrier/Patriarchal society and respective practices
- 2) Marital obligation
- 3) Pregnancy and child bearing responsibility
- 4) Low education, awareness, and capacity
- 5) Job Insecurity
- 6) Excessive workload
- 7) Fear of coercions/forces/harassments
- 8) Poverty/Economic Vulnerability
- 9) Employers negative attitude towards trade union
- 10) Limited time and space
- 11) Factory environment is not conducive for women to join TU

Recommendations

Stakeholders participated in this research, have suggested to us two sets of recommendations to overcome stated challenges/barrier and to increase women participation in trade unions:

Regarding structure and processes

- Initiate work to remove barriers in the structures and processes at federation level.
- Replace informality and introduce at least 20% formal practices inside the federation.
- Set up and truly activate Central women committee/wing.
- Ensure 1) comprehensive legal framing on increasing women participation and 2) full implementation.
- Introduce a zero-tolerance gender violence policy and ensure its effective implementation.
- Act collectively and more to address negative attitudes towards trade unions.
- Engage federations in monitoring labor court functionality.
- Introduce special incentive/allowance for RMG women leaders.

Regarding women level issues

- Go for massive campaigning for establishing the right to trade union in the RMG factories.
- Facilitate women union members family visit to trade union federation.
- Take individual case basis initiative to address marriage and child-birth related union leaving.
- Strengthen context specific awareness campaign and capacity building with women workers.
- Strengthen organizing and unionization activities both inside and outside factories.
- Start lobbying strongly and sensitize the factory management.

Section I

Introduction and Methodology

The setting

RMG export earning is the lifeline of Bangladesh's economy. The industry is unparalleled in the export trade, sharing around 85% of total export earnings, and alone contributes more than 10% to the GDP (Bangladesh Bank, 2024). Share of clothing exports in the global markets reached 7.9% in 2022 from just 2.5% in 2005 (WTO, 2023).

Bangladesh is a highly populated country. The country has an abundant unskilled and poorly educated labor force. RMG is a labor-intensive industry. The industry alone provides several millions of jobs. Only a little skill and education is required. Moreover, it is a women worker friendly industry. Although there are statistical differences, it can be said for sure that among the workers employed in this industry, the majority are women. By far, the garment industry is the largest formal sector women employer.

Considering its immense importance in the economy and in the export trade, it is a must that a sound and uninterrupted industrial relation is maintained and continued in this industry. For this, a strong and efficient workers organization more specifically trade union has no alternative. Since, the majority of its workforce have only little education, workers organization is expected to give due leverage to systematically and constructively engage with the employer and management on industrial relation matters. There are also a number of international obligations. According to ILO, right to FoA and/or TU constitutes a fundamental principle at work. This is an essential component of the ILO's decent work agenda. It has serious potential and implications with the upcoming Bangladesh's graduation issue to a developing country status.

However, the ground reality is different. Anecdotal evidence suggests that only an insignificant number of RMG factories have registered TUs, well below 10 percent. Roughly, 6-7-8 percent RMG workers are organized into trade unions (Islam Md. Manirul, 2021). Again, many of the registered TUs exist only in paper, and reportedly have gone dysfunctional. Since, no election was held. Union leaders have been laid off indiscriminately. A second critical issue is that despite having a majority women workforce, the representation of women in the trade union and further to the leadership position are only limited in comparison to men.

In the underlying circumstances of above and particularly to promote women representation and women leadership in the trade union in the RMG factories, 3F for about the last decade has continued working with a number of national trade union federations in Bangladesh. All trade unions the 3F is working with in Bangladesh have formed women's committees/wings/ departments, and there are union programs to increase the women's participation in the trade union movement. Some of those federations have gender policies and strategies in place. However,

women's participation in trade unions, especially at the leadership and decision-making level, is reportedly notably low despite all those efforts made by unions.

3F's available data on trade union membership further reveals that though women dominate the total number of union members in the RMG factories, the increase in the number of women members in recent years has been prolonged and at an even lower rate than the increase in the number of men. In addition, women's representation in various leadership levels has been constant since 2021. Furthermore, women's representation in decision-making positions and with decision capacity is nominal.

Therefore, 3F finds it is crucial to analyze obstacles to more representation of women in the trade union movement and at the leadership and decision-making level. It is important to analyze the space and efforts made by unions to increase women's representation in trade unions and the involvement of women in those efforts in strategizing, goal setting, program designing, and execution. At the same time, it is vital to hear the reason from the working women for underrepresentation at the leadership level and the entire labor movement.

These were the milieus. 3F commissioned an independent research. Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies facilitated research conduction at implementation level. Specially, 3F's five (5) partner's programs and interventions dedicated to promote women representation in the unions of RMG industry are studied in-depth. This report narrates the research findings.

Research Objectives

- Assess the space and union efforts/programs provided by federations to increase women's representation at all levels for gender equality and the challenges the federations face on it.
- Gauge the women's involvement in designing unions' strategies and programs and plans to increase women's representation at various levels of the union movement.
- Collect the viewpoint of women workers/leaders on challenges and obstacles to getting involved in trade union work.

Research Questions

This research dealt with the following three (3) sets of research questions:

- 1) What opportunities (space and efforts) are available in a federation to increase women's representation at all levels? What challenges do unions face in practicing those spaces and efforts?
 - What is the status of gender policy, strategy and plan to increase women in TUs?
 - What is the current status of union membership and respective reasons?
 - What is the status of women members in the union & reasons?

- What are the trends of women representation and reasons (3F shall provide the baseline of 2021 to see the trends)?
- What is the number of women in the leadership position and reasons?
- When held the meeting (Timing)? Any barriers/challenges for women to participate?
- Where the meeting takes place (Place)?
- Is the women issue a regular agenda in the meeting or came by chance?
- Who talks in the meeting (men leader/women leader)?
- Who decides in the meeting (men leader/women leader)
- What is the role of women leaders/participants in the meeting?
- Is there a women committee/wing in the Union? If yes, what is the structure of the women committee?
- How are the members selected in the women committee/wing?
- What is the status of functionality of the committee?
- What is the status of gender training in the Union?
- What is the status of women representation in different meetings/forums?
- What are the opportunities and shares available for women?
- What are the challenges unions face to increase women leadership?

2) What is the status of women's involvement in designing strategies, programs, and plans? What are the strategic options available to increase women's representation at various levels of the union movement?

- What is the status of gender policy/documents/strategy to increase women representation?
- Who makes the policy/documents/strategy? When was it made? Why?
- What was the process followed?
- Any participation of women?
- Do women know this?
- What is the real status of women representation in the various levels of the women's movement?
- What is the strategy followed?
- Who sets the goals?
- Who designed the programs?
- What role for women?
- Any change over time?

- What about the status of execution of policy/documents/strategy?
 - What is the status of women participation at implementation level?
 - What are the positive aspects?
 - What are the challenges to be in the process of creating the space for women in trade unions?
- 3) How do the women workers/leaders assess/view the challenges and obstacles to getting involved in trade union works?**
- What do women say on the underrepresentation of women in the trade union leadership?
 - What is the status/level of gender awareness/understanding?
 - What is the level of awareness and education of women leaders?
 - What about the organizing capacity of women leadership?
 - What about the decision-making capacity of women leadership? What are the strengths? Where are the gaps?
 - Any language barrier? What and How?
 - What is the status of training and opportunity for women in the union?
 - Any issue with time (lack of/meeting timing)?
 - Any issue with information and communication?
 - What about the status/dignity of women leadership?
 - Any issue over resource distribution? What and how?

Methodology

This study is predominantly premised on the qualitative paradigm of research. Information is collected both from primary and secondary sources. Project documents and limited relevant literature mainly sourced for collection of secondary information. Primary information is collected from enterprise level women workers, women leaders, 3F partners TUFs, women committee leaders and 3F and BILS. The methodology of this research broadly included Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Interview, Consultation, Meeting and documents review. A set of pre-developed checklists are used for collecting data from primary and secondary sources. Different checklists are used to collect data from different stakeholders and sources. Methodology plans against three main research questions have been detailed in table 1.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD is emphasized to collect data from enterprise level women workers and women union leaders. 5 FGDs are conducted with the enterprise level women workers and 5 FGDs are conducted with the

enterprise level women union leaders. Mentionable that here enterprise means 3F partners TUFs intervening RMG factories.

Table 1: Methodology plan

Research Questions	Preferred methods and tools and techniques
What opportunities (space and efforts) are available in a federation to increase women's representation at all levels? What challenges do unions face in practicing those spaces and efforts?	- Documents review (Constitution, member registration, meeting resolution & others of the 3F partners) - Meeting with 3 F - FGD with women union members - FGD with women leaders - Consultation with women committee - Meeting with the leadership of 5 partners of 3F
What is the status of women's involvement in designing strategies, programs, and plans? What are the strategic options available to increase women's representation at various levels of the union movement?	- Documents review (Policy, Strategy, Meeting register, meeting resolutions) - FGD with women leaders - Consultation with women committee - Consultation with the 3F 5 partners - FGD with women union members
How do the women workers/leaders assess/view the challenges and obstacles to getting involved in trade union works?	- FGD with women union members at factory level - FGD with women leaders at factory, area and central levels - Consultation with women committee

Meeting/Consultation with 3F five partners

One with each of the five 3F's partners targeted under this research, thus a total of five (5) consultations are conducted. Top level executives along with supportive other influential executive level staff joined these consultations. A pre-developed checklist is used. Efforts and space of the TUFs to increase women participation in the unions and in the leadership roles are particularly studied in these consultations.

Consultation with the leadership of 3F partners

One consultation was held with the leadership of five 3F partners TUFs. Ten (10) top level leaders joined this consultation. A pre-developed checklist is used. What opportunities (space and efforts) are available in the federations to increase women's representation at all levels and what challenges unions face in practicing those spaces and efforts, are particularly explored in this consultation.

Consultation with the women committee

Consultation meetings are emphasized to collect information from the women committee leaders. One with the women committee of each of the five 3F's partners targeted under this research, thus a total of five (5) consultations are conducted. The structure, functionality, process, and the outcomes of the women committees/wings are studied in-depth.

Documents review

Documents review was a continuous process throughout the entire lifecycle of this research. Two different sets of literature are particularly reviewed i.e., 1) legal and project documents of the 3F partners TUFs, and 2) limited relevant literature review.



Section Two

RMG Industry: Status, Workers, Unionization and Trends

This section of the report provides an analysis of the current status of Bangladesh's RMG industry. More particularly, factory size and growth potential, status of workers and women workers, status of unionization and share of women workers in this and respective trends and reasons have been analyzed precisely.

RMG industry: factory size and status

The size of the RMG industry grew exponentially at least until 2010. From just 50 (fifty) factories in 1980 the RMG industry now has several thousand factories. Bangladesh now has 3722 export oriented RMG factories¹. There are several hundred more that may not be exporting now. The current members of the BGMEA and BKMEA are about 4,134 units² and 2,520 units³ respectively. Whatever it is, this last figure counts a reduced number of factories than a couple of years back. Anecdotal information suggests that few factories have been closed down for their inability to invest to comply with the ACCORD and Safety Alliance needs. Moreover, domestic and international pressure to improve compliance and labor rights standards is increasing. Some non-compliant factories were closed down. Efforts to improve product quality and automation are increasing. Available information suggests that the number of factories has been almost at a standstill, and is not increasing as before.

Employment status and trend

Since factories are not growing, it is natural that employment is not growing. Couple of years back, a popular figure used to say everywhere was that RMG employed around 4 million workers. However, worryingly, according to recent statistics, the number of workers in the garment industry has decreased. According to the latest Labor Force Survey⁴ and BGMEA data (Mapped in Bangladesh), the number of workers employed in the garment industry is around 3.2-4 million. Many say that earlier the number of workers was wrongly shown to be too high. However, due to the reduction of the number of factories and increased automation, workers are definitely losing. However, significant empirical data is lacking. Overall, it can be said however that the employment trend in the RMG industry is declining.

Similarly, the number of women workers is also decreasing. Historically, the garment industry has had a higher proportion of female workers. According to all past statistics, the number of women

¹ BGMEA: Mapped in Bangladesh, Retrieve on 01 August 2022 from <https://mappedinbangladesh.org/>

² BGMEA: General Members: <https://www.bgmea.com.bd/page/member-list>

³ BKMEA: BKMEA at a glance: <https://www.bkmea.com/about/at-a-glance>

⁴ Bangladesh Labour Force Survey (2022) Annexure ii, Table 42: Distribution of employed persons aged 15 or older, by BSIC at 2-digit level, sex and area, page 181, Retrieve from https://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/b343a8b4_956b_45ca_872f_4cf9b2f1a6e0/2023-10-25-07-38-4304abd7a3f3d8799fbc59ff91007b1.pdf

workers in this industry is about 80 percent. However, all current data show that the number of women workers has decreased significantly compared to the past. According to the widely used BGMEA Mapped in Bangladesh data, the number of women workers in this industry is currently 57.5%⁵. Looking at the data of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistic's Labor Force Survey for the last few years, it can be seen that the number of women workers has decreased by at least 10 percent over four years. This is clearly a declining trend. The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) in a recent report has identified childcare responsibilities, pregnancy-related discrimination, and challenging work-life balance as key factors for this decline.

Status of TU in the RMG

Trade union is the legal formal workers' organization (registered) in a factory for the purpose of regulating the relations between workers and employers, and between workers and workers (BLA, 2006). According to the Department of Labour Bangladesh, around 1,300 RMG factories/establishments have registered Plant Level Trade Unions⁶. If we count this figure, then almost 25% factories have trade unions. However, anecdotal information suggests that many registered Unions have gone inactive. literature review suggests that currently only around 10% RMG factories have trade unions (Islam Md. Manirul 2018)⁷.

We get nearly similar findings from our research. Five (5) partners' TUFs of 3F we studied, reportedly had altogether 254 trade unions in the RMG industry previously, which now has reduced to 103 only. In numeric terms, this is almost 60% reduction within the last couple of years. We assume the correct figure is less than this, since one partner (BTGWL) didn't differentiate between active and semi-active unions. According to our findings, 37% unions have gone completely inactive and only 23% are semi-active (Table 2). Elections could not hold regularly, many elected leaders have been sacked, management is hostile towards union activities, and many factories with trade unions have closed down are four of the main causes indiscriminately reported.

Literature review suggests that in 2013, just after Rana plaza collapse, there started a stiff competition among RMG TUFs to facilitate the formation of trade unions in the RMG factories. 430 unions were registered in the next couple of years onward 2013. Application submission for union registration however has marked a declining trend too in recent years. Routine rejection of applications on arbitrary ground is one of the main reasons for this. Data shows that the rejection rate for union applications has stood around 50% for the last couple of years⁸. Legal binding that any establishment level union must cover at least 20% of its workers as signatory members is reportedly another great barrier. Since it is difficult for the RMG TUFs based at factories outside to organize at least 20% workers in a union. Apart from these, employer's insensitivity to unionization is too high and reporting of harassment and job loss are indiscriminate for organizing matters. Mentionable also, EPZ labor law doesn't allow workers to form and join trade unions.

⁵ Retrieve on 30 September 2024 from <https://mappedinbangladesh.org/>

⁶ Department of Labour (2024), Publicly accessible database-Trade Union Registration-Information of Registered Trade Unions (Garments sector), Retrieve on 30 September from <http://103.48.18.197/en/trade>

⁷ Plant level union, p10, Accessible at <https://bilsbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Workers-Rights-Gender-Based-Violence-in-the-RMG-and-TU-Capacity-to-Deal-with-These-Final-Draft.pdf>

⁸ See year wise data on trade union registration and trade union rejection from publicly accessible database from the Department of Labour Bangladesh, Retrieve from <http://103.48.18.197/en>

Table 2: Status and trend of union practices in the Bangladesh's RMG Industry

SL	5 Partners	Total Union	Active	Semi active	Inactive
01	Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF)	32	13 (40.6%)	8 (25%)	11 (34.4%)
02	United Federation of Garments Workers (UFGW)	61	19 (31%)	32 (52.5%)	10 (16.5%)
03	National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)	101	49 (49%)	11 (10.5%)	41 (40.5%)
04	Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation (BRGWF)	32	4 (12.5%)	7 (22%)	21 (65.5%)
05	Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League (BTGWL)	28	18 (64%)	Didn't mention	10 (36%)
Total		254 (100%)	103 (40.5%)	58 (23%)	93 (36.5%)

Workers participation into unions: Status and trend

What percentage of RMG workers are unionized and what percent among them are women and what percent are men, we don't have reliable data available on these. According to one BILS research (BILS 2018), around 7-8% RMG workers are organized into Unions. According to the Department of Labor Bangladesh, around 16%⁹ RMG workers are organized into unions. To overcome this difference, we do a simple estimation. From the previous table and analyses we find that only 41% unions are active now and the rest 59% have gone either inactive or semi-active in the last couple of years. According to the department of labor Bangladesh data 524,341 RMG workers are organized into unions¹⁰. If we deduct straight a 59% from this figure than the figure left with us is 214,980 only. Based on available BGIWF and BTGWL data and considering an average point we calculate that per RMG factory on average has employed 891 workers. Latest BGMEA Mapped in Bangladesh database has listed 3,722 export-oriented RMG factories in Bangladesh. That means these number of factories have employed altogether 331,6302 (3722 X 891) workers. Now, if we consider the figure 214,980 against this total figure of 331,6302 workers, we find that only around 6.5% RMG workers are currently organized into unions.

⁹ It says 524341 RMG workers are organized through 1306 unions. Our estimate suggests that per RMG factory on average employed 891 workers (see in the table 3). According to this count, 3722 RMG factories (Mapped in Bangladesh) have employed all including 3316,302 workers. 524341 workers out of 3218292 workers meaning around 16% are organized into unions.

¹⁰ Department of Labour-publicly accessible database-information of registered trade union (Garments sector)-total members (sum), retrieve from <http://103.48.18.197/en/trade>

Our research finds only limited unionization related data from the BIWF and BTGWL. Based on a different calculation particularly averaging three figures obtained from BGIWF, BTGWL and estimated data for entire RMG, our research has estimated that only around 41% workers from a unionized factory covered under the existing union and the rest 59% remains outside of the union (Table 3).

