IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 ON WORKERS IN THE READY-MADE GARMENTS INDUSTRY OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

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Abstract

This study describes the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ready-made garment (RMG) workers of Bangladesh. The study also aims to reveal and alleviate the adverse impacts on RMG workers through suggesting some policy measures. The responses from 200 apparel industry workers of Bangladesh through semi-structured interviews have been collected employing purposive methods of sampling. Based on interview with the RMG workers, the existing literature and personal communications with RMG workers, it identifies the consequences that the RMG workers faced during the first phased of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. COVID-19 affected the RMG workers adversely in different aspects of their lives, their physical and mental health, socio-economic aspect, migration of occupations, job security, employment, food security, social safety and so on pervasively. This study also assessed the measures taken by Bangladesh Government as well as the regulators of the RMG industries. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the cancellation and suspension of buying orders from Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and many MNCs have increased pressures on Bangladeshi garment factories to lower order volumes as well as to provide price discount. This study suggests some policy measures and recommends safety measures. Finally, the study identifies issues to be studied further.

Keywords: Bangladesh, COVID-19, Impacts, Readymade Garment Workers, Policy.

INTRODUCTION

The rationale for this study stems from the urgent need to understand the unequal impacts of COVID-19 on the lives and livelihoods of Bangladeshi garment workers. While it is widely acknowledged that the pandemic has severely affected these workers, the extent of these impacts on various aspects of their social and economic lives remains unclear due to a lack of empirical data. Current research focuses primarily on apparel firms within the supply chains, largely overlooking the severe implications for workers who form the foundation of these supply chains. This study aims to address this limitation by examining how the pandemic has altered the working conditions and livelihoods of RMG workers in Bangladesh.

This research wants to explore several crucial aspects surrounding the impact of COVID-19 on garment workers in Bangladesh. It delves into how the pandemic has disrupted their lives and examines the extent of this disruption. The study also investigates the socio-economic challenges these workers have encountered both prior to and following the onset of the pandemic. Furthermore, it scrutinizes

the responses of garment factories to the pandemic and evaluates how these measures have affected the workers' lives.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to ascertain the impacts of COVID-19 on workers in the ready-made garments industry in a developing country, with a specific focus on Bangladesh. By shedding light on these issues, this research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the pandemic's effects on one of the most vulnerable segments of the global workforce and to inform policies and practices that can better support their recovery and resilience in future crises.

The escalating spread of COVID-19 has posed threat to human lives and disrupted livelihoods and has made people's everyday life uncertain. The COVID-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on trade, businesses, and putting the global economy into an unprecedented crisis. Being an integral part of the global economy, the global supply chains have been tremendously affected (Rasul G, & et al. 2021:1). Although almost all the global supply chains in the global trade have faced obstacles due to COVID-19, the global supply chains of the apparel industry have had to deal with a more challenging situation. As countries across the globe impose restrictions on the movements of citizens and enforce lockdowns, global brands are revoking their orders from suppliers. Therefore, garment factories are limiting their production or postponing them. In doing so, many factories have been suspending their workers. The garment workers who continue to work are in life-threatening positions due to inadequate health and safety measures in factories (Care International UK, 2021). Furthermore, those workers, who are on their jobs, earn less than before the COVID-19 era or their salaries are delayed (IHRB, 2021). More than 60 million workers across the world are employed in the garment industry and 75% of them are women. Therefore, the pandemic has posed the gravest threat to the livelihoods of workers, and it has provoked serious social and economic disruption in the lives of millions of women garment workers (ibid, 2021). Bangladesh is the world's second-largest exporter of Ready-Made Garments (RMG), and its' apparel industry has been playing a key role in rapid industrialization and economic development (IHRB, 2021:8). The RMG industry of Bangladesh has been profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2020 was a turbulent time for the Bangladesh apparel industry as it lost its second position as a global clothing exporter (World Trade Statistics, 2021). Vietnam apparel exports outstripped Bangladesh in 2020 due to the fact that Vietnam handled the pandemic situation better than Bangladesh as they continued their production amid the pandemic. Whereas the government of Bangladesh had to enforce lockdown to limit the outbreak of Covid-19 outbreak (Textile Today, 2021). Though Bangladesh regained its position in 2021, the pandemic hit every stakeholder in the Bangladesh RMG industry. Nevertheless, the lives of the workers, who often have very limited access to social security and safety, have been disproportionately devastated during the pandemic period. The garment workers in particular women have had to face, in addition to the lack of safety nets, the challenge of losing their jobs, pay cut, delayed salaries. The health crisis which emerged from the pandemic era soon turned into a socio-economic crisis (IHRB, 2021). To understand the unequal impacts of the Covid-19 on the life and livelihoods of Bangladeshi garment workers, this research focuses on how the pandemic has altered social and economic aspects of workers' everyday life.

