

Social Compliance, Occupational Health and Environmental Safety Management Practice in the Apparel Industry of Bangladesh: An Overview

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Abstract

The environment is everything in the world around us that surrounds and affects all life on earth. It provides all necessary goods and services to the biotic component within it. Garments industries may contribute more to the economy of the country along with taking care of the surrounding environment. Notwithstanding, working conditions in this essential division are poor. That is, they don't agree to work hones that guarantee the social welfare of their employees. The factories are experiencing tension to enhance their work environment security to worldwide measures. This study audits the writing on working conditions in Bangladesh's RMG part and the disappointment of its current work laws. A Primary research was done to gather qualitative information which was being investigated qualitatively utilizing illustrative and inferential insights. The survey was designed to collect information to analyse the present scenario of compliance practice in Bangladesh. The research was identified the causes and effects of occupational hazards and explores policy options and recommendations that can promote greater occupational safety in Bangladesh RMG sector. It will also aid us in rheostat the disability or death caused by occupational hazards on poverty status. The correlational analysis of health & safety strategies in working environment and designed usage in developed countries will help as rules for building legitimate health and safety prime for present garments manufactures and exporters.

Keywords: Environment; Pollution; Occupational health and safety; Compliance; Labor standards; Fair Labor practices and Readymade Garment (RMG)

Introduction

Generally in textiles, knitting, dyeing and thread are mainly used as raw materials. Among the final products of different industries, some industries are ready made garments, some are fabric industries, some produced yarn and thread and some are producing garment accessories. Fabric production involves several steps such as sizing, resizing, bleaching, mercerization, dyeing and washing and various chemicals are used in various steps. The processes in readymade garments involve knitting, heat setting, dyeing, slitting, drying, squeezing and compacting. Garments section involves cutting, CAD, auto spreading, swing, and quality control, finishing and packing. Raw materials of any readymade garments industry are yarn and fiber. The process involved in thread production is dyeing, levelling, dispersing, buffering, spinning and washing, chemicals used in whole process are disperse dyes, levelling agent, dispersing agent, caustic, and sodium hydrosulphite, formic acid as buffer agent. Raw materials used in producing garments accessories are imported. Chemicals used in the process are polymer, lime, ferrous sulphate, urea, and hydrochloride acid. Waste water originates in dyeing; bleaching, mercerizing, and washing sections pollute natural water bodies when they are discharged without any treatment. With the ever increasing population there is continuous and endless demand for natural resources, which are provided by the environment. Comprehensive, trusted and timely environmental information and a careful planning according to this information are inevitable to meet the ultimate demand of human with limited resources. Textile and Clothing (T&C) Compliance (acting according to certain accepted rules and standards) indicates international formulated standards and guidelines for the said industries [1]. International Compliance Association (ICA) stated that the term compliance describes the ability to act according to an order, set of rules or request. Compliance in the RMG industry ensures all labor rights and facilities according to the buyer code of conduct which also consider the labor and industry laws

of the RMG producing country. The aim of compliance is to maintain strictly the labor law [2]. Health and safety at work are considered to be very important issues as they are intrinsically linked with the overall well-being of working people. Occupational Safety and Health have been repeatedly mentioned as a fundamental right of every worker, and are referenced in the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care, the WHO constitution, the UN's Global Strategy on Health for All, the ILO Convention and in many other multilateral conventions and documents along with the National Labor Law of Bangladesh [3]. However, status of occupational health and safety in developing countries like Bangladesh is especially problematic, with workers bound to work in an unsafe working environment where there is little regard for safety issues and inadequate monitoring from any public or civil society agency. Poor safety and health record of locations where poor people are 'employed' also contribute to worsening the situation. Hence, occupational health and safety are very important irrespective of the type of employment, or size or sector or location of the workplace because of its strong connection with extreme poverty and wellbeing. The research provided consciousness about the existing health and safety condition in the Garments of Bangladesh. The study indicates how environmental components are affected by existing industrial operation. The Specific Objectives of the report is to apprehend the air