Table 3: Status and trend of unionization and share of women

Status and trends	Entire RMG	BGIWF	BTGWL
Total Union	1,306	28	28
Total workers in the unionized factory	1163,646 (Estimated)	26,564	23,320
Average no of workers in a factory	891	949	833
Estimated average or workers per factory	891		
Union members	524,341 (45%)	6,294 (24%)	12,416 (53%)
Mean average unionized members	41% $[(45+24+53)/3]$		
Reduced in the last couple of years (37%, see table 2)	194,006 (estimated)	2,329 (est)	4,594 (est)
Total Women union members		2,445 (39%)	5,057 (41%)
Average women members	40%		
Reduced in the last couple of years (37%)		905 (est)	1,871 (est)
Men members		3,849 (61%)	7,359 (59%)
Average workers members in a union	401+	315	443+

Women in the union: trend and reasons

Despite the majority of the women workforce, our research finds that of the unionized workers per factory, on average 40% are women workers and 60% are men workers. This estimation is based on the limited data we get from the BGIWF and BTGWL, as you can see from the table 3. Considering that 37% unions are inactive now, this figure of women involvement in unions is now furthermore squeezed. We also observed a declining trend of women members in the partners unions for the last couple of years particularly associated with reducing women workers in the factories for socio-cultural reasons.

Representation of women in leadership positions is furthermore weak. Despite that RMG has a majority of women workers and women issues are more prominent, among the union leaders, only

34% are women leaders and the rest 66% are men leaders (Table 4). There is further observed a declining trend of women leadership in the RMG. BGIWF coordinator reports that they had 96 listed women leaders a couple of years back which has now reduced to 89 only.

3F partners TUFs and women union leaders and general workers have reported a good number of reasons for reducing women RMG leadership. Extra work and time without legitimate gain, marriage-after family restriction, pregnancy and childbirth and related reasons, and harassment from the factory management and law enforcing agencies are reportedly the main causes for the reduction of women leadership in the RMG unions. One women leader from BIGWF from Syadabad said, “Local police arrested one woman leader’s spouse on a drug business case though he was a well-known tea seller in the locality. On condition to leave the place and union, her husband was released 2/3 years later. She then just disappeared from the place along with her family.”

Table 4: Status of women leaders in the union & reasons

SL	5 Partners	Total Active & Semi-active Union	Total Leader	Women Leader	Men leaders
01	Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF)	21	210	63 (30%)	147 (70%)
02	United Federation of Garments Workers (UFGW)	51	500+	175 (35%)	325 (65%)
03	National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)	60	600	360 (60%)	240 (40%)
04	Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation (BRGWF)	11	110	33 (30%)	77 (70%)
05	Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League (BTGWL)	18	180	25/26 (14%)	154/155 (86%)
	Total			34%	66%

Section Three

Space/efforts to increase women representation in unions

In view of the declining trend of both women members and leaders in the RMG sector trade unions, 3F partners TUFs have invested quality efforts, time and resources to increase women representation into the unions. 3F reportedly has supported them for over the last half of the decade. This section provides an in-depth analysis of the space and effort provided. We particularly look for 1) efforts and practices, and 2) structure and processes that the 3F partners offered/initiated to increase women representation in the unions.

Efforts to increase women participation in unions

We talk to every 3F partners TUFs and with general workers members in the union. Three 3F partners too have responded to our request, they supplied us with relevant project related and other documents we asked for. We reviewed the same. From all these, our research identified mainly two broader types of efforts with 3F partners TUFs to increase women involvement in unionization such as A) Activities and practices and B) legal efforts. Following sections details on these.

A) Activities and practices

Interfacing between primary and secondary collected information, our research finds that 3F partners TUFs have mainly three types of activities and practices to influence/encourage women participation into unions such as 1) Project driven, 2) General and 3) Innovative. In the table 5, we have bullet listed the main activities and practices our research finds:

Although, 3F partners TUFs reported a wide variety of activities and practices, we particularly identify the following four types of main project driven activities/efforts to increase women involvement:

- Participatory Problem/issue analysis
- Effort to form new unions and to reactivate old semi or inactive one
- Meeting/influencing general women workers to join trade unions
- Capacity building of union leaders

These are reportedly a great interest to the TUF leadership and organizing them consumes most of the time. We repeatedly tried to know from all five 3F partners TUFs, which activity works well. However, our research could not sort out any best single activity nor do we find any evaluation reporting on them. Learning and feedback mechanisms reportedly are missing. In a previous section, we have analyzed that there is even greater space within the unionized factories to increase women participation since only around 40/50% workers are unionized. But, specific and dedicated effort along with a clear target is never a reported case.

Table 5: 3F partners TUFs activities and practices to increase women participation in unions

Stakeholders	Activities and practices
BIGWF	▪ Problem identification workshop/meeting ▪ New union formation ▪ Reactivation of old unions ▪ Capacitating unionists [Awareness training, Organizing Training] ▪ General meeting, Courtyard meeting, Gate meeting with general workers
NGWF	▪ Problem identification workshop/meeting ▪ New union formation ▪ Reactivation of old unions ▪ Capacitating unionists [Organizing skill, Union Registration, Union Committee Formation]
BTGWL	▪ Problem identification meeting/workshop ▪ Factory level organizing committee meeting, Small group meeting, Outside meeting with general women workers ▪ Capacitating unionists (Training)
General	▪ Providing some support services ▪ Campaigning on women workers' rights ▪ Defending through actions
Innovative	▪ Facilitating family members visit to TUF and meeting ▪ Special influencing allowance to women leaders

Apart from project driven efforts, our research finds that every single TUF performed three types of general activities which are particularly dedicated towards women workers such as 1) support services, 2) defend rights violation, and 3) campaign. Among the support services, legal aid is reported to be common. One TUF has reported giving sanitary napkins to women workers. Secondly, defending of rights violations particularly related to maternity leave and benefits and against harassment and discrimination are reported as a wider practice. Campaigning for policy protection against women rights violation particularly on women's national and international days are reported common. Women workers participation is reported more often in these campaign events like rallies and demonstrations. General women workers in a number of FGDs claimed to us that these services have made their life easy. Many women workers highly praised the women leaders in their factories and often expressed their die-heart support to them. But when asked why they are not joining unions and in leadership roles, they mostly remain shy. Less capacity, time constraints, and family and social non-cooperation are often reported. In an FGD, a couple of

women leaders said to us that they don't even disclose their union identity in the community because they fear that they may be denied several services like accommodation in a rented house. Despite all these benefits, how much contributory these general activities/efforts to influence women to engage in union practices, deserve furthermore studying.

Although very insignificant, our research finds a couple of innovative activities/efforts towards increasing women involvement in unionization such as inviting family members to visit TUF offices and meeting with them and giving special allowance to women leaders. Facilitating family member's visits to TUF offices and meetings has been very useful to influence family members to let their women family members to freely engage in unions, claimed a number of senior BGIWF officials and leaders.

B) Legal Efforts

Two legal efforts/instruments, our research finds, are widely in practice to increase women participation in unions. They are 1) Constitution and meeting resolution and 2) Gender policy.

1) Constitution and rules and resolution

Reserving a certain percentage of women 1) in programs and movements and 2) in union formation and reserving defined percentage of women leadership in the 3) executive committee and in 4) other powered structures are four main legal efforts reportedly exercised through the Constitution and meeting resolutions. For example, BGIWF's Constitution has provisioned that two-third of the 20 member executive committee must be women. NGWF's Constitution has provisioned that at least 50% of its executive committee members must be women. It has been further provisioned through meeting resolutions that either president or secretary of any committee at any level must be women and 60% workshop and training participants must come from women. Legal efforts through Constitutional provisions and rules and resolutions are reported most effective. Since, these cause legal bindings to all leaders and staff at all levels to follow.

2) Gender Policy

NGWF and BTGWL have formulated and implemented a gender policy. BTGWL formulated and implemented it in 2019. NGWF previously had a gender policy. This year they have formulated a new gender policy. English versions of both the policies are available. Women leaders in the executive committees from the NGWF reported to us that one external consultant formulated the gender policy and women leaders and/or women members' participation were not ensured in the policy formulation processes. Women leaders and general union women members from both NGWF and BTGWL who we talked to said to us that they don't know what is inside the gender policy. Many of the enterprise level women union leaders and members from both the TUFs even expressed their doubt whether their TUF has at all a gender policy. This indicates a massive unawareness on gender policy and as such participation of women leaders in the implementation stage is completely missing.

UFGW reported that they have a gender policy but during our visit to their organization they could not show us a gender policy. Even in repeated requests afterwards, they don't supply us with a soft

copy. So, we have reported them as not having a gender policy. BGIWF, and BRGWF have reported that they don't have a gender policy but they are in the process of framing a gender policy in the running year. One senior BGIWF leader said to us that they are one of the among very few women headed TUF in the RMG sector in Bangladesh and from the very beginning gender sensitivity and gender norms and practices are highest in their organization.

Table 6: Status of gender policy, strategy and plan in TUs

SL	5 Partners	Status of gender policy	Year	Who
01	Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF)	No		
02	United Federation of Garments Workers (UFGW)	No		
03	National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)	Yes	Not mentioned	Consultant
04	Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation (BRGWF)	No		
05	Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League (BTGWL)	Yes	2019	Consultant

Those who have given us a gender policy, we reviewed extensively the same to determine its effectiveness. Considering ILO Convention 190 and adding women members increasing criteria, we set altogether seventeen indicators to assess the policy effectiveness. These include among others, indicators for increasing women representation in the Union and in leadership roles, indicators for gender violence protection in the world of work, and anti-discrimination and equality related indicators. For every yes answer we consider 100% effectiveness, for semi status 50% effectiveness, and for a no answer zero effectiveness is counted. Aggregate total analysis suggests that BTGWL's gender policy is only 32% effective and for NGWF policy, the effectiveness status is 53%.

Our analyses suggest that although BTGWL and NGWF have gender policies, there is ample space for improvement if they want to make it a truly effective policy to increase women representation in the union and in the leadership role. First of all, it needs to be a Bengali version policy, short, precise and specific. Women increasing policy guidelines are rather weak and inadequate. Many of the policy guidelines are only mere descriptive statements, not smart, specification and time-boundedness are completely missing. Such as, BTGWL's one policy statement reads, "efforts will be made to increase the number of women in all levels of committees and decision-making positions".

Table 7: What is inside gender policy

SL	Status	BTGWL	Effective	NGWF	Effective
01	Human rights recognition	No	0	Yes	100
02	Statement of 'O' tolerance to gender violence	No	0	No	0
03	Gender sensitivity	To some extent	50	To some extent	50
04	Women increasing policy guidelines	No	0	No	0
05	Women representation policy guidelines	Mentioned but not specified*	50	Mentioned not specified	50
06	Women Leadership	Not specified	50	Yes	100
07	Defining violence	Sexual violence defined	50	No	0
08	Area and coverage	No	0	No	0
09	Committee/focal person	Mentioned not specified	50	Yes (6 member committee,	100
10	Complain reporting and handling	No	0	Yes	100
11	Confidentiality protection	No	0	No	0
12	Awareness raising strategy	Yes	100	Yes	100
13	Define Roles/responsibilities	No	0	Yes	100
14	Support services	No	0	No	0
15	Implementation plan	Yes	100	Yes	100
16	Monitoring and supervision	Yes	100	Yes	100
17	Remedy	No	0	No	0
Effectivity level			32%		53%

Structures and processes to increase women representation

To facilitate manifestation of the programmatic and legal efforts, 3F partners TUFs have established relevant structure and processes. In the interviews, FGDs and consultations, two types of structural arrangement are commonly referred to e.g., 1) creation of space in the existing structure and processes and 2) establishing and enacting completely new structure and processes.

Space creation in the existing structures and processes

Executive Committee

Among the existing structures of a TUF, the executive committee is considered the apex decision making body. 3F partners TUFs have successfully created right space in the executive committees to act for increasing women representation in various other structures and processes. On average, 46% executive committee members of the studied TUFs are women (Table 8). BIGWF has the highest number of women in the executive committee, 60%. For UFGW, NGWF and BRGWF, women members in the executive committee are also quite rich, 43% to 50%. BTGWL has the lowest number of women members in the executive committee, still 31%.

Table 8: Women in the executive committee

SL	5 Partners	Total members in the EC	Women members	Men members
01	Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation	20	12 (60%)	8 (40%)
02	United Federation of Garments Workers (UFGW)	30	13 (43%)	17 (57%)
03	National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)	30	15 (50%)	15 (50%)
04	Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation (BRGWF)	17	8 (47%)	9 (53%)
05	Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League (BTGWL)	35	11 (31%)	24 (69%)
Average			46%	54%

As analyzed above, women representation in the apex decision making executive committee is quite significant in any consideration. Given this reality, reducing women leaders and women participation in the union is quite frustrating. Our research looks deep into qualitative other aspects for executive committee formation and functionality. Firstly, we look into the member selection criteria in the executive committee. Mostly, TUFs have a democratic process to follow to elect executive committee members through national level councils. Reviewed paper documents reveal the same thing. In the meeting, senior leadership of different TUFs repeatedly also claimed the same. “Performance in the root level, education, and talking capacity are given the highest preference”, said Mr. Amirul Islam from NGWF. However, a few of the women executive committee members among many we have met don’t comply with the mentioned criteria. They were not vocal, and their level of understanding regarding TUF was not satisfactory at all.

We also talk about different aspects of meeting. Meeting timing and place mostly reported women members friendly and participation of women members in the executive committee meeting

reportedly satisfactory and high. However, a few anomalies also are observed. A few women executive committee members were unable to recall from memory when they last attended an executive committee meeting. Many women executive committee members reported to us that they only attend, don't talk or decide. "The President and/or General Secretary talks most of the time and decides, they listen and implement while in action", said a group of women executive members in a consultation meeting. Increasing women members and/or women issues is reportedly never a routine agenda in the meeting. "If only there is a serious women related issue, that is discussed and follow-up actions are set", said a woman executive committee member of a TUF. However, different practices also are reported, but they are very insignificant.

Repeatedly claimed

"President takes the decision"

"General Secretary takes the decision"

"Decisions taken at federation level"

"Those who attend office regularly, decide the meeting agenda, President or Secretary dictate"

Women committee/wing

This is a completely new structure, different from existing structure, and follows its own set processes. Two types of women committees/wings are mainly reported such as 1) central committee and 2) area committee (Table 9). Criteria are in general specified in the gender policy. BTGWL, NGWF, and BRGWF reportedly have both a central women committee and area level women committee. BRGWF has formed three area level women committees particularly at Sreepur, Narayanganj and Chattogram. UFGW has a Central Women Committee consisting of 20 members. BIGF has formed three Area level women committees respectively at Savar, Gazipur and Dhaka. These are reportedly each a 10 members women committee having representation from enterprise level women union leaders.

Table 9: Status of women committee/wing

SL	5 Partners	Status of Women Committee	
		Central committee	Area Committee
01	Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF)	X	Yes, 3 at at Savar, Gazipur & Dhaka
02	United Federation of Garments Workers (UFGW)	Yes	NO
03	National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)	Yes	Yes
04	Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation (BRGWF)	Yes	Yes, at sreepur, narayanganj, Chittagong
05	Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League (BTGWL)	Yes	Yes, at Narayanganj

We further studied different qualitative aspects of the formation and functionalities of these committees and their role in increasing women members and leaders in the unions. Organizing capacity, level of activeness, hard-working capacity, talking ability, and comparatively better education are reportedly the main criteria for selection of leadership in the women committee. In general, senior women leaders do the most selection. “We do the selection. We know who are the best capacity women at the root level”, said one women executive committee member from a TUF. In a few instances, open meetings and elections through voting are also reported.

We talked to a good number of central level women committee members from different TUFs who have central women committees. Our research finds that mostly, central women committees are rhetoric set-ups, meetings are not held regularly, and committee members can hardly talk about the functionality of the women committee and their role as a leader. On functionality, one central women committee leader from UFGW said, “we conduct training and seminars for women workers”. One women committee leader from UFGW stated, “we formed the women's committee to ensure that women's voices are heard”.

Area level women committee/wing reportedly plays a key role to mobilize women workers to join unions. Two area level women committee leaders from BGIWF report to us in a meeting the following role of their committee:

- Encourage other women workers to form unions.
- Awareness rising on labor rights
- Reduce the tendency to leave the union in the middle
- Organize factory level women workers into unions
- Link-up with women workers for communication purposes and to know their problems

Section Four

Challenges of creating space for women in trade unions

Senior leaders, and women leaders have said to us a number of challenges/barriers regarding creating space for women in trade unions. They are mostly associated with structures and processes. From available documents review we also get to know a number of challenges.

Structural Barriers

Many women leaders have reported to us structural barriers in the unions to create space to increase and develop women leaders. 1/2 senior leaders driven, massive nepotism and favoritism and gender discrimination are reportedly causing most structural barriers. “Even after managing everything, you can go up to a certain level only, you need to create a new structure to go beyond, since leadership remains as it is whatever is the age”, said one woman executive committee member of a TUF.

Too much informalization

Cent percent practices are reportedly informal. There is the constitution, there is gender policy, there is resolution, still decisions taking and practices are all informal. No system works. Advanced and efficient women leaders reportedly just lost in the informalization processes since there is not a system for rightful evaluation of their skills and efficiency and promote them accordingly in the right position.

Central women committees are mostly ineffective

Formation is not complete, meeting don't held regularly, members don't know their roles and responsibilities, there is no or very little resources allocation, there is no systematic procedure developed to address and deliver outcomes to any women issues – these are reportedly the inherent pictures of the most central women committee.

Policy/strategic guidelines are missing

Organizing, unionizing and increasing women members and leaders in the RMG industry are undoubtedly the most challenging tasks. Research and innovation and based on which formulation and reformulation of standard policy and strategic guidelines deserves to be a continued process. But quality research and innovation and policy/strategic guidance are missing at union level. Rather, the practice is like that women workers are included in the union only because labor laws require it.

Limited financial capability

Considering the work-burden of her own and extra hours of work for the federation, RMG women leaders deserve some financial incentives. But, TUFs have only limited financial capability and development projects don't allow giving financial incentives to women leaders. One BGIWF's women leader said to us in a FGD, “Actually, the point is that no one wants to feed themselves for others”.

Negative attitude towards trade unions

Peoples in general have a negative attitude towards union leaders. A good number of women union leaders report to us that they don't disclose their union identity in the community. Family members don't want their women involved in unions and become a leader", said one leader.

Sexual violence inside trade union structure

Many women leaders and few men leaders have openly reported average sexual violence inside many trade union structures and processes. Protection mechanism is missing. Gender violence protection is not a priority to the women committee. This is causing a great barrier that good women leaders are not coming to join and stay with unions and federations.

