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Abstract

The ready-made garments (RMG) sector is one of the booming manufacturing sectors than any other in terms of employment opportunity and foreign exchange earnings in Bangladesh. This sector also eliminates poverty and plays crucial role in the national economy of Bangladesh. Along with its distinction, this sector has been facing a serious challenge because of COVID-19 pandemic over the last one and half years which can harm the future sustainability.

in Bangladesh: An Analysis

The present study has made an attempt to identify all the adverse impacts of Covid-19 on the readymade garment sector of Bangladesh. It also aims at finding a suitable solution to cope with all the adverse effects. To accomplish the study, data were mainly collected from secondary sources. Since the inception of RMG in 1978, Bangladesh achieved a tremendous growth by establishing scores of factories in consistent with the export linkage. In the Year 1983-84 this sector contributed \$31.57 million from export of finished goods and services. In the Financial Year 2013-14, this sector earned \$24.49 billion that represents about 81 percent of countries' total export earnings. It further increases \$34.2 billion in FY2018-19 which is 84% of the country's total exports. But in FY 2019-20 the export has been decreased around \$7 billion to USD 27.95 billion from \$34.2 billion in comparison to previous FY2018-19 due to the effects of COVID-19 as all kind of communications and transportation was restricted world-wide. The study shows that USD 3.17 billion orders have been cancelled or suspended by the retailers and brands which threatening the employment and financial security of millions of RMG workers. There are 70,000 workers who have lost their jobs by June 2020 and almost 2.28 million workers jobs were likely to remain at risk and above 70 factories were closed during the last fiscal year. To protect this sector, Bangladesh Government declared an amount of BDT 500 million stimulus package on March 25th, 2020 for supporting the workers' wages and securing their livelihood. The study recommended some

suggestions to the government of Bangladesh, factory owners and management, BGMEA and BKMEA, buyers association, workers association, NGOs and ILO to take some initiatives in order to overcome the negative impacts of COVID-19 that will be helpful for improving the conditions of garments sector. Keywords: RMG; Impacts; Worker's Risk; Unemployment; COVID-19; Policy Implications 1. Introduction: The readymade garment industry (RMG) is the highest ambassador of Bangladesh as a country in the world market, one of the main engines of development in recent years (Khan, 2020), which faces an uncertain

future in financial development from Bangladesh after the COVID19 pandemic (Bhattacharjee, 2020). The journey of RMG began in the late 1970s and since then it has played a crucial role in the Bangladeshi economy (Haider, 2007). Within a very short period of time it has become the largest export earners of the country through a major positive effects on GDP, GNP, per capita income and employability of millions

worker in the country (Shahriar et al., 2014). This industry has not just contributed through the earning of foreign exchange but also in socioeconomic prospects, creating a huge number employment opportunities

significant employment opportunities, employing over 4 million workers (BGMEA, 2020). Presently the national economy of Bangladesh is largely dependent on RMG which is the country's largest manufacturing wing having 11.2% GDP contribution (Akter, 2020) and 36% manufacturing employment. 6.5% global

However, the coronavirus pandemic has presented this sector with many more challenges that are likely to

mostly for the poor illiterate workforce of the country. In 2019, the export value of ready-made garments (RMG) stood about 34.13 billion USD, which is decreased by 27.95 billion USD for pandemic COVID-19 in 2020. Currently it accounts for 83 percent of the country's total export revenue. Its growth has created

market share has made it world second leading exporting industry while China is the first.

slow down the overall growth of the RMG industry. Global demand for clothing has fallen, and some 1*Department of Social Sciences, BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology, Dhaka, Corresponding author Email: abdurrakib@buft.edu.bd ²Pro-Vice Chancellor, BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology. ³Department of Textile Engineering, BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology. 54 BJFT 2021 Volume 6: 54-64 Abdur Rakib et al. 2021 brands have even canceled their orders. For this reason, the garments industry was at stake for the moment.

