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Editorial: Understanding the evil, ignorance and apathy around us



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Why worry about poisoned, fetid seas, mass extinction, climate change, floods, fires and cyclones and their sequelae? The main problem is the world's "leaders"; far too many of them fools and cruel psychopaths who are doing nothing about extinction of all life on earth— apart from filling their pockets, stealing other people's countries and killing as many people they don't like while they still can. A dictators' traditional role is mass murderer but these days they are killing in extraordinary numbers due to their war toys of mass destruction, but with the same cruelty and selfish disregard as tyrants of old.

Here we are in a global pandemic and the Chief Psychopaths of the planet are planning on destroying and invading other peoples countries and frankly, killing both their own citizens and citizens of other countries. Such great leaders we humans have, and have always had. Currently they are playing their pathetic little mind games of which country will I invade this week - who do I need to kill to make it happen (and they are certainly not worrying about how many of their own idiot soldiers they are going to kill in the process - they care no more for their slaves than they do anyone else). Besides soldiers get the 'raping rights' on any alive, or dead, casualties and that too has always been the case.

And all this is happening at a time when we really need the idiot men of this planet to grow up and be men and do something right. I say 'idiot men' as I don't think women are allowed to be mass murderers – that is men's business - they don't even get to apply for the job. But there are some women in the evil enclaves of the psychopaths big and small. What we women need to do is stand up globally and demand proper governance and (continued next page)

to make sure this never happens again. We are the nurturers and the protectors and we have been squashed into the ground and silenced for millennia and sadly too many of us have stayed there. This is the final battle for our collective lives and the 'hidden army' now needs to stand and fight with as many good men as will join us. The dictators won't save any of us. We won't all fit into their brothels or "rocket ships to Mars" - what fools they are. We need to do it now while the dictators are squabbling among themselves like packs of rabid street dogs - as the biggest bullies have been robbing the smaller psychopath dictators' countries and their personal claims. In fact the countries and coffers of the lesser dictators have been the most robbed. They have happily passed over their nation's wealth and resources and their countrymen's freedom for a chance to join the big club of evil pathetic fools. And now when they fear for their own protection the bigger psychopaths want more and more - this is the bed they have made for themselves. There is no honour among thieves and murderers - and if there was any justice on planet earth all of those insane men should be rocking backwards and forwards in their strait jackets on some cold stone floor in a secure mental health facility. Let me assure you - they are clinically psychopaths..

Did the dictators miss out on something as a child and decide to throw a tantrum, and to take it out on the entire world - such is their insane rage. Sorry guys, nearly everybody misses out in this world, and mainly because of psychopaths like you who have plagued us since we crawled out of the primeval mud.

Sadly, evil is not just the domain of the dictator - it seems they can muster whole armies of evil men to do their robbing, raping, murder and torture for them. Then there are the men who make mass murder weapons for money - let's not pretend they are made for peace or defence - they are made for money. It is pretty damn hard to kill people en masse with stones - so they facilitate mass murder.

And then what about the trafficked women, children and babies who are sexually tortured and abused for money - and there are the "normal men" who go to their rape houses where one man pays another man to rape the object of his choice. The so-called "normal" men also use the slave labour of millions of trafficked women and children (they are easier than men to beat into submission).

I apologise sincerely to the many good men among us who are totally appalled and ashamed to be of the same species and gender as this male trash. Good young men are at great risk of suicide on planet earth - who would want to grow up and be 'one of them'?

And the would-be dictators masquerading as politicians and the corporate thieves robbing and destroying the earth air and seas around us, are of the same ilk. Such is the nature of greedy selfish humanity. **Humans are the failed experiment of creation.** Not the animals and plants we are hell bent on destroying, who we could learn everything from if we stopped killing them for money and cruel sport. The total losers and idiots are the humans. We had the brain (well some of us) but not the heart or soul to live peacefully, decently and cleanly on planet earth.

Look at the obscene way humans treat animals as if they are inferior and it is okay to torture and kill them. What sort of brute does that? Animals treat their females and their young with great respect, even reverence, and protect them as all creatures on earth should. Not humanity - women and children and even babies are trafficked for sex and slavery - yes baby rape is also in the sphere of dictators and their criminal gangs they surround themselves with.

If these monsters are not removed immediately it is the end for all humanity. The lucky humans will be washed away by floods - the rest will die a slow, painful, starving death, or be bombed into oblivion by mad men's nuclear weapons, wars or the diseases caused by cruel treatment of incarcerated and tortured animals, by far too many humans. I am right and they know I am right, but frankly they just don't care, nor it seems do a huge number of humans. There is not even a dull light of comprehension of the extent of the evil on this planet; far too many humans are merely focused on the spoils they get for themselves in their own lifetimes. It seems their lack of care also extends to their own children who they will leave a depleted and poisoned planet to.

And as for apathy - this mess lies at the feet and conscience of all of us. This great gift, this wonder of creation, life, made from the brightest stars that shine in our night sky seems to be wasted on the most undeserving creatures - in the known universe - humans. Can stars weep? Surely they must weep when they see their progeny on planet earth - the worst case scenario of life in an infinite universe.

There has always been a struggle of good against evil, and sense against selfishness on this planet. Evil and selfishness have won every time with just a few intervening enlightened years here and there. We are living among filth, fantasy and fiends. Are we up to it? Our track record of arch stupidity says no. We are going to have to be good, clever and hardworking to sort this all out - but they are indeed the very joys of life if we but knew it.

So what needs to be done to save the planet and all life (forgetting about Mars). No-one believed that lie did they? Living perpetually in a helmet or vacuum due to lack of breathable air sounds just like how things are becoming here.

And if you are wondering how we can start to live anew here is a small list of initiatives that may help (not necessarily in order of importance - but they are all vital to our survival).

1 Psychopaths/dictators and those who feign being politicians and those who do their raping, killing and torturing for them, pack up your pieces of gold and leave now. Go to Mars if you want - just hang your heads in shame as you pass by. If you want to redeem yourselves go out and pick up the millions of tons of rubbish we have left on land and sea.

2, Remove all politicians and introduce a governing system of experts and honourable people to make national decisions - they are the ones doing all the work now and keeping the wheels turning.

3. Proper treatment of the planet -- always and as a priority.

4. No more ill treatment or genocide of animals - these along with the baby rapers are the most evil of all

5. No more wasting vital planetary resources to make junk so rich evil men can become richer.

6. No more global rape trade of women and children and babies. No more of 'the big bad ones' exploiting the smaller and weaker –they are the cowards among men.

7. Morality and ethics and planet management to be part of children's and adult's education.

8. We will always have the evil and ignorant born in our midst – but let's keep them out of all decision making and away from any form of power. Preferably keep their Madnesses behind locked doors. There is enough innocent blood spilled on this planet already .

9. Make all decisions with our hearts instead of our heads.

10. Teach and live a philosophy of giving. If we all GAVE then every single person on the planet would be endlessly showered with largesse - think about it.

Quotes from the past month:

'Stuck in perilous moment': Doomsday Clock holds at 100 seconds to midnight

The clock has been set at that time third year in a row as science and security board says it 'brings neither stability nor security'

.....
One of the key steps in the autocrats' playbook is to suffocate civil society. From Venezuela to Belarus, elected leaders who have overseen a democratic decline have harassed volunteers, shut down community groups, and curtailed charities. The last thing a strongman needs is a group of engaged community leaders telling people the truth.
.....

According to "Animal Survival International" Elephants, rhinos and more face unrelenting threat from heartless POACHERS who work for CHINESE CRIMINALS!

The poachers work for Chinese criminals seeking rhino horns, elephant tusks, lion bones, leopard skins - in fact, any wild animal body part they can peddle in Asia. They are merciless and would have no hesitation in ambushing and killing game rangers. This makes patrolling the area a difficult and seriously dangerous job.

WHAT???

In the shortest war ever it seems China now owns Iran. See the banner (page 8) on the sacred Freedom Tower featuring China's flag. So are the Iranians to suffer genocide and sterilisation like the Tibetans and the Uighurs? This is the ultimate betrayal of his country and he must resign now.

The dictator gave his WHOLE country away!

Things that make us proud to be human





The others



Donkeys facing genocide due to their skins being made into fake Chinese medicants



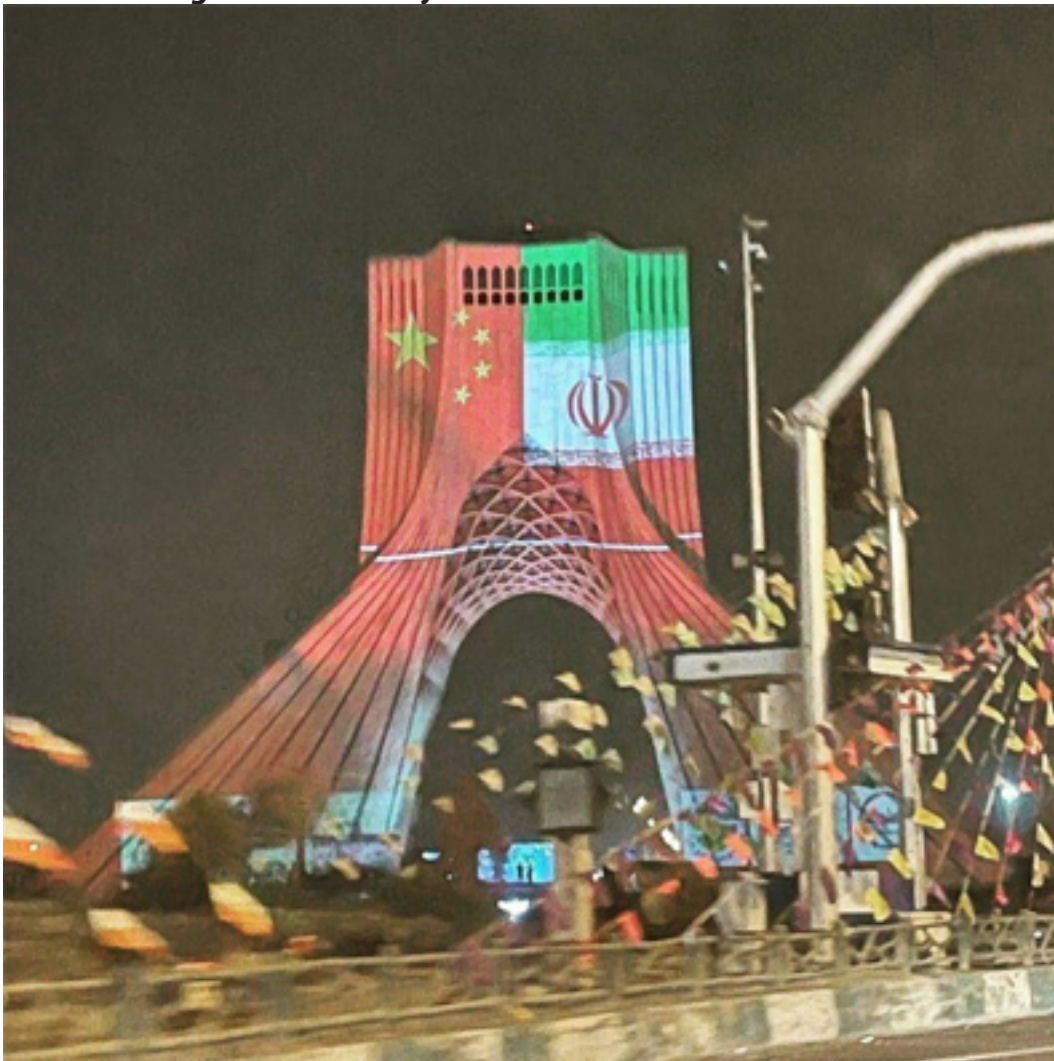
Father and daughter photo



Father and son photo



What !!!! Iran given to China by its dictator !!!!!



Tazreen Fashions, Rana Plaza, FR Tower and then Hashem Food, what next? The ineffective OHS regulatory processes of the Bangladesh Government

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ASM Anam Ullah's Bio: Anam's expertise is in globalisation and neoliberalism, ILO, WTO, HRM, employment and industrial relations, workplace safety and OHS regulations, Bangladesh and global RMG industry, international business and supply chains management, ethical business, CSR and CSV. Anam was appointed academic by The University of New South Wales, The University of Sydney, The University of Wollongong, Charles Sturt University, The University of Newcastle, and CQUniversity, Australia.

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Abstract

This article aims to review the current Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations in Bangladesh to identify lessons for policy-makers, mainly for the Government of Bangladesh. Since the country's independence in 1971, different governments have been less interested in producing and establishing an effective OHS policy and regulation in Bangladesh. Scholars even argue that Bangladesh has lacked OHS culture since the colonial period. However, in recent times, OHS has become a matter of concern for the Bangladesh Government and other government's stakeholders. The OHS campaign started in Bangladesh after the Rana Plaza incident in 2013. Nevertheless, scholars still argue that the Bangladesh Government's approach to reducing workplace casualties is insufficient while workers and people in the state are still experiencing high numbers of workplace injuries and deaths. Therefore, this article reviews four different cases between 2012 and 2021 (i.e., Tazreen Fashions, Rana Plaza, FR Tower, and Hashem Foods Ltd.) to understand and find gaps in the Bangladesh Government's OHS policy regulatory process and to suggest how to improve OHS conditions in Bangladesh.

