

Neo Liberal Globalization
and its effects on
Readymade Garment industry of Bangladesh
(Case Study)

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Dedication

I lovingly dedicate this study to my parents, who support me in each decision of my life

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Abstract

Philosophy of neo liberalization globalization is emerging from last two decades and dominating the economic policy making in most of the world economies. It is strongly advocated in UK and the USA, however, substantial resistance as limited its influence for rest of the world. For this study, the researcher used the descriptive case studies methodology to test the effectiveness of this philosophy of globalization for readymade garment sectors in Bangladesh after the setback of Rana plaza incident. As a result, she proved with the help of data collected from RMG workers that it is still ineffective because policies are malfunctioned.

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1. Introduction

According to comparative advantage theory, every economy tries to increase its production level within the limited cost range and increases the exports to increase the level of GDP. In this present era, almost every country in the world is within the fold of globalization. No one can ignore the benefits of inclination for investment around the globe (Investopedia). This proclivity of capital generation through businesses to move beyond domestic and national markets to international markets can increase the interconnectedness of all of them. Globalization has had the effect of markedly increasing not only in international trade, but also cultural exchange (Business Dictionary).

World economy has become more flexible in regards to moving market and production (Sarker 2010). The advantages of globalization have been heavily scrutinized in recent years. Spokespersons for this idea explain it as a way out for developing nations as increasing industrialization, much faster employment generation and getting speedy technological advances (Mark 2000). Bangladesh is no exception to that, Osmani, quoted in Sarker (2010), who also has supported this progress of world economy as many multinational enterprises are located here with production and influence in the country's economy. This welcoming atmosphere for foreign direct investment in the country results as an increase in industries and new businesses, which take the employment level up. The export of the country has also increased due to reduced tariffs, high investment (*ib id*).

Bangladesh Readymade Garment industry (RMG) has become the most responsive towards the globalization and neo liberalization in the perspective of the change of modernity (Kabeer and Muhammad 2004) as the transformation of Bangladesh's economy from agriculture to market-

based system (*ib id*). RMG industry is the life blood for Bangladesh economy as 78% of the country's export earnings come from this sector (Bangladesh Board of Investment). In context of modernity, this industry has also changed the distribution of labor force and researchers call it as a female-oriented business (Rashid, 2006). There are 5,100 garment industries provides work for 3.6 million workers where ninety percent are women (*ib id*). Around more than 10 million habitants are associated with this business (Enam).

In this situation, where not only the employment is increasing but also share of female labors is also very encouraging. This labor force can be very helpful for alleviating poverty of their family and can empower themselves, but there are many challenges for Bangladesh to meet the economic globalization. One is the ways to exploit the opportunities created through the trade liberalism-favorable trade agreements. The labor standards and industrial affairs issue of RMG industries in Bangladesh is malfunctioning. Working conditions in RMG industries do not meet the codes of conduct. Long working hours and irregular wage payments are very common in this sector. Though workers receive the cheap wage from their work, even then they have to face often wage penalties. Although, globalization and industrial liberalization might be effective and benefitted for economics, still few issues are ignorant and this may cause inequality in the society (Sarker 2010).

1.1 Objectives

In this study, research is trying to find out the root cause of this inequality. Main aim of the study is to explore the affects of industrial affairs in the perspective of globalization on the labor class of RMG sector.

Aims of this study are

- To study the industrial affairs in context of globalization and neo liberalization of trade.
- To explore the current living situation of the workers in RMG sector.

This study will try to answer the following research question

- What is the role of neo liberalization in the development of the working class for RMG of Bangladesh?

1.2 Hypothesis

Though neo liberalization has been a useful factor to boost up the GDP level of Bangladesh through high exportation and productivity, the impact of neo liberalization is lowering down the standard living of the working class. On the bases this explanation hypothesis for my study is, “neo liberalization is creating the inequality in the income distribution between the investors and working class of RMG of Bangladesh.”

1.3 Structure of the Study

Following this introductory chapter, this paper is organized into five chapters. *Chapter 2* explains the literary stuff for the explanation of neo liberal economic globalization, the industrial affairs of labor rights in terms of working condition, wage, union building & working hours. The structure and growth of the RMG industry with favorable and unfavorable discussions of different scholars and academic intellectuals for the effects of neo liberalization on this industry is also explained in the same chapter 2. *Chapter 3* is giving the idea for suitable methodology and data for this research. The results are described in *Chapter 4*. Concluding remarks with suggestions are presented in last *Chapter 5*.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Bangladesh expanded 6.01 percent during the fiscal year 2012/2013. Share of exports is growing day by day and three quarters of this exports revenue come from ready-made garments (Bangladesh Economic Survey 2013). Globalization and neo liberalization is one of the main reasons for this fastest growth of RMG Sector (Ahmad 2010).

In this chapter, different scholarly work is discussed. The *section 2.2* explains the concept and definitions of different key terms related to globalization used in this study. *Section 2.3* explains different industrial affairs for RMG, and a brief introduction of RMG industry of Bangladesh is given in *section 2.4*. In the end *section 2.5* gives a review of different intellectual works for understanding of the effects of globalization neo liberalization on RMG Bangladesh.