About \$2.4 billion ordered was canceled by the retailers (Cernansky, 2020). Many clothing owners are similarly facing financial difficulties as orders are abandoned, delayed and postponed due to COVID-19 (Pattanaik, 2020). At the moment, the entire RMG business cycle is numbed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the question of worker survival is also at stake. That is why Dr. Rubana Huq, general director of BGMEA: "For her it is about the survival of the company, for us it is about the survival of our 4.1 million workers" (Cernansky, 2020).

Incentives and other related facilities during COVID-19 are inaccessible to vulnerable RMG workers in Bangladesh due to owners' earnings restrictions, and many workers are unemployed and disadvantaged by delaying many previously placed orders for shipment. With limited income and no savings, workers faced a major financial crisis during this pandemic situation. Unpaid leave is granted to employees. The fight against COVID-19 cannot be supported by the government alone. It will require an unprecedented level of coordination between the public and the private at the local and international levels. The World Economic Forum launched the COVID Platform for Action on behalf of the World Health Organization in response to the pandemic. Bangladesh should try to use this platform to mobilize support for its private sector and share

On March 25, 2020, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh announced a BDT 5 billion stimulus package for export-oriented industries to overcome the short-term wage payment crisis for white-collar and blue-collar workers and also a capital loan of \$ 3.5 billion at lower rates. The interest offer is unlikely to adequately support the industrial sector (Foyez, 2020). HSBC Bank, a global financial institution, also extended its support to lobby the RMG sector. Many other banks and financial institutions are insured for a short-term loan of up to one year, with a main moratorium on existing fixed-term loans from the textile and clothing industry for four months to cover payroll and pension payments (Perera, 2020). By the way, much more support is needed from the Bangladesh government, BGMEA, BKMEA, buyers association, workers

some of its own experiences in fighting COVID-19 and building its economic resilience.

association, NGOs, ILO and other organizations to sustain the apparel sector of Bangladesh. 2. Objective of the Study The main objective of the study is to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the readymade garments in Bangladesh. To achieve this purpose, the study also seeks to achieve the following objectives: to assess the nature of export performance in RMG sector before and after Covid-19; to identify the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the workers of RMG sector of Bangladesh; to suggest plausible measures to overcome the adverse impacts if any. 3. Literature Review Shimanta, Gope & Sumaiya (2020) found that the garment manufacturing sector is a major contributor to the Bangladeshi economy. Apparel revenue was heavily reliant on exports, but these days buyers cancel

to reopen factories. BGMEA and BKMEA are taking many more steps to support workers. The Bangladeshi government has also better accepted the top priority condition and introduced some improvement packages. Islam et al, (2020) stated that woven and knit export items have been in decline since the COVID-19 pandemic began, but before the global pandemic began, RMG export trends were well positioned. Research has also shown that the Bangladeshi economy is almost dependent on RMG exports. The situation of the 55

and maintaining a good relationship with buyers to deal with the pandemic situation. A price reduction policy, a declaration of the risk premium for workers and government stimulus packages for the industry were also proposed. Kabir, Maple & Usher (2020) stated that garments workers had negatively affected both their physical and mental health and the well-being of their lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many RMG employees are losing their job opportunities. The study also argues that the COVID-19 pandemic will have long-term effects on the lives of workers, particularly in terms of their health problems, economic shortages and the inability to meet their basic needs, as well as future job opportunities. Responsible organizations and individuals should reconsider the health of RMG employees and general well-being during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Hassan (2020) found that coronavirus disease is wreaking havoc on the ready-made garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh. Currently RMG plays an important role in the country's economy and contributes 80% of export earnings. It is projected that by 2021, Bangladesh will reach a middle income position that depends only on RMG. However, with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no doubt that the

RMG industry has "fallen off a cliff" as many industries have closed and are unable to pay workers' wages. At the same time, orders worth \$ 3.17 billion were canceled and the job opportunities and financial security of millions of workers remain under threat. According to media reports, 70,000 workers had lost their jobs

Sen et al. (2020) found that the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the global economy. According to the ILO, this pandemic virus is causing an economic and labor market crisis. The study also found that the RMG industry is one of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic among the other industries. The garment sector in Bangladesh is also radically affected by COVID-19. At the beginning of the coronavirus in Bangladesh, most factory owners were unable to pay workers' wages in the critical

as of June 2020 and up to one million jobs are likely to remain at risk.

