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Garment Production Processes and their Health Challenges: A Case of Tailors and Dressmakers in the Small-Scale Clothing Industries in Sunyani Municipality

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Abstract
The garment industry contributes enormously to the socio-economic development of societies. Inadequate facilities compel small-scale workers to carry out most of the garment production processes manually during long working hours, thereby affecting their health. Repetitive activities such as patternmaking and assembling have their own health challenges. The study envisages health-related problems involved in garment production processes and their effects on the wellbeing of tailors and dressmakers. To help achieve this, the research examines the workplace health and safety compliance situation in the small-scale garment industry and identifies health-related problems associated with production processes. A qualitative research approach was employed. The population for the study comprised tailors and dressmakers who have consecutively been in the garment production sector for a period of five to twenty years. A snowball sampling technique was used to gather a sample of forty (40) dressmakers and tailors. In-depth interviews with structural questions, observation, and focus group discussions constituted the data collection instruments. The study reveals that the knowledge level of tailors and dressmakers with respect to health issues is very low. Again, the research identified the use of unprescribed medications for the treatment of waist pain and headaches. This research highly recommends government and stakeholders' interventions to help improve the welfare of tailors and dressmakers working in the small-scale garment industries.
Keywords: Pattern making*, Cutting-out, Assembling, Repetitive activities, Safety measures*
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1. Introduction

The garment industry in general is one of the outfits with the largest labour force globally (Opoku et al., 2015; Gavor et al., 2016). Garment production centers in Ghana range from small to medium and large scale, respectively. In fact, the medium- and large-scale garment industries are mostly located in the metropolitan areas, while the small ones, which are sometimes referred to as shops and centers, are almost always found in the four corners of the country.

Abor and Quartey (2010) believe that the garment industry contributes enormously to the socio-economic development of nations. In the same vein, Ampofo (2011) and Foster (2014) write that the industry is seen as a major source of poverty alleviation, especially among the youth, since there are many job opportunities associated with garment production.

The nature of the garment industry varies depending on whether it is small, medium, or large-scale. A common characteristic of a large-scale garment industry is that it has different departments within the same outfit, and the labor force is large to the extent that the production line is divided among individual workers. This kind of production sometimes makes the production activities appear repetitive. However, a typical feature of the small-

scale garment industry is that, in the absence of division of labor, much of the activities rest on the shoulders of individual tailors or dressmakers (Opoku et al., 2015).

To produce a garment, Colovic (2011), Carr and Pomeror (1992), and Armstrong (2015) assert that one needs to go through several processes, which may include designing, pattern making, lay planning, cutting, sorting, bundling, application of interfacing, assembling (sewing), pressing, finishing, and packaging. The aforementioned activities in the large-scale industries are carried out by individual professionals with varied expertise, while at the small-scale level, one has to master everything, which places many health challenges on tailors or dressmakers who find themselves in this phenomenon.

From the perspective of Asare et al. (2018) and Alyssa and Lisa (2010), the activities embedded in garment production have different health implications. Some of the activities may require long hours of standing, sitting, bending, and straining of the eyes, heat exposure, handling of sharp or cutting objects, and many more. Awuye (2014) and Bheda (2004) are of the view that failure to accord these processes the needed attention has the tendency to affect the health of the individual. Irrespective of the fact that most of the production activities are done by single or a few workers in the small-scale garment industry, some tailors and dressmakers do not follow or practice the right kind of health and safety measures applicable to the industry. As a result, workers physical and emotional wellbeing becomes threatened.

Most of the literature on garment production workers concentrates on the overall industry set-up, the environment, machine operation, adherence to safety measures, and government policies without necessarily looking at the individual production activities and their health-related issues for the workers, especially the players within small-scale businesses. Lack of proper monitoring in the small-scale garment industries in Ghana coupled with long hours of production schedules, which workers go through single-handedly, affect their health, and in some cases render them incapacitated.

In view of this, the study intends to delve into the various garment production processes and their health implications for the workers within the industry. To help achieve the aim of the study, the specific objectives will be to identify the standardized garment production processes, examine the workplace health and safety compliance situation in the small-scale garment industry, and identify health-related problems in the production processes.

The following represent the research questions formulated to help achieve the objectives of the study:

1. What are the standardized garment production processes?
2. What is the situation of workplace health and safety compliance at the garment industry?
3. What are the health related problems associated with garment production processes?