It is widely known that the Covid-19 has severely affected Bangladeshi garment workers. However, we don't know the extent of these impacts on various aspects such as the social or economic life of workers due to the unavailability of empirical data. Furthermore, the current research tends to focus on apparel firms in the supply chains and ignores the impact on workers who are at the bottom of supply chains. Given this limitation of the existing studies, this research will shed some light on the ways in which the pandemic has changed the working and livelihood situations of RMG workers in Bangladesh.

This paper fills a critical gap by providing empirical data on how the pandemic has affected Bangladeshi garment workers. It highlights the socio-economic challenges these workers face, examines factory responses, and evaluates the effectiveness of industry policies for sustainable recovery. This research offers valuable insights into the unequal impacts of COVID-19, informing better support and resilience strategies for one of the most vulnerable segments of the global workforce. The structure of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review, while Sections 3 and 4 cover the detailed methodology and the analysis and findings, respectively. The paper concludes with the final section, which includes the conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for future research directions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic was declared as a pandemic on 11 March 2020 by the World Health Organization. This global pandemic is also known as the coronavirus pandemic. In December 2019, the novel virus, Corona was first detected from a Chinese city known as Wuhan. According to the World Health Organization, up to March 1, 2022, the Covid-19 pandemic caused 5,94,4342 human lives since the beginning of the epidemic. In Bangladesh, the first case of a COVID-19 patient was detected on March 8, 2020 (Islam, Talukder, Siddiqui, & Islam, 2020) and subsequently the lockdown was enforced on 26 March 2020 to stop the outbreak of Covid-19. This lockdown triggered a big shock for the labour market and the RMG sector in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's apparel sector contributes more than 80% of the total exports in Bangladesh. An estimated 4.2 million workers are working in the Bangladesh RMG sector (ILO, 2022: Haque and Bari, 2021). Most of the apparel factories in Bangladesh are located in Dhaka and nearby places. Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh accommodates more than 15 million people in less than 325 square kilometres area. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world (Alam&Razi, 2018) and Bangladesh's apparel industry has been contributing to this rapid growth. The Covid-19 outbreak hinders the growth of the economy of Bangladesh because of the sudden disruption in the textile and garments manufacturing industry (Islam et al., 2020). Bangladesh Government has taken many initiatives such as diagnosis of suspected cases, quarantine of doubted people and isolation of infected patients, local or regional lockdown, increasing public awareness and social distancing to combat the COVID19. Furthermore, the government has announced many financial stimulus packages for the apparel industry of Bangladesh. To address the socio-economic situations of the apparel industry workers, the government announced several financial stimulus packages of about USD 11.90 billion (Islam, Talukder, Siddiqui, & Islam, 2020). The social and economic conditions of workers of the apparel industry in Bangladesh has been dramatically changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Current studies (Naeem and Heath, 2021; Saxena, Mullins and Trapathi (2020) show the devastating socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 on garments workers of Bangladesh based on employment, income, consumption, health, and migration. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the apparel industry inevitably had catastrophic consequences for some of the most vulnerable and poor workers in the RMG global supply chain. IHRB (2021:8) investigates the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the garments workers of Bangladesh and reports that the industry is decreasing its markets, postponing shipments, and delaying payments to the workers. COVID-19 outbreak disrupts of supply chain that leads to production blocks in developing countries (Teodoro& Rodriguez, 2020). A study conducted by LeBaron, Kyritsis, Leal, & Marshall (2021) shows the impacts of COVID-19 on workers and factories of four different countries including Bangladesh and reports that the living condition of the garments workers are deteriorating due to the COVID-19. This study also discusses the misuse of labor and the severe economic condition of workers. Hossain (2021) investigates the impacts of COVID-19 on the marginal people of Bangladesh. Sen et al., (2020) discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on the workers of the apparel industry and find that the workers are in the most vulnerable condition. Most of these studies mainly focus on

the garment industry and some studies focus slightly on the workers of the apparel industry. Nevertheless, the in-depth studies on the affected garments' workers and real representation of the workers including their socio-economic status throughout the COVID-19 crisis are missing. Therefore, this study focuses mainly on the apparel industry workers of Bangladesh and identifies the social and economic conditions of those workers during the COVID-19 era.