2.2 Neo Liberal Globalization

Though the concept of globalization is not a new phenomenon, it has been widely defined in different ways. Some say globalization is a notion of modernity; some might say it is the result of capitalism. Basically, globalization is a process through which “an increasing portion of economic, social and cultural transactions could take place directly or indirectly between different parties among different countries and market (Robertson 2007). Similarly, McGrew (1992) explains globalization as “the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between the states and societies” which makes up the modern world system. It describes the process by which events, decisions and activities in one part of the world can come to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe (Robertson

2007). In the era of globalization, nations are interconnected with a chain which created interdependence among countries and their citizens.

Economic globalization is 'the increasing integration of national economies into expanding international markets. This expansion of markets will mean that the free movement of goods, services, labor and capital, will result in a single global market in inputs and outputs; so that, economically speaking, there are no foreigners (Globalthinking, 2008). Therefore, economic globalization creates a market of free trading of goods and services particularly labor and capital in different nations. It makes business or investments within different nations easier and convenient.

With the aim of Breton Wood Conference in 1944, the north came up with the idea of neo liberalism and stated that there will be no trade blocks and economic spheres rather this idea of neo liberalism will promote free trading and movement of capital through lowering down the barriers of trade within nations (Enam). As a result, maximizing profit through having the cheaper production in an economy without borders becomes the motive of this neo liberalism system. Basically, neo liberal policy encourages three things: (ib id)

- 1) free trading- decentralizing trade and businesses across borders
- 2) deregulation of trade policy
- 3) Privatization of state owned properties.

Neo-liberal globalization in terms of economic development refers to the neoliberal policy which actually reduces the control of the state over the economy. For the purpose of this essay, neoliberal globalization will cover the economic globalization mainly on readymade garment

industries in Bangladesh. I shall discuss the economic dimensions from the side of neoliberal globalization focusing on readymade garment industries in Bangladesh.

2.3 Industrial Affairs in RMG

Working Hours are the standard time limit for employees of an organization. These vary from place to place and organization to organization. Working hours are also different for full time and for part time workers. Normally, working hours for permanent employees are defined and according to the skill and job designation. In case of part-time workers, these hours are based on the agreed level of employment. In particular RMG sector, employees work in different shifts (at least three shifts in 24 hours). One shift is of 8 hours with a break of one hour. So in this way, normally a labor works for maximum seven hours per day (International Labor Law).

Labor Wages are the monetary compensation for the time and efforts an employee does for the production for the employer. These are determined through the bargaining and in words of Marx through hostile struggle between employer and employee. Labor theory of economics says that wages are according to the marginal productivity of the labor. International Labor Organization (ILO) is also working for better wages of labor in different sectors to fulfill their daily needs. Wage structure is different for different workers and according to their skill, job description and contract. Some are salaried persons, who receive the salary in a regular interval of time. Few are on weekly, daily, or hourly payments. These labors are paid according to their work completed in particular time. Most of the labor class in RMG sector gets their payment as exchange of their work done in a specified time (International Labor Law).

Working Conditions are defined as the circumstances in which an individual or staff works, including but not limited to such things as amenities, physical environment, stress and noise

levels, degree of safety or danger (Business Dictionary) . ILO is has taken this task as their prime objective to provide the healthier and safe environment during work (International Labor Organization).

Labor Union is a lobby or an organization of workers, who takes care the wages and working conditions for the employees. Harvard economists Richard Freeman and James Medoff explained it as a monopoly power, which can raise the wages above competitive level. The members of this union have some legal privileges and immunities that they get from government, both by statute and by non enforcement of other laws. The purpose of these legal privileges is to restrict others from working for lower wages. As antiunion economist Ludwig von Mises (1922) wrote, “The long and short of trade union rights is in fact the right to proceed against the strikebreaker with primitive violence.” Interestingly, those who are expected to enforce the laws evenhandedly, the police, are themselves heavily unionized.

2.4 Bangladesh RMG Industry

The achievement of RMG sector in Bangladesh has enormous influence on socio-economic development of this country. Approximately 3.6 million workers, in which two million are women, are working and more than ten million habitants are indirectly related with this business. Moreover, it is the most booming industry in Bangladesh for past twenty years. In 1970, before the liberation war, Bangladesh had only one garment industry and at present the number of ready-made garment industries has increased from 1 to 5,100 (Hogg, 2005). Having the advantage of cheap labor made investors including national and foreign interested to bestow more invests in it and globalization made the trade easier. Generally, the growth of a product or services is found due to the increase of the local demand, however, in case of Bangladesh RMG

industries, the demand has gone up due to the growing demand in the developed countries (Rashid 2006). The readymade garment industry in Bangladesh plays a vital role in boosting the national GDP and earning foreign exchange currency. The following statistics (Table 2.1) shows RMG's contribution in total export of Bangladesh and this shows an apparent indication of RMG's growth in overall economy of the country.