It is anticipated that the study will help small-scale garment industry workers position themselves well on issues relating to standardized garment production processes while at the same time being abreast of health and safety matters in the industry. Again, it will enable tailors and dressmakers to adopt and practice the right measures or approaches involved in production in order to understand health issues in each of the production activities.

2. Literature Review

The key areas that will be considered under the literature review will include the nature of the small-scale garment industry, garment production processes, health and safety measures in the garment industry, and health-related problems associated with the activities embedded in garment production.

2.1 The Nature of Small-Scale Garment Industry

Small-scale businesses like the garment industry contribute significantly to the development of the national economy. Asare et al. (2018) believe that the establishment of small-scale garment industries requires a smaller amount of capital and other resources. When it comes to human resources, since these industries are not large, they require a smaller labor force, and the organizational arrangement is not as similar as that of large-scale enterprises. Setting up a small-scale garment business from the perspective of the Ghanaian system, the individual may need at least two different sewing machines with varying functions like straight stitching and neatening or overlocking, a cutting table, and an iron (Opoku et al., 2015). It should be noted that the physical structure to house the

operational machines can be a small room, which is sometimes designated as kiosks and containers in the Ghanaian jurisdiction. All the day-to-day activities are carried out in a single structure, while in the large-scale garment industry, there are several units earmarked for the various production processes. The main garment production activities, such as designing, patternmaking, lay planning, cutting, assembling, finishing, and packaging, are all required to take place in a single unit in the small-scale sector. Notwithstanding, since all the processes are undertaken within the same venue, there is the likelihood for an individual worker (tailor or dressmaker) to also shoulder these responsibilities alone. Irrespective of technological advancement to replace the amount of human effort or intervention in the garment production centers, much burden is still placed on the workers in the small-scale ventures (Dickerson, 1999). Undoubtedly, mastering all the activities in the quest to produce garments has the tendency to affect one's health and wellbeing.

Apparently, the garment industry is divided into four major markets: women's, men's and boys, children's, and miscellaneous apparel, including accessories. Small garment producers typically do not have large orders that would warrant the investment of large specialized equipment or that could spread the overhead cost from shipping to off-shore facilities (Glock & Kunz, 1990). Small-scale garment manufacturers are more interested in women's wear, while large producers generally make standard or basic items with long runs, limited style changes, and large lot sizes (Asare et al. 2018).

Another difference between the small-scale and large-scale garment industries, as asserted by Nyarko et al. (2015), is that large apparel manufacturers employ automation or mess production motels to produce simple commodities with bulk-order purchases, while in the small-scale venture, manufacturers usually deal with individual clients on a customized basis (Frings, 2008).

2.2 Garment Production Processes

The procedures for making garments are extensive in nature. In the garment industry, especially on a large scale, every operation is carried out by a different unit. The order of production arrangements scholarly vary from one author to another (Opoku et al., 2015).

In some contexts, the processes are considered from the fiber stage to the finished garment, which in essence seems too cumbersome. Carr and Pomeror (1992) outlined garment production processes, including fiber preparation, yarn production, fabric construction, dyeing and printing, garment manufacture, retailing, and consumption. The arrangements proposed by Carr and Pomeror appear unrealistic in the modern-day garment industry. The constant demand for garments has propelled manufacturers to separate textile production from garment making, which used to be a subsidiary of the clothing industry (Frings, 2008).

Generally, the main activities under garment production, as related by Safa (2018), Diloranzo (2010), Injoo (2002), and Kathryn and Maslow (2012), are designing, pattern making, lay planning, cutting, assembling or sewing, pressing, finishing, and packaging.

Foster (2014) and Bevilaqua (2013) believe that few regular consumers consider how intricate the garment manufacturing processes are and the kind of people involved in the creation of a single garment in the industry. The assertions by the authors indicate that production is not the responsibility of a single person; rather, it takes a team of workers to bring the processes to fruition.

Looking at the production processes enumerated earlier, there are other intermediary activities that also complement the main processes. Some of these activities, according to Carr and Pomeror (1999) and Rocha (2014), include sorting and bundling of sizes after cutting and the application of interfacings when necessary. The actual processes, like designing, are the first phase, which is considered cardinal to the development of garments. Individual workers who operate in the designing section are called designers. Their major duty is to create styles or designs for the industry. In fact, they are the image makers and style inventors, whose job is crucial since the growth of the industry largely depends on them. In some companies, the designers double as forecasters who predict styles that can ultimately sell within a particular season. Garment designers, from the perspective of Frings (2008), work tirelessly to create trendy styles or designs. The majority of designers in the garment industry are well paid since their presence in the industry cannot be underestimated. Another key dimension of garment designers is that most of them can act as cutters and machine operators, especially in the small-scale industry.