METHODOLOGY

This study has been designed to be mixed in nature, with the purpose of the research to collect descriptive information that can be used to find the impacts of COVID-19 on the workers of global supply chains in the RMG sector in Bangladesh.

Given the purpose of the research, it is necessary to combine different methodological approaches for this study. In-depth interviews with the workers in the global supply chain apparel industry have accelerated the inquiry into the factors that impact the workers. Semi-structured interviews have been used to collect the primary data. Excluding the demographic questions, total 10 questions under six categories were there in the interview. Most of the interviews were recorded and then the responses were written down on paper and afterwards transcribed into Microsoft Word before being imported into Python for analysis. As well as personal observation has been taken into consideration in conjunction with interviews as it produces findings that are relatively more accurate.

All the seven divisions of Bangladesh have been taken as the sampling units in this research. What is notable is that most of the RMG factories are in the Dhaka division and particularly in three districts which are Dhaka, Narayangonj and Gazipur. Therefore, more samples have been collected from Dhaka district. All the workers of the apparel industry of Bangladesh constitute the population of this research. A total of 200 workers from the Apparel industry have been taken as the sample of the study. A purposive or judgmental sampling technique has been applied for this study. The study has considered both primary and secondary data. Secondary has been collected from various published materials such as BGMEA, research articles, monographs, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Bangladesh Ministry of Commerce.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Key performance indicators of the project

Determining the extent to which Covid-19 has impacted the global value chain in the apparel industry in Bangladesh. Coming up with a policy agenda to increase the sustainability of the apparel value chain and to protect workers' livelihoods. Measuring the progress of the study quarterly. However, the researcher will be responsible for the research outcomes.

Impacts of the COVID-19 on workers in the Ready-made garments industry

Situation of RMG sector throughout COVID-19

The Corona virus has already been transmitted most of the countries in the world. The world is globalized and interconnected for business and trade, information and technology, movement of population and some other dimensions. As a result, COVID-19 transmitted very fast and almost all of the countries in the world.   As Akter (2020) says, it has spread to 208 countries in the world. And Bangladesh is not out of those countries. In Bangladesh on 8th March 2020 the first COVID-19 patient was identified. Bangladesh Government decided to implement a countrywide lockdown on 26 March 2020 considering the rapid dispersion of COVID-19 virus. On 7th July 2020 BGMEA declared to open the factories and workers were ordered to join their duties immediately. For the such sudden decision, the workers fall in a dangerous problem. The public transports were stop.

The workers who were in the villages faced the main problem to back to their working place. RMG sector is a danced labour oriented sector in Bangladesh. At the pick time of COVID infection in Bangladesh, taking a decision to open the garments factories was a suicidal decision. After opening again new infections and deaths of RMG workers have already been reported. The factory owners again took a decision to close the factories for a few days on the criticism of different media all over the countries. Meanwhile, on 25th March 2020, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Government announced a stimulus package of BDT 5000 crore $587 925000) for the export-oriented sectors to tackle the COVID pandemic (Daily Star, 2020).

This money was advised to use to pay the wages of the workers. But the owners of the factories did not pay the appropriate wages to the works for the months March & April 2020. After a month, the factories opened again. To the RMG workers that became a matter fear as they had go to the factory like a normal day. It was not informed to the returning workers that they would not able to maintain the social distancing in the working place even they would not get the medical facilities in the case of becoming infected with COVID-19. But COVID crisis is not only a health issue, it covered almost every sector of statehood ranging from politics, economics, and society. As RMG sector is the part of global supply chain, it is hampered severely. On the other hand, it has also been perceived that economic crisis is going on and unfolding unemployment crisis is increasing very sharply in Bangladesh.

