

## **A STUDY OF HRM PRACTICES IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH: A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE**

*Muzdalifa Anzum<sup>1</sup>*

### **ABSTRACT**

The article examined the current HRM practices in the manufacturing industry in Bangladesh, most prominently in the apparel sector which is the most important booster of economic growth for the country. Unfortunately, research has shown that the industry has observed lack of leadership and managerial proficiency which has led to various devastating accidents and fierce labour protests. The study was able to scrutinize the gap and some future managerial implications based on analysis of information from different scholarly resources. The entire article was constructed and analysed from a social perspective to pinpoint the under covered societal issues which leads to different other problems in countries like Bangladesh where the societal structure is the base for most of the management practices locally. The Government and many international organizations like IMF, World Bank have lent hand and given immense support to the industry, but the development path is still hindered. Since most of the researches earlier conducted research on the health and safety issues in this industry and general HRM practices, this paper will allow readers to further perceive the concerned issues from societal viewpoint in terms of leadership and management from the very core that has allowed spread of all other branches of complications and unrest. The findings of this paper have indicated that there is no standard HRM structure practiced in factories and the core issue is the absent role of efficient leaders and motivating executives.

### **1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

In an underdeveloped country like Bangladesh, taking into consideration the inadequate availability of technology as importing machineries is very expensive and not easily affordable because of high tariff rates; the manufacturing industry tends to be extremely labour intensive. The manufacturing industry comprises of many industries- Food & Beverages, Tobacco, Cement, Ceramics, Steel, Footwear & Leather, Pharmaceutical & Chemical, Electronics and many other types but the notable branch under the manufacturing industry in Bangladesh is the Apparel sector which comprises 80% of the export sector (Tanvir, Goswami, Muqaddim, 2015). This sector has a contribution of 11.17% to total GDP in the fiscal year 2017-2018 (Textile Today, 2019). Besides receiving remittance from the expatriates, the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector has contributed a huge portion in the economic growth of the country. In the year 2019, Bangladesh exported \$30.14 billion worth of garment products (Textile Today, 2019). Hence, the government has embraced export-oriented industrialization and invited more involvement by the private sectors to contribute to the national development (Hossain, Cheng, 2002).

Taking the boosting growth into consideration in the manufacturing sector, Bangladesh decided to switch to a mixed economy from a social economy in the 1990s as it wanted to turn the focus on industrial economy rather than agrarian-based economy (Abdullah et al., 2011; Ahmed and Peerlings, 2009; Farooque et al.,

---

1. Lecturer, Independent University (IUB), Bangladesh

2007; Siddiqui, 2011). By the support from the government for more private investments, a recognizable growth was observed in many industries like- garment, jute, textile, leather, and pharmaceuticals (Fernandes, 2008). Additionally, a sum of \$17,185.23 million was invested by 1,597 foreign companies in different industrial sectors (GOB, 2010). UNCTD (2019) revealed in the World Investment Report (2019) that Bangladesh has shown an increased rate of investment from 2.15 billion dollar in 2017 to 3.31 billion dollars in 2018 (Nordea, 2020). Japan Tobacco's acquirement of Akij Group's major trade, tobacco business is worth mentioning as it is the most notable investment till date. Besides, other countries are investing in Bangladesh as well, such as UAE, United Kingdom, China, Malaysia, India, Egypt, Norway, and South Korea (Nordea, 2019). And now, it has a big plan called Bangladesh Vision 2021 which focuses on eight goals and goal six talks about, global integration and creating a commercial hub. Also, JP Morgan claimed Bangladesh to have a hopeful growth and as one of the "Frontier Five" economies. (Investors Chronicle, 2008). In addition to this, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mentioned Bangladesh to have the second fastest growing economy in year 2016 with a 7.1% growth rate (The Economics Times, 2018). But in recent times, a declining trend has been observed due to the novel cause, Covid-19. The World Bank is expecting that the GDP growth rate of 8.15% will come down to just 1.6% by the end of this fiscal year (TBS, 2020).

Therefore, as we realise the significance of the manufacturing sector in the economic growth of the country, it is a pre-requirement to ensure efficient leadership and managerial practices, the roots of HRM practices to ensure a productive team of human resources and maintain a continuous growth of the industry. But unfortunately, HRM practices in this industry requires more attention to discover the fundamental under covered concerns which has led to lot of unrest and devastating incidents in the labour industry. Most of the past researchers have highlighted the health and safety issues, political impact on the industry and other external disputes. A gap is still visible as much of research have not been conducted yet from a social perspective in the manufacturing industry to scrutinize the under lying societal issues which led to very weak leadership and mis management in the labour market of the industry. Moreover, some unethical practices during this pandemic and employers' pressure on labours have resulted into more extreme demotivation of the labours as well. Therefore, this paper will highlight the current HRM practices in the industry and underline the lack of leadership and mismanagement of human resources from a social perspective and the effect it established on the market, labours and the companies itself.

