IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)
Volume 26, Issue 9, Series 7 (September. 2021) 16-20
e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845.
www.iosrjournals.org

Occupational Mobility among Female Workers in the Compliance and Non-compliance Garment Factory of Bangladesh

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Abstract:
Background: Occupational mobility is the change of occupation or job. People do not usually have the same capacity to change career in the midstream.A worker can change job and/or grade in the same occupational field or another in her/his lifetime. The extent of occupational mobility is indicated by the number of workers who change occupation over a given period of time. The main purpose of this study was to determine the nature and extent of occupational mobility among female workers in the compliance and non-compliance garment factoryof Bangladesh.
Materials and Methods: Both the qualitative and quantitative questionnaire-based face-to-face interview method was used to collect the primary data. A total of 2929 female garment workers of two garment factories named Nass Apparels (non-compliance) and Delta Composite (compliance) constituted the population of this study. Samples of 458 female worker respondents were chosen randomly to meet the objective of the research. Charts and diagrams were prepared using the software like MS Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Female garment workers' occupational mobility was measured by the number of occupation changes divided by the year of experience in garment job.
Results: About half (49.26%) of the female workers of non-compliance factory had high occupational mobility and about one-third (32.35%) had no occupational mobility. In case of compliance factory, more than half (57.76%) of the female workers had no occupational mobility and above one-fifth (21.43%) had high occupational mobility. Occupational mobility of non-compliance garment factory was significantly higher than compliance garment factory.
Conclusion: Female workers' occupational mobility of non-compliance garment factory in Bangladesh is significantly higher (almost double) than that of compliance factory. Female garment workers of non-compliance factory are interested to mobilize to compliance factory for increasing their income and good work environment.
Key Word: Occupational mobility; Female workers; Bangladesh RMG.

Date of Submission: 10-09-2021 Date of Acceptance: 26-09-2021

I. Introduction

Ready-made garments (RMG) sector of Bangladesh is the most important sector that contributes significantly to the economy of Bangladesh and it provides employment of a vast number of female workers[1].During the early 1980s, this RMG sector has become the major source of employment for the Bangladeshi women workers[2]. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) is committed to protect the interests of its members and their employees by implementing legitimate rights and privileges for garment workers[3]. During 1990-2010, the contribution of export to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Bangladesh has been increased three times due to the RMG sector where the role of female workers was the most[4]. Women's social capabilities have been enhanced as they are now able to develop an identity for themselves, have social visibility and command respect in their additional role of earning members of society[5]. The main focus of this study is to determine the nature and extent of occupational mobility of female workers with respect to compliance and non-compliance factory in the garment sector of Bangladesh.

II. Material And Methods

This research was carried out from March to May 2013 in Dhaka &at Gazipur district of Bangladesh. These two districts are the major industrial areas where most of the RMG factories has been established. Considering the objective of the study, Naas Apparels Ltd. of Dhaka metropolitan city area as the non-

compliance factory and Delta Composite Knitting Industry Ltd. of Gazipuir as the compliance factory were selected purposively.

Study Design: Descriptive design
Study Location: Two RMG factories located in Dhaka and at Gazipur
Study Duration: March 2013 to May 2013
Sample Size: 458 female RMG workers

Sample Size Calculation: Sample size was calculated by the online sample size calculator developed by the Creative Research Systems of California[6]. For determining sample size,50% responsive distribution with 5% margin of error or confidence interval and 95% confidence level were assumed. It became 136 for Naas Apparelsout of the female workers population of 210 and 322 for Delta Composite out of the female workers population of 1987. Thus the sample size of this study was (136 +322) = 458.

Subjects & Selection Method: From the two garment factories only the female workers were considered to calculate the population and sample was taken randomly from that population. The population was determined in March 2013 from the attendance record of the factories.

Procedure Methodology:This study was the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. A well-designed pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. Ideas were also shared with the stakeholders like factory executives, owners, resource persons etc.