Methodology: This review article is based primarily on secondary sources, such as the World Bank data, ILO and UN conventions, Bangladesh's Labour Act and OHS policy, and scholarly work about OHS in Bangladesh's major informal economic sectors, mainly the RMG. Further

more, the four prominent cases provided in this article were published in national and international media to reveal Bangladesh's poor OHS status and its consequences on workers' and public life.

Findings and contribution to knowledge: Since the British colonial period, there has been a lack of OHS culture in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, the Bangladesh Government also lacks the adequate expertise and political commitment to do its job and ensure better OHS for its citizens. Moreover, disrespect for the National Labour Act, ILO and UN conventions has exacerbated the situation. Thus, this article suggests that the government should sincerely respect the National Labour Act in Bangladesh and positively change OHS practices and regulations through their political commitment.

Keywords: OHS culture and regulation in Bangladesh, Bangladesh Labour Act, trade unionism, ILO and UN conventions, DIFE and RMG.

Introduction

Since the 1980s, Bangladesh, as a developing country, has adopted new markets and liberal economic policies that emerged under the doctrines of neoliberalism and globalisation (see Harvey, 2007; Rahman, 2013; Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b). Since then, Bangladesh has seen rapid change in aspects of its socio-economic development. This change in the socio-economic situation of Bangladesh can be best understood by Ahmed's (2004) precise portrayal of the newly emerging capitalist class in Bangladesh. This powerful business class appeared in post-independence Bangladesh, which was after 1971. Ahmed describes explicitly the characteristics of Bangladeshi capitalists who had no status in society and lacked business experience but started their businesses with high ambition to change their social status, and globalisation, with its commensurate influence on Bangladesh's socio-economic conditions, was a blessing for them. Inspired by Ahmed, in this article, I also draw critical analysis, mainly from contemporary scholars, about the Bangladeshi capitalists responsible for unethical business practices in Bangladesh. Since the 1980s, due to the significant amount of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) in Bangladesh, local proto-capitalists merged with the international brands and supply chains, and they jointly exploited Bangladeshi workers in most informal economic sectors, including the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) (Ahmed, 2004; Ullah, 2021a). Low wages, extreme overtime, no regular payment of work and bonuses on time, and a shoddy workplace are the severe issues in the RMG sector (see Siddiqi, 2019; Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Ullah, 2021a).

In recent years, Bangladesh's economic progress and industrial work have burgeoned (Tahmid, 2020). Contemporary scholarship, e.g., Ullah and Amanullah (2021) and Ullah (2021b), suggests that Bangladesh is ranked as the 37th largest economy in the world in terms of GDP and economic activity, based on data from the tradingeconomics. The economic progress mostly comes through informal sectors such as the RMG, agriculture, construction, transportation, telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, leather and fisheries. The RMG industry alone has played a significant role in the national economy, with an estimated turnover of US\$40 billion at present and expected to reach US\$50 billion soon. The RMG industry currently contributes 13 per cent to the national GDP in Bangladesh (Ullah, 2021a.; Rahman & Ishty, 2020). However, the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) conditions in most informal economic sectors, including the RMG, are not satisfactory in Bangladesh (see Rahman, 2019; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020). Employers within most of these industries do not respect and enforce the national Labour Act, ILO conventions or the relevant UN conventions (Rahman, 2019; Siddiqi, 2019; Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Ullah & Hasan, 2020; Ullah, 2020; Ullah, 2021b). While industrial accidents in most informal economic sectors are common in Bangladesh, corporate offices have the same situation. Since 2012, the Bangladesh Government has taken some initiatives to control fire incidents in different sectors, including the RMG, but the result is unsatisfactory. Fires in the Tazreen Fashions factory, FR Tower, and Hashem Food & Beverages intensify the tension among the workers and their families about risk at workplaces in Bangladesh. After the Rana Plaza incident in 2013, it was expected by scholars, national and international NGOs and trade unions, workers and ordinary citizens of the

state that the Bangladesh Government would finally adopt some practical strategies to control the workplace; however, fires still continue in various workplaces and these incidents are killing innocent workers (see Anjum, 2021).

Surprisingly, another fire, not in a factory or corporate office, killed at least 40 passengers and injured 70 on a ferry in Bangladesh (see *The Daily Star*, 2021c; *BBC News*, 2021; *Deutsche Welle*, 2021). The incident took place on 24 December 2021 at MV Abhijan-10 in the early morning on the banks of the Sugandha River, adjacent to the rural town of Jhalokati, 250 km south of the capital Dhaka. According to national and international media, the ferry was designed and built with the capacity to carry a maximum of 310 passengers but has been illegally loaded with a minimum of 500 passengers, violating national transport laws (*The Daily Star*, 2021c; *BBC News*, 2021; *Deutsche Welle*, 2021). This is an overall picture of Bangladesh where ferry owners are greedy and want to illegally profit from their transport business in violation of its transport laws. When transport owners engage in unethical business competition with their business rivals in their sector and try to get more passengers and load them without transport capacity or drive a vehicle without a fitness certificate, it often ends with a fatal tragedy like MV Abhijan-10. Moreover, most of the ferries in Bangladesh are old and do not comply with requirements to be used as public vessels, but the Bangladesh Government has not taken any decisive strategy to control this industry since the country's independence. However, after visiting the spot of the ferry incident of MV Abhijan-10, the State Minister for Shipping of the Government of Bangladesh announced Bangladeshi Taka (BDTK) 1.5 lakh be given to families of each person who died. BDTK 1.5 lakh, is equivalent to \$US1750, and this minimal compensation to each deceased's family shows the actual socio-economic condition of Bangladesh where a citizen's life is worth less than \$US2000 (*The Daily Star*, 2021c).

Bangladesh's leading English newspaper, *the Daily Star*, published a report on occupational deaths and injuries, indicating that by 2020, 729 workers died in the workplace, including 384 in the country's transport sector, 84 in the construction sector and 67 in the agriculture sector (see *The Daily Star*, 2021). *The Daily Star* report further states that in 2019, 1200 workers were killed and 695 injured in Bangladesh. Contemporary research also suggests that every year, about 12,000 people are killed in road accidents, and 35,000 or more are seriously injured in Bangladesh, which is alarming (see Scroll.in, 2021). However, Ullah (2021b) suggests that Bangladesh, as a developing country, still lacks adequate data for the total death and injuries in the workplace in Bangladesh. Bangladesh currently has a population of at least 170 million, and is a densely populated country. According to *The Daily Star* (2021), currently there are 89,974 registered factories, shops, companies and institutes and more than 4.4 hundred thousand unregistered businesses in Bangladesh. The state monitoring agency, the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), with only 993 official staff, is unable to cope with the pressure of monitoring and controlling the vast formal and informal sector in Bangladesh with only 575 actual inspectors (Barua, Wiersma & Ansary, 2018; *The Daily Star*, 2021). Scholars, e.g., Tahmid (2020), suggest that Bangladesh is a developing country, and the economy was mainly based on agriculture but has steadily changed its status from agriculture to

manufacturing. Thus, the fundamental question is whether the state needs to adopt a more constructive OHS regulatory process and strategy than what it has now to control both formal and informal sectors in Bangladesh. Scholars also argue that if the Bangladesh Government can control the most informal economic sector through its proper OHS policy and regulatory process, not only will workers be safer in the workplace, but it will also increase their productivity to the greater extent of the country's prosperity (see also Tasnim et al., 2016; Ahmed, Sobuz & Haque, 2018; Rahman, 2019; Tahmid, 2020).

On the other hand, for theoretical interpretations of this article, we may find a clear picture of how Bangladesh has performed during the period of globalisation and neoliberalism from scholarly work, e.g., Rahman (2019), Siddiqi (2019), Alamgir and Banerjee (2019), Crinis (2019) and Ullah (2021a). More specifically, Rahman's work illustrates how consecutive governments of Bangladesh have at times acted ignorantly in controlling most informal industries, including the enactment of adequate Labour Acts and the establishment of functional regulatory processes. Rahman also described the current state of OHS in the RMG sector, where factory accidents are common, and workers die brutally, with no respectable compensation provided by local factory owners or their international partners in the global supply chain (see also Siddiqi, 2019; Ullah, 2021a). Some other scholars' studies (see Sulaiman, 2013; Ahmed, Sobuz & Haque, 2018; Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2020; Ullah, 2021a, 2021b) suggest that, while RMG workers are dying in factory accidents (e.g., Tazreen Fashions, Rana Plaza), workers in other informal economic sectors also remain vulnerable to workplace death and injuries. Therefore, my argument is still the same as that of other scholars that the Bangladesh Government has not played a proper role in controlling RMG and other informal economic sectors in Bangladesh since the country became independent in 1971. Although the Bangladesh Government and RMG employers have adopted a neoliberal trade doctrine since the 1980s, they were responsible for ensuring the sector's safety and enacting international standard Labour Act and regulations. Thus, I can undoubtedly draw my theoretical basis in this article that both the Government and the RMG employers were irresponsible and ignorant about RMG and other informal economic sectors' workplace safety in Bangladesh.

Therefore, this article aims to address two fundamental research questions: (a) Why do all these accidents in different manufacturing centres, corporate offices and public places still occur in Bangladesh, and (b) how can these workplace accidents and injuries be prevented. The author first provides the four cases and then discusses the theoretical underpinnings to understand points that impede adequate regulation for most informal industries in Bangladesh. At the same time, critical discussion and recommendations for preventing workplace incidents are also provided in this article.

Literature

Case One: The Tazreen Fashions Ltd factory fire (24 November 2012)

Since the RMG industry's inception and its massive development, mainly in the 1980s, there have been hundreds of RMG factory accidents in Bangladesh (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Ullah, 2015; Tahmid, 2020; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b). However, the

Tazreen Fashions fire in 2012 was the deadliest incidents in the RMG industry in Bangladesh until then (Sulaiman, 2013). On 24 November, in Bangladesh's industrial city Ashulia, a nine-storey building experienced a deadly fire that caused the deaths of 112 RMG workers and injured approximately 200. Poor quality electrical infrastructure within the building was found to be the leading cause of the devastating fire of the Tazreen Fashions. On the ground floor of the building, a short-circuit started the fire, which then rapidly spread to other floors of the building due to the combustible products kept on the premises (see WSR, n.d.; Sulaiman, 2013; Gopinath & Choudhury, 2015; Barua, Wiersma & Ansary, 2018). Most workers who died succumbed to smoke inhalation, while others burnt to death. Some died jumping from the windows on the top floor of the building in an attempt to escape the fire of the factory (see, e.g., Bajaj, 2012; Paul, 2012). Moreover, scholars, e.g., Sulaiman (2013), argue that the higher floors of the building were illegally constructed, there were insufficient exits and narrow stairs, and the collapsible gate located on the ground floor was closed, which led to increase the death toll of the incident.

Tazreen Fashions Ltd. produced clothes for global clothing brands, including Disney, Sears/Kmart, Dickies, Li & Fung, C&A, and Walmart (WSRN, n.d.; Paul, 2012). Tellingly, Walmart, before the incident, had inspected Tazreen Fashions several times in 2011 and 2012, and the audit team had identified some significant issues such as a shortage of fire alarms, insufficient fire extinguishers, and obstacles that could significantly obstruct workers' evacuation of the factory in an emergency situation. After the incident, the investigation by Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Network (WSRN) found fault with the Walmart auditors for ignoring the essential element that the premises lacked proper exit facilities (WSRN, n.d.). The stairs were linked directly to the ground floor instead of the available outside exit stairs. While, after the incident, Walmart denied their business relationship with Tazreen Fashions Ltd in Bangladesh, evidence was found which suggests that at least three different Walmart suppliers were using Tazreen Fashions as their regular source of clothes (WSR, n.d.; Paul, 2012; Bajaj, 2012).

On the other hand, at least 18 months before the Tazreen Fashion's incident, Walmart had committed to major rectification in most of their suppliers' factories in Bangladesh. Still, it had not done anything regarding the compliance of RMG factories, and the Tazreen Fashions factory fire occurred. In April 2011, in a meeting between several stakeholders of the Bangladesh RMG industry, including global brands, Bangladesh Government representatives, RMG local suppliers, and civil society members and other NGO advocates in Dhaka had a dialogue to assess the RMG sector's working conditions and how it can be improved. In that event, although Walmart acknowledged the need for immediate modification of its sourcing factories, it denied taking financial responsibilities for upgrading those factories in Bangladesh and added: *"It is not financially feasible for the brands to make such investments. Publicly, however, Walmart was reassuring consumers that it would not buy from an unsafe factory"* (cited in WSR, n.d.). Several years after the Tazreen Fashions incident, victims had not received their proper compensation, reflecting poor corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments for RMG workers in Bangladesh from major global clothing brands (see Gopinath & Choudhury, 2015; Sulaiman, 2013; Ullah, 2021a; WSRN, n.d.).