### ***1.1 Objectives of the Study***

The research content has been structured as an attempt to fulfil the above-mentioned research gap. The current study has aimed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To overview the current HRM practices in the industry from a social perspective.
2. To draw attention to the underlying causes of mismanagement from Sociologists theoretical paradigms, absent role of HRM execution and prevalent lack of leadership in the industry and what impact it created on the organizations itself, market, and the labours.
3. Some managerial implications have been suggested as a future direction to solve the issues raised on the HRM practices in Bangladesh in the apparel industry.

## **2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative approach, that is, literature survey was performed to accomplish the research objectives. To accomplish an in-depth study from a social viewpoint on different issues in the labour market, scholarly opinion and research work was read from a functionalist perspective and setting the conflicting theory and findings were discussed accordingly. This theory suggests perceiving the different groups of the society being strongly correlated and functioning unitedly (Levin, 2004). This has allowed to discover the root causes of the managerial or leadership problems in the industry. The experimental studies and surveys of different researchers were collected from libraries, universities, and scholars were contacted as well. To present an overview of the literature review, experimental and theoretical studies were equally prioritized to present in a sociological paradigm.

## **3.0 A SOCIAL PROSPECTIVE: HRM PRACTICES IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH**

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the ‘social clause debate’ was called up by many scholars and few of the notable elements raised in the debate surrounding the issues in Bangladesh labour market were—setting minimal labour standards based on the legislation passed by International Labour Organization (ILO), banning of child labour and involuntary labour, allowing the labours address their problems during and collective bargaining and lot more (Berik, 2017). Besides, such an environment is much observed in countries like Bangladesh because of poverty, exploitation of poor people by the rich, high density of population, wastage of resources, shift in distribution process and sadly self-indulgence (Uddin, 2013). In contradiction to all these factors, Uddin (2013) added that, a disorganized growth process can be held responsible for such an unsteady process. As we attempt to view the situation from sociological perspective, the concept of conflict theory can be related here. The theory perceives the society in an imbalanced form where the rich and authoritative group dominates the weak and insolvent group (Sanderson, 2007). As Karl Marx introduced this concept, with the passage of time, industrialization kept on evolving and the concept of economic inequality became more visible and turned into to the root cause of social disputes (Eseban et.al, 2012).

### ***3.1 Work-Force Legislation of Bangladesh***

The HRM practices in the public sector are controlled by PSC (Public Service Commission). Government officials are categorized into 29 grades (horizontally) and 6 ranks (vertically) and a competitive exam, named as BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) is conducted and ranks are awarded based on the results. Primarily, practices in the government sector are polluted due to-lobbying, pressure from higher authority, corruption, political leaders prioritizing people of their parties, hence leading to inconsistency and irregularity (Bhuiyan, 2011; Ehsan, 2008; Karim, 2007; TIB, 2007) which has caused into recruiting incompetent people in the government sector and the after effect has been, HR policies and regulations not being implemented and monitored properly which is leading to an alarming ‘work culture’. Additionally, the pay structure is designed by the National Pay commission (NPC) - this department focuses on the salary and benefits of the non-manufacturing employees (Mahmood, Absar, 2015).

Labour Law Legislation of Bangladesh was last updated in the year 2006. Because of the incompetency of the concerned authority, and lack of monitoring led to big mishaps like the ‘Rana

Plaza Incident’ and ‘Tazreen Fashion Fire Accident’. For all the industries, the implementation of labour laws in mandatory and some distinct laws have been designed for the labourers working in the sensitive sites of the factories (Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006). The National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC) formulates wage structure for employees in the manufacturing industry (Mahmood, Absar 2015). The law was rewritten with the aim to ensure improved working conditions via social aspect and a good communication system between employers and workers (Nasim, 2013).

Mahmood and Absar (2015) mentioned, NWC and NWPC both formulate strategies based on four pillars-

- i. The benchmark should be set in a way which will fulfil the basic needs of the families of the workers consisting of three adult feeding units.
- ii. The wages for industrial sectors must be set at a higher grade than agro or rural wages and those of office employees.
- iii. Wages and Productivity must be aligned.
- iv. The financial capacity of the companies to be considered to make the payments duly.

This consideration for the manufacturing industry was reasonable enough as they tend to input more physical labour compared to non-manufacturing industries.