Non-responsive judiciary to workers matter

Judiciary is not reportedly responsive to RMG women leaders' needs. It is common that employers harassed the efficient women leaders for unionization purposes. Job firing is most likely. In such a situation, a responsive judiciary could have been offered the true protection. But the reality is different. One woman leader reported to us in an FGD, "in the last six years, I have filed more than 10 cases in the labor court, as a women union leader. None of them get a final verdict yet". This non-responsive judiciary is creating living examples to the general workers that if unionized, it is a must to fall in adverse situations, but no protection and remedy is there. "Rahima's case (a union leader was sacked earlier) has been continuing for the last 10 years. The company is saying that the case will not solve even one crore people behind it. How much money can an ordinary worker spend?", said a women leader from Jatrabari.

Section Five

Challenges and obstacles to get involve by women in TUs

In the previous section, trade union level challenges are particularly identified and analyzed. In this section, we have analyzed in detail plant level challenges/barriers that women workers need to tackle to join a trade union. Again, this is particularly based on the observation and reporting from the enterprise level women workers, and women union leaders, and 3F partners TUFs leaders. Documents review findings offered the gaps in analyses.

Patriarchal culture and practices

In a patriarchal society like Bangladesh, household works are in general considered a woman's responsibility. As such, after factory hours, women are to perform regular family work. In such a situation, it is almost impossible for a woman to spend time for unions. "When we men go home, lay down in the bed and don't do any work. But women after reaching home start doing household work like cooking. If women go to the federation, who shall do these. Society or family shall never want women to work for the federation", said one TUF President in a meeting.

Once married, women leave unions

Marital status is reportedly another big issue. Federation leaders repeatedly claimed that they lost many of their best women leaders after they got married. Sometimes, it is because their life partner doesn't want them to continue engaging with TUs. Sometimes, they need to leave their jobs to join and to live in a different husband's place. Sometimes, this is reported to be a power and authority conflict rooted in the patriarchal culture of the society. BGIWF leader Babul Akhter stated, "Many men think that if women are involved in union and lead, they will become more independent. This role is not acceptable to the men, they don't want women to lead their families".

Pregnancy and child bearing cause women to leave union

Pregnancy and child bearing are repeatedly claimed to be the most determinant cause for losing women leaders. The prevalent practice is reportedly that after child birth, child caring becomes a core responsibility, and concerned women don't come back to trade unions. "Sooner women get pregnant and give birth to a child, they leave the union", said one women leader.

Low education, awareness, and capacity

RMG is an export-oriented industry. Most advanced stakeholders including foreign buyers are consistently in a working relation with the RMG factories. It is simple that comparatively educated women leadership joined in union. But many of the women workers in the RMG have only little education. In such a situation, lacking required education and awareness, there is always a sense of insecurity among workers. Keeping jobs alive became their ultimate priority, let alone unionization. "Women don't really want to lead", claimed a group of enterprise level women leaders in an FGD. One senior leader claimed, "I put lots of effort in developing women leaders, I did not get the same

output.” He further specified low capacity, and lack of leadership skills & voice as two main barriers of developing women as leaders.

Job Insecurity

Job insecurity is identified as one of the main reasons for women to avoid trade unions. The practices of dismissal, discharge, firing, factory lock outs, cuts and factory closure are rampant. Workers are always under threat of firing and there is always a long queue in the gate to get jobs. These reportedly have caused developing a sense of insecurity among women workers that employers have unlimited power and authority while, on the other hand there is zero protection for their jobs.

Excessive workload

Workload is reported to be too high in the RMG factories. Unless there is an exception, women workers in general enter into factories at 8.30 am in the morning and get out from factories around 8/9 pm. This is reportedly a regular practice. A group of workers reported to us in an FGD from Syedabad that in a recent past experience they needed to continue working even for a month without a single day off. Joining a union particularly in the leadership role requires carrying out some extra work on a regular basis. Until there is any incentive, women in general, don't find it meaningful to join a leadership role.

Fear

Reportedly, practices of coercions/forces/harassments are common for union involvement. There is a growing tendency that workers usually don't defend particularly to avoid retribution from the employer in the long run. It is frequently expressed that workers can manage a job in other factories with similar salary and benefits unless there is a serious resistance by the employer.

Poverty/Economic Vulnerability

Women RMG workers are trapped into a cycle of economic vulnerability/poverty. It is because of economic vulnerability/poverty that the comparatively backward section of women is coming to join RMG jobs. Secondly, because of a number of poor job conditions like poor wage and job benefits, gender violence and discrimination, women workers are consistently in a hand to mouth situation. Remaining consistently under the threat of poverty and economic vulnerability, it is really difficult to join a trade union which employers don't like.

Employers have a negative attitude

Employers are reportedly very much intolerable to organizing and trade union rights of workers. Dismissal, discharge, and termination of workers on account of organizing relevant activities and discontinuation of elected members of the trade unions from the establishments are reported indiscriminate. Apart from these, irregularities in election, factory closure and dysfunctional trade unions on the ground of continued non-cooperation and resistances by the employers and management are reported common.

Limited Time and space

Most workers reportedly are already stressed from prolonged work hours, overtime works and performing night duty for an extra income to live on and continuous work without a leave. Involving in union and/or performing as a leader requires furthermore time spending on factory purposes.

Factory environment is not conducive for women to join TU

None of the enterprise level unions we talk to in the research have a union office inside the factory. Despite having unions, leaders cannot perform their activities freely inside factories. Many union leaders said to us that they don't talk about union matters directly with any workers inside factories, they work outside. "We had to join the union secretly", said one women union leader from Gazipur. "They not only treat women leaders, family members often are threatened", said a group of women leaders in an FGD.

Section Six

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this section, we have suggested a good number of options to tackle all challenges listed out in the previous section. To be noted, these are based on the suggestions and opinions expressed by the different stakeholders in the interviews, meetings, FGDs and consultations.

For space creation in the trade unions

- ➡ Initiate work to remove barriers in the structures and processes in the federation level. For this, influence from external friends like the 3F deserves to be a first priority since they have acceptance to the trade union leadership. In place of one/two man driving decision-making strategies, a participatory approach deserves promoting and popularizing inside the structure.
- ➡ To some extent current informal practices deserve formalization. At least 20%, practices in the trade union structure need formalizing. For this, along with sensitizing senior leaders, investing of both resources and time are a must.
- ➡ Formation and activation of a Central women committee/wing is a concurrent priority. Almost every studied TUFs have initiated activities on this. This opportunity deserves to be optimally utilized. We need a strong, vibrant, and accountable committee along with legal rational authority and resources to effectively deal with women issues inside the structures and processes.
- ➡ Trade union structure and processes to be made legally compliant. This required 1) comprehensive legal framing and 2) full implementation. Including an updated and effective gender policy, all other deserving policy and strategies to be framed immediately. Sufficient resources and pressure to be created both internally and externally on these.
- ➡ Gender violence of any kind in the inside structure to be taken care strongly. A zero-tolerance policy to be included on this. Assessment, act and remedy framework to be followed to curb gender violence. Women committee deserves to be strengthened to play an effective role on this. Compliant reporting and handling mechanisms deserves to be initiating and making gender sensitive.
- ➡ To address negative attitudes towards trade unions, collective and massive works deserve initiating. Inside structure, more emphasis to be given on transparency, participation and accountability. Local level networking with relevant other community stakeholders can help in this.
- ➡ Labor court processes deserve to be less time consuming and more responsive to workers protection and needs. TUs involve Public monitoring of labor court activities and processes can help in this.
- ➡ Last but not the least, it is repeatedly recommended to introduce special incentive/allowance for RMG women leaders.

To increase women participation in unions

- ➡ Collective and massive campaigning towards the right to trade union to be made a core priority. Involving all stakeholders, appropriate campaign strategy to be developed, resources to be mobilized, and implemented. Equal emphasis to be given on inside strategy to mobilize more women members to join trade unions.
- ➡ To reduce family level obstacles, facilitating family member's visits to trade unions and meetings can be a good practice. However, at the initial stage, this should be regular, and sufficient.
- ➡ To address marriage and child-birth after union leaving, it is suggested to take initiative on an individual case basis. Since the issue we know already it is desired to act with due diligence well in advance.
- ➡ To address unawareness, low education and skills, context specific awareness campaigns and capacity building training deserve furthermore intensifying and strengthening.
- ➡ To address job security, fear, workload, and working environment, organizing and unionization practices have no alternative. Both inside and outside strategies to be followed. Inside factories, efforts need to be continued to expand women members. In the outside place, along with regular organizing activities, issue specific activities to be initiated.
- ➡ To address the employer's negative attitude, it deserves sensitizing factory management. Collective lobby and sensitizing options can be helpful. TUs to be prepared for this. Instead of an exclusive approach, an inclusive and enabling approach to be followed.

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ANNEX I

Checklist & Guidelines

Consultation with the Leadership of 3F's Partners

CHECKLIST

- Status of women leadership in the TUF and in the Unions
[Number/Role/Performance/Leadership style and capacity/Decision making capacity/Organising capacity/3F after and 3F before]
- Status of space and efforts in the TUFs to increase women's representation and leadership quality [policy, strategy, plan, committee, wing, functionality, status of implementation]
- Status of women's participation in the TUF and union matters [Legal formulation/Implementation level]
- Opportunities available in the TUFs and women's share [Resources/Training/Representation in external forums/Overseas]
- Challenges unions face to increase women representation and leadership quality [At practice level and at legal implementation level]

GUIDELINES

Area & Number:	1 Consultation with the leadership of 3F's partners shall be conducted at any suitable place. 3F as venue is highly preferred.
Participants:	10-15 top level leaders from 5 3F's partners as participants are highly appreciated. From each partner, least 2 and maximum 3 leaders are expected to join this consultation meeting. A mixed group of men and women leaders are preferred as participants.
Resource Persons:	Lead researcher shall facilitate this consultation meeting. One Research Assistant shall assist in organizing and administrative matters and shall document and write the consultation transcript.
Recording:	The entire consultation to be audio-recorded. For this, in the beginning, upon informing research objectives, consent is to be taken from the participants for audio-recording.
Photo:	A couple of good photos to be taken. It is preferred to capture the photo in the middle.
Special Instructions:	In no way can the question be asked by looking at the front of the checklist. It is suggested to take appropriate preparation well in advance.
Duration:	Consultation with partner's TU leadership shall continue a maximum of 2.30 hours.

ANNEX II

Checklist & Guidelines: FGD with Women Workers

CHECKLIST

- **General information**
 - Research objectives and ethics
 - Name, age, and education
 - Designation and factory name
- **Status/Level of awareness on Gender Aspects**
 - Gender issues at work place (Gender violence, harassment, discrimination and gender equity)
 - Gender policy/strategy (Yes/No/What is inside)
 - Women committee/wing at workplace (Yes/No/Role)
- **Gender dispute resolution**
 - Gender-dispute resolution mechanisms (reporting authority/channel/confidentiality protection/time-needed/remedy)
 - TU/PC/WWC and their role on gender dispute resolution
 - Status of collective bargaining on gender issues
- **Women in the union**
 - Perception about TU
 - Willingness/unwillingness to join TU
 - Respective reasons
 - Women in TU: Opinions/views (Dignity/acceptance/skills/capacity)
 - Views/opinions about underrepresentation of women in TU
 - Views/opinions regarding union's effort to increase women members in TU
 - Challenges/barriers for women to join in TU
- **Women participation**
 - Legal formulation and women participation
 - Legal implementation and women participation
 - Labour movement and Women Participation
- **Opinion/views/recommendations to increase women participation in the TU**
 - Challenges/barriers
 - Alternatives/solution

GUIDELINES

- Area & Number:** One with the factory level women workers of each of the five 3F's partners targeted under this research, thus a total of five (5) FGDs to be conducted. Partner's place including factory and community place are preferred. Close door sitting is preferred most.
- Participants:** Maximum 6/8 factory level women workers shall join an FGD.
- Resource Persons:** Least, one Research Assistant shall facilitate an FGD. One Intern shall present to write the proceedings. He/she shall further perform the role of a gatekeeper. Participants having homogeneity in age and socio-economic status are preferred.
- Recording:** The entire discussion shall have to be audio-recorded. For this, it is important that participants are informed in the beginning the purpose of the research as well as consent is taken from them for audio-recording.
- Photo:** Please ensure that 1/2 good photo is taken for every FGD as well as consent is taken for this. It is preferred to capture the photo in the middle.
- Special Instructions:** Asking a leading question is strictly prohibited. Respective facilitator shall only place the issue in front of the participants for discussion. To facilitate a lively discussion, it is further suggested that the facilitator has taken appropriate steps in the beginning such as starting a discussion after listening to a song and saying by name etc. In no way can the question be asked by looking at the front of the question paper. It is suggested to take appropriate preparation well in advance.
- Duration:** An FGD shall continue maximum of one hour.

ANNEX III

Checklist & Guidelines: FGD with Women Union Leaders

CHECKLIST

- General information
 - Name, age, education
 - Status/dignity for being a women leader (Workplace, Family, Society)
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Skills, capacity, and gaps (organizing capacity/decision-making capacity)
 - Training and role promotion
- Status/Level of awareness
 - Gender issues at workplace
 - Gender equity, gender budget, gender violence
 - Gender policy/strategy
 - Women committee/wing (Structure and composition, selection criteria, roles responsibilities, and performance evaluation)
- Women in the union
 - Number, trend, reasons, and challenges
 - No at leadership position, trend, reason, and challenges
 - Strategy/efforts/plan to increase women in trade union
 - Opportunities/shares available for women in the union
 - Challenges/barriers to increase women in TU
 - Causes for underrepresentation of women in union
- Women leaders participation
 - No of meeting, timing, and women's participation
 - Regular agenda versus women issue as an agenda
 - Speakers and decision makers
 - Legal formulation and women participation
 - Legal implementation and women participation
- Labour movement and Women Participation
- Challenges/barriers to be involved in union
 - Challenges for women to be involved in TUs
 - Challenges for women leaders to mobilise women to join in TUs
 - Alternatives/recommendations/Solutions

GUIDELINES

- Area & Number:** One with the enterprise level women union leaders of each of the five 3F's partners targeted under this research, thus a total of five (5) FGDs to be conducted. Partner's place including factory and community place are preferred. Close door sitting is preferred most.
- Participants:** Maximum 6/8 plant level women union leaders shall join an FGD.
- Resource Persons:** Least, one Research Assistant shall facilitate an FGD. One Intern shall present to write the proceedings. He/she shall further perform the role of a gatekeeper. Participants having homogeneity in age and socio-economic status are preferred.
- Recording:** The entire discussion shall have to be audio-recorded. For this, it is important that participants are informed in the beginning the purpose of the research as well as consent is taken from them for audio-recording.
- Photo:** Please ensure that 1/2 good photo is taken for every FGD as well as consent is taken for this. It is preferred to capture the photo in the middle.
- Special Instructions:** Asking a leading question is strictly prohibited. Respective facilitator shall only place the issue in front of the participants for discussion. To facilitate a lively discussion, it is further suggested that the facilitator has taken appropriate steps in the beginning such as starting a discussion after listening to a song and saying by name etc. In no way can the question be asked by looking at the front of the question paper. It is suggested to take appropriate preparation well in advance.
- Duration:** An FGD shall continue maximum of one hour.

ANNEX IV

Checklist & Guidelines: Consultation with Women Committee

CHECKLIST

- General information
 - Name, age, education
 - Level of awareness (Gender equity, gender budget, gender violence)
 - Skills and capacity (organizing capacity/decision-making capacity)
 - Strengths and gaps
- Status of Women Committee/Wing
 - When and why formed?
 - Structure and composition
 - Member selection criteria (How come to be selected? Who decides?)
 - Any office?
 - Roles and responsibility (set roles versus practices)
 - Status/acceptance/dignity
 - Status of meeting
 - Opportunities and shares (training/role promotion/other opportunity/Who & how decides)
 - Representation (Inside country and overseas)
 - Documentation, reporting, and accountability
- Women in the union: Assessing current status
 - Women members in the TUF (number, reasons, trend, changes, issues)
 - Women members in the affiliated unions (number, reasons, trend, changes, issues)
 - Women in the leadership position (number, reasons, trend, changes, issues)
 - What are the positive aspects and changes over the year?
 - Why underrepresentation of women in the trade union leadership?
- Meeting and women participation
 - When meeting and where meeting?
 - Women issue in the meeting agenda?
 - Who talks?
 - Who decides?
 - What role for women leaders?
- Legal formulation and women participation
 - Do the union have gender policy/documents/strategy to increase women representation

- Any participation of women in the legal formulation processes (Who makes? When? Why?)
- Status/level of legal awareness (Process/Policy/Strategy)
- Status of participation of the women committee in legal implementation
- Labour movement and Women Participation
 - Who sets the goals?
 - Who design the programs?
 - What is the strategy followed?
 - What role for women?
 - Any change over time?
- Challenges/barriers to be involved in union
 - What are the challenges for women to be involved in trade unions
 - Any issue from employers
 - Any issue from the government
 - Any issue with level of awareness and education
 - Any language barrier
 - Any issue with information and communication
 - Any issue with resources flow

GUIDELINES

Area & Number:	One with the women committee of each of the five 3F's partners targeted under this research, thus a total of five (5) consultations to be conducted. Partner's place is highly preferred for this meeting.
Participants:	Maximum 6/8 Women Committee members are expected to join consultation meeting.
Resource Persons:	Lead researcher shall facilitate these meetings/consultations. One Research Assistant shall assist in organizing and administrative matters and shall document and write the consultation transcript.
Recording:	The entire meeting/consultation to be audio-recorded. For this, it is a must that the participants are informed in the beginning the purpose of the research as well as consent is taken from them for audio-recording.
Photo:	1/2 good photos shall have to be taken for every meeting/consultation. It is preferred to capture the photo in the middle.
Special Instructions:	Leading/guiding questions is strictly prohibited. In no way can the question be asked by looking at the front of the question paper. It is suggested to take appropriate preparation well in advance.
Duration:	One one-to-one meeting/consultation shall continue a maximum of 2 hours

ANNEX V

Checklist & Guidelines: Meeting/Consultation with 3F Partners

CHECKLIST

About the TUF

- Name, Year formed, Year registered
- Number of members in the executive committee and
- No of women members in the executive committee and their role
- Changes in women membership and role statuses after engagement with 3F and reasons

About affiliated Unions

- Number of affiliated unions
- Women in the leadership role (Number, leadership, and role)
- Total members in the affiliated unions
- No of women members in the affiliated unions
- Increase/decrease of women members/leaders over time and reasons
- Engagement with 3 F and respective changes

Gender representation in the union: Legal framework

- Gender policy/strategy in the TUF [Availability/when, who formulated and why]
- Status of gender policy in the affiliated unions [Availability/when formulated/why]
- Strategy/plan to increase women involvement in the TUF and Unions
- Status of participation of women in legal formulation [who make/process followed]
- Status of legal awareness of women leaders
- Status of legal implementation and participation of women

Women in the Union: Efforts and space

- Status of women participation in programs and movement
- Status of women issue as a meeting agenda
- Status of gender training/role promotion
- Status of women engagement and representation in different external meetings/forum
- Opportunity for overseas representation and share for women
- Status of women committee/wing
- Perception/evaluation of current women leadership (awareness/skills/capacity)
- Strategy/effort to increase women members in TU
- Achievement/failure and respective reasons

Opportunities and challenges

- Challenges/barriers TUF faces to increase women members/leaders
- Challenges/barriers women faces to be involved in TUs
- Reasons for underrepresentation of women in the TU leadership
- Alternatives/recommendations to overcome challenges
- Alternatives/recommendations to increase women involvement in the TU

GUIDELINES

- Area & Number:** One with each of the five 3F's partners targeted under this research, thus a total of five (5) one-to one meeting/consultation to be conducted. Partner's place is highly preferred for this meeting.
- Participants:** Top level executive along with supportive other influential executive level staffs are expected to join this one-to-one meeting/consultation.
- Resource Persons:** Lead researcher shall facilitate these meetings/consultations. One Research Assistant shall assist in organizing and administrative matters and shall document and write the consultation transcript.
- Recording:** The entire meeting/consultation to be audio-recorded. For this, it is a must that the participants are informed in the beginning the purpose of the research as well as consent is taken from them for audio-recording.
- Photo:** 1/2 good photos shall have to be taken for every meeting/consultation. It is preferred to capture the photo in the middle.
- Special Instructions:** Leading/guiding questions is strictly prohibited. In no way can the question be asked by looking at the front of the question paper. It is suggested to take appropriate preparation well in advance.
- Duration:** One one-to-one meeting/consultation shall continue a maximum of 2 hours.