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do not have enough reserves.

4. Methodology

salaries.

than \$ 30 billion. The garment sector began its journey in the late 1970s and became a billion dollar industry in 2000 in an otherwise impoverished country. About 165 million people live there. Almost 22% of the population lives on the poverty line. Sen et al., (2020) found that COVID-19 has become the most dangerous and largest global health disaster of the century, one that also affects the national economy. The clothing industry is considered one of the most vulnerable sectors. RMG's buyers struggled with financial problems and were unable to pay the workers' legal wages. Many RMG workers in Bangladesh have faced layoffs and are also victims of order cancellations and late deliveries. However, the situation worsened when workers did not follow health instructions. Therefore, RMG factories must ensure that workers maintain the minimum distance between them. Sultan (2020) noted that the garment sector (RMG) is in a time of crisis due to COVID-19, with a virtual restriction of new business and a massive cancellation of existing orders. In Bangladesh, nearly a million textile workers have already been laid off due to order cancellations. Many RMG employees will be financially affected by the COVID-19 crisis. On March 25, 2020, the government of Bangladesh announced a BDT 500 million economic stimulus package for workers' wages and benefits. Most of

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RMG's employees are women, come from underdeveloped socio-economic backgrounds and receive low

Sakamoto, Begum & Ahmed (2020) described that Bangladesh is one of the high risk countries of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is affecting the social and economic status dramatically and the poverty rate is increasing day by day. The study also focused on urban slums, social exclusion, and pre-existing conditions. Recovery of the economy would take a long time due to the weaknesses mentioned above and many people in Bangladesh would not be able to recover from the current pandemic situation because they

The study heavily relied on secondary sources of data. To identify the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on readymade garment industries and its workers in Bangladesh, researchers were not able to visit the factories due to COVID-19 norms and rules of restrictions and maintaining social distances. For this reason, researchers were unable to collect primary data by conducting surveys and other techniques of information collection. Therefore the research technique was mostly relied on the available information from secondary sources. Those data were compiled based on intensive consultation of journals, research articles, thesis papers, newspapers case studies, online news paper and survey reports, garments manufacturing industries annual reports, BGMEA yearly report and document files. The sources of information and data were basically through skimming and scanning the findings of different secondary documents. After the completion of the data collection, descriptive analyses was used to illustrate the data. At the first phases, analysis has been done to identify the negative impacts of Covid-19 on RMG of

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Bangladesh and the second phase illustrates the measures to cope up with the negative impacts to move towards the top position in the world apparel market. This study did not follow any unethical means to collect information rather maintained strong ethical norms and practices. 5. Results and Findings: 5.1 COVID-19 & its adverse effects on RMG Export performance The contribution of the RMG sector has seen phenomenal growth over the years. It is the main export sector of Bangladesh. Over the past two decades, the RMG industry has emerged as a thrust sector, ensuring the fuel for economic growth and development. While the export earnings of the garment industry were slightly less than 1 million dollars in 1978, in 1983-84, 2007-08 and 24,490 million dollars in fiscal years 13.57 million dollars and 2013-14, which represented 81, 13 percent of the countries in the world lose

total export earnings. It increases \$34.2 billion in FY2018-19 which is 84.2% of the country's total exports. But in FY 2019-20 the export has been decreased around \$7 billion to USD 27.95 billion from \$34.2 billion

in previous FY2018-19 due to the effects of COVID-19 around the world.

Table-1: RMG and Its Contribution in Total Export

disruption due to COVID-19 (Holy, 2020).

2011

Source: International Monetary Fund, 2020.

Table-2: Changes scenario of RMG export

Source: Export Promotion Bureau, 2020.

5.4 Effects on livelihood of Garments Workers

Time period/Category

Earnings from Woven

Garments

Knitwear

Earnings from

Express, 2020).