The pattern-making process, which is equally important as the designing, also ensures that the styles or designs made by the designers are interpreted into patterns or garment replicas (Fings, 2008). The work of the patternmaker is closely related to that of the designer. Gavor et al. (2016) believe that there are technologies that aid pattern making, but in the small-scale garment industry, manual application is mostly adopted. Persons who make patterns are required to pay much attention to their job because the least mistake committed can ruin the production line since all the production processes, from the designing to the finishing stage, are intertwined (Kiron, 2017). To achieve precision in pattern making, it is essentially required to spend many hours in situations where no technology is employed for pattern production. Patterns have to be fully inspected and accepted as the true reflection or representation of the proposed garment design before being cut out. Cutting ensures separation of the various garment pieces, but prior to this process, lay planning, which constitutes marker making and spreading, is carried out before the actual cutting. The cutting-out activity, in some contexts, forms part of the entire lay planning process (Opoku et al., 2015; Carr and Pomeror, 1992).

In the large-scale garment industry, marker-making appears mandatory, especially when embarking on mass production. Marker marking ensures the economical use of fabrics. This means that the application of a maker prevents fabric waste and, at the same time, makes cutting faster and easier (Carr and Pomeror, 1992). The process of sorting and bundling of sizes is carried out after cutting, but whether the industry is small or large, they are directly or indirectly followed. Apparently, sorting and bundling of sizes is a characteristic associated with the medium- and large-scale fashion industries. In some cases, interfacings are applied when necessary to the garment pieces within the cutting room. On the other hand, this particular exercise can also be carried out in the assembly unit by the sewing machine operators or individuals purposely employed for this activity (Opoku, 2013). Assembling or joining together the garment components constitutes one of the major tasks in the garment industry. Most of the machines in the industry are located in the sewing room. Key activities in this section involve many related processes, and they also require much effort and attention. The majority of the production hours are spent in the sewing unit. Uma et al. (2018) believe that most of the health-related problems in the garment industry emanate from the assembling department. Several pressing operations take place in the sewing section during the construction of the garments. Finishing, which involves final pressing, inspection, and packaging, complements the overall production processes (Opoku et al., 2015).

2.3 Health Related Problems Associated with Garment Production Processes

Healthy issues associated with garment production processes have diverse effects on the wellbeing of workers within the industry (ILO-OSH, 2009). The industry as a workplace has its own health problems, but, in some jurisdictions, the main activities pertaining to production may be responsible for the numerous predicaments that workers face in the course of discharging their duties. Asare et al. (2018) and Akliter (2019) report that some of the workplace health challenges have long-term consequences. This assertion means that when people are exposed to health problems, it may take time for their effects to manifest, and this might be the reason garment workers put up a lackadaisical attitude towards their own safety in the industry. Kabir et al. (2019), writing on the health and safety of garment workers, concluded that issues like coughs, fevers, jaundice, kidney failure, musculoskeletal problems, and respiratory challenges are the key health implications for garment workers. This declaration is accurate, but it fails to identify the exact activity responsible for each of the problems.

As indicated earlier, the main activities for garment production, such as pattern making, lay planning, cutting, assembling or sewing, pressing, and packaging, have their own health challenges.

Pattern making ensures the interpretation of styles or designs into full garments. This process requires long hours of standing. Pattern making seems repetitive in nature and may create strain injuries (Prentice et al., 2018). Lay planning is a production process carried out predominantly in the large-scale garment industry, especially during mass production. The health and safety issues of this activity are not as concise or elaborate in the small-scale outfits as in the bigger industries. A lay planner has to spend long hours spreading fabrics, making patterns, and placing them onto fabrics. Even though there is a mechanical way of achieving this activity, some industries employ a manual approach, which also works effectively but comes with stress.

The cutting-out process requires the worker to spend more hours on the cutting table, especially when several pieces need to be cut. The effects of cutting injuries and electric shocks are common in such circumstances. In some cases, shoulder pain becomes obvious in areas where many layers of fabric are to be separated, and the situation appears worse if the right cutting tools are not employed (Lillipet et al., 2017).