ANNEX VI

Transcript: Consultation with the Leadership of 3F's Partners

At 3F office, Gulshan 2,
23 May 2024

Participants: Five partners of 3F

Sl.	Name	Designation	TUF Name
01	Z.M. Kamrul Anam	President	BTGWL
02	Yusuf Hossain	Coordinator	BTGWL
03	Babul Akhter	GS	BGIWF
04	Syeda Moontaha Ahmed	Program Coordinator	BGIWF
05	Nurul Islam	GS	UFGW
06	Sheheli Afroz Lovely	Cooperation Coordinator	UFGW
07	Md. Rafiqul Is:	GS	NGWF
08	Camelia Hasan	Coordinator	NGWF
09	Sabina Akter	Coordinator	BRGWF

Issue: “Status of women leadership in the TUF and in the Unions

There was a period when it was difficult for us to find any women to join our union. Women integration, women participation and leadership development, and capacity; women are still sluggish in these sectors and many do not perform well in these areas.

We are unable to sustain women in leadership for four reasons. The causes are as follows:

- Family Problems
- Social Barriers
- Women's safety
- Job security

As a result of marriage, even the women leaders are slowly leaving the job. If we can develop women leadership, it will be sustainable. Women proved better than men in leadership.

There are several barriers that prevent capable leaders from working actively. Without the President or the Secretary, no one at the national level gets an invitation. They are (capable leaders) not being used efficiently.

Trained a lot of people but lost them. Not receiving feedback from them. The primary cause of this is that there are no financial benefits.

At the Union level, women are fairly sustainable, but not at the Federation level due to lack of financial benefits. At present, a 17-member women's committee has been formed.

When her husband cooperates, she forgets about the stairs down and ascends within the head. Everyone doing one federation or settled overseas.

Issue: “Status of women’s participation in the TUF and union matters [Legal formulation/Implementation level]”

The federations got separated because of the internal problems. In the aspect of leadership women have a very little space. We have only documents of women participation but not their actual participation. The women committee of IBC is a complete eye wash. The committee validation is expired. At present, for a committee meeting we are exceptionally waiting.

Reality: In IBC, the women committee do not have permission to organize a meeting by its own decision.

We cannot organize any program of women’s day without getting any budget from IBC.

Federation wants the progress of the women committee but in the central committee the opportunities are very limited.

Issue: “Status of space and efforts in the TUFs to increase women's representation and leadership quality [policy, strategy, plan, committee, wing, functionality, status of implementation]”

We are trying at maximum level but success rate is low. We have 48 unions. There is a central women's committee, we also have local committees but not in all regions.

Many members are gone now. Currently, 2-1 persons are missing from the group. We do not have a policy, there are some guidelines. As planned, a unity policy will be in place by June.

There are some at the policy level. In the central committee, we have 12 women out of 20 members. We have a gender policy.

We have women committee but they need to improve on the decision-making.

ANNEX VII

Transcript: FGD with the BRGWF's Women Workers

Gazipur, 07 June 2024

Participants

Sl	Name	Designation	Age	Education
1.	Papaya Akter	General Secretary	28	Graduate
2.	Sabina Akter	Joint Secretary	24	Graduate
3.	Arifa Akter	Quality Inspector	30	HSC
4.	Layla Akter	Swing Operator	25	SSC
5.	Tahmina Akter	Swing Operator	26	7 th
6.	Sajia Afrin Jonaki	Women Committee General Secretary	24	MA

Awareness of women on all issues, from the factory level to the union level, to make them aware of the priority for women's progress.

Women's rights were not there in the past, Begum Rokeya has brought women out of the darkness of women's rights that she wanted to established in our society.

My role is that I don't want them to be deprived of anywhere, I want women to get their rights back.

In December 2023, the committee's tenure was two years.

The first one was in 2022 and the second one is in 2023.

When we went to different programs, we found that we had different donor organizations, so they also demanded what we do for women.

There are 3 F's, when we go to the Bills, they ask us if we actually have a women's committee, and when they ask if we don't have a women's committee, that's where we feel we need to have a women's committee.

Is it going to start in 2022 and then get a little more organized in 2023? So now what is the goal of the women's committee you know what are your responsibilities even though I am still confused is it written somewhere that this is how the women's committee will work?

It is not written in such a way, about the women's committee, why is the women's committee formed to work with women? Working with women's awareness
I will give an example, I am a generalist, I have 2 members who are coming to me because I am not there, I have 2 members who have gone to him to solve a problem.

There are 3 actives, all in all maybe 15/16 I'm confused but actives are 3

I know that there are leaders of our union, the secretary, the general secretary, everyone knows that there is a women's committee in our federation, most of them know.

It is mainly the ability to give lead as mentioned in legal matters, he knows the law very well.

In fact, we have basically selected those who are our organizer or we work as we go to work, so we see that there are some who can speak act if or whose educational back ground is good, and if it is our central women's committee, there is another thing, like from Gazipur, some from Savar, some from Chittagong, some with some active members, in Gazipur, there are 5 people, but 5 people are not going to be given, there are 2 people's rooms, we have given them 2 people, this is how we have made it so that all the areas are included and all the covers are given

No one has come now.

We had our second meeting in December, and we had two meetings with the committee that we formed the day before.

9 out of 17 are women

Salauddin Sapan, the secretary, me, our finance secretary, that woman, Saiful Bhai, the organizational secretary, and those who are from the factory level are not really in the main post.

If I tell you the fact, when we formed our women's committee for the first time, we did not have any work, when we formed it again in the second time, we had two meetings, but now we have no idea how to work with women.

I have seen that after Corona, women have reduced a lot and the second is that when women cross the age of 30 and they can not work, they suffer from various complex diseases and again it is seen that when they are a little older, there is a pressure on the family, if the child has to be given to the school, it has to be brought from the school, then it is seen that Hasband is doing a good job, then his wife is asked to stay at home for not having a job, and many are going to the village.

The fear of the job is definitely there, the fear of the job was there before and is still there, but now it is more than before.

Protection has not been reduced

I mean the job security place is getting worse, I mean the place of law, if we let a worker out before, we could work everything from getting him in to paying his dues, now it's so tough they're showing the law that it's okay if the owner is forced to resign, but the owner will show that he hasn't come, he's resigned, like last night I got a complaint, he'll get 3 years' worth of money, now if he deducts 2 months' worth of money, what he'll get, so the place of law is becoming so difficult that day by day the verbal termination on him is gone,

I have been Secretary of State since 2015.

If I talk about the women of my federation, we have different types of projects, training programs, where they are skilled, from those programs, we have brought 50 people, in a program of 500

people, we have a program like this, a women's committee or a team of 20 people will be given 20 training, it is not that he is obsessed with it, it is not that he has given training to each one of them, it means from those 20 people, we have at least 5 women leaders, but it has been seen that his age is a little less, he is a little better in studies, he can talk. Whoever is the head of the women's committee has to be active, whether I am married or not, I will lead in the place of leadership, it is possible before marriage, after marriage, it is not possible from the in-laws' house

We give a lot of training programs to women who are leaders in the union, but when they go to the factory and talk in the same way as the federation has taught them, it turns out that another problem is that the employer likes them, increases their salary, increases their benefits, that you no longer go to the federation, you are on the committee.

We are constantly creating women leaders, but it has changed, why is it that there is no one limited to one, now 5 activists have developed it, after a while they do not exist, but now if you want to know the reason, I do not know myself, my question is why?

In the place of decision-making, those who are in the main place or at the main level make the decisions, but in our federation some of us who are in the place of decision-making understand a little because there are some in our committee who are workers, but even if they understand Deeply, they will not understand what is really happening, they will not understand what the decisions should be made, so in that case we are in a vacuum, they make the decisions.

There is a draft, a draft has been made and a training has been done on it

It's been picked up by someone outside

Sajjad Bhai has made it with some ideas, then we have added a lot of things to it, those who are in the staff of the federation, those who are in the women's committee, we have filled it with everyone, but now it has not been completed.

That's what we worked on

Our policy was made but that was also not shown to us that is what is happening or given to us once that is also our program was done this is what we have done for now in between that later on your opinion will be taken that what can be done for the organization.

The structure of the federation has come a long time ago, then I did not come, so how can I come and do something about it?

We have been told that there are several programs with only the structure system, where all the people who are on the committee are given what work.

How do I do it better? If I were to judge myself now as a general broadcaster, I would say that I have a lot of shortcomings, and another thing is that we know that many federations are formed in the field of giving opportunities, but the president of our federation really wants the women of our federation to go to a good place and do something good, but you didn't say if we have any awakening from ourselves, it's really less.

We had three last year.

Friday is a must because if you want to fill the committee, you have to do it on Friday.

Time doesn't matter, it could be in the morning or in the evening.

How long it is may be half time because depending on the agent, the committee has to be there.

She assumes that when Women's Day is coming, the committee is given the responsibility

Now it is frustrating, now the work pressure was less than before, the human pressure is more, many people do not resign and even if they resign, it is seen that within 2 months, 1 month has not gone, the situation that they have to resign, the female leader or the women's workplace that they have not been able to work, they have to resign, the female leader or the women's workplace that it is not going to be completely permanent because the torture on women is more, the factory level says, the outside says on the street says, there is torture on all sides, so that is how to move forward, if I say from my place that our pressure is very high that we have to create female leadership, but it is actually that if we make something so tough, but it does not last long, and there is a shortage in the place of skills.

Why that will power is not awakening, since we have a goal that 1 person will do 20 trainings, it's okay, he will get the convention once he comes, and we are talking to him even if it's very difficult, but the next one who will come and work, he will have to show him the benefits for everything or he will not do it, no one will come with his own initiative, there is no such mentality in us anymore,

When they are tied up and given a call, they think what will happen to me by going here, what will be my benefit, they think what will I do as a leader.

If there is no one except the men, there are 9 women in our committee, who are from the factory level, 3/4 people call them, we have to come to the AC meeting, okay, how do we open the factory, okay, the day you do the duty, I give you 1000 rupees or 1200 rupees, with the same attendance, then it will come, but from their mind that the fillings that I am a member of that committee, how important I am in the AC committee of a federation, those fillings are not among them, if you give them the money, then they will not come if the money is not given, now they need 500 rupees, if I can't give it, then the leader will not come, we also have a limitation, it looks like I am buying his time, so I also have to have the money.

We want to correct our union information a bit, there are 31 unions in our ledger.

There's no 31 out of 31.

Men are 70%, women are 30%.

Women are more likely to be members of our

No, I'm talking about the union.

Maybe it's 30/40%.

Hey, where we have more women members, but why do we give the committee that we don't want to talk about, I don't want to come forward, I'm afraid of being maximized, but men are a little brave because of which we have to give the committee back to men.

ANNEX VIII

Transcript: FGD with UFGW's Women Workers

Date: 15 July 2024, Place: Gazipur

Participants List

Sl.	Name	Designation	Education
01.	Most. Dilpinjir Parvin	Quality	Honours 4 th year
02.	Most. Liza Akter	Assistant Helper	8 pass
03.	Razia Sultana	Quality	Honours Third Year
04.	Rina	Iron	5 pass

There is no discrimination between men and women at employment. All are equal.

I have never been a victim of any harassment. Not even heard of anyone facing this problem.

On gender policy, we understand equal rights for men and women. Except for this, we don't know much about the policy. We just heard there is a gender policy.

Every section has a leader.

I have a wish to become a women leader. But I still can't get an opportunity to join as the leader. There are several causes for this. Among the most important causes are: The owner of my factory runs a school. I work as a teacher in the morning at that school and then come to the factory after lunch. This is why I am incapable of spending my time here right now. However, my long-term goal is to become a women leader.

We have family restrictions on doing any union. Many women desire to be leaders but are unable to join the union because of family obligations.

We know there is a committee, but we did not vote last time.

My husband is very supportive. As a result, I expect that coming to the union in the future will not be a problem for me.

If we have a problem, we go to the union leader to solve it. Our trade union leaders encourage us to join the union. Unfortunately, we were not able to join due to our time constraints and obligations related to our family. We are concerned about what will happen if we are harassed or feel insecure after joining the union.

However, if the in-charge officer or supervisor does not give us permission, we will be unable to join the union.

Our trade union's last meeting was held one and a half months ago. Furthermore, the union organizes a union meeting once every three months.

I saw two meetings in the previous six months. But we didn't know the agenda of the meeting.

Here we have a PC committee. But we don't know the committee's rules and regulations.

As per law we get all types of leave. We need to inform our supervisor. Normally they don't make any issue on legal leave.

We don't have any women's committee in our trade union. From the union of our factory, we know Hasi Apa and we can tell her about our problems.

We also have an anti-harassment committee.

Finally, women need proper training on all issues and laws from the trade union.

ANNEX IX

Transcript: FGD with the BTGWL's Women Workers

Date: 23 August 2024, Place: BTGWL office

Participants List

Sl.	Name	Designation	Education
01.	Tumpa Akter	Helper	S.S.C
02.	Farzana	Helper	S.S.C
03.	Mim Akter	Helper	S.S.C
04.	Md. Mehedi Hasan	Helper	H.S.C

There is no discrimination between men and women at employment. All are equal.

Sometimes the lineman really misbehave with the workers. Most line man are male. The line man doesn't raise his hand against us, but he comes towards us threateningly. Sometimes they give us punishment to stand in front of line for 15-20 minutes. Sometimes they cut our attendance for silly mistakes.

When we face such issues we tell union leaders about it. And if they find this is true they take action.

Our line man is a women and she is helpful also. So we do not face such problems.

We know there is a worker union we have in the factory. But we do not know about any women's committee/wing in the union.

I don't know how many members are there in the union.

We have no idea about any meeting of the union. When we face problem we talk to the TU leaders. Most of the times our problems are solved.

When we face any problem we talk to the TU member from our floor every time.

In the case of overtime, the authority takes our permission before overtime.

We know better about the PC committee.

When we (women) have issues related to our salary we talk to our lineman first. If it not help then we seek help form the TU leaders. They talk to our management and solve those issues. We much appreciate the works of union regarding our problem solving.

I don't remember when the trade union was first formed.

I cast my vote during last union election.

I also cast vote during the last union election.

I want to join the trade union but before that I want to prepare myself for entering the union. I feel women works more so they should get more prominence.

It is very important to have proper knowledge of it. Skills are also very important for it.

Challenges:

- Authority/management don't want us to join union.
- In committee if there are too many women then it could be a challenge for a new female to enter into the committee.
- Family barriers
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of sufficient support from all

Women leaders need to be more polite with the female worker. We need more training and information.

ANNEX X
Transcript: FGD with the BIGWF's Women Workers
05 July 2024, Demra

Participants

Name	Designation	Education
Bristi	Operator	5 th
Morion	Operator	5 th
Tushi	Operator	5 th
Florida	Operator	5 th
Ronta	Operator	5 th
Parvin	Operator	5 th

After the union they can't say anything roughly. There are 3 shift 9am, 12pm, 3am . There are no problem in women workers in our factories.

We don't know any women committee about. But If we face any problem we go to salma apa.

No women policy or law in the factory. But In federation we have gender policy.

We tell this problem salma apa , Apa solve this problem.
we didn't get any holiday day for shipment. After that we tell them this problem salma apa. Salma apa talk with management. Then they get the holiday

Salma apa; They do job per piece rate. Previous rate was 250 tk after they the authority now they will pay 200tk. I talk with management if give 300tk per piece rate they will do others they will not do this work

Total 9 person 2 of them are women.

600 members. In total 400are women

We can't talk as like salma. When we talk we fell fear. When salma apa is with us we fell very strong.

We are not interested, because we can't talk. We fill very fear.

ANNEX X

Transcript: FGD with the NGWF's Women Workers

10 July 2024, Hemayetpur

Participants

Name	Designation	Age	Education
Mojuri	Operator	34	8
Seuli	Operator	35	8
Mahmuda	Quality	25	SSC
Sakina	Operator	28	8
Kakoli	Operator	23	5
Vanu	Operator	35	5
Taslima	Quality	268	SSC

Gender issue

Got training on men-women discrimination, gender equality, harassment.

In women committee there is also man in the committee. There are 5members in the committee, 3 of them are women.

Those problems we can tell male members we told them. Those problems needs women members told women. Some personal problems told women members.

Don't know about the Gender policy

TU/ PC/WWC and their role

If I need break from work, first I told section manager, If he don't allow me a break then I go to TU members. All problem told to TU leaders. Yes TU members talk about that.

Collective bargain held on gender issues.

