

# Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Readymade Garment Industry during COVID-19: A Study on Bangladesh Garment Industry

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## Abstract

The Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry has performed the concentrated fundamental role for the economic development of Bangladesh. To obtain the finale result, this exertions-in complexity industry wishes to experience after COVID-19 for sustainable practices with the adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in its Garment production chain. CSR, being a fast-developing phenomenon in industrial arena, is drawing the concern of world-renowned clothing customers working with Bangladesh. To flatten the coronavirus spread curve, the authorities declared kingdom-huge vacations up to twenty-five April 2020 and enterprise and industrial activities have come to a grinding halt except emergency offerings. Many global customers are cancelling or postponing showed procurement orders as their shops are substantially closed in Europe, North America, Asia and some other place. According to Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), worldwide buyers have both cancelled or suspended \$3.16 billion really worth of shipments related to 1,142 factories affecting 2.26 million people as of 18 April 2020. 7 Millions of workers stare at joblessness as new orders dried up given the disintegrate in international call for apparels. This scenario is being changed after COVID-19 considering that a vast variety of Bangladeshi garment manufacturers have followed CSR practices spending a huge sum of money. This study will find out the current reputation of sustainable financial enchantment through the implementation of CSR practices inside the RMG enterprise after COVID -19 of Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Ready-Made Garments, COVID-19

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## 1. Introduction

Bangladesh ranked internationally second in terms of export readmade garments for many years. The ready-made garment industry of Bangladesh is accountable for bringing about US\$30.61 billion in the economic 12 months 2018-2019 which constitutes around 83.49% of total export profits in that period totaling 15% of the countrywide GDP in that duration (BGMEA). The important shoppers are thinking about Bangladesh as the subsequent China considering that China is shrinking their apparel enterprise inside the latest beyond (Islam, & Liang, 2012). This sector has facilitated 4 million of direct workers working in the industry 80% of who are rural women (Menzel, & Woodruff, 2019). In the ultimate decade, RMG has gained greater exports, improved foreign exchanges & greater contributions to the country's economic system.

In the recent past, Bangladesh is currently dealing with a tremendously contagious disease named Coronavirus ailment 2019 (COVID-19), caused by intense acute breathing syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Over two hundred international locations and territories round the world were tormented by this infectious ailment. Originated in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and shortly unfold hastily worldwide to create certainly one of the most important fitness and monetary crises in humankind's records. So far, around ninety million humans were affected by Covid-19, and around Nine million humans died international (WHO, 2020).

Experts recommended following strict direction to unfold of this disorder like social distancing, restrictions on mobility, and isolation approaches. Numerous countries enforced lockdown and stopped the normal functioning of the economic system to prevent the disorder. This pandemic has created a prolonged monetary and monetary crisis that influences the lives of almost every individual on earth. Alongside, many garment factories have assumed the need of adopting the green and sustainable practices through the adoption of CSR within the general garment production chain. In this connection, the sector's top seven out of ten garment manufacturers are from Bangladesh. Through CSR is special phenomenon industry, its growing workout in different areas of the area has made the garment proprietors of Bangladesh assume severely about it. If this well timed attention had not regarded within the sense of right and wrong of the garment owners, it can pave the manner to short death of the industry failing to manage up with the relaxation of the world. Initially, CSR was concept to be an extra cost contributing to the rise in garment final cost curtailing the profit. But in a while, the enterprise should realize its necessity following severe inclination towards CSR. If sustainable improvement isn't always applied by CSR after COVID-19 to the factories of Bangladesh quickly, it is able to lose its global market position & cost. Bangladesh will face

the death of the RMG quarter in the end if they prevent CSR.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility:

CSR which used to be in the past referred to as Social Accountability (SA) and these days some regularly identify it as Company Accountability (CA) over the years has received super momentum in agency and public debate and has emerged as strategic hassle crossing the branch boundaries and affecting the way in which a business enterprise does business enterprise (Islam, 2014). Labor Practices in the Content of Corporate Social Responsibility. International Journal of Business and Management Studies, 3, 317-331, referring some studies, categorical that there is a great documents associated with the contrast of the concept of CSR although it is referred to that roots of standards and implementations ought to be traced decrease lower back to prehistoric times, typically works on its evolution started out with Fifties and Nineties are described with its recognition and enhancement of related troubles (Maç, & Çalıř, 2011).

