

Exploitation of Female Workers in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments Industry

Internship Organization

Outlook Tex Apparel

Prepared by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration

Supervised by

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December 10, 2025

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INTERNSHIP INFORMATION

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monika". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Date: 10/12/2025

Name: Monika Islam Binty

Student ID: 193011005

Letter of Transmittal

December 10, 2025

Shawkat Tanveer Rahman,
Senior Lecturer ULAB School of Business (USB)
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)
Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1209

Subject: Submission of Project report on “Exploitation of Female Workers in Bangladesh’s Ready-Made Garments Industry

Dear Sir,

With due respect, I would like to inform you that I have completed my Internship on Outlook Tex Apparel. The internship report paper titled “Exploitation of Female Workers in Bangladesh’s Ready-Made Garments Industry” has been prepared for the fulfillment of my internship according to the prerequisites of my undergraduate program Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). In this report, I have tried my best to compile the concepts which I have learned in my Bachelor of Business Administration along with some experience gathered from the internet for taking relevant information regarding the Internship. I hope that it will find your acknowledgment. I am looking forward to your valuable feedback.

Sincerely,

Monika Islam Binty

Student ID: 193011005

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA); Concentration: Supply Chain Management

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University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)

Acknowledgement

I would like to address certain people with due honor and respect who assisted me not only to solve the challenge and complete my project paper but also to introduce me to this new situation without any trouble. Therefore, I'd like to express my gratitude to them. I am grateful to Almighty Allah for providing us with the patience and courage to complete this challenging task, withing its Deadline.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Shawkat Tanveer Rahman (Senior Lecturer, ULAB), for his advice and encouragement. He patiently provided valuable suggestions, motivation, and thoughtful assistance throughout my report submission process.

My successful study would not have been possible without his support and diligent efforts. I am grateful for the internet's ability to facilitate knowledge sharing and success in every domain. I collected all necessary data and documents for this report using the internet and Google. I had also like to thank my department manager, Mominur Rahman Shelly (CEO & Founder, Outlook Tex), for his kind assistance with every element of RMG regarding the project.

Lastly, I am deeply thankful to my family and friends for their unwavering love, support, and encouragement. Their faith in me, particularly my husband's constant encouragement throughout my undergraduate years at ULAB, has served as a guiding light. Despite my limited experience, I attempted to write a compelling and insightful project report that was infused with genuine understanding. Their unwavering support has truly been the foundation of my journey and achievements.

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Part A

Chapter 1: Internship Preparation

1.1 Motivation and what I expect to learn from this internship

As I am a student of Supply Chain Management in Bachelors in Business Administration in the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh and ever since I can think of, I have been fascinated about how the products reach buyers all the way from the suppliers and how companies manage to make things work. This is the reason why I have selected to do my internship at a buying house; it is a bridge that is lacking between the local factories and foreign buyers. My role in the job entails assisting with the processes of negotiating prices, inspecting product quality, guaranteeing timely delivery of orders and ensuring that costs are kept at a minimum.

At the designated place of my internship, I am expected to acquire the knowledge of communicating with suppliers, receiving their orders, monitoring the production process and organizing deliveries. I also wish to observe how purchase of houses maintain cordial relations with the local factory as well as foreign customers and how the supply chain concepts apply in the practical workplace scenarios.

An internship at a buying house will provide me with an opportunity to experience the issues that arise in the processes of sourcing, delivery time and an assurance of quality products. I am hoping that it will improve my problem-solving skills so that I can be up and running in the industry upon completion of my studies.

1.2 Internship Search Process

Previous to my interview at Outlook Tex Apparel, I engaged in some preparation activities in order to do better. I was confident that researching the company prior to the interview will make me feel more confident. The first thing that I did was to visit the official website of the company. They began with their history, nature of garments they deal with and services they offer as a buying house. This also provided me with a fundamental knowledge of the way the company functions and its unique difference to other institutions.

During the business research, I also researched various business directories to know their registration status and time spent in the field. This information was significant to me since it enabled me to comprehend the stability and growth of the company over the year. Being familiar with the fact that the company possessed a good background meant that I was applying to a trustworthy and professional establishment.

I then accessed LinkedIn and looked at the company profile and got to know who worked there. I could envision the work culture in the organization by observing the location and the work of the employees. This provided me with an indication of the type of skills that the firm appreciates and how the team interacts. I also interviewed a few of those in the industry having worked with Outlook Tex Apparel. Through them, I was informed about the reputation of the company and how it develops relationships with suppliers and buyers.

I further investigated the list of buyers of the company, their export performance and their market in the foreign countries. This study revealed to me that the company was dealing with recognized international buyers and it was also holding its position in the market well. It also provided me with knowledge on the need of international business relations in a buying house.

Lastly, I could visit job portals like LinkedIn Jobs to review, staff and company ratings and testimonies. Reading about

the accounts of other employees provided me with an objective interpretation of this company. I came to know the good and the bad working environment there. This assisted me in preparing on the mind-set in readiness to the interview and in having realistic expectations.

All in all, it helped me to have a clear vision of Outlook Tex Apparel. Although not all this information was directly required to be asked during the interview, it enabled me to answer the questions confidently and also demonstrate to the interviewers that I had conducted adequate research. The preparation also gave me a sense of being a professional and a good impression to the interviewers.

