



AIUB

Office of
Research and Publications

COVID-19: Increasing Production Cost and Its Effect on RMG Sector of Bangladesh

Esrat Jebin
Md. Faruque Hossain

AIUB Journal of Business and Economics

Volume: 17 Issue Number: 2 ISSN (Online): 2706-7076

December 2020

Citation

Jahan E. and Hossain F., COVID-19: Increasing Production Cost and Its Effect on RMG Sector of Bangladesh. (2020) *AIUB Journal of Business and Economics (AJBE)*, 17 (2), 36-68



Copyright © 2020

American International University-Bangladesh

AIUB Journal of Business and Economics

Volume 17, Issue 2

ISSN (PRINT) 1683-8742

ISSN (ONLINE) 2706-7076

December 2020 pp. 37-68

COVID-19: Increasing Production Cost and Its Effect on RMG Sector of Bangladesh

Esrat Jebin

*Faculty of Business Administration,
American International University-Bangladesh*

*Md. Faruque Hossain**

*Faculty of Business Administration,
American International University-Bangladesh*

Corresponding author*:

Email: mfhossain@aiub.edu

COVID-19: Increasing Production Cost and Its Effect on RMG Sector of Bangladesh

Abstract

The garments sector of Bangladesh is playing a major role in the growth of the rapidly growing economy of the country. According to World Bank in 1972, the total GDP of Bangladesh was US\$29 billion which grew to \$173.82 billion in 2014, where \$31 billion came from the export sector and 82% of that was the contribution of the RMG sector. This industry is badly affected by the burden of the increased utility bills and unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. According to BGMEA, international buyers canceled or postponed at least 3.16 billion worth shipments which affected 1142 garments and 2.26 million workers, working in those garments. Therefore, this study is an attempt to find out the effect of increased gas and electricity bills as well as COVID-19 pandemic on RMG sector, consequences of COVID-19 pandemic, condition of workers and owners', steps taken by Government and BGMEA, and the solution and precautionary to avoid such problem in the future. The research tools are the questionnaire for workers, and interview schedule for factory management and owners. Samples were taken randomly from different levels of management and workers. The study divulges most of the owners and workers are not happy with the government's decision of increasing utility bills especially the electricity bill amid the pandemic was deadly for them. The BGMEA was in dilemma from the very beginning of the pandemic which created more confusion among the workers due to lack of collective decision-making leadership. Terminating workers even after the government's request puts the workers in a tight situation however some garments are not terminating workers and they have no intention to do this in the future. Concluding remarks, the government should give clear instructions to BGMEA about the safety of workers and stop terminating them. To save the industry they should work together, and the government should also reconsider the decision of increasing the gas and electricity bill.

Key words: Production cost, RMG, BGMEA, COVID-19, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

“Made in Bangladesh” tag has become a well-known readymade garments brand in the global market. Readymade garments (RMG) sector is the backbone of our economy. In the year 2002 textile, clothing and RMG contributed 77% of the total merchandise exports and it has been increasing in every year. In the recent years, earning from RMG sector not only dominates Bangladesh’s GDP, This sector is the biggest contributor of our export oriented earning and also playing a major role in economic development of Bangladesh. According to BGMEA 3503 garments are listed but right now around 6000 garments factories are there in Bangladesh. 98% of these factories are located in four major districts; Dhaka 38 %, Gazipur 28.9%, Chittagong 16.1% and Narayanganj 14.7% (Moazzem and Radia, 2018). In the financial year 2016-2017 RMG sector generated US\$ 28.14 billion which is 80.7% of total export earnings and 12.36% of GDP (Hossain and Latifee, 2017).

Bangladesh holds the second place in producing RMGs, right after China. According to recent survey total workforce of Bangladesh is approximately 6.08 core, whereas RMG and textile sector together generated 45 lakhs employment opportunity (Akhter, 2019). Only the booming RMG sector creates the working opportunity for almost 35 lakhs workers. Among them 60.8% are female and 39.2% are male (Akhter, 2019). It means garments sector is creating employment opportunity for many people especially for women. But it is a matter of concern that with time how much the socio economic condition changed of the worker. Other study shows that the wage disparity between male and female workers and their salary growth of male workers is comparatively higher than the female workers (Hossain *et al.*, 2014a; and Hossain *et al.*, 2014b; Afroz *et al.*, 2018). Although RMG sector earns maximum foreign currency for Bangladesh workers of this sector were always deprived and never got right payment for their work. After 8 days unrest in January 2019, government revised the pay structure for garments workers on January 14, 2019 (Table 1).

Table 1: Recent pay structure (The Daily Star, 2019).

Increased Wages (BD Taka)						
Grade	Basic Wage 2018 Gazette	Revised Basic Wage	Rise in Basic Wage	Gross Wage 2018	Revised Gross Wage	Rise in Gross Wage
7	4100	4100	No rise	8000	8000	No rise
6	4370	4380	10	8405	8420	15
5	4670	4683	13	8855	8875	20
4	4930	4998	68	9245	9347	102
3	5160	5330	170	9590	9845	255
2	8520	9044	524	14630	15416	786
1	10440	10938	498	17510	18257	747

That unrest might give them some extra payment, but the working conditions is not still good. Till now many workers are forced to work 16 to 17 hours and seven day in the week. Unsafe working condition, sexual harassment and the back to back fire incidents left many workers injured as well as took many lives. Many organizations are working to improve the situation and it is improving day by day but still now some owners are taking advantages of the helpless situation of workers.

Bangladesh garments sector largely depends on international market as most of our buyers are from European and American market. In the past quota protection gave us some advantages so when the garments faced “quota withdrawn situation” economists of Bangladesh were little bit worried but we successfully handled situation (Islam *et al.*, 2014). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a big problem for our RMG sector. At first it was thought that this pandemic will create new opportunity for Bangladesh as many renowned fashion brands is planning to shift their orders from China to other RMG manufacturing countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Vietnam, and India. But then the scarcity of raw material came in front and Garments owners started to think from where they would manage raw material for this sector. Our RMG sector is heavily depending on China for raw material. We export 60% woven fabrics, 15% -20% knit fabrics and

80-85 % dying chemicals and accessories from China for RMG sector export. Because of this pandemic situation supply chain from China had stopped and it took few months to stabilize the chain. Another alternate option India was also affected by COVID-19 and they are still struggling with the pandemic situation. Hence, it is truly an alarming situation for Bangladesh. But it is a positive sign that China is now in a better position and now we are getting the raw material from China and the production of RMG sector has started in full swing. But another big problem is many of our buyer countries are now affected by COVID-19. The lockdown situation pushed them towards cancellation of the orders. It was a huge loss for RMG sector and big shock for our economy (Rasheduzzaman, 2020). After cancellation of orders or postponed shipments by many fashion brands, an uncertainty struck the sector and government and BGMEA, BKMEA and other concerned parties were trying to find alternate solutions.

Furthermore, government decision like increasing gas and electricity bills blows a hit on our RMG sector. From July, 2019 gas price has been increased by 37.88% for industrial use (Textile Today, 2019). It took a heavy toll on our RMG sector and other industries that are highly dependent on gas to run the factory. As the production cost raised our apparel industries lost their competitive edge and small textile factories suffered a lot (Table 2).

Table 2: Proposed production cost (The Daily Star, 2019).