We don't want to join TU.

Challenges

- After work give extra time
- Can't get Holiday
- Late night home reached
- factory Work hamper
- Don't get enough cooked time
- Didn't get enough money

Barriers

- Need Husband permission
- Family person Don't like
- Give extra time to child
- Also Knows people think negative.
- Risk of lost job
- Threads
- Husband don't want women leader

ANNEX XI

Transcript: FGD with the BTGWL's Women Union Leaders

Date: 23 August 2024, Place: BTGWL office

Participants

Sl.	Name	Designation	Education
01.	Surma Bepari	General Secretary, Union(Gazy Knit Wear)	Degree
02.	Eva Akter	Member(Gazy Knit Wear)	Class 8
03.	Sumaiya Akter	Member(Gazy Knit Wear)	Class 10
04.	Monowara	Cashier(Gazy Knit Wear)	Class 8

Our union currently has seven members. There are two men and five women in the union. We have a committee of 2-year-olds. Elections are conducted every two years.

Strength of committee:

- No one gets fired without any valid reason
- Sexual harassments faced by women has decreased
- Supervisors do not raise hand on any worker
- Line manager do not misbehave like before

Weakness of committee:

We have do unpaid overtime for 30 minutes to sometimes more than one hour.

Not everyone do complain about any issue against the management usually. They afraid of losing their jobs.

Decisions:

The president, secretary of the committee takes any decision always.

Gender Issues:

They (management) don't treat men and women equally. We do not have any women committee in the union. We need to discuss women related issues covertly.

Challenges:

1. Workers have the fear of loss their jobs.
2. Union members face different kind of threats for involving in union.

3. We had to join the union secretly (without informing the management/ by telling them lie that we are not doing any union)
4. The family members of union members got many threats sometimes.
5. Authority tricks members by increasing their wages to stop their involvement in union.

Supervisors tell us not to socialize with those who involve with union.

We are going to form new committee soon by electing the members.

In presence of the workers union the management do not harass any member of union or worker in the factory premises. But outside the factory area authority threaten the workers.

We had our last meeting in June 2024.

Every year, we host three to four committee meetings to ensure good communication and collaboration among union members. These sessions provide an opportunity to debate critical subjects, share information, and make choices that affect our goals and efforts. By holding these meetings on a regular basis, we guarantee that all members are aligned and informed, which fosters a feeling of cooperation and collective responsibility. Furthermore, these meetings give a chance for feedback and planning, allowing us to handle any issues.

We have our union constitution that we made to negotiate with the authority. BTGWL helped us to prepare it.

We warn workers so that they do not make any mistakes in work.

We help women develop confidence and resilience, allowing them to manage problems and conquer barriers in the future. We hope that by offering support and encouragement, they will acquire the skills and mentality required to face challenges with fortitude and drive. This strategy not only promotes independence, but also guarantees that women are better prepared to face any challenges that may come.

Finally, we want to make sure that management does not make it difficult for workers to join unions. Job security is a key problem in this setting since it has a direct impact on workers well-being and stability.

ANNEX XII

Transcript: NGWF's Enterprise Level Women Union leaders

10 July 2024, Hemayetpur

Participant list

Name	Designation	Age	Education
Mst Kobita Nasrin	Women Secretary	30	HSC
Najnin Begum	President	30	5th
Nazma akter		36	5th
Md Abdul Aziz	Organizational secretary	24	SSC
Nargis Begum	Active member	25	5th
Md Shamim Sheikh	Joint general secretary	37	HSC
Md Sumon	Joint secretary	37	
Md Naimul Islam	Vice president	34	8th

Committee member

9 person, 4 of them are women. This committee was formed in 2021.

Decision making capacity

We all are TU leaders take the decisions

Women leaders in TU

Najmin: when they want to come in leadership her family, husband don't give him a chance. In garments sector trade union

Gender training

No, but we got gender training

Gender policy/ Strategy

No

Women committee/wing

kobita: we have TU committee we solve all the problem.

Challenges/ barriers

They don't get family support,

Women committee/wing

Selected procedure is -who can talk, in meeting she is active, training active this way we selected

women

Meeting agenda vs women agenda

Women agenda talk in the meeting. It is not a regular agenda. No special meeting for women agenda

Challenges

Family roles & responsibility, main issue also husband.

Solutions

Counselling them. Encourage them, motivated them.

ANNEX XIII

Transcript: UFGW's enterprise level women union leaders

4 June 2024, GW office, 23 Topakhan Road

Participants List

Sl.	Name	Designation
01.	Sheheli Afroz Lovely	Joint Secretary
02.	Nasima Yeasmin	Office Secretary
03.	Mst. Salma Hossain	Social Welfare Secretary
04.	Alhamra Parvin Taslima	Arts and Cultural Affairs Secretary

We know about what is gender equality, women capacity.

On the basis of their active participation in the union, we select members. (Nasima Yeasmin).

Many of us think that getting equal wage as men is gender equality. But they are not aware that other issues are also related to this.

There has been a significant decrease in hesitation among women compared to before. Still, women's participation in the union is 30% lower than our expectation. Decision making is vary person to person. Women is still behind men in decision making.

We formed a new committee last month. Till now we did not set any committee meeting. We do not have guidelines for our women's committee. We do not have any separate constitution yet for our women's committee.

When it comes to the awareness about women's committee they know that there is a women's committee, but they do not identify us as part of that committee.

We also have limited understanding of a lot of topics. More instruction/training on these issues is required.

We still have lacking in various areas. There are no additional opportunities for women. They are afraid about employment insecurity. Women still lack awareness. Funding crises exist to support the advancement of women in our industry.

Due to funding shortages, we are unable to offer national and international training opportunities for women. When women join the union, they are anxious for their social security.

The purpose of forming the women's committee is not being fulfilled. In the case of movement, the role of women depends on what kind of movement it is. In many cases, women have an open floor for participation in many discussions.

Challenges:

There are various difficulties that women deal with when they want to join a union:

- Administrative challenges
- Family barriers
- Social challenges
- Barriers for Trade Union leaders
- Information and Communication barriers
- Financial challenges

Women join Trade Union but they are not able to join federation due to these challenges.

Solutions:

- Awareness needs to be increased in both sides.
- We need to empower women in certain areas.
- Women have to provide education.
- Increase awareness among the family members of the female union member.
- Allocate a separate share in the annual budget for women.
- Arrange meetings for women and give them space to discuss.
- The Women's Committee should be active.

ANNEX XIV

Transcript: FGD with BGIWF's Enterprise level Union Leaders

05 July 2024, Demra

Participants

Name	Mobile no	Company	Position in factory union	education
Abdul Hanna	01789188378	Zoom sweater	President	5th
MST. Salma Begum	01967833483	Zoom sweater	General Secretary	8th
Md Sahin	01922177826	Zoom sweater	Joint General Secretary	4th

Men and women enjoy equal opportunities.

We all sit together and discuss and decide.

It has also happened that the police have been yaba in the pocket and beaten mercilessly.

It's the fear that runs through mind. Women are not as brave as men. One man can do what five women can't. There are two such women, but they are not to be found. For example, if there had been a woman named Alia, we would have been far behind.

He's been pushed a lot. The police were in the area at the time. He was then forcibly removed. I was a labourer then. There was no one standing beside him. I was standing. I had an altercation with the Demra police. The police told me to shoot him. A lot of threats. There is a lot of abuse. That's how he got it out. I could not do anything at that time because if there is a union then what will happen if the leader is not me.

Yes. Later, the company paid him.

To increase women's leadership, we need to increase their safety inside and outside the factory. Women's leadership cannot be increased as long as the threat perception cannot be stopped. If there are 9 members of the female leadership, then 5 boys are needed to increase their courage. Our company has brought out people who can talk.

The government should take action. The government can stand by those who dare to speak up.

It has been 6 years that the union has not found a solution to any of the cases. One woman, Rahima, has been suing for 10 years but is still unresolved. The company says it will not solve the problem if one crore people are behind it. So how much more money can an ordinary worker spend in the case.

ANNEX XV

Transcript: Consultation with BGIWF's Women Committee

13 June 2024, BCWS

Participants

Name	Designation	Education
Hena Akter	Organizer	Maters
Anjum Begum	Zisas Fashion Ltd. Sromik Union-president	
Hena	Zisas Fashion Ltd. Sromik Union	5 th
Syeda Moontaha Ahmed	Women Committee member	M.sc in Environmental Science
Salma Akter	Women committee member	BA

Earlier there used to be frequent meetings but now there is no call. The meeting didn't happen this year. I've had two or three in a year. I don't remember the last time.

I don't think it was last year. Maybe six months earlier this year. I think it was before September. Yes it is.

The meeting took place right here. But what is the date of the meeting and before they are held, I can say that I have to go to the meeting.

20th meeting of the CBFI held 8 months ago. I'm coming to the meeting, but I don't remember the date.

I didn't have to say anything at the meeting. I just listened to the meeting. What do we need to do with our federation? These things happened. There is no need to say anything.

We have 11 members. All the decisions will be taken by senior leaders.

Salma Aapa called us before you had a meeting, the date of which is Friday's federation meeting. We do not ask so much again, you are busy yourself saying that you are not a member of the federation or that meeting of your federation.

Who decides what. I wasn't there that day. No, there is nothing to fear, there is nothing to say, we have no problem where we work, like you are coming, calling us, we are coming. Discuss it and take it. That's what we're doing up front. If you imagine yourself, then you are a good woman, if you imagine yourself, then women will decide. There are 20 women here. See here it is 11 out of 20 women are 9 men are seen taking 9 decisions and imposing on 11 people.

That's what we all sit together and discuss in the committee. Let's discuss what to do together.

Besides, we have owners who tell us to produce and we tell them to pay.

No, we do not have anything like that how will the federation run, what is my work in the federation, it is written somewhere.

There is a constitution. I don't have a constitution and I can't say what is written. The constitution was made from the federation. I know. What do u say? We know we have a constitution.

There is no use of those words now that democracy has been created. This is the thing. I don't worry about what I'm going to do anymore. It can be said when it will happen. Time will tell.

The constitutions are read out before the unions are formed. And I don't know if she remembers talking about the Constitution, or if she really understands the Constitution, or if we actually read it because the Constitution is the way it is. Your factory will be managed. And when we train them, they understand anything.

Yes, I forgot. I can forget. Because the more fundamental thing is that if the constitution is given to us, we can say that this is what we cannot read, if they read us, we can.

Normally, most of the programs that take place are women. Women are more than men. I've been here since 2004.

I am a member with the Trading Federation.

The participation of women is now 60-70%. It's gone down now. It wasn't 100% but it was good. Because when I joined here in 2004, there was an educational system for the female workers, there was a program for the Elders, there was a teaching of the Elders, I joined as a teacher. What I saw there was adult education.

Yes, adult education. Then I had to do a part-time job, there I saw one Nasima Apa, Nasima Apa was an officer, then there was a lot of participation of women which is not there now. It has decreased a lot. I think there is a reason for this. It is not that the program has decreased, but it has decreased in the committee.

Yes, they are the same and Muntaha Apa is saying one thing that if both of them work, then their family is not running by paying for their children's education, which is one of the reasons why girls are being sent to the village. In the factory then the male workers are working more because they are not coming to the community.

The maximum number of women in the executive committee that we have submitted in the last two years is less. We couldn't get more than 40%. It's going down slowly. Salma is coming down.

And those who are being kept in the 40% are not able to actively participate in later tasks. We can't find them. And when our programs are one day a week, Friday, and this is the day they have a holiday, they only talk about one day a week, and this is the day they have a lot of work at home. That's what they always tell us. They need to spend time with family.

Yes. One day is a holiday.

If one day I have to stay in the program all day, it's very difficult for me.

When I came to the federation on Friday of the week, I took a training on that day.

I will have that problem whether it is a federation problem or not.

Federation send us to meeting. I go to Bengal Inn once.

He invited me. I was there, did you see me, you was presenting. I've seen you several times.

He's gone to the beach.

I went to the beach. Bengal is two days away. It's sending you now. I said that's what I do in the trade union. The number of women does not increase because the 4 children whose income does not go to two, then the wife sends the children to the village with the children and they stay in the mess, so the female laborers do not decrease. There needs to be more women leaders.

5th person: Earlier the people of the village had an idea that they would go to the capital to get a job with a good salary. What I understand as I work is 22 years running 23rd first. Earlier I used to get a salary of Rs 1500 and now I get a salary of Rs 15000. Isn't it going to be so hard to get here? People are getting annoyed.

Do you know what Salma said to me in 2004 that if you leave the leadership, I will bring something from Malik. If you leave the leadership, you want to give money.

Anjum: we need a federation led by us, and if we have a job, we have to stay.

Why do we end up being from the beginning. No one has gone away. There is hardly any other one of them that opens up. As soon as the company recruits people, they will become our members. Out of 600 people, you have only 180. You can increase the rest. There is no time to give everyone that percentage. Not everyone has the time to be a leader.

Everyone needs leadership, at the end of the month, we can take a percentage and go to different places with a percentage, if someone has a problem, we can give this 10 taka 20 taka percent.

On this day when the heat is high, everyone comes and falls on their heads, the fan does not run, the fan does not have a capacitor, it does not have a weld of pain and does not survive and the whole body is filled with cotton after working. Yesterday I went to the office in that condition, saying that the fan is not running, I have sent the masonry completely cleaned and fixed, so they need a leader. How to increase women leaders, if we can't have more than 8 people in the committee, then how to increase leaders. It's good there again. It is advisable to call them factory women. Of course, my status increases after joining trade union. There is no road and peace. Dignity is rising here. Relatives don't speak well. Talk to foreigners.

No one likes my neighborhood, everyone knows that the landlord knows that the union leader's house. The one who gave up on love and gave an advance later said that he did not give an advance. We have not done anything in writing, we are afraid of people's faces, we have given money in hand and have not given an advance to leave the house.

Later, the police came and took everyone away.

A woman is being beaten by her husband, who came to my house in the middle of the night and stayed at my house for two days. Later, the landlady said that the house in which I used to live before I left the problem, the landlady said that no one can solve it except Monia's mother. After that, I kept her in my house for two days and gave her a job and then her husband again somehow found my number and called me. Then he came back to me and took me by the hand. The landlady says that if this is not the case now, it will not happen again. If our neighbors say something, we can solve it.

There are some things that all people are not the same, some are a little more clever, some are a little less clever, some are a little more criminal, I am not in charge of these things. I go my way.

Anjum: When people shout, why do they shout, when they say there is a problem in the factory, how will the company know if I don't shout. If I scream, you'll know there's a problem. If I sit quietly, will I understand that there is a problem in his factory? If you scream, everyone will know the company.

There is only one GM in our company. and line Chief. People don't care much about our owners.

Anzum: Line Chief is one per line. There are two on the floor. We have 4 lines and one in the GM factory.

They are not all men. I'm very scared of GM. They are afraid. They didn't come a long time ago. They are afraid that they will not be able to bear our pain.

What else is to be done if the female leader has to grow in another factory, if they actually call if they have a problem, if they come, and if they do not come, how will they grow. If it comes to it, like today, one of the eagles said that tomorrow 200 people will be thrown out. So I'm telling you to throw 200 people out on the streets every day and tell them to go to your father's house and don't take the number. He said he'd be back soon and see you tomorrow. I'll see if I get a call.

Anjum: Now it goes to us first, others are not busy with this. Babul Bhai is busy with all this only as much as we get on the road. We have to turn the wheel. If the wheel does not turn, there is no leadership, no rice.

If I say we need more skills. There are still many recipes. More training is needed. If we want to increase women workers and women leadership, then a lot of work has to be done. In fact, the biggest thing is that they are not economically strong and there are family barriers. But there is still no alternative. You have to be alert. And they have to move. It must continue. It cannot be stopped.

Another thing is that it is difficult to make them understand that this is for their own good or that they need to come to this because knowing their rights and making themselves work actively is not something that we can explain to them. They feel that we are calling them again and again for our needs.

Maybe they don't have a place here. These things work in your mind.

In fact, sometimes they understand and they do it later. We didn't really give them enough chances. I don't think anything will happen as long as we don't have these things, as many of our federations as we have, all working together and taking the workers together. No, they will do it, but what the federation will do, the federation will have to cooperate with them. No, it's okay. But the federation has to give them the warning. We need to be more aware of these workers.

And now another problem is that their target has increased a lot due to the increase in wages. Then they're either going to hit that target or they're going to work with Organize. They see the union leaders who are there that they will talk a little in the middle, there is no time for that because their target is very high. And we also feel bad that we call them again and again because they do not get time to rest for a day. There is so much pressure on them. For example, there is a union called Irene Fashion, they did not have leave for 4 consecutive weeks, then they are in the 5th week when the management asks for leave, then the management is in the 5th week and does not give them leave, then they are angry and stop working and leave the factory, saying that we will not work, if leave is not given, then we will leave the factory. But we can't do anything for them. They told us that we would arrange a day's leave for them, which we could not do under the circumstances.

When I talk to the management about that, the management's attitude is that I will not keep the union people and the union committee will not keep that. Then I asked a question that you said don't keep union people you actually said in which jurisdiction and one thing you have a committee to hand you your shipment where your workers are doing so much work. Management says. You told me that I will leave the committee and do whatever it takes for this. And I'm not saying you can't do it. You have been dragging them for 4 weeks, then I had a little argument with him and complained a lot to Babul Bhai against me. I couldn't make him understand that after 4 weeks of continuous work, you can't give them a day's time. You can't stay here. Until you see the worker's

side. If you look at the worker, the worker will look at you. Workers won't listen to you.

Sultana: Last night, when Oni was talking to Babul bhai, Babul bhai was telling her that it won't happen the way you are saying. You can't remove a member of the committee because they are right in their place. And you go there's a union.

They have taken leave. They didn't come the next day. Now it's not their fault. Because they've been working for five weeks. And he's entitled to his vacation. They're off duty on Friday the 4th for the benefit of the owner that the shipment is on.

But when I see that I can no longer walk, I can no longer work. Then he called me and I said I taught you, now you teach me, but you can't do anything illegal. Do what you have to do until 5pm. They didn't listen to them. It was later approved in June.

No, I don't have any position in the executive board of the federation.

IBC is a women's committee. In 2023, I was on the IBC women's committee.

No, the IBC women's committee is the IBC central women's committee. What I said before, I will still say that there is no alternative to warning. It has to continue. And the workers need to understand that. And I have seen that our workers are good enough. Understand them. But there are two like we lost 3 leaders they were very, very good leaders. And they were very efficient. I think we've lost them. If we could have given them any other advantage, I think they would have. But we couldn't help them. I couldn't get any other financial help. I had so much to say and nothing more to say.