Female Garment Workers' Occupational Mobility: In this study, female workers'occupational mobility was measured by the number of occupation changes divided by the year of experience in garment job as below.

$$OM = \frac{n}{y}$$ Where, OM = Occupational mobility
n = Number of occupation changes
y = Year of experience

Statistical Analysis:Salient features like mean, standard deviation (SD) and coefficient of variation (CV) of occupational mobility of the female garment workers were used to find out average value, dispersion and relative variability. Simple t-test was used to test the following null hypothesis to compare the occupational mobility of the female workers of compliance and non-compliance garment factory:

> *"There is no difference between the occupational mobility of the female workers' of compliance and noncompliance garment factory."*

III. Result

Occupational Mobility of Female Garment Workers

Occupational mobility scores of the female workers of Naas Apparels (non-compliance factory) ranges from 0 to 3 with mean of 0.58, SD of 0.508 and CV of 0.873; whereas, occupational mobility scores of Delta Composite (compliance factory) ranges from 0 to 2 with the mean of 0.30, SD of 0.441 and CV of 1.453. Occupational mobility scores of the female workers of both non-compliance and compliance garments ranged from 0 to 3 with the mean of 0.39, SD of 0.479 and CV of 1.239 as shown in Table no 1. CV of occupational mobility of the female garment workers were higher than 0.5, it revealed that the female garment workers were heterogeneous based on their occupational mobility.

Table no 1:Mean, SD and CV of Occupational Mobilityof Female Garment Workers

Name of Factory	Categories	Respondents		Mean	SD	CV
		Number	Per cent			
Naas Apparels Non-compliance factory	No mobility	44	32.35	0.58	0.508	0.873
	Low mobility	14	10.29			
	Medium mobility	11	8.09			
	High mobility	67	49.26			
	Total	136	100.00			
Delta Composite Compliance factory	No mobility	186	57.76	0.30	0.441	1.453
	Low mobility	32	9.94			
	Medium mobility	35	10.87			
	High mobility	69	21.43			
	Total	322	100.00			

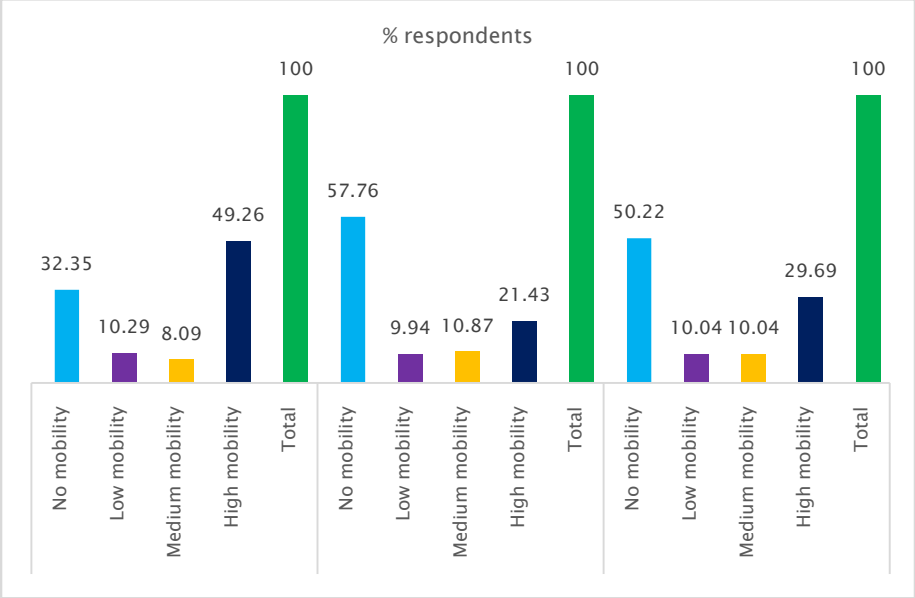
Both	No mobility	230	50.22	0.39	0.479	1.239
	Low mobility	46	10.04			
	Medium mobility	46	10.04			
	High mobility	136	29.69			
	Total	458	100.00			

The female garment workers were classified into four categories based on their occupational mobility as follows:

Categories	**Basis of Categorization (score)**
No mobility	0
Low mobility	>0.0 to <0.5
Medium mobility	0.5 to <1.0
High mobility	>1.0

Category-wise distribution of the female garment workers is shown in Figure no 1.

Figure no 1: Distribution of the Female Workers based on their Occupational Mobility



Findings of the Figure no 1 revealed that about half (49.26%) of the female workers of Naas Apparels (non-compliance factory) had high occupational mobility, whereas about one-third (32.35%) had no occupational mobility, 10.29% had low and 8.09% had medium occupational mobility. In case of Delta Composite (compliance factory), more than half (57.76%) of the female workers had no occupational mobility, whereas above one-fifth (21.43%) of them had high occupational mobility, 9.94% had low and 10.87% had medium occupational mobility. In case of both garments, above half (50.22%) of the female workers had no occupational mobility whereas, 29.69% of them had high occupational mobility, 10.04% had low and rest 10.04% had medium occupational mobility.