1.3 Internship interview experience

Upon attending my interview at Outlook Tex Apparel, I realized that the placements have a professional and organized process. All this was done in a well-organized manner and this created a positive perception in my mind about the organization.

The first round was the pre-screening rounds. During this phase, I was kindly questioned upon my educational experience, the courses I took as well as whether I enjoyed any prior work experience or internship assignment. They also requested about my career objectives and reasons why I would like to be part of the supply chain and buying house industry. This section of the interview was significant since it enabled me to depict my enthusiasm in learning about supply chain management and how I was driven to do so.

The technical round was conducted second. This was the most difficult part as this was a subject knowledge test. I received questions dealing with fabrics, the process of garment production and quality control systems. They were asking whether I was familiar with the way in which the garments are created starting with raw materials and ending with the final products. They also inquired how the purchasing of houses sustains relations with the foreign buyers, as well as how various issues, such as production delays or defects are addressed. This step was directly relevant with the things I had learnt in the classroom, and I attempted to respond as much as possible, based on theories and practical considerations.

The last round was at the management level; in which the technical knowledge was no longer applicable; since more attention was paid to the individual skills. The situational questions that I was asked were things such as how would I deal with a delayed shipment, what would I do in case I had conflict within a team and how would I deal with stress when things were hot on the production line. These were questions that challenged my capability to solve problems, leadership skills, and teamwork skills. It taught me that not only technical knowledge is important, but also such personal traits as the ability to communicate, the ability to make decisions, and being adaptive to changing situations.

Altogether, the process of the interview was quite smooth, clear, and transparent. The interviewers were well mannered and got me convinced. I also felt that I had the same chance to

perform and present myself and my talents. Such experience was not only a preparation of the internship but also taught me more about myself and ways of improving myself.

1.4 About the Organization

Business Name: Outlook Tex

Type of Business: Clothing Manufacturer & Agent

Products: All kinds of Knit, Woven, and Sweater clothing

Address: House #173, Road #2, D.O.H.S. Mirpur, Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh

Email: shelley@outlooktex.com

Website: www.outlooktex.com

Contact: +88 01759999968 / +88 01705571712

Managing Director: Mr. Md. Mominur Rahman Shelley

Director: Mr. Md. Morshed Alam

Year Established: 2008

Business Background

Outlook Tex started its journey in 2008 as a clothing manufacturer and buying agent. The company provides apparel sourcing and production support for both local and international clients. Over the years, it has built a strong relationship with customers by offering reliable services, maintaining quality, and ensuring timely delivery.

Vision

To become a trusted and professionally managed apparel company that ensures customer satisfaction through reliable and efficient services.

Mission

- To provide high-quality, cost-effective apparel solutions.
- To maintain long-term trust and satisfaction among customers.
- To continuously improve services based on customer needs.

Objectives

- Ensure quality service at fair prices.
- Build strong relationships with clients and suppliers.
- Expand business operations and create new opportunities.
- Develop employee skills through continuous learning.

Core Values

- **Integrity:** Maintain honesty in all business dealings.
- **Customer Focus:** Prioritize client needs and satisfaction.
- **Knowledge & Expertise:** Encourage skill development and efficiency.
- **Fairness & Respect:** Operate ethically and transparently.

Legal Information

Registered under Dhaka North City Corporation

Registration No: TRAD/DNCC/073011/2022-

Major Customers

Outlook Tex mainly works with European buyers such as:

MARES APS (Denmark), SOCIM SRL, AMITA SRL, FASHION ITALIAN STYLE, FRABO SRL (Italy), and K3I Wholesale (UK).

Services

- Garment order follow-up
- A.Q.L. inspection
- Sample development
- Price negotiation
- Apparel sourcing and business development

Competitive Advantage

Outlook Tex competes in a highly competitive apparel market but stands out for its efficiency, client rapport, and commitment to exceeding customer expectations.

Long-Term Strategy

- **Skills Transfer:** Continuous employee training and development.
- **Service Delivery:** Fast, reliable, and quality service.
- **Management Effectiveness:** Active supervision and performance monitoring

Human Resources Plan

Staff are hired as needed based on contract size. Additional workers are recruited temporarily during peak production periods.

Business Contribution

The company has a skilled and diverse team with deep knowledge in apparel manufacturing. It operates following Bangladesh's business ethics and Codes of Good Practice, maintaining professionalism and confidentiality in all dealings.

Chapter 2: About the Internship

2.1 Activities of the Department

There were some significant duties of the buying house which were performed in the department I worked in. Their primary duties were the manufacture of garments, the supply of fabrics, quality management and liaise with the buyers. These functions were all inter-related and needed close coordination.

Production planning was one of the most important activities. The department was able to make elaborate schedules to estimate time it would take each part of the production process i.e. fabric cutting to finishing and shipment. The appropriate production plan has contributed towards the company avoiding production delays and timely delivery of products.

Fabric and accessory monitoring which includes zippers, labels, buttons and tags were also another great undertaking. The department monitored their quality and got them delivered at the right time. There were a lot of things that could go wrong were there a delay or a deficiency in some materials, hence the job was manned very carefully.

Another issue that the department paid attention to was quality control. Inspections were done prior to production, at the time of production and upon shipment of garments. This was in order to ensure that the products were of the standards of the buyer. Quality also assisted the company retain its reputation and long-term relations with buyers.