Impact of proposed price hike	
Industries	Rise in production cost
Power	93.73%
Steel re-rolling	11.42%
Textile	22.57%
Cement	4.09%

Another big shock hits RMG industries and other sectors when cost of electrify increase from March 1, 2020; amid COVID-19 pandemic. Due to Corona outbreak, when our exporting sector is facing cancellation of orders and RMG sector is fighting with scarcity of raw material, order

cancellation and many more problems, then this price hike blows another hit on our manufacturing sector. It pushed RMG sector to the border. The increasing production cost is making the situation harder for our textile industries in the global market and eating up the profit as well as the advantages.

The main purpose of the study is to find out how different textile organizations are thinking and handling growing production cost due to increase of gas and electricity bill. Another main purpose is to know how different garment owners as well as the workers are managing economic shock which came as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. The specific objectives are: (1) to know the effect of increasing the gas and electricity bill on RMG sector, (2) what type of steps organizations are taking to keep workers safe in this COVID-19 Pandemic, (3) to what length the steps of government are helpful for RMG sector, (4) know about “staff trimming”, (5) how they faced the scarcity of raw material what type steps should be taken to avoid such situation, (6) what types of problems are workers facing because of pandemic and increased production cost.

2. Material and Methods

Area: Selected garments are from Mirpur and Ashulia industrial hub areas.

Population: The management of the selected garments and working class people from different garments.

Tools: The tools are used such as, questionnaire, face to face interview, observation and published articles and reports on RMG sector in different newspapers, magazines and journals.

Limitation: Limitations are flaws or shortcoming of a research. This could be happened because of unavailability of resources, small sample size, flawed methodology etc. No research is flawless but listing the flaws of research shows the ethics and honesty of the researcher and transparency of the study (Editage Insights, 2019). Limitations of this study are different from each other such as, workable small size of sample, selected members of management participated for interview, workers sometimes didn't give proper answer, age limit of the worker was not taken into consideration, time was short and 50 respondents (20 from management, 30 working class people) express their views, thoughts and problems regarding different issues connected to the topic. Among the workers both male and female (70% female, 30% male) participated as respondents. Two structure

questionnaires were prepared for the respondents. Questionnaire for management contain 12 questions while questionnaire for working class people contains 10 questions. Respondents were from export oriented large garments as well as from some local small garments. While the questionnaire for management focused on how they are solving different problems, the questionnaire for workers contain questions basically regarding their economic conditions and what they are thinking about different problems.

The 20 respondents from managements (Table 3) hold different positions and posts in their organization they were selected from different organizations. The other 30 working class people were also from different organizations but because of some privacy issue they didn't want to disclose the name of their organizations.

Table 3: Respondents who holds senior policy making post along with owners.

Name of the organizations	Number of respondents
M M Group	4
Snowtex	5
Adam Apparel Ltd	3
Small garments 1	5
Small garments 2	3
Total	20

3. Results and Discussions

As management and workers have to deal with different issues in some points they have totally different point of view. For example, when workers think about the salary and other payments management was worried about safety, production and other things. Below all these matters will be discussed.

3.1 Steps taken by garments

In this pandemic situation, every garment has taken several steps to ensure workers' safety. Even the small local garments are trying their best to protect their workers. On the other hand, even large garments have installed disinfectant spray tunnel as a safety measure. These organizations are also using the thermal scanner for monitoring the temperature of the workers, cleaning the doors, handles and floor after 2 or 3 hours, motivating workers to maintain social distancing, using masks, and washing hands after a period. Some of them even set up hand washing point for workers' and take some unique steps like installed TV in some point of the factory where they play awareness video, arranged help desk to call the doctor if necessary, made isolation room, separated entry and exit point even specific space to keep shoes.

On the other hand, small garments are also following some steps for workers' safety like ensuring social distancing, motivating to use a mask, washing hand, etc. It is clear that garments owners are aware of the pandemic situation and from their side; they have been trying their best to follow the steps instructed by WHO.

Workers are also satisfied with the safety measurements taken by different garments. At their working place, they try to maintain the rules and regulations. But the problem identified by many owners is workers do not follow the instruction outside of their working place. For example, they come to their working place in a group and leave in a group where the matter of "social distancing" is absent. Their living places are congested where they do not follow the hygiene and isolation is not possible there even if it is necessary. Although some organizations think by their motivational program workers will follow all the steps suggested by WHO inside and outside of the organizations, some believe it is not possible because some workers are not really cautious about the COVID-19 (Fig.1).

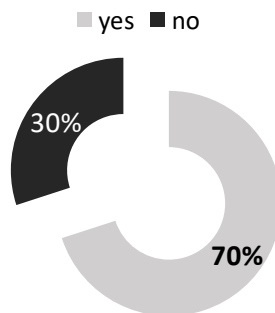


Fig. 1: Possibility to follow all the steps suggested by WHO.

3.2 Steps taken by government and other organizations

COVID-19 blows a big hit on our garments sector. On March 26, 2020 government announced day days shut down until April 4, 2020. After that, it extended several times. As per government instructions garments were also closed at this time. So the production and shipment of the garments became uncertain. This sector created a working opportunity for millions of males and females. Many of them didn't get their salary before closing the garments. On 12th April workers from at least 11 factories of Savar started a protest on the street for the wages of March. In that difficult situation created because of the lockdown, the most important question was "what will be the future of the RMG sector?" At that time Bangladesh government and BGMEA took some initiatives to save this sector. On 25 March 2020 Prime Minister of Bangladesh announced a stimulus package of 5000 core taka to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on export-oriented industries. Help could be taken from this package only for salary disbursement and other payments of those industries. On 1 April 2020, the finance ministry published the guideline for the disbursement of the stimulus package. According to the guideline, industries can take aid from the package at 2% interest for six months grace period to pay salaries and wages to workers for three months. The government has collected salary sheets, workers' list and mobile banking number from the management to disburse the salaries of April directly to workers. On behalf of government different banks collected these documents which will be later submitted to Bangladesh Bank. As borrowers will get six months grace period, they have to start paying back the money from the seventh month in a small amount (Fair Wear, 2020).

According to the research of SANEM (South Asian Network on Economic Modeling), 55% of organizations did not get any help from stimulus packages. The SANEM conducted this research over the phone and took interviews of the management members of 303 organizations. Among them 102 organizations (34%) said that they got the help and 11% said they have no idea about this and 55% said they didn't get any help from the package (Prothom Alo, 2020).

Many garment owners believe it is a good decision of government while some believe there is some mismanagement and as a result, export-oriented industries are not getting the full benefits of the packages. According to some owners, banks are reducing the amount from the original

declared by the government and distributing partial amount. On the other hand, some small local garments did not get any benefits from the packages. While they were being asked about the stimulus package they didn't give any opinion regarding this (Fig. 2).

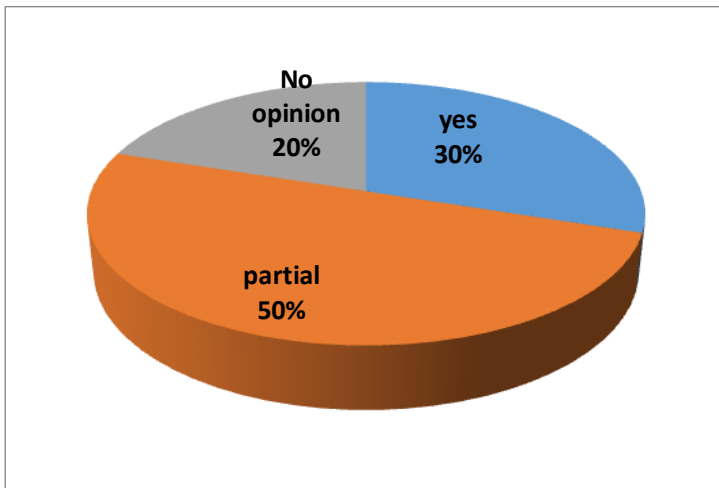


Fig. 2: Opinion regarding government stimulus package.