Table 2.1: Comparative Statement on Export of RMG & Total Export of Bangladesh

Year	Export of RMG (In million US\$)	Total Export of Bangladesh (in million US \$)	% Of RMG's to total export
2009-10	12496.72	16204.65	77.12
2010-11	17914.46	22925.38	78.15
2011-12	19089.69	24287.66	78.60
2012-13	21515.73	27018.26	79.63

Source: Trade Information 2014

On one hand, we can observe this tremendous growth of RMG sector and on the other hand, labor class is suffering. *Working hours* are one of the major issues in Bangladesh RMG sector. The workers are so deprived as sometimes they are suppose to work continuously for twenty four hours with only small breaks for snacks (Alam 2012). Attendance is mandatory and in case of absence they may lose their job or some monetary loss has to bear. This monetary loss is normally in the deduction of *Labor Wages* (*ib id*), which are already very low as Bangladesh is a labor abundant country. Large population country makes the supply of labor very high and demand is comparatively low (Bangladesh Economic Survey). This demand supply equilibrium determines the wages for labor at very low level. In such situation, labor theory is ineffective and very skilled and experienced workers are unable to get according to their productivity. So wages are not satisfactory (Kunar 2013). Although Ministry of Labor & Employment has determined the minimum wage (5,300tk), but there are still many other pay elements in RMG

sector not included in this range. Overtime payments are very common and most of the workers do overtime to earn more money. These workers are unable to get any fringe benefit, for example attendance allowances, transport facility, festival bonus, profit sharing, in addition to their wages.

More work as overtime can cause serious health issues and worker do not have any facility of medical care or medical insurance (Moazzem 2013). All these *working terms and conditions* are hard to find in RMG Bangladesh (*ib id*). Mostly workers are hired in garment industries with no formal appointment letters. As a result, they always have the fear of losing jobs as there is no job security and continue working even in an unsafe and unsatisfactory work environment (Alam, 2012). To reap the most profit from the production, the investors or the producers made workers to work day and night but hesitate to give them the proper wage as a return of their hard work.

2.5 The Effect of Neo Liberal Globalization

The era of globalization is particularly the formation of privatization, deregulation and internalization of trade and investment which were bounded within local or national level (Alam 2012). Bangladesh readymade garment sector is the most influenced area which has been prioritized in the name of neoliberal globalization (Ahmad 2009).

2.5.1 Boon of Neoliberal Globalization

Two main factors are involved in the growth of RMG industries in Bangladesh, 1) MFA quota system¹ and 2) Cheap labor. As a developing country, Bangladesh has the facility to enjoy quota

¹ At the end of the Uruguay Round, textile and clothing quotas were negotiated bilaterally and governed by the rules of the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA). This provided for the application of selective quantitative restrictions when surges in imports of particular products caused, or threatened to cause, serious damage to the industry of the importing country. The Multifibre Arrangement was a major departure from the basic GATT rules and particularly the principle of non-discrimination. On 1

free status in the 1970s and at the same time, the labor wages were lower than any other countries. This results foreign manufacturers and investors to move their production and investments to Bangladesh. Even if Bangladesh enjoys quota free system in North American market, exporters of Bangladesh have to be the subject of payment depending on how much they are exporting. on the other hand, in EU market, Bangladesh does not only enjoy the quota free system but the EU's Generalized System of Preference (GSP) that is actually allowing Bangladesh garment exports to have the free access in EU market. This might be one of the reasons for the growth and development of RMG industry in Bangladesh. In addition, the favorable trade agreements with different nations Bangladesh RMG become more rising industry having the availability of cheap labor (Rashid 2006). Bangladesh RMG industry has not only contributed in economic growth but in the social metamorphosis of the country. For example, women empowerment, and poverty alleviation are also the results of neoliberal globalized RMG sector. RMG has given a huge chance particularly to poor women to get a direct access to cash income. It was found in a survey, accomplished by BIDS that working in RMG industries made women more confident enough to play a role for the economic contribution in their families as they are also responsible for house rents and education expenses for children (Bhattacharya et al 2002).

2.5.2 Ban of Neoliberal globalization

Industrial affairs of RMG refer to the low wage, absence of labor unions, working condition, excessive work, job security and irregular payment. Having the cheap labor facility in Bangladesh, neo liberal globalized economic policy encourages foreign investors to invest on Bangladesh RMG. To be at the peak of profit maximizing level, garment industries owners take

January 1995 it was replaced by the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing which sets out a transitional process for the ultimate removal of these quotas.

the full advantage of this situation. As a result, workers work longer time but with a very low wage. As Bangladesh has the problem of poverty, many people live under poverty line, people work very hard to earn their daily breads. When there is an emergency to supply, they are forced by their owners to work more. RMG industry is a female-oriented business and mostly these women come from very rural places of Bangladesh and work day and night but receive less than 2 dollar a day. Moreover, there are many workers who walk daily 3 to 4 miles to reach their workplace. Working environment in these factories are not safe and do not follow the standard level of working conditions (Enam).