Food Security:

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee conducted a national survey in response to the COVID-19 among 2675 respondents from low income people between 31st March to 5th April 2020. They found that 14% of the respondents had no food reserves at home, whereas 29% only had enough food for 1–3 days. In such a condition, starvation for the low-income people was a normal phenomenon. In Bangladesh, hunger pandemic became one of the consequences of the global pandemic COVID-19. An interviewee (Female, age: 31, source: personal communication, 5 May 2022) mentioned in her speech as:

We will die without food as the price of the daily necessary is increasing every day. Corona could not kill us; we will be killed by hunger.

The workers of the RMG in Bangladesh are the low-income people. Now, the price of daily necessary is growing rapidly. It became difficult for them to survive like the pre COVID period with the same income.

Change of Jobs:

Many countries including Bangladesh is straggling to meet the ongoing need of their population in the period of COVID-19 but they are unable to provide their large support being offered in the developing countries as for example Srianka.

The lockdown for COVID-19 and its consequences like economic recession lead to major loss of income for the working-class people in Bangladesh. As a result, many RMG workers were forced to leave their jobs. Most of them are now rickshaw-pullers and others went to villages to work as farmers.

One RMG worker told

My husband and I worked in the same factory. But my husband resigned from the job at the time of Corona. Now he is a rickshaw-puller. Not only my husband some many men in our slam lost their jobs and now working as rickshaw-pullers. (Female, age: 34, source: personal communication, 15 May 2022)

Some of the RMG workers became hawkers. They sell vegetables, fruits, Canacur-Murhi etc. One of the interviewees told us as:

> *My husband had to start selling vegetables in Kathalbagan area to support our family. Before Corona, I was a housewife and now and then worked as a temporary Bua (maid-servant). For Corona his (her husband) income decreased and he was bound to change his work. So, he started to sell vegetables and I came work in this garments factory. (Female, age: 25, source: personal communication, 16 May 2022)*

Health and Safety:

When a COVID-19 infected person remains in touch with an uninfected person, it spreads or transmits to others. COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CO-2 virus. When a COVID infected person cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe heavily small liquid particles can be out from his mouth or nose and that liquid particles may infect others. People may receive this virus through mouth, nose, eyes if they go into the close contact (less than one meter) of the infected people (WHO, 20200). The density of population in Bangladesh is very high.

The RMG sector of Bangladesh holds a large number of people who work and live in a congested area. Though, it is told to maintain social distancing, using hand sanitizer, wearing masks etc. the COVID infected people were the same bed during the first week.

The patients did not disclose about his or her infection. The reopening of the RMG factories led to high vulnerabilities of COVID-19 infection to the workers (The Financial Express, 2020). 97 workers were found COVID-19 positive in April, 2020, and 10 workers among them died (New Age, 2020).

Social distancing was not strictly maintained inside the RMG factories and effective protection measures are not taken to protect the factory workers. Most of the cases the RMG workers used only the masks made of cloth as safety measures. But that did not protect themselves from the virus. The RMG workers cannot use the social distancing as they work in a congested working place. So, the risks of infection for them were very high. As a worker mentioned:

> *We worked in a crowded place. We were in a high risk of COVID infection. Some workers were infected but they did not disclose. Safety measured were tried to maintain but that was not effective as we were more in number (Male, age: 23, source: personal communication, 20 May 2022).*

In Bangladesh, it is a challenge to maintain social distancing and safety measures, as it is a labor-intensive industry. The workers of the Bangladeshi RMG industries suffer from headaches, respiratory problems, depression etc.as they work in the unhealthy environment. Some factories had provided their workers umbrellas as they could maintain social distance and they also provided hand sanitizers and masks. Some factories had the facility to check temperature at the entry of the factories.

The workers who were affected by COVID-19 they some of them became physically weak and they cannot work like pre COVID period. But their factories do not think about this problem of the workers. Some respondents mentioned that the medical facilities like hand sanitizers, masks, and temperature checks due to government and buyer's strong instructions provided by their factories by strong instruction of the government and buyers.