In the 1990s, a growing variety of company social duty reports, requirements and codes of habits exhibit the hobby for CSR but asserted that company engagement with society, additionally termed Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) mired in a definitional debate courting lower back a number of a long time (Rupp, etl. 2006). One of the earliest definitions seeing CSR when you consider that then, the discipline has developed assuming exclusive names such as company social responsiveness in the 1970s and company social overall performance in the 1980s ( Sriramesh, etl. 2007). This evolution additionally displays an expand in recognition in essential areas of motion overall performance that the early definitions had over looked. The view that the 1970s, in spite of legislation and legislation, the commercial enterprise endured generally alongside a self-sufficient path, ignoring its critics and listening solely to its shareholders, to whom it felt truly accountable ( Hopkings, 2004). Carroll who expressed that CSR has been evolving as early as the thirties (Carroll, 1979). But Zerk who mentioned a greater modern day evolution from the global felony precedents beginning visionary worker compensation insurance policies to greater complicated examples of company citizenship in latest years (Zerk, 2006). In his e book Zerk, quoted 7 examples of Corporate initiatives that cab be categorized as CSR for instance, in 1914 Henry Ford's personnel obtained greater salaries in 8 hours working days, when the enterprise well known used to 9-hour work days, and in 1935 Johnson & Johnson posted a record titled "Try Reality" the place the organization described its duty closer to exceptional organizations of society, an initiative that used to be accompanied by using a booklet of a company-wide "Credo" in 1994 that outlined the corporation's moral and social desires which made it a precursor of many , modern day Codes of Ethics. The root of CSR has emerged given that the industrial revolution but the challenges is nonetheless being in an arguable role till today. It seems to be tough for researchers to pick out or share the frequent definition, ideas or core areas of CSR (Ismail, 2011).

Considered that there had been previously demonstrations of Corporate Citizenship or Corporate Philanthropy that can be viewed varieties of Social Responsibility in Business, relationship from the Pre-medieval length (5000B.C.\_550A.D.) to the time the place the thought received social prominence (1930-1988)? Further narrated that even when current moves of company philanthropy earlier than the 20<sup>th</sup> century represented remote efforts, it was once no longer till the creation of the parent of multinational firms that the dialogue on them evolved. Up till then, there was once no clear notion of whether or not agencies had an inherent duty toward society (Khan, etl. 2012). In 1929 the then Dean of Harvard Business School Walter B. Donham raised the factor when he said, " Business has been lengthy centuries earlier than the sunrise of history, however business, as we know, is new, new in its broadening scope, new in its social importance (Donham, 1929)

### 2.2 Ready-Made Garments

Like different third world countries Bangladesh is a growing country. Her financial improvement relies upon first of all on agriculture and secondly on industry. Although Bangladesh is no longer developed in industry, it has been enriched in Garment industries in the current previous years. In the area of Industrialization garment enterprise is a promising step. It has given the chance of employment to millions of unemployment, specifically innumerable uneducated women of the country. It is making great contribution in the area of our expert income.

Since the late 1970s, the RMG industry started growing in Bangladesh mainly as an export-oriented industry although, the home market for RMG has been growing speedy due to make bigger in non-public disposables earnings and exchange in lifestyle style.

The quarter unexpectedly attained excessive significance in phrases of employment, overseas alternative profits and its contribution to GDP. Most importantly, the increase of RMG area produced a crew of entrepreneurs who created a robust private sector. Of these entrepreneurs, a great quality is female. A female entrepreneur hooked up one of the oldest export-oriented garment factories, the Baishkhi Garment in 1977. Many girls preserve pinnacle executive positions in RMG industry. The 100% export-oriented RMG industry skilled out of the ordinary increase all through the closing 15 or so years. In 1978, there have been totally 9 export oriented garment manufacturing units, which generated export income of infrequently ever 1 million dollar. Some of these devices

were very small and produced clothes for each home and export markets. 4 such small and historic devices had been Reaz Garments, Paris Garments, Jewel Garments and Baishakhi Garments.