As a result of globalization, trade among countries became trouble free. 5,100 readymade garment industries employ 3.6 million workers among them 90 percent are women. This sector is not only growing economic development but also empowering women economically and in their domestic affairs. Low cost production made it more competitive in the world market (Hogg, 2005). However, the globalization of Bangladeshi apparel production has long been touted as the pride of the nation despite the enormous profits reaped by the government, local investors, foreign buyers, and others, which has not trickled down to their laborers. Bangladeshi laborers, who are recipients of the lowest global wage, are now paying for their work with their lives. Poor working condition including lack of infrastructure which results of taking lives of human in the name of economic development. As a result of globalization, now Bangladesh has many investors and buyers who demand RMG products of Bangladesh. However, if we look deep in this, we will see that the labor group is the one who work day and night to meet the national as well as international demand. But in return, they even do not have job security, proper wage, and secure job place. Rana Plaza incident describes this situation of victimizing workers results of

neo-liberalism and globalization, where over 1100 deaths were reported and many workers were trapped inside (Muhammad 2013).

The past and on-going incidents in RMG industries are the symbol of the failures of neo-liberal globalization policies. Bangladesh RMG has well maintained neoliberal policies by focusing on exports, making the country attractive to the foreign investors through keeping wage lower than any other country (Luce 2013). Living under the poverty line made garment workers in Bangladesh suffer from malnutrition, disease. It has been shown in a study that most of the Bangladesh readymade garment workers go through malnutrition, different health disease due to over work, starving or low intake, unsafe and unhygienic shelter (Muhammad, 2013). But this is not the end of their suffering, there is worse to come in their life. Almost every year there is either fire or collapsing can be found in garment factories. The Daily star, a Bangladeshi newspaper, published the list of factory fire and killing on February 27, 2010. The list includes: “32 killed at Saraka garments, Dhaka, 1990; 22 killed at Lusaka Garments, Dhaka, 1996; 20 killed at Jahanara Fashion, Narayangaj, 1997; 24 killed at Shanghai Apparels, Dhaka, 1997; 12 killed at Globe Knitting, Dhaka, 2000; 23 killed at Macro Sweater” (Muhammad, 2013).

2.6 Effect in the Perspectives of Different Scholars

Anu Muhammad (2013) states in one of his article *Wealth and Deprivation*, “*Ready-made Garments Industry in Bangladesh one of the industrial sector, influenced most by the neo liberal policy particularly it was sufferer of “structural adjustment program” by the World Bank and The International Monetary Fund. The privatization of public enterprises and industries and the deregulation of government intervention results de industrialization and also laying off many workers. The shutting down of Adamjee Jute mills was the first consequence of neo liberal*

policy, which lay off many workers'. These reforms of neo liberal left a large pool of labor to be unemployed and forced to work with a low wage in RMG industry, as this new industry was emerged as an export oriented business and enjoyed the policy both from the government and international financial institutions as well foreign investments. Privatization and neo liberal globalization made the new rich, the new owner of the economy to look for high profit investment scopes. Consequently, a huge number of poor unemployed women were ready to work at very low wage and for longer hours in unsafe working environments".

Luce (2013) in her article “Bangladesh: More Garment Workers Die as a Neoliberal Nightmare Continues” explains Bangladesh RMG was misguided by neo liberal economic development. The country became export oriented adopting its “comparative advantage” of cheap labor. Through after 30 years, this sector has grown aggressively and now contributes over three quarters of the country’s export. Wages are hardly above from 30 years ago. The profits mainly go to some factory owners, garment retailers, investors, and brands in developed regions, Europe, China and the U.S. The prime problem is garment produces do not have the power to negotiate fair prices from those multi- nationals like Walmart, Disney and Sears seek for high profit with low production cost and they demand low prices and faster production from domestic producers compressing working conditions.

Nicholas Kristof (2013) argues for neo liberal globalization as she/he believes sweatshops, the results of neo liberalism, are benefitted for the countries like Bangladesh, as it creates jobs and lead to economic development. On the other hand, Ha Joon Change disputes against Kristof and mightily.

William Gomes (2013) has described the reasons and responsibility of the government and authorities in his article and explained *that* the workers have become the victim of human rights violations in RMG industries because there is no safe work condition. It is the market who is the root of this human suffering. However, people never stop arguing about the issue that who should take the responsibility of those deaths workers. Recently the rapid growth of RMG created a higher demand for high rise buildings. Moreover, many buildings are converted into factory industry, or it is the owner of the building who adds extra floors to expand factories illegally. Presenter of CNN, Amanpur took this situation as a political matter and said “most of the politicians of the two major political parties- the ruling party Awami League and the opposition group Bangladesh National Party (BNP) have garment factories”. She also mentioned about the accident in Rana Plaza factory. The building was built illegally as the owner Sohel, who was not given permission to built 8-story building. He only had permission to built 5 story building. Sohel Rana was a senior joint convener of Awami League’s youth from Jubo League. Even though the building was built illegally, the authorities ignored that due to Rana’s Political connection.

Many scholars have argues that the global urge of improving labor standards particularly “recognizing that enforcement through a ‘social clause’ in trade agreements or at the World Trade Organization (WTO) might not be sufficient enough to improve the persistent working condition and increasing the wage rate (Berik and Yana 2007). Cagatay (1996) is one of those scholars who explain why the global enforcements by WTO will not work to improve the working condition. Because he believes that market forces cannot bring the improvement alone. Labors, particularly women in garment industry, are mostly found in informal units where global enforcements and regulations are tough to reach. Thus, improving labor standards and

employment policies should be monitored well by the domestic market forces so that it bring usefulness particularly for women to have more job security with a better wage. On the other hand, others may argue on the opposite way that the global urge will result unemployment. For example, Kabeer (2004) says that the enforcements of labor standards will cause lower employment level and it will expand inequality in informal sector of labor market (Berik and Yana 2007).