The last was contact with buyers with the department. They also sent updates to customers on a regular basis, answered the questions and addressed problems within a short period. Such professional and direct communication was effective in establishing a trust relationship with foreign customers.

Besides those activities, the department liaised with merchandising, production and quality control departments. They collaborated, which resulted in an absence of disorganization in the course of work and on-time delivery

2.2 Work Environment

It is here that professional and supportive work environment of Outlook Tex Apparel was excellent to learn as an intern. On the first day I measured that the office culture was cordial, and employees were in cordial relationship with each other. They all cooperated in a team spirit which helped in the work flow and minimized undue internal conflict.

Management was friendly and made interns feel free to ask questions whenever we did not understand something. I was never reluctant in seeking guidance since the supervisors established an open inquiry atmosphere. They did not merely explain my work but provided useful information about the way industry functions. This motivated me to be an active learner and acquire the drive to take responsibility in my work.

The other benefit of the working environment was the possibility to rotate the tasks. I was also permitted to witness different phases of the supply chain procedure such as fabric sourcing, following orders, and checking quality. This provided me with a wider perspective of how various departments in a buying house relate amongst themselves.

It was also safe and organized at work place. There was good safety regulations observed in the production areas and the offices are clean and comfortable. The company ensured that the employees were provided with tools that could enable them work with ease. This provided a certain feeling of safety and allowed me to keep my eye focused on learning.

All in all, Outlook Tex Apparel was a non-professional and encouraging environment. It also made me gain confidence, enhanced communication skills and how teamwork is an important precursor of supply chain operations.

2.3 Duties and Responsibilities as an Intern

The tasks I had to perform when working as an intern have exceeded the scope of apparel supply chain, hence providing me with practical exposure to their operations. These duties were all well planned in such a way that I was able to learn the actual operations at a buying house step by step.

I had one of my best jobs. I used work orders, production calendars, shipment history and other significant documents. This made me realize the importance of correct documentation in the management of supply chains since even the slightest mistake in documentation can cause serious issues to both the company and the purchasers.

I also made reports concerning the progress and delivery. Managers, after inspecting these reports, would at times share them with buyers in order to inform them of the production schedules. This work enhanced me on matters relating to report writing, organization of data and clear presentation of information.

The other major component of my role was to monitor production processes in factories. I toured some of production sites visiting which involved the processes of garment cutting, stitching, finishing, and packing. The observation of these steps helped me have a clear understanding of the theoretical knowledge of the production and how this compared with the operations.

My role in supporting the merchandising team was to ensure that buyer requirements were checked, verification of order details and supporting in related follow up with the suppliers. I was also informed on the importance of merchandisers in bridging the gap between international buyers and factory in the country.

Besides, I was involved in quality inspection and fabric round-checking. I got to know how fabrics undergo inspection in terms of color, textural touch and flaws before manufacturing. I also witnessed operation of how well finished clothes products were tested to ensure that they were fit in accordance with global standards and then ready to be shipped.

Lastly, I also helped in order follow up of such accessories as zipper, buttons and labels. It was important to ensure these items were in on time so as to guarantee that there would be no delay in the production.

These set of duties assisted me in acquiring the skills of organization, analysis, and communication. Above all, they provided me with a true understanding of the way purchasing houses works and how the process of supply chain activities is performed on a day-to-day basis

2.4 Application of Educational Learning with Internship

This is one of the most positive aspects of my internship as it enabled me to practice theories I had learned at the university in reality. practices. It provided me with the opportunity to bridge the gap between the lesson taught in classrooms and the real works of a buying house.

For instance, in my Supply Chain Management classes I learnt about textile production and operations management. It took me through the process of manufacturing garments right in the internship including; cutting the fabrics and final packaging. This assisted me in reading the ways in which the theories on production lines and efficiency of workflow are implemented in. buying house.

Quality assurance systems were also the aspect of knowledge that I encountered at the academic level. Both of these systems were working in reality as I observed them during my internship. There was pre-production inspection, in-line inspection, and final inspection of the quality during production. This process aroused my awareness regarding quality monitoring in the international business, which should be very strict.

Supplier coordination and lead time management is also something that I grasped during a class. During the internship, I was exposed to the fact that poor timely fabric supply or accessories may technically impact the delivery schedule. This provided me with practical reasons as to why supply chain managers should never stop following up and maintaining good communication with the suppliers.

In addition, I also used what I know about documentation and reporting. As an example, during preparation of reports, I applied some of the techniques that I had learnt in business communication courses, such as effective formatting of the reports, summarization, and elimination of irrelevant information.

In general, the internship was beneficial in assisting me in closing the theory-practice gap. Not only did it enhance my skills in transferring classroom knowledge to real life situations, it also enhanced my technical knowledge, as well as improved my UAT professional skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and communication

Chapter 3: Self-Reflection

3.1 Feedback on Internship

It is an internship that I did at Outlook Tex Apparel as one of the most rewarding learning experiences in my academic life. It exposed me to the actual supply chain of the apparel industry that is far different to classroom studies. This period allowed me to get positive comments regarding my performance by my supervisors, and thus, I also felt capable of improving.

My company supervisor valued the fact that I was very keen to learn and work with responsibilities. He said that when preparing documentation and reports, I was keen on details. He also noted that as I was not understanding some of the stuff, I always asked the related questions and thus displayed interest and commitment. This was encouraging to me and it made me understand that it is not bad to ask questions.