It is obvious from Table no 1 that the mean female worker's occupational mobility of non-compliance factory (0.58) is almost double than that of compliance factory (0.30). This is because of that the benefits and facilities of compliance factory are higher than non-compliance factory. In other words, it can be said that non-compliance environment push them to choose better options and compliance garment factory pull them to join there.

Female Workers' Comparative Occupational Mobility of Compliance and Non-compliance Factory

Naas Apparels was selected as non-compliance and Delta Composite as compliance garment factory. Compliance ensures UN human rights, labor rights of ILO convention, labor law and guidelines incorporated by the BGMEA, foreign buyers. Most of the compliance standards are based on ILO conventions[7]. Currently, many international buyers are demanding compliance with their code of conduct (COC) before placing any garment import order[8]. Finding revealed that mean occupational mobility of female workers of non-compliance garment (0.58) was higher than compliance garment (0.30). Framed null hypothesis was examined by running simple t-test and result shown in Table no 2.

Table no 2: Results of t-test for Comparing Female Workers'Occupational Mobility of Compliance and Non-compliance Factory

Types of Garments	Number of Respondents	Mean of Occupational Mobility	t-value	Significance Level
Compliance	322	0.30	5.887	0.000
Non-Compliance	136	0.58		

The calculated value of 't' (5.887) was greater than that of the tabulated value with 456 degrees of freedom at 0.00 level of probability. So, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, it was concluded that there was significant difference between the occupational mobility of the female workers of compliance and non-compliance garment factories. Occupational mobility of the female workers of the non-compliance factory (0.58) was significantly higher than that of compliance garment (0.30). It is quite logical that the advantages of compliance garment were higher than non-compliance garment. It might be the causes of higher occupational mobility of the non-compliance garment factory than that of compliance garment factory.

IV. Discussion

Informal recruitment, wage discrimination, irregular payment,rented factory premises, narrow staircase, absence of lunch room, absence of separate toilet or common room for female workers etc. were observed during this study at non-compliance factory Naas Apparels.On the other hand, compliance factory Delta Composite enjoys lots of advantages like higher price of products, free from labor unrest, reduced worker turnover rate, increased worker morality, increased productivity, global image and recognition, good public or community relation, improved government-industry relation and many more.Compliance factory follows UN human rights, ILO conventions, COCs developed by the international organizations or buyers, provisions of Bangladesh labor law and factory rules in favor of 'decent work', whereas non-compliance factory ignored those.

Considering the COCs and other advantages of compliance, the researcher of this study tried to compare the occupational mobility between the compliance and non-compliance garment factories. Though RMG female workers of Bangladesh are less mobile but situation either push or benefits pull them to shift job to the better garment factory. Due to unsafe, insecure, unhealthy work environment, they suffer from different types of diseases and also face lots of issues which virtually push them to change their job. On the other hand, different types of benefits, favorable work environment, labor standards, occupational health and safety etc. pull them to join in the compliance factory. But every mobility or job shifting creates different types of issues or negative consequences for the concern factory.

Female workers' mean occupational mobility of non-compliance factory was found almost double (0.58) than that of compliance factory (0.30). The null hypothesis was rejected through t-test which implied that female workers occupational mobility of non-compliance factory was significantly higher than compliance garment factory.Non-compliance environment push them to choose better options and compliance factory pull them to join there.

V. Conclusion

Null hypothesis regarding "there is no difference between the occupational mobility of the female workers' of compliance and noncompliance garment factory" was rejected by t-test and it was found that occupational mobility of female workers of non-compliance garment was significantly higher than that of compliance factory. The mean of occupational mobility of the female workers of non-compliance factorywas significantly higher than compliance garment. Therefore, it may be concluded that transferring the non-compliance garment factories to compliance garments could reduce the occupational mobility of the female garment workers.

Female workers face various crises in the RMG sector. Unless and until the basic rights of the workers are ensured, this sector will not be able to achieve its desired goal. UN human rights, ILO conventions, COCs developed by the international organizations, provisions of Bangladesh labor law and factory rules have to be followed and strongly monitored by the concern authorities. Non-complianceRMG factory should take initiatives to establish the compliance features to reduce female workers occupational mobility in order to protect the factory from the negative consequences.

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Acknowledgment

The researcher would like to express his heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Md. Sekender Ali, Pro Vice Chancellor, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU), Dhaka for his valuable advice and to Dr. Md. Monarul Islam, Joint Director (Policy & Planning), Polli Daridra Bimochan Foundation (PDBF), Dhaka for his active co-operation to prepare this paper.

A. Musaddeq. "Occupational Mobility among Female Workers in the Compliance and Non-compliance Garment Factory of Bangladesh."*IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(09), 2021, pp. 16-20.