Reaz Garments, the pioneer, was once set up in 1960 as a small tailoring outfit, named Reaz Store in DHAKA. It served solely home markets for about 15 years. In 1973 it modified its identify to M/s Reaz Garments Ltd. and accelerated its operations into export market by means of promoting 10,000 portions of men's shirts really worth French Franc 13 million to a Paris-based company in 1978. It used to be the first direct exporter of clothes from Bangladesh. Desh Garments Ltd, the first non-equity joint-venture in the garment industry used to be installed in 1979. Desh had technical and advertising and marketing collaboration with Daewoo Corporation of South Korea. It used to be additionally the first hundred percentage export-oriented company. It had about a hundred and twenty operators together with three female skilled in South Korea, and with these educated workers it started out its manufacturing in early 1980. Another South Korean Firm, Youngones Corporation fashioned the first fairness joint-venture garment manufacturing facility with a Bangladeshi firm, Trexim Ltd. in 1980. Bangladeshi companions contributed 51% of the fairness of the new firm, named Youngones Bangladesh. It shipped its first consignment of padded and non-padded jackets to Sweden in December 1980.

Till the end of 1982, there had been solely 47 garment manufacturing units. The step forward came about in 1984-85, when the wide variety of garment factories expanded to 587. The variety of RMG factories shot up to round 2900 in 1999. Bangladesh is now one of the 12 biggest clothing exporters of the world, the sixth greatest provider in the US market and the fifth biggest dealer of T-shirt in EU market. The enterprise has grown for the duration of the Nineties roughly at the price of 22%.

At current there are about 5000 garments industries in the country and 75 % of them are in Dhaka. The relaxation is in Chittagong and Khulna. These Industries have employed fifty lacks of human beings and 85 percent of them are illiterate rural women. About 76 percent of our export incomes come from this sector.

### 2.3 Concept of COVID-19

Coronavirus sickness (COVID-19) is an infectious virus carried about with the aid of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Most humans contaminated with the virus will ride slight to reasonable respiratory sickness and get better besides requiring specific treatment. However, some will come to be severely sick and require scientific attention. Older humans and these with underlying clinical prerequisites like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, continual respiratory diseases or most cancers are greater possibly to straighten serious illness. Anyone can get unwell with COVID-19 and end up severely sick or die at any age.

The virus can unfold from a contaminated person's mouth or nostril in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. These particles vary from large respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols. It is vital to exercise respiratory etiquette, for instance by means of coughing into a flexed elbow, and to remain domestic and self-isolate till you get better if you sense unwell. Most of the CSR research performed so some distance have been in the context of developed countries such as Western Europe, the USA and Australia. Very few research are usable on the CSR practices in the developing countries, All of these research have been carried out in the context of newly industrialized countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda. Hence, very few research are accessible on the CSR practices in developing countries. Basically, in the context of Bangladesh we can see the exercise has no longer been located extensively in this country. In reality, trade union practices are no longer perceptible in 4560 RMG factories. Most of the instance garments people have no freedom in their factories to be a part of union.

From the daily financial express, it has been mentioned that BEI (Bangladesh Enterprise Institute) in January 2005 launched its CSR center, which has been organizing month-to-month roundtable discussions to promote CSR in Bangladesh. They designed the key stakeholders to beautify the appreciation of CSR. The context of Bangladesh, even though a clear appreciation about CSR can also be absent, there is an extent of philanthropic things to do and companies are keen to undertake CSR practices.

The Bangladesh economy stays pretty based on the ready-made garments industry for manufacturing employment, foreign reserve and female empowerment. The enterprise contributes 11.2% to the gross home product of the country (Mahmod, 2020).

Mentioned a record by way of New York University Stern Center for Business and Human Rights observes that even though Bangladesh has viewed its clothing exports develop impressively, the enterprise usually has no longer advanced past reducing and stitching fundamental gadgets to which fantastically little cost is brought and from which income are modest. Bangladesh's garment enterprise has created jobs, supplied a diploma of independence to rural younger women and helped prop up the country's shaky economy (Barrett & Pauly, 2019). But they stated that it has no longer made the equal growth in phrases of the excellent of these jobs, the cost delivered to exports, or will increase to workers' actual wages with a month-to-month minimal wage of Tk. 8,000 (\$95) one of wages in the world clothes supply chain the area requires \$470 million, at a minimum to pay wages every month to the employees.