Case Two: The Rana Plaza building collapse (24 April 2013)

The Rana Plaza building collapse was a horrific experience for the approximately 1134 RMG workers in Bangladesh who lost their lives and the thousands of others who were injured (*The Guardian*, 2014, 2015; Siddiqi, 2019; Goodwin, 2021; Ullah, 2021a,b). Scholars argue that the Rana Plaza disaster was a failure of the nation's rotten administrative system that lacked proper oversight strategies of the RMG sector (see Barua, Wiersma & Ansary, 2021). The building, which had been allowed by building authorities to be built on swampland for use as an office building, had four extra floors illegally added by the owner, Sohel Rana, using nonsubstantial building materials. Some of these additional floors were then leased for use as RMG factories which required the installation of heavy industrial machinery and equipment. The activities described above are evidence of the poor and corrupt governance of Bangladesh (see Siddiqi, 2019; Rahman, 2019; Goodwin, 2021). The day before the accident, RMG workers had been evacuated due to the observation of cracks in the building. Other offices at Rana Plaza, such as the banks and shops, were also closed. However, local engineers and an inspection team certified the building as sound for production the next day, 24 April 2013. Despite RMG workers' grave concerns about the risk and their refusal to enter the building, at the behest of the factory owners, Sohel Rana forced workers inside as their jobs and salaries were threatened (see Clean Clothes Campaign, n.d.). Shortly after RMG workers entered the building, the eight-storey building collapsed entirely within less than 90 seconds. The Rana Plaza building collapse further established the overall working conditions of the RMG sector in Bangladesh and how inexperienced and corrupt engineers inspect buildings that are used as RMG factories in most residential areas in Bangladesh (see, e.g., *The Guardian*, 2014, 2015 & 2018; Clean Clothes Campaign, n.d.).

Case Three: The FR Tower fire at Banani (28 March 2019)

The FR Tower fire was another incident that shook the country and the world community, with the international and national media (*BBC News*, 2019; *The Daily Star*, 2019) reporting the incident immediately. On 28 March 2019, at approximately 1:00 pm, a 22 storey building at Banani, a wealthy suburb in the capital city of Dhaka, caught fire. Even in the nation's busy capital city with approximately 20 million people, where most corporate headquarters are established, high rise buildings often do not follow the nation's building code. In the FR Tower fire, at least 25 people either burned to death or died when they jumped from the top floor of the building, and a further 70 others were injured (see *The Daily Star*, 2019; *Dhaka Tribune*, 2019; *BBC News*, 2019). Witnesses outside the building were severely affected as they could do nothing to help those inside. The building had a shortage of fire safety equipment and narrow stairs that were locked at the time of the incident. Building and factory fires are common in Bangladesh, which has created fears among citizens. The state government continuously demonstrates irresponsible behaviour to minimise fire risks in commercial buildings and factories in Bangladesh. For example, just before the FR Tower fire, in February 2019, in the old part of Dhaka known as Chawkbazar district, another fatal fire occurred due to illegal chemical stockpiling. In that incident, at least 70 people lost their lives, and many more were injured. In the same month, another deadly factory fire broke out in the country's commercial city, Chittagong, killing at least nine people (see *BBC News*, 2019).

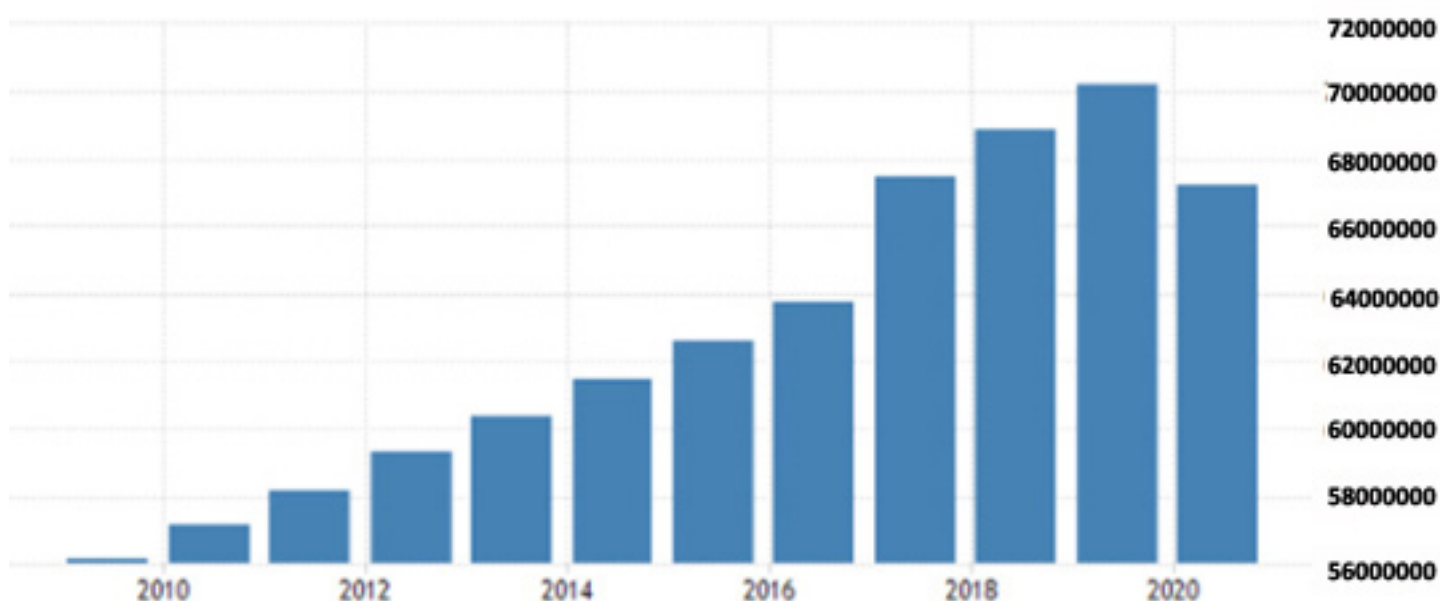
Case Four: Factory fire at Hashem Food and Beverage Limited (8 July 2021)

A factory of the country's top food and beverage company, Hashem Food and Beverage Limited, caught fire on 8 July 2021 in Rupganj, an industrial city about 25 kilometres east of Dhaka. The factory fire killed 52 workers, including child labourers, as child labour at the factory was widespread (see *Al Jazeera*, 2021; *The Diplomat*, 2021; Ullah, 2021b; The Centre for Child Rights and Business, 2021). A worker who escaped from the fire stated that dozens of workers were trapped inside the factory when the fire broke out. The factory gates on different floors were locked, which prevented workers from escaping the blaze quickly (see *Al Jazeera*, 2021; Anjum, 2021 cited in *The Diplomat*). *Al Jazeera* (2021) published statements made by the head of the Dhaka fire department, Dinu Moni Sharma, who admitted that the factory blaze was due to improper storage of highly flammable chemicals and plastics. According to several local and international media, the factory employed approximately 7000 workers in its 35000-square-foot building with only two staircases, which was not adequate for emergency evacuation.

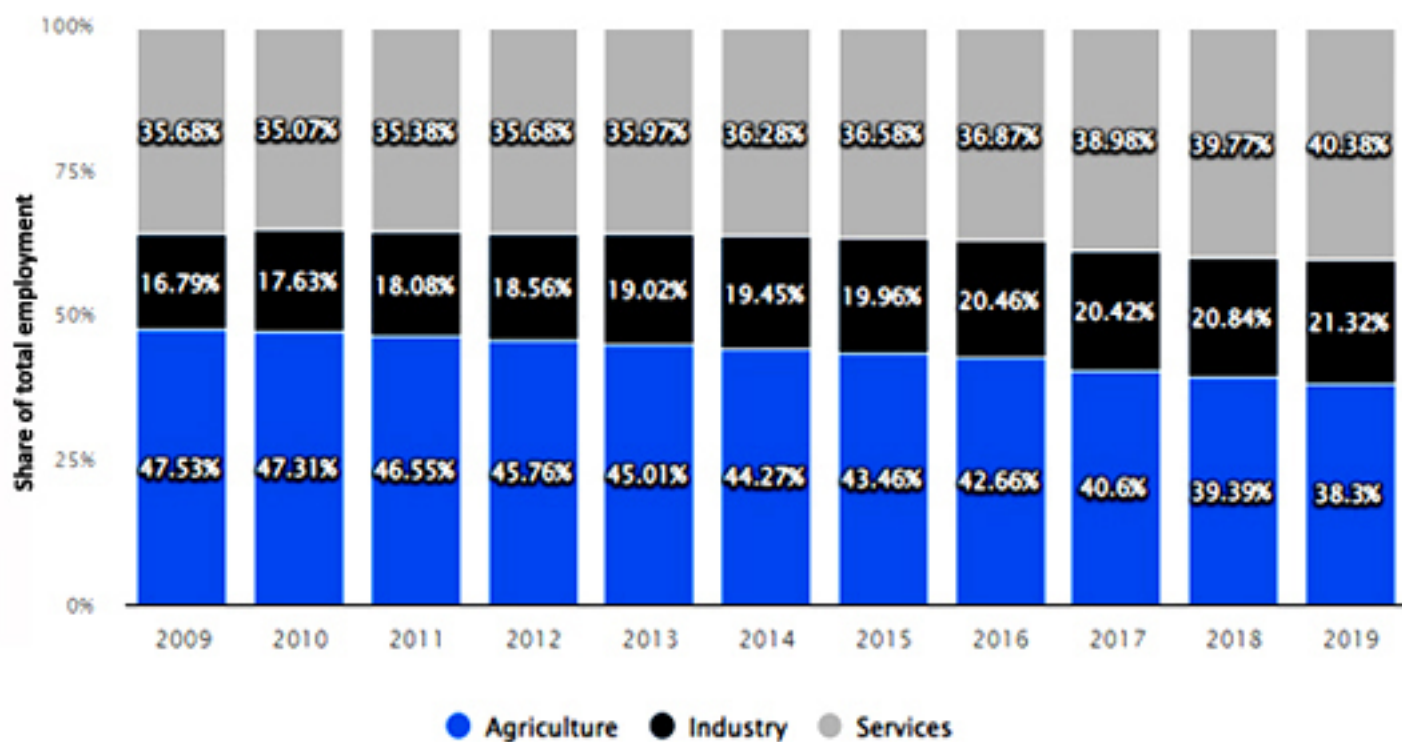
The most worrying issue is that the trade relationship between Hashem Food and Beverage's parent company, Sajeeb Group, and its international supply chain reveals unethical business in most developing countries, including Bangladesh (see Crinis, 2019; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b). Sajeeb Group, the parent company of Hashem Food and Beverages, exports products to many countries, including Australia, the United States, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Bhutan, Nepal, and other countries in the Middle East and Africa. Sajeeb Group (Hashem Food and Beverages) also produces juice for Lahore-based Shezan International, Pakistan, and has several other businesses, including a garment factory (see The Center for Child Rights and Business, 2021; *Al Jazeera*, 2021). Several scholars in their contemporary work have strongly accused international supply chains of having business relations with local capitalists in Bangladesh and exploiting workers (including child labourers), but the state has been very silent on taking decisive action against the violators (see Crinis, 2019; Siddiqi, 2019; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b).