In the case of our federation, it can be said that women leaders are given priority in decision-making, everyone's opinion is taken, but when we talk about workers in other factories, they say that they are left with a little bit of monopoly in decision-making where women workers are more. But where there are more male workers, they are not able to talk about taking decisions. So there so that they can talk, if they can be strong, if they are given that space, I think it is good.

I mean you want to hear the assessment that you have women leaders at the union level at the federation level about their capacity skills everything, so your vast experience, I mean you want to hear the assessment that you have women leaders at the union level at the federation level about their capacity skills everything.

Give them a space, give them an organizational space, give them a functional space, not a paper space. The second is to keep them in communication. I mean, you have to keep the info. I made a leader, then there was no contact for a year, he did not come, neither did I. If you get involved in this work, the leadership will develop automatically. Our involvement is when someone is given the responsibility, they lead according to their opinion, then they feel for the leadership, then they do not want to go.

Now another thing is that I have done partnership organization and whatever I have done, you will not come here again. At one point in the partnership, he came to the rally meeting and I took the thank you. I didn't thank him. Then maybe if they don't let them go, they have to give them a partnership to keep them going. They need to be brought into communication.

They must perform their functions on a regular basis. Does partnership mean we do women leaders as Ershad Sarkar said one thing do you remember when there was 30% women's room in the parliament, he said I gave 30% women out of so many men as ornaments. So if we bring them to the function.

There are women leaders in my organization, they have the capacity and there is transparency. They have the mentality to work. They have everything. But we have to give them space, or hold them, or bring them into the work. Now the challenges that are there in it like holding on to a woman like these anjums in the factory if they unionize at a large level will listen to what the factory owner has to say when he can come with leave. His presence will remain. But if I ask someone else to come, he will not be present. He's not in the factory, but he's outside. We will have to keep an eye on the financial loss if he acts there later. You need to keep an eye on his transportation. And the organization has to give him the environment that he needs to take the space, that he will be given an opportunity or space to do the useful work that his handiwork does. In that environment, there is a financial environment as I said that you go in front of some factory and hold a meeting or go to the press club with 10 people. But now she's the leader. He is responsible for 10 people. 10 people will be looking at him who will give the car fare to the leader. But the office said that you will pay the rent for 10 people. She can't say this because our culture is different. In this case, the task of the organization is to tell the leader that 10 people will go with you. Their rent will be borne by the organization. And there is one more thing that we have started that is the family meeting of the Womens Leaders.

A meeting every three months. We will call the family members of the union leaders here to see if they will do any work here.

Then if there is a problem in the family of any member among the leaders, then call someone from his family to come to the union and raise this issue. Well, let me tell you openly that a study of 3F is coming up or they are coming up with their own findings where they are saying that the Woman's Leader is going down.

Women's worker level is decreasing and thread union is decreasing. A study of 3F is that the women's federation is decreasing as it was before, worker union is decreasing, trade union is decreasing. The reason for the decline of women leaders is more due to family reasons.

In factories where the number of women is 85-90%, the percentage was even higher before. It's not going down now. Especially for big buyers who do not have factories, bikers will have to give promotions to women, women will have to give more jobs, so they give more importance to women in recruitment. Men were given less importance in all those factories, such as a factory in Ashulia where no men would be hired. Babul Bhai: No, no. We always want more women in our union committees. It is told from our organization. We ask women to be given more importance while organizing while forming committees.

There is no written policy. We have a women's policy. Muntaha does not have a women's policy. Women's policy but not gender policy. When the constitution of the federation is approved by the executive, it can be retained or amended.

It was said last year when Afroja Apa was there. There will be some changes in the constitution, some amendments will be made. It was something like this. Can or will not be kept if we make a general annotation that there will be at least some direction to increase omen.

ANNEX XVI

Transcript: Consultation with BTGWL's Women Committee

25 June 2024, BTGWL Office

Participants List

Sl.	Name	Designation
01.	Kuasha Akter	Womens co: Secretary
02.	Bably Begum	Joint secretary
03.	Monowara Akter	Joint General Secretary, Central Committee
04.	Eva Akter	Member, Narayonganj
05.	Shanta Farjana	Vice President – Women Committee

All: We have women committee.

A central committee and several regional committees exist. Regionally, there is a three-to-five-member committee. A meeting is held every three months. Have women changed for the better or worse? Talk about these issues and try to find solutions at the following meeting. We orient them about their rights. We provide paths in which they can maintain equal rights of men and women.

We call a meeting every three months. Our President stays in Chittagong. We have 35 members in our women committee. This month, we had a council with 35 members of our women's committee. Women from different areas came to participate in the meeting. We maintained a red Saree dress code in that meeting. We operate it by collecting donations from each member. If someone has a difficulty, we assist her by collecting donations.

We have a regional committee of 35 members in the Narayanganj area. 18 unions are located in Narayanganj, Chittagong. The committee was first formed on the year 2019. Before 2019 there was no active women committee in the federation. The reason for creating a committee is the federation thought if a committee could be formed women would participate in the meetings. The 2019 committee was changed first after corona in the year 2021 because some members changed their living area, and some left the union. The reason for leaving the union was they had to face pressure from their family, some males think that women are bound to do only household chores after working and do not need to do any union. The members are mostly the workers of garments and very few from the leadership. Out of 35 members, 5-6 persons are from leadership and the rest are workers.

Criteria: Who can talk and have an understanding capacity the leadership take them in committee with the voting system.

In a council, two people stand for election, and the leader selects the central committee members via a hand-raise technique.

In 2021, the vice president was replaced because she was underperforming. She could only talk well, but the implications were not significant, so a new person was elected. Election is the means of selecting.

Workers are aware of the committee. We give them training and guarantee that female garment workers attend. Throughout the training, we observe and recommend names for selection. Our Monowara apa achieved this position by this process, which took nearly 7 years.

As a member of the regional committee, I can say the workers of my factory who work on my floor know that I am working with the committee. On the other floors due to restrictions I could not go to them and tell them about my position in the union. In my factory there basic union exists. I am a member of the union. I don't know how many members there are in my union.

A woman came to Eva Apa who had cut her finger due to an accident. As the women know that Eva Apa is working in the union she came to her.

The members have some fear of losing their jobs.

The workers know that we are doing a union so they come to us to solve any problem. The problems are not only women-focused.

One female came to me with a complaint about eve-teasing, and we resolved the issue by counseling the boys who teased her.

We formed the women's committee to ensure that women's voices are recognized.

Gender Policy:

We heard the term in the training. We heard there is a gender gender-based policies exist. We don't have clear information about the policy.

We have a gender policy. Anam bhai after discussing with everyone prepared the policy. The laws related to women-focused law are in the policy.

We have an anti-harassment committee consisting of 5 members. Among them 4 are women. The committee was formed two years ago. This committee's responsibility is to monitor if there is violence against women in this office. However, no complaint has been filed over the past two years. No Fund is allocated for this committee.

Assessment, Challenges:

Men reign supreme everywhere. As a result, women have relatively restricted opportunities. The committee has only recently been formed, but it has no implications. Women have key positions, yet they are unaware of the responsibilities that come with it.

If we wish to combat it effectively, the preferential treatment or prejudice must be eliminated absolutely. Women require a space to express themselves and be allowed to perform their tasks following their positions. The goal should be to focus on how to apply the knowledge gained after training rather than on the financial reward.

Women are unable to dedicate their time to work after raising their families.

Any complaint against the Supervisor might get them into trouble.

Following the death of my spouse, I rejoined the union because I felt it was important to me. My husband used to stop me from doing union.

Women need to take a stand. Women require a good education, guidelines, and freedom of speech.

ANNEX XVII
Transcript: Consultation with UFGW,s Women Committee
UFGW office, 23 Topakhan Road, 4 June 2024

Participants List

Sl.	Name	Designation
01.	Sheheli Afroz Lovely	Joint Secretary
02.	Nasima Yeasmin	Office Secretary
03.	Mst. Salma Hossain	Social Welfare Secretary
04.	Alhamra Parvin Taslima	Arts and Cultural Affairs Secretary

We know about what is gender equality, women capacity.

On the basis of their active participation in the union, we select members. (Nasima Yeasmin).

Many of us think that getting equal wage as men is gender equality. But they are not aware that other issues are also related to this.

There has been a significant decrease in hesitation among women compared to before. Still, women's participation in the union is 30% lower than our expectation. Decision making is vary person to person. Women is still behind men in decision making.

We formed a new committee last month. Till now we did not set any committee meeting. We do not have guidelines for our women's committee. We do not have any separate constitution yet for our women's committee.

When it comes to the awareness about women's committee they know that there is a women's committee, but they do not identify us as part of that committee.

We also have limited understanding of a lot of topics. More instruction/training on these issues is required.

We still have lacking in various areas. There are no additional opportunities for women. They are afraid about employment insecurity. Women still lack awareness. Funding crises exist to support the advancement of women in our industry.

Due to funding shortages, we are unable to offer national and international training opportunities for women. When women join the union, they are anxious for their social security.

The purpose of forming the women's committee is not being fulfilled. In the case of movement, the role of women depends on what kind of movement it is. In many cases, women have an open floor for participation in many discussions.

Challenges:

There are various difficulties that women deal with when they want to join a union:

- Administrative challenges
- Family barriers
- Social challenges
- Barriers for Trade Union leaders
- Information and Communication barriers
- Financial challenges

Women join Trade Union but they are not able to join federation due to these challenges.

Solutions:

- Awareness needs to be increased in both sides.
- We need to empower women in certain areas.
- Women have to provide education.
- Increase awareness among the family members of the female union member.
- Allocate a separate share in the annual budget for women.
- Arrange meetings for women and give them space to discuss.
- The Women's Committee should be active.

ANNEX XVIII

Transcript: Consultation with NGWF's Women Committee

Tophakana Road

Participants

Name	Designation	Age	Education
Camelia Hasan	Program Coordinator	27	BSS & MSS Sociology, DU
Suraiya Jasmin Ruma	Women Committee member	28	BSS
Tithi Afrin	Program Coordinator	34	MBS
Suiti Sultana	Central Committee Women Affairs Secretary	36	SSC
Nargis Sultana (Zhuma)	Joint C.B.A Sec	39	SSC
Monira, Munni	Office stuff	35	SSC
Jasmin Begum	Convener	38	HSC

Women committee

Yes we have many more times ago but some of them are resign from the job. Then it became week after that 10th may together 25 person we take training and reinvigorated it. Now this committee has been proposed. After training we decided that we will rearrange this committee

We collected name & phone number of the committee members. We give proposal to the president. This is informal committee. After two meeting then will be decided who will get which post. All training participant are now members.

I came here 18 years ago. After come I found & join the central committee. Since 2010 I was basically working with women.

Basically working with women. Motivated them to work with women. Increase women leader. I don't know where is written women committee roles & responsibility.

Yes, they know about the women committee, yes in tanning or program we told them about.

Yes, some one known from kobir vai area come for support . She was work in partex group aslo is PC committee. She told against something about the management committee. After that 18 persons of them were throw out from the committee. She did not get the job but solve as like that problems.

As like basic committee meeting women in front of all women can not say about sexual harassment but in women committee meeting they can told us easily.

They come in the federation and give complain. They thought that this problem solve by federation but real scenario is that the problem solve by women committee.

Selection of committee members

We learn selected procedure from amirul vai then women come for meeting then we selected from there. From this office, after 3F told 10th may we arrange meeting. Policy was written by office but I was not involve. That's means legal formulation, policy & others decision was not participant by women.

Decision making

Some times it was discussed in the meeting

Previous committee what done I don't know. All time I was not present in the office. now I am trying this known about and how can we develop this.

Some women workers give advice. Federation meeting was held in Friday. 85-90% women are present.

In federation meeting we discuss, or take advise from Amirul vai then decision was taken. Main or over all decision was taken by amirul vai.

We have those name. in formal way.

Ans: we discuss with brothers

Challenges

>family maintain

>did not give time

> policy was written by office but I was not involve

ANNEX XIX

Transcript: Meeting with BIGWF Leaders & Executives

13 June 2024, BCWS Office

Participants

Name	Designation	Education
Babul Akhter	General Secretary	
Syeda Moontaha Ahmed	Program Coordinator	M.sc in Environmental Science
Salma Akter	Admin officer	BA
Hena Akter	Organizer	Maters

I started work Garment Industries Jatiya Federation We started its work in 2000 and it was registered in 2003 by three of us (I, kolpona and Shehenaz) Our goal was to make all the working people of Bangladesh realize their rights. And among the rights, the social rights, the right to education and even the political rights were aimed at working. We have formed an organization for this purpose. Education was our goal. All the unions that will be there in the political sense here, along with this federation, the leaders of that road level union, they will come under the leadership of this federation and their responsibility will be to form thread unions in Bangladesh and work on these things And through them to collect and organize the rights of factory-based or region-based workers. At the beginning of this work, in 2000, we formed unions in several factories and with those unions, we register our federation. And we put a lot of emphasis on the network as we go about our work, and then we have a large network, both nationally and internationally. We have an international network called ITUC Uniglobal Industry All. AFL CIO and some of the other organizations behind it are Canadian some organizations are European some NGOs. We were able to build a good network with them and we still have this network. And this network helps us a lot in our crisis. Then we got together with them as we did the Industry All sessions in 2016 or earlier. Some confederation (3F) working with them in June-March. We work with solidarity center. We work with these organizations. And we have another NGO which is called clean cloth campaign and we work with it in Patna. That is, we are basically at the growth level.

I work for the workers. We believe that the grassroots is the biggest strength. Our main slogan is (the liberation of the grassroots workers' power thread union). We hold or cherish this slogan in our minds. Can we do thread union or not but this is what we remember. One thing is that as a trade union federation, we try to comply internally with the issues of transparency, accountability and democracy. We give a lot of importance to internal policy or ideology. We will work for the interests of our workers And our goal is to make our organization apolitical. We don't support any political party. Rather, if any political party likes our goal, they can support us. We have a media policy, not an unwritten policy. But the thing about our media is that in our organization we will not go to any media. If the media needs us, the media will come and find us. That is why we rarely give any address or bring the news to the people of the newspaper and give them a letter. If my work is important and if it needs media for news, media will come and take news from us. I'm not going to

report them. We won't do that. Another thing we don't like is meetings. The reason for this is that there can be very little profit in this rally meeting. We did a lot of rally meetings but I did not see any benefit of the real worker in it. benefit of my organization. I did a rally and the name of my federation came up.

But the problems were not solved. But we stuck to them. For which we do not need the reputation of the federation by doing this. If the worker is benefitted, we can do procession, meeting, rally or whatever else we need.

There are some rules to form some committees in our organization and within what is allowed in our constitution, there is an option that we can make any policy if we want. We have constitutional and legal rights.

When we established our organization, there were three of us, but two of us were women. Most of the issues in our organization are women's development. In particular, women's empowerment, women's rights, vocational training something special for women and rights for women and children, we are bringing it together in our constitution.

In our system, women are more important than men .Of the 20 executive members of the committee, 12 are women. And the number of women in our garment-related unions is more. Anjum: And we are also taking some new steps to develop new leadership. Meanwhile, we have taken the initiative to form a women's committee in the area. This year we have formed committees in three areas of Savar Gazipur Dhaka.

About women. (3F) will be formed under the project. When we have formed the women's committee at the area level, our plan is to form a central committee with these three women's committees at the federation level.

Then the activities of this committee we have been told roughly what we can do in this 1 year with the women's committee with women. Find out how to increase women's leadership. Then there is the finding of the Anti-Harassment Committee from the head of that women's committee. That's our plan for this year. What are the two committees doing? ? ?

We have formed area-based women's committees, which are actually made up of women leaders in many types of factories. A 10-member committee has been formed in Savar and Ashulia.

It is made up of workers. And their job is to encourage other women workers under them to form unions. Awareness in areas of rights. Our main goal is to reduce the tendency to leave the union in the middle and organize the women who are at the factory level together.

(3rd person) What we want through the committee is to create a link-up between them. That is, through them, we can know their problems and we can advise them when to do what. That's our main goal.

I don't like it. Everyone will tell me what I like and what I don't like, and then I'll work on it. I don't have any problem. My only happiness is the equality of workers with all women workers.

There were not more than 11 people. Women don't really want to lead. When we formed our last committee, there were fewer women for a variety of reasons. Three of them (Tania Mim Maria) are married. some family problems. Men don't want women to lead their families. Because many men think that if women work, they become more independent. They think that if women become more independent, men will not accept their rule. A lot of men don't like to be left out. In many cases, it is also a reason for women to have children and leave the union.

We have 32 TUs in the RMG Factories. A total of 76 TUs including RMG. 32 in RMG. RMG TUs have 320 leaders.

According to our report, the number has decreased. At the end of 2023, at the beginning of 2024, the number of leaders at our factory level was 304, of which female was 89 and male was 215, according to this data, it is below 50%.

Yes, the number of executive committees at the union level has decreased or increased compared to the last 5 years ago. It's down.

The reason is that they do not want to stay on a small salary.

No, it's not the money. Their families don't have money.

The boys came and worked from the mess, the tax was less, but a girl can't stay in the mess because of the low wages. So the similarity that I saw in the secondary review is how much effort I put to create a woman leader. When Rana Plaza was hit, suddenly the union leader became very big and again I saw a statement coming to a place and again decreasing.

Recently, in a meeting, many people said that many times a family's husband and wife are working together in the garment sector, in which case it is now seen that due to the increase in the cost of rent, both of them are not able to live a good life in the city by spending their children's education on their income. In that case, their male members are working in the garment industry and their wives and children are being sent to the village. This is because the cost is less and the children are able to study in a good school and women can also be seen doing other work in the village.

Actually, the point is that no one wants to feed themselves for others.

Another thing is that it seems to me that in the unions that we later had, we were not able to bring women workers to the committee. It comes to my mind later that we have a union called Balaka Fashion, last year it was New Working, another union called Redux Fashion, last year it was in these two factories that we have less number of women in the committee and more number of men.

There is no gender policy. However, this year we have decided to formulate a gender policy. Almost half way done. Within next month, we will have a gender policy in our organization.

We have to have a policy burning sector brother, besides, there are some unwritten policies in our organization, firstly there is the issue of female discrimination, secondly if there is any sexual harassment of a man by a man or a woman by a man, we will bring them under punishment.

In an unwritten way, everyone knows that we are the ones who judge. Another thing is that we make some written notes.