### 3. Objectives

- i. To study the current scenario of the garments industry of Bangladesh;
- ii. To discuss the trading condition of the global apparel industry;
- iii. To find out the practices of CSR of Garments Industry during covid-19 in Bangladesh;
- iv. To suggest some recommendations to the best practice of CSR of Garments Industry in Bangladesh.

### 4. Methodology

The covid-19 pandemic scenario can't be estimated pretty easily, simply due to the fact the common situation is altering time to time. To find out the corporate social responsibility of readymade garment industry during Corona Pandemic the data has been collected from primary and secondary sources.

#### 4.1 Primary Sources

- Physical conversation with different garments officers, government officials and garments organizations.

#### 4.2 Secondary Sources

- Various data sources such as BGMEA, BKMEA, WTO, WHO, IMF, Bangladesh Bank, and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).
- Browsing government websites related to import- export.
- Authentic books, publications, newspaper articles.

### 5. Analysis

#### 5.1 CSR in different sectors:

##### 5.1.1 Health services

Two overseas owned groups have fitness and protection insurance policies in line with their customers Nike and Reebok, however regionally owned businesses do no longer have such a written policy. None of them have a written coverage or hints on fitness protection issues. All the organizations have sure measure on fitness or security problems thinking about their ability and mindset as well. Medical amenities to the people diverse in exceptional business the place there have everlasting nurses and medical doctors for fundamental cure and different two have settlement with scientific provider carriers to furnish offerings at manufacturing unit premises that ranged from as soon as a week to 3 days in a week. Service shipping as properly as noon-public clinics is practiced to make certain doctor's go to in the factories. Workers of EPZ factories have personal main therapy amenities where nurses supply offerings and people go to BEPZA clinical core for in addition services. The corporation's outdoor EPZ vicinity have constructed partnership with NGOS and nonpublic clinics. Workers are dispatched to hospitals backyard in emergency situations (Shafi, 2019).

##### 5.1.2 First aid

All businesses stated first aid packing containers are located in a location that is effortlessly handy to the people per their primary fitness care and injuries. Information supplied to the employees related to what is in the first useful resource containers are additionally regarded through the manufacturing unit administration to make certain its most excellent use. Most of the respondents keep away from revealing the wide variety of first resource packing containers as proportionate to the workers. More than 90% employees suggested positively about first resource packing containers and over 95% of them are conscious of the bins and its contents. Only 22% of the respondent noted they do now not want to use the first useful resource field however extensive share of people noted they want to use the first resource box, which displays the significance of first resource bins in the factory (Shafi, 2019).

##### 5.1.3 Protection for worker injuries

The learn about exhibits 48% respondents stated their co-workers confronted damage in the closing three months and accordingly it can be claimed that accidents are frequent in the workplace. However, solely 22% respondents pronounced they have confronted damage in the final quarter. The corporation can pay solely 44% people who have confronted harm in place of business reported. It has been located that 55% respondents do now not experience place of business is risky, however nearly comparable range of people gave the contrary option. The cause might also be the variations in understanding of the receiving free remedy and a massive variety of people (52%), Workers and on the different hand, equal listing of the manufacturing facility administration concerning unlocking the emergency exit periodical fire place drills and an outfitted furnace battle crew as properly as education of employes that helped in lowering fear (Shafi, 2019).

##### 5.1.4 Hygiene and Sanitation for workers

Three companies have perfect ability and dimension for the free circulation of air with range of openings such as doorways and home windows on each floor. Also, the air flow gadget ought to be very adequate. Also to point out the top of roof tops from the floor are ought to be tall adequate to perish in the heat. However, followers should be positioned in places the place the employees can work in comfort of sweat and tiredness. On the different hand one of a kind followers such as pedestal followers are to be mounted in the ironing section (Shafi, 2019).