3.3 Layoff

The layoff is permanent or temporary termination or suspension of an employee. In this lockdown when the economy of the whole world is suffering, “Layoff” becomes a common word for all. For the last few months, apparel workers of Bangladesh are experiencing layoffs despite government has taken numerous steps to help them.

Even after Bangladesh government has announced stimulus package for export-oriented industries, the layoff issue came to spotlight after the statement given by BGMEA president Rubana Huq- “The reality was unexpected for the sector that workers will have to face termination, but entrepreneurs are helpless as 99 percent of factories are running with only 55 percent capacity” (Uddin and Mahmud, 2020). After the statement published, BGMEA made it clear that Rubana Huq did not say anything about job cuts in this sector. She expressed her concern regarding declining employment opportunities and potential job cuts (The Business Standard, 2020c). But the situation is much more critical. In spite of a tripartite agreement between concerned parties, 18000 workers were fired in April

and May. According to a report of DIFE (The Department of Inspection of Factories and Establishments), 67 apparel and textile factories fired 17,579 fired workers after Eid Ul Fitr of 2020. According to Industrial Police, 18,128 workers faced layoffs from April to the first week of June. 117 factories at Ashulia, Gazipur, Chittagong, Narayanganj, Mymensingh, and Khulna sacked their workers showing the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. 13,796 of them are from 81 BGMEA factories, 2,266 from 13 BKMEA factories, 258 workers are from 4 BTMA factories, 47 from a BEPZA factory and 1761 workers are from some other factories (Ovi and Alif, 2020); although it was decided in the Tripartite agreement that, “No factory would go for layoff on the condition that workers from shutting down factories would get 60% of their gross salary” (Uddin and Mahmud, 2020).

During the interview the owners and management firmly say, they never want to fire any of their workers but sometimes they do it because of the situation when they do not have any other options. Some big export-oriented garments factories like Snowtex, Adam Apparels, etc. did not sack any of their employees and workers in this pandemic and they have no intention to sack workers in the future. Even the local small garments are trying to protect themselves as well as their workers. But some workers inform that after the Eid Ul Adha some factories will sack the workers.

3.4 Increasing gas and electricity bills

Increasing gas and electricity bills was a big strike in our RMG sector. In the competitive market low production cost is the key to survival. In this crucial moment, the increased bill is a burden to all. On 1 July 2019, Bangladesh government raised the gas price for captive power generators to 13.85 taka per cubic meter from 9.62 taka per cubic meter and for industries gas price was raised to 10.70 taka per cubic meter from 7.76 taka per cubic meter (RMG Bangladesh, 2019). As a result, the production cost of yarn and fabrics increased. Bangladesh fabrics producers are capable of covering 95% of the total demand of the knitwear sector and 40% of the woven sector. The increased price of gas enhanced production cost of yarn and fabrics 6.66 and 7.61 per kg, respectively. Before gas price hike production cost of per kg yarn was 15.15 taka which went up to 21.81 taka. On the other hand, the production cost per kg fabric was 17.32 taka which rose to 24.93 taka later. These increased production costs made the market more competitive and inspired many garments owners to import yarn and fabric from other countries at a low price. Garment owners were not against the

gas price hike but if the government increased the price gradually RMG sector would handle the situation more easily (Ovi, 2019).

In the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic, another hit came from the government when it was declared that the cost of electricity would increase from 1 March 2020. The decision came as to rub salt on the wound of garment owners. In the pandemic when the entire RMG sector was struggling with the order cancellation, shortage of raw material and uncertainty than the government suddenly declared that power price would be increased. The decision was criticized badly but the government was determined to execute the plan. At that time it was predicted that the electricity bill would go up to an average of 8, 70,000 taka per month for heavy industries and 17,340 taka for medium-sized industries (Noyon and Sajid, 2020). According to economist A. B. Mirza Azizul Islam, “Bangladesh Apparel manufacturers enjoy better competitiveness due to lower electricity prices. It will be great pressure on the businesspeople as the production cost went up erasing the competitive edge to the global markets. It would be difficult to absorb the new cost, when the profit, as well as the business, is in a declining trend” (Textile Today, 2020a).

In Bangladesh the usages of electricity vary depending on the sector (Fig. 3). Comparing to many industrial country electricity bills is higher in Bangladesh (Table 4). Every garment owner is against this decision. They believe in this critical time government should reduce the price of gas and electricity for the survival of the local and export-oriented factories. But the government took a very bad decision and not helpful for the RMG sector.

Table 4. Electricity price (BDT) comparison between USA and Bangladesh (The Business Standard, 2020a).

	USA	Bangladesh
Industries	5.4 TK	8.45 TK
Domestic	10.77 TK	3.75-6.34 TK

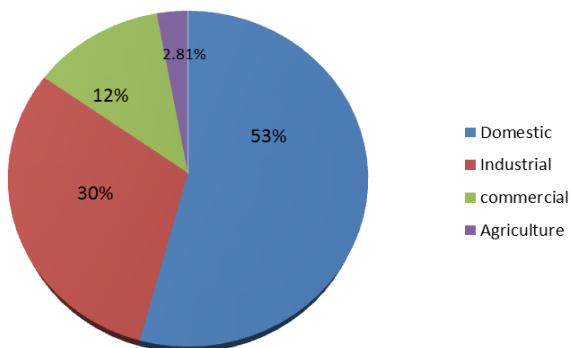


Fig. 3: Sectors and usage of electricity in Bangladesh (The Business Standard, 2020a).

3.5 Mismanagement

From the very beginning of the pandemic, there was mismanagement in the different sectors of government. Inadequate testing capacity, fragile public health infrastructure, lack of communication, and slow response to the pandemic situation at early stage put Bangladesh in the danger. To control the situation Bangladesh government declared public holiday and lockdown from 26 March 2020. Prime Minister started to handle the situation and declared a stimulus package for export-oriented business. But initial mismanagement made the situation difficult and the RMG sector was not out of it.

The “lockdown” and “social distancing” was a totally new term for many rural people. From 24 March 2020 people started to leave Dhaka for their home district without maintaining any distance. The condition became more confusing when many workers returned to Dhaka after getting the news that BGMEA has decided to open all garments on 5 April 2020. Many workers received messages from factories’ owners and managers that their factories would be open and if anyone did not join they would not receive any payment for the day of their absence (Mahtab, 2020). After receiving the message garments worker started to come to Dhaka on foot or using whatever transport they could manage in the absence of public transport amid the shutdown (The Business Standard, 2020a). Thousands of workers gathered in their workplaces without maintaining any social distances only to find out closure would continue until 12 April 2020.

This mismanagement was heavily criticized but the member factories of BGMEA tried their best to control the situation. Owners of

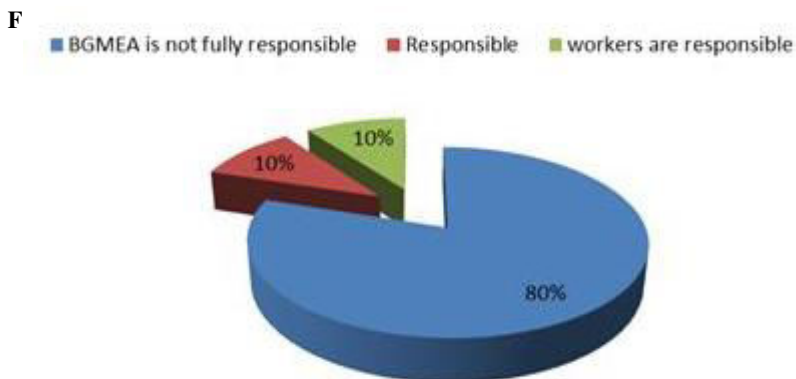
different garment factories believe it was a wrong decision and the chaos generated because of this decision created a vulnerable situation, but they also believe this mismanagement was unwilling. COVID 19 pandemic situation is totally new for them and they are still trying to figure out how to run this production-oriented sector profitably by ensuring all kinds of safety measurements for workers.

