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*With a focus on Ethical and Sustainable Business*

**3 Editorial:**

**Dirty Business - a threat to all life on earth**

*Lesley Pocock*

DOI: 10.5742/MEJB.2021.93889

**Ethical Business**

**5 Covid-19: The role of global clothing brands/retailers in vaccinating and providing financial aid to the RMG workers in Bangladesh**

*Asm Anam Ullah*

DOI: 10.5742/MEJB.2021.93885

**12 Smart City vs Quality of Life with a Focus on Asia:  
A Sociological Appraisal**

*Mohammad Taghi Sheykhi*

DOI: 10.5742/MEJB.2021.93886

**Information technology**

**20 The Impact of Information Technology: Learning, Living, and Loving in the Future**

*Riwa Abyad*

DOI: 10.5742/MEJB.2021.93887

**Culture**

**34 The long lonely journey**

*Ebtisam Elghblawi*

DOI: 10.5742/MEJB.2021.93888

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## Editorial: Dirty Business a threat to all life on earth



### Dirty Business - a threat to all life on earth

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**There are no financial kickbacks for politicians in regard to climate change and ethical business – just a healthy population and the ability for all to eat and breathe - they would have to make a decision that did not benefit them personally and financially, an ethical decision, a decision for humanity and all life on earth, a decision for common sense and decency, a decision to benefit future generations – a hard call for most of them it seems.**

Now that most nations say they are going to get tough about climate change and planet destroying practices we seem to have forgotten about all the other human activities destroying all species and habitats, all life, and just as fast and twice as cruelly.

Who knew there were so many minks in Europe until they caught Covid in the unhealthy small boxes they were forced to live in and had to be 'culled' in their millions. We have much better alternatives to animal fur to keep us warm. Alternatives that do not involve taking from animals their own right to live and treating them with abject cruelty.

And obviously it is not just the West that has disgusting attitudes towards animals – seems China has found another use for donkeys – once cruelly treated as beasts of burden now they can be made into cosmetics that are totally useless! But there is money to be made out of silly, vain women.

The Chinese now kill donkeys en masse to make a cosmetic called ejiao, made out of donkey skins - so financially viable that you can just throw the donkey away to die slowly after skinning it alive. The fact that most 'cosmetic products' do absolutely nothing is irrelevant. That is not the point, as with far too many products of all kinds– it is just another way for an evil human to make money at the cost of a higher minded species' life. 4.8 million donkeys are being killed each year and at this rate donkeys will be extinct in less than ten years. As the number of Chinese donkeys plummeted because of the demand for ejiao, traders turned to Africa, with devastating consequences for donkeys and rural communities that depend on donkeys for their livelihoods. (Network for Animals)

Then there are the bile bears, still to my mind the cruellest practice the Chinese have ever come up with. These poor animals are kept alive – yes they are not even afforded the mercy of death to end their constant torture – in cages so small that they cannot move to pull out the endless drip, drip, drip of the needles draining their vital bodily fluids. What sort of mind thinks this is acceptable.

Trawling the depths of the oceans occurs, not just to catch and sell the targeted fish. It is easier and cheaper to scrape the bottom and all life out of the ocean and then just throw away the lives that they don't have a market for - the fact that the species of fish they do want to sell RELY on these ocean ecosystems to live seems not to impress on dull and stupid minds – or simply they do not care. Mass hunger will strike humanity after the business owners lives of excess and after they enjoy the spoils of their crimes.

Every country on earth is guilty and we do not have governments that have any morality as regards the sanctity of all life and the absolute necessity of all life and healthy ecosystems – governments have aided and abetted every type of criminal and madman for short sighted gain and their own political power.

Slavery, dangerous work practices, unconscionable pursuits like child sexual predation, poisons that kill bees and birds, and endangered animals traded for body parts; the list of evil, cruel and destructive ways humans make money is endless.

Do any of these shocking crimes ever get onto the front page of the newspapers? No, rather we fill our lives with endless unimportant human trivia. The matters that count – death of a planet, and all its life forms, are rarely highlighted as you cannot upset humans and the status quo, you cannot demonise them – yet these are the matters of vital importance to all life on earth. The shocking truth is that one species is rapidly destroying the viability of an entire planet.

### **Fact: Humans are just 0.01% of all life but have destroyed 83% of wild mammals**

And it is not just those destroying life on earth for money, many ordinary people willingly heap processed donkey on their faces, use chemicals in their dishwashers that poison rivers and oceans, kill bees and birds with pesticides – the list of human vanity, idiocy and laziness is heart-wrenchingly endless.

Many people try to do the right thing of course but they are let down by all the others and particularly governments and the lack of appropriate national legislation. All countries / governments should be instituting urgent legislation to stop all of these practices as sadly humans do not seem to be able to see the truth of their lives and their behaviours or care about the legacy of their lives on the next generation.

Who on the planet apart from total idiots ever thought nuclear arms, and chemical and biological weapons were appropriate. The human self focus factor is unfathomable and all life forms on the planet need protection from our species.

Today irresponsible business is raping as much of the planet and its struggling life forms as it can, while it can – these are the real mass murderers – these are those committing genocide and specicide. These humans are destroying the miracle of life itself.

Fires resulting from global warming, along with human exploitation are destroying our last great forests and grasslands and along with them, billions of species, many of them unique. The fact that these forests have been giving us the oxygen that sustains our lives seems to be of little concern in the mad race to amass as much personal wealth as possible.

I write this for all life on earth, including humans.

# Covid-19: The role of global clothing brands/retailers in vaccinating and providing financial aid to the RMG workers in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present a critical analysis of the vaccination program of Bangladesh Ready-Made Garments (RMG) workers from the point of view of stakeholder participation. At least six million RMG workers are currently employed in about seven thousand RMG factories in Bangladesh. Since the emergence of Covid-19, Bangladesh has been going through some difficulties in administering the Covid-19 vaccine. It has indeed resulted in RMG workers being excluded from the vaccination program. The Bangladesh Government and global clothing brands and other (Western and European) countries ignored their responsibility to carry out the Covid-19 vaccine for the millions of RMG workers in Bangladesh. Getting RMG products from vaccinated factories in Bangladesh is essential. Amid the pandemic crisis, it was also crucial to provide adequate financial support to Bangladeshi RMG workers. This article helps to understand the analysis from the theoretical perspectives of CSR and how national and international stakeholders can help to immunise RMG workers in Bangladesh. Finally, this article will make some recommendations for Bangladesh RMG partners nationally and internationally.

### Key words:

Bangladesh RMG, OHS, Covid-19 vaccine program, global clothing brands and their responsibility, Bangladesh Government, RMG factory owners and BGMEA responsibility

## Introduction

**The pressure of the pandemic in the world has brought a severe challenge while the garment industry of Bangladesh faces its challenging situation. The RMG workers are starving but still working hard to regulate the global market being active. However, the sector needs flexibility, sustainability, labour welfare and financial support, infra-structural improvements and diversification, and adequate regulation.**

The Ready-Made Garments (RMG) industry and its rapid development in Bangladesh have resulted from globalisation and neoliberalism, which was a new political and economic dogma that restructured the global market in the 1980s (e.g., Harvey, 2007; Munck, 2010; Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Ullah, 2020 a,b). The Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) provides the impetus for the early development of the garment industry in Bangladesh. However, the formation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its free trade agreement with its member countries was the turning point in the massive development of the Bangladesh RMG industry (see Yang & Mlachila, 2007; Alam, Selvanathan & Selvanathan, 2017; Anner, 2020). Approximately seven thousand RMG factories employ six million workers (see Labowitz, 2016), accounting for more than 80 per cent of the country's export earnings with a 13 per cent contribution to the national GDP. The industry is standing as the country's economic backbone, with revenue expected to reach US\$50 billion by the end of 2021. However, due to Covid-19, the expectation of getting the 50 billion targets has been tremulant (Haque & Gopalakrishnan, 2019; Rahman & Ishty, 2020).



Since the inception of RMG in Bangladesh, its compliance, low wages and meagre working conditions have sparked a contentious debate and anger among human rights activists and anti-sweatshop campaigners, trade unions and consumers locally and globally (Butler, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2013, 2015; Kabir et al., 2019). International clothing brands and retailers take the most financial advantage of their exploitation, while local RMG employers are also ignorant about RMG workers' safety, better wages and other basic needs (Muhammad, 2011; Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021; Ullah, 2021). Nonetheless, two colossal accidents at Tazreen Fashions in 2012 and Rana Plaza in 2013 shook the whole world; consumers, for the first time, found out where their beautiful dresses were made and the hardship of RMG workers. The Rana Plaza disaster killed 1,133 RMG workers (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Rahman & Rahman, 2020) and left thousands of RMG workers brutally injured and permanently disabled. The research suggests that Tazreen Fashions and Rana Plaza victims received inadequate financial compensation from global clothing brands such as Walmart (Rahim, 2017; Blanchard, 2019). The Bangladesh Government and RMG employers were committed to bring the industry under proper surveillance and ensure the national Labour Act and the ILO conventions are well respected; it has not been the case yet (see, e.g., Rahman & Rahman, 2020).