They also criticized that the medical provided by their organization is a showcase project. The RMG workers of Bangladesh are still suffering directly or indirectly after COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact on Employment in the RMG sectors:

The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic transmitted to the RMG sectors through different media and decrease of employment in this sector is one of those. On the other hand, country-wide lockdown, order cancellation by international buyers and brands, slowdown of national economy, the decline in demand of goods and services and the global economic recession are the important causes for decreasing the employments and employment opportunities in RMG sectors throughout COVID-19 pandemic. Due to lockdown, the factories were closed on an average 41 days which caused the immediate effects on the RMG workers including factory closure, loss of working days, retrenchment, income, livelihood, and job loss etc. (Hossain & Alam, 2022). The national economy of Bangladesh became slowdown because of the countrywide 75 days' lockdown. The income and livelihood of the RMG workers of Bangladesh are directly influenced by the slowdown national economy, which is caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), buyers have either suspended or cancelled purchase orders worth more than $US 3.15 billion because of COVID-19. Due to orders cancellation by international buyers and brands during COVID pandemic the garment industry lost $4.33 billion worth of exports between 20th March 2020 to 20 June 2020. As Hossain&Alam, (2022) mention =the RMG sector lost $6854.0890 million worth of sales revenue in the year 2020, and $2026.187 million worth of sales revenue in the year 2021 because of lockdowns. These loses caused the shutdown of more than 348 garment factories including 0.4 million job loss which indirectly effect the socio-economic conditions of the garment workers which increase the vulnerability of the livelihoods of the garment workers including their family members.

According to Anner (2020) describes that more than one million garment workers in Bangladesh have already have been fired or furloughed. According to the Solidarity Center, tens of thousands of garment workers have through their unions negotiated to ensure they receive wages during factory closures, and proper PPE while at work (Connell, 2020). The growth rate of employment of Bangladesh RMG sector is -1.442% in the year 2020 and -10.406% in the year 202. Because of the unfavorable effect on the economy of Bangladesh caused by the COVID-19 pandemic the unemployment rate in Bangladesh is increasing rapidly.

The enduring declining trend of the employment in the RMG sector in Bangladeshis going to be a big problem for the development of RMG sector in Bangladesh as well as for future development of the Bangladesh economy.

Impact on the socio-economic aspect:

A national survey which is conducted by Rural Advancement Committee from March 31, 2020 to April 5, 2020 to identify the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, it is found that 14 percent garment workers among 2675 respondents from low income had no food reserves at home, only 29 percent workers had enough food from 1 - 3 days. Most of the garments workers of Bangladesh are from low income family they come from rural areas of Bangladesh and majority are women. The salary of those people minimum $95 per month. At the time of lockdown these low-income people did not get their wages which was very critical situation for them.

Starvation for those workers =was one of the outcomes during the pandemic period. The RMG workers of Bangladesh are facing different socio-economic problems for COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most highly regarded national daily newspapers named The ProthomAloon May 2, 2020published a story that two employees a garment factory had sell their new-born baby as they were unable to pay the fees of USD 295 because of the factory having shutdown at the time COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact on Mental health:

The mental health of the RMG workers were decreasing during the COVID-19 period and after the pandemic their mental status may affect adversely (Hossain & Alam, 2022). A significant number of women are being rapped and suicide may adversely affect the mental health of the female employees of the RMG sector for future. Kabiret al., (2020) tells that the mental health of the RMG workers is affected because of their future job insecurity and fear of becoming infected with and dying of COVID-19.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the understanding of vulnerability among workers in global supply chains, particularly in the context of unprecedented crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The research highlights the multi-dimensional nature of vulnerability, encompassing physical, mental, socio-economic, and employment aspects. The findings underscore the interconnectedness of global supply chains and how disruptions in one part of the world can have profound local economic and social impacts. This adds to the existing body of literature on global supply chain resilience and the need for more robust frameworks to withstand global crises. The study sheds light on how workers in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector adapt to crises by shifting occupations and finding alternative livelihoods. This paper contributes to theories of labor market flexibility and resilience, especially in developing economies.