*(in 000)*

Age Group	Rural			Urban			Bangladesh			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
<b>Working age population</b>										
15-29	13856	14661	28517	5777	6959	12736	19633	21620	41254	
30-64	20863	21531	42394	8993	8498	17491	29856	30029	59885	
65+	3575	2604	6179	1015	721	1736	4591	3325	7915	
Total	38295	38796	777091	15785	16178	31961	54080	54974	109054	
<b>Force</b>										
15-29	9198	4740	13938	3898	2247	6145	13096	6987	20083	
30-64	19796	9976	29773	8474	2723	11196	28270	12699	40969	
65+	1744	241	1985	418	48	467	2163	290	2452	
Total	30739	14957	45696	12790	5018	17808	43528	19946	63504	
<b>Employed</b>										
15-29	4857	4064	12521	3560	1871	5432	12017	5936	17952	
30-64	19609	9770	29379	8394	2650	11044	28002	12421	40423	
65+	1744	241	1985	418	48	467	2163	290	2452	
Total	29809	14076	43885	12372	4570	16943	42182	18646	60828	

Figure 1: Statistical data regarding labour force by broad age group, gender and settlement (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2017)

### **3.2 Employers controlling the HRM practices**

Not only laws and regulations but also social aspects play a vital role in ensuring proper implementation of HRM practices in any industry. The mind-set of the employers and, values and principles are the base for establishing HRM standards in countries like Bangladesh because people prioritize culture and values professionally as well. When we address the societal effects on organizational management, it includes nepotism, prioritization of social capital, strong family networks and informality (Mueller, 1994). In Bangladesh, based on social contacts and personal preference, employee recruitment, promotion and evaluation are done and have also mentioned that, local companies consider training and development more of a cost than an investment (Mahmood & Absar, 2015). Apart from countries like India, Japan and China, Bangladesh emphasizes on social elements in their business system as well and these practices which are very dissimilar to western economies (Witt and Redding, 2013). According to Hofstede's study, Bangladesh rates high in power distance, masculinity, group orientation and uncertainty avoidance. Most of the companies are owned by families privately. Accounting reigns and favouritism is much in practice in Bangladesh (Spence et al 2016).

According to a report by Daily Star, 2014 (A local daily newspaper)-

- While hiring employees, internal referral and word of mouth was used by 33% of the organizations.
- A background check is done and also references are prioritized by 40% of the organizations.
- The practice of providing training is not prevalent in around 25% of the companies.
- No structured reward and recognition programme is available in 55% of the companies

Hence, there are less competent people in the HR department, which is resulting into mismanagement, no proper HR planning, discrimination, interruption in the production process, no proper implementation and monitoring of labour laws and as a result it is leading to Employer-Labour union conflicts. In this regard, Khan et.al (2017) challenged that, the prevailing labour inefficiency is due to very ineffective HR system in the industry which has led to a very disordered working environment and least enthusiasm among employees. Hence, under this scenario, it is very clear that, employers are reluctant to initiate actions for employee development and motivational incentives dissemination. Again, when we observe the situation through the lens of conflict theory, the elites as employers are exploiting the workers as they are poor and weak, and exploiting the social order to benefit themselves.

### **3.3 Role of Labour Unions**

A very important role is played by the 'labour unions' in the manufacturing industry as they can affect the whole production process. Collective bargaining is a way to let their voice be heard. According to Bangladesh Labour Act (2006), every company needs to have 'participation committee' but unfortunately it is neglected by most of the enterprises (Mahmood and Absar, 2015). Hence, it is weakening the effectivity of the committees and obliging them to perform responsibilities with no opportunities and incentives in return (Gosh et al., 2010, Mahmood, 2008). As a result, the government decided to make some changes to improve the employer-labour relations by periodically revising the benchmark for minimum wages in sectors like- garments and textile industries and made it compulsory for the Ministry of Labour and

Manpower to resolve all types of disputes (Absar, 2014). It has become more of a social practice by the employers because of nepotism and status quo for which challenging situation keeps on arising every now and then. Rather than considering all level of human resources as assets they tend to believe that employees and labours are obliged to serve them irrespective of the situation since they hold a ‘powerful’ status in the society.