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as well as water quality, the noise level, and solid waste management system, occupational health opportunities of the workers, social survey, and traffic flow measurement of this industrial area. OHS management system is the structure of the management of all the parameters of Occupational Health and Safety. The guidelines and ways how the OHS parameters should be implemented in the factories are in the OHS management systems. It also includes the recoding of all events, incidents, training procedures, written program of safety and other OHS issues. To know about the standards and compliance requirements, the workers should be trained with full of details. The training should cover all the information about the facilities that they should get from the factories, operational training to run the production process smoothly, workers participation in the safety committee, training on first aid, firefighting, emergency evacuation etc.

Compliance in Bangladesh RMG Industry-an overview

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) reported a growth in the RMG industry from 30 enterprises in 1980 to 4482 in 2016-2017. Conversely meeting the best compliance standards of the world, now in Bangladesh 150 factories are being prepared as green factories on the other hand more than 4,000 woven and knitwear garment factories are under pressure from their international buyers to improve their workplace safety to global standards by June 2018 [4]. The social dimensions of the RMG industry are getting more attention from consumers, social workers, welfare organizations and international buyers. Now international buyers are demanding green factory. So, compliance with their “code of conduct” proved a major demand before placing order, where as some are accepting some fixed general standards of particular code of conducts. Casual enlistment, low education levels, wage separation, sporadic instalment, compel work and short contracts of administration are extremely regular practices in Bangladesh. Rented factory premises, narrow staircases, low rooftops, shut situations, nonattendance of lounges, drinking water and nonappearance of independent toilets or normal spaces for female specialists are different worries in facilities. The social consistence status of RMG industry alludes to the degree to which the business meets the necessities of the labor law or potentially some other buyer particular implicit rules or intentional affirmation conspire. The present status of the industries is not palatable; there is a dire need to enhance the circumstance. By and large, adherence by a specific producer to a given standard or code of conduct rules is confirmed through occasional reviews/investigations. These investigations held by purchasers as well as outsider examiners designated by the purchasers. There is no "Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) practice in low categories factories (sub-contract factories, sub-contract for dyeing, printing factories) relate to the preventative, retaliatory and compensatory effects of laws which protect worker's safety and health. In order that, they are unable to reduce employee injury and illness related costs, including medical care, sick leave and disability benefit costs. "Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in the garment sector relates to: temperature, noise, light, ventilation, machine, chemical, electrical, and fire safety; and ergonomics. Both employers and workers have responsibilities to contribute to a working environment free of health and safety hazards. There is no OHS training applies to both mid-level management and workers to raises awareness and reduces workplace-related accidents, injuries and diseases. Poor wastage management practice which is a set of characteristic activities includes collection, transport, treatment and disposal of waste is warming for our environment. There is no act upon to prevention of waste production through in-process modification, reuse and recycling which is a formulation of reuse or material recovery.

Methodology

A review of the literature and background history of the RMG growth was conducted to find out to find out that the key focus group (the garments workers themselves) among grossly illiterate and limited knowledge on human rights, working conditions and labour standards. The study was intended to confine the current status of compliance practices in low categories factory of Bangladesh in order to develop research hypotheses. A primary research was conducted to collect qualitative data which was being analysed using multivariate analysis. The survey was designed to collect information about awareness and compliances practice in the factory directly from worker and also from management. The primary data provided working condition, occupational health and safety (OHS) practice in the garment sector which relates to temperature, noise, light, ventilation, machine, chemical, electrical, and fire safety; ergonomics and pollutions. The information provided the condition of working environment about safety hazard. A questionnaire was also developed to collect recent problem of compliances issues in Bangladesh. Each problem was leading the hypothesis. The purpose is to determine the current state of what problem is available in the field and the study will identify problems of compliances issues in Bangladesh that may exist. Consultation with mid-level management of the low categories factory provides their perspectives on current assessment trends and practices, problems they found illiterate worker and limited knowledge on human rights, working conditions and labour standards. All the collected data was processed and analysed chronologically. After conducting the research work, the findings were being processed with the help of percentage frequency. Most of the sub-contract garment, dyeing and printing factories environment were found to be very unhealthy & risky environment. One of the real constraints of the investigation was privacy. Gathering data was especially troublesome on the grounds that most data was articles of clothing focused and in this way couldn't be cited in the report. Taking pictures inside most zones of the premises was not permitted due to the risk of them being part of each garment's secrets. The privacy imperatives constrained an extraordinary segment of the specialist capacity to collect and analyse data.