It is also true BGMEA did not get proper guidelines from the concerned department regarding these. Cancellation of order and urgency to complete the order from foreign buyers pushed BGMEA and BKMEA to take such a decision. This is why some owners think BGMEA and BKMEA should not hold 100% responsible for this mismanagement.

Another matter is some garments owners believe workers are partially responsible for this mismanagement. According to them when lockdown started workers were asked to stay where they live near their workplace, but the left the city as soon as the factories closed. So when garments owners wanted to reopen the factories they abruptly started for their workplace and this chaos created; while, workers have different opinions about this matter (Fig. 4).

The SANEM (South Asian Network on Economic Modeling) Netizen Forum believes that there are still some contradictions in the directives of BGMEA. The government should check this issue and give strict instructions regarding workers' health and safety (UNB News, 2020).

Fig. 4:
Managements' opinion regarding the BGMEA A mismanagement



After the Eid Ul Adha 2020, garments workers started to join their workplaces from August 08, 2020. To avoid any unwanted situation BGMEA has instructed workers to follow health safety measures like maintaining social distancing, washing hands before entering the factories,

temperature check, wearing masks, etc. During the Eid holiday, workers were asked not to leave their workplaces but many of them left for their home district (The Business Standard, 2020b). To avoid crowds, garments factories in different industrial areas maintain their own calendar. While garments factories in Gazipur started their operations from August 3, 2020, some other garments started from 4, some from 5, and so on but it was clear, workers were not following any instructions when they were coming from their village. Boarding on overcrowded local transport, moving in a crowd, no mask were common scenario among the workers.

3.6 Import raw materials

Although Bangladeshi fabric producers are covering 95% of the total demand for knitwear fabrics and 40% of woven fabrics; the RMG sector imports the rest to fulfill the demand. Besides to fulfill the demand we import many raw materials from neighboring countries. Bangladesh is the largest importer of cotton in the world. In recent past India was the main source of cotton for Bangladeshi millers. But the late delivery, less amount of product than the agreed quantity and poor quality cotton made the millers take the decision of importing cotton from different sources (Fig. 5). In 2019 Bangladesh imported only 18% cotton from India which was 26% in 2018, while in 2019 more than 12% cotton came from Commonwealth of Independent States countries, nearly 12% came from the US, 5% came from Australia and 10% came from rest of the world. On the other hand, last year Bangladesh bought 41% of the total demand for cotton from East and West African countries. The better quality of cotton, timely shipment, and commitment attract Bangladesh to buy cotton from African countries (Textile Today, 2020b).

Apart from these Bangladeshi garments and textile owners also import different types of fabrics like poly spandex, woven fabrics, the metal of zipper, rubber, polyester yarn, etc from other countries. Bangladesh also import sewing thread raw material but complete dyeing and other processing in Bangladesh. To meet the demand for raw material of Button, Bangladesh textile industries are using the local market as well as importing from outside. China is the main source of the raw material of the Bangladesh RMG and the textile sector. But we also import raw material from Pakistan, India, USA, and some other countries depending on the demand, price, quality and availability.

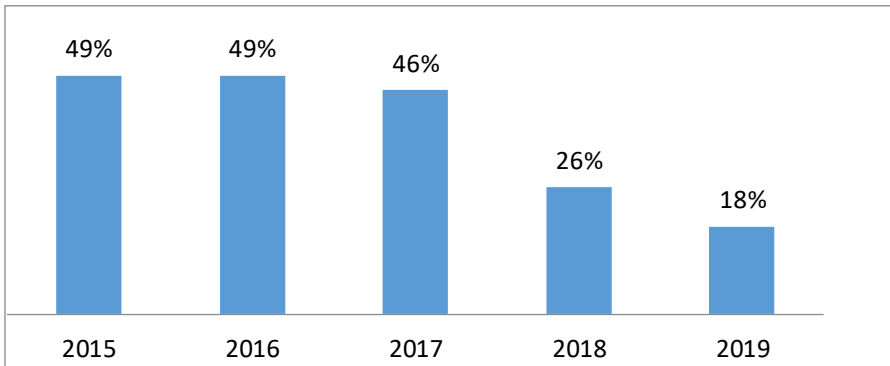


Fig. 5: Amount of cotton imported from India last few years (Apparel Resource, 2016; Dhaka Tribune, 2016; BDNews 24, 2018; Textile Today, 2020).

While local small garment rely on local raw material, export-oriented garments use imported as well as local raw material. There are several reasons for importing raw material from other countries. These are

- Inadequate of a reliable source
- Less investment and capability
- Inadequate technological support and unskilled manpower
- High utility bill
- Demand of some material is more than we produce
- Production cost of some raw material is more. It increases the total costing of the product in the global market. So importing those raw materials seems a better option
- Maximum buyers from the US, EU prefer raw material from specific country and quality
- Good relationship with raw material suppliers from other countries

Managements of Export-oriented garment factories believe it is possible to produce the same quality raw material as imported raw material if millers get enough opportunities. They think for this we need investment, proper technology, skilled manpower, less utility bill, honesty, and patience. If the Bangladesh government, BGMEA, BKMEA, and other concerned parties work together in the recent future we will be able to produce the best quality raw material locally and it will strengthen this sector.

3.7 Effect of COVID-19 on the supply chain of raw materials

On December 31, 2019 the government of Wuhan, China reported about treating dozens of new cases and world came to know about the contagious Corona Virus. On January 11, 2020, Chinese media reported the first death because of this virus (Taylor, 2020) and the world saw the suspension of economic activities in one of the biggest economically powerful countries, China (Bhattacharjee, 2020).

At first, the situation was considered as a benefit for Bangladesh when some popular global brands were planning to shift their orders from China to Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Cambodia. But soon the real situation became clear when the raw material shipment from China stopped due to lockdown in China. China is our biggest business partner and we are heavily dependent on China for the raw material (Rasheduzzaman, 2020). According to the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) Bangladesh import 60% of woven fabrics from China. Not only that, but 15% - 20% raw material of knit fabrics, 80-85% dyeing chemical and accessories, 40% of garments accessories and packaging, manufacturing raw materials also come from China. When the shipment stopped prices of raw material increased 30% to 40%, in some cases it went up 50% than the regular price and the situation was threatening. Usually, garments owners store raw material for 3 to 4 months. Considering the situation BGMEA president Rubana Huq then said, "In general we are possibly going to take a hit for three to four months". But that sudden hit made everyone tense at that time since no was sure about when the regular shipment would resume. If the regular shipments from china do not resume within the next two weeks, we will not be able to procure any trim, as much of the raw material is from China"- Rubana Huq said (The Loadstar, 2020).