### 3.4 How Female Labours are Positioned

Earlier, the participation of women in the labour-intensive industries could not be thought of but the practice is changing at a very fast pace with rapid industrialization. The gender gap has narrowed down to an extent in the labour market, to be more specific; in the export-oriented sector the prominent role of female labours is much visible. But unfortunately, division in occupations, discrimination in wage rates based on gender is still in practice. In the manufacturing industry, women are dominating in the apparel sector mostly comprising of mostly women, approximately 60.08% (Akter, 2019). But recently, a declining trend has been observed by many researchers because of various issues, such as- inefficiency in the technical side, lot of policies to be materialized as per commitment, stagnant efficiency position and no training facilities. 60% of the contracts are for western brands and most of the companies are owned by local employers and only 5% by foreign investors (Tanvir, Goswami, Muqaddim, 2015). When women were being encouraged to contribute in this sector initially, Majumder and Begum (2000) while carrying on their research, concluded that, women are being encouraged to work more in this sector because-

- Low wage rate of female workers
- Women can be dominated more in this patriarchal society
- Women are mostly expected not to stand up for their rights, raise their voice and involve themselves in any sort of disputes
- Also, sewing is more of a feminine profession

According to the surveys conducted in 1990s and 2000s, a prominent gender wage gap was observed (Berik, 2017). Majumder and Begum (2006) highlighted in their paper that, the wage rate for women workers tend to fall compared to men below the standard set by the government and they consider it to be ‘deprivation and discrimination’. Hence, women had to work overtime to earn the equivalent pay which resulted in long hours of work, over stressed, problems in balancing family and work life especially for married women.

Categories	Male wages USD S/per month	Female wages USD S/per month
Operator	28.65	19.53
Cutting	50.02	15.00
Ironer	24.08	14.06
Sewing helper	15.25	9.69
Cutting helper	19.22	10.64
Finishing helper	15.37	13.00
Folder	19.42	14.71

Figure 2: Wage Discrimination in the Apparel Industry (Absar et.al , 2010)

Khatun, Rahman, Bhattacharya and Moazzem (2008) also added that, according to the survey conducted by CPD, the average income of women declined to the average earnings of women compared to men deteriorated from 95.4% in the 1991–1995 periods to 75.9% in 2005. Gender discrimination seems to be much prevalent in the work culture but, the concerned government authority seems to be reluctant about it as they are being bribed and controlled by the big conglomerates of the country. Additionally, technological advancement and women workforce has a negative correlation in this country. They are dominating the woven department constituting 68% of the total workforce while only 35% in the knitwear industry (Majumder, Begum 2000). Hence, when the recruitment takes place in, HR tends to avoid hiring women for the knitwear industry as they have a perception that women cannot contribute effectively to the technology-based sectors because of lack of education and skills. Again, young girls are more welcomed to work in the factories than married women as the absenteeism rate is high because of the physical problems they face when they are pregnant due to malnutrition and also, rise of marital problems because of male dominance (Kabeer & Mahmud, 2003).

### ***3.5 Absence of leadership during Covid-19***

Amid the nationwide Covid-19 lockdown, hundreds of factories have been permitted to reopen their operation with a strict health and safety guidelines from the health ministry (Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, 2020). Meanwhile, the question in here arises is, were these safety precautions maintained in real and was there a supervisory team from the government to have a check? Hundreds of labourers were infected initially after the reopening but the doubt still exists if the statistics are reliable or not (Financial Express, 2020). Factories failed to maintain the guidelines and moreover, to bring the labourers back to work, salary were cut down and lay off was done setting a reason of financial crisis and urgent meet up of orders by international companies (Financial Express, 2020). Hence, from the lens of conflict theory, it is transparent that the lives of these labourers are not counted rather money making has been prioritized more.

## **4.0 IMPACT OF HRM PRACTICES ON THE ORGANIZATIONS, MARKET AND EMPLOYEES**

Majumder and Begum (2000) has mentioned that Favourable Working Environment (FEW) create a great impact on the overall production process as workforce feels motivated to perform at a higher speed when a safe and sound environment is ensured, and the employer makes them feel like assets of the company. It also includes a satisfactory remuneration package, safety and precautions at workplace, pure water and hygienic food, health related benefits and overall job security (Majumder and Begum, 2000). Giulian and Alfonsina (2009) have also found a positive correlation between this element and outcome and the gap between these two also narrows. Again, ‘Societal Effects (SE)’ talks about how social norms and values are implanted in the companies along with formal rules and regulations and the work system is moulded based on these societal practices (Majumder and Begum, 2000).

The statistical information gives a clear indication regarding the contribution of the manufacturing industry and the RMG sector in figure 3 and figure 4. In spite of the economic development, Bangladesh is still not being able to implement SHRM practice rather relying on the traditional HR systems. As discussed earlier, it is mainly because of family dominance in the business (Farooque, 2007; et al. Mamun, 2008; Siddiqui,

2011). ‘Rana Plaza Accident’ is the worst of all disasters that took place in the history of industrial mishaps in the world (Hobson, 2013).