But they also indicated their flaws. As an example, I should have limited the time I used to make reports perfect and this would have reduced the speed. They recommended to me that I should tighten up my time management by given it the right balance in terms of accuracy and efficiency. On my part, I had to be more willing to take action rather than to wait to be allocated instructions. Such pieces of wisdom were highly practical and thought me that the working environment demands quick decision-making, as well as, careful work.

All in all, the kind of feedback that I got assisted me in personal development and growth in my career. It has boosted my confidence on my capabilities and also indicated to me the small areas that I will improve on to develop a promising career.

3.2 How I Could Do Better and How the Organization Could Utilize Me Better

When I look back on the way I performed, I find that there is a number of things that I would have done differently. During the start of my internship, I was rather shy and nervous to ask questions or to express my opinions. This hampered my learning. Had I been more active and

more assured in the beginning stages, I would have only learned more within the same time interval.

The other improvement that I can make is multitasking. At some point I could not be able to do documentation, reporting and follow up activities all at the same time. Better planning and time management would have enabled me perform better comfortably. I think that trainings of more complex skills of working with Excel would also enable me to complete a more work in less time and more professionally.

As far as the organization perspective is concerned, I believe that the Outlook Tex Apparel should have used me in a better way by assigning me more duties in buyer communications and production planning meetings. I most of the time participated in these activities but not included directly in discussions. In case I was assigned small tasks like preparing of emails or meeting agendas, I would have been more confident in communicating professionally.

There might be other ways that the company could schedule intern trainings on specific subjects that are related to its business like ERP systems, international business documentation and quality control standards. This would not only assist such interns but also enable the firm to utilize the potential of these interns better.

Simply put, there was a room to improve both, on individual level and on the organizational one. I could have performed better since I was more proactive and confident and the organization could have benefited more because the interns could have been involved in more practical work.

3.3 Recommendations

Based on my overall internship experience at Outlook Tex Apparel, I would like to give the following recommendations:

For the Organization (Outlook Tex Apparel):

1. Implement an organized internship program where interns get interchanged between the various departments like sourcing, merchandising, logistic, and quality control.

2. Give interns a chance to communicate with buyers (email, call observation, note-taking meetings).
3. Organize some brief trainings of ERP software, international trade documentation and quality control standards to interns.
4. Assign small independent projects to the interns so as to enable them gain confidence and problem-solving skills.
5. Provide frequent feedback so that interns have a chance to monitor their progression and make a change by continuously developing themselves.

For Myself and Future Interns:

1. Improve The skill of communicating (particularly, English to write and speak about work).
2. Increase technical expertise in excel, ERP and chain documentation.
3. Take more initiatives rather than waiting to be given a task to do.
4. Put my importance on time management and multitasking to accomplish the tasks in less time.
5. Be on top of trends and innovations in supply chain globally to be able to align academic concepts to exchange with the industry.

Chapter 4: Personal Development Plan

4.1 Technical Skills

Practical supply chain skills are technical skills someone possesses and uses to facilitate in smooth flow of material, information, and product between suppliers and buyers. These skills are of utmost importance in a buying house such as Outlook Tex Apparel since all levels of work, beginning with the fabric sourcing and ending with the shipment, rely on precision, promptness, and efficiency. In the course of my internship, I discovered that better development of technical proficiency will enable me to better contribute to this industry.

Demand forecasting and planning is one of the initial technical abilities that I would like to acquire. I observed that buyers must rely on making the right demand forecast hood on the basis of individual seasons. Anticipating forecasting methods and training in tools such as the Excel forecasting table or ERP software would assist me to make better plans by learning to read data. Supply chain backlogs and oversupply will readily happen without adequate forecasting.

Inventory and warehouse management is another technique that is very vital. I monitored during the processes of buying house how the fabrics, trims, and accessories are to be tracked adequately. Assume that there is only one component such as a zipper or a button that will come late and it could stall the entire order. I, hence, desire to learn new inventory systems, like, Oracle NetSuite, SAP SCM, or Zoho Inventory. These systems will assist me in ensuring that stock management is smooth and we will have fewer chances of running out of stock.

I will also enhance my logistics, and documentation skills. I learned how important documents such as the invoices, packing lists, bills of the lading, and certificates of origins are in international shipping. Any mistake in such documents can make shipment longer or make it incur additional costs. To ensure I am prepared, I would also prefer to learn more on the documentation related to international trade and incoterms (FOB, CIF, etc.) that are paramount in management of global supply chains.

My other technical skill that I want to increase is knowledge of quality control. During my internship I observed the inspection of fabrics and garments at various points. One area which I would like to gain further knowledge in is the international standards like AQL (Acceptable Quality Level) and ISO certifications. This will enable me to make sure that the products are in accordance with the expectations of buyers even before they go through shipping processes.

Briefly, my technical development plan would involve betterment in four aspects namely forecasting and planning, inventory management, logistics documentation and quality control. Through online classes, training, and on-job training, by going through these step by step, it will better equip me to a professional career with supply chain management.

4.2 Interpersonal Skills

As well as technical expertise, supply chain management also demands interpersonal skills since in this profession one is constantly having to deal with buyers, suppliers, factory employees, and coworkers. A good interpersonal skill guarantees an easier flow of communication, quicker effort on solutions and future relations of business.