Data Analysis

490 persons (from management and worker) are selected form garments, dyeing and printing where number of factory is 24 out of 4000 (which are developing for compliance and occupational health and safety as per buyer requirement). The data are presented in Table-1 that is 100 people from management and 390 from worker are selected for this analysis. In this analysis, 98% (98 peoples) of management knows very well about compliance and occupational health and safety and 2% (2 peoples) are not aware. On the other hand, 15% (59 peoples) of worker knows about compliance and occupational health and safety which is very primary level and 85% (331 peoples) have no knowledge about compliance (Table 1).

Table-2 is observed that 92% of management respondents have higher level of environment pollution and workplace safety awareness is related to their position in the factory where 12% of worker

Awareness of social compliance and OHS	Position	
	Management	Worker
Aware	98 (98%)	59 (15%)
Not aware	2 (2%)	331 (85%)
Total	100 (100%)	390 (100%)

Table 1: Awareness rate of social compliance and OHS.

respondents of environment pollution and workplace safety awareness (Table 2).

Result and Discussion

Alongside bringing acknowledgment and positive examination for the country, material and RMG industry additionally hold the record of encountering some most noticeably awful mechanical mischances in the nation. The hazards in the Garments Industry of Bangladesh includes swarmed conditions, uncovered working machines, electrical associations are unrefined and hazardous, a couple or no terminate dousers unavailable or breaking down, no terminate rehearse is ever performed, directors and laborers are not prepared to comprehend wellbeing and security issues, stairs and floors utilized as capacity; doors stay shut even in crisis; processing plant not planned as business office, limit paths for firefighters to enter and safeguard. Exploiting poor observation of concerned expert's standards, laws and codes are frequently disregarded in development area of our nation and manufacturing plant structures are no special case. Poor air quality is a result of a number of factors, including emissions from various sources, both natural and "human-caused." Poor air quality occurs when pollutants reach high enough concentrations to endanger human health and/or the environment. Most of the dying and printing factories are released unwanted chemicals or other materials into the air in large enough amounts to harm the health of people, plants and animals, and our environment.

At present ground water is the most reliable source of water supply for Bangladesh as water can be easily extracted almost from entire water-bearing at depths varying 0 to 20 m [5]. In Bangladesh, industries use water collected both from surface and underground sources. Huge amount of water is used in different stages of industrial production and waste water or effluent produced as a bi-product. The pollution from industrial effluents produced in different stages of the production process in water bodies and rivers has reached alarming levels. The long-term effects of this water contamination of organic and inorganic substances, many of them toxic, are incalculable. The marine and aquatic ecosystems are affected, and the chemicals that enter the food chain have public health implications. Various industrial activity deals with the generation of noise along with the product. Thus noise pollution in the industry is obvious. Among the various other environmental concern within the expanding industrial scenario, noise is very important one. Evidently, industrialization along with rapid urbanization and a developed transportation system play a significant role in the increased noise levels globally.