Earnings in July-

May FY18-19

(Billion USD)

16.04

15.68

31.73

5.3 Covid-19 and Cancellation of RMG Order

6.2

2012

3

2013

9 8

7

6

5 4 3

2

1 0 6

2010

BJFT 2021 Volume 6: 54-64 Abdur Rakib et al. 2021 Ready-made clothing has played a significant role in Bangladesh's GDP for the past decades. About 83% of the country's total export earnings comes from this sector with the participation of almost 4.5 million workers (BGMEA, 2021). Due to COVID-19, the RMG sector export earnings are losing large amounts every day. According to BGMEA, retailers canceled around \$ 3.17 billion and 2.20 million garment workers were affected during the pandemic, while many shipments and orders were canceled or suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic (BGMEA, 2020). However, the sustainability of RMG's factories looks extremely miserable. Bangladesh always has to depend on China for the necessary equipment of the garment industry, such as raw materials and industrial ingredients. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, China stopped exporting. Because of this, the impact on the garment sector in Bangladesh has been reflected (Akil & Tonny, 2020). 5.2 Effects on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Bangladesh is the fastest growing economy in the South Asia region. This country is seen as a role model for other developing countries in achieving sustainable development and the economy grew at double digit annual growth. That success has been compromised due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

on the global economy. In 2019, only 20% of people lived below the poverty line, but now it is almost 40% (Rahman & Ishty, 2020). Today, the RMG sector is considered the backbone of the economy and the country accounts for 13% of Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) and is under severe stress. This industry accounts for 2 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) (Global Fashion Industry Statistics International Apparel, 2020). Bangladesh will become the next Asian giant with more than 7% of GDP (Bhattacharjee, 2020). BGMEA claimed that \$ 3.17 billion was cut in April 2020 due to COVID-19 (BGMEA, 2020). According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the world GDP could be in a range of 0.1% to 0.4%, that is, \$77 billion to \$347 billion, Bangladesh could lose 0.01% of its 2018 GDP worth \$ 3.02 billion and 894,930 jobs due to the corona pandemic (BDRAL, 2020). According to the International Monetary Fund, Bangladesh's real GDP dropped to 2.0% in the 2019-20 fiscal year, as a result of declining trade in ready-to-wear garments, weaker private business growth and more severe

Figure-1: Real GDP growth (Percentage)

6.8

2015

8

2018

7.6

2017

7.2

2016

7.9

2019

2

2020 (f)

Shortfall

from Govt.

Target (%)

26.31

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Growth

(%)

-19.22

-18.74

-18.99

Real GDP growth (Annual % change)

6.3

2014

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted global supply chains and has had Bangladesh (Kabir, Maple & Usher, 2020). Many retailers and brands in Euclosed their stores due to the coronavirus and are canceling their orders. BGN 1.8 billion have been halted and another \$ 1.4 billion have been canceled (Fig. 58).	rope and North America have MEA reported that orders for \$
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of BGMEA stated that "since the increase of COVID-19 cases in Europe and the US, Bangladeshi factories are losing around \$100 million (€92 million) per day. They are even canceling orders that have reached their ports or have already been shipped. Only in Bangladesh, it is predicted that around \$6 billion in export revenue will be lost during FY 2019-20 amid cancellations from some of the world's largest brands and retailers" (Paul, 2020). She also said, "\$10 million in orders were canceled across 20 factories" (Cernansky, 2020). This rate has a largest branch for the largest largest brands and retailers" (Paul, 2020).	

Effects on job Sector of RMG Hundreds of thousands of garment workers in Asia were suspended or laid off their jobs due to coronavirus when North America and Europe closed their stores. Majority of them are women. According to the wall Street Journal reports, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar are the most affected countries in Asia during COVID-19 pandemic situation where many workers have to arrival back to their villages, face food crisis, and borrow money to survive. In Bangladesh, there are many factories announced lay-offs to minimize