Industrial origin Sector	2014-15	2014-16	2014-17	2017-18(p)
<b>A. Agriculture</b>	<b>8.63</b>	<b>8.62</b>	<b>8.89</b>	<b>9.78</b>
<b>1. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY</b>	<b>7.64</b>	<b>7.83</b>	<b>7.93</b>	<b>8.99</b>
a) Crops & horticulture	6.97	6.50	6.98	8.33
b) Animal Farming	8.02	10.98	8.63	9.99
c) Forest and related services	11.39	11.38	12.44	11.26
<b>2. FISHING</b>	<b>12.47</b>	<b>11.55</b>	<b>12.34</b>	<b>12.50</b>
<b>B Industry</b>	<b>15.04</b>	<b>16.51</b>	<b>15.71</b>	<b>17.21</b>
<b>3. MINING AND QUARRYING</b>	<b>13.26</b>	<b>19.69</b>	<b>19.42</b>	<b>17.51</b>
a) Natural gas and crude petrolcum	12.65	16.52	12.11	12.32
b) Other mining & coal	13.65	21.68	23.80	20.32
<b>3. MANUFACTURING</b>	<b>14.01</b>	<b>15.96</b>	<b>15.83</b>	<b>17.68</b>
a) Large & medium scale	14.20	16.59	16.26	18.31
b) Small scale	13.19	13.31	13.95	14.86

Figure 3 : Sectoral growth rate of GDP at current prices, 2013-2014 to 2016-2017 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2017)

Fiscal year (July-June)	Number of RMG factories	Employment (million workers)	Export earnings (in billion USD)	Export earnings per worker (USD)	Share of RMG exports in total export earnings
1984-1985	384	0.12	0.12	1000	12.44
1989-1990	759	0.34	0.62	1824	32.45
1994-1995	2182	1.2	2.23	1858	64.17
1999-2000	3200	1.6	4.35	2719	75.61
2004-2005	4107	2.0	6.42	3210	74.15
2009-2010	5063	3.6	12.50	3472	77.12
2014-2015	4296	4.0	25.49	6373	81.71

Figure 4: Contribution of RMG sector in export earnings from 1984-2015 (BGMEA, 2016)

‘Political connection’ was one of the main reasons as the owner bribed the local Mayor to build extra three floors without the formal permission from the government (Taplin, 2014). It triggered the attention of the whole world in term of labour condition in Bangladesh as 1134 workers were killed due to the collapsing of the building (Berik, 2015). Earlier also mishaps took place in the industrial sectors which created a pressure on the organizations by European Union and North America to maintain standard work force conditions (Ahmed and Peerlings, 2009; Islam and Deegan, 2008).

Name of the factory	Year of the Mishap	No. of workers killed	Reason
Garib & Garib	2010	21	Fire
That's It	2010	29	Fire
Tazreen Fashion	2012	113	Fire
Rana Plaza	2013	1,134	Structural Failure

*Table 1: Few worth mentioning industrial mishaps (Claeson, 2015)*

Hence, it is clearly visible that the global reputation of Bangladesh is declining and if remains to continue so, the buyers might shut down their business and switch to other countries (Taplin, 2014). Also, the export rate has decreased gradually from the year 2012-2017 from 20.2% to 15% (The World Bank Group). Such attitude will not only decline the profit growth of the industries but also create an impact on the economy also. Employees and workers will feel less motivated to work due to absence of FEW. As a result, it can be concluded that, absence and improper implication of HR practices can create a prominent impact on the organizations, labours, and the market as a whole. Research also says that – implementation of HRM practices and market performance in Bangladesh has a strong positive correlation (Absar, Nimalathan, Mahmood, 2012).

## **5.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Once a manager of a reputed manufacturing company has mentioned, ‘since it is a poverty-stricken country, it is cheaper to make labourers do the extra heavy load of work rather than investing on imported machineries’-this statement of his has left me disheartened. The HR practices in the local companies are considered more personal. The industry uses HRM synonymous to administrative work which is one of the root problems. Professional skills are comparatively less prioritized in companies and personal preference is prioritized more. In Bangladesh, to create an influential position in the market and to run the business smoothly, sadly it is important to have good political and family connections.

### ***5.1 The Conflict Theory***

Johir, Saha, & Hassan (2014) has found that without good management, profit growth cannot be expected. Moreover, the sense of sovereignty and equality reduce wastage of resources, increases productivity hence, resulting into expansion of business (Appelbaum et. al., 2000). But the managerial practices in this industry seem to not consider these empirical results for their sustainability. Even after some dreadful incidents and labour protests the situation did not get better. An inhuman situation during this pandemic was also observed. This oppressed group is being exploited and they cannot do much as they are all needy and the suppressed one as well in this social relationship. Hence, as we analyse more the scenario, the conflict theory is more visible here. As Marx defines employers as bourgeoisie who rule the production process and proletarians as labourers who are the oppressed one. In this realm of economy, labourers own nothing but have their physical effort to be sold and the employers control capital and exerts influence to earn excessive profit, but workers have been addresses as ‘potential revolutionaries’ by Marx as well (Ultee, 2007).