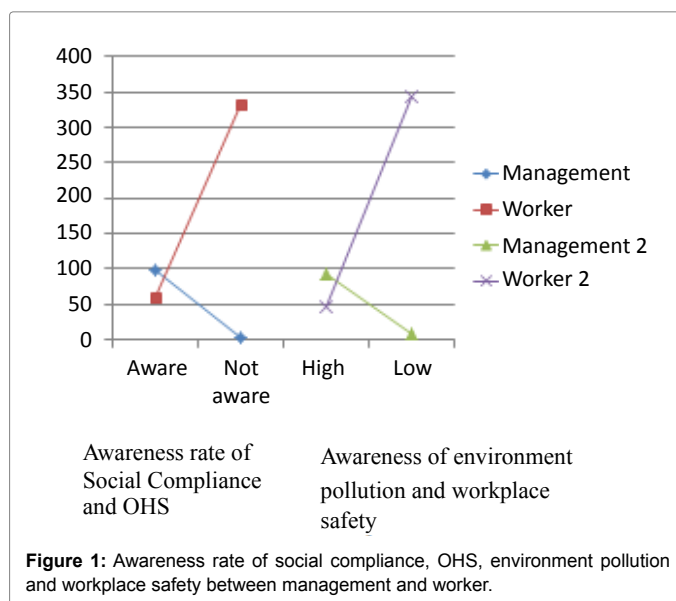
Occupational health refers to the distinguishing proof and control of the dangers emerging from physical, chemical, and other work environment perils so as to set up and keep up a safe and sound workplace. In Bangladesh, as in many nations in the west the duty regarding health and safety at work is set on the employer, in spite of the fact that the government has some sort of occupational health care services and security measures. Occupational health services are given as advantages by employers and for the most part are separate from other group health services.

Position	Awareness of environment pollution and workplace safety	
	High	Low
Management	92 (92%)	8 (8%)
Worker	46 (12%)	344 (88%)

Table 2: Awareness of environment pollution and workplace safety.

Working conditions in Bangladesh's RMG sector

In Bangladesh, working conditions are regularly miserable. The Figure 1 shows the difference of awareness rate of social compliance, OHS, environment pollution and workplace safety between management and worker. The result shows the worker is not aware of it. On the other hand, management awareness high and worker awareness is low for environment and workplace safety (Figure 1). In spite of the fact that the piece of garments industry has a place with the formal area, the recruitment procedure is generally casual contrasted with western practice. As there is no contract or appointment letter, millions of garments workers are vulnerable to losing their jobs at a moment's notice without benefits. The end of an employment relationship is probably going to be passionless and hopeless experience for a specialist and loss of pay gravely influences his or her family. Furthermore, gender issues in majority of garments production lines are undermined causing work instability, sporadic wage installment, hardship of the lowest pay permitted by law and advancement introduction. In fact compared to other employment sectors in Bangladesh, job insecurity is higher in the RMG sector. To ensure workers' rights and job stability, workers ought to be given arrangement letters enumerating the states of work. Conversely with Australia working conditions, the Work environment Relations Demonstration of Australia contains arrangements shielding representatives from losing their job unreasonably through unlawful end. Specialists in the Bangladesh RMG division regularly work extended periods for curiously low pay, paying little respect to laws ordering extra time pay or a lowest pay permitted by law. The RMG wage level is one of the most minimal on the world. Most of the garments factories do not have standard working hours also forced labours is common in Bangladesh. Despite the fact that most work until subsequent to night, there are no security measures for them and no residential facilities or transportation offices gave. Late or sporadic wage payments are normal in the sector. Generally, the greater parts of the industrial facilities do not give any pay slip. The processing factories, which give pay slips, don't have straightforwardness. It isn't extraordinary for pieces of garments workers to be expelled without payment following a while of committed work. Low and medium classifications piece of garments factories and this kind of biting the dust and printing production lines workers are not happy with their



present condition and the level of wages is the most critical wellspring of disappointment for workers in industry. Then again, prospects of advancement in the RMG business of Bangladesh are unprecedented. Without full payment or being paid on time, worker regularly stresses and are restless over the future and all things considered profitability going down and work disappointment.

In addition, women are for the most part victimized as far as access to more generously compensated white color and management positions. They are by and large thought to be just for helpers, machinists, finishing helpers and sewing helpers as often as possible and as line supervisors and quality controllers. It is uncommon to find women working as cutting masters, finishing and machine operators, or as in-charges who draw compensations shifting from 2-10 times that of the normal operator.