I want to share a little bit, last year in 2022, I did a training from the Solidarity Center, where we did a recharge, where we talked to about 140 workers. There are 10 people who are partners with Solidarity Center, and many of the people we spoke to have been victims of sexual harassment. We're writing them down. But I didn't write a letter. After receiving the complaint, we had Jahanara Apa there, she was an advocate, Jahanara Apa Oni was a legal advisor, she used to write letters from there if there was any family problem.

Jahanara Apa was the advocate of the Solidarity Center. Now what we do is we add to the blast. And there are some workers who have been sexually harassed and if they need counseling, the Solidarity Center has told us who will help us. They will do a few more things pending various legal arbitrations.

It is necessary to have it. Has it actually happened when we started working on the constitution or organization? It has been 20/21 years now in 2003. Now we can bring it up-to-date. Now if we put forward 50 years in the current situation then it will be correct. But then do it immediately. But our constitution is not like that, my core is my theme Kalpana Apa Sheikh Nazima, we sat together. Yes, there should be a policy in that place. I mean we don't. Can do for documentation if possible. Yes you can for documentation. But I don't think it's necessary
We have a constitution of our organization in print and we will give it to everyone.

ANNEX XX

Transcript: Meeting with UFGW Leaders & Executives

4 June 2024, UFGW office, 23 Topakhan Road

Participants

Sl.	Name	Designation
01.	Nurul Islam	General Secretary
02.	Sheheli Afroz Lovely	Joint Secretary
03.	Nasima Yeasmin	Office Secretary
04.	Mst. Salma Hossain	Social Welfare Secretary
05.	Alhamra Parvin Taslima	Arts and Cultural Affairs Secretary

I am Md. Nurul Islam. I am the general secretary of United Federation of Garments Workers. I am involve with the Labour politics since 1984. In 1986, I get elected as the general secretary of 'Dhaka Darji Sramik Karmachari Union'. For the tailor worker I did a lot of movements. In 1988, I formed a union named 'Sommilito Garments Dorji Sramik Federation'. In my lifetime besides this garments and tailor sector I have worked in different sectors. All the sectors along with the informal sector 400 unions has been registered by me. In the plastic, leather, Footwear Company I had to stay at night as well and I used to share numerous stories with them to build up a good relation for the seek of the union.

I have created many organizations in this way, but my main organization is my garments sector. I learned about trade unions from dada. This federation was established in 1988, but it was registered in 1997, when dada was the president. Even before 1988, in 1986, Khurshed Alam was leading efforts; he focused solely on garment organization and was a leader of the workers' alliance, working alongside Shajahan Siraj of JSD. Khurshed Alam told him to assign Nurul Islam to work with me so I could focus on garment workers. He agreed, and then we formed a federation, with Khurshed Alam as president, myself as vice president, and another woman, Jahanara, also serving as vice president. This organization still exists today. We began our movement for garment workers, and a year later, dada said, "Alright, now that you have a clear path, let's create our own federation." Khurshed Alam helped me establish a separate federation. Thus, we formed the United Garment Tailors Workers Federation in 1988. In 1997, we restructured it as the United Federation. In 1997, out of the 30 members of the Executive Committee, 5-6 were women, and currently, 14 out of 30 members are women.

Previously, we had aimed for an equal representation of men and women, but this time we have one less woman, bringing the total to 14. Around 2013-2014, there was pressure from Industry All to

ensure that women's leadership should comprise 40%. Due to international pressure from 2013-2014 for at least 40% women participation in leadership. Before that, there were only 5-6 women in basic unions. During that time, we conducted many training programs, such as those aimed at enhancing women's leadership and bringing women into leadership roles in the garment sector. These were organized by ITGL, which is now known as Industry All. 3F first came here and stated they would work with our federation. The initial work of 3F in 2015 focused on office management. At that time, there were only 5-6 women in the Executive Committee. Due to the pressure from 3F, a women's committee was established in the central committee in 2016-2017. 15 out of 30 members were women in that committee.

We do election every three years, and the last election was in 2022. There was a highly qualified and effective female vice president from Chittagong, but due to travel difficulties related to her age, she is no longer on the committee.

One female leader named Rehana stepped aside from the committee since she lived in Chattogram. We have a total of 61 unions, with over 600 committee members, including 208 women. When it comes to leadership, women often struggle to organize effectively. This is primarily due to their fear of losing jobs and not having enough time to dedicate to their unions. As a result, men often take over organizing efforts and leadership roles.

We are unable to create a suitable environment for women because of these barriers. For instance, in trade unions, women are sometimes included only because labor laws require it, leading to their representation in member positions but not in significant roles. Additionally, many qualified women cannot participate due to family obligations.

The Role, Status, and Respect of Women in the Executive Committee:

When it comes to the committee, I can work completely independently.

I can carry out my official duties independently without any obstacles. My opinions are valued, and I work accordingly. We all have the opportunity to speak in any meetings.

We work in accordance with the directives provided by the federation.

The last meeting was held on May 15, 2024. We hold meetings every three months, mostly in the afternoon or evening. Sometimes, there are issues with attending at the meetings. Decisions are made by Nurul Bhai.

In the last meeting, we discussed the area committee and addressed some minor official issues. We also talked about forming a women's committee and a youth committee. Women members from our central committee, area committee, and the union of garments are the member of the central women committee. On the basis of their active participation in the union, we select members.

There is no separate agenda for women; the meetings focus on organizational matters.

Those who do regular office decide the meeting agenda and the agenda are not only women focused.

There is nothing extra provided for women.

It is clear in terms of equality.

The 61 unions have 57,000-58,000 members, of which 38,000 are women. We are attempting to develop women's leadership, however when we develop female leaders, we are unable to retain them.

Many women got married, and others discontinued due to a lack of financial support.

They don't own the federation. There is an issue of their awareness.

I won't work here if it means neglecting my family, as there is no benefit for me.

Many people make inappropriate comments about women here, and there are also negative remarks about men. Sexual harassment of women is an issue present everywhere.

Negative comments about women are more prevalent than those about men. While there may not be obstacles from colleagues, harassment is an issue. Our constitution lacks provisions regarding gender, which contributes to this problem.

When a case is filed against a woman, the repercussions are different. A man can go to jail multiple times without it being a significant issue. Women often step back when they sense danger. Additionally, some NGOs create major obstacles for women's leadership because they prioritize their own organization goals, which puts others at risk.

There is no gender policy, but there are plans to establish one between the 8th and 9th of this month. We have a gender guideline at the federation level, but none at the union level. There is a harassment committee at the union level, but no gender training is provided.

We provide training to women to increase women participation in the leadership.

Guidelines and decisions have been made based on the opinions of all members of the EC committee. Not everyone in the union may be aware of these guidelines. There is no pressure from 3F, but we have sought support from them. The guidelines have implications. Those who come to the EC will take nominations. Lovely Apa and Nasima Apa mostly decide the goals, while Nurul Bhai manages the adjustments.

I have attend programs in abroad twice because the invitations were in my name.

In many meetings, the president/secretary name mentioned on the invitation card.

But if the name is not mentioned, male leaders are prefferd for the meeting by the federation.

We have a women's committee with 20 members. The committee meets and makes decisions in collaboration with the EC committee.

Women always have to snatch their dignity.

Finally, women need to step forward, increase their awareness, and receive proper training.

ANNEX XXI

Transcript: Meeting with NGWF Leaders & Executives

07 June 2024, NGWF Office

Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Cell & Email</u>
Amirul haque amin	President	01731201302
Md Rafiqul Islam	General Secretary	01679098972
Camelia Hasan	Program Coordinator	01786080318
Tithi Afrin	Program Coordinator	01738382834
Shahriar Nafiz	Organizer	01741618233
Ms Alayea Begum	Vice president	01925752020
Md. Saidul Islam	Account officer	01778485800
Sahil Hossain Shihab	Program Coordinator	01688331673
Md Kobir Hossen	Join Seceretary	01915052835
Nargis Sultana (Zhuma)	Joint C.B.A Sec	01964137123
Jesmin Begum	Vice president	01846519330
Md Foridul Islam	Organizational Secretary	01924852107
Samir Hossain	Office stuff	0188541417

About NGWF

We established this federation 22nd july in 1983. We started work in 1981. Now Suddenly we give name independent garments workers federation of else. Then we don't follow this way, we follow trade union form. In 1981-1983 middle we registered 5-6 trade union form factories by a network. One of them was ahmed garments we registered them. Another one is general ataul goni osmani's nephew BP garments . Bins garment & in Mirpur 2 garments Dalsa & konko. Another one I can't remember that name. Total 6 garments trade union we registered in this time. We didn't claim as a federation, Just we use our network and registered this trade union. After 1980s in Dhaka city there was 'Dhaka City Dorji Sromik Union'. That was very strong organization. There mainly area is new market. Now in Dhaka city there is 100+ market but in 1980 there was not 100+ market. Few market was that time New market, Gawsiya, Chadni Chalk, Mouchak, Gulistan. Where ladies are worked our union was strong. That time I was a student of Dhaka University. Famous ladies & tailor shop in New market name was Bright Star. East way gate of new market left side 1st floor that shop was situated. In Bright Star Cutting master name was Kazi Mohammed Ali. Bright Star owner was 2 person , youngest name was may be mohid, He was 1 year senior of our Dhaka University political Science department. Mohammed ali relation was good with his owners. Then mohammed ali said to owner we want to create a union, uncle please written some things. Then mohid said I can't understand this but some of them I know who can write this. Then I will introduce you with him. Then mohid vai introduce with me & barrister mamun vai. Mamun vai & owner mohid vai are same batch and I was junior of them. They we create a dorji sromik Union. After that it was a strong union. 1982 there was strong movement. That time some of them lose job,30-32case. The garments become stronger. In dorji sromik union members leaders those who are in cutting section work in shop they are like educated and well train. They are join in the factories. Another those who are in

machine man they are also join the factories. A part of them are get shock when join in factory they think in factories they get well facilities but unfortunately the scenario is not good. That means when they are dorji master they were good condition. In the middle of the work they cant take break but after joined in factories they cant go out. As like that dorji they are same in condition. Sometime they go outside take a cup of tea & cigarette. For this reason In a day 5-6 times they go out. But this not a matter for a shop. But when they entire in the garments they see they enter in 8 am break for lunch in 1 pm after end of the work they can out . In the middle of the time they can go out. They think previous time we are like independent. But now we are in a jail. Organizationally they are very expert. They are look like rebellion appeared behavior. After that 8-10 dorji masters who are leader of the union contacted with me. They said without organization in the garments we have no way. Then I discouraged them not to create another organization. That time there was a organization supported by JASOD korshed alam organization talk with them. What did they say? After go there he cant do this & it will be no match our consciousness. End of that I will with them. In the day I was a student after evening 7-8pm in corner of mohosin hall field. I was meeting with them. After create union we are declared as a federation in 1983 middle of the year. The name is National Garments Workers federation and started work. After that it need to registered I cant accept it. Then time I think if I am strong it will make easily. After many times left I realized I need registration and without registration it not work. After 10 years we registered. We passed almost 41 years.

Then in short we have failure also we gain achievement but sometimes we cannot work. We are first raise voice for weekly/ Friday holiday. **'Garments sromik bachte chay sukurobar Chuti chay'**. We can say partial it was given. After that we can say 60-70% workers enjoy that. After that Eid bonus it was not in garments sector. Country president and his home maker that time got eid bonus but garments worker not got eid bonus. We raise voice about that for eid bonus but in our law there was nothing for it. Eid bonus conversion was applied every were accepted garments sector. Then we start voice raise and 95% workers are get Eid bonus. Once upon a time may day was government holiday but garments workers not get this holiday. We are the first organization claim that holiday for garments workers. Strategically we called a strike. In fact strike was no so hard that time. All garments were in Dhaka city. Form rampura which factory was organized I start procession from there also from kawran bazar which organization was good they covered that area. Barlinton garments situated in elephant road. It was sister of concern brac. We also said that you are talk about human right. In your garments there is no weekly holiday, may day & eid bonus. Somehow this news was moved internationally. Then brac tactfully give it there one of the employee. Then this garments moved into private sector. Maternity leave was not applicable in garments sector we raise voice for it. We raise voice for the first time for maternity leave weekly holiday, may day & eid bonus but that does not mean we claim are not do this alone. We take initiative after that 3-5 organization join with us. After that was effective but we are the initiator of this. We have many more poster for this purpose.

This is one side another side is that after started we think this is women based sector And how can we carry on women. First, we follow our constitution. Then is here 8-9 times talk about women of course they are women worker. In constitution, Federation purpose, Women purpose, ILO convention, human right convention, women rights child rights in here we add them. Federation will ensure that women workers right. For create awareness what need for women workers they

will do & take necessary step. 50% will be women in our council committee. In our Federation there will be separate women committee. Our Constitution we add at least half are women. 30 person are our committee members in general 15 of them are women. In this committee separate women affair member, Sub women affair member, Finance secretary post. We reserved this post for women because they can work properly. At the first time when garments was started that time was danger to talk with women garments worker. When we wants to talk that time we talk in front of the garments gate. Suppose in police line area there was 4-5 garments that time we talk in the corner of the area. That time we also talk with women workers family members. So that they can understand there is no illegal work here. When we get some women leader that time it was easy for us.

Challenges /barriers

At least 50% of women will be all structure. Federation Structure or Union Structure and committee. In the real scenario we cant do this.

Our Target is that in our society women are already backward. That time in this sector there was 75-80% women worker. In fact they are not advanced. If in our constitution 50% reserved for women and our male friend cant fill up that. Equal participation in committee. We face difficulty in sweater factory and take decision because there was 20%-30% female worker. Our registered Union is 111, CBA 10 and target is this year 6 CBA. In 111 Union 45 is full active, slightly active 17. In our Union either president or secretary is women or both are women. In this Union 60% women are leader including president secretary. We try to do that .

30 of the committee members and 17 of them are women (last election). In every committee there is 9-10 members average 9. $(111 \times 10 = 1110)$ approximately 60% are women leader.

Approximately I can,t remember the year. I was first partner of 3F. May be 2015.

Yes, activity is there , in general garments worker , on the other side women issue they have activity. They want to see women come forward in leadership and they raise their voice. They are very sensitive. They want to see in work place that women are harassment or not. If they are harassed how can they protect them.

If they see women leader in trade Union leadership is not sufficient, they encourage them. But they are not happy low number of women in leadership.

We have some achievement also we are failure in some sector. Someone in federation from 2006. 30-35 years Nurun Naharn in federation. Some women are also in federation 30-35 years. As they continue here long time, If they don't fill comfortable they will not stay here. This is my satisfactory that they are here. Another disappointment is that first time my target was federation, nationally & internationally they can represent them. I bring them from the root level of the women workers. It means that from the outside of the garments I will not bring anyone. When they come with a group or single in a federation I am searching in a trick way some of them are little bit educated choice them for women leader. Some of them who passed SSC encourage them to join federation. Jasmin is one of them. She traveled Europe 2 times & another place. Nurun Nahar alos traveled. As you can say we have achievement & also we have failure story.

Failure:

If I say, the amount of effort I put in I did not get the same output. Specifically, capacity, leadership voice, when local issue comes forward from internationally there is a large gap we see. We try to fulfill this gap but we cannot. This is the failure place. As a percentage from my expectation 30% behind.

Challenges

One of the challenges is that we bring them in federation but they need support I cannot full fill it.

>Financial support need.

>family system.

>social

>Family purpose.(barriers from family not like before but still have.)

Another limitations in our society is that when we go home from outside, lay down in the bed and don't do any work but women are not after reached home they start home work. So if women go federation they will be late arrive in home and all work will done man., that's the reason society or family person don't want to women work in the federation. We work hole day outside but when we enter in the home, We all are liege lord and our women are not go to the bed they enter the kitchen make food for us.

Owner; purpose in women leadership 80-90% top level worker are male. On the other hand 10-20% women are top level .Rest of the women are bottom level operator , senior operator. Owner set their mind is that they need more and more production. This production earn by the male worker. Owner don't want women are working in the top level. govt & others organization discourage them.

Legal atmosphere

After rana plaza incident women leader are coming and after a sudden period they gone .We don't fill that. At the first time what we are face day by day we overcome that problem and women leadership is increasing in groud, mid, federation level.

Women committee

Yes we have many more times ago but some of them are resign from the job. Then it became week after that 10th may together 25 person we take training and reinvigorated it. Now this committee has been proposed. After training we decided that we will rearrange this committee
Camellia: we collected name & phone number of the committee members. We give proposal to the president. This is informal committee. After two meeting then will be decided who will get which post. All training participant are now members.

ANNEX XXII

Transcript: Meeting with BRGWF Leaders & Executives

07 June 2024, BRGWF, Gazipur

Participants

Name	Designation	Cell & email
Sala Uddin Shapon	President	01915707755
Md Mobarok Khan	Vice president	01906633091

The meeting you held with the women a little while ago, as far as I know, it was before Eid, so we could not get all of the members of the proper committee together, there were a few members of the women's committee including the secretary. The discussion with which we started with the aim of the federation changes at different stages which is significant since RMG Bapak was a force of women. We all know that RMG was about 80% or 85% women in the garment sector but now it is close to 60% does it mean that women workers are the same but Bangladesh has gone to the collapse of Boro type house now there are various reasons why that is, those who once go to Metaneti maximum and come back Can't because they don't come back after the amount of work they do, in that case we see the crisis of women workers here. That crisis will also happen if 20% has decreased there, then that 20% is decreasing from the factory. To work from within, the federation of the union union and the federation brought to the top leader ship but that place is narrowed down a lot. It is from my personal opinion that I said it is our One area of the crisis is the 2nd area that we are after, especially in our federation. Each federation will have different thoughts in different places. It is normal that there will be different places to spend money. We already have the EC committee of our federation, it's 17 percent, it's 8 women, 9 men, and 6 of these 8 are union-level naysayers of garments, and the remaining 9 of them are saying secretary women. Since the garment sector women's borough force works here we have at least 2 posts to keep women in one post, that is why we have been continuing for a long time, many federations are doing it and some are moving away, so that is why I did not have a women's committee at one time, we have a convention center in 2023 where there were about four hundred women and Nazma Apa of BILS was also a guest on that day and there was our Samson Nahar Apa was a chip guest at the 3F Center.