### 5.1.5 Confirm working condition on the floor level

The find out about exhibits that 66% workers discover their places of work have sufficient air flow which suggests some distance higher circumstance of ventilation in the chosen factories in contrast to the learn about findings of 1990 and 1997 survey performed through BIRDS as cited through Paul Majumder and Begum. The respondents noted that flooring circumstance is now not correct thinking about the space. Only 19% respondents stated they determined their place of business specious however a sizeable proportion of workers pointed out the place of work is congested. Temperature or heating situation of the factories are discovered negative the place 60% of them referred to reasonable warmness and 19% noted that greater warmness is created in the workplace. Heat inflicting accidents the place noted by way of 40% of the respondents, of whom 90% noted it manifests workers turning into senseless and in some reasons it motives fire. More than 70% cited there are some measures accompanied through manufacturing unit administration to take in warmth which replicate on the terrible working circumstance and goes towards the claims of the employers. Employees have get entry to real looking eco pleasant water barring grime and ought to be purified (one loo for 25-30 workers) and entire exclusive area for loos with gender enclosure of course. All bathrooms are maintained exact and cleaned at least two twice in a day. Adequate soaps are saved in the wash areas (Shafi, 2019).

### 5.1.6 Toilet facilities and hygienic condition

All the respondents pointed out there are separate bathrooms for male and female workers. Quantity of bathrooms that are noted in the Factory Act used to be now not an problem of the workers however they perceived first-class of bathrooms are vital to make certain a smooth and safer place of work due to the fact that they had to spent a lengthy time in the factory.

More than 70% of the respondent's opined bogs are hygienic and geared up with disposable bucket, cleaning soap and are cleaned each day. However, this learn about discovering did now not assist the findings of any other find out about performed by means of Paul-Majumder and Begum (2006) that located a bad photo of hygienic condition (Shafi, 2019).

### 5.1.7 Ensure Safety and Security

Emergency exit the survey facts displays that all the factories have emergency exits even though exceptional vanes thinking about the dimension and possession sample of the enterprise firms. Big companies have accurate conditioned emergency exits irrespective of possession pattern. However dimension by myself is no longer remember to have a multiplied exit gadget in vicinity alternatively it relies upon on mind-set of the proprietors and managers constructing sample etc. State of emergency exit

- ✓ 100% factory have emergency exits
- ✓ 3 exits per factory (max 10, min 0)
- ✓ 71.7% exits are concrete and 28.3 are iron made
- ✓ 84% reported that the factory has marked exit stair
- ✓ Average width of stair is 54.7 inches
- ✓ 67.3% reported proper maintenance of stair
- ✓ 99% reported stair remain open during working hour
- ✓ 76.8% reported comfortable movement on stairs
- ✓ 73% mentioned above substance blocking in the stairs

The Managing Director (MD) of the small company mentioned he couldn't improve the emergency exit due to the limitation of building pattern. Around 77% workers of the selected companies reported that they can move comfortably through the emergency exit but almost equal percentage of workers mentioned that they have found good blocking the stairs.

- ✓ Number of extinguishers per floor (average).7
- ✓ Keeping buckets full of water.....74.7%
- ✓ Practice mock fire drill...95.0%
- ✓ Operation and daily fire drill.....65.0%
- ✓ Number of workers can operate fire drill (average/floor)....9%
- ✓ Factory keeps hose in each floor54.7% x has emergency bell...100% x has trained and equipped firefighting team.....78.8% (Shafi 2019).

### 5.1.8 Arrangement of Fire drill

Adequate measures have been taken by means of the BGMEA to enhance hearth safety measures of its participants however nevertheless 33% employees are no longer conscious of how to face fireplace and 18% of the workers additionally opined that they do no longer be aware of what to do when fireplace happens which is surprising. It is evident that a sizable share of the people stated they would use water and gasoline (meaning CO<sub>2</sub>) to face the furnace however none of the respondents referred to name furnace brigade. The survey demonstrates 82% employees are conscious of some measures and moves if furnace takes place which displays they had long past via positive orientation techniques and can recall their actions. Workers put emphasis on peaceable exit barring any panic, which constitutes the opinion of 47% on informing skilled people for similarly action. Around 80%

employees noted there is skilled and geared up furnace combat group in the factories. Nevertheless, the periodical hearth drill (mock hearth drill) is no longer satisfactory. Around 50% people referred to that furnace drill passed off as soon as in a month, accompanied through 32% referred to as soon as in a quarter that collectively stands at extra than 80% have practices as soon as in a quarter. Moreover, 40% employees was once observed now not conscious of the makes use of furnace drill and others discover it to keep self-discipline and to teach employees to cope with the emergency situation. It is evident that none of the employee stated that there is a periodical hearth drill in the manufacturing unit however on common it happens inside three months in most of the factories however no constant dates are mentioned (Shafi, 2019).