The workplace in Bangladesh RMG sector is underneath standards. Most factories do not have sufficient ventilation and fumes fans that leave the pieces of garments workers presented to poisonous substances and tidy. Raw materials contain tidy and fiber particles that linger palpably. Dye, a toxic substance emitted from colored cloth, spreads in the workroom. Therefore, numerous workers suffer the effects of consistent weakness, cerebral pains, frailty, fever, eye and ear torment, hack and icy, the runs, looseness of the bowels, urinary tract disease and conceptive medical issues because of exhaust, uncongenial working conditions, and far reaching labor law infringement. Truth be told, the Factories Demonstration of 1965 sets the occupational safety and health standards in Bangladesh, however like each other part of the Labor Code, it is once in a while authorized because of the absence of assets and degenerate practices in the system [6].

International pressure

Many international buyers from the United States, European Union, Canada and elsewhere, consider that Bangladesh garments are produced in abusive and exploitative conditions which do not uphold labor rights and standards and acceptable working conditions [7]. The displeasure by Bangladesh's garment manufacturers and government to lookout its own particular national laws has provoked international buyers to demand their own Codes of Conduct⁷ with local employers. Since the expiry of the Multi-Fiber Agreement Quota system in 2005, they have requested compliance with their own sets of principles before putting any garments import order [8]. These buyers' codes of conduct rules depend intensely on the possibility of social compliance. For instance, Nike code of conduct mandates orders that social compliance reviews be done with every one of their providers. These reviews check providers are conforming to social welfare practices, for example, permitting their workers one day of out of six gives solid cases from a genuine organization's genuine sets of principles.

Social compliance has developed as a noteworthy issue in the Bangladesh RMG sector. In spite of the extra costs these compliance requests put on the part, there are sound monetary reasons why the Bangladesh garments industry should meet them. On the off chance that the RMG Industry neglects to execute social compliance as indicated by International Labor Standard, it might lose its worldwide markets. Overlooking social compliance could hurt Bangladesh's competitiveness as a supplier. This could have critical outcomes: the conclusion of the greater part of the article of garments industry with a large number of workers losing their employments; the decrease of monetary development, and social issue, for example, grabbing, capturing, burglary, road hustling and prostitution. Then again guaranteeing social compliance is essential in Bangladesh's pieces of

garments industry to both keep up nature of items. In the RMG area, a Social compliance Certification System could be offered through buyers to advance and ensure legitimate, empathetic and moral working conditions in assembling preparing, and the workplace and in addition meets international labour standards

Environmental sustainability

Sustainable use of resource has become one of the major concerns of current world. Sustainability means to use a resource in a way that will not harm the resource and it will remain useful for next generation. International community is getting interested in sustainable production and eco-friendly factories day by day.

Though, Bangladesh only has one hundred and fifty green garment factories and only four thousand factories are starting to use eco-friendly machinery and technology. But it is very important to adapt with sustainable use of resource and being eco-friendly to stay on the competition on international market. Also, Factories should focus on using renewable energy sources, waste management, and environmental management and encourage other to protect environment.

Workplace safety

The readymade garment industry which changed lives of millions of people in Bangladesh has undergone significant transformation in terms of workplace safety. The paradigm shift in the sector has emanated from our firm commitment to ensuring safety of our workers. Brands and retailers who compete in the corporate world every day are working hand in hand with other stakeholders for the cause of safe and decent working conditions in Bangladesh, setting a unique example of multi-stakeholders collaboration in the business world. Despite the unique success of the RMG sector, the poor working conditions in the factories and the lack of social compliance are serious concerns. Most of the RMG factories do not practice the HR and IR activities, and have no well-defined HR or Personnel unit, ineffectively address labor rights and ignore labor standards, discarding fair labor practices, overlook health and safety issues and disallow trade unions. As a result, workers' rights are grossly violated in the RMG sector which has led to labor unrest.

