

Baseline Survey Report

UN WOMEN'S OVERALL PROJECT ON:
“Career, Capital and Confidence: Empowering Women Garment
Workers through Career Mobility, Financial Literacy and Reduce
Violence Against Women”

Submitted to



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
BB	Bangladesh Bank
BGMEA	Bangladesh National Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
DCI	Data Collection Instrument
DiD	Difference in Difference
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GD	Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HDI	Human Development Index
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoL&E	Ministry of Labour and Employment
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MSC	Most Significant Change
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OM	Outcome Mapping
RiH	ResultsinHealth
RMG	Ready Made Garments
VAW	Violence Against Women
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

UN Women Bangladesh, as part of the UN Country Team in Bangladesh, has identified women's economic empowerment and the prevention of violence against women as key priorities in its 2014-2016 Country Strategy and Plan. Therefore, UNW has been decided to execute a baseline survey in the selected garments factories, on 'Career, Capital and Confidence: Empowering women garment workers through career mobility, financial literacy and reduce violence against women'.

METHODOLOGY

The study followed a mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the key questions. A total of 80 structured interviews were conducted with garment workers in two pre-selected garments. Within each garment, respondents were selected randomly. Focus Group Discussions was conducted gathering female garment workers in selected garments to learn the untold stories. A few KIIs were conducted with employers and managers.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

More than half of the respondent female garment workers were aged below 25 years. Age distribution suggests the high involvement of young women as garment workers. Among respondents 80 percent are ever married. 3.8 percent respondents are divorced or separated. Analysis reveals that 80 percent of the respondents completed primary education. Most of the interviewed women work as operator (57.5%) and helper (23.8%) suggesting more than 80 percent of women work at lowest tier of garment workforce though 62.4 percent of them have more than 2 years of working experience.

TRAINING SUPPORT, CAREER MOBILITY, PROMOTION AND REWARD

Among interviewed garment workers only 20 percent received training. The time of training suggest that, the respondents received such training before they started working as garment worker. Among respondents 58.8 percent mentioned they did not receive any training at work place. The remaining respondents mentioned receiving training on specific tasks they have to handle at work place.

Before changing a job, on average, a worker works 1.8 years in a factory. Key reason for job changing is higher salary. Few respondents mentioned changing jobs for promotion and family issues.

INCOME, EXPENDITURE, SAVINGS AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

The reported average monthly income of the respondents is 6,738.8 BDT while the average expenditure is 5,171 BDT. Majority of their expenditure is spent on food (36.7%) and house rent (26.2%). 85 percent respondents reported to have savings while only 10 percent of the respondents have repayable loans. However, the opportunities for investment are minimal.

GENDER DISPARITY

Protection from sexual harassment and right to work with dignity is universally recognized as basic human rights. Special laws punishing sexual harassment having nationwide jurisdiction are yet to be passed.

In recent past, sexual harassment towards women workers in RMG sector in Bangladesh has been a burning issue. Both factories are meeting all compliance issues regarding women workers safety, security, work place environment. During informal group and individual discussion and interview with the workers, in both factories; it was found that women workers are very happy with their employers and work place environment and have no complain. The collected data also reflect that, the both factories are like safe zone for women workers.

Information on women workers rights, different laws, management policy is well known by the workers. The ratio between male and women worker in sample factories, 31.3 percent says 70 to 80 percent are women, 29 percent mention it is 60 to 70 percent.

About 85 percent worker have knowledge or/and aware of workplace gender policy in both factory. When asked to tell what they understand gender policy; about 68 percent worker says, gender policy means equal rights, 31 percent feel it means no discrimination and 4.4 percent worker says gender policy means equal salary regardless of gender and in one factory 2.9 worker says that, gender policy ensure women gets equal rights in everywhere. Interestingly in one factory 2.9 percent workers says, gender policy means buttoning on cloths!

90 percent worker say that gender policy/HR policy or/and manual does exist in their factories and they knew this information. Only 26 percent received induction amongst them. 14.3 percent worker learn collar joint, sleep joint and finishing from induction. 83 percent worker believe that workers are benefitted by the gender policy. 15.2 percent says only equal rights and little over 9 percent worker mentioned special act for women.

None of the respondents reported to have experienced any sexual harassment on service/workplace especially in the factory they are now working. Only 2.6 percent workers mention PC committee. 99 percent workers are not member of any CBOs or union.

SAFETY SECURITY, MOBILITY AND SECURITY AGAINST VIOLENCE

Both sample factories are like safe zone for the workers, 100 percent workers say they feel safe in their workplace. A small number of worker mentioned kicking as only physical assault.

97.5 percent workers have no transport facility to work place. 96.3 percent worker reaches their workplace on foot and they live very near to the factory. 95 percent worker responded that there was, no orientation provided by the factory on the safety and security issue related to women worker.

61.3 percent responded positively on factory policy and committee on VAW (violence against women). 88 percent worker knows about compliance and code of conduct. 63 percent knows about women rights, 40 percent knows their rights at workplace and 21.3 percent knows about labor law.

CONCLUSION

RMG factories have now been turned into more safe and working friendly following huge investment and direct monitoring by Accord. In this study the sample factories found safe and women workers friendly, both factories maintaining standard compliance mechanism set by Accord and all systems are in place. Workers are happy and feel safe in their workplace. They believe they are getting decent salary and without any gender discrimination. However, there is limitation in sample size and coverage in this study.