RMG workers often end their fortunes in factory accidents. The previous factory disasters in Bangladesh were largely artificial because these factory accidents could have been prevented by proper surveillance. However, after the Rana Plaza building collapse, global clothing brands faced extreme criticism for their unethical sourcing (see Crinis, 2019; Rahman, 2019) from low-regulated countries, including Bangladesh. So, with a five-year initial plan, two private monitoring agencies (Accord and Alliance) led by Western and European clothing brands came to Bangladesh to monitor the RMG sector, mainly the OHS issues. The Bangladesh Government's monitoring agency, which is the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) is now mainly responsible for the RMG safety regulation under the Remediation and Coordination Cell (RCC). However, recent scholarship argue that DIFE is not a credible body for monitoring the vast RMG sector with its limited resources and unskilled workforce (see Barua, Wiersma & Ansary, 2017; Rahman, 2019; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020).

The safety of RMG workers is a significant issue that was very prominent during the Covid-19 pandemic. Several national and international media (e.g., Islam & Hashan, cited in *The New Age*, 2021)) have published news about the Covid-19 vaccine for RMG workers in Bangladesh. Since they are at high risk of becoming infected, this article aims to argue for the participation of stakeholders in the vaccination program of RMG workers. Further discussions will show whether Bangladesh RMG stakeholders, primarily global clothing brands, could be more accountable for RMG workers' health safety and their sustainable well-being in Bangladesh.

### The theoretical framework utilised in this article (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a corporate concept by which business leaders integrate social and environmental concerns into their business activities and interacts with various social partners (see, e.g., Hamidu, Haron & Amran, 2015; Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016). The concept of CSR existed in the corporate world for more than a century. However, academically, it was first coined in 1953 by the American economist Howard Bowen. Bowen, for the first time, more precisely and academically talked about the Social Responsibilities of the Business. Thus, Bowen was often cited as the father of CSR. In 1970, CSR had been popular in the United States. But, in 1971, the Economic Development Committee introduced it as a tool for eradicating social obstacles beyond the state government's initiatives. Since the 1980s, CSR continued to evolve as more organisations began to incorporate social interests into their business practices, allowing them to become more responsive to stakeholders. However, CSR is not a very clear concept to academics and non-academics because of its complex applications. Thus, it is essential to know what is the definition of CSR. In line with Bowen's statement:

*The obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society (Bowen, 1953 cited in Hamidu, Haron & Amran, 2015, p. 84.)*

The above definitions of CSR reflect the need to take care of society by formulating policies towards annihilating social problems. CSR is also considered a panacea that will address the global poverty gap, social exclusion, and environmental degradation (see, e.g., Van Marrewijk, 2003; Amoako & Dartey-Baah, 2020). In 1991, University of Pittsburgh Professor Donna J. Wood published "*Corporate Social Performance Revisited*", which revealed a new CSR model and provided a framework for assessing the impacts and outcomes of CSR programs. And then again, in the same year, a Business Management Professor from the University of Georgia, Archie B. Carroll, published a remarkable article, i.e., "*The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility*", stated what should be the role of organisations. A bit later, his theory was well followed while creating CSR policy and well-known organisations, e.g., Wells Fargo, Coca-Cola, Walt Disney, and Pfizer, incorporating this concept into their businesses processes (see Thomas, 2019).

Again, the multinational organisations were urged to keep the core content of ethical business and to do the following for their business practice:

- *"Sustainable development practices;*
- *Transparency and accountability;*
- *Maintain good stakeholder relationship management;*
- *Advocacy on different aspects of human rights, justice and democratic principles;*
- *Compliance with accepted international standards on CSR, and;*
- *Ethical business practice" (cited in Hamidu, Haron & Amran, 2015, p. 84).*

Nevertheless, globalisation and neoliberalism have severely limited the role of global CSR as the global market is more competitive than ever before (see, e.g., Ireland & Pillay, 2010). David Harvey, a British scholar, did not see globalisation as a positive change because it caused more instability worldwide (see Harvey, 2007). Global apparel companies, in many cases, refrain from expanding their CSR role and deliberately deprive RMG workers by providing low wages and inadequate other social benefits (Crisis, 2019; Ullah, 2021b). Bangladeshi RMG workers are the best example of exploitation and modern slavery (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Oosterhoff et al., 2018). While the CSR theory suggests that giant corporations would have been interested in expanding their CSR role to reduce the world's poverty gap, on the other hand, it is exacerbating poverty because global capitalist most ignominiously pay low wages and meager benefits to the workers, mainly to RMG workers in Bangladesh (Ireland & Pillay, 2010; Ullah, 2020 a, b). Ullah (2020a) argues that global supply chains have never been responsible for extending their substantial helping hands, e.g., financial support to improve the RMG workers' livelihood in the last 40 years or more. Ullah (2020a) further suggests that RMG workers live in a dark present and has no idea about the future where their primary concern is inadequate facilities (see, e.g., Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021). The question is, how this situation can be changed? Thus, this article argues whether apparel brands and retailers worldwide should have been more responsible for vaccinating and providing financial support to the RMG workers in Bangladesh amid Covid-19 pandemic.

## Literature

### RMG workers' livelihood amid Covid-19

While RMG workers' livelihood is compromised with a lot of impediments, the Covid-19 pandemic made it worse. Between March and June 2020, brands cancelled multi-billion dollar clothing orders from Bangladeshi RMG manufacturers. As a result, by September 2020, more than 357,000 garment workers had lost their jobs, and many more were forced to accept lower wages. The current investigation manifested that the total textile exports for 2020 have declined by about 17 per cent (see Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021). With the fear of the Covid-19 pandemic and its adverse effect on the market, in early March 2020, Bangladeshi factory owners began receiving notices from the brand to delay order shipments (see Mullins, 2021; Roshitsh, 2021). But, a more critical decision yet to come from the international clothing brands followed by the end of April 2020, when about US\$3.2 billion worth of orders had been suspended or withdrawn, which made it so much more difficult for the RMG workers. By May 2020, Bangladeshi workers had lost about 30 per cent of their wages, estimated at US\$502 million. The dramatic economic shocks suffered by the workers have led to severe compromises in consumption and loss of wealth (see Mullins, 2021; Clean Clothes Campaign, 2021).

A recent survey report conducted by UC Berkeley-BRAC in mid-2020, showing that 82 per cent of Bangladeshi RMG workers interviewed said their income in April-May 2020 was lower than in February 2020. In addition, about 77 per cent said it was challenging to feed each family, and 69 per cent of workers ate less protein-dense foods (meat, fish, eggs and milk) from

February to May (cited in Mullins, 2021). Another report published by *The Business Standard*, a leading English Newspaper in Bangladesh, revealed that the poverty rate was 40 per cent in 2005, which dropped to 20.5 per cent in 2020, but it went to 40 per cent again. The reason for the higher poverty rate was when the whole country was locked up due to the spread of Covid-19, people were left without jobs and income in early 2020. As a result, in just five months of the pandemic, the poverty rate was severely curtailed from 20.5 per cent to 40.9 per cent in August 2020 in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, the country is still pursuing a strict lockdown policy to control Covid-19. However, RMG workers are at serious risk of losing their jobs or not yet being vaccinated. A distorted national vaccine policy has put millions of RMG workers at risk, and they still do not know whether they will ever be vaccinated (see Ahmed, 2021; *BBC News*, 2021).

### Bangladesh Government's vaccine policies and management

The Bangladesh Government was working to vaccinate all its citizens in early 2020, leading to a commercial agreement between the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII). Although most Bangladeshis did not believe in the effectiveness of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine, all eligible Bangladeshis were encouraged to take up the jab as part of the compulsory vaccination program. So, about 5.5 million people received at least one dose of the vaccine, although about 50,000 people received two shots until Islam published a report in *Deutsche Welle* (DW) in April 2021. Nevertheless, when India faced high Covid-19 infection across the country, SII abruptly stopped supplying Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine to Bangladesh, creating a challenging situation for 167 to 170 million Bangladeshis. According to the business agreement between the Bangladesh Government and SII, it was supposed to supply 5 million vaccines between January and June 2021. However, SII has given only seven million vaccines to Bangladesh (see Islam, 2021).