The factories which were running out of raw material owners of those factories were forced to bring raw material by air to meet the manufacturers' deadline. The senior vice president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Mohammed Hatem described the situation as a tremendous challenge - "I am forced to airship fabrics and raw materials to meet the deadline". He also added production in many factories was hampered because of a lack of raw material (The Loadstar, 2020). Not only raw materials, Bangladesh also imports 40% of capital machinery and spare parts from China (Fiber 2 Fashion.com, 2020). In the interview maximum owners mentioned that during the COVID-19 pandemic earlier stage, they used raw materials from their stock, but it is

true there was a shortage of raw materials and to fulfill the gap they bought raw materials from local suppliers at a high price. Even the small local garment went through the same situation.

3.8 Uncertain lives of garments workers

The booming export oriented garment sector created job opportunity for millions of people, mostly for young rural women. Many girls and women came to urban area relying on this sector and this matter created some health and safety related issues for these working women (Alamgir, 2019). Although the hard work and dedication of garments took this sector to a new level, whenever anything bad happen they suffer the most. Rana Plaza, Tazreen Fashion and many more tragic incidents took lives of garments workers and the responsible did not even get the punishment. In 24 April, 2020 was the seventh year of Rana Palza tragedy. It is true that the responsible for the incidents were not punished like before but the aftermath of this sector changed. After that garments manufacturers were bound to build new factories or renovate the existing ones following all safety guidelines to comply with Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (Accord) and Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance). Both options were costly for the manufacturers and it squeezed the profit margin. According to BGMEA from April to October in the year of 2019, 59 factories were shut down because they could not comply and 25,900 workers lost their jobs. In the meantime while Bangladeshi factories were upgrading as safe and green workplace competitor took the place in the global market. It forced Bangladesh to offer lowest prices to get back to competition (UNDP Bangladesh, 2020).

With time work place condition changed but till now garments workers are dealing with some typical issues like maternal issues, work related back pain, machine injuries, financial problem, sexual harassment etc (Alamgir, 2019). The corona pandemic has made their situation worst. Since the Wuhan outbreak in 2019, Bangladesh RMG sector suffered severely due to disrupted supply chain and lack of Raw material because China is the main source of our raw material. By the February, 2020 when COVID 19 emerged in Bangladesh's largest RMG market- US and Europe, manufacturer became concerned about the estimated losses. By the third week of March buyers started to either cancel the orders or delay order shipments (UNDP Bangladesh, 2020). Many garments fired their workers in this time and still this thing is happening even after government urged to

stop terminating the workers (Mridha, 2020). According to many workers after the Eid Ul Adha many garments will fire workers which make their condition uncertain. With time the situation in RMG sector is getting better but the risk and uncertainty of garments workers are not over yet. Manufacturers, who survived initially, might choose to accept orders only from solvent brands and it may result significant downsizing and job loss for more than 4 million RMG workers. Two third of this sector's workers are women and it will hampers their earning and ultimately it will push back the gains we made in women empowerment (UNDP Bangladesh, 2020).

In the first quarter of 2008 when the recession hit the world economy of the world witnessed corporate behemoths collapsing, increasing unemployment, and unimaginable downturn of global trade. WTO said, during that time global trade of goods reduced by 12 percent and service trade by 9 percent. As per an estimate of ILO 22 million people lost their jobs at that time. The COVID 19 Pandemic has brought that old tragedy of economy most severely in the year 2020, and the distress signal is already visible everywhere in the world. Economist believe it recession is just the primary signal and after effect will be much more dangerous. The initial estimates of ILO said that approximately 25 million might lose their job while WTO believe global trade of goods will fall by 13 percent to 32 percent depending on the severity and duration of the pandemic (Quoreshi, 2020).

From December 2019 Bangladesh government has raised the minimum wages of garments worker to 8000 per month from 5300 (The Daily Star, 2018). But their lifestyle did not change significantly. With salary living cost has increased manifold (Antara, 2019). During the interview all of the workers said they can hardly provide their family with the salary they get. In the most of the family husband and wife both work hard to fulfill the needs of the family. Including overtime a garments worker earns 12000 to 14000 taka. From there they have to maintain house rent, food cost, gas bill, electricity bill, necessity for baby, and medicine cost if anyone of the family gets sick. Depending on area for house rent they pay 3500 to 5500 and for food 4000 to 5000 (Table 5) and rest of the money for other cost which includes different types of bills, fulfill demand of their children, medicine for their sick family member etc.

Table 5: Expenditure of garments workers.

Expenditure	Taka
House rent	3500-5500
Food cost	4000-5000
Other	2000-4500

Because of the pandemic, many top fashion brands close their outlets during the lockdown and the victims of this are the people who stay thousands of miles away in Bangladesh and work the factories export readymade garments to those brands. When the lockdown started many workers didn't get their salary even after government announcement. This forced many workers to seek a new job in some other factories but the news of "terminating can happen after Eid Ul Adha" take their mental peace away and they are counting the days with fear and uncertainty. Many workers are now thinking of going back to the village if they lose their job because they do not have any other option but they are not sure what will they do after returning to the village.

3.9 Effect of Corona pandemic on the economy

Corona pandemic changed many things all over the world. Till 11 August 2020, total coronavirus cases -20,322,898; Deaths- 740,473 and recovered-13,245,532 (Worldometer, 2020). After a prolonged lockdown, many countries have started the business amid the infections and death with a hope that soon we will conquer the COVID 19. But many believe the wound of Corona will remain.

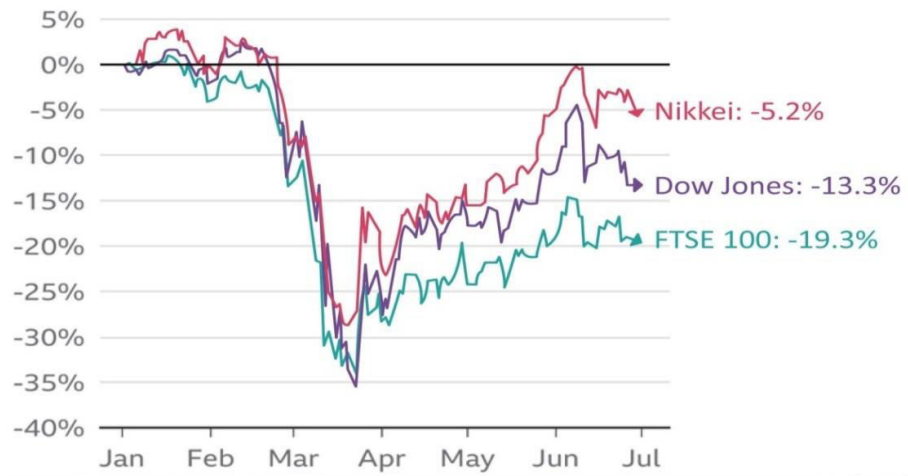


Fig. 6: The impact of Corona virus on share markets (Bloomberg, 2020).

The IMF (International Monetary Fund) already declared that the global economy will shrink by 3% this year which is the worst situation since the Great Depression in 1930. Stock Market witnessed big shifts. The Dow and the FTSE encountered the biggest quarterly drops in the first three months since 1987 (Fig. 6; Jones *et al.*, 2020).

In the USA the death rate has declined for the last few days but the curve has not flattened yet. Only a few days ago on average, 15000 people dies every day After the improvement of the situation recently US government is gradually opening business center (Chowdhury, 2020), but the debate is still going on how schools and colleges will reopen again. Some states have decided to reopen schools and colleges in the fall, however many have a question that whether students will join the classes or not in the fall. Observing the situation some district has already decided that if the infection rates continue to surge they will not resume the in-person classes in the fall (Schwiegershausen, 2020). Although the government is pushing so hard to roll back the economy, 10.4% of people are already out of work (Jones *et al.*, 2020). The UK is another severely affected country where 46,526 died in Corona till 11 August, 2020 (The Guardian, 2020). In response to the shrinking economy, the UK has slashed interest rates believing the theory that it will make borrowing cheaper, encourage

spending, and boost the economy. The prime minister who was also affected by Corona a few days ago has declared gradual easing of lockdown to allow people to return to work and recover the economy (Chowdhury, 2020).