Similarly, Razvi (1999) analyzes that even though there might be severe poor working condition, export-oriented industrialization should not pay attention to that because the first priority should be the business growth. Improving global urge of labor standards ultimately will results disincentive for firms or international buyers/investors to go forward (Berik and Yana 2007). Bangladesh does not facilitate the industry workers to have union rights. The absence of union activities in Bangladesh industrial sector is a way to attract the foreign direct investment (FDI). Though sometimes it can be found that a few workers in unions organization with an aim of establishing labor rights, it end up an “extension of political parties” and results inefficiency for bringing welfare for labor group (Berik and Yana 2007).

With the transnational companies and local garment factory owners and producers, some other informal small enterprises also become the winners as their businesses have also grown around the RMG industries in buying and contracting agents. Thus the winner of neo liberal globalization is the “fat cat capitalists” and the government who eventually reap the profits ignoring the poor workers rights (Enam). Deregulation is needed particularly for the transnational and multinational corporations because de-regularized government policy will help them to shift their businesses or investments in low income countries. Basically, they shift their businesses or funds in the form of foreign direct investment so that do not have to take the risk of

international shock. On the other hand, governments had to reform and deregulate the market to attract the FDI. Under neo liberal policies, governments adopt the labor laws which will make labor flexible without thinking about labor safety (Enam).

Neo liberal globalization has adverse effects in expanding the gap between the rich and poor. The process of de-centralization and de regulation of public rules, as well capital accumulation affects working poor labor reproducing poverty and creating “greater polarization and social exclusion” (Enam). Moreover, in formalization of labor has emerged with the help of neo liberalism which actually made government less responsive to the vulnerable working poor. The public revenue has been gone down since tariffs and taxes are reduces as a part of globalization.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in previous chapter, neo liberalism has a positive impact on the economic growth as well as sector growth of RMG. Though most of researchers were not in the favor of this industrial liberalization as a tool for societal development, and some loopholes are still needed to fill. To explore these anomalies, researcher used qualitative technique to collect the data at household level in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Researcher tried to investigate the impact of neo liberal globalization on the individual's life particularly the life of labor working in RMG in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

The Chapter is divided into five main sections. In *Section 3.2*, I have tried to explain the brief explanation of research process approaches. *Section 3.3* covers the specific case study methodology. In section 3.4, sample selection of my research work is defined. Section 3.5 explains the process for data collection. Finally in last section 3.6, researcher has explained the procedure for descriptive case study analysis.

3.2 Qualitative Research Technique

Qualitative research is a situated activity that “locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world”. Moreover qualitative research turns the world with the help of representation and the representation is the element of field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos. Basically, qualitative researchers work as interpreters and study in their natural ways, tries to interpret and analyze what they observe or hear in a meaningful way (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013) provide a simpler and functional definition of qualitative research as

“qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values”. In short, qualitative research deals with “text, images or sounds” (*ib. id*)

Like other research process, qualitative researchers also use a variety of tools and techniques to improve a deep understanding of how people perceive their social realities and consequences. Moreover, it also tries to find how people act towards the consequences they face within the social world. There are various approaches to collect qualitative data for a research. However, some overlapping can be found among qualitative research processes. The following table 3.1 briefly explains different types of qualitative research methods (*ib. id*)

Table 3.1: Types of Qualitative Research

Research Approaches	Defining features	Data collection
Phenomenology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This research method highlights on individual’s experience, conceptions, feelings and beliefs. • Description of human experience of phenomena. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike survey/questionnaires, this research method asks participants to describe their experiences including their opinions, thoughts or perceptions.
Ethnography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on practices (cultural) • Gather information on how people live or what they do in their everyday life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on observations, videos, photographs, interviews. • Long term field work process. • Questions are made to be focused on social/cultural aspects
Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of one or several cases • Look at individuals, a small group of participants or a group as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases are selected ‘based on a unique quality’ • Questions or interviews are made to be focused on the unique feature of interest.

Source: *Qualitative Research Defining and Designing*

3.3 Case Study Approach

Case studies are useful for running a qualitative research, where researcher analyzes one or more than one cases for the interpretation of a particular situation. In other experimental² or quasi-experimental³ study may hide some information whereas case studies “bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data (Guest et. al 2013). In this approach the cases are to be selected on a unique and focused quality and unstructured open ended questions are made to collect the information about that unique feature (*ib id*).

Yin, cited in Tellis (1997), has mentioned two types of case studies: explanatory and descriptive. Explanatory case studies are used for ‘casual investigations’. Descriptive cases need a descriptive assumption to be established before initial the project activities (*ib id*). To explain the importance of a case study method in a research work, Yin mentions that “the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena” because “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.

In my research paper, I followed descriptive case study method. This research method consists of accurate description of the facts of a case and a conclusion based on the explanations which go along with the facts provided in the research paper. Similarly, this research paper provides the description and facts about Bangladesh readymade garment industry workers as well as the influence of neo liberal approaches. Moreover, it also explains the findings from the case studies which have used in this particular research work.