Bangladesh's labour force by sectors and gender

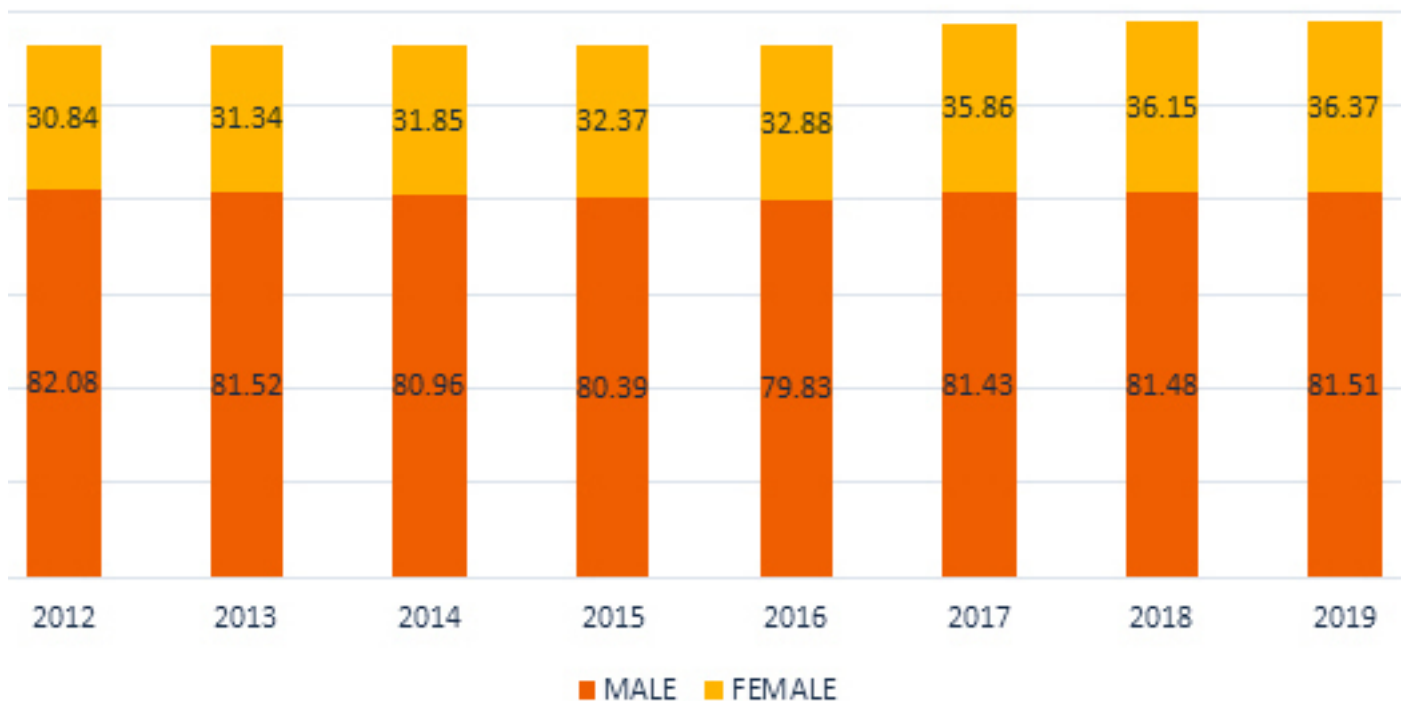
According to the World Bank's Development Index compiled from officially recognised sources, the total labour force in Bangladesh in 2020 is reported to be 67,225,702 (see Graph One). Bangladesh's actual labour force, values, historical data, forecasts and estimates were taken from the World Bank in December 2021 (see Trading Economics n.d.). Graph One also includes those who are currently employed and unemployed but looking for work and first-time job-seekers. In addition, the size of the workforce varies from year to year as seasonal workers enter and leave. Graph Two shows the distribution of employment by industries in Bangladesh, and agriculture is still a dominant informal economic sector for Bangladesh. However, the service and manufacturing industrial sector is also steadily increasing, as shown in Graph Two. On the other hand, male and female labour force participation in Bangladesh is shown in Graph Three, which shows that males still dominate the formal and informal working sector in Bangladesh. The Pie Chart One shows the labour force consists of persons aged 15 years and above who provide labour to produce goods and services within a specified period in different industries.

Graph One: Bangladesh - Labour force, total (2010-2020)

Source: Trading Economics (n.d.).

Graph Two: Bangladesh - distribution of employment by economic sector from 2009 to 2019

Source: Statista (2021).

Graph Three: Male and female labour force participation in Bangladesh

Source: The author constructed the graph based on data from the Global Economy.Com

Bangladesh's Labour Act

For the first time since Bangladesh's independence in 1971, in 2006, the Bangladesh Government enacted a Labour Act with some provisions of the OHS and further amended it in 2013 after the Rana Plaza incident (see Afrin, 2014; Siddiqi, 2019; Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b). Nevertheless, the Act did not comply with international standards, which failed to ensure the safety of workers in the workplace and prevent workers from forming trade unions and bargaining at the factory level (see Human Rights Watch, 2013; Solaiman, 2013; The Guardian, 2014 & 2015). However, the Bangladesh Labour Act has several provisions to follow and ensure for workers' protection at the workplace, which include:

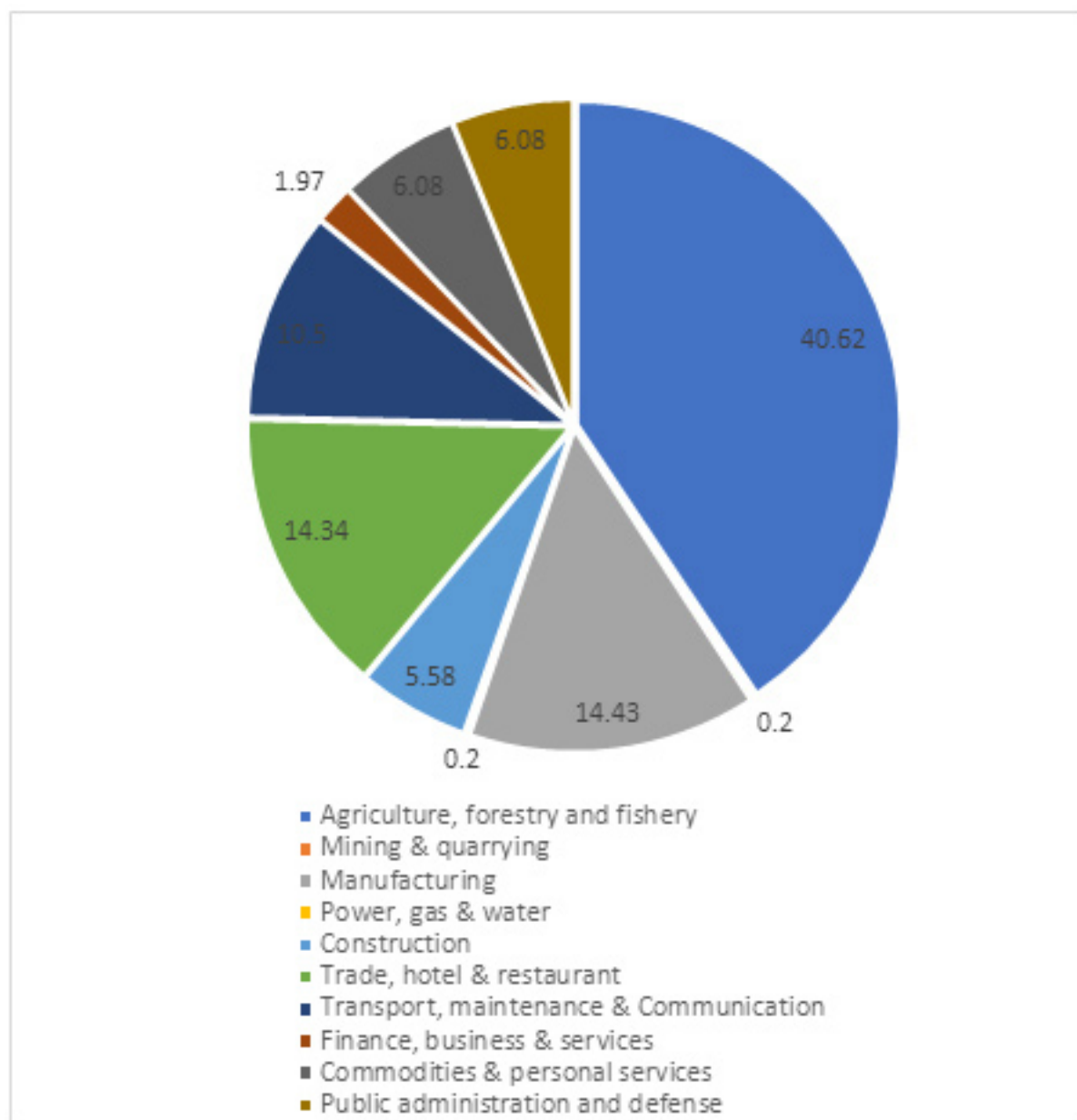
- a) Every establishment to be kept clean and [free] from effluvia arising out of any drain, privy or other nuisance (Section 51, BLA);
- b) The temperature of the work room is comfortable and prevents injury to health;
- c) Every employer is required to make effective and suitable measures for securing and maintaining adequate ventilation, sufficient and appropriate lighting (Section 52);
- d) To prevent gathering dust or fumes in the workroom and its inhalation by workers (Section 53)
- e) The working environment of an establishment should not be so overcrowded that it is injurious to the health of workers. As a guide, nine and a half cubic meters of space should be provided for each single worker in a factory (Section 56),

f) Every establishment should arrange sufficient numbers of separate toilets with sufficient light, air and water for male and female workers (Section 59).

g) Employers should provide sufficient supplies of pure drinking water (Section 58); sufficient lighting (Section 57);

h) An adequate number of gender-segregated toilets and wash-rooms, as well as sufficient numbers of clean and hygienic dustbins and spittoons at convenient locations in the workplace (Section 60)" (National Profile on Occupational Safety and Health in Bangladesh 2019, p.31).

However, the question is whether the Government of Bangladesh, through proper enforcement, ensures that employers follow these provisions of the Labour Act. Several international organisations, such as Human Rights Watch (2015), suggest that the Bangladesh Government needs to go a long way in enacting an internationally standard Labour Act and establishing a genuine enforcement process of the national Labour Act. For example, Chapter XII of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 (as amended in 2013) shows the provisions for compensation for dead and injured workers. BDTK 100,000 (approximately US\$1,165) for a deceased worker and BDTK 125,000 (approximately US\$1456) for a permanently disabled worker. First, the amount is too small for both dead and injured workers. And second, the Labour Act does not explicitly state what consequences an employer may face for intentionally violating Section 61 of Chapter Six of the Labour Act (see Labour Act, 2006; The Daily Star, 2021a).

Pie Chart One: Employed labour force above 15 years by sector in Bangladesh

Source: The author constructed the Pie Chart based on data from the National Profile on Occupational Safety and Health in Bangladesh 2019.

Another critical point is that the rights of domestic workers are not included in the Labour Act. Domestic workers' wages, bonuses, health, life insurance and compensation are the main issues that the government has ignored to include in the Labour Act in Bangladesh. The present study shows that domestic workers in Bangladesh are significantly abused, both physically and mentally, and most of the domestic workers are women and underaged. To protect the rights of domestic workers in Bangladesh, the Government of Bangladesh formulated the Domestic Workers Welfare Policy in 2015, but it has lacked significant enforcement measures to make the policy effective (see Ullah, 2021b, *The Daily Star*, 2021a; Ain O Shalish Kendro, 2021). Moreover, the Bangladesh Government is still enacting a good and internationally standardised Labour Act to protect workers in various economic sectors' workplaces (see Afrin, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2015; Salminen, 2018).

The OHS and accidents prevention policy in Bangladesh

Significantly, OHS clauses of the 2006 National Labour Act were not strong enough to control and prevent the industrial sector's fatal accidents and injuries in Bangladesh. Therefore, the Government of Bangladesh intended to establish a tripartite National Industrial Health and Safety Council in 2009 to prevent industrial accidents (see Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, 2015; National Profile on Occupational Safety and Health in Bangladesh, 2019). But in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza incident, the Bangladesh Government felt extreme pressure from both the national and international levels for their negligence in controlling industries and poor OHS practice. As a result, the government created the National Occupational Safety and Health Policy in 2013, mainly to regulate the RMG sector. The national OHS policy includes:

- *Necessary measures to ensure workplace safety and health protection in light of international Conventions/Declarations/Recommendations/Instruments (Article 3.a.1).*
- *Implement national laws and regulations in relation with workplace safety and occupational health (Article 3.a.2).*
- *Setting up national standards on OSH (Article 3.a.14).*
- *Review and updating of all laws relating to OSH (Article 3.a.15, Art. 4.a.20).*
- *Development and implementation of national policies and legal framework (Art. 4.a.2).*
- *Developing Strategy and Action plan to ensure proper implementation of national laws and regulations (Art. 4.a.3).*
- *Inclusion of OSH issues in the policies and programs of all related Ministries and agencies (Art. 4.a.13).*
- *Establish labour courts in the industrial zone as the workers and trade unions can have easy access to the courts for implementing the mandatory provisions of OSH (Art. 4.a.15).*
- *Impose mandatory terms and conditions upon the Construction agencies to follow the OSH polices during govt. run construction works (Art. 4.a.22).*
- *Providing financial support to the establishments that maintain and practice the rules and regulations of OSH (Art. 4.a.24).*

· *To ensure maximum safety standards during factory construction and implement all standards and regulations on internal safety environment (Art. 4.d.1 (Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, 2015, p.11)).*

However, contemporary scholarship still suggests that RMG and other informal economic sectors in Bangladesh have not been secured enough, and scholars further argue whether the Bangladesh Government has come up with their political commitment to regulate the most informal economic industries in Bangladesh and protect workers from any catastrophe (see Rahman, 2019; Siddiqi, 2019; Tahmid, 2020; Ullah, 2020; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b). To make most informal economic sectors safe, the Bangladesh Government was responsible for establishing the national OHS framework designed by the ILO (see Diagram One) for the state and organisation to follow. However, in Bangladesh, neither the ILO framework is well observed, nor even the national OHS policy works effectively.

