


## Socio-economic Conditions of Women Workers: A Study of Garment Industry in Bangladesh

### Abstract

The garment sector in Bangladesh was virtually non-existent till 1980 but has grown at an average of 17% per year since its inception. The garment industry was the first to provide employment opportunities to women in large-scale in a country where women traditionally have not worked outside their home (Heath and Mobarak, 2015). The growth of Bangladesh garment industry has been characterized by low wages, poor enforcement of labour legislation and the availability of a large pool of unskilled women workers. While some have viewed the feminisation of the garment sector as a positive step towards women emancipation, it has also led to more exploitative conditions for the women. In this paper we seek to explore the socio-economic profile of the women workers in the garment industry of Bangladesh. We try to pit the workers who are employed in the factories that are run by the church with those that are privately owned and find a major shift in the narratives in terms of more happiness among the employees in the Church-run factories. For conducting this study, we have collected primary data using a structured questionnaire from 192 female workers (Non-Church owned employees), irrespective of marital and religious status, employed in 11 different garment factories situated in Dhaka, Gazipur districts areas. Furthermore, about 168 female workers (mainly Christians who are minorities in Bangladesh) working in 11 garment factories run by Church authority in 5 districts namely Dhaka, Natore, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Khulna are also interviewed to gain insights into their working conditions. We have analyzed the data through the use of software SPSS and STATA. To check the mean difference a paired t-test was carried out among both the group's employees. After examining the life-standard details, a binary probit regression has been conducted for understanding the probable factors determining improved living standard. We have also taken various other factors into consideration and resorted to the usage of a 5-point Likert scaling, computing separately Management Index (MI), Harassment Index (HI), Life Standard Index (LSI) and Medical Facility Index (MFI) which are reduced to a single index of Job Satisfaction (JSI) using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The index shows the employees in the Church-owned industries to be in a much more satisfied state than their counterparts in the non-Church owned sector.

Key Words: Women, socio-economic, education, job satisfaction, discrimination, Church owned, non-church owned

  
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