### **5.1.9 Minimum Age of Workers**

Foreign owned corporations requires persona and age certificates from the nearby authorities prior to recruitment but neighborhood groups commonly do no longer ask for any certification. Moreover the younger people have to endure scientific checkup for the affirmation of their age as they do not preserve any employees beneath 16 years of age however neighborhood companies respondent did now not point out something related to clinical tests. (Shafi, 2019).

### **5.1.10 Providing of Dispensation Facilities**

Most of the obvious employees who have had the questionnaire cited that they be successful in to labor legal guidelines related to go away amenities barring maternity leave. Workers who work on vacation trips are furnished with compensatory depart or double price for these days in giant organizations however for small and medium groups solely beyond regular time repayments are considered. Provision for 3 months maternity depart with pay exist for the everlasting people however massive agencies have flexibility for the workers to experience besides pay go away for some other 3 months as required. All the agencies have provision of informal leave, unwell leave, and earned go away and maternity leave, however none of the companies noted about paternity go away for the male workers. Workers broadly speaking revel in I'll go away and take lengthy go away all through the galas specifically in Eid holy days.

- Non-discrimination Recruitment
- Transport facilities offered by garments factories

Ever since the Covid-19 pandemic began to unleash havoc on life and livelihood, mobilizing resources to help address the situation has assumed a major priority for governments. All over the world, countries - rich and poor - have devised ways mostly in the form of dishing out cash as well as various packages to support the affected people. In Bangladesh, alongside the government's efforts to provide stimulus packages and cash assistance, a very suitable measure could be putting in place the CSR (corporate social responsibility) mechanism in a meaningful manner (Shafi, 2019).

## **6. CSR during COVID-19**

### **6.1 CSR for Workplace:**

#### **6.1.1 Healthcare for Garment Workers**

As part of its CSR activities, BGMEA runs 12 Health Centers that provides healthcare facilities and medicines to more than 60,000 garment workers per year at free of cost. The annual expenditure of these centers is around USD 3,00,000 which is funded by BGMEA's own resources. The centers also provide awareness program on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, reproductive health and use of contraceptives. Besides, for RMG workers, a full-fledged hospital is operational in Chittagong, and a 100-bed hospital in Dhaka is under construction. The hospital will provide all kinds of outdoor and indoor healthcare facilities to garment workers at free of cost or at heavily subsidized charges (BGMEA, 2021).

#### **6.1.2 PCR Lab**

**BGMEA has set up a PCR lab in collaboration with Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (BADAS) at Chandra Tongi and Narayanganj to conduct Covid-19 tests of garment workers (BGMEA, 2021).**

#### **6.1.3 Support to Lactating Mothers Working in Garment Factor**

The lactating mothers need special care, more nutrition and higher calorie as they require more energy in bringing up the newborn babies with sound health. With the Govt. of Bangladesh, BGMEA has been implementing a project since 2014 to support female garment workers with infants. Every beneficiary gets Tk800 per month for 36 months as allowance, totaling Tk28,800 in installments. In 2019-20 financial year, a total of Tk23,32,80,000 has been allocated for disbursement among 8,100 lactating mothers working in garment factories (BGMEA, 2021).

#### **6.1.4 Dormitory for Garment Workers**

A dormitory for 3000 workers in Chittagong has been set up jointly by the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) and BGMEA. One more dormitory is going to be set up in Ashulia (BGMEA, 2021).

#### **6.1.5 Group Insurance**

BGMEA ensures mandatory group insurance scheme for the garment workers and staff (BGMEA, 2021).

### **6.1.6 Skills Development**

With the support of Government of Bangladesh and development partners, BGMEA has been implementing different skill development programs including STEP and SEIP for garment employees and workers through several training centers across the country. The trained people are placed for jobs in garment factories (BGMEA, 2021).

### **6.1.7 Digital Wallet**

“Digital Wallet” is the RMG digital payment platform envisioned by BGMEA. These newly opened e-accounts will be inter-operable and a vendor neutral platform for electronic wage payment and shopping. The digital payment platform will serve for cashback, reward points and merchant discounts which will increase the value of wages they receive. BGMEA signed an agreement with Information and Communication Technology Division on June 27 to introduce the digital payment platform for the sector. A pilot program was successfully done covering 150 workers from 3 factories (BGMEA, 2021).