The critical point is whether Bangladesh will sooner or later receive the promised vaccine from India. Many assumed, that it has been a challenge for Bangladesh to get all the vaccines from SII as the Covid-19 situation went out of control in India, which means their internal requirement for jabs is also very high. According to *ABC News*, by early June 2021, the death toll rose to 359,676 out of 29.2 million confirmed cases (see *ABC News*, 2021). On the other hand, Bangladesh had no substantial plan B for the vaccine program, so it is unclear whether the Bangladesh Government will receive the Covid-19 vaccine from other sources or countries. Nevertheless, in July 2021, Bangladesh received 2.5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine from the US government as per the COVAX facility, which predominantly low and middle-income countries usually receive (see Kamruzzaman, 2021). But, the question is whether such a gift can serve the need for mass vaccines in Bangladesh?

Although the roadmap of the vaccine program is not very clear, total vaccine management and its conservation facilities are also inadequate in Bangladesh. For example, the *Dhaka Tribune* published a report in early January 2021 stating that Bangladesh had minimum cold storage or proper storage system for preserving Covid-19 vaccines. In this situation, the

question is how Bangladesh would ensure Covid-19 vaccine for its 167 to 170 million people, including RMG workers (see, e.g., *Dhaka Tribune*, 2021; Amanullah, Hasan & Ullah, 2021).

Most importantly, garment workers are not getting enough information about the vaccine against Covid-19, and many do not have access to the vaccine. According to a Dhaka-based research non-profit South Asian Network on Economic Modeling and Microfinance Opportunities, only two per cent of garment workers in Bangladesh have been vaccinated against Covid-19. The report includes insights from 1,285 workers surveyed across the industrial sector in Bangladesh, including Chittagong, Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Savar (Roshitsh, 2021).

On the other hand, Vietnam and China came across some excellent initiatives to vaccinate their RMG workers. For example, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour encourages workers to buy vaccines; employers/traders agreed to pay for jobs to vaccinate their workers. The Vietnam Textile and Garments Group (Vinatex), which employed 150,000 workers, announced that country's textile and garment industry - which has 2.5 million workers would have been vaccinated by their initiatives (Chau, 2021).

Cambodia also being ahead with their vaccination program for the RMG workers. For example, the Cambodia Covid-19 vaccination project launched in June 2021 resulted in garment workers now have jobs in their arms. Such initiative was a rare highlighted for the Southeast Asian country's \$7 billion garment sector, representing the nation's largest employment sector and 16 per cent of its gross domestic product of Cambodia. Nonetheless, Cambodia got all its vaccines from China and India (see Chua, 2021).

Another excellent example of the world's only private Covid-19 vaccination project launched in Indonesia in May 2021. Research shows that 10 million workers registered to receive a Chinese-developed jab. The program, however, run by the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), lobbied the national government to allow its workers to track vaccines instead of waiting in the official queue quickly. Another example of CSR revealed by Unilever Indonesia, one of the first to vaccinate workers at the Bekasi factory outside Jakarta, was a great initiative and hoped to boost Indonesia's workers' immunity. A great example of CSR (see Hodge, 2021).

Surprisingly, RMG workers in Bangladesh remained without vaccination. It seems that neither the Bangladesh Government nor even any international conglomerates took any substantial strategy to vaccinate RMG workers. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), and even the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) failed to show any pathway to vaccinate their workers while the government lost track of vaccinating most Bangladeshis. Therefore, during the Covid-19 pandemic, whether big clothing brands and retailers should have played a more constructive CSR role in vaccinating all RMG workers in Bangladesh is an open call.

### A critical analysis from the perspectives of global supply chains

Most Western and European consumers were unaware of Bangladeshi sweatshops before the Rana Plaza disaster. RMG workers in Bangladesh make beautiful dresses while they have been given meagre benefits in return. Nevertheless, the efforts of RMG workers have made big brands financially healthier, and they have become the world's leading capitalists with the nexus of the local (Bangladeshi proto-capitalists) (see, e.g., Muhammad, 2011; Ullah, 2020). However, scholars have claimed that the supply chains are still abstaining from ethical business in developing countries, mainly in Bangladesh (see Crinis, 2019; Anner, 2019; Rahman, 2019).

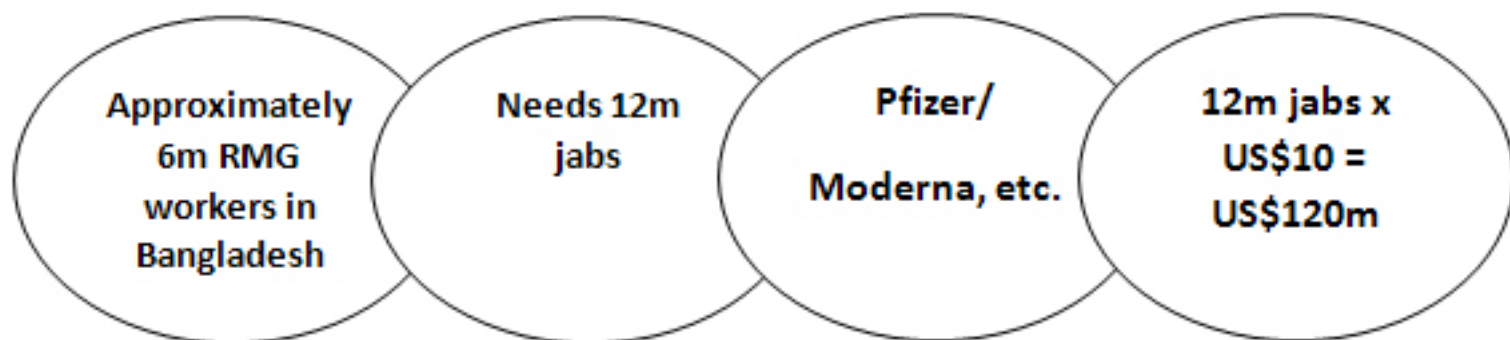
The current research reveals that the global apparel market will be growing from 1.5 trillion in 2020 to about 2.25 trillion by 2025 - it means the worldwide demand for apparel and footwear growing every day (Shahbandeh, 2021). As mentioned earlier, Bangladeshi garment workers are at the bottom of this race where brands and retailers are the most profit takers. Bangladeshi RMG employers also profit from the RMG industry despite their call on low prices from the global clothing brands. But the question is, how much will an RMG worker benefit from this economic cycle (see Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021).

A further explanation has emerged from the neoclassical economic dogma for the increasing gap between the workers and executives in income (see Munck, 2010; Hirst & Thompson, 2019). For example, *Oxfam Australia* (2018) reported that a top Australian fashion company CEO could earn up to \$2,500 an hour compared to garment workers in Bangladesh. In other words, with the current minimum wage of garment workers in Bangladesh will have to work for 10,000 years and do more in a year to reach the Australian CEO (Head, 2018). On the North American side of the world, the Walmart family secure US\$100M a day, turning them into the world's wealthiest dynasty. Ullah (2021) argued that giant multinationals make an uneven profit by exploiting workers around the world. For example, through the Bloomberg reports, the Walmart family's fortune has risen from US\$39 billion to about US\$191 billion - a profit of nearly 400 per cent since it peaked on the list in June 2018, whether it has been ethical. The number increased rapidly in August 2018, when Walmart reported an 11 per cent rise in its stock after an excellent earnings report was published, revealing the family's total wealth to US\$ 163.2 billion (Ullah, 2021).

As discussed earlier, the Bangladesh Government mostly lost track of vaccinating all its citizens, and RMG workers are now at risk when working in factories. Bangladeshi RMG workers still produce Western and European garments in this critical time, which means RMG workers are still contributing to run both the internal and external economy. However, the brands rescinded the order without considering that their inhumane decision would have left thousands of workers without any jobs not to have bread and butter for their families (see Clean Clothes Campaign, 2020). It is also essential to think that the Bangladesh Government continuously shows their negligence on RMG workers vaccination and other



**Figure 1: The tentative economic model of vaccinating RMG workers in Bangladesh**



financial supports. At the same time, local RMG employers and global RMG buyers, i.e., global apparel brands and retailers' negligence also being despicable while they mostly remained silent to help RMG workers more seriously.

The simplistic economic model (Figure One) explains how RMG workers in Bangladesh can be vaccinated and the project price equation. For example, suppose one hundred garment companies are outsourcing from Bangladesh. So, if we divide \$120 million by the top hundred companies like Walmart, Levi's, Adidas, Nike, Zara, and H&M, each company has to pay only  $120,000,000 \div 100 = 12,00,000$ .

### Directions for future research

The author of this article must suggest that this article should be considered from its limitations, as it was written from secondary data. However, potential researchers who have an interest in this area may conduct an in-depth qualitative study. The further empirical study may discuss the role of the big clothing brands in Bangladesh and whether they will consider expanding their CSR budget for immunisation and other necessary benefits of RMG workers.