I would like to improve the first interpersonal skill that is effective communication. As the purchasing of houses involves international purchasers, the written and spoken English is highly desirable. I would like to be fluent in writing professional emails, preparing presentations, preparing professional reports and giving presentations in the meetings. Communication ensures that there are less cases of misunderstanding and also creates confidence.

Negotiation is another of the skills. I also observed when merchandisers negotiated with suppliers regarding prices, shipping time and quality measures during my internship. Finding win- win solutions take patience, confidence, and patience is a necessary ingredient in making progress in successful negotiation.

This is one of the skills that I wish to practice because I want to be able to balance the expectations of buyers and supplier capacity in the future.

I too seek to develop my problem-solving skill. During supply chain management, something out of the blue like shipment problems, fabric shortage or quality failures are very frequent. I have

witnessed how managers dealt with such difficulties, analyzing the situation and communicating with various departments as fast as possible. I desire to build this skill to enable me to react in a calm manner and propose workable solutions.

Collaboration and team work also plays a great role. A buying house is the intermediary of numerous entities, therefore, cooperation with the merchandising, production, quality, and logistics departments needs to be established. I wish to be more involved in group work and respect various roles as well as to share ideas freely with the aim of pleasing to the eye the performance of the team.

Finally, the cultural awareness and adaptability are what I would like to acquire. Outlook Tex Apparel collaborates with foreign buyers of various countries, and cultural peculiarities may affect the communication aspect of business. The ability to adjust quickly and the cultural sensitivity will enable me to develop good relationships with global partners.

Through enhancing communication, negotiation, problem solving, teamwork and adaptability, I will then be able to handle supply chain operations properly and develop a positive relationship with other players in the profession.

PART- B
Exploitation of Female Workers in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments
Industry

Executive Summary

Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector forms the major part of Bangladesh export economic system and has approximately four million employees with the largest number being women. Although the sector has generated a lot of jobs and enabled women to be part of the economical arena, extensive literature demonstrates that the garment workers still face different exploitations. The present paper performs a qualitative meta-analysis of recent scholarly articles, non-governmental organization reports, and official publications to get insights into the character, scope, and continuity of exploitation of female employees in the RMG industry in Bangladesh.

Based on the analysis, there are a number of repeat and interlocking types of exploitation. One of the most problematic issues is low wages. Despite the revising of minimum wages over the years, the majority of studies depicted that the income in most cases is still not enough to support the basic living expenses. Consequently, women employees rely so much on the overtime labor, which makes them physically tired and strained financially. The excessively long working hours (which are commonly between 10 and 12 hours a day with some continued beyond that during the high production seasons) are usually mandatory and not necessarily adequately paid. The practices lead to exhaustion, illnesses, and poor living standards.

Workplace conditions and safety remain a significant issue. Although the literature demonstrates that some of the factories continue to exist in terms of unsafe working conditions, the situation has improved in most factories thanks to international efforts that have been launched after the Rana Plaza collapse. Things like lack of proper ventilation, blocked emergency exits, lack of proper enforcement of safety standards, and ineffective trainings continue to put workers at risk. Non-physical exploitation is also common alongside the physical hazards. A lot of literature records on verbal abuse, pressure by the supervisor, humiliation as well as harassment that cause extreme burden of psychological stress and an unwillingness of the worker to bring out another complaint.

The second important discovery is that the representation of workers and the lack of awareness of labor rights are weak. The threat of retaliation, the low rates of unionization and ignorance about legal rights make women less able to bargain on their favorable terms or report abuse. In

areas where labor organizations or worker committees exist, compliance with safety and labor standards is associated with improvements, and this is still lacking in most of the factories.

According to these results, this research study suggests that there should be stricter laws on labor, education of the workers, worker participation committees, better facilities at the work place, fair wage policies, responsible action on part of international buyers and gender sensitive support systems. The conclusion points out that despite the improvements that have been made, exploitation is still deep-rooted because of economic pressures, demands in the global supply chain, and poor monitors. Government agencies, factory owners, buyers and labor rights agencies will need to work together in order to make a sustainable change.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The ready-made garments (RMG) industry is the largest export-earning sector in Bangladesh. It accounts for more than 80% of national export income and employs around 4 million people, where about 60–65% are women (BGMEA, 2023). These women mainly come from low-income households and often migrate from rural areas to cities in search of work. For many families, garment jobs are their main or only source of income.

However, even though the industry has created employment opportunities, it has also been linked to serious worker abuses. Many researchers have shown that female garment workers face various types of exploitation, including low wages, unsafe workplaces, pressure to meet strict production targets, and limited access to rights (Kabeer, 2020; ILO, 2019). Some workers also experience verbal abuse, long overtime hours, and lack of proper facilities such as clean toilets, drinking water, or breaks (Amin, 2021).

Events such as the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 and frequent factory fires have brought global attention to working conditions in the industry. Although some improvements have taken place since then, women workers still face many challenges. Since female workers make up the majority of the labor force, their experiences provide an important understanding of the overall condition of the industry.

This study focuses on reviewing and analyzing previous research papers, reports, and published documents to understand how female workers have been exploited and how these issues have changed or remained the same over time.

1.2 Research Questions

What forms of exploitation of female workers are described in published studies about Bangladesh's ready-made garments industry?