² Experimental Research is based on different experiments in the lab or uses some quantitative data for the testing of hypothesis.

³ Quasi Experimental Research is the combination of some experiments and some descriptive analysis

3.4 Sample Selection

Sample selection is one of the important tasks in case study approach. According to Hycner (1999), cited in Groenewald (2004), the selection of case or the group of cases is the observable fact that dictates the method including even the types of participants. For this research, I selected my first respondent through convenience sampling technique, which means sample is consist of the people who are easy to reach. Welman and Kruger, cited in Groenewald (2004), consider this process is the most important kind of non-probability sampling. This process is helpful to recognize the primary participants. On the base of this sampling technique, I visited one affected household which was mentioned by the one of the experts to whom I visited for the elaboration of my problem statement. Neuman, quoted in Groenewald (2004), in his study called this first respondent as the gatekeeper, who has some formal or informal authority to control the site.

Greig and Taylor, cited in Groenewald (2004), mentioned that the people, for whom the entry is achieved, are ‘gatekeepers’ and the other participants, recommended by the first participant, are ‘key actors or key insiders’. For my rest of sample or in the words of Greig and Taylor for the key actors, I followed snowball random sampling, where I used the references of my first respondent and then sample group appeared to grow like a rolling snow ball. At the end, I was able to collect the information from nine more households, which was enough for the explanation of my problem statement. As according to Punch, mentioned in the article *Qualitative Research Basis*, in the qualitative research or particularly case study research sample size doesn’t matter, important is the main focus or point of interest. In this study, particular focus is industrial affairs for working class in RMG sector, so all my respondents were the employees in the different garment factories in Chittagong.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Interviews from the Main Actors

Data was collected through open ended unstructured informal interviews. However the focus was the objective of the research. Bentz and Shaprio, cited in Groenewald (2004), define this interview technique as bracketing, where inquiry is fully controlled by researcher's perspective. Collected information is point of views of the respondents but mostly on the researcher thinking and feeling. Miller and Crabtree, quoted in Groenewald (2004), support this bracketing and say "the researcher "must 'bracket' her/his own preconceptions and enter into the individual's life world and use the self as an experiencing interpreter". Some other qualitative researchers also appreciate this technique for example Bailey, cited in Groenewald (2004), expresses the informal interview as a conscious attempt by the researcher to find out more information about the setting of the person. The interview Process is reciprocal as both the researcher and the participant engage simultaneously. It is more likely to gain more information.

Kivale, mentioned in Groenewald (2004), mentions that it "is literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" and at the time of interviewing researchers try to "understand the world from the subs' point of view, to unfold meaning of people's experience".

I collected the data from ten different respondents to answer my research question how industrial affairs of labor issues have changed or affected through the transformation of RMG industry in neo liberal globalization era?

My questions were directed to the participants, and were related to their experiences, feelings and opinions about the theme in question. Guidelines for this informal interview to the RMG workers are given in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Interview Guidelines for Main Actors

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Demographic Information of Respondent• Working Hours• Labor Wages• Working Conditions• Labor Union |
|---|

Source: Personal Presentation

3.5.2 Triangulation

In case study data collection, the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the data are most important, and for this purpose, Yin, mentioned in Tellis (1997), has suggested various sources for the collection of data. This process is known as triangulation, through which collected data can easily be verified by another source (Yin 1994: 92, Stake 1995: 114). For my present study, I have used various techniques for the confirmation of my data and to obtain accurate information.

Personal Observations techniques provide the first hand information about the behavior and body language of the respondents. It is because of the personal involvement of the researcher, who provides a natural, flexible and relax environment to her respondent (National Science Foundation (NSF). With little amendments, Miles & Huberman, quoted in Groenewald (2004), suggested the same technique with the different name of memoing in which researcher prepares some field notes according to his/her observations. While using this technique, discrepancies can be avoided between the beliefs and reported in interviews. However, there should be a balance between the reflective and descriptive notes. In this study, I was fully involved in the field survey and gave full attention to every respondent and his actions. It helped me to get desired outcomes and described me the true picture of the reality.

Patton (1990), quoted in Mayoux (2000), says *Document Studies* is another way to crosscheck the qualitative data which is potentially useful. Yin, mentioned in Tellis (1997), relays more on

documents for authenticity of case. For deep understanding and validity of the information provided by the RMG workers, I collected material from the specified documents and articles in order to analyze the situation of RMG and arrive at a more complete understanding of the lies of working poor labor. For my study, I tried to gather documentary proof, which could answer the following questions.

- 1) How did Neo Liberal Globalization emerge in economic sector particularly in industrial sector of Bangladesh?
- 2) To what extent, Neo Liberal Policy affect on poor working class?
- 3) Are there any indications of globalization that degrades working class living styles?
- 4) Is there any nexus between globalization and marginalization of working class?

3.6 Descriptive Case Study Analysis

Examination of case studies facts is the most important part of the analysis. Cases can be analyzed by Causal as well as Descriptive. Gerring (2001) and King et al (1994) are more in the favor of descriptive inference for the social sciences (Research Design). Many researchers have used this highly informative descriptive analysis for most famous case studies in anthropology, political science, and sociology are primarily descriptive in orientation (e.g., Fenno 1978, Hartz 1955, Lynd and Lynd 1956, Malinowski 1984, and Whyte 1955) (*ib id*).