### Recommendations and conclusions for the global apparel brands/retailers and other stakeholders of the Bangladesh RMG

- International apparel brands need to establish a "VACCINE BANK" in a joint initiative of international apparel brands, local and international trade unions and Western and European countries. They should provide free vaccines to the Bangladesh Government to ensure the safety and well-being of all RMG workers;
- International big clothing brands should offer other financial support to the Bangladesh RMG workers to continue their RMG production amid Covid-19 in Bangladesh;
- If necessary, the European Union will need to create a joint force between the ILO, WHO, global brands and the Government of Bangladesh and BGMEA to arrange and manage the vaccination program for RMG workers;
- The central priority of the Government of Bangladesh's vaccination program should be not only RMG workers but all citizens;
- The Bangladesh Government should take or buy vaccines, especially from different countries of the world, instead of depending on any particular nation. The Bangladesh Government should increase the vaccine storage system as soon as possible so that they can store the vaccine for a certain period;
- The Government of Bangladesh should form a task force, which may include military and paramilitary forces, NGOs, local health centres and clinics for vaccination programs;
- The Government of Bangladesh, most importantly, needs to create an OHS culture in the nation to prevent current and future pandemics like Covid-19;
- The Government of Bangladesh should also make many extra efforts and reform the health sector with some good policies and control corruption.

Finally, global apparel brands and retailers, BGMEA and RMG employers need to step up with their support and assistance so that the Bangladesh Government can find ways to implement a vaccine program for RMG workers. RMG is the country's economic backbone. It has created millions of jobs and contributed a lot to the national GDP, not only for Bangladesh but also globally. Thus, RMG stakeholders locally and internationally, mainly big apparel brands and retailers in the West, Europe and other countries, must be responsible for providing free vaccines to RMG workers during the Covid-19. While RMG workers are vaccinated, it will ensure safe and sustainable RMG products for Western and European consumers.

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# Smart City vs Quality of Life with a Focus on Asia: A Sociological Appraisal

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## Abstract

Sociologically speaking, industrial development has caused great socio-economic changes including smart city development in some countries. Industrial development has widely impacted quality of life and its derivatives. Many Asian countries with low quality of life are deprived of smart city features. Instead, many people in such countries live in slums. Countries such as India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and many more have increasing slum areas. Residents in such cities are deprived of smart cities encompassing clean water, electricity, gas pipelines, toilets and so on. The heterogeneous situation within such people has contributed to low standards passing from one generation to another. Industrial revolution, increasing education among the citizens, gradually diminished differences in what is currently known as smart cities are alleviating factors. Therefore, the factor of quality of life has brought about extensive social change leading to the smart city phenomenon. Overall, quality transformation and its various dimensions generally and sociologically reduce poverty, and provide future health leading to a smart city sphere. However, according to modernization theory, industrial technology promotes economic growth in the developing world; a change leading to other structural and cultural changes.

**Key words:** Industrial development. Industrial revolution. Smart city. Quality of life. Cultural change

## Introduction

Asia as the largest continent of the world with 48 independent countries, and a population of over 4.6 billion (WPDS, 2020), is largely facing the smart city problem. Exceptions are Japan, South Korea and Singapore, generally and sociologically, while the rest are countries without smart city development. Such cities are usually deprived of many amenities such as health services, garbage disposal, sufficient educational institutions, residential services and the like. Shortage of amenities prevents cities from evolving. Such a situation causes the degeneration of cities from different perspectives. Under the conditions of transportation system, poverty, weakness of power plants, water supply networks, ignoring waste, and crime increase, cities are further devastated (Connected Vehicles in Smart Cities, 2019). Similarly, information systems including schools, libraries, hospitals and other community services are in short supply in many Asian cities (McLaren, 2015). Technology of smart city allows city officials to interact directly both with community and city infrastructures, and to monitor what is happening in the city, and how the city is evolving (Building a Smart City, 2017).

Industrial development and its consequences, mainly due to the industrial revolution in the West, has itself brought about significant changes in the class system of industrialized countries. During this movement, social classification has been largely affected by changes in spatial, social and economic status. In this article, we will examine the trend of change in social classes in industrial societies. Non-industrialized countries, on the other hand, have not seen the change in social classes as experienced in industrial societies.



Throughout history, poverty has been a normal phenomenon for human beings, and what accelerates it is done by a minority that has always been criticized and attacked by the poor. Throughout history, many human societies and individuals have been in a heterogeneous situation due to class differences and in many cases with poverty. Owners of wealth and capital, whose number and proportion were also limited, generally had more control over the majority of citizens. While the wealth of the capitalist class has been steadily increasing, the poor generally live in poverty and with limitations. Until the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, such a situation existed in today's industrial societies. Gradually, with the development of industry during which many social structures changed, social classification was also affected.

### Method of Research

Methodology used in the present article is of qualitative type. Qualitative research usually studies people, events or areas in their natural settings. In finding facts for the research, the researcher engaged in careful data collection and thoughtful analysis of what was relevant. In the documentary research applied for the present research, printed and written materials were widely regarded. The research was performed as a qualitative library-type in which the researcher had to refer to the relevant and related sources. In the current research, various documents were thoroughly investigated, and the needful inferences were made. The data fed by the investigator in the present article is hopefully reliable. Though literature on pandemics is very limited, yet the author tried to investigate many different resources in order to elicit the necessary information to build up the text.

### Industrial transformation

Following the Industrial Revolution, manpower entered jobs that required skills. Following such a move, literacy and education also increased among citizens, and the grounds for class differences gradually diminished. However, class differences are still evident even in industrialized countries. In the context of a capitalist society with modern "open door" markets, while capitalists and industrialists are getting richer and poorer, the poor are also better off. The capitalist and industrial society, with its dynamic situation, always adds to its added value, its gross national product increases, and its wealth increases more or less exponentially. While the wealthy minority becomes more wealthy in such an environment, the majority of the working class in different sectors also achieve better status and a higher quality of life; Simply because per capita increases, wages improve, and more services are provided to the already poor. In this way, the public satisfaction of the citizens will increase to some extent. In such circumstances, the opportunity for social mobility is provided for the weaker strata in a society. Therefore, the factor of industrialization and industrial development itself leads to extensive economic and social changes. The region of Western Europe and Japan are the best examples of this claim.

While the poor do not find themselves in the same situation as the owners of capital, the class gap between them does not widen much. This in itself means that in the industrial and

developmental conditions of societies, manpower gradually enjoys advantages such as social security benefits, insurance services, medical services, more job opportunities, guaranteed employment, and so on. Such opportunities improve the standard of living for citizens. Thus, in the sequential form, the children of "one" generation also enjoy better and more advantages compared to their similar generation in the past. Thus, many of the roots and contexts of poverty are weakened, and in contrast, the class differences between the minority of industrialists and the majority of the labor force are reduced. This trend has been well experienced in industrialized countries during the twentieth century. For this reason, many less developed countries also always follow the example of industrialized countries; That is, they try to take advantage of their plans and experiences. Communicating at different levels allows non-industrialized and newly industrialized countries to improve their quality of life in various ways, that is, a situation in which poverty within countries is reduced to a minimum. Overall, industrial transformation and its various dimensions of development reduce poverty and provide future health for less developed societies (Tanner: 2013).

At the same time, if the rich did not get richer, and development and investment did not take place, productivity would not increase, and the poor would never have a chance to raise their status. Therefore, many advocate the capitalist system, investing more and more. It is in these circumstances that job creation takes place in various fields of industry and services, and as a result, many poor citizens also have the opportunity to enter various jobs and services. Examples of such a scenario are the industrialized countries of Western Europe; That is, the group of countries in which large-scale investment has taken place during the twentieth century. This situation has gradually changed the economic structure of these societies, and thus the way the poor are classified in those societies. This is the case even today in a country like China. Despite the fact that China has a special (socialist) political system, at the same time, following the development of capitalism in that country, the expansion of industries in various urban and rural sectors, as well as the development of services, a significant share of its poor citizens have raised economic status and have encountered a new society. In a way their quality of life has improved, and that in itself has affected their health and life expectancy index.

If this flow (investment by the rich) did not take place, advanced technology would probably never have been available to access such information today. Thus, industrial development, technological advancement, the acquisition of new technologies, and unprecedented inventions all depend on new types of investment. Hence, countries if they invest in different industrial sectors, can minimize their poverty in various sectors, and in contrast to industrial investment, they can create a stepping stone, through which they can always achieve more progress, more production, new initiatives, wider employment and finally more wealth. The European Union has started over the last two decades minimizing poverty among many European countries (especially Eastern Europe). This hypothesis is being developed today. In a way, many former Eastern European countries are experiencing new investors, by Western European countries and Western European

investors. Under such circumstances, many areas of poverty in these communities are fading and disappearing. The world today, given the ever-increasing needs, has no choice but to industrialize and expand industry; that is, a situation in which production increases, and consequently consumption takes an upward trend instead. The result of this interaction is the circulation of more money between different sections of society, as well as the achievement of more welfare and facilities within these communities. Otherwise, the recession, the business boom, and conditions like this will keep citizens in poverty, constraint, and deprivation. Such a situation will have a negative impact on future generations.