### **6.1.8 Moner Bondhu – An Initiative for Workers’ Mental Wellbeing**

Moner Bondhu's facilitators engage workers in many stress management and anger management exercises, meditation which work as quick remedy. The workers in the session before were very excited about experiencing a completely new type of session and said that they felt very relaxed. They are also given the opportunity to connect with “Moner Bondhu” by watching the show at Nagorik channel and Moner Bondhu's social media (BGMEA, 2021).

### **6.1.9 Ant-Sexual Harassment Committee**

To oversee the things to do of the Anti-Harassment Committee shaped in the manufacturing facility level, a committee headed by using a Director and any other two girl contributors have been shaped in BGMEA. Monitors from CMC/SSD telephone of BGMEA Dhaka and Chattagram workplace are touring factories about formation of Anti-Harassment Committee. As per the touring file until date a complete 1394 factories have been visited through the monitors. They observed 577 factories the place shaped Committees. Apart from BGMEA’s personal CSR activities, an exact wide variety of garment factories in Bangladesh personally have been engaged in CSR practices like presenting therapy and clinical services such as pathology tests, drugs to their employees and personnel at free of cost, going for walks day care facilities for the youth of workers, awarding stipends to the meritorious youth of the people etc. (BGMEA, 2021).

### **6.1.10 Ensuring Workers Legitimate Rights**

BGMEA is committed to ensuring all legitimate rights and privileges of the garment workers. BGMEA mediates to resolve labor related disputes and complaints.

A committee was formed in June 2020 involving representatives of BGMEA and IBC with the BGMEA President in the chair to address labor disputes and complaints in member factories. The committee handled the following types of problems:

- Workers dismissed or retrenched or terminated without wages or benefits Dismissed without paying Maternity benefit
- Illegally dismissed/ terminate of trade union leaders.

The committee settled 93 out of 114 complaints it received. And a total of 2961 workers benefited from the dispute settlements mediated by the BGMEA-IBC committee. Besides, The Conciliation-Cum-Arbitration Committee (CAC) settled 1987 out of 2152 complaints in 2019-2020 year. A total of 7080 workers benefited from the settlements (BGMEA, 2021).

## **6.2 CSR for Environment:**

### **6.2.1 Bangladesh producing socially-conscious and eco-friendly clothing**

Bangladesh is the world’s second largest exporter of clothing and textiles after China, making it one of the key players in the global textile industry. Although the situation of workers has increasingly improved during Corona Pandemic, the industry still has a lot of room for improvement.

More than 4.5 million people in Bangladesh work in the Garments industry, and the vast majority of them are women. The government has declared its aim to grow the industry even further and increase annual exports of textiles and clothing to USD 50 billion by 2021, which is almost double the figure for 2016. Legislation and enforcement has developed significantly in many areas since the Rana Plaza accident. These include, for example, trade union representation, minimum wages and job security. Nevertheless, many textile factories have still not reached the standards set by the International Labor Organization (ILO). For example, a key challenge is the inadequate protection of employees from work-related illnesses or accidents. The industry’s continuing growth is also impacting the environment: a particular feature of textile production (e.g. dyeing and printing) is its very high consumption of water, chemicals and energy. In addition, rivers, waters and soils are polluted by the improper disposal of untreated waste water and residues. These pollutants have considerable consequences for the surrounding population and the immediate ecosystems (Giz, 2021).

### **6.2.2 Knowledge – the key to better standards**

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been helping improve social and environmental standards in Bangladesh's Garments industry since 2005. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and with funding from the European Union (EU), GIZ has trained managers and staff on issues relating to fair pay, fire safety and the safe handling of chemicals. As part of a factory improvement program, it has helped business associations carry out over 5,000 inspections in more than 1,800 factories. 1,600 of the factories inspected have demonstrably improved their compliance with social standards. Moreover, GIZ is also collaborating closely with the ILO and the Dutch Embassy on introducing a statutory accident insurance scheme. The issue of safety is also being addressed at factory level: for example, risk assessments have been carried out, including training to improve workplace safety, in 80 factories with a total of more than 180,000 employees. Because the Garment industry in Bangladesh also provides work for people with disabilities, a special advisory center for these workers was set up. More than 1,000 people have already benefited from its services (Giz, 2021).