UN Convention on Human Rights

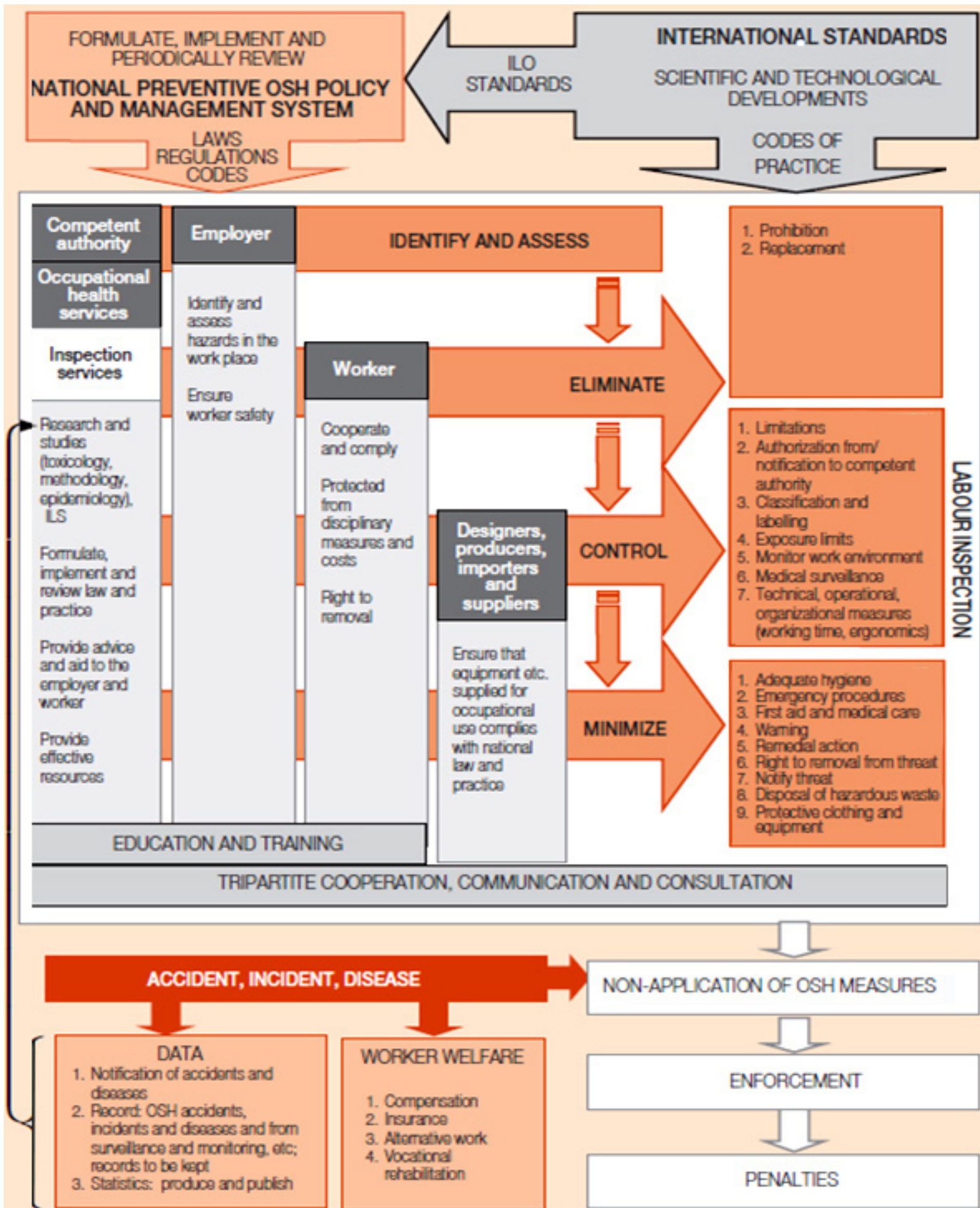
The United Nations Human Rights Convention 1948, and in line with Article 23 of the 2011 UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, require:

- (a) *States' existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms;*
- (b) *The role of business enterprises as specialised organs of society performing specialised functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights;*
- (c) *The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached (UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, 2011, p.1).*

The Government of Bangladesh is a signatory to the United Nations Human Rights Convention, and it is the responsibility of the Government of Bangladesh to protect civil rights in Bangladesh. However, several studies, such as The Global Economy.com, have published their report on civil rights in Bangladesh, which shows unsatisfactory results. For example, Graph Four shows the level of civil rights in Bangladesh from 1972 to 2020, and Graph Five shows the rule of law in Bangladesh from its historical stance between 1996 and 2020. Tellingly, none of the civil rights and civil law indicators show satisfactory results in Bangladesh (see Footnotes One, Two, Three & Four). In addition, international organisations such as Human Rights Watch (2021) and Amnesty International (2021) have published reports on human rights and other issues from different countries. Reports show that Bangladesh lags far behind in improving most citizens' human rights. Their report focuses on gender-based violence, violations of women's rights, workers' health and freedom of association, labour rights, suppression of trade unions and opposition parties' non-violent movements, and false and unjustified allegations against them. However, the Bangladesh constitution strongly suggests protecting workers and civil rights, which includes:

- (i) *socialism and freedom from exploitation (Article 10),*
- (ii) *emancipation of peasants and workers (Article 14),*
- (iii) *public health and morality (Article 18),*

Diagram One: ILO OHS framework for state and organisations (Source: Alli, 2008)



- (iv) *equality of opportunity (Article 19) and*
- (v) *work as a right and duty and a matter of honour (Article 20), as [a] Fundamental principle of State policy. The State policy clearly mentions that everyone shall be paid for his work based on the principle" (The National Profile on Occupational Safety and Health in Bangladesh 2019, p.28).*

Freedom of Association (Article 38), Freedom of Profession or Occupation (Article 40) and Prohibition of Forced Labour (Article 34) are added and confirmed under the constitution. Nevertheless, the Bangladesh Government has constantly violated the constitutional rights of the citizens in Bangladesh, and workers are discouraged from forming trade unions for freedom of association, mainly in the RMG sector (see Human Rights Watch, 2013; Ashraf & Prentice, 2019; Siddiqi, 2019; Rahman, 2019). Bangladesh's international business partners, such as the EU, which accounts for more than 60 per cent of Bangladesh's garment exports, have warned the government it will withdraw its trade preferences if the government continues to perform poorly in establishing and ensuring human rights, mainly labour rights in Bangladesh. It is pertinent to mention that Bangladesh has ratified most of the basic ILO and UN conventions on human rights but has not implemented them. However, scholars argue that the state must be proactive towards ensuring civil liberties following the UN Human Rights Conventions, which Bangladesh significantly lacks (see Deva, 2012; Ullah, 2021b; Amnesty International, 2021).

Critical discussions

People are continuously dying in high-rise buildings, factories, restaurants, roads, rivers and even mosques while doing their everyday work in Bangladesh (Tasnim et al., 2016; Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2020; Ullah & Hasan, 2020; Ullah, 2021b; Anjum, 2021). Nonetheless, OHS culture is not a high priority for the Bangladesh Government or any political party (Safi, 2018; Ullah, 2020). The historical background of OHS culture suggests that OHS culture has probably been absent in Bangladesh forever, and it was not there during the colonial period, not even during the rule of West Pakistan. However, after independence, the Bangladesh Government and other stakeholders were not aware of OHS culture, so that fires in factories, office buildings, ferries often take place in Bangladesh and kill workers and ordinary citizens of the state (*The Daily Star*, 2021; *BBC News*, 2021; *Deutsche Welle*, 2021). Bangladesh was an agro-based economy, and most rural citizens used to work in the fields. But, as mentioned earlier, since the 1980s, the nation has changed its status to an industrial economy (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Tahmid, 2020).

Previously, Bangladesh Government has mostly followed British and West Pakistan's factory or industrial laws to control its industrial sectors. However, it was necessary to formulate some excellent and effective Labour and OHS Acts and policies to run most informal economic industries efficiently, but most Bangladeshi Governments have ignored this since the nation's independence, and it did not happen up until 2006 when the Bangladesh Government first enacted the national Labour Act with its significant blemish (see Human Rights Watch, 2013; Afrin, 2014; Rahman, 2019). Later, the Bangladesh Government established National Industrial Health and Safety Council in 2009 to prevent industrial accidents (see Bangla-

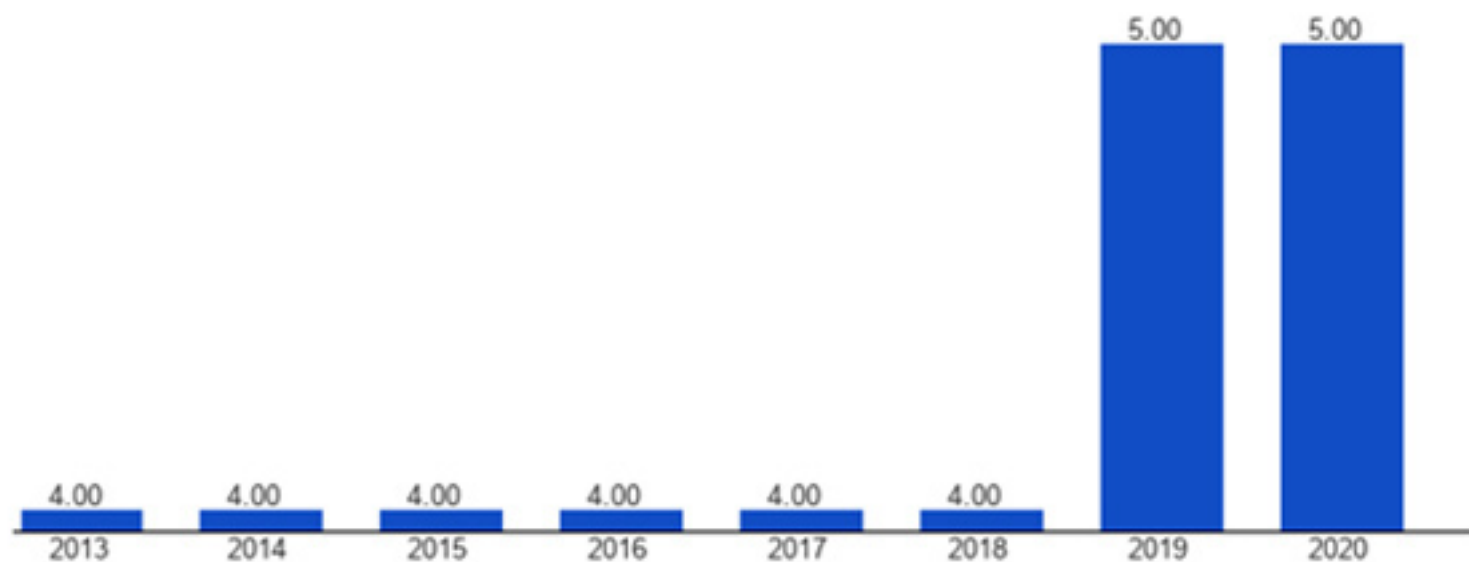
desh Institute of Labour Studies, 2015; National Profile on Occupational Safety and Health in Bangladesh, 2019). Nevertheless, industrial accidents continued occur, mainly in the RMG sector. After Tazreen Fashions and Rana Plaza factory incidents, the Bangladesh Government was under extreme pressure and criticism to make a national OHS policy to stop factory casualties. However, most attempts failed in Bangladesh, as several fire accidents in different factories, corporate offices, ferries have created further concerns for the actual OHS regulation in Bangladesh (see Safi, 2018; *The Daily Star*, 2021a; 2021b & 2021c).

The Tazreen Fashions fire and Rana Plaza building collapse are possibly the most well-known examples of accidents that have killed or harmed RMG workers in Bangladesh (see Safi, 2018; Rahman, 2019; Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021; Ullah, 2021a). However, these are not the only deadly incidents that have occurred in the RMG sector of Bangladesh; there have been several other dangerous RMG factory accidents before and since, often exacerbated by the conditions that workers are subjected to (Rahman, 2019; Siddiqi, 2019; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020; Tahmid, 2020). These include workers being locked inside factories with no means to safely leave in an emergency evacuation, excessive working hours with short meal breaks and access to clean drinking water, and inadequate toilet facilities. Workers being subjected to underpayment and poor working conditions is an example of modern slavery in Bangladesh (Siddiqi, 2019). In addition, there is a shortage of jobs for most Bangladeshis in other informal sectors for the low and less educated and less skilled citizens. Therefore, RMG workers often compromise their safety to work in risky RMG factories to earn a living. Nevertheless, the national Labour Act could help workers seek and receive appropriate justice, but it did not happen because of inadequate government enforcement of the Labour Act in Bangladesh (see, e.g., Safi, 2018; Butler, 2019; Rahman, 2019; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020; Ullah, 2021b).