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to:

- Review previously published research papers, reports, and documents related to exploitation of female garment workers in Bangladesh.
- Identify different forms of exploitation discussed in the literature.
- Understand how working conditions, wages, safety issues, and discrimination have been presented over the years.
- Provide recommendations based on the combined findings of multiple studies.

1.4 Scope of the Research

This research focuses specifically on female workers employed in the ready-made garments industry in Bangladesh. The study uses a meta-analysis approach, meaning it does not collect data through interviews or questionnaires. Instead, it reviews academic papers, journal articles, NGO reports, government documents, and international organization publications from the past several years.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Female Labor Force in the RMG Sector

Many researchers agree that the RMG industry has changed the economic lives of women in Bangladesh. Women who previously did not have access to paid work now have an opportunity to earn money and support their families (Kabeer, 2020). However, this empowerment is often limited because their work environment continues to have many risks.

Studies also show that most women workers are employed in low-skill, low-wage positions, while men are more likely to become supervisors or managers (ILO, 2019). Female workers often report that they have little negotiation power, and many accept poor working conditions because they fear losing their jobs (Amin, 2021).

Several research papers describe how the RMG industry has changed the lives of women in Bangladesh. It has provided employment to millions of women who previously had very limited job opportunities. Many researchers highlight that female workers often take garment jobs because of poverty and the need to support their families. Past studies also show that women usually work in lower-level positions such as sewing operators, helpers, or line workers. They rarely get promoted to supervisory roles due to limited training and gender discrimination.

Researchers argue that although the industry empowers women financially, it also exposes them to exploitation due to poor labour practices. Many female workers accept tough working conditions because they feel they have no other choice. Earlier studies also show that the social status of women improves slightly with garment work because they can contribute to household expenses. However, this improvement is limited because exploitation continues to negatively impact their physical and emotional well-being.

2.2 Common Types of Exploitation

Low Wages

Many papers mention that female workers earn wages that are lower than their basic living needs. Even though the minimum wage has been revised several times, many researchers say it is still not enough to cover food, housing, and transportation. Some studies show that women rely on overtime work just to survive, which increases stress.

Long Working Hours

Working hours are a major issue discussed in previous studies. Female workers often work 10–12 hours a day, sometimes even longer during peak production seasons. Past research shows that long hours lead to physical pain, fatigue, and emotional stress. Workers often skip breaks because they must meet production targets.

Unsafe Working Conditions

Many studies reference factory accidents such as Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashions, which highlight the unsafe nature of factories. Papers report poor ventilation, blocked emergency exits, and lack of safety training as common issues. These unsafe conditions put female workers at constant risk.

Emotional and Verbal Pressure

Past research consistently shows that verbal pressure from supervisors is common in many garment factories. Female workers often face shouting, scolding, and threats if they fail to meet targets. This type of treatment reduces self-confidence and increases mental stress.

Lack of Rights Awareness

Several studies show that many women do not know their legal rights or complaint procedures. As a result, they cannot report problems or negotiate better conditions. This lack of awareness makes them more vulnerable to exploitation.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research design. Instead of collecting new field data, the researcher reviews and analyses existing studies from the past several years. Meta-analysis means combining findings from different papers to identify common patterns, strong themes, and major conclusions. This design is suitable because many published papers already provide rich information about exploitation of female garment workers. By comparing these papers, the research can produce a clearer and more complete understanding of the issue.

3.2 Data Sources

Data for this study come from secondary sources only. The researcher reviewed journal articles, NGO reports, international organization publications (such as ILO and Human Rights Watch), academic theses, and newspaper articles. Papers were selected based on relevance, publication quality, and the depth of information related to exploitation. Only papers published in the last 5 years were included to ensure updated and reliable findings. Documents have been collected using targeted keyword searches (e.g., “female garment workers Bangladesh,” “RMG labor rights,” “post-Rana Plaza,” “gender-based exploitation,” “maternity rights RMG,” etc.) through digital databases, organizational websites, and institutional archives.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

A thematic analysis approach was used. First, each paper was read carefully, and key findings were highlighted. Then, similar findings from different papers were grouped under common themes such as *wage issues, safety problems, long hours, and verbal pressure*. After that, similarities and differences across papers were compared. These themes were then combined to form the overall conclusions of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the main themes that come out of the meta-analysis of past studies and reports on the exploitation of female workers in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector. Each theme below summarizes what multiple papers and reports found, compares the evidence, and explains why the issue matters.

4.1 Wages and Economic Pressure

Most studies show that low pay is a central part of exploitation in the RMG industry. Many female workers earn near or just above the official minimum wage, but this level is usually not enough to meet family living costs (Rahman, 2021; BGMEA, 2023). Several survey reports found that workers rely heavily on overtime to earn enough money; this means they work longer hours just to survive (Research Survey, 2020). The low wage problem also creates high tension — when living costs rise (food, rent, transport), wage levels feel even more inadequate and push workers to accept harsh conditions rather than lose their jobs (Kabeer, 2020). Recent protests and strikes show that many workers and unions are demanding higher wages, which highlights how serious the gap is between pay and living needs.

4.2 Working Hours, Overtime and Fatigue

Long working hours and heavy overtime appear repeatedly across the literature. Multiple surveys and studies reported that women commonly work 10–12-hour days during normal periods and even longer during peak seasons (Mahmud, 2020; ILO, 2019). Overtime is often compulsory rather than voluntary, and overtime pay is not always given correctly or consistently (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The combination of long hours and high production targets leads to chronic fatigue, musculoskeletal pain, and reduced ability to care for family or rest — all problems documented in study by Mamun et al., (2022).