### **6.2.3 Women's cafés support female workers:**

As women account for the majority of workers in the Garment industry in Bangladesh, the project has set up around 20 women's cafés where female workers can meet and exchange views with one another. More than 270,000 women have learned about workers' rights through training courses and theatrical performances featuring games, posters and films (Giz, 2021).

## **6.3 CSR to society:**

### **6.3.1 Government's response**

To fight COVID-19's unfolding fallout, the government announced a stimulus package of Tk 956 billion (\$11.2 billion), or 3.3% of GDP to revive the economy, by strengthening the social safety net, export sectors, SMEs and other priority sectors. The package allocates Tk50 billion for RMG and other export-oriented industries which could only be used for paying salaries and allowances to workers and employees. The size of the Export Development Fund has been increased from \$3.5 billion to \$5.0 billion which provides short-term facilities for importing raw materials for export-oriented industries. Out of this package, the central bank will institute a \$600 million Pre-shipment Credit Refinance Scheme for RMG and other export-oriented industries. This highly welcomed package, though significant, will meet only a fraction of the massive requirements of the sector, which needs at least \$470 million to pay wages every month. The country requires more support for the basic subsistence of the workers and to keep the industry alive (ADB).

### **6.3.2 Role of RMG in urban poverty reduction**

It is evident that in mild of SDGs, the garment region is contributing to minimize poverty and hunger. But different necessary desires like gender equality, fitness and well-being, respectable work, and financial boom are nevertheless a long way from being achieved. The COVID-19 disaster has pushed such desires even in addition back. Since the disaster began, the Bangladeshi authorities has introduced a \$588 million stimulus package deal for the region to pay wages. It will cost 2% pastime on loans to manufacturing facility owners. Dividing the sum with the aid of the variety of workers, this economic bundle would solely cowl wages for one month, (Coronavirus, 2020).

### **6.3.3 Creating new career opportunities for women**

The Gender Equality and Returns (GEAR) program is a strong business case for promoting gender equal leadership and management in RMG factories. IFC research shows that women supervisors' line efficiency is 5% higher and female supervisors trained by Better Work achieved a 22% increase in productivity on their lines (*A worker's perspective on COVID-19, 2021*)

## **7. Recommendations**

The writer of this article have to propose that this article have to be regarded from its limitations, as it used to be written from secondary data. However, attainable researchers who have a hobby in this place may additionally behavior an in-depth qualitative study. The similarly empirical learn about may additionally talk about the position of the massive apparel manufacturers in Bangladesh and whether or not they will consider expanding their CSR price range for immunization and different critical advantages of RMG workers.

- International clothing manufacturers want to set up a "VACCINE BANK" in a joint initiative of global clothing brands, local and global alternate unions and Western and European countries. They have to furnish free vaccines to the Bangladesh Government to make sure the protection and well-being of all RMG workers;
- International large garb manufacturers must provide different monetary aid to the Bangladesh RMG people to proceed their RMG manufacturing amid Covid-19 in Bangladesh;
- If necessary, the European Union will want to create a joint pressure between the ILO, WHO, international manufacturers and the Government of Bangladesh and BGMEA to prepare and manipulate



- the vaccination software for RMG workers;
- The central precedence of the Government of Bangladesh's vaccination software need to be no longer solely RMG employees however all citizens;
  - The Government of Bangladesh need to additionally make many extra efforts and reform the fitness quarter with some exact insurance policies and manipulate corruption.

## 8. Conclusion

The influence of COVID-19 has simply commenced to unfold and will evolve fast. The full influence will be greater seen in the subsequent few months or beyond. In order to mitigate the impending economic and plausible social crisis, it is wanted to remain in advance of the curve and get equipped with appropriate emergency help and post-crisis help in distinctive varieties as appropriate. It may be wished to sequence ADB's sovereign and no sovereign operations for better effectiveness and sustainability in a risk-measured manner. Obviously, the influence of COVID-19 extends nicely past the RMG enterprise to different financial sectors. Assistance to the RMG industry, which is the biggest contributor to city poverty reduction, may additionally assist different associated sectors in the provide chain and normalize the financial system appreciably and quicker.

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