Notably, while the Bangladesh Government has not produced an international standard Labour Act and/or OHS Act, and the ILO fundamental conventions (seven out of eight) that the Bangladesh Government ratified were not well-respected and enforced. Hence, based on research findings, although Bangladesh has a Labour Act and a regulatory body for building safety, this is not enough to offer adequate worker protections. Scholars, consumers from around the world, anti-sweatshop campaigners, human rights activists, and trade unions at both national and international levels have had high hopes that the industry would be adequately regulated after the Rana Plaza building collapse in 2013, but this regulation has not occurred as of now (*The Daily Star*, 2021b). Still, the significant flaws in the monitoring process led by the Bangladesh Government's monitoring agency, DIFE, have created further concern about the industry's adequate regulation and RMG workers' safety at the RMG factories. The organisational enforcement abilities of the Bangladesh Government are woeful. The government has provided limited resources for monitoring RMG factories. Bangladesh follows parliamentary forms of government system headed by the prime minister. So, as an executive of the state, it was the responsibility of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to ensure that the prominent RMG industry was under proper regulation (see Safi, 2018; Siddiqi, 2019; Rahman, 2019; Tahmid, 2020; Ullah, 2021a).

Graph Four: Civil liberties in Bangladesh

Recent values



Longer historical series



Source: The Global Economy.Com (n.d.). (1) (2)

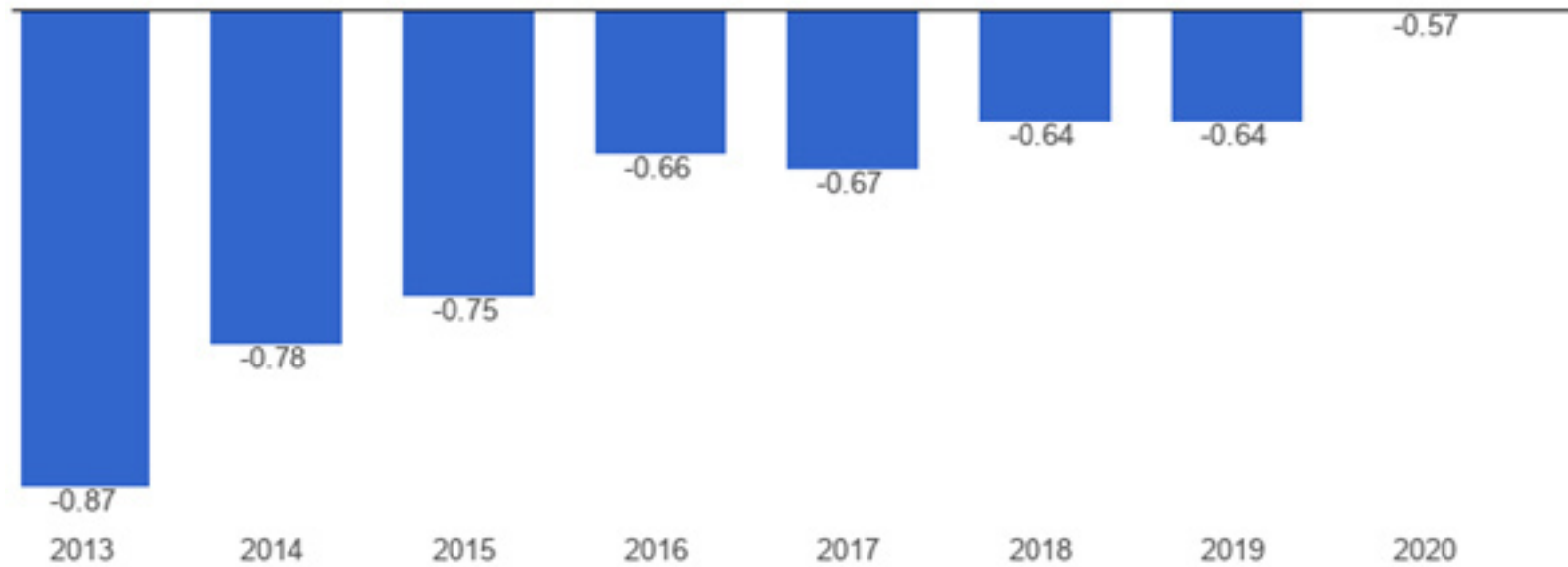
1. "Bangladesh: Civil liberties index, 7 (weak) - 1 (strong), 1972 - 2020:

For that indicator, we provide data for Bangladesh from 1972 to 2020. The average value for Bangladesh during that period was 4 points with a minimum of 3 points in 1979 and a maximum of 5 points in 1975. The latest value from 2020 is 5 points. For comparison, the world average in 2020 based on 195 countries is 3 points" (The Global Economy.Com (n.d.).

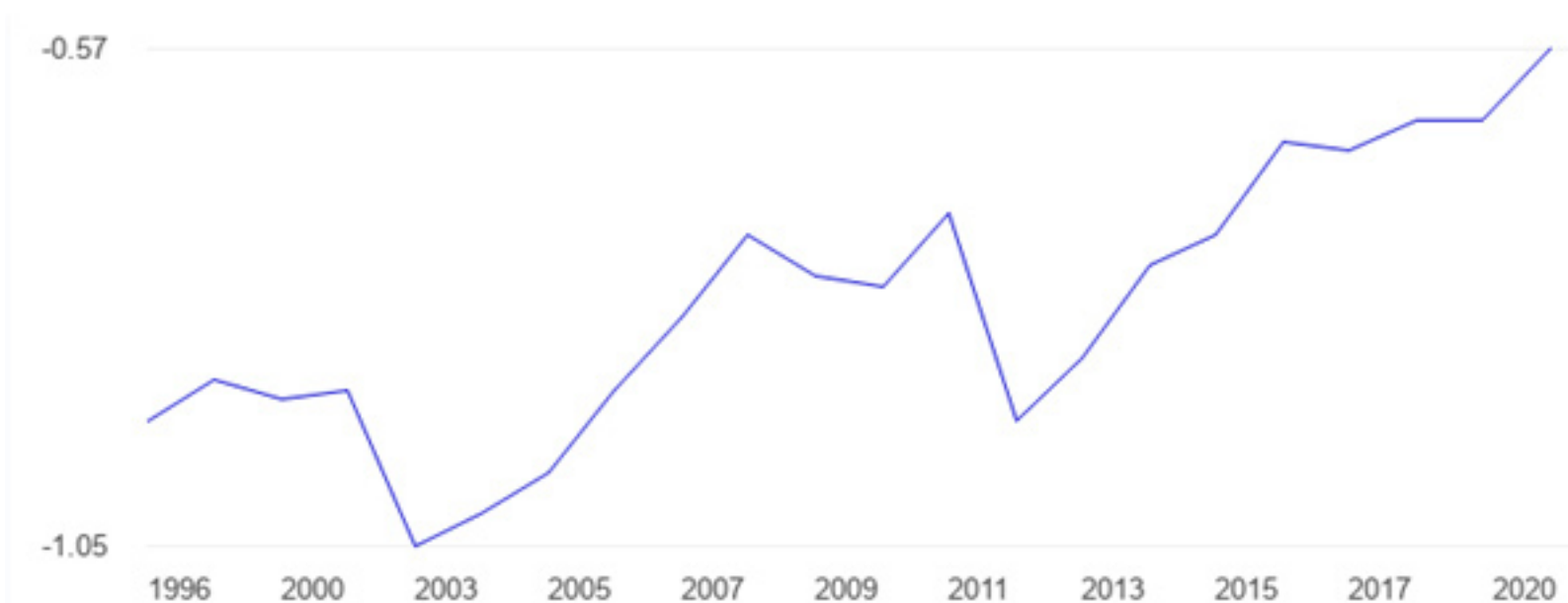
2. "Definition: The Civil Liberties index from the Freedom House evaluate the following: freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights. The rating ranges from 1 (strong liberties) to 7 (no liberties)" (The Global Economy.Com (n.d.).

Graph Five: The rule of law in Bangladesh

Recent values



Longer historical series



Source: The Global Economy.Com (n.d.). (3) (4)

(3) "Bangladesh: Rule of law index (-2.5 weak; 2.5 strong), 1996 - 2020:

For that indicator, we provide data for Bangladesh from 1996 to 2020. The average value for Bangladesh during that period was -0.82 points with a minimum of -1.05 points in 2003 and a maximum of -0.57 points in 2020. The latest value from 2020 is -0.57 points. For comparison, the world average in 2020 based on 192 countries is -0.03 points" (The Global Economy.Com (n.d.).

(4) "Definition: The index for Rule of Law captures perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence" (The Global Economy.Com (n.d.).

Scholars argue that to achieve a significant result in eradicating workers' exploitation and to ensure and establish better OHS practices and regulation, there is a need for central trade union bodies who would have to negotiate with the government and employers (Ashraf & Prentice, 2019). However, there is no trade union umbrella organisation in Bangladesh, such as the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). There are 32 trade union federations at the national level (23 of them in RMG) and one labour institution in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), which is not a trade union body but instead provides logistic support and education to workers and trade union leaders to build trade unionism in Bangladesh. There are several trade unions peak bodies that work individually at the national levels, and some sectoral trade unions are affiliated with them. Some federations are also affiliated with international trade union federations, such as the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Research suggests that in the absence of a prominent trade union institution or umbrella organisation in Bangladesh, trade unionism has not yet been institutionalised there.

On the other hand, trade unions face restrictions (Ashraf & Prentice, 2019) in RMG factories despite the Bangladesh Government's ratification of ILO Convention C087- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 and C098- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949. Hence, collective bargaining is relatively rare at the factory level, and millions of RMG workers remain outside of the collective bargaining process (see Ashraf & Prentice, 2019). Moreover, many workers are afraid to join trade unions, perhaps not surprisingly, given that union leaders often risk death or being falsely charged by police after demonstrations and strikes for minimum wages and working conditions. Most RMG workers are not members of any trade unions, nor do they have proper knowledge about trade unionism. As such, trade unions simply represent workers' hope, solidarity, and well-being. However, despite comprehensive labour legislation, the state itself is generally seen to be against trade unionism in Bangladesh, which severely hinders the sustainability of trade unionism in the country (see Human Rights Watch, 2013; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020).

International brands and retailers, who are the primary buyers of the Bangladesh RMG products, had previously done little to stop labour exploitation and improve the working conditions of RMG workers in Bangladesh (see Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Crinis, 2019; Ullah, 2021a). They ignored the issue of OHS practice and regulation in factories where their garments are manufactured (Rahman, 2013; Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021). The study analyses suggest that the Bangladesh Government has taken some initiatives since 2005, including by enacting the National Labour Act in 2006 (amended in 2013) and other ways to stop the RMG factory accidents; however, most attempts failed (Afrin, 2014; Rahman, 2019). In response to the Rana Plaza incident, Bangladeshi apparel buyers in the Western and European brands and retailers formed an Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety to monitor RMG factories. However, My analyses from the research findings of this study suggest that external initiatives on Bangladesh's RMG factory monitoring program was partly successful, or at least has been effective compared

to the traditional approach. In saying this, again, the conventional regulatory system of the Bangladesh Government in the past did not work well, and in many ways, it has been ineffective, mainly due to insufficient respect and enforcement of the National Labour Act and ILO conventions by the Bangladesh Government and RMG employers. So, these improvements that occurred after the Rana Plaza incident should be considered to enhance the quality of OHS at the point of production (see Rahman, 2019; Siddiqui, 2019; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020; Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021).

The Alliance and Accord's legal five-year agreement on RMG factory monitoring was finished by December 2018. However, the Accord showed further interest in remaining in Bangladesh to continue factory inspections for better industry's OHS regulations and sustainability. The Accord's approach to factory monitoring has been appreciated by national and international trade union bodies and members of civil society who observe the Bangladesh RMG situation from a neutral perspective. Accord engineers found that since work began in 2013, significant fire safety and other critical issues were detected, while some factories were corrected, but considerable work is still to be done. However, since December 2018, the Accord has faced tremendous challenges to remain in Bangladesh to continue monitoring factories. As research suggests, the risk of workers dying in an unsafe garment factory in Bangladesh continues (Safi, 2018). Between them, the Accord and Alliance have inspected approximately 2000 garment factories; still, outside of these numbers, many RMG factories, mainly subcontracting factories, remain out of proper surveillance (Haque, 2018; Safi, 2018; Butler, 2019). However, following the High Court verdict, the Accord was allowed to remain in Bangladesh, with a direction to shift its operations to the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) to overview factory standards. Hence, the Accord handed over their monitoring project on 1 June 2020 to the RSC (see Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2021a; Accord, 2021). Previously, the Clean Clothes Campaign stated:

The progress reached on fire safety by the Bangladesh Accord is under severe threat now that its Bangladesh office operations might be closed after 30 November [2018]. This will impair the Accord's ability to inspect and monitor factories in Bangladesh and violates previous agreements that [the] Accord would remain fully operational until domestic institutions have the technical capacity and the political will to perform inspections and ensure remediation. The risk of new factory tragedies looms large, which is a reputational and legal risk for brands, but in which workers pay the most considerable price of all, and their lives (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2019).