In any case, improving living conditions, industrial development, and so on, motivates creativity among the poor, and this is an important point that policymakers and bureaucrats need to pay attention to. The creation of its own industrial and productive resources nurtures many talents, and thus the capacities and capabilities of the citizens can be exploited. Therefore, any change in living conditions and any investment in the industrial sector will have positive and inclusive results. Therefore, policymakers, industry owners, and other administrative and industrial officials should always pay attention to this important issue. It is noteworthy that the movement itself requires extensive management and continuous monitoring. This means that the controlling administrative system must always be active in various economic and industrial sectors in countries. In this way, class differences can be reduced, and relative equality replaced.

### Wealth and poverty

It is wealth itself that can reduce or alleviate poverty. If there is not enough wealth and capital, the ability to invest and consequently create jobs between different strata of a society decreases as much as possible, and thus the standard of living takes a downward trend. This situation is more prevalent in developing countries today. The industrialized nations, meanwhile, have been able to maintain their capitalist system by creating wealth for themselves over the past two centuries, and have always kept their economies active by converting raw materials into finished goods, and thus creating added value, and As a result, the level of poverty in these communities has decreased. As a result, class differences have shrunk to a minimum. As mentioned earlier, the middle class in these societies has always been expanding; That is, a situation in which the salaries and wages of the majority of citizens are close to each other.

Without the conditions of productivity, the circulation of the economy will not exist externally; there will be no such thing as economic thinking. Therefore, in any situation, countries must be able to use their available resources in a desirable and sustainable way. That is, in a format that, while exploiting resources, raw materials and natural resources are not completely lost, and will remain a share for future generations. The productivity system causes the economy; that is, production, distribution, and consumption will continue to the desired extent, and thus all members of a society will be able to take advantage of the current and active economic achievements of their land. Thus, as far as developing countries are concerned, such socie-

ties still have a long way to go to achieve a significant level of productivity, and consequently an active economy.

To achieve this, the fair use of resources must be done from all parts of a country. In other words, appropriate investment should be made in all states and different urban and rural areas. In this way, the economy in these areas, while being active, and productivity continues, class gaps are reduced to a minimum. Today, many developing countries in the world are faced with irrational and inactive economies, which results in the emergence of poverty in various forms in these societies.

Thus, wealth is the product of productivity, and productivity can be developed and expanded. This means that it is through the system of productivity that countries can achieve sufficient wealth, and this chain or system continues on its own, and little by little. Wealth production is more frequent in these societies. Hence, productivity can be developed and expanded at different levels and in different sectors. As the industrial society has generally developed in various fields, and the (interdisciplinary) relationship has been established, it itself provides the conditions for the continuation of development. As a result of such conditions, poverty and class differences are reduced to a minimum. An example of such a claim is the industrialized country of Japan, where poverty has been reduced to a minimum, in return for which all capacities have been exploited to the desired extent. The opposite is the case in Africa, where countries generally face weak and powerless economies in pursuit of weak productivity, and consequently widespread poverty. In such a way that while many social and economic indicators (development indicators) are low, the unemployment rate in these societies is very high, and in some cases even reaches 40% of the working age force.

If, for example, a poor farmer in the Central African Republic wants to sell his banana crop on the right terms, he must enter into a deal with North America or Europe (deal with the capitalist community); that is, a business that takes 116 days to ship, and requires approximately 38 licenses and signatures. Therefore, any commercial and industrial development and prosperity of less developed countries requires a deal that has a strong economic infrastructure of the capitalist type. In such circumstances, many producers of agricultural materials, as well as other industrial products such as textiles and the like, have been in trade relations with industrialized countries in recent years. Otherwise, less developed countries will not be able to access foreign exchange resources easily. Such trade relations make it possible for less developed countries to use the technology and new products of industrialized countries, or in other words, to access them, in order to sell their products. Thus, less developed countries and societies have been able to improve their economic position to a large extent in recent decades.

While socialism is an ideology, capitalism itself is a natural phenomenon. In other words, capitalism is merely a kind of freedom of action of ordinary people, and through it they can enter into transactions that both parties agree on. However, the ideology of socialism does not provide such a culture. In contrast, in the form of capitalist-based business interactions,

individuals and social groups and even governments easily have the opportunity to trade and exchange goods and services with each other. Hence, economic prosperity is more or less divided between the two sides. In other words, both parties share in the profits and benefits of their goods and services. In this way, class differences are moderated to a large extent. Thus, the phenomenon of industry, trade, and economic prosperity can itself moderate class differences. Today, many less developed countries have improved their economic and social position under such conditions.

In explaining capitalism, one can add: Hong Kong, for example, has no natural resources, the British government, with a prudent planning system, and the activation of trade and industry, turned this city (region) into an economic miracle. That is, by strengthening the business system, developing various products such as home appliances, etc., this recently occupied city of seven million people, which is now part of China was able to achieve a high economic and social status. Meanwhile, class differences in this part of the world have been reduced to a minimum. As trade and transfer of goods from this region to other regions continued (and still continues) during the second half of the twentieth century, this has led to high GDP for the country in question; That is, the wealth that all citizens have benefited from. It should also be noted that proper and sustainable management should continue along with industrial and commercial developments. Only in such circumstances will the weaker countries and regions of the world be able to achieve a better economic and social position and improve their quality of life.

On the other hand, as far as Africa's natural resources are concerned, it is the richest continent in the world; That is, it has 50% of the world's gold resources, the most diamond resources in the world, 90% of the world's cobalt, 40% of the world's electricity capacity, 65% of the world's manganese resources and millions of hectares of uncultivated land. Weak industrial development, as well as a lack of investment, a shortage of skilled human resources, and the like, have left the African continent, with 56 different countries, generally in poor, substandard conditions. Poverty in that society, while affecting the current generation, will also negatively affect future generations. Therefore, access to technical tools and knowledge, as well as the industrialization of society, the resources available in a society such as Africa can be used optimally. The positive effects of this process will have a positive effect on other countries and societies in the world. For example, if African countries can exploit their existing resources, they will subsequently have more trade and economic ties with the industrialized world; That is, a phenomenon that will help both industrialized and developed societies on the one hand, and the African continent on the other.

Despite its natural opportunities in Africa, the continent hosts the majority of the world's poor. This has made many population groups more vulnerable than ever before. A variety of diseases, food shortages, marginalized living, young marriages between young people, widespread unemployment, domestic violence and the like, are among the effects of poverty in such countries, which are mainly due to their inability to exploit. It

has emerged from the natural resources available in the mentioned countries. Thus, the factor of industrial development itself can bring a kind of economic dynamism, welfare and public security to that society. Hence, the African continent still has a long way to go to achieve normalcy and an acceptable quality of life, despite the abundance of natural resources in that society.

### A picture of the first world

The difference between rich and poor in first world countries is significant today. In a way, it has led to problems and challenges in those communities. For example, socio-economic inequalities, or class divisions, and unemployment in British society in early August 2011 led to riots, insecurity, and widespread fires in many major cities. The disruption of the economic order, which is itself the result of the US recession in 2008 on the one hand and the economic development of China and other East Asian countries on the other; all these factors lead to economic stagnation, rising unemployment and consequent class divisions in society. Thus, following the economic imbalance in that society, similar problems arose in that country in 2011. Hence, in order to achieve a harmonious and balanced economic order, many countries, and even knowledge-based industrial countries with extensive production during the twentieth century, are facing challenges today. The situation itself has led to some contradictions. Therefore, the whole world order today needs more reflection and consideration.

Unemployment in industrialized countries, including the United Kingdom, is at the root of many of that country's problems. For example, unemployment among young people aged 16-24 increased from 14% to 20% between 2008 and 2011. As noted, the emergence of new industrial competitors and the abundance of products from such countries at low prices is itself a major factor, which has ultimately led to unemployment in countries such as the United Kingdom. Today, many industrialized countries in Western Europe are looking for new and effective solutions. At the same time, such countries are themselves exposed to the influx of many immigrants from poor countries in Africa, Asia and South America; That is, a phenomenon that has exacerbated their problems.

Rising unemployment in the UK over the three years ending 2011, brought the proportion of unemployed youth in Britain closer to a similar index among the Arab nations, which in 2011 had unprecedented consequences and developments; as happened in Egypt and Tunisia. The expansion of industry and abundant production in non-European countries, including China in Asia, has greatly affected the issue of employment in industrial societies, including the United Kingdom, in a way in which the proportion of the unemployed population has shown an unprecedented increase in recent years. This phenomenon has provoked strong reactions from unemployed young age groups in 2011. Some socio-economic researchers have compared the situation in the industrialized country of England to the situation of many Arab countries during the same year. These conditions require that the mother industrialized countries also make a major overhaul of the employment situation of their young population.