### ***5.2 The Functionalist Perception***

As we observe the negative impact and the declining trend the labour-employer relationship created on the economy and the businesses itself, the theory of functionalism can be fitted in here. This theory suggests that establishing values and beliefs in a society in a way that communities can realize how the whole societal

system is interconnected and to maintain harmony, should be working unitedly. Sociologists from a functionalist viewpoint focuses on the strong correlation of all classes in a society and how inequality creates conflicting impact on each other due to disequilibrium of power and capital. Focusing on the future sustainability of the industry and considering the societal structure of the country, it is alarming that motivating leadership is barely present which is why labours remain extremely demotivated. There is where more research needs to be performed to study the employer-employee relationship culture in the industry and realise the effectivity of the strong correlation of these two parties. To ensure quality, sustainability and achieve the competitive advantage, the participation of employers' is vital and has a potential gap to look forward. From the lens of conflict theory, advancement in industrialization has suppressed the subordinates more resulting into excessive profit making for the employers and leaving the labour live the struggling life.

## **6.0 FUTURE MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS TO UPHOLD THE VALUE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES**

If we start from the roots, Bangladesh needs to substitute its authority with competent people who have enough knowledge in HRM, have strong ethical values and will be strictly monitoring the working conditions across the industries rather getting carried away by the bribe provided by the employers to handle the situation according to their needs.

*'Accountability and Responsibility'* are the key terms to be focused on this regard. A productive Research and Development department must be established to support the Government to find out the insights, the main reasons of the disputes arising now and then. Additionally, the term *'psychological contract'* needs to be embedded in the roots of the business practices by these business conglomerates. This theory can be strongly connected with workplace behaviour and attitude of human beings as it elaborately describes the balance between, how employees are being treated by the employers and what employees are putting into the job (Business Ball, 2012). Furthermore, the employers must educate their next generation with these theories, keep them away from the prejudices and help them to have a better mind-set as per the prevailing social system, they will be taking over the chair of the business. On the contrary, the human resources need to be enlightened about their basic rights, giving safety and precaution training to avoid the seldom accidents taking place and also, routine health check-up facilities. Moreover, hygiene factors such as-availability of pure water, hygienic food and, also sanitary pads in the toilet for women. Day care facilities must be arranged for the women as they cannot afford to hire a nanny to take care of the babies back at home.

Again, in a society where nepotism is prevailing and the business are being run by such kind of employers, they must be educated first. The organizational structure must be observed from a Sociologists perspective to abolish the root problems. *'Distributive Leadership'* is an effective concept that can help these employers to realise that- Labours are not objects rather Human Beings like them, as this concept teaches leaders to consider business system as a social course that needs to be embraced via communication with surrounding contributors in the business system (Uhl- Bien 2006).

To reduce the gender gap, women need to be trained with more technical skills so that they can work in the related sectors with the advancement in technology so that they can compete with the male labour force in other sectors under manufacturing industry (Kabeer, Naila & Mahmud, Simeen, 2018). New labour initiatives must be taken by the government to acknowledge their hard work, a new system must be introduced in terms of *'trade unions'* for women so that they can gather enough confidence to stand up for themselves as well. Employers need to be more empathetic towards them and change institutional structure to empower female workers. Most importantly, gender democracy to be embraced both by managers and government to embed it into economic development culturally.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Like India and China, Bangladesh can be set as an example for having low-cost labour and under the manufacturing Industry, the export-oriented sector has a notable contribution. Bangladesh has a big dream of establishing honest governance which will be also efficient enough to create a new Bangladesh making it a 'prime marketable hub'. Absar and Mahmood (2012) added, the country is striving to build an economic environment with skilled workforce as a competitive advantage and dominate a position next to Malaysia. Hence, to create a safe and sound environment for the biggest considerable strength for Bangladesh, the 'labour workforce', the government and the business conglomerates need to contribute together from functionalist viewpoint. Apart from emphasizing on government rules and regulations, the social aspect needs to be highlighted as well- the cultural needs to be embraced but the negative ideologies need to be filtered out first and new opportunities must be created for this underestimated vulnerable workforce by being empathetic towards them. As disequilibrium and rebellion are mutually exclusive. The government has been showing immense support financially to ensure a sound production system along with other international organizations. But, firstly, nepotism and concept of 'labour exploitation' needs to be abolished from the work culture. As the absence of HR department is visibly observed in this industry, to achieve the competitive advantage and sustain in the long run, execution of HRM practices have become mandatory. But for this, the employers need to initially rethink the management system, perceive sustainability from functionalist perspective as it will allow them to realise how industries are heavily dependent on labours to keep the wheel of economy keep moving.