The EU has already notified all embers about the declining economy of this region. Economists have predicted a prolonged shutdown can shrink the economy up to 7.4% in 2020 which was dropped by 4.4% in 2009. It may increase unemployment to 9% from 6.7 of the previous year. But they are also optimistic about retraining virus soon and believe in that case economy will boost by 6.3% in 2021. The EU member Italy and Spain suffered a lot in this pandemic and many people lost their lives when Corona emerged in these countries. But they are a little bit stable and easing the lockdown slowly. These countries' economies largely depend on tourism (Chowdhury, 2020). COVID 19 pandemic damaged travel industry very badly including airline industries. During this time many clients canceled their business trips and holidays to avoid getting infected. Many countries also imposed travel restrictions to prevent the virus (Jones *et al.*, 2020). Now everything is coming on track very slowly but the situation is still crucial. France, Germany and many other countries are now withdrawing restrictions and allowing the movement of people across the geographical boundaries (Chowdhury, 2020).

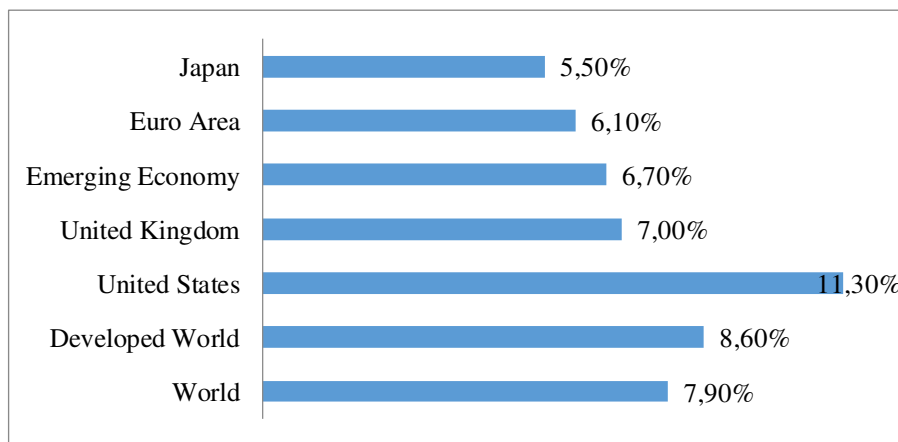


Fig. 7: Predictive cumulative losses by the end of 2021 (Bloomberg, JPMorgan, Eurostat, IMF, FEE; Dhaka Tribune, 2020).

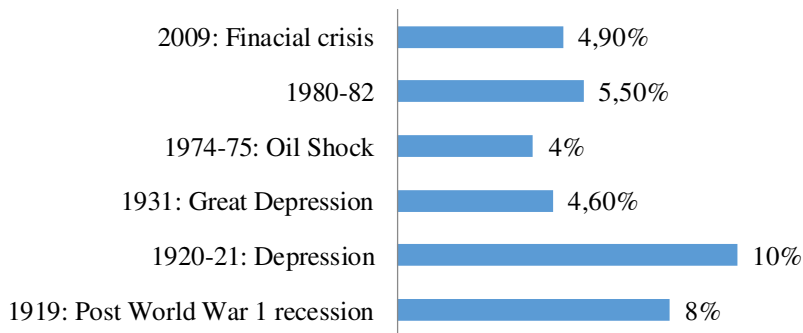


Fig. 8: Largest previous fall of world GDP (Bloomberg, JPMorgan, Eurostat, IMF, FEE; Dhaka Tribune, 2020).

Global brands were affected very badly in this pandemic. Famous brand Nike halts their operations and shut down the stores in the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Western Europe to control the spread of Coronavirus. However, the stores in South Korea, Japan, and China were open depending on the outbreak situation. In late February at the initial stage of pandemic UNIQLO shut down its 350 outlets in China and more than 100 outlets worldwide. 27 of these were in Europe and all 50 outlets in the US. The H&M was going through a tough situation since it sources 50% of the raw material from China. Another popular brand ZARA was also in a difficult situation due to the highest rate of inventory turnover even though it sources only 10% raw material from China (Light Castle, 2020). Due to this large scale of closure, a large brand started to postpone or cancel the order and apparel sales of Bangladesh took a nosedive.

The drastic hit of the pandemic on the economy of Bangladesh left many people unemployed. Not only famous fashion brands many organizations usually take uniforms for their employees. Due to the global recession, they sacked their employees and we lost the orders. Since many middle class and lower-middle-class people lost their job in the last few months they left the city and many houses and flats are now vacant. In Ashulia, Gazipur, Narayanganj where many garments workers live near their workplace left their houses at the initial stage of lockdown. Many left after being sacked from their work. As a result, society and economic dependency created with a long time broke suddenly. COVID-19 changed the buying behavior and lifestyle of people. Many people especially the

owners of the garments believe the bounce back is possible but nothing will go back 100% like before.

3.10 The bounce-back of Garments sector

From the very beginning of the pandemic, BGMEA and BKMEA are monitoring the situation closely. After the primary and some initial mismanagement BGMEA started to handle the situation efficiently. Although workers’ termination is going on, BGMEA is trying to get back the postponed and canceled orders from big fashion brands. To get the help of global brand BGMEA president Rubana Huq released a video message urging international apparel buyers to come forward to save the RMG sector of Bangladesh. She also wrote a letter to German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Dr. Gerd Müller, where she requested him to call their all brands, sourcing from Bangladesh, not to cancel or hold up any shipment. In response to her appeal several brands like H & M, PVH, Inditex, Marks & Spencer came forward gave the assurance that they will take the shipments of products that have been already manufactured and ordered (Fair Wear, 2020).

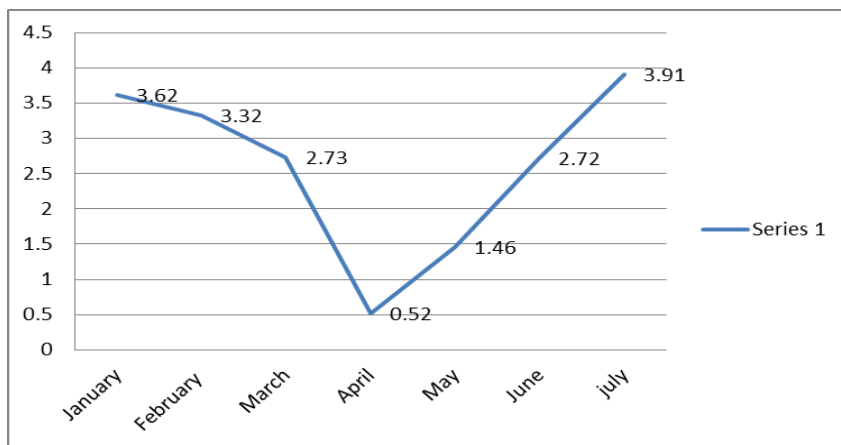


Fig. 9: Bangladesh’s export in 2020 in \$ billion (Fashion Press 24, 2020).