To improve working conditions, Bangladesh Government needs to conduct a thorough review of labor regulation. The working environment and working conditions need to be brought into line with the country's current realities and should be backed with the resources necessary to ensure compliance. Furthermore, the government should protect workers' rights by creating a system for complaints concerning violations, adjudication, remedies, and punishments. But there is reason to believe it can be achieved. The reason is the pressure international buyers are already exerting on the Bangladesh RMG industry and the success similar pressure has had in countries such as Cambodia. Monitoring and surveillance of human resources and industrial relations activities are also required.

Despite of current development of RMG sectors in Bangladesh the working condition of the factories is not satisfactory. Due to work hour, working environment mismanagement, ignorance of labor law and labor right the work safety of the factories is low in grade. Factories should practice good HR and IR activities and abide by the labor law to ensure good workplace

Conclusion

Social compliance might be bargained by current HR and IR rehearses. An approach that focuses on labor rights, worldwide work

benchmarks, fair labor practices, security work environment and also conventional work in enhancing working conditions is required. Further, the fair labor Act, the Factory Act, the Occupational Health and Safety and Security Act, Center Work Measures, Set of principles, the ILO and the WTO Traditions are all add to a superior workplace. These incorporate a deficient utilization of work benchmarks and labor rights, law and implementation, aggregate bartering exercises, fair labor practices and in addition the government of Bangladesh and business visionary's part in executing the not too bad work in the RMG segment. It proposed checking was expected to guarantee compliance with these laws. In conclusion, it proposed to enhance human resource management in RMG factories could guarantee social compliance. The article took a gander at the parts of the primary performers in HR and IR frameworks: non-government and government and the parts of the global group, community society and partner bunch including the ILO and the WTO. Bangladesh government framework was discovered poor, because of restricted financial resources. The government also seems to lack the political commitment to improve working conditions in the RMG sector. The Bangladesh government needs to give careful consideration to checking compliance. In addition, a code of conduct and viable compliance observing cell is likewise required. This article proposes the ILO observing framework be utilized to set up workers' rights in the RMG business in Bangladesh. Guaranteeing work fulfillment, over the long-term, requires cautious arranging and exertion both by management and by workers. Subsequently the government, international community and stakeholder should work in collaboration in enhancing working conditions in the RMG area with the foundation of a HRM unit or personal management unit in each RMG industry. Indeed, the framework of Bangladesh RMG area is poor because of an absence of monetary help and also government and policymaker's lacking regard for this division. In result, the ILO alongside different stakeholders and institutions will assume a critical part in observing foundation of Social compliance. In a case, the ILO supervisory and observing framework and Better Factory Plant Program in Cambodia and its prosperity could be utilized as a good example [9-11].

Recommendations

Air Pollution Control APC system which is an implementation of clean technologies running under the supervision of an environment professional during the production process that reduce industrial smokestack emissions; including capture of methane gas emitted from waste sites as an alternative to incineration (for use as biogas). Shifting to clean modes of power generation for transport prioritizing rapid urban transit, walking and cycling networks in the industrial area will also reduce the air pollution. Lime or other basic chemicals using during chemical dosing control pH of water if pH value is less than 6.5 and HCl or other acidic chemicals using during chemical dosing control pH of

water if pH value is greater than 9. Methane gas production should be promoted to recover energy production. Incineration should do as final disposal of sludge producing from ETP and recycle and reuse should do in as much as possible amount to decrease the rate of solid waste production. Use of ear muff as a mandatory by the workers engaged in operating machinery that produces sound in the range of 80 dB and above. Replacing very old machinery is mandatory that produce excess noise. Isolation of the generator room from the main industrial workplace and use of ear muff by the respective personnel engaged in operating the generator. Emergency Response Preparedness Plan (ERPP), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all the workers in industries, training of using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), free medical checkup of workers and free medicine etc. should be given to minimize occupational hazards in industries. RMG industries should ensure health, safety and standard work environment for the employees. In this case, organizations should provide proper ventilation, sufficient light and air. For organizing such facilities owners should comply at a minimum with legal standards, minimize the use and discharge of hazardous substances and promote recycling of resources.

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