Managerial Implications

This paper enables Managers in the RMG sector to implement more stringent health and safety measures to protect workers from future pandemics or similar crises.(This includes providing adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), ensuring social distancing in workplaces, and improving sanitation facilities.)To mitigate the risks associated with global disruptions, managers will be more expert to diversify their supply chains and reduce dependency on single markets or buyers. (This could involve exploring new markets, creating more flexible production systems, and developing local supply chains.)The study highlights the need for better support systems for workers, including financial assistance, mental health services, and job security measures.

This has made Managers in the RMG sector conscious for policies that protect workers' rights and ensure fair labor practices, especially during crises. (This includes pushing for government policies that provide financial support and job security for workers in the industry.)By addressing these theoretical and managerial implications, stakeholders in the RMG sector can better prepare for future crises, ensuring the well-being of workers and the sustainability of the industry.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the preset survey and existing research, some recommendations have been suggested for the RMG industry of Bangladesh to bounce back from the crisis situation of COVID-19 pandemic. The first and foremost measure is that factory owners should take care of workers regarding safety measures and the physical and mental health of their employees. The factory has to be well informed about all the related information regarding the COVID-19 and necessary actions should be taken as soon as possible. The communication with the buyers and others key stake holders has to be maintained as much as possible. In this regard, temporary price reduction policy measures can be taken to attract foreign buyers and brands. Monetary incentive and risk premium for their employees may be provided. Bangladesh government announced a financial package of BDT 50 billion for export oriented industries. The industry should manage the government stimuli properly. The cash flow of the factory has to be secured. Last but not the least, the factories should set out their objective(s) and develop a business resilience plan.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Limitations

The study involves a sample of 200 RMG workers, which, while significant, may not fully represent the entire population of RMG workers in Bangladesh. Geographically, it is mainly focused on Dhaka and does not comprehensively include other important areas like Gazipur and Narayangonj, which are key to the industry. Conducted over a six-month period, the research might not capture the long-term impacts of COVID-19, as the pandemic's effects continue to evolve. The use of purposive sampling, though effective in selecting respondents with valuable insights, could introduce selection bias, possibly leading to a sample that is not fully representative.

Additionally, the study relies heavily on self-reported data from interviews, which can be influenced by biases such as recall bias or social desirability bias, leading to potential underreporting or exaggeration of experiences. The use of secondary data from various sources may present challenges regarding accuracy and completeness, with some data potentially outdated or not entirely applicable to the RMG sector in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the study lacks a thorough comparative analysis of different demographics within the RMG workforce, such as gender differences, which could provide deeper insights into the pandemic's varied impacts.

Future Directions

To better understand the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on RMG workers, conducting longitudinal studies would be beneficial. These studies can track changes over time, offering insights into evolving worker conditions and effective long-term strategies. Expanding the geographic scope to include all major RMG areas in Bangladesh would ensure findings are more representative, highlighting regional differences.

Increasing sample size and diversity will improve the generalizability of results, including various factories and demographic backgrounds for a comprehensive view. Incorporating quantitative data like financial records and health statistics can strengthen qualitative analyses. Comparative studies on different workforce subgroups, such as gender and age, would help identify vulnerabilities and tailor interventions.

Assessing policy impacts at both government and factory levels could reveal successful measures and areas needing improvement. Given the study's noted mental health effects, future research should focus more on mental health issues, access to services, and intervention effectiveness. Analyzing global supply chain disruptions and comparing Bangladesh with other garment-producing countries could provide strategies for resilience. Exploring technological integration could enhance working conditions and safety measures, offering innovative crisis solutions. Lastly, investigating worker empowerment initiatives like unionization could highlight their role in resilience and improving conditions during crises.

CONCLUSION

To point out to some limitations, it is to be noted that the scopes of the research are limited both spatially and timely. The study was limited only within six months. Also the study considered the RMG workers of the Dhaka the other RMG factory places (i.e. Gazipur, Narayangonj) were not considered for the present study. Present study concludes that COVID-19 impacted the RMG workers in many different ways due to the absence of welfare policies of the RMG industries. Additionally, their money mongering attitudes as well as their own vulnerable conditions lead to the worsening of the RMG workers' sufferings.

Finally, their irresponsible behavior of the foreign buyers and brands accelerated the sufferings of the RMG workers. For future research, it is recommended that more detailed case analyses and case-studies could also be beneficial for the betterment of the workers of the RMG in Bangladesh as well as the Bangladeshi RMG industries.

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