The assembly unit has many interrelated activities that require serious attention. Bandyopadhyay et al. (2012) assert that during the sewing process, many parts and senses of the human body come into play. The neck, eye, feet, hand, buttocks, and other musculoskeletal issues do occur more frequently. Sometimes, the type of sewing machine used has its own advantages and disadvantages. The use of electric sewing machines has become prevalent even in remote areas, and the mechanisms involved can endanger the wellbeing of operators. The vibrations emanating from the sewing machine have serious effects on the health of the individual worker if proper measures are not put in place.

Pressing, as believed by Opoku et al. (2015), plays a major role in garment construction but at the same time has some health challenges. In fact, pressing activity is important during the assembly of the garment components. Pressing issues cannot be ruled out from the factors that affect the wellbeing of garment workers. Skin burns and electric shocks in the sewing room are also connected to pressing.

3. Methodology

This study in particular was carried out in the Sunyani Municipality within a period of three (3) months. Qualitative research approach was employed. The population for the study comprised tailors and dressmakers who have consecutively been in the garment production sector for a period of five (5) to twenty (20) years respectively.
A snowball sampling technique was used to gather a sample of forty (40) dressmakers and tailors. In-depth interviews with structural questions, observation and focus group discussions constituted the data collecting instruments. The data accrued were descriptively analysed. For clarity and generalization purposes, the municipality was categorized into four (4) main zones (A, B, C and D) in respect of participants' working experiences.

Table 1: Focus Group Interview with Participants

Category	Population for the Study	Accessible population
Zone 'A'	Tailors and dressmakers with five (5) years working experience.	10
Zone 'B'	Tailors and dressmakers with ten (10) years working experience.	10
Zone 'C'	Tailors and dressmakers with fifteen (15) years working experience.	10
Zone 'D'	Tailors and dressmakers with twenty (20) years working experience.	10
Total Participants for the Study		**40**

4. Results and Discussions

This section of the study presents the results and discussions in a descriptive manner.
To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the names of the respondents or interviewees were not disclosed; rather, codes were assigned to the tailors and dressmakers found in each zone.
However, individual tailors and dressmakers who fell within the range of five (5) years of working experience were assigned 'TDA', while ten (10) years of working experience were identified as 'TDB', fifteen (15) years' experience as 'TDC', and 'TDD' for designers with twenty (20) years' experience in that order.

4.1 Standardization of Garment Production Processes

Generally, the business of fashion, among many others, has the sole responsibility of making garments and some accessories to complement an individual's dressing. Opoku et al. (2015) report that the garment industry, whether small or large, globally has different sectors or units with related functions that contribute to the overall success of the industry.
However, on the issue of whether the small-scale garment producers have the various units, it was revealed that the majority of tailors and dressmakers from the four zones do not directly have the sectors in their centers. The respondents further reported that most of the garment production processes rest on the shoulders of two or three people. When a question was posed on why 'line of production' (division of labor) is not practiced at the small-scale garment industries in the Sunyani Municipality, the responses were that:

> *I do not have enough money to employ experts to assist in carrying out the various production processes pertaining to garment production. When you employ people, they*

> *want you to pay them more than even the owner of the business. I try to do everything on my own: from pattern making to fabric cutting and the sewing of the garment components ('TDB': personal communication, 14th July, 2023).*

The respondents believe that once they are able to satisfy their respective customers and collect their money, whether the processes they employ conform to the global standard or not is not a matter of discourse. Carr and Pomeror (1992) write that when individuals are made to handle the production processes differently or practice a different line of production, the end products appear better as compared to someone handling the entire process. Some of the respondents were frank enough to suggest that when different hands are employed to produce a garment, with each hand working on separate features, it makes the garment fit or hang well on the human figure.

> *Look, I have observed the ready – to – wear garments on the market and they are tailored to conform to the contours of the human figure, but what we do here, sometimes create problems for us. We are not able achieve best results in our production as compared to foreign garments (TD 'A': personal communication, 14th July, 2023).*

It can be deduced from the assertion that working in the small-scale garment industry demands mastering, if not all, then most of the activities involved in garment making. In some jurisdictions, one has to go through style analysis, pattern making, lay planning and cutting, sorting and bundling, machining, pressing, and finishing before packaging and shipping to prospective clients or destinations. All these activities call for extra effort from the producers. Professionally, when someone finds himself or herself in such a situation, the chances are that the individual may develop some health complications over time.