Descriptive inferential is effective and simple mainly focus on the questions of case study protocol. Miles & Huberman, quoted in Groenewald (2004), explained a very simple but comprehensive way to analyze descriptively the evidences of case study. In this analysis, first of all, distribution of information according to the research protocol is required. After putting the

information into different respective arrays, data can be explained in frequency of the event and then answers for the main research question can be derived.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

Readymade Garment Industry has played a vital role in the growth of Bangladesh Economy. Although, Bangladesh economy is an agrarian economy, this RMG sector emerges as the largest foreign currency earner sector (Kabeer and Muhamud 2012). This growth can easily be quantified in geographical, political and few economic aspects (Ahamed 2010). Daily Star in its publication of January 19, 2014 claims that Bangladesh has taken-over India in readymade garments exports, despite the recent setbacks it received like instances of building collapses and fire at manufacturing units. The Economic Times reports in January 2014 that between January and October 2013 was the growth period for Indian exports, whose readymade shipments to the US grew 6.3 per cent to \$3.2 billion. At the same time, despite of all setbacks, Bangladesh jumped 11.4 per cent at \$4.9 billion (The premier export finance agency 2013).

However, strand for socio-economic growth, as livings and livelihoods for RMG workers, is still in gray. According to most of the experts and researchers garment industry is mainly the contribution of its workers, who are still neglected (Ahamed 2010). The industrial affairs of labor issues (wrt Section 2.3) are complex and challenging. In this study, I tried to investigate the situation of garment industry in Chittagong after the announcement of new labor policy, particularly for garment industry.

As per requirement of the descriptive case study analysis (with reference to section 3.6), Section 4.2 explains the categories of the questions asked during the one to one interaction with them for the interpretation and fulfillment of my research objectives. Section 4.3 consists of presentation of finding. In the last section 4.4, results are explained.

4.2 Interpretation of Data

To fulfill the objectives of this study, explained in section 1.1, data was collected about main variables of different industrial affairs in context of globalization and neo liberalization of trade discussed in section 2.3 as well as in table 3.2, to understand the current living situation of RMG workers. Interviews were quite flexible but bracketed. Respondents were free to share all whatever they wanted. Along with much other information, points described in table 4.1 were the key issues for which researcher put a bracket (table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Categories of the questions

1. Personal Demographics of Respondents <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name2. Sex3. Age4. Family Size5. Education level
2. Working Hours <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Daily routine of the worker2. Payment method (e.g. fixed or according to the work completed)
3. Labor Wages <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Total working experience in garment industry2. Job Title3. Is salary according to the job experience and job title?4. Is the salary enough to maintain family costs?5. Is overtime required for more earning?6. If yes, how much a worker is paid for that?7. Are other members of their family also working in the same sector?8. Do the workers get any increment if the factory gains profit?
4. Working Conditions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do the workers enjoy holidays?2. How often they can take leave from work?3. Is there any penalty if they cannot come for work?4. Is sanitation facility in the factory is good?5. Do the workers have access to pure drinking water?6. Does the factory provide any transportation facility for the workers?7. Did the worker receive any sort of training, technical or self defense in case of fire in the house or building collapse?8. Do they have to wear any particular dress during work?
5. Labor Union <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does the worker know or see the owner of the factory?2. Does the worker know about reporting authority in case of any sever problem?3. Is there any labor union? If yes? What is it doing for the workers' welfare?

4.3 Presentation of Information

I collected data for the variables explained in table 4.1 from 10 RMG workers, who were employed in different garment factories in Chittagong.

On the bases of *personal demographics*, my all respondents were young female of average age of 24, which confirms the findings that RMG sector is creating more job opportunities for females (Uddin 2008 & Ahamed 2013). Like a report of the daily star published on February 06, 2014, me study found that with this average age of 24, twenty percent were from the juvenile age group⁴. All respondents were skilled and eighty percent were literate up to the maximum grade 8. Rest of twenty percent did not attend any school but they learned the stitching from their family or friends. All were the true representatives of poor income group with big family size, who were doing this job to support their family (Tamanna 2010). Because of this same reason of low earnings, twenty percent child labor also found in my analysis.

In the response to the *working hours*, the entire respondents reported that they have to work for more than eleven hours per day, and during this they have only one hour lunch break. For their survival in such high inflation situation, they work six days a week and have only one week end for rest. Sometimes, they are strained to work on weekends too. Seventy percent of respondents reported that without any intimation, sometimes supervisor asks them to work for twenty four hours, and during this twenty four hours shift, they do not have any break or lunch. They are served by some small quantity of snacks during their work. All respondents were agreed that payment is based on the work completed, and that is also not paid in time. Sometimes, they

⁴ Below the age of 18 years

receive their payments after one or two months, after the completion of whole consignment. Along with this delay, they complained about the low wages.