The above quote of the Clean Clothes Campaign highlights the safety of RMG workers, and the Accord's presence in Bangladesh as a factory monitoring agency was essential. However, the Accord has left Bangladesh after handing over its program to the RSC. Now DIFE has been responsible for conducting monitoring factories in the RMG sector. However, the fundamental question about DIFE is whether it can adequately monitor Bangladesh's huge informal economic sector, such as the RMG sector. In July 2021, the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and the German non-profit organisation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

organised a dialogue to evaluate the overall situation of OHS practice and control in Bangladesh, primarily for the RMG sector. The event was held in Dhaka just immediately after the fire incident of Hashem Food and Beverage Limited to assess further whether DIFE was doing its job in industry monitoring and regulation. However, Mr Rehman Sobhan, Chairman of the CPD, an eminent economist in Bangladesh, raised an important question about the performance of DIFE. According to him, eight years after the Rana Plaza incident, the performance of DIFE is still in question, which is a concern for Bangladesh RMG and other stakeholders in the informal sector, mainly workers. Trade unionist and labour organiser Ms Kalpona Akter, executive director of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity, on the same occasion, said: "many workers would not have died had the government's inspection been carried out at factories" (*The Daily Star*, 2021b). Mr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD, said: "93 per cent of factories had safety committees. If the committees could function, the number of industrial incidents might go down" (*The Daily Star*, 2021b).

Research suggests that when states ratify ILO and UN conventions, it becomes their responsibility to respect and enforce them adequately (see Alli, 2008; Burton, 2010; Deva, 2012; Tasnim et al., 2016; Ullah, 2021b). In addition, scholarly work also suggests that governments are primarily responsible for formulating and enforcing OHS policies (Rahman, 2019). Therefore, Bangladesh Government should ratify ILO OHS related (i.e., C155, C161 and C187) conventions and include them into the National Labour Act, which would have been provided guidelines for OHS policy, practice and regulation in Bangladesh. However, scholars, e.g., Alli (2008), further argue that government initiatives approving these ILO conventions would still be insufficient to establish OHS culture at the state and organisational levels if they could not pursue their social partners. Scholars argument reflects that the government alone might not enforce Labour or OHS Act/s without the support of their social partners such as employers (Alli, 2008; Rahman, 2019). In this case, my argument is the same as that of other scholars because governments make adequate policies as appropriate authorities; however, governments cannot even achieve the ultimate goal in OHS regulation by themselves. When it comes to the implementation process, other government, or state stakeholders must work towards the same goals that governments set for establishing OHS culture, practice and control (see Alli, 2008).

The significant issue is while the Bangladesh Government needs to ensure that the national OHS policy has been well implemented, which for the first time was required to ratify the ILO OHS related conventions C155, C161 & C187. These three conventions are the guideline for the state and organisations to establish the OHS framework at the national level to follow the proper ILO guidelines for OHS practice and accidents prevention. On the other hand, the regulatory body of the Government of Bangladesh, DIFE, is not equipped with competent officials who are mainly responsible for inspecting the industrial sector (see Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2021b). While there is a perception of corruption in the monitoring process of DIFE officials, there is a lack of strict action against factory owners and employers in various economic sectors who violate the national Labour Act and ILO conventions. However, from internation-

al and national media and scholarly work, it is identified that the state or employers are not serious about stopping all these fatal accidents in different sectors in Bangladesh (see Anjum, 2021; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b; *The Daily Star*, 2021b & 2021c).

Nevertheless, it has been extremely challenging to see that any government can establish a good OHS policy and regulatory process in Bangladesh. At the same time, its stakeholders are also disobliging; mainly, state capitalists who are also known to be violators of the national Labour Act in Bangladesh (see Ahmed, 2004; Ashwin, Kabeer & Schubler, 2020; Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2021a & 2021b). The characteristics of proto-capitalists and crony-capitalists in Bangladesh are well portrayed in the writings of scholars - they were critical to describing the capitalists of Bangladesh and their irresponsible behaviour and accused them of being greedy for more profit from the exploitation of RMG workers (Ahmed, 2004; Muhammad, 2011; Gilbert, 2018; Siddiqi, 2019; Ullah, 2021b). Proto and crony-capitalists in Bangladesh are also close allies of the main political parties in Bangladesh, which might have been an obstacle for the government to go for drastic regulation of the informal industry such as the RMG. Thus, the article argues that whether the Bangladesh Government would change its political outlook, become more responsible, and play a decisive leading role with the political will in controlling most of Bangladesh's informal economic sectors in the future.

Research question one of this article was:

Why do all these accidents in different manufacturing centres, corporate offices and public places still occur in Bangladesh?

Notably, as mentioned earlier in this article, civil rights and the rule of law in Bangladesh is very low, which can be seen in Graphs Four and Five. After providing some cases in this article and with some helpful analysis, I can offer the following reasons why Bangladesh has significantly witnessed tragic accidents in factories, homes, corporate offices and even public transport such as buses, trains and ferries, and these include:

- lack of OHS culture in Bangladesh since the colonial period;
- disrespect for the national Labour Act, ILO and UN conventions;
- inadequate labour and OHS legislation;
- inadequate monitoring techniques and inexperienced labour inspectors in DIFE and their corruption in the monitoring process;
- lack of institutional democracy to perform independently and adequately in the factory and other workplace monitoring processes;
- inadequate OHS knowledge of government officials in Bangladesh;
- inadequate and insufficient coordination strategies and approaches;
- nonsubstantial section of the National Labour Act towards stopping factory casualties;
- inadequate compensation for victims, mainly workers in informal economic sectors;

- unethical business of RMG and other factory owners and transport owners in Bangladesh;
- lack of education and knowledge of employers, factory and transport owners to run the business safely and healthily in Bangladesh;
- lack of government and employer support for trade unionism and ineffective safety committee at the factory level; and finally
- the lack of political commitment of the Bangladesh Government to change the most informal sector in Bangladesh and the overall OHS situation in the country.

In order to change the OHS situation in Bangladesh, the government must work on the above issues to see positive changes in OHS practices and regulations in Bangladesh. Thus, research question two provides recommendations for the Government of Bangladesh and other state stakeholders, such as employers in various formal and informal economic sectors in Bangladesh.

Research question two of this article was:

How these workplace accidents and injuries can be prevented in Bangladesh?

Recommendations

My research suggests that a sound and effective health and safety management system provides a structured and systematic approach to successfully managing multiple issues in any organisation and production hubs. While it is good practice to have such a system, it is a proven way to manage health and safety risks in the work environment. However, for this arrangement in the workplace, the role of state governments is vital. States need to amend Labour and OHS Acts from time to time and align their Labour and OHS Acts with ILO conventions to see regulated industries where both employers and employees enjoy their presence and ensure safety. However, not every state responds positively and does not make standard labour and OHS Acts and disrespectfully refuses to regulate industries; Bangladesh is no exception. Therefore, the Bangladesh Government should immediately:

- amend the National Labour Act and enact new OHS legislation with some decisive provisions for punishing Labour Act violators;
- ratify the ILO Conventions (C155, C161 and C187) as these three conventions are guidelines of the state and organisation for maintaining a proper workplace for workers and employees; and
- collaborate with ILO, other international OHS organisations and agencies, and OHS experts to establish an OHS culture in Bangladesh.

However, as a starting point, the Government of Bangladesh, mainly the Prime Minister, as the head of the government, must take the initiative to establish human rights in Bangladesh by discussing with other stakeholders of the government. Moreover, respecting and enforcing the National Labour Act, the ILO, and the UN conventions to establish workers' and civil rights in Bangladesh and ensure their safety is a must which must

come from the political commitment of the Bangladesh Government.

Conclusions

As a developing country, Bangladesh has seen an increase in its economic activity in recent years; however, for a vastly populated country, OHS has not been a significant priority of the Bangladesh Government. The OHS regulatory process has not been effective since the Rana Plaza incident in Bangladesh. Therefore, it has been a matter of deep concern to workers, trade unions, international organisations, consumers, and scholars both nationally and internationally whether Bangladesh is still at a high risk to see another catastrophe like the Rana Plaza sooner or later. In order to establish the OHS culture and its proper practice and regulations, the Government of Bangladesh must apply the National Labour Act and the ILO and UN conventions along with their political commitments.

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Population and Development vs Quality of Life: A Sociological Appraisal

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Abstract

The two variables of population and development affect each other in an indirect manner in which when population increase happens, development is reduced. The two effectively impact quality of life. It is strongly recommended to control population in order to achieve development. Sociologists are widely responsible for creating the balance between population and development. As resources are limited in each country, an organized and planned population is needed towards any development. The phenomenon of development is multi-lateral, and needs an appropriate population size. It is worth mentioning that population naturally grows, but resources for development do not. Overall, Asia, Africa, and Latin America had a very high population growth rate of 2.1% between 1955 and 1975. Fortunately, increase of literacy and education has caused population growth rates to decline in the past two decades in many parts of the developing countries. The only part of the developing world with high population growth rate is Africa in which the population will increase to over 4.2 billion by the year 2100; threatening other parts of the world. Such a situation will widely endanger quality of life.

Key words: Population growth. Imbalanced development. Fertility and quality of life. Women's rights . Poverty decline.

Introduction

The two contexts of population and development are mutually connected with each other. Population needs to be controlled to bring about tranquility and desired quality of life. Many developing countries with high population growth rate are far from development. On the other hand, industrial nations that started organizing their population, could reach higher living standards therefore, leading to more comfort and convenience for all ages. Thus, countries must try to achieve development to reach a desired quality of life. Increasing gaps between desired population, and the existing population has kept them away from accessing development - the whole process keeps the developing nations with a low quality of life. Such a stage of life deprives many age groups of many facilities such as access to wanted health, food, education, sports, recreation, housing and more. An increasing number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America are in such a situation. Population and development cover population studies, the relationships between population, economy and the environment, that is social change, and related thinking on population and public policy. The highest global population rates are more due to development peaking at 2.1% between 1955 and 1975 (World Population Prospects, 2016). The global population is still increasing, but there is a significant uncertainty about its long-term trajectory due to the changing rates of fertility and mortality (Esteban, 2013). Some other demographers predict that world population will begin to decline in the second half of the 21st century (Damien, 2021). The score of quality of life out of 10, is as the following for some countries..

Table 1: Quality of life Ratings in Selected Countries 2012

Switzerland	8.22
Norway	8.09
Canada	7.81
Austria	7.73
USA	7.38
China	5.99
Turkey	5.95
India	5.67
Vietnam	5.64
Bangladesh	5.07
Nigeria	4.74

Source: The lottery of life, 2012.

The two areas of population and development are interrelated. While the adoption of population policies and population planning makes it possible to achieve greater development, development in turn modifies demographic indicators. This reciprocal flow first entered industrialized countries, and then gradually into developing countries. Therefore, in the conditions of uncontrolled population growth, less economic development can be achieved. Therefore, the process of population and development must ultimately be limited by natural problems (Boserup: 1981). While the world's population exceeded seven billion in 2011, urban spaces have expanded at an unprecedented rate. Population growth and the expansion of cities themselves will play an important role in how the planet Earth works, and consequently affect the quality of human life in various dimensions. This means that as natural populations grow exponentially, many natural resources are being over-used in a way, that future generations will face a lack of many resources. Hence, population and development must always be planned in proportion to each other; otherwise, human societies will face many limitations, lack of resources and so on.

Method of Research

Methodology used in the present article is of qualitative type, in that, various paradigms have been used to find out about the facts regarding pandemics during history. 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 into the present article is hopefully reliable. Though literature in 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.

Population growth

Population growth patterns are related to almost all the challenges that urban society faces. At the same time, poverty, pollution of urban spaces, how to produce energy, food, water shortage, poor health and the like, are among the consequences of population growth, and as a result, population growth and urban expansion. Hence, population growth, while having immediate effects, also has long-term and future consequences. Therefore, development planners must always consider the population factor (population growth), and predict its growth. In this regard, demographers have been quite successful in their demographic forecasts, which are conducted every two years by the United Nations in the form of national, regional and global forecasts (United Nations: 2010). Undoubtedly, demographic issues and consequences are the most important challenges facing humanity today. The methods we adopt today will affect our own health and happiness even for future generations (Population and Development Review: 2012). One of the regions of the world that is facing the consequences of population growth decades ago is the region of Asia itself. This is what will happen to the African continent. At the same time, development in its general sense also brings with it cultural and value changes, which in turn lead to reduced population growth.

While the average population growth in Africa in 2011 was about 2.4 percent, it is 1.1 percent in Asia, 0.5 percent in North America, 1.2 percent in Latin America, zero percent in Europe and in The Oceania region is estimated at 1.2 percent per year. The low indicators of population growth in these areas are largely due to social, economic and cultural development in these areas. High population growth in the African region itself greatly delays development on the continent, and lowers the general quality of life. African countries will face many social challenges and problems in the coming years, and will face quality of life issues, that is, the conditions under which massive migrations will take place.

The world's population is projected to exceed 9 billion by 2050. According to UN forecasts, this population will reach 10 billion by 2100 (United Nations: 2010). These issues and the desire to improve living standards at the same time will create a great challenge for many countries in the world. Mostly, it is the developing countries that are in this critical situation; that is, their population grows without providing sufficient resources for employment and services. In this movement, the need for achieving a decent and satisfactory quality of life within developing countries will escalate. Therefore, given the 2050 population outlook, less developed countries need to adopt appropriate demographic, economic and social policies in order to meet the growing needs of their citizens.