According to Clifford Stout, a social psychologist at the University of Liverpool in England, what happened on the streets of Britain in the first decade of August 2011 was itself a class war. This means that a significant proportion of the young population belonging to the lower economic classes were deprived of employment and income. This caused many sharp reactions in that society at that time. This is more or less the case in many other industrialized countries. Therefore, and in such circumstances, such (industrial) countries must find alternative opportunities, in such a way that rising unemployment can be curbed as much as possible. This in itself requires international meetings at the level of industrial and exporting societies, both European and non-European, in such a way that the export quota for countries and between countries is somewhat clear.

Economic pressures and rising unemployment have endangered social security in many First World societies. During the first few months of 2011, this reaction was widely expressed by industrialized countries, in a way where public safety and comfort are greatly endangered. Therefore, there is a situation where the process of industrialization today is out of the monopoly of classical (traditional) industrial countries. And in

contrast, many other countries have entered the process of industrialization, which in itself requires revision and re-planning. While many non-industrial (non-Western) countries today are highly literate, with many industrial and specialized skills, this has caused many Western countries to lose their industrial power, and as a result, their revenue streams have also declined. This has led to many contradictions in these societies. This means new conditions such as unemployment / lower income, loss of employment guarantees, and finally a decrease in the purchasing power of citizens. In such societies, in general, following the increase of the global population on the one hand, and the expansion of literacy and education among this population on the other hand, this has to a large extent endangered the position of industrialized countries.

According to Table 2 below, there are significant differences in income distribution between several selected countries. While Sweden has the highest income gap between the two countries, Sweden has the lowest income disparities. While industrialized countries are in such an economic situation, developing and non-industrialized countries are in a much more precarious position as far as inequality of income distribution is concerned. Therefore, according to the Gini coefficient index,

**Table 1: Gini coefficient index related to the inequality of national income distribution between several countries European Selection (2011)**

Country	Percent	Country	Percent
Portugal	36%	Germany	30%
United Kingdom	34%	Netherlands	29%
Italy	34%	France	29%
Greece	32%	Austria	26%
Spain	31%	Sweden	26%

**Table 2: Unemployment status / index in the first world during two periods**

Year / Area	2000	2011
USA	4%	9.1%
European Union	8.8%	9.4%



countries should reduce the difference in income distribution within them to a minimum, in order to improve the quality of life.

According to Table 2, the United States was in a better position in 2000 compared to 2011 in terms of unemployment. Similarly, the EU countries have experienced a slight increase in unemployment over the past ten years in the table above. As far as the United States is concerned, the costs of its Middle East wars have contributed to the escalation of the economic crisis and unemployment in that society has reduced the quality of life in that society.

### Economic-industrial image of the European Union

While Europe is the largest trading partner of the United States and China, the region is also home to some of the richest consumers. The European Union is recognized as one of the (and perhaps most) largest trading partners of the United States and China as a rich, industrial society. In return, the European Union exports many of its industrial products and products to the United States. Thus, such regions of the world have kept their economies very dynamic and productive by pursuing active trade and industrial relations with each other. Similarly, the newly industrialized country of China has established most of its trade and economic relations between rich countries and the United States and the European Union. It should also be noted that industrial products, as they enter the markets of industrialized countries such as the European Union and the United States, generally have a higher quality compared to the country's exports to other parts of the world. The commercial connection of such regions of the world with each other should be used as a model for other industrializing societies. Therefore, countries, if they want to achieve a high industrial and economic position, will inevitably have to strengthen their trade relations with other parts of the world as much as possible.

At the same time, according to the United States and China, if the European Union stops buying goods from these two countries, huge losses will be inflicted on the world's two largest producers. Because the European Union does not have a large workforce today, it has generally stopped producing many insignificant industrial products, instead importing such goods. Under such circumstances, the markets of producing countries, including the United States and China, have always remained active and profitable. Likewise, the transportation industry is largely related to trade relations between such countries. If countries are merely producers and consumers of the goods they need, the transportation industry will also be largely stagnant and bankrupt. It should also be noted that the transport industry, especially among EU countries, has created a wide range of employment. At the same time, the commercial and industrial dependence of the industrialized countries themselves is inevitable. It is also worth noting that about 65% of Canada's industrial and food products are exported to the United States. Hence, there is still more global trade between industrialized countries, which in turn has resulted in a higher quality of life in those societies.

While Germany, as one of the founders and driving forces of the European Union, runs a huge export-oriented economy, this situation has made it one of the most stable economies in the industrialized world. Germany, itself was the originator of the European Union doctrine, and has the most active European economy and industry. It generally provides a wealth of industrial and strategic assistance to other EU members. It is also worth noting that some economically and industrially weak countries in the EU have themselves created many problems and challenges for strong members, including the German economy.

By comparison, French citizens are less indebted than American citizens. At the same time, the policy of the French government is designed to reduce the borrowing system of citizens. Thus, the US economic and financial system is very different from that of the European Union, including France. One of the problems that led to the recession in the United States in 2008 was the issue of borrowing from banks and delays in repaying and repaying borrowed amounts. However, the fiscal and banking policies of Western European countries, including France, are very different from those of the industrialized United States.

Meanwhile, Greece in southern Europe in 2011 as a member of the European Union faced widespread financial problems and economic downturn. Some members of the European Union, which already had a weak economic infrastructure, have not been able to easily adapt to the stronger EU countries economically over the past decade. A clear example of this is Greece in southern Europe. In recent years, the country has faced economic, financial, and unemployment problems. In a way, during 2011, it also adopted the policy of austerity. The country's position as a member of the European Union is so shaky that it is likely to leave the euro area. Thus, economic and financial problems are not limited to Third World countries, but also affect some European societies. Countries that generally do not have strong and serious industrial infrastructure and production are very economically vulnerable, such as Greece.

To reform the country's economy, the Greek government adopted austerity policies in 2011. It has cut a lot of costs, and conditions. Adoption of such a policy by countries causes dissatisfaction among citizens. Citizens' negative reaction to such policies causes the economic and industrial movement within such societies to be disrupted. Also, interest in work, work commitment, production of quality and standard products are affected. All of these are consequences of such policies and include austerity.

This situation has increased Greece's financial and economic dependence on European governments, so that it can repay its debts to them. One of the major challenges for countries with unhealthy economies is the increase in financial debt. This move affects the general budget of a country and even the position and per capita income of individuals. Such conditions cause most of a society's income to be spent on loans within these countries. The example mentioned today is Greece.

### Renovation theor

According to modernization theory, industrial technology not only promotes economic growth in developing societies, but also brings about other structural and cultural changes. The theory of modernization expresses the concept that by adopting new methods, production, quantity and quality of products and services are upgraded and improved. This trend also affects the cultural and social conditions of societies. For example, in order to improve higher quality goods and services, the productive and service providers must also be equipped with new training and cultural contexts, that is, what implies structural and cultural changes within a society. This situation can be seen in many developing countries today. For example, China today is constantly updating, equipping and updating its manpower, in order to improve the quality of its goods, and to achieve a better and more profitable position in competitive markets.

The general characteristics that societies want to pursue in their development process in the pursuit of modernity differ between different societies. However, all generally seek to specialize individual structures, institutions, and activities, that is, the kind of political and economic cohesion that characterizes advanced Western societies. One of the ways to achieve industrial, economic and service development is to specialize different sectors of products and services. This is the only way countries can compete with more advanced societies. This means that following the specialization of different sectors, the quality of products and services within the communities, while increasing, has gained public trust, in a way that citizens and consumers are more willing to receive domestic products and services.

For example, in the social sphere, modern societies are known for having a high level of urbanization, literacy, research, health care, a healthy administrative system, mass media, and transportation facilities. Therefore, other societies, including developing countries, in order to lead to industrial development as modern societies, must achieve these characteristics and indicators. For example, the promotion of literacy and education, as well as access to various fields of research, help society itself to step into socio-economic development.

In these (industrial) societies, while the kinship ties are weak, the nuclear family system is in place. One of the main characteristics of industrialized countries is the disappearance or weakening of kinship relations in those societies. In contrast, these countries generally live in the form of nuclear families. In order to close the vacuum of kinship relations, industrialized countries have established clubs and centers through which individuals and citizens can somehow communicate with each other, that is, most relationships between individuals take place outside the family and kinship network. Similarly, in societies, birth rates and mortality rates are low, as opposed to relatively high life expectancy. This in itself has given rise to the phenomenon of aging in those societies, that is, a situation in which many elderly citizens, both men and women, in old age and in the context of weakening family and kinship relationships, face many problems and challenges. For this reason,

day care institutions have been established for such people to provide them with the necessary services.