4.3 Safety, Building Standards and Occupational Hazards

Safety remains a major finding across many reports. The Rana Plaza collapse (2013) and other incidents led to international efforts (the Accord, later safety programs, 2023) and some improvements in building and fire safety. Still, many papers and NGO reports argue that unsafe conditions continue in parts of the industry — blocked exits, poor evacuation plans, and inadequate safety training are still recorded in audits and field research (Clean Clothes Campaign, ILO project summaries). In short, physical safety improved in many factories but is uneven; enforcement and maintenance are weak in others (Accord reports, 2023; ILO, 2023)

4.4 Verbal Abuse, Supervisory Pressure and Psychosocial Stress

Multiple studies document non-physical forms of abuse — shouting, humiliation, threats, and sexual harassment are frequently reported (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Khatun, 2020). Supervisors use intense verbal pressure to keep production speed high; women report emotional stress, loss of self-confidence, and fear of losing their jobs if they complain. Some reports also document cases of gender-based harassment that remain under-reported because of stigma and weak grievance systems.

4.5 Weak Unionization and Rights Awareness

Studies and reports find that many female workers have low awareness of labor rights and limited access to strong unions. Anti-union practices, legal barriers, and fear of victimization reduce union membership and weaken collective bargaining (Rahman & Hossain, 2019; HRW, 2023). The literature shows that where unions are active and protected, workers report better enforcement of safety and overtime rules, but union suppression remains a problem in many factories.

4.6 Summary of Findings from Meta-Analysis on Exploitation of Female Workers in Bangladesh's RMG Industry

Theme / Issue	Key Findings from Past Studies	Why It Matters (Impact)	Main Sources (Harvard Style)
Low Wages	Female workers earn wages below living needs; depend on overtime to survive. Wage protests are increasing.	Creates financial stress, forces overtime, reduces bargaining power.	Rahman (2021); Kabeer (2020); BGMEA (2023).
Long Hours & Overtime	10–12-hour days; peak season is often longer. Overtime is regularly compulsory; not always properly paid.	Causes fatigue, health problems, and higher accident risk.	Mahmud (2020); ILO (2019); Mamun et al. (2022).
Safety & Building Conditions	Safety improved after Rana Plaza, but poor ventilation, blocked exits, weak enforcement still exist.	Unsafe factories increase injury and death risk. Needs constant monitoring.	ILO (2018); Clean Clothes Campaign; Accord/RSC reports.
Verbal Abuse & Harassment	Many female workers face shouting, threats, humiliation, and gender-based harassment.	Causes stress, low confidence, mental health issues; reduces ability to complain.	Human Rights Watch (2015); Khatun (2020).
Weak Unionization	Low rights awareness; fear of retaliation; union suppression common.	Limits bargaining power; reduces ability to demand safer conditions.	Rahman & Hossain (2019); HRW (2015).

Chapter 5: Recommendation and Conclusion

5.1 Recommendations

This study reviewed a wide range of published research papers, reports, and documented cases on the exploitation of female workers in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments (RMG) industry. Based on the patterns found across these past studies, several recommendations can be made for policy makers, factory owners, buyers, and labor rights organizations.

These recommendations aim to address the root causes of exploitation, improve working conditions, and ensure long-term sustainability of the industry.

1. Strengthen Monitoring and Enforcement of Labor Laws

Although Bangladesh has labor laws and regulations, many studies show that enforcement remains weak (Rahman & Langford, 2023). To reduce exploitation, the government should increase the number of inspectors, improve inspection quality, and ensure unannounced factory visits. A stronger monitoring system would make it harder for factories to dismiss safety norms or ignore worker rights. Collaboration between government agencies, workers' unions, and independent auditors would create a more transparent system.

2. Promote Worker Education and Awareness

Many studies found that female workers often do not fully understand their rights, benefits, or complaint procedures (Hossain, 2021). Regular training programs, posters in simple language, and legal awareness workshops inside factories would help women become more confident in reporting abuse or unfair treatment. NGOs and buyer companies can jointly sponsor such training sessions.

3. Encourage Formation of Worker Committees

A consistent finding across the literature is that the absence of strong worker representation increases vulnerability to exploitation (Faruque, 2020). Factories should be encouraged or required to create Worker Participation Committees that include female workers. These committees can help raise concerns, negotiate improvements, and act as a communication channel between management and workers.

4. Improve Workplace Safety and Facilities

Meta-analysis shows that workplace hazards—such as lack of ventilation, unsafe machines, and overcrowding—contribute to exploitation and poor health (Akhter et al., 2022). Employers should invest in better lighting, ergonomic chairs, clean toilets, and separate spaces for female hygiene needs. These investments can reduce accidents and improve productivity at the same time.

5. Support Fair Wage Practices

Low wages remain one of the most common problems highlighted in previous research. Female workers often earn the lowest wages and rely on overtime to meet their basic needs (Islam & Ahmed, 2023). It is recommended that factories adopt transparent wage structures and strictly follow government minimum wage rules. International buyers should also review their pricing practices so that factories are able to pay fair wages without cutting costs through exploitation.