Applying sciences such as demography will greatly help to cope with this growth, and thus create a sustainable future for all people of the world. Not only the science of demography, but also the study of sociology and sociological foresight can, to a large extent, prevent potential problems. Therefore, countries, especially less developed societies, today have a serious need for social studies, sociology and demography; in such a way that the population and resources can be coordinated and adjusted with each other. Otherwise, many crises await

such countries; that is, a situation that will negatively affect the quality of public life. In the absence of practical guidance from dynamic theories, population concerns rely heavily on a descriptive framework called population evolution, which has been used in Europe before, and is less widely used in developed societies today (Lee: 2003).

Unequal development

While the people of the world today generally live healthier and longer lives, at the same time, there is a great deal of inequality between different segments of the population on different continents, which itself requires more attention and the application of regional and specific growth mechanisms. Because different regions and countries of the world are faced with different resources and facilities, or in other words, there are different capacities in these areas, this has caused different levels of development to appear in these areas. In such circumstances, different countries and regions of the world must always adopt plans and methods at micro and macro levels in order to improve their production capacities; In such a way that they can generally achieve a higher quality of life. Hence, many parts of the world now need proper investment in order to achieve the required economic and social development, otherwise unequal development between the countries of the world will continue.

Due to the fact that demographic change (population growth) is not the same all over the world, the fertility rate in some developing countries is high. Sociologists and economists have proposed theories based on reproductive behavior, but these theories have not been found to be useful and effective in predicting population. If women are increasingly delaying the onset of childbirth; as the average age of childbirth increases each year, it increases the likelihood of fertility at older ages (Bongaarts: 1998). The most important reason that puts countries in a state of underdevelopment today is the high fertility in such countries; That is, a situation in which different age groups are not easily accessible to educational and welfare facilities, and in later years they will not be able to acquire the necessary skills. Hence, sociologists of the population generally recommend that a transformation from quantity to quality should take place; That means a smaller population with more facilities and ...

Most demographic change (population growth) is due to the young population that currently exists in developing countries. Today a significant share of the world's population; that is, more than a third of the population is classified as young people. This population is gradually entering the reproductive cycle in a way that directly plays a role in population growth. Therefore, less developed countries should give high priority to their young population, in which they promote and introduce different methods of family planning and birth control in a way that from the current young population, citizens does not appear unexpected in the coming years. In this way, the quality of life can be improved, and the needs of different groups of citizens can be met in different dimensions. It is noteworthy that more than 80% of the world's population growth today is related to less developed countries; That is, societies in which the quality of life is significantly different from global standards.

This (young) population will soon and gradually enter the fertile cycle; which means it will be responsible for more than 80% of the world's population growth. According to this forecast, governments in less developed countries should provide adequate financial support to the young population, as far as family planning programs are concerned. Global organizations such as the United Nations and its subsidiaries such as the World Health Organization, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc., advocate greater support for the young population in less developed countries so that eventually the desired population emerges.

This means that the world's population is growing for a long time yet, that is, it will continue until it reaches the replacement level (1/2) of a child for a woman. The United Nations generally recommends that families in the countries have about two children in order to achieve the desired population. UN population projections assume that even in less developed countries, fertility will slowly reach a replacement level of 1.2 children per woman by 2100 (Myrskylä et al. 2009).

In particular, about 70% of the world's future population growth (by 2050) will be in 20 sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia (excluding China). Because many population indicators in these areas are not up to standard, such as the average age of marriage less than 18, continuous population growth, high migration, low literacy, and general poverty; each in turn plays an important role in the population growth process. As a result, many parts of Africa today are at the forefront of population growth compared to other societies. This situation, in addition to affecting the countries concerned, also has negative and destructive effects on other societies. For example, widespread unemployment in such countries leads to large-scale migration to other communities; such as is happening today from African countries to industrialized countries, or from Afghanistan to other countries. Thus, improving demographic indicators and ultimately population growth on the African continent can in itself lead to greater health for other communities.

Fertility and Quality of Life

Programs related to specific countries in Africa and Asia; that is, where fertility rates are still high, other countries, such as Japan and other low-fertility countries, may have different quality of life indicators. African regions and many parts of Asia due to the high level of fertility in these parts on the one hand, and on the other hand the emergence of overpopulation in itself causes the quality of life in these areas to be low. This situation will also negatively affect future generations as far as their quality of life is concerned. Also, since industrialized countries such as Japan and European countries have a low population growth trend, and in contrast to the quality of life has always been on the rise in these areas, this has led to a significant distance in terms of quality of life, which exist between the continent of Africa and other industrialized countries. Although fertility and mortality have both declined during population change, due to the difference in quality of life between the First World and the Third World on the one hand, and globalization on the other, international migration, and the growth of foreign-born in many developed countries has increased (National Research Council: 2000).

The promise to the developing world is that trends toward smaller families since the 1950s are related to advances in education, health care, family planning, and opportunities for girls and women in these areas; That is what affects the quality of life. Since the second half of the twentieth century, with the advent of health, education and development projects, many less developed societies have also taken effective steps towards a higher quality of life. This has consistently made it possible for such communities to make further progress. Evidence of this claim is found in countries such as South Korea, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore and the like in the East Asian region. Such policies are still recommended today for the less developed communities of Asia, South America, and Africa. Otherwise, human societies will face irreparable social challenges and harm in the coming decades, which, in addition to social problems, will also pose risks to the environment.

Women's rights and Quality of Life

There are still around 215 million women in developing countries who do not have access to family planning facilities, and thus are deprived of this type of reproductive rights, which directly affects their quality of life (Osotimehin: 2011). Therefore, in order to achieve a higher quality of life in its various dimensions, access to family planning programs and women's participation in decisions related to fertility and the number of children is itself very important. Creating such a culture in developing societies is seen as a guarantee of improving the quality of life.

At the same time, of the approximately 584 million teenage girls in the world, 88% of them live in such countries which is harmful and potentially exposes them to a low quality of life. Because many developing countries in the past had high population growth rates, a significant number of girls of that period are now of marriageable age, financial independence, livelihood, and so on. In contrast, many of these countries are not sufficiently able to meet the growing needs of such girls. Therefore, the quality of life of such women is widely at potential risk.

Despite the fact that in 1994, approximately 180 countries around the world agreed to promote this type of citizenship for women, in order to prevent involuntary fertility, improve the health of women and children, and consequently a quality enhanced life, meanwhile, many women around the world are still denied such rights. In 1994, at the ICPD, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, more than 90 percent of countries agreed to give women more rights in terms of family planning and voluntary fertility programs. However, many countries have not been able to secure these rights easily. In other words, many women in such countries face problems due to high fertility, limited access to family planning services and the like; That is, the sum of the conditions that have endangered their health to a large extent. This situation has kept the quality of life of families low; That is, a situation that will have a negative impact on the next generation.

Reducing poverty and Quality of Life

Pursuing this policy, that is, voluntary reduction of unwanted fertility, contributes to poverty reduction, and in turn improves living standards. Therefore, many countries in the world, in order to achieve a higher quality of life, have put the process of fertility decline on the agenda of their development programs, and have attached central importance to it. This situation can be seen today in many parts of Asia and Latin America. In other words, by slightly reducing the population, quality improvement in various aspects of public life can be achieved. The growth of cities and the expansion of their urbanization reflect the global transformation of poverty alleviation, and Word has been introduced to better welfare and quality of life (Glaeser: 2011).

Investing in adolescent girls in terms of education, health, protection against violence, and upgrading their skills is itself a milestone in improving the quality of life of the family. Almost universally, women with higher levels of facilities have fewer children; simply because they want fewer children, and have better access to birth control tools (Bongaarts: 2010). Therefore, global recommendations today are that more investment, especially in meeting the needs of girls, will ultimately improve their quality of life. This situation has been extensively experienced and addressed in industrial societies throughout the twentieth century; it is a process that leads to improving the quality of life. It has already begun in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia and Malawi. Because African countries have generally distanced themselves from development planning for years, international organizations, including the United Nations and its affiliates, have placed special emphasis on such countries, setting up a variety of educational and health investments for girls and women.

Such efforts, and other initiatives of this kind, protect the civil rights of women and girls insofar as they relate to their reproductive health, their education, and their quality of life. This in turn leads to a balanced approach, the use of resources in a reasonable way, and consequently the appropriate consumption of families, communities and nations.

Changing social stratification and Quality of Life

The past decades have witnessed economic progress in various societies such as India, China and the like. This has greatly affected the lifestyles of different groups; in such a way that tangible changes can be observed in the social stratification system of such societies. For example, the widespread migration of rural populations to their urban areas has affected various aspects of their lives socially, economically and culturally; that is, a set of factors that affect their quality of life. India, for example, has seen many economic developments in recent years; that is, rising incomes, an explosive increase in the middle class, and so on. The combination of such changes has had a great impact on the system of social stratification and even the system of shortcomings in that society. It brings with it a different lifestyle and new expectations for families and individuals. Given the emergence of such a situation, social planners must always adopt appropriate and convincing policies. Otherwise, a kind of disorder appears in different dimensions within such societies.

The growth and development of the market, consumption, stores, domestic airlines and the like, indicate the change of social classes in this country; that is, a situation that has affected the quality of life in various dimensions. Economic development generally leads to more consumption, more relocation, more services, and so on which is, what is called a higher quality of life today. Industrial societies have gone through such a process in the past which has put them in a higher state of well-being and quality of life today. The desirability of quality of life today positively affects future generations themselves; that is, it creates a kind of guarantee for them.

At the same time, there are still many signs of relative poverty in places like India. For example, people living below the poverty line in urban areas refer to those who have access to less than 2,400 calories of food per day, and in rural areas this indicator is defined as less than 2,100 calories per person per day. Therefore, countries should consider their urban and rural areas in a balanced way as far as their food supply is concerned. Otherwise, there will be more migration to urban areas that have more food security and services.

This change in social classification, incomes, and consumption has itself led to better living conditions, more services, and ultimately a higher quality of life for newcomers. As a result, socio-economic leaders and planners today have heavier responsibilities around the world in ways that can meet the growing needs of their citizens; that is, providing various services, providing employment, providing housing in the form of (small) nuclear settlements, providing leisure facilities and the like.

Conclusion

Sociologically speaking, population and development have an indirect relationship with quality of life. As countries are widely becoming urban, people seek more quality of life. New lifestyles emerging since 1970, caused the discussion of quality of life. Since then, people tried to acquire the criteria reflecting quality of life. Access to more education, health measures, hygiene, insurance, better conditions for women, lower child birth rate and the like, came to be known as the indicators of quality of life. For that, there came to be a competition among different nations. To attain that, many people adopted new measures and policies. Similarly, new development plans were put into action, and following it, new industries and technologies were created and used in order to reach higher quality of life. Therefore, quality of life is something made, and not given by nature.

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Poem

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Point of view

Earth, the only planet that supports life and the only place that I can call home.

"Tell me, what do you see in yourself?"

It responds to me with its wind scraping across my dry cheeks, and with a howl, it finally speaks.

"Oh man of god, science and philosophy, I see in myself life and death in a constant rotation, everyday humanity strives for salvation but it always ends in devastation.

I feel the dust engulf my weary body as I walk ahead of the past. I feel the blood drip from my dry hands as I strangle the present.

Sailing through the Antarctic Ocean, I see only a blur, it's crippling wind excavates through my fingers and zips through my bones as I unknowingly float towards the future.

"I have found my purpose, what of yours?"

"Oh man of anger, love and hatred. I have no purpose for I am only a product to your survival. I provide you with sweet nectars and bitter Radicchios that make me your saviour, but I am also the fire that burns through your crops and I am the water that drowns your soul. When you go for a swim I am your demise.

The dark clouds spell the end of it all, my heartbeat says that the sky is bout to fall. I can't walk an inch through the muddy fields because it aches through my chest. Bringing the pain, I stand to confess. I walk and walk to see the heavens above me turn red. The storm gathers inside my head. It got me running through the acid and it got me losing it. This is what I see. What about you?"

"Man of a broken and corrupted society, you see dark clouds and red skies, all I see are the stars amongst all of you, Destiny isn't about fate, it's about the choices you make. So let me ask you a question, what choice will you make?"

Earth

What do you see in yourself? I see in myself life and death in a constant rotation

What is your purpose? I have no purpose for I am only a product to your survival

What do you see? I see the stars amongst all of you

Why are you here? It isn't the question of why I am here it is what I am created to do

Why do you cease to exist? The same reason why you exist. I am no different from you

As I float across the emptiness of space, I see a blue sphere rotating gracefully

| get closer I see more to this blue sphere, there are signs of clouds smeared across it

Now there are signs of tectonic plates floating in the blue sphere

It isn't really blue anymore for there is greenery in this

Now I see orange and yellow in some parts of it

The closer I get the more it contrasts

Now I see buildings and structures

I see the clear blue water

The buildings are now lit up

There are specks

people

life