5.6 Recommendations and Ways Forward

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believed that the Taka 5,000 Crore stimulus package from the government was a timely initiative to lessen uncertainty about workers' wage payments. Millions of RMG workers are going to be affected economically by the COVID-19 crisis. Majority of these workers are female, coming from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, and mostly working at a low wage in garments factories predominantly producing low-priced garments. Historically, the garments workers have been often denied their rightful benefits. Based on the research findings and local and international literature the study recommends the following suggestions that will help to improve the conditions of garments sectors and might be helpful for the entrepreneurs of RMG industry, policy makers and related stakeholders to tackle the challenges caused by COVID-19 pandemic. 5.6.1 To the Government of Bangladesh The government is the main regulatory body of RMG sector. It is the responsibility of government to seek out the possible approaches to overcome the negative impacts of Covid-19 on RMG. So, it is recommended to cooperate the work with trade unions to find ways to support garment workers during this pandemic situation and to ensure the future feasibility of the industry once the crisis has passed.

to establish COVID specialist Community Hospital for providing medical facilities to RMG workers.

The factory owners and management have the key role to overcome the negative impacts of COVID-19 on

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• to ensure the food security and accommodation facilities of the RMG workers, otherwise workers can affected by coronavirus diseases. These are also very crucial to ensure worker health facilities

to transform marketing or sales policy and need to change their production facility to modular

to concentrate at opening up online shops to supply to the customers of the European Union and the

to investigate proper coronavirus testing or health checkup close to the factories for workers and

to ensure the available safety related goods in garments industries for the workers as well as at their

to arrange some precautionary measures like arrangement of antiseptic in the entry and exit of factory

to ensure and monitor the wearing masks of all workers, employees and management staffs while

to influence the RMG owners to generate new business policies like-e-commerce for marketing of

to establish many more COVID-19 testing booths in different industrial areas of Dhaka and

to develop a set of guidelines for RMG workers and employees for ensuring health and safety facilities.

The buyer associations have the key responsibilities to improve the workers' socioeconomic conditions and provide many more facilities and support the BGMEA, BKMEA and owners of the industries. So, it is

 to monitor the RMG factories that they are maintaining all the suggested safety protocols efficiently. • to support the factories to bear the additional cost for ensuring health and safety of the workers.

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The workers association should overlook the rights of workers. They should suggest the workers to maintain social distance and personal protective equipment (PPE) for the health protection. They should aware of COVID-19 issues and provide realistic advice to RMG workers to follow both at work and at

This NGOs seeks to promote welfare for workers, create awareness and provide education regarding workers' COVID-19 related health & safety, rights and responsibilities, defending the rights-particularly of women-in the social, economic and political spheres, mobilize workers and support them regarding their

to raise the voice for workers regarding health & hygiene, compensation and benefits, rights and

• to provide awareness raising programmes on basic hygiene, working safety measure etc.

safety with the government agencies, owners and concerns of the workers.

to support the BGMEA, BKMEA and owners of the industries for ensuring the vaccination or

• to establish of a COVID-19 taskforce to maintain physical distancing in the workplace.

The BGMEA and BKMEA are the owners association of garments. So, they are main body who can take proper initiative to cope up with the negative impacts of COVID-19 to move towards the top position in the

 to pay all wages of the workers by digitally, either through bank account or through mobile wallet. • to establish a mandatory provident fund for workers for any emergency. The amount can be given by

to provide PPE to workers and employees and factory surfaces must be cleaned regularly.

ensure the vaccination or effective medication for all workers and management staffs.

paying wage for workers and loan with lower interest rate.

5.6.2 To the Factory Owners and Management

and productivity of the organization.

the worker and factory in equal ratio.

they are in the production floor.

world apparel market. So, it is suggested-

RMG products and many more policies.

RMG sector. So, they have-

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USA directly.

home also.

5.6.3 To BGMEA and BKMEA

5.6.4 To Buyers Association

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To the workers Association

rights. So, it is recommended to-

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garments-textile-industry.

200427091544354.html.

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home.

5.6.5 To NGOs

recommended -

• to ensure garments village projects for improving the livelihood of workers.

• to provide the transport facilities from workers' residence to the factory.

gates, adequate soaps for the workers so that they can wash their hands.

• to work to develop own brands to reduces dependency of RMG business.

effective medication for all workers and management staffs. • to provide foreign aids to develop the workers' supportive facilities.

• to provide financial supports for functioning the industries efficiently.