After a sharp decline for the last few months in July 2020 export-oriented sector earned 3.91 billion dollars. It is the highest ever earning in a

single month in the history of Bangladesh (Fig. 9). It was possible since the global buyer reinstated the orders and as a result shipment of garments, the product increased. In the improving situation of the corona pandemic, the export earnings of Bangladesh increased by 44% and jump to \$3.91 billion in July 2020, from \$2.91 billion in June 2020 (Fashion Press 24, 2020).

Bangladesh and Vietnam were fighting for this place. According to the “World Statistical Review 2020” of WTO, China is in the first position. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, china earned 15 thousand 200 core dollars from this sector although it is 600 cores less than in 2018. After China, the EU is in the second position. EU earned 13 thousand 600 core dollars. But as a single country, Bangladesh holds the second position. Bangladesh earned 3 thousand 400 core dollars from this sector. The close competitor of Bangladesh Vietnam is in the third position with 3 thousand 100 core dollar earning. After Vietnam there are India, Turkey, Hongkong, USA, Indonesia, and Cambodia are on the list. According to the ex-president of BKMEA Fazlul Huq, Vietnam is highly dependent on the USA for exporting its readymade garments. The economy of the USA is recovering slowly than the EU. So we can expect Vietnam won't be able to catch us in the next two years but we have to be careful (Prothom Alo, 2020).

Now many countries are in the second phase of Corona Pandemic. They have started their business amid the infection and are trying to survive with this problem. It is a positive sign because it will boost up the export opportunities for Bangladesh. Many brands are now placing orders for the upcoming Christmas. The foreign buyers who have canceled the orders are now coming forward with new hope because of this festival. The new ray hope is helping our RMG sector to bounce back. Anwar Ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez)- Managing Director of Evinco Group believes the mentality of the buyers of Europe and America is changing. Now they are shifting their order from China to Vietnam. Ultimately these orders will come to Bangladesh also. Now we just need to survive for a few more months till the situation becomes normal (Bangladesh Pratidin, 2020).

Another good news for our RMG sector is now Bangladesh at the top for exporting denim to the US. Because of Corona pandemic maximum shops are now closed but online shopping is running. During an interview with popular newspaper Bangladesh Pratidin, managing director of Hameem Group A. K Azad said, buyers are now buying dresses online and many clients who postponed or canceled their orders are now placing orders and accepting shipments from Bangladesh. He also said now the foreign buyers

are giving 10% less price for the shipments and new orders. Bangladesh has already received 75% bookings for August, September, and October and 60% bookings for November and December. During the interview, he mentioned that worldwide Bangladeshi denim product is popular. Although in the EU market Bangladesh holds the top position as a denim exporter, for a long time we were in the third position in the USA market. Now we are at the top in the US market as well. This will create a new brand image for Bangladesh which is a positive sign. He also said that, in 2019-20 fiscal years, from the total export-oriented sector Bangladesh earned 17% less than the previous fiscal year. Only in the readymade garment, we earned 18% percent less. EU is one of the biggest clients in the RMG sector. In the 2019-20 fiscal years, we exported 19% less and lost 400 core dollars (Bangladesh Pratidin, 2020).

4. Conclusions

It is true that the RMG sector of Bangladesh is the key to our booming economy. It is the source of our export earnings. Two third of our garments workers are women who were once lived in a village without any economic power. Our RMG sector made them the opportunity to be economically independent and get the self-respect as human being. But still, there are many problems that our women workers are facing like not getting enough sick leaves, problems with work during pregnancy, sexual harassment, etc. in different accidents took huge death toll but the responsible for the incidents always get away without getting enough punishment.

“Green factories” term came to Bangladesh after the Rana plaza incident took many lives of the workers. It forced many garments to rebuild their factories by following certain rules and regulations. That incident put our reputation at stake and it took time to regain the reputation in the international market. During that time competitors of Bangladesh take the place of Bangladesh in the international market. To bring the clients back Bangladesh offered a very low price and gradually came back to the competition. “Green Factories” term made things different but still there are some problems in our RMG sector. Previously RMG workers got a very poor salary. In 2018 Bangladesh government revised the salary structure and now they can earn a little bit more but inflation, high food costing, and house rent do not allow them to save much. With the salary, they can hardly manage their necessities although many believe now their condition is a little better than the past.

From the beginning of the pandemic garments, factories are trying to follow the guidelines suggested by the WHO. Using Facemask, hand sanitizer, social distancing, and many more steps are being taken by the factories to control the corona infections. Even small local garments are trying to follow these steps to control the coronavirus.

The increased utility bill blows a strike on our RMG sector. It raised the manufacturing cost while buyers are paying the same for the product. This decision pushed the sector to the edge and ate up the competitiveness of the sector. Many owners believe that it is a wrong decision and our RMG sector will suffer for this decision in the long run. To stay in the competition we need low production costs but the extra utility cost put a burden on the shoulder of our apparel sector which is a bad decision for this sector and for the betterment of the sector government should think about this twice.

The COVID-19 unprecedented pandemic brought another disaster to our economy. The RMG sector started to suffer for this before the virus emerged in Bangladesh. After the Wuhan outbreak, the supply chain of raw material was disrupted as we are heavily dependent on China. Many garment factories then ran the production with stocked material. The factories which were out of raw material were forced to bring raw material by air with extra cost. Local suppliers also increased the product price and the whole situation was alarming for the textile industry. This was a totally new situation and no thought this might happen. After this many economists and garments owners said that we should think about an alternate option for raw material sourcing to avoid this kind of unwanted situation.

When the virus emerged in Europe and America our top buyers started to cancel the order and postpone the shipments. That was another shock for the textile industry. In the meantime, Coronavirus infection started to grow in Bangladesh. To control the virus Bangladesh government announced lockdown. Garments factories were also closed down to stop the pandemic. To save the export-oriented industries Bangladesh government announced a stimulus package. It was undoubtedly a good decision but it was not beneficial for all. During the interview, while some industries said that the package was helpful for them, some said they got partial help. On the other hand, some local garments said they didn't even know about this. Recent research by SANEM also proves that many garments did not get any benefits from the government announced package. According to the research, 55% of industries didn't get assistance from this welfare package.

Whenever anything bad happens garments workers suffer first. When garment owners suddenly decided to reopen the factories on 5th April 2020, workers started to come back on foot or overcrowded local transport only to get the notice of extended closure. It increased the risk of corona infection and out the lives of workers in danger. The management of BGMEA member factories BGMEA is not fully responsible for that. It was a completely new situation for them and they didn't get proper instruction from the government. But general people as well as workers think BGMEA should have handled the situation more carefully. They are the decision makes of this industry and their fault can push the whole industry to danger.

Due to the cancellation of the order, many garments tormented their worker although the government announced a stimulus package and urged not to terminate the workers. Many workers were terminated without getting the salary of the previous months and the termination came to them as "bolt from blue". From April to the first week of June more than 18000 workers faced layoffs. During this time we witnessed several times workers took the road for salary and wages.

After a prolonged lockdown, the economy of Bangladesh is turning back. The bounce back of the RMG sector is positive news for us. Many foreign buyers who halted the shipments or canceled the orders are coming forward and placing new orders. Although now they are paying less than previous, leading businessmen and BGMEA believe it is a good sign and soon our RMG sector will reach a stable position.

References:

- Afroz, N, Moloy, D. J, Hossain, Z. (2018). Socio-Economic status and influencing factors of wage discrepancy among ready-made garment workers in Bangladesh: Evidence from Dhaka City. *Journal of Science and Technology*, 8(1 & 2): 21-30.
- Akhter, A. (2019). Employment trends in 2018 in Bangladesh textile and apparel industry – A popular business magazine in Bangladesh "Textile Today". January 2, 2019, Online edition.
- Alamgir, H. (2019). The daily adversities of garments workers- The Daily Star- March 29, 2019. Online edition.