## REFERENCES

- Abdullah, A., Boyle, S. and Joham, C. 2011. Cultural factors in workforce management: the case of multinational companies operating in Bangladesh. *International Review of Business Research Papers*. 7(2), pp. 196-211.
- Absar, N., Nimalathan, B. and Mahmood, M. 2012. HRM-market performance relationship:evidence from Bangladeshi organizations. *South Asian Journal of Global Business Research*. 1(2), pp. 238 – 255.
- Absar, M. M. N., Sikder, Z. H., Nimalathan, B., & Bhuiyan, M. M. 2010. Employee compensation practices in industrial enterprises of Bangladesh: A public-private sector comparison. *Economic Sciences Series*. LXII (4)
- Ahmed, N. and Peerlings, J. 2009. Addressing workers' rights in textile and apparel industries: consequences for Bangladesh economy, *World Development*. 37(3), pp.661- 75.
- Akter, A. 2019. Employment trends in 2018 in Bangladesh textile and apparel industry. [online] [accessed on June 15, 2019]. Available from: <https://www.textiletoday.com.bd/employment-trends-2018-bangladesh-textile-apparel-industry/>
- Ali, M. and Mamun, M. 2012. Supply chain management of textile industry: A case study on Bangladesh. 1, pp.35-40.
- Appelbaum, E., Bailey, T, Berg, P & Kalleberg, A. 2000. Manufacturing Advantage: Why High-Performance Work Systems Pay Off. *The Academy of Management Review*. 26.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). 2017. *Bangladesh Statistics 2017*. [online]. [Accessed 31 October 2018] Available from:[http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/a1d32f13\\_85\\_53\\_44f1\\_92e6\\_8ff80a4ff82e/Bangladesh%20%20Statistics-2017.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0KMkGPXmAF4YXALQBcMTHZXTVQuFHSMjZqTnrhLT hBbxO7T-d3TT-oomY](http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/a1d32f13_85_53_44f1_92e6_8ff80a4ff82e/Bangladesh%20%20Statistics-2017.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0KMkGPXmAF4YXALQBcMTHZXTVQuFHSMjZqTnrhLT hBbxO7T-d3TT-oomY).
- Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

2015. *Trade information*. [online]. [Accessed 31 October 2018] Available from: <http://www.bgmea.com.bd/home/pages/TradeInformation#.VdS38DBViko>.
- Bangladesh Gazette. 2015. *The Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006*.
- Bhuiyan, F S. 2011. Modernizing Bangladesh public administration through E-governance: Benefits and challenges. *Government Information Quarterly*. 28(1), pp.54– 65.
- Business Balls. 2012. *The Psychological Contract*. [online]. [Accessed 04 Nov 2018] Available from: [https://www.businessballs.com/building-relationships/the-psychological-contract-2012/?fbclid=IwAR24OzOymCHQLStYX5PN0OGXLe-qZJuDAteB-OnncArdkAqGR\\_amZnY\\_R9s/](https://www.businessballs.com/building-relationships/the-psychological-contract-2012/?fbclid=IwAR24OzOymCHQLStYX5PN0OGXLe-qZJuDAteB-OnncArdkAqGR_amZnY_R9s/).
- Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. 2020. Bangladesh: Garment workers at risk of COVID-19 infection as factories supplying to major brands reopen, against Health Ministry advice. [online]. [Accessed on June 30, 2020]. Available from: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/bangladesh-garment-workers-at-risk-of-covid-19-infection-as-factories-supplying-to-major-brands-reopen-against-health-ministry-advice>
- Claeson, B. S. 2015. Emerging from the tragedies in Bangladesh: A Challenge to Voluntarism in the Global Economy. *New Solutions*. 24(4), pp. 495-50.
- CPD. 2006. *Bangladesh Vision 2021*. Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). [03 November 2019] Available from: <http://saber.eaber.org/sites/default/files/documents/Bangladesh%20Vision%202021.pdf>
- Ehsan, M. 2008. Public sector human resource management in Bangladesh: Challenges and opportunities. *Asian Affairs*. 30(4), pp.50–75.
- Esteban, J., Mayoral, L. and Ray, D. 2012. Ethnicity and Conflict: Theory and Facts. *Science*. 336(6083), pp.858-865.
- Farooque, O., Zijl, T., Dunstan, K. and Karim, A. 2007. Corporate governance in Bangladesh: link between ownership and financial performance. *Corporate Governance: An International Review*. 15(6), pp.1453-77.
- Fernandes, A. 2008. Firm productivity in Bangladesh manufacturing industries. *World Development*. 36(10), pp. 1725-44.
- Hossain, S. and Cheng, M.Y. 2002. Bangladesh: building for a better future?. *International Journal of Social Economics*. 29(10), pp.813-821.
- Investors Chronicle. 2008. The seven hottest emerging markets. *Investors Chronicle*. 20 March, pp. 28-37.
- Islam, A. and Deegan, C. 2008. Motivation for an organization within a developing country to report social responsibility information: evidence from Bangladesh. *Accounting Auditing and Accountability Journal*. 21(6), pp. 850-74.
- Karim, M. 2007. Restoring the credibility of Bangladesh Public Service Commission: Major challenges and policy recommendations. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*. 4(1), pp.1–12.
- Levin, J. 2004. Functionalism. [online]. [Accessed on 28 June, 2020]. Available from: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/functionalist/>
- Mueller, F. 1994. Societal Effect, Organizational Effect and Globalization. *Organizational Studies*. 15(3), pp. 7-428.
- Nasim, A. K. M. 2013. Analysis: Current and Pending Labour Legislation of Bangladesh. 1(1). pp.01
- Nordea. 2020. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bangladesh. [Online]. [Accessed on June 01, 2020]. Available from: <https://www.nordeatrade.com/dk/explore-new-market/bangladesh/investment#:~:text=FDI%20in%20figures,largest%20investment%20of%20the%20year>.
- Pratima, P.M. 1996. Health Impact of women's wage Employment: A case study of the Garment Industry of Bangladesh. *Quarterly Journal of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)*. 24(1.2).