• to influence garments owners to re-start the closed factories.

Chittagong to get easily accessible for RMG workers and managements. • to establish the field hospital for better treatment of COVID-19 positive workers. • to ensure freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining of workers.

• to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers and employees 5.6.6 To ILO The international Labour Organization (ILO) is a specialized organization in the field of labour issues. The ILO is to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues. All the decisions made by ILO are tripartite; this means that governments, employers and employees are represented within those decisions. So, it is suggested -• to monitor the international labor convention implementation and to provide support and suggestion. • to help to implement the labour rights and labor rules related to apparel sector. 6. Conclusions The COVID-19 Pandemic has hit the hard of the business around the whole world. Most of the countries are affected by coronavirus more or less all over the world. Many businesses are becoming shutdown.

Economy of countries is vulnerable conditions. Bangladesh also affected by COVID-19 pandemic and its economy is also at a risk position. There are three types of business people suffering huge economic losses due to the coronavirus attack first, whose products are totally dependent on foreign buyers, second, whose

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More than 2.20 million workers in the garment industry were affected by the pandemic, while many deliveries and orders were canceled or suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic (BGMEA, 2020).

their orders and factories don't make payments to workers-some are also closed. If the length of the confinement increases, there is a great possibility of becoming unemployed. Many families face great problems to survive in this situation that depend mainly on RMG. It is also noteworthy that Bangladesh could face an unmanageable situation in the near future. To confirm health security, RMG owners are trying BJFT 2021 Volume 6: 54-64 Abdur Rakib et al. 2021 COVID-19 pandemic leads to many difficulties in RMG due to the cancellation of orders, the closure of the factory and the loss of employment of many workers, the salary deduction of workers. Many workers have already been sent home without pay. The study recommended ensuring security measures at RMG's factory

situation. As a result, millions of RMG employees have been sent home without pay. At this point, the Bangladeshi government has taken many initiatives to save RMG's business, that is lessen of VAT tax rebates, loan instalment rescheduling, financial support to the owners to pay the workers' wages, etc. Sharmin and Khanam (2017) stated that the ready-made garment sector makes a great contribution to the development of the socio-economic conditions of garment workers, especially for female workers. This sector plays an important role in creating employment opportunities for women and also in increasing economic progress. As a result, sufficient job opportunities for garment workers could ensure a sustainable existence. Leitheiser et al. (2020) identified that Bangladesh is the fastest growing economy in the Asia-Pacific region with annual GDP growth of just under 8%. RMG's industry dominates the country's economy, contributing more than 80% of all exports and 11% of GDP with total export earnings of more

Year RMG export Total export Contribution in (in million us\$) (in million us\$) total export (%) 1983-84 31.57 811.00 3.89 1989-90 1923.70 32.45 624.16 1995-96 2547.13 3882.42 65.61 76.57 2001-02 5986.09 4583.75 10699.80 75.83 2007-08 14110.80 2013-14 24491.88 30186.62 81.13 2018-19 34133.27 40535.04 84.21 2019-20 27949.19 33674.09 83.00 Source: BGMEA, 2021 57

2020). This rate has changed just over a few days later. "Until March 24, orders of 649.30 million pieces of RMG products from 738 garment factories worth \$2.4 billion have been canceled" Dr. Rubana Huq (Kamruzzaman & Sakib, 2020). A survey, conducted on RMG of Bangladesh, revealed that almost 23.4 % suppliers signposted that "a lot" of current orders had been canceled. Around 22.3 % suppliers said: "most" of their recent orders canceled while 5.9 % had all of their in-process orders canceled (Anner, 2020). This type of cross-brand and retailer cancellations presents RMG employees with enormous challenges, not other stakeholders. Syed Hasibuddin Hussain, head of the Bangladesh Mapped project at BRAC University, says how will owners pay workers' wages? When shipping is delayed and the order is canceled (Cernansky, 2020).