4.2 Adherence to Workplace Health and Safety Measures

Health and safety compliance in the garment industry cannot be downplayed (Asare et al., 2010). Adherence to safety measures plays a vital role in ensuring the wellbeing of industry players and the sustainability of businesses. It was observed that the majority of the tailors and dressmakers working in the small-scale garment industry in the Sunyani Municipality have little regard for health and safety measures. Some of the designers believed that once they were able to erect their structures and acquire the primary facilities and logistics, they were good to go without necessarily attaching importance to the nature of the business activities or their long-term effects on their health. It can be emphatically stated that respondents' knowledge of health and safety measures is low since accidents and other health-related issues rarely happen at business centers. Looking at the health and safety measures, some of the respondents conceded that adherence to safety rules in the small-scale garment industry is a major problem.

> *The nature of our business premises is a challenge on its own. We do not have enough space to cater for our comfort. Our movement is sometimes restricted and ventilation is a problem. In some cases, our kiosk and containers become heated especially during the dry season and we have no place to go just to sacrifice our safety and stay in such conditions ('TDA', 'TDC' and 'TDD: personal communication, 20th July, 2023).*

In the garment industry, the correct use of tools and equipment has a role to play in the health of workers. Improvisation has become the order of the day, and in some situations, workers are not concerned about using the wrong tool or equipment for an activity. On the issue of using the right tools and equipment, some of the tailors and dressmakers believed that once a goal needs to be achieved and there is no tool or equipment to execute such a task, the individual may have to find other means to accomplish such a task, whether employing fair or foul means.

> *We do not have funds to purchase tools for all the activities we embark on in our shops. Our machine tables can sometimes serve as cutting-out table and ironing board. As for scissors, especially when it is only one, we can use it to cut everything; from paper to fabric ('TDA' and 'TDD' personal communication, 20th July, 2023).*

To ensure proper health and safety in the course of producing garments, it is required that each activity have its own recommended tools and equipment. This, however, helps save the workers from certain problems, like damage to tools and equipment, stress, and delays in production.

From the discussion, it can be concluded that small-scale garment producers in Sunyani do not consider safety rules as paramount to their wellbeing and the sustainability of their businesses. Inadequate funds to buy the right tools and equipment are also making production difficult for tailors and dressmakers.

4.3 Health Related Problems Associated with Garment Production Processes

The health and safety of workers in the garment industry is a major concern, especially in areas where people's knowledge of safety measures is insignificant. The activities involved in garment production are repetitive, and if care is not taken, one may be exposed to several health-related problems (Sadika et al., 2019).

The in-depth interviews conducted revealed that tailors and dressmakers operating in the small-scale garment industries suffer various degrees of ailments, some of which have become chronic. The respondents, who have worked for more than five years, admitted suffering from waist pains, spinal injuries, eye problems, swelling of feet, miscarriages, tingling of fingers, ulnar deviation or ulnar drift, and headaches.

Looking at the above health issues critically, waist pain generally is associated with long hours of either sitting or standing. Typically, the cutting and actual joining of garment components together are the major causes. Some respondents asserted categorically that they can either stand or sit for hours during peak production periods.

> *My production schedule is such that I can be on my feet throughout the day only for cutting fabrics, and the same approach is sometimes applied to the sewing of the garment replicas. Actually, I am not sure whether this kind of production arrangement is the cause of my waist pain, which upon several medications still persist ('TDA' and 'TDD' personal communication, 20th July, 2023).*

It is important for tailors and dressmakers to understand that engaging in repetitive activities such as standing and sitting has the tendency to generate or build up fluids around the waist and the feet. The common antidote or remedy without medication is the initial application of the press-as-you-sew principle and the observance of intermittent breaks during production hours.

Garment producers are required not to engage in a single activity for a longer period of time. In some cases, allowing themselves to take short breaks and rest can be a good help. Irrespective of the fact that many small-scale garment producers operate manually, their work schedules are also devoid of breaks and proper rest. Swollen feet as a major disorder among tailors and dressmakers in some jurisdictions is attributed to the type of industrial sewing machine and its attachment used. Despite long hours of sitting and standing, the sewing machine can also be a contributing factor to swollen feet. It is obvious that some of the old motors attached to the sewing machines are the cause due to the kind of vibration they create or generate during operation. Crutch motors and direct-drive motors are good in respect of their control and speed, but they are responsible for creating unsatisfactory vibration. Most of the garment shops visited by the researchers are equipped with crutch motors, so the workers cannot run away from swollen foot disorders in some years if proper measures are put in place. The current motors on the market (servo motors) are described as energy efficient, vibration-free, noise-free, and have adjustable sewing speeds as compared to the crutch motors.

Other physical health challenges, such as spinal injuries, may be caused by poor sitting posture and the type of chairs used by garment workers.