- Sarker, A. 2006. New public management in developing countries: An analysis of success and failure with particular reference to Singapore and Bangladesh. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. 19(2), pp.180–203.
- Sanderson, S.K. 2007. Conflict Theory. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, G. Ritzer (Ed.). [online]. [Accessed on 21 May, 2020]. Available from: 10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosc089
- Shahidul, M.I. and Shazali, S.T. S. 2011. "Dynamics of manufacturing productivity: lesson learnt from labor intensive industries", *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*. 22(5), pp.664-678.
- Siddiqui, J. 2011. Development of corporate governance regulations: the case of an emerging economy. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 91(2), pp. 253-74.
- Spence, C., Carter, C., Belal, A., Husillos, J., Dambrin, C. and Archel, P. 2016. Tracking habitus across a transnational professional field. *Work, Employment & Society*. 30(1), pp.3-20.
- Rayhan, S., Saha, S., & Hassan, M. 2014. Factors Affecting the Customer Buying Behavior in Relation to Readymade Garments in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Marketing and Logistics*. 1, pp. 8-14.
- Taplin, I. 2014. Who is to blame?: A re-examination of fast fashion after the 2013 factory disaster in Bangladesh. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*. 10(1)
- Textile Today. 2019. *RMG sector's contribution to GDP downs by 3%*. [online] [accessed on 15 June, 2020]. Available from: <https://www.textiletoday.com.bd/rmg-sectors-contribution-gdp-downs-3-2/>
- The Business Standard. 2020. *World bank forecasts only 1.6% GDP growth for Bangladesh*. [online]. [Accessed on 25 July, 2020]. Available from: <https://tbsnews.net/economy/world-bank-forecasts-only-16-gdp-growth-bangladesh-90592>
- The Financial Express. 2020. *Most RMG factories fall short of reopening criteria as virus lockdown unwinds*. [online]. [Accessed on 30 June, 2020]. Available from: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/most-rmg-factories-fall-short-of-reopening-criteria-as-virus-lockdown-unwinds-1589379753>
- Uddin, M.M. 2013. A Study of Knowledge on Consequences and Practices about Environmental Pollution of Secondary level Students' in Bangladesh. *Universal Journal of Environmental Research and Technology*. 3(5), PP. 571-584
- Uhl-Bien, M. 2006. Relational leadership theory: exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *Leadership Quarterly*. 17, pp. 654– 676.
- Ultee, W. (2007). Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, G. Ritzer (Ed.). [online]. [Accessed on 20 May, 2020]. Available from: 10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosb044

## **AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

Muzdalifa Anzum has pursued an MSc in International Human Resource Management and Development from the University of Glasgow and completed BBA from North South University with a major in Human Resource Management and minor in Marketing. She has supervised a project titled 'Improving Account Opening Process for New Customers' for a multinational bank in London. Currently, she is serving as an Adjunct Lecturer at Chittagong Independent University and a Monitoring and Documentation of Young Power in Social Action (YPSA). Additionally, she is the Research Coordinator of a Scottish research forum supporting equality for Scottish ethnic minorities. Her research interests lies in refugee integration in the labour market, gender and diversity in organizations, leadership and entrepreneurship and methodology to study silent voice of ethnic minorities.