Earnings in July-

May FY19-20

(Billion USD)

12.96

12.74

25.70

The COVID-19 pandemic has a large impact on the standard of living of both women and men in the garment industry (Ahmed, 2020), which also hampers the social and economic resilience of the garment sector (UNB, 2020). Employees of the world's leading clothing exporters, i.e. China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, India, Cambodia, Pakistan, etc., live in the most vulnerable condition. This vulnerability rate in Bangladesh may be higher in the developing countries. Workers have to face limited income, social safety net problem, limited access to healthcare, leaves without payment, limited savings and many more (Cernansky, 2020). A recent survey has found that about 72.4 percent of manufacturers in Bangladesh were unable to provide facilities their workers with some income when furloughed, while 80.4 percent of them stated that they were incapable to provide compensation when order cancellations resulted in worker dismissals (Anner, 2020). In Bangladesh, there are around \$7 billion in export revenue lost during 2019-20 financial year amid cancellations from some of the world's largest brands and retailers. 1 million RMG workers lost their jobs. Manufacturers couldn't pay the wages to the workers as they didn't get enough financial support from the buyers (Paul, 2020). For this reason Bangladesh government declared over US\$588 million (BDT 5,000 crore) stimulus package to pay salaries of export-oriented industries, from which apparel industries can get the major portion of benefit (Al Jazeera, 2020). BGMEA decided to repair manufacturing units with 30% of the workforce advising to ask only the worker living near their respective factories to join (The Financial

indicates that RMG sector of Bangladesh was facing a negative growth at beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic started. Even the buyers, who have been buying Made in Bangladesh products for many years, canceled orders or asked for large discounts without any hesitations. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has been appealing to the buyers to continue ordering. BGMEA has formed task forces to monitor the situation, to collect information on order cancellation, and to work with the Government to provide support so that the industry can afford to pay the workers. Trade Union believed that RMG workers were in a high-risk position, burdened on the mental pressure their families in the wake of rampant job insecurity and financial suffering caused by unpaid wages, layoffs and exposure to infection. The trade unions themselves had played an active role in negotiating with owners, associations, and the government to ensure workers' salaries and job security and OHS; although they were experiencing difficulties in communicating, mobilizing and carrying out protests in lockdown situation. Trade Unions to announced many more package for textile & garment industries to overcome short term crisis of

their responsibilities following Bangladesh labor law. For this reason, thousands of workers to be unemployed overnight because of these lay-offs. Almost 2.27 million of the country's RMG workers lost their job, which is the highest employment sector of Bangladesh (Wright & Saeed, 2020). This coronavirus epidemic cut between 4% and 9% of garment sector jobs in different countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia and India. The Asian Development Bank estimates that Asia will grow this situation by just 0.1 percent in FY 2020-21 and the slowest rate in six decades (Rabby, 2020). According to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), above 70 factories were closed during the last year (Perera, 2020). When two or three order cancelled and factories were not working, workers are facing tremendous problems rather than any other stakeholders. On this pandemic, people are becoming jobless, stressful, suffering anxiety and falling in depression. The number of unemployed members is

Bangladesh is a promising developing country in the world. The export-oriented apparel industry of Bangladesh, popularly known as readymade garment (RMG) is one of the booming manufacturing areas with greater interest to the national economy of Bangladesh. The export earnings data for FY 2019-2020

increasing every day where the rate is 4.4% population (The Daily Jugantor, 2020).

supply chain relies on imported raw materials and machinery from abroad, and the third, whose incomes depend on in-house demands and facing. The main business of Bangladesh, the RMG industry is facing a serious crisis because of COVID-19, with the mass cancellation of orders that decrease the export rates and GDP of the country. Some garments factories fired a portion of their workers, some kept their workers standby. Bangladesh government declared a stimulus package of BDT5000 crore for export-oriented industries to overcome the downward effect of its economy. It is needed to start the new generation business policies like-e-commerce for marketing of RMG products and needed to work to develop Bangladeshi brands to reduce dependency of RMG business on the international buyers for selling its product. The effects of COVID-19 may be exist for long time and its full impact will be more visible in the next few months and years. In order to maintain the economic stability, it is needed to take some initiatives to save the RMG business. In this way, the study suggested some recommendations to improve the conditions and further effective analysis is also required to overcome the consequences.

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