- Antara, N.F., (2019). Unable to save: An RMG worker's cost of living – Dhaka Tribune- 9 March, 2019. Online edition.
- Apparel Resources, (2016). Bangladesh's cotton import from India rises by 36% in 2015- Apparel Resources, 14 March 2016. Online edition
- Bangladesh Pratidin, (2020). পোশাকশিল্পে অবিশ্বাস্য রকমেরে প্রবৃদ্ধি হবই- Anwar Ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez)-Bangladesh Pratidin, August 8 2020. Online edition.
- BDNews 24, (2018). Bangladesh imports 46 percent cotton from India in 2017-BD News 24, 17 August, 2018. Online edition.
- Bhattacharjee, J. (2020). Bangladesh: COVID-19 badly impacts garment industry- ORF (Observer Research Foundation), April 28, 2020.
- Chowdhury, A. R., (2020). Raging Corona virus: its impact on global economy – The Financial Express, May 21, 2020.
- Dhaka Tribune, (2016). Stats show Bangladesh's cotton imports heavily reliant on India- Dhaka Tribune, 26 December, 2016. Online edition
- Dhaka Tribune, (2020). Infographic: Impact of coronavirus on global economy- Dhaka Tribune, 13 April, 2020.
- Editage Insights, (2019). What are the limitations of study and how to write them? – Editage Insights: May19, 2019.
- Fair Wear, (2020). Covid-19: Worker engagement and monitoring, Covid-19: Country-specific guidance, Fair Wear's Covid 19 Dossier: COVID-19 Impact and Response: Bangladesh. August 31, 2020.
- Fashion Press 24, (2020). Bangladesh exports bounce back on positive growth amid COVID-19 crisis- Fashion Press 24, 7 august, 2020
- Fiber 2 Fashion.com, (2020). Covid-19 impacts garment production in Bangladesh- Fiber 2 Fashion.com, March 9, 2020.
- Hossain, M.F., and George, A. (2014a). Labor unrest in Ashulia industrial hub. The AIUB Journal of Business and Economics 11(1): 129-147.
- Hossain, M.F., George, A., Talukder Alam, M.K., and Mohib, A.A. (2014b). Impact of implementing TQM in RMG manufacturing units in

Bangladesh. *The AIUB Journal of Business and Economics* 11(1): 29-52.

Hossain, M.S, Latifee, E. H, (2017).

https://www.academia.edu/34152267/Readymade_garment_industries_going_green?fbclid=IwAR0ZlZRIAggXcR_8xrZHF--1XilDnXv714D5xe0zPjltclntXXA3J8zGlk

Islam, N., Chowdhuri, A.S.M.M., (2014). Socio economic factors of readymade garments workers in Bangladesh. *D.U. Journal of Marketing*, 15, 305-325.

Jones, L., Palumbo, D., Brown, D. (2020). Coronavirus: A visual guide to the economic impact- BBC News, June 30, 2020.

Khan, S. & Sajid, E. (2020). Power tariff hike hostile to industries and growth- *The Business Standard*, March 7, 2020. Online edition.

Light Castle, (2020). The effect of COVID 19 on Bangladesh's apparel Industry- *Light Castle*, 29 March, 2020.

Mahtab, N. (2020). The Pandemic: A Bangladeshi perspective –The daily newspaper of Bangladesh “*The Daily Star*”, July 7, 2020. Online edition.

Moazzem, K. G. and Radia M.A. (2018). ‘Data Features’ of Bangladesh’s RMG Enterprises: Key Features and Limitations, CPD Working Paper 123. Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

Mridha, R.U. (2020). Don't terminate any RMG workers, suggests DIFE- *The Daily Star*- June 8, 2020. Online edition.

Noyon, A. U. & Sajid, E. (2020). Electricity price hike: Another blow to industries- *The Business Standard*, February 28, 2020. Online edition

Ovi, I. H & Alif, A. (2020). 18,000 RMG workers fired in 2 months, DIFE urges owners to stop- A national English-language broadsheet daily newspaper in Bangladesh “*Dhaka Tribune*”, June 7, 2020. Online edition.

Ovi, I.H. (2019). Increased gas prices to push up yarn, fabrics production costs- A national English-language broadsheet daily English newspaper in Bangladesh “*Dhaka Tribune*”, July 7, 2019. Online edition.

- Prothom Alo, (2020). ‘55 business establishments yet to receive stimulus funds’- A major daily Bengali newspaper in Bangladesh “Prothom Alo”, August 8, 2020. Online edition.
- Prothom Alo, (2020). পোশাকের বাংলাদেশেই দ্বিতীয়- Prothom Alo, August 9, 2020
- Quoreshi, S. (2020). COVID 19 trajectory for Bangladesh RMG- The Financial Express, April 24, 2020. Online edition.
- Rasheduzzaman, M. (2020). Coronaviurs pandemic signals troubles for RMG sector- The first financial daily of Bangladesh “The Financial Express.” 14 March, 2020. Online edition.
- RMG Bangladesh, (2019). Businesses oppose ‘high’ gas tariff hike- RMG Bangladesh, July 1, 2019. Online edition.
- Schwiegershausen. E., (2020). When will school reopen? – The Cut, September 17, 2020
- Taylor, D.B., (2020). A timeline of Corona virus Pandemic- The New York Times, 6 August, 2020. Online edition.
- Textile Today, (2019). Gas price hike to eat up RMG exporter’s competitive edge – A popular business magazine in Bangladesh “Textile Today”: 1st July 2019. Online edition
- Textile Today, (2020a). New electricity tariff to eat up RMG sector’s competitiveness in global market- – A popular business magazine in Bangladesh “Textile Today”, February 29, 2020. Online edition.
- Textile Today, (2020b). BD textile millers relying on quality African cotton- A popular business magazine in Bangladesh “Textile Today”, July 5, 2020. Online edition.
- The Business Standard, (2020a). A perilous return of Bangladesh Garments workers amid shutdown – The Business Standard, April 5, 2020. Online edition.
- The Business Standard, (2020b). RMG factories reopen ensuring health safety: BGMEA Director- The Business Standard, August 9, 2020. Online edition.
- The Business Standard, (2020c). Rubana Huq did not announce job cuts: BGMEA. 6 June, 2020.

- The Daily Star, (2019a). Workers' wages rise in 6th grades. The daily English newspaper of Bangladesh "The Daily Star", January 2019, Online Edition.
- The Daily Star, (2019b). Gas price hike to hit industries: Star Business report. The daily English newspaper of Bangladesh "The Daily Star", 12 April 2019. Online edition.
- The Daily Star, (2018). Tk 8000 a month- The Daily Star- September 14, 2018. Online Edition
- The Guardian, (2020). Coronavirus UK map: the latest deaths and confirmed Covid cases- The Guardian, 11 August, 2020
- The Loadstar, (2020). Bangladesh's key garments sector hits a wall with shortage of raw material – The Loadstar, March 3, 2020.
- Uddin, J. and Mahmud, S.U. (2020). Govt Requests BGMEA to stop Layoffs- the Business Standard. June 8, 2020. Online edition.
- UNB News, (2020). BGMEA should take instructions from govt on health and safety: SANEM- UNB News, May 4, 2020. Online edition.
- UNDP Banglaesh, (2020). Covid-19: a high-stakes test for the RMG sector- UNDP Bangladesh, April 30, 2020.
- Worldometer, (2020). Worldometer- 11 August, 2020. Online Edition.