We did not even have a policy, we are in the draft stage of policy development this year, we will finalize it at the end of a year, step by step, when we have made a women's committee here, now my Narayanganj district committee, we have taken the initiative to make a committee in Chittagong district, there are bushes, we have a women's committee in Sreepur, we are slowly working to expand our women's wing in different places, so since we did not have a women's committee before, we have not thought of it in that way now that it has become a women's committee and it is a single, Question:

It seems to us that the questions of women's rights that we see at the factory level are still not being addressed in the same way as we now talk about the Anti-Harassment Committee or how many

factories are in favor, those places are very weak, even after getting the power of the High Court, they are not in the same way. That is why we think that this year we have taken many plans to bring women especially to their mouths and we have already told the women's committee to do as much as possible this year, but from the first January of the next year, the women's committee will decide what they want to do this year, what they want to do, what they want to do. The federation will support from behind, for so long we used to do with the lead, but now we think that the women's committee will handle everything that is women's and we have trained to create a network at the factory level with the policy last week. Our plan there is to create a network in each factory about women's issues, our women will be in communication with the center committee and will share their disputes with the women's committee. The women's committee will take initiatives to solve them if any. I think it is a very big matter and the SKA Federation will handle it, we are leaving the women's committee together, we will hold it and prepare a list, it is not hers, do it, it will be done on March 8. Let them say that I need to do this on March 8 and I want this support to do this and on March 8 we want to highlight this issue, for that we need so many facelines, banners, so many men or women to be present here etc. What do they want to do? We will not do this plan again. Before we celebrated the day at different times. We once celebrated the women's day, there were more women present or women had more speeches, but there was no separate platform for women. We did it together. Now their capacity is increasing. After getting the responsibility, if someone gets the responsibility and when he starts to fulfill it, then he has an automatic kind of capacity. If our basic unions are at the factory level, if there are garments, then if we organize a union there, there must be a woman in the president secretary. President secretary will not be 2 men if it is sweater then we can not cover it in that KA because sweater is 80% boys to 20/30% girls that's why women are there but women can't be brought in the core NEA of the committee. But if we look at the garment levels of the unions, Colombia has become a 2-turn committee and still has a female secretary, and that committee, since it is the majority of the garment sector, is female, and thus in every factory we front a new union, and when we form our committee, we put a woman in the presidential secretary, and then we try to have a majority of women on the committee, where there are more female workers. The sweater is a little exception, so we have started to adjust these places,

Women's leaders in the trade union said the places of despair. Some of the people I have trained here have left me, the reasons for leaving are that they were maximum unmarried, after getting married they do not give their permission, after they become very skilled - and when they are married her husband will not get a job, even if we try hard, there is no benefit to each other. Now we have two people here. The second step is the challenge of having a baby, if they survive here after getting married, then the second challenge is the maternity.

The ones that we handle used to have a maternity, maternity is not for everyone but also the ones that happen from something like sexual harassment, they may not get the opportunity they want to do, they are thrown out of the factory on various pretexts, various complaints are filed in his name. There's something else about wages, I have a factory theory that they're underpaying wages.

In number 1, the number of maternity is high, in number 2, sexual harassment and sexual harassment, but the sexual harassment of the worker is the complaint, but the way they take it from the owner's point of view is that they do not listen, do not follow the instructions of the superior, that is why they throw him out of the factory, many K.A. So he doesn't come because they don't

hunt, but the worker can catch him after he leaves, now we often work with AKA law places, but in that case, if the officer doesn't go as he says, there is a structure and Another thing is that the target has a role, now that the production target has increased, but it is an important issue at present, the additional target that is given to women workers to fulfill the target, then there are various pressures on it. Yes, he doesn't listen to superiors, doesn't work properly, he interrupts various people, I got a compline the day after day, I am preparing it, here it is seen that he says superiors don't listen and he behaves defiantly, I saw that Section 4 of 23 of the Labor Act was put there so that he does not get service benefits, if he is found guilty, this is a method they are using. Throwing them out of the factory on various pretexts. The number of this compline is now much higher after wages.

When these are happening at the factory level where there is a string union, when the union tries to solve it, when the union cannot solve it, it comes to the federation. When we see that line in the federation, now we think our secretary is the women's committee and he is taking enough ideas about revenge that is why. Seen this sexuo The compline that comes due to harassment is the compline's revenge, we finally made it with him, but even after that, I see before posting, because he is new, he may have some technical mistakes, which may be something to add. But whatever revenge comes, it is also important to submit my complaint. We women's committee is currently in charge. That's why when he has women's committee meetings, he receives so many complaints from other members of his committee that he can call them so and then things like this happen or AKA they do this, they don't do this, it's easy for them to ref these things because we are related to that. From the programs then we select them and send them, we also send women from the factory level like our 3F center or such industrial women to this program so that they get more ideas. Now what should we do if 2 women from the committee could have left 1 off if the factory level union is very active, then we add one woman from there, as the last example gives in Nepal last year the program of 3F was called a regional program. There will be top and second tier leadership from the federation, so either Mubarak will go or Papia will go with me, but we ourselves have changed the decision that the second sheep will not go, we will take it from the union. We took the president of the union that Colombia has to Nepal and we visited all the things that the Gfund has to go there and he got a lot of ideas from there. Colombia is currently running the checkout system. Federation is the first and let me also tell you that it started with 1200 and this month 199 more have been added. I heard that there is another factory in Bangladesh, but I don't have a good idea about it, but we started it with 1200 members and now after 1400 three months, that means half of the factory workers are 3000 workers. It is that we explained to this leadership of ours or told him that you had a chance but we did not take you, we take a union. And after taking it 3F is very happy that any other federation is union level We didn't take anyone and she came and a very important result of the union of that factory came, so it is an example, so we have to take extraordinary initiatives from time to time. Nothing, we're still constantly thinking about what can be done about it.

If domestic violence is in the factory union factory union advocate has requested he notices that a woman is suddenly behaving in a different way then he sees that it is affecting his job or affecting his work he does not identify it he says he has to find out that also, there are many places online violence sms sent pictures taken there are many types of harassment my question is what do we do?

We are taking some steps at the federation level which I have already done, so it's like now let's think at the national level, if you want to achieve something like we need the plant level, we need the national level strong representative, if we look at it, it's very remote because we have very few women like this who can speak very vocally or can concentrate there, we have a lot of steps to be taken in those places where we are very weak and secondly I think 3F is where you are doing a job right now even before this work but one thing has happened is that the 3F has done a 2 day program during women's day, after completing that program what else can be done as a result of this research. Which one will be told by the High Court, the govt has made a rule, you will tell it, it is making it thinking about it. Now we know that the new law has not come in KA of maternity. By calculating with the wages due for the last month, now it appears that the worker has worked for the last 15 days of the month, then he has received 15 days of salary.

But we challenge SKA still by leaver admission committee we say then law is here party therefore rules can never change law that means what is in law previs 3 months calculation all his earnings with that calculation one day wages should be taken in 112 days and that is what we are in effect now Now if it happens, many factories are giving benefits in reference to those rules. I am getting news. Now I can say it is illegal but I can't say another day because the workers are not aware. Now where I am talking about Colombia Colombia has done it for a while, it's not their fault, it's the rules, they did it, but they've been maintaining it ever since when I told management that you can't do that because the rules can never dictate the rules, and we at the BGB solve Now I said this because there are many branches of rules or laws about which our women will go to NAEA, suppose if the women's committee has 21 people, these 21 people need to know the matter very well, they need to understand, they need to learn, then we have not been able to teach them enough to understand. Couldn't because many of us leaders don't know much. Now I said this because there are many branches of rules or laws about which our women will go to NAEA, suppose if the women's committee has 21 people, these 21 people need to know the matter very well, they need to understand, they need to learn, then we have not been able to teach them enough to understand. Couldn't because many of us leaders don't know much. I was in the committee of rules, which was completed in 2022, I went to this committee and I saw that the proposal did not come to our mind, but when I saw that the committee of rules moved to the final place towards the division, then it came to my mind that the direction of the women's NAEA night work of BD 103 in BD 103 of the Labor Act 109 said that Form 35 is doing a form by filling this form, the consent of the worker has to be taken. Now I see that it has been said in another place that if the consent is not withdrawn in writing in the next step 2 then there will be a delay of 1 year, when it came to my mind did I consent for today because I consented there is no The time is not written that for so many days then it may be 1 day for 1 completion but it will be up to 1 year till I do not write it also form 35A means another form is prepared by the owner to take consent. When I withdraw, the owner will not stand with the form for me, then where will this woman worker get form 35, who will provide it to her, or what system will it go here, she does not know, so I brought it up in the ministry meeting. The secretary has changed, he is the chairman of the committee he was not before the first chairman meeting so when I brought it up now you will see what has changed I have proposed, and there the owner is coming for the first 9 months then it is 6 months Since it was 1 month, I got a chance and explained it very logically, then the chairman said no, it will not happen, he came last and said, I later suggested that it should not be more than 15 days, but since I named it from 12, it should not be more than 1 month. The chairman stuck in that place to keep it in place.

And later coming that 1 month instead of 1 year will see the change in rule 103 and I gave another night lorry workers who come to work at night will leave at 6 o'clock and return at 8 o'clock this can't be done where it can be enforced for those who have shifting duty, Then they have given a line there, but there is a condition that we will ensure the safety of women workers and make them work at night, but there are still technical 2/3 points that even our leaders do not know. So if you think that there are so many issues for such small branch women's issues and it will take hours to talk about them, then we can't take those things to our women's NAIA, so I think our women's NABA has a lot to do in this place.

I think it will be 30%. 30% means that we have 70% men.

This is the reality, if anyone can say it out loud, it is not the reality, we have many issues in the rules and in the law. Now they elected the PC committee, then I complied with the Labor Department, they stopped the representation, the election of the PC committee was not proper because they would not send representatives where there is a union, then when the rules came in the rules, I went to the place where it was said that there is a union, the PC committee would not be needed, there I further clarified that where there was a PC committee before the union was formed, the PC committee would be dissolved as soon as the union was formed, but with the condition that the clause would be there. What can be said, now there is no talking point because the union is automatic, PC is abolished, but it was not clear in the previous place, there was no need for the PC committee in the previous place. Management is not clear, that's where the problem is, they are continuing to do the same. Now it is being said that we need such places. Actually, we don't get that much time. There are ILS committees which we work on conventions here we have 7 members committee there are 4 SPOB IPC 3 there are the reports given by the government according to the law apart from that we also prepare the report before sending the report given by the government we say show us And if you don't show then we will send what we think is real what we see then the first time went to 2 o'clock after that they came and changed they started the process of talking to us. In that committee there are Asik brothers, Shakil brothers, Jewel brothers, there are 4 of them and we are 3 from IBC. This is the situation. We need to work attentively in those areas. Even after passing the final TC, it gets changed in the place of Palilant. Even after passing in Palilant, again, the BG pressure changes overnight. This is the reality of our Bangladesh, so we have to continue with them. But there are some places where we do not have any chance to compromise, we have to move forward, now if the law is passed in the parliament, we are coming to 15%, it is an advantage for us, 30/20 / 15 we tried to think 10, I think what is really visible is that if we want to see any improvement, then first we have to identify the rights, the second is that the women in the problem areas, those who have women's committees, they need to have a clear idea from those places, what are the weaknesses in the law, what are the things that need to be included in the law, those things need to be brought up with the workers who have women's committees, because they may say things that may not be possible to be taken in the law, but if they say 5 things, then 1 of them may come that can be taken in the law, it is better to talk to them.

ANNEX XXIII
Transcript: Meeting with BTGWL Leaders & Executives
25 June 2024, BTGWL office

Participants List

Sl.	Name	Designation
01.	Z.M. Kamrul Anam	President
02.	Yusuf Hossain	Coordinator
03.	Bably Begum	Assistant General Secretary
04.	Kuasha Akter	Womens co: Secretary
05.	Samim Hasan	Org-sec
06.	MD. Hasan Ali	President Youth
07.	Shanta Farjana	Women Secretary

In 1972 BTGWL first formed. This is the oldest and largest federation. In 1990 we renamed it to BTGWL. We have regular meetings and ensure more than 30% women participation. In our central committee 30% are women and in our women committee 100% are women.

Our accounts are tracked in QuickBox system and Excel. We have gender policy, women committee and can share all documents related to this.

We have women at all levels. There are resource persons. They take classes. Basically, this is how things operate around here. This is roughly our situation.

They receive training.

I am directly linked with Trade Union since 1980. Later in 80-90 when we did TU, we did not really get women participants. Back then, women used to go to the hotel but did not come to the program. They did not want to go to the residential program. I remember, two or three days before the show, Kohinoor Begum stated, "My brother says that such programs traffic women." This was on an Indian program. Mahbubur Alam used to sit on a chair with two or three phones while I conducted Reborn at BTUC. I was with them till the year 81-82-84. I did not like their activities. When I used to attend the general meeting, I would make silly comments. Following a meeting, they made the decision not to have relation with Kamrul Anam. I got an opportunity to do a master's program in London. But I didn't go.

I revolted. Together with 4 people including Khokon Chandra Sheel from my area, along with their union leaders, we carried out a movement against them secretly. I eventually lost them all. I got along well with every single female coworker. Thus, they claim that Kamrul Anam is a decent guy. Through this circumstance, we were organized. How hard it was to acquire women back then. It's a lot simpler now. Good women may now be found in any program, including international ones. Earlier, garment girls did not even come to the union. From that experience I would say much better now. But there are still some limitations. Because leadership, training cannot be given to anyone. Kuasha apa can provide training now by completed 100 training. Shanta Apa went abroad for training and is now improving and improved. The biggest shortcoming of women who join TU is lack of education.

The leader of maximum TU is chalk in my hand like China Apa. They can't develop yet. Nazma Apa, can speak in an extraordinary way. The leader of maximum TU is chalk in my hand. They can't develop yet. Nazma Apa, can speak in an extraordinary way. But she can't write. She has been trained at the solidarity center. She has a lot of courage. Many organizations have female leadership but they are still developing. It was the National Union. Yet there are still issues with the basic unions. There aren't any educated women around. Women are eventually located, but they lack proper education. During a training session held here not too long ago, two or three individuals who didn't pass class five.

According to national and international guidelines, 30% of participants should be women.

Nearing 50% for NTUC and Industry All.

But we are not ready to go to this place yet. We form the national committee in 2019 and December 2022. Women now make up 30% of our membership as of 2019. This is done under NTUC and IBC norms. There were thirty members of the committee in 2019, eleven of them were women. There are a few more women now than there were before in our executive committee of 50 members. Despite being forced, we are continuing to meet the required quantity. They say that quality is not a big deal but women's participation should be increased.

We have 17-18 basic unions, 9-10 people in each union. Hardly, 1-2 women in each union.

Women do not wish to have frightening lives. They believe that they will lose their jobs if they join the union. They have family pressure. They have financial Problem.

The main challenge here is that there isn't enough time, which is leading to serious issues.

Violence occurs everywhere. We don't receive that here as Anam bhai at BTGWL is like our father. But not so in other places. With them, violence occurs.

Violence is high in many federations. There are no such facilities.

The same person is going to garments, chemicals, and all programs. The same person is going to different programs, as the person has a good relation with the leaders. Sometimes educated person does not get the invitation due to not having a good connection with the leaders. This is happening in the Federation, that's why women don't want to come to the basic union.

Through a compensated system, many federations are displayed as paid workers. For example: a student from Jahangirnagar University is depicted as an employee who stays in the hall and attends the program as needed. Although they do studies, the federation views them as paid staff. Many dropouts are the result of it. It's the same in every organization. They don't operate in an organized manner. Amin Bhai's female members have all left their federation. In the recent past, a woman named Ila left the federation. A few have moved to the United States. It's not an objection. Consider it a declaration. In fact, there is a lack of women's leadership in basic unions.

Bangladeshi federations have formed yellow unions. For example, leader Shamim Khan of Gazipur and Tauseef has many unions, their organization is 3 years old but there are 48 unions. Hasan Bhai and Nazma Apa have many unions but the members do not know their posts.

Kalpana Apa, Najma Apa, Sultana Apa, there are many women in their 100 federations, but they have no freedom, no place to speak without the leader's permission. Without Dina Apa and Rahima Apa, no leadership has ever been developed. All the same, people go to BILS meetings.

When invited to discuss chemicals, plenty of members contact the leader.

In the past, Karima Apa would attend any program that involved garments, metal, steel, or chemicals when there were a lot of great leaders there. According to Amin Bhai, there are 110 unions. Our organization was founded in 1972, but even as the Awami League member, I was unable to form a union, therefore they were canceled. Thus, what is his method?

Buyers are well-informed. They are not bothered by it. They prioritize their business. There's nothing to be done because factory owners are powerful. Our leaders are also quite corrupt.

This is done by the owners. J.L. sweaters company has no representative in the union. Same at Dekko. 90% of them are not effective, 10% are effective.

No one can do any CBA except people like Najma Apa.

Honestly speaking, in the garment sector the agreement paper requires a charter of demand. I have 100 of these MOUs. If I want I can make 10-20 agreements. But this is not the formal system. There are laws and regulations regarding this.

The surveys done by the government have several criteria for which the percentage of women workers in the garments sector is shown less than its actual amount.

We have step-by-step strategy. We have prepared a separate women's committee. We are trying to bring women's education and training. We organized a conference for women.

We have a gender policy. This was developed during the Corona period. We also developed a youth policy. The policies were prepared by us without any help from experts. Women's opinions were genuinely taken while developing the policy.

In each decision-making, we try to take the perspectives of women into consideration. But as previously said, women's decision-making scopes are limited. Meetings of the committee take place every three months. There isn't a set agenda for our meeting. We organize meetings based on what is needed. There is minimal emphasis.

We try to have at least 50% of women participate in training.

Before doing anything, Bhai sits with us. Bhai prioritizes our opinion. The basic union women members face the difficulty. They worry about losing the job they have. Despite being a committee member, they are unable to contribute their time since they only have one kitchen and a small number of bathrooms. They have several family problems.

My spouse has made it challenging for me to work as a Trade Union member. Although he said there was no need to do this, I thought it may be important. The reason for me joining the union was that I could not pursue my rights from the factory if I did not know the law. But now, the girls are starting to show some interest.

While working, there are some challenges we face. The first concern among women is what will we end up with? I do this as an expression of responsibility to my country and nation. However, about other women participants, if they pay 500 Taka as payment, they will join; otherwise, they will not participate. The reason for this is that they are not educated. Another reason is the safety of the women. I taught one girl everything but she didn't want to let anyone else come because of jealousy. The level of competitiveness among the women participants is quite high.

Family persons also have an important influence on it. I remember in a residential program, I had to show my family members the full program over the video call.