

FEMINIZATION OF SHRIMP PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH: PACE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

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- Feminization of shrimp processing and other agricultural sector including the garments has been remarkable trend observed recently in Bangladesh.
- Labor Force Survey report in 2013, 40% of workforce were women compared to 31% in previous survey in 2005.
- In aquaculture & fisheries 36% of workforce are women reported in 2014. Shrimp Industry is playing significant role in the economy through earning foreign exchange, employment, contributing in income and nutrition covering sizable amount of women in shrimp processing sector.
- There are criticism that women at their workplaces are often victims of disparity and marginalization keeping them mostly in unpleasant jobs at the bottom level, depriving righteous leaves and allowances and poor health care.

Objectives

- To assess the labor force and their nature of work engaged across the shrimp supply chain.
- To assess compliance level of labor laws across the formal sector of shrimp industry.
- To evaluate the economic relations of labor laws compliance benefiting the female workforce towards empowerment and poverty reduction.

Methodology

- The study utilized data on over 530 workers randomly chosen and interviewed from 40 shrimp processing factories across the six coastal districts of the country.
- In depth interview of Owners, Managers, Compliance Officer, Labor Contractors
- Key Informant Interviews across the supply chain
- FGDs at different stakeholders level
- Review of relevant literature, Government Policies, Laws and Rules

Results

- Workers are better aware about their basic rights and entitlements
- Most factories have trained Labor Compliance Officer
- Better labor compliance including Appointment Letter, ID Cards, Minimum wage and Maternity benefits
- Average monthly wage for a male and female worker found Tk 5944 (US\$ 75.5) and Tk 4291 (US\$ 54.5) respectively.
- Women workers gets 72 Taka against per 100 Taka of male wage
- Leaves and overtime allowances generally under-paid
- Women workers attain 4.78 years of schooling against 8.84 year of male workers