In these societies, as far as the political sphere is concerned, there is more participation in decision-making. Industrialized countries have given citizens earlier than other societies the opportunity to be more involved in various and decisive decisions related to their own destiny. Countries like France and many other EU countries are in a similar situation today. In non-industrialized countries, however, such participation is less common among citizens. In economic societies, more industrial development, technical upgrades of production, more trade / financial exchanges in the form of "monetary" cash rather than commodity "purity", more division of labor, large-scale market development and continuous growth of infrastructure is visible. As industrialized nations evolved over the past century and a half, many of their economic and trade relations have become more and more modernized than those of non-industrialized nations. In non-industrial societies, however, the exchange of goods for "pure" goods is still more or less visible.

In general, modernization has always been of interest to many scholars and sociologists since the 1960s (Hagen: 1962; Bendix: 1964; Berger & Kelmer: 1973; Tiryakian: 1985; Harrison: 1988; Nolan & Lenski: 1999).

### Class and race

The sociology of racial relations raises considerable discussion of social inequalities based on class and race, that is, how the two coexist despite all the differences. In other words, today, in the industrial and capitalist world, the market is more concerned with meritocracy than skin color and race. Dislocations and movements resulting from social movements must inevitably ignore racial differences. At the same time, and in a critical way, it should be added that capitalism would not have developed without slavery. This means that it was the forced labor of African slaves that enabled the nations of Western Europe to lay the groundwork for their industrialization by importing cheap raw materials from the colonies and exploiting black labor.

Many efforts have been made to understand the historical roots of class and race. In the 1930s and 1940s, sociological historical studies addressed this concept as caste and class (Davis, Gardner and Gardner: 1941). Studies have been conducted in cities in the southern United States, comparing them to India's shortcomings. Racial factor was identified as the most important sign of self-class difference. In explaining the relationship between class and race, it should be added that in some cases even class has surpassed race (Wilson: 1980, 1987). Wilson argues that many social issues within cities (industrial cities) are based on class-based emotions and actions rather than race. Capitalism and racism, on the other hand, must eliminate racism on the basis of a conventional thinking of capitalist development, which itself arises from industrial development. While racism is seen as a remnant or a legacy of the traditional social system, capitalism based on rational criteria of merit and efficiency must gradually eradicate the irrational signs of the past; it is a process that seeks to promote social justice and improve the quality of life.

## Conclusion

To achieve smart city goal, fair use of resources must be done from all parts of a country. In other words, appropriate investment should be made in all states and different urban and rural areas. It is worth noting that rural development feeds the smart city projects. In this process, class gaps could be reduced to a minimum. Wealth being the product of productivity, productivity itself can be developed and expanded. Such a process gradually and sociologically leads to smart city development. As a result of such a process, poverty and class differences could be eliminated. An example of such a claim is the individual country of Japan where smart city goals have been reached, and class differences minimized. Hence, smart city access needs its own wise planning and efforts.

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# The Impact of Information Technology: Learning, Living, and Loving in the Future

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As Charles Darwin said " It is not the strongest of the species who survive, nor the most intelligent; rather it is those most responsive to change"

We are in the center of the third key revolution in human civilization, (Toffler, 1980, 1990; Toffler and Toffler, 1994, 1995; Cornish, 1996; Bell, 1996;). Humanity and technology develop reciprocally. Developments in one domain prompt changes in the other sphere, and vice versa. We have a traditional anxiety that technology - will take from us of our humanity - nevertheless our humanity to a pronounced degree is developed and preserved by technology (Lombardo, 1996). Information and communication technology in particular is instilling into everyday life - there are personal computers, business and social networks, servers, browsers, providers, telecommunication systems, and the Internet - the leading machine ever built. The Internet and the World Wide Web are figuratively growing into the nervous system of human civilization. So a global brain and a global mind are emerging. Our environment is becoming progressively more intelligent, flexible, and computerized (Stock, 1993). The current economy focuses over the production, distribution, organization, and utilization of information and knowledge (Drucker, 1993; Bell, 1996).

E-commerce relies heavily on the use of information systems and technologies. Information technologies include an extensive range of communication media and devices which connect information systems and people including voice mail, e-mail, voice conferencing, video conferencing, the internet, groupware and corporate intranets, car phones, fax machines, personal digital assistants, and so on. IT may be employed to boost the quality and timeliness of organizational intelligence and decision making, therefore encouraging organizational performance (Finger and Brand 1999). But, we have to keep in mind that some conventional means of communication frequently score higher than advanced technologies with respect to acceptability, ease of use, and richness. Therefore the effects of IT when they are applied correctly can help as an influential addition to an organization's communications infrastructure (Finger and Brand 1999).

E-commerce companies rely heavily on Information efficiencies (INE). Information efficiencies (INE) are the cost and time savings that result when IT permits individual employees to complete their existing tasks at a higher level, undertake additional tasks, and increase their roles in the organization owing to improvements in the capability to collect and scrutinize data. IT facilitates the augmentation of both the quantity and quality of information that may be satisfactorily analyzed. INE are principally a within-person or within-group effect. Therefore, IT simply allows each individual or subunit to execute more work; this will lead to an increase in organizational efficiency.

The use of electronic communication compared to face-to-face communication, has been revealed in the literature to boost the total communication in the organization (Edmondson, & Moingeon, 1999). This leads to the capacity to link and allow employees both within and between functions and divisions to communicate - whether through database repositories, teleconferencing, or electronic mail. Increasing online interdependencies makes critical information more accessible and transparent to employees and increases the incidence of problem-solving (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1999).

The basic rationale for E-commerce organizations is that in situations of rapid change only those that are flexible, adaptive and productive will excel. New technologies are a fundamental factor of bringing enterprise learning in a way that is cost-effective and that results in quantifiable improvements in workforce and business performance. A learning organization offers a wide range of opportunities for individual and collective learning and development. A learning organization is one where the maximum benefit is also leveraged from other learning opportunities such as day-to-day work experiences, team meetings, short-term secondments, and membership of task groups. Thus, for a 'learning organization' it is not sufficient to survive. 'Survival learning' or what is more often termed "adaptive learning" is critical. So "adaptive learning" must be joined by "generative learning", learning that enhances our capacity to create. Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not ensure organizational learning, but without it there is no organizational learning. Advancing the organization in the right direction requires working to exceed internal politics and game playing



that control traditional organizations. In other words it entails nurturing openness (Senge 1998). It also includes pursuing to allocate business responsibly far more widely while holding coordination and control.

Learning organizations including companies using e-commerce understand how to exploit the power of information and communication technologies. They are used to fortify organizational identity; develop and maintain learning communities; keep staff members, clients, and others informed and conscious of corporate developments; initiate unexpected, helpful connections between people and offer access to their knowledge and ideas; foster innovation and creativity; share and learn from good practices and unintended outcomes; strengthen relationships; develop and access organizational memory; share tools, methods, and approaches; celebrate successes; identify internal sources of expertise; and connect with the outside world (Henderson 1991).

In E-commerce most companies follow the policy of Galvanizing workers as an important step toward becoming a fluid, adaptable learning organization that can flourish in a world of fast change. Many organizations' leaders quote change as the most common problem they face. So it is apparent that organizations desiring to stay pertinent and thrive, learning better and faster is significantly critical. So the key to survival is learning across organizations and knowledge should be constantly enhanced through both internal and external learning.

A successful e-commerce organization appreciates the role that learning can play in developing organizational effectiveness. It proves this by having a stimulating vision for learning and a learning strategy that will support the organization in attaining its vision. Communication systems are employed to encourage the lateral transfer of information and knowledge across formal structural boundaries. In decentralized and geographically spread organizations, particular care is taken to use communication to encourage lateral communication and to overcome the increased danger of the development of "silos" (Leadbeater 2000).

E-commerce stimulated creativity and led to new insights and innovative practices, that encouraged a balanced approach to the importance of both planned and emergent learning. In a learning organization, planning is based on careful reflection through probing questions that draw on data and information from monitoring, review, and self- and independent evaluation (Castells 2001).

### E-commerce and learning environment

As Albert Einstein said "I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious"

People like to be part of a great team. They like to be part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative. The development of information technology has influenced the interactions between individuals.

The development of information technologies led to enhanced interactions between individuals. This encouraged information synergies (INS) which are the performance gains that result when IT allows two or more individuals or subunits to pool their resources and cooperate and collaborate across role or subunit boundaries, a between-person or between-group effect. IT and information technology improved the ability to link and enable employees, improved ability to codify the organization's knowledge base, improved boundary spanning capabilities, improved information processing that leads to increased efficiency; and improved collaboration and coordination that promotes innovation (Castells 2001).