Some respondents indicated using stools as seats for their sewing activities. Stools are not the recommended chairs for use in the garment industry. These chairs have no mechanism to support the back body, thereby creating back pain and leading to various spinal injuries. A good chair should be the type specially designed to support the backbone and make sitting comfortable at the same time.

Again, respondents admitted suffering from eye problems due to poor lighting systems in their facilities. Constantly gauging and guiding the stitching lines for hours under poor lighting conditions can cause eye-related disorders. Some respondents admitted that they sometimes have to wash their faces several times before they can see from afar after sewing for many hours under poor lighting systems. The onus is on the designers to make sure they have good lighting systems stored in their shops to help curb these eye problems.

One pertinent issue discovered by this study is that sitting for many hours can cause miscarriages among women. Even though it is not medically proven, respondents believe having waist complications for a long period of time can influence that. Some of the interviewees contacted admitted having one or two miscarriages in their marriage lives.

Another common health issue that was observed during the researchers' interactions with the respondents is a condition medically called ulnar deviation or ulnar drift. This is a physical health disorder resulting from the constant and long handling of bent scissors for cutting. Experts believe that ulnar deviation occurs as a result of inflammation in the hand, writs, or fingers, which probably makes the fingers bend towards the pinky (little fingers). The Ulnar drift condition is largely associated with the use of manual-bent scissors. The initial symptom is tingling of the fingers, and if medical attention is not sought, it then develops into an ulnar deviation.

5. Findings and Recommendations

The study sought to identify a standardized approach for garment production with respect to the various constructional processes, examination of workplace health and safety compliance, and health-related problems associated with garment production processes. The study reveals that standardization in terms of processes is a major concern in the small-scale garment industries in Ghana. Even though the designers within these outfits are creative and versatile, adhering religiously to global standardization is a problem.

The different sectors that jointly come together to foster productivity do not exist in these local garment centers. In view of this, most of the production activities are carried out singlehandedly by a few workers. The study further indicates that employing well-trained experts to occupy key units such as patternmaking, garment assembling, and cutting poses constraints on the finances of the industry.

However, it is recommended that individual tailors and dressmakers collaborate and, if possible, put their resources and expertise together instead of establishing themselves on their own. Educational institutions offering fashion or clothing as a program of study should also try to assist some of these workers, especially those without formal education.

Considering the workplace health and safety compliance of garment workers in small-scale industries, the study reveals, among many other things, that the knowledge level of tailors and dressmakers in respect of health issues is very low. Being abreast of health and safety measures and policies is not the same as adherence. Dressmakers' understanding of safety rules is not directly proportional to their commitment to follow these policies.

Again, it was discovered that most of the small-scale garment industries in the municipality lack the necessary facilities and logistics required to undertake production. This phenomenon sometimes exposes workers to health and safety challenges.

The situation of dressmakers and tailors in the small-scale garment industries can be well managed if the government and other stakeholders can join forces to help workers secure funds to purchase modern tools and equipment such as electric cutting scissors and sewing machines with servo motors.

Many health-related issues appear common in the lives of tailors and dressmakers, as revealed by the study. These problems may range from mild to acute to severe. Some of these disorders have become part and parcel of garment workers operating on a small scale.

Another finding identified is the use of unprescribed medications for the treatment of waist pain and headaches. Self-medication, either traditional or orthodox, is affecting the wellbeing of individual workers.

To help curb this menace, it is highly recommended that tailors and dressmakers working in the small-scale garment industries seek proper medical attention and desist from self-medication because of the consequences thereof. Voluntarily, there should be frequent screening exercises to ensure the welfare of tailors and dressmakers since they also contribute to national development.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The health and safety issues that tailors and dressmakers in the small-scale industry face are compelling. The majority of the garment production centers in Sunyani, although they started well, are no longer functioning as they used to in the past. A key factor responsible for the collapse and abandonment of these businesses can be associated with the ill-health of the owners, who doubled as main workers.

The garment industry is labor-intensive, and for this reason, when very few individuals are made to shoulder all the production processes, it tends to affect their health. Due to health issues, most garment workers in small-scale businesses are not able to work for many years. Because of the industry's intense competition and the lack of government and stakeholder support for workers, health and safety regulations are typically disregarded. Many garment workers do not take issues concerning their health very seriously and, in some cases, indulge in self-medication.

It is imperative that the government, as well as society at large, acknowledge the significant contributions these people make to the economy and offer them assistance with regard to their occupational safety and wellbeing.

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