The results for *labor wages* explained a reality that Bangladesh RMG industry is a labor intensive industry and labor is really cheap. Thirty percent of the respondents were working in this sector from last twenty years and they spent their whole working period in sewing section. They did not get any promotion during this period, even they are enough experienced. They were appointed as tailor and still they are at the same rank and getting the wages like all other worker. Sixty percent of inquisitors reported that they receive an increment in their wages once in two years, but this is for all and no special treatment with loyal and experienced workers to retain them.

All informants delineated unanimously that wages were very low. Their average income per month is not more than 4000 tk, even after the announcement of new labor policy for minimum wages at 5300 tk. This is not enough for their livings, so they are forced to do overtime. However, after the regular duty of eleven hours, they are not able to do much during that extra time and payment is according to the work. Forty percent of respondents told the researcher that their other family-members are also working in the same sector to earn the money and as male workers get some higher wages.

In terms of *working conditions* for this labor class, workers are very deprived. They do not enjoy any holiday like others and in case of overworked illness or some other urgent piece of work at home they are not able to go to work, one day overtime is mandatory for them with very low payment of just 20 takas per hour. Researcher personally observed the very poor situation of sanitary and clean drinking water facility during the visit of work places and confirmed it from

her respondents. Most of the workers live very far from the work place and to come to work they have to hire public transport, which is an additional expense. Some people reported about the issues of harassment in these local vehicles. In response to the question for transport facility, sixty percent of the inquirers fed it back that they had requested for it, but did not get any reciprocation for it.

Workers reported that they were hired on the bases of their skills and after that they did not offer any training for enhancement of their skill. Even they claimed that they are not provided any instruction in case of any emergency like fire in the house or building collapse. On further exploration, sixty percent of the respondents were totally unaware about these safety nets, and did not know what to do in that situation. Forty percent had little knowledge about tackling the situation on the bases of their previous experiences. Some of the respondents share this also that in case of selection for training, factory owners normally select male workers (Alamgir 2014).

Workers in garment industry do not have any documentary proof of their jobs, that's why they do not have any job security. They can be fired at anytime without any reason. Anytime without any reason they can be fired from their work. As respondents were free to share all matter related to their job, 40% of the respondents shared very sensitive issues of verbal abuse or sexual harassment, which explain the working environment for those females, who have no option except this job. As they have feared to be fired, so they do not share it with anyone.

Labor union is not encouraged in RMG industries in Bangladesh, so the response for this last resort was also not very good. Most of the workers never know the actual owner of the business and they believe that supervisor is the last decision making authority. In particular response for the labor union, fifty percent were totally ignorant with this idea of labor union. Thirty percent

claimed that they know about the labor union but have no idea about their working place. Rest of twenty percent said that there is labor union, but is ineffective. Mostly worker were scared from this labor union, as they were considering them as a representative of the authorities and in case workers share their matter with members of the union, they might have lose for their job.

4.4 Summary of Results

Industrial affairs of RMG Bangladesh, as explained in the previous section, are not favorable for the working community in this sector. Although it is the fastest growing and job creating sector, even then labor is not very happy. Life cycle hypothesis of labor economics say that productivity is maximum in the young age. Most of the labor is young females, who support their family by their earning (GTZ annual report 2013). Wages are neither up to the policy nor according to their marginal productivity. Along with this, they face some gender discrimination in their wages as compared to male. So these low paid females also involve some of their other family members, like younger sister, to work with them to meet the income expenditure ratio (Uudin 2010). Poverty of the labor class is one of the main reasons of child labor in this sector (ib id). International labor organization is very keen about the working conditions and particularly for females they have certain code of conduct. However the RMG sector is not taking all national and international rules seriously for the improvement working conditions. So even after a setback of some severe incidents, they are not following the regulations. Working class is bound to work in the same environment because of their financial situation and inflation in the economy (Khan 2011). Labor Union can be one of the savers for workers in this critical situation, but it is not effective in Bangladesh and factory owners may not allow for it, so they are trying to scare the worker for their job.

Data obtained from the annual report of ministry of labor 2013 explains that level of investment is growing in RMG sector. Level of exports has also jumped up to 11.6 percent and is at \$4.9 billion (the premier export finance agency 2013). Growth of the sector shows that investors are earning and making money. On the other hand, the workers who are the actual heroes of the industry are deprived. These results show that my hypothesis “neo liberalization is creating the inequality in the income distribution between the investors and working class of RMG of Bangladesh” is accepted. So we can say that neo liberalization is not fully effective RMG sector of Bangladesh. Although, the idea of globalization is very attractive, however it cannot be implemented for RMG sector of Bangladesh. If it is forced to apply, it may cause some serious economic problems like income disparity.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

In this study, the hypothesis whether idea of neo liberalization globalization is effective for all economies or not was tested. From the results of this study it is clear that this idea of globalization is not very effectual for the whole society. At some points, it pushes the society towards the capitalism, which explains the largest income disparity between poor and rich communities. If it will continue in the same way, sooner we will face an eventual social breakdown, which will cause a major macroeconomic crisis. This will happen if institutions will not be properly enacted.

To avoid this economic recession, some strong labor laws and policies are required before implementing this idea of globalization. As Bangladesh government and many other different agencies are working very hard for making these labor policies, but execution and continuous updation is also essential. In case of violation, proper accountability recommended.

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