As a response to external changes many organizations are implementing new organizational structures that include less hierarchy and more self-directed teams that can bring together the best combination of people and resources to remain competitive. Overall, the inclination is away from vertical structures towards horizontal structures focused on core work processes. A linked change is giving employees more responsibility and authority for decision making, and a stronger interest in corporate values and culture. Some companies are converting themselves into learning organizations, which stress equality, strong culture values, and a flowing, adaptable structure planned to grab opportunities, handle crises, and stay viable in an unpredictable environment (Senge et al 1999).

E-commerce encouraged decisions being made in teams. This builds positive team dynamics. The best teams normally pass over a period of "storming," where issues are whipped out and disagreement is surfaced. In fact, the most effective teams are composed of members who have a variety of personal styles and preferences for communicating, gathering information, and decision-making. Teams that are successful and productive have learned to value and admire differences, taking advantage of the strengths of each of its members (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1999).

Team learning is seen as 'the process of aligning and developing the capacities of a team to create the results its members truly desire' (Senge 1990: 236). It creates on personal mastery and shared vision – but these are not enough. People need to be able to act together. When teams learn together, Peter Senge suggests, not only can there be beneficial results for the organization, members will grow more rapidly than could have occurred otherwise. The learning process among a team starts with 'dialogue', the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine 'thinking together'. To the Greeks *dia-logos* meant a free-flowing if meaning through a group, allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually.... [It] also involves learning how to recognize the patterns of interaction in teams that undermine learning. (Senge 1994)

It is important for companies to invest not just in new machinery to make production more efficient, but in the flow of know-how that will sustain their business (Leadbeater 2000). A failure to attend to the learning of groups and individuals in the organization brings catastrophe in this context. Successful organization needs people who are intellectually inquisitive

about their work, who dynamically ponder on their experience, who develop experience-based theories of change and continuously test these in practice with colleagues, and who use their understanding and initiative to contribute to knowledge development. In short, it needs people who are reflective practitioners.

Reflective practice thrives when people feel a high level of psychological safety and trust, and it is damaged when people feel subjected to unfair negative criticism and when they believe that they cannot rely on colleagues. Teamwork is, therefore, a fundamental element of an honest learning organization. In E-commerce, one characteristic of teams is that they function as learning communities in which sensitively expressed dissent, conflict, and debate are cheered as positive sources of learning. Fostering the safety and trust on which reflective practice and positive teamwork depends, needs meticulous devotion to relationship building and the supervision of individual and collective performance (Castells 2001).

E-commerce organizations attempt to develop and guard the investment made in staff members, through recognition and incentives for learning. The time and effort spent on effective knowledge management and learning are recognized as core activities in the organization's time and performance management systems. Incentives for contributing to learning and knowledge development can be traditional (e.g., career advancement, increased income) or may be less traditional (e.g., informal peer status, time made available for study, or public acknowledgment for an innovative contribution made).

In a learning organization, an important source of individual learning and development is coaching and mentoring support from managers, specialists, and other experienced colleagues. High-quality coaching and mentoring can help reflective practice flourish. However, both involve skills that cannot be taken for granted and must be consciously developed in the organization. It cannot be assumed that good contract managers and technical specialists automatically make good coaches and mentors (Senge et al 2000).

The units of knowledge production are both the individual and the collective. Learning organizations understand that while knowledge is created in the minds of individuals, knowledge development thrives in a rich web of social contact among individuals, groups, and organizations. A learning organization provides creative opportunities for this knowledge to be developed and shared with others through interpersonal contact and access to documentation (Zey 1999).

An organization's main repositories of knowledge are the design and delivery of its products and services and the strategies, systems, and procedures it has developed to guide its decision making. Learning organizations know how best to take a learning approach to the development of this embedded knowledge by putting in place the necessary systems and infrastructure for knowledge management (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1999).

In E-commerce feedback is the dynamic process of presenting and disseminating information to improve performance. Feedback mechanisms are increasingly being recognized as key elements of learning. Key (and often underutilized) sources of knowledge in organizations are the data and information that emerge from monitoring systems and the analyses, conclusions, and recommendations arise from self- and independent evaluations.

A learning organization distinguishes the significance of a strong organizational memory. It guarantees that individuals and teams are reassured to use a range of ways of developing their implicit knowledge and making it accessible to others through carefully targeted documentation and collaborative working practices. Documentation is made accessible to others in the organization with a range of user-friendly information and communication technologies (Zohar et al 1999).

## Conclusion

The new era of e-commerce organizations has encouraged learning. Information and communication technologies are used, amid other reasons, to reinforce organizational identity; shape and maintain learning communities; keep staff members, clients, and others informed and aware of corporate developments; generate unexpected, useful networks between people and offer a gate to their knowledge and ideas; inspire innovation and creativity; share and learn from good practices and unintended outcomes; strengthen relationships; develop and access organizational memory; share tools, methods, and approaches; celebrate successes; identify internal sources of expertise; and connect with the outside world.

It can be argued that information technology robs individuals of personal contact. The Internet hides rather than reveals - the computer is a drug which hypnotizes the mind and numbs the body. Also, we may fear being swallowed up and lost within the emerging World Brain/World Mind system. The Information Age theory of the future can be seen as too commercialized, too growth oriented, too technological in emphasis, and too rationalistic and cognitive - we talk incessantly about "bits" and "information," but what about feelings and values? (Henderson, 1991; Lombardo, 1996)

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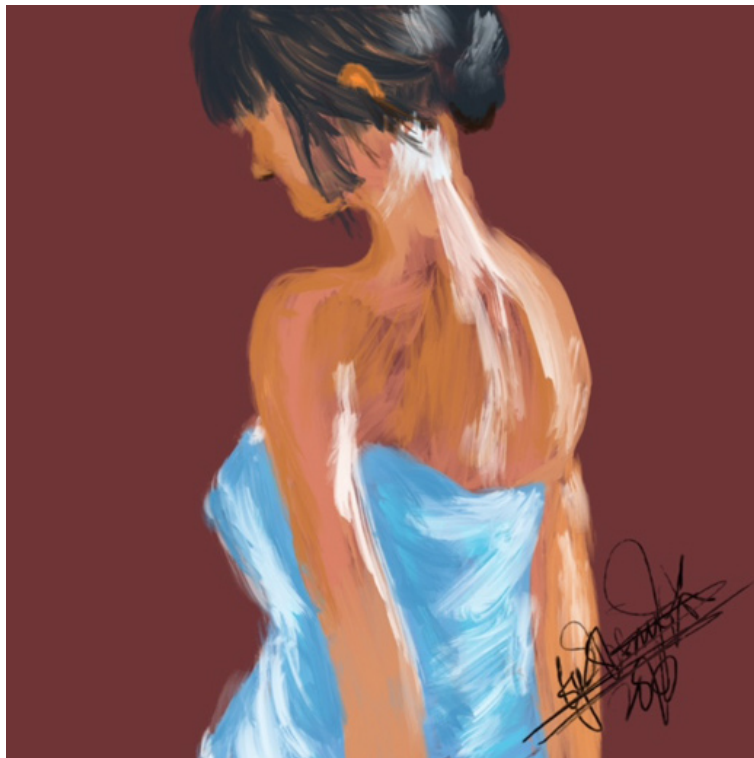
## The long lonely journey.

*Ebtisam Elghblawi*

Confined struggled in my own darkness  
Broken and shuttered  
Fragile and frightened  
Trying hard not to crack  
Intense mental strain  
Total physical drain  
Screaming out loud for help  
Fearing the unknown with great difficulty  
How it feels to be helpless  
How it feels to be broken  
Feeling low and lonely  
It's a slow process  
Eating you up to the bone  
The demon of the past roaring out of my unconscious  
Awakens those engraved fears  
The hardwired in us  
Rising the high tide of panic shockwaves  
Concerned and deeply worried  
My life is on hold for ages  
Sleepless countless nights  
Breathlessness awful days  
Seemingly digging in the ground alone  
Long tiring hectic unpleasant path  
Unavoidable gaps in the career  
Some called it a rat race  
Daunting unending examinations.  
We are scared to say we aren't ok  
But it's ok to be not ok  
After all we are the same human beings  
Prisoned into my own agony  
Surrendered to sadness  
Unfolding the psychological impacts  
Longing for a loved ones to lean on  
What is more?  
Take a breath in and pause  
A dim of light at the end of the tunnel showed up faintly  
A glimpse to revive the weakened natural ability



Enlighten my way briefly  
Guiding me through my long awaited journey, peacefully and wonderfully  
To excel those frozen talents and skills  
To reach the final destiny safely  
Enchanted by the glare in lustre  
Awaken the 'can-do-attitude' mode  
Nor rigid neither rocky anymore  
Unfolding the energy and dynamism inside  
To embark into a long awaited goals  
Optimistic and hopeful  
Compassionate support  
Unconditionally standing  
The glory is booming on steadily  
Moving me to excellency  
I am ready and all for it  
Mark me for a victory  
Transformed by loneliness and fear



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