6. Increase Pressure from International Buyers

Past studies show that international buyers and brands can influence factory behavior (Khan & Wichterich, 2022). Buyers should require stronger compliance audits, consider long-term sourcing relationships, and avoid last-minute order changes that pressure factories to push workers beyond limits. Ethical sourcing policies must be monitored and not just declared on paper.

7. Provide Mental Health and Gender-Sensitive Support Systems

Many papers highlighted emotional stress, verbal abuse, and harassment faced by female workers. Factories should provide access to counsellors, set up gender-sensitive grievance cells, and enforce zero-tolerance policies for harassment. This would create a safer and more respectful working environment.

5.2 Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the exploitation of female workers in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments industry through a qualitative meta-analysis of previously published academic and institutional studies. By examining findings from many years, the study was able to identify common patterns and root causes of exploitation that continue to affect women working in the sector.

The review shows that female workers face a variety of challenges, including low wages, long working hours, unsafe conditions, harassment, limited knowledge of rights, and weak worker representation. Although some improvements have taken place after major incidents like the Rana Plaza collapse, many issues remain ongoing. The analysis reveals that exploitation is influenced by a combination of economic pressure, global supply chain demands, social norms, and gaps in monitoring systems. Because of these overlapping factors, addressing exploitation requires coordinated action rather than isolated solutions.

Overall, this meta-analysis demonstrates that although exploitation is still present, there is clear evidence that continuous monitoring, better policies, and worker-centered practices can create meaningful improvement. Future studies may expand the analysis to include interviews, longitudinal data, or comparisons with other countries to understand broader patterns of labor exploitation and gender inequality in global supply chain

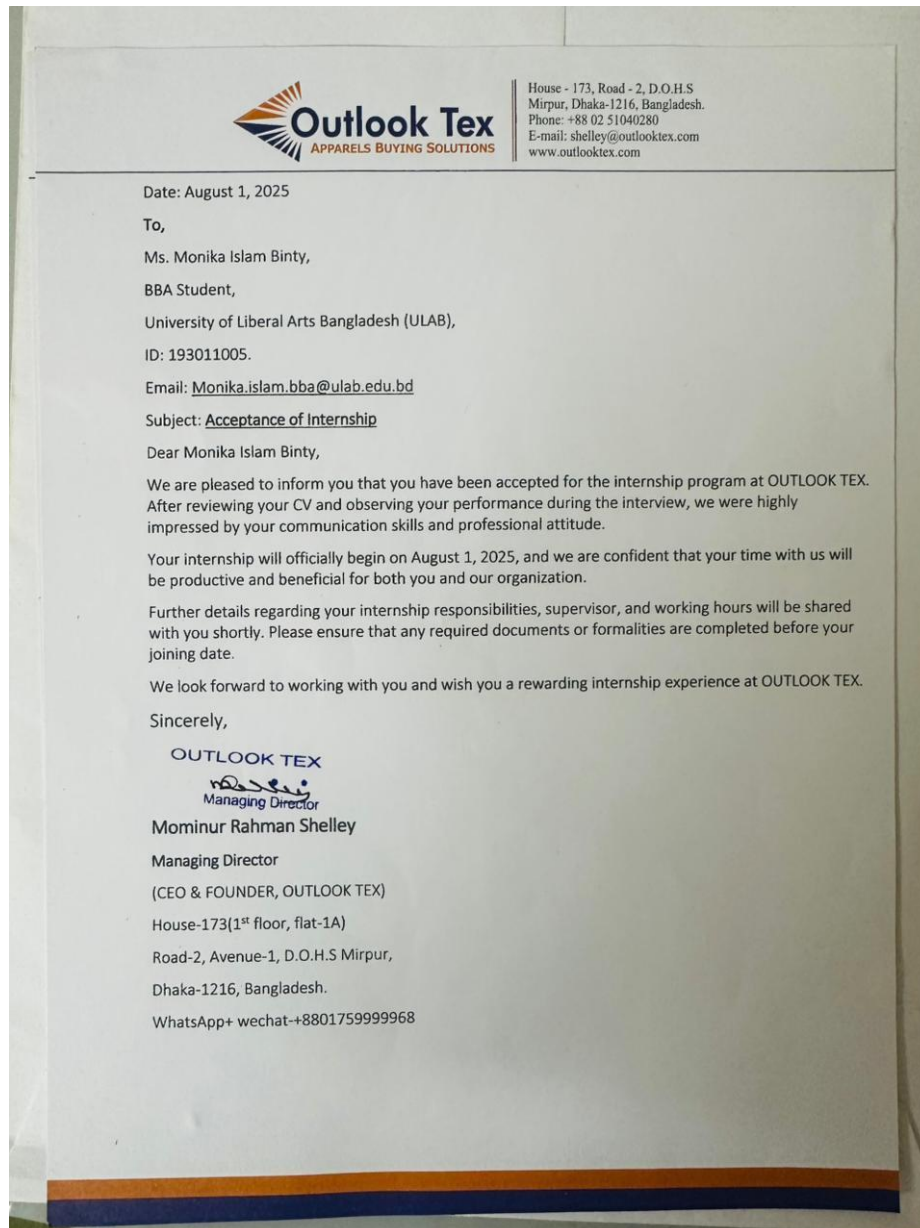
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Appendices

Copy of company-provided internship confirmation/acceptance letter (attached)



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Internship Title:	Exploitation of Female Workers in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments Industry

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