Rights, benefits and social justice: Status of female workers engaged in the shrimp processing industries of Bangladesh

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We mourn and pray

For the 412+ workers died from the building collapse
Express our solidarity with the sufferings and deprivations bereaved families.
Outline of the presentation

• Introduction – about the industry
• Admissible rights & benefits for the workers
• Baseline status
• Interventions & outcomes
• Results
• Challenges
• Conclusion
Introduction

• Shrimp processing industry is considered economically vital for export earnings, employment generation

• There are (54+32+4) 90 shrimp processing industries running in Bangladesh
  – In Khulna 42 EU + 12 Non-EU
  – In Chittagong 21 EU + 11 Non-EU
  – In Dhaka 4 EU

• Over 50,000 labor working in shrimp factories, about 80% are women (formal sector)
• There are 220,000 shrimp farms covering 247,187 ha land in sw districts (Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jessore Narail & Cox’s Bazar)
  – Over 120,000 *Bagda* farms, average farm size: 1.4 ha
  – Over 100,000 *Golda* farms, average farm size: 0.58 ha

• There is no good statistics on no. of labors engaged in this part of the industry (*informal sector*)
Rights and benefits – BLA 2006

• Rights
  – Appointment letter & ID
  – 8 hours duty
  – Paid leaves under BLA
  – Minimum wage
  – indiscriminated wage
  – Joining /formation of Trade Union
• **Benefits**
  
  – Overtime at double rate
  – Cash against accumulated AL
  – Maternity benefit
  – Gratuity & Provident fund
  – Share of net profit
  – Compensation for accidents
  – Compensation for job termination
Baseline status

- Strong criticisms locally and internationally for gross non-compliance of labor rights and benefits – visible inability to embrace recent growth
- UNIDO’s technical collaboration with GOB assisted financially by EU and NORAD undertaking baseline & TNA/Gap Analysis
- Engagement of NGOs & signing of MOU with BFFEA
The Interventions

• Development of Training Manual
• Robust baseline study
• Training of Trainers (TOT)
• Follow up Training
• Assessment of Compliance Status
• Factory based Labor Laws training for workers and staffs
• Personal interview of over 1500 workers (62% female)
Activities

• Baseline study covering 2000 female workers from 37 processing factories
• Baseline status shared through 4 stakeholder workshops in 4 districts
• Organized 4 TOT where 78 officials were trained (using a customized Tr Manual)
• Organized 10 Follow-up training where 217 mid-level officials from 51 processing factories attended
Activities

• 50 batches of 2 day long Labor Laws training for labors covering 1532 participants from 25 Processing Factories

• 30 participants in each batch, 20 female and 2/3 staffs from admin & accounts

• Basic labor rules taught, participation encouraged by group work, group presentation, questions & answers and quiz competition

• Factory based labor trainings are ongoing – as the mainstream activities to keep the industry aware and informed – to stay in business
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Training</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th># of events</th>
<th># of participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training of Trainers (TOT)</td>
<td>Inspectors, MOL&amp;E Quality Control Officers FIQC, DOF; Executives from Processing Factories &amp; NGO</td>
<td>Khulna Chittagong</td>
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<td>78</td>
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<td>Follow-up Training</td>
<td>Mid-level Officials from shrimp processing factories</td>
<td>Khulna Chittagong Cox’s Bazar</td>
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<td>217</td>
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<td>Factory Based Training</td>
<td>Workers and Staffs from shrimp processing factories</td>
<td>Khulna Bagerhat Chittagong Cox’s Bazar</td>
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<td>1532</td>
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<td>Awareness Meeting</td>
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<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade Union Training</td>
<td>Trade Union Leaders from shrimp processing factories</td>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes

• Awareness raised, positive decisions by good factories also by government

• 4 awareness meetings with top level management

• Changes are seen in many cases:
  – Appointment of new ‘Compliance Officer’
  – Prepared own Training Plan for LL Training
  – Opened Training Register to keep training records
  – Hoisted display boards, festoons & posters
  – Emergence of new ‘Trainers Pool’ within industry
Results

- Better wages
- Issuing of Appointment Letter & ID Cards
- Major leaves (no perennial work)
- Maternity Leaves - started
- Trade Unions (new)
- Government announced amendment of BLA

*Petition to withdraw GSP was the trigger!*
Challenges

• Contract labors are still under poor compliance level
• Male workers are in better positions with better wages
• Intermittent supply of raw materials (shrimp) prevents better compliance
• Top management/owners are yet to convince regarding the obligations of complete compliance of LL
• Policy weakness in BLL 2006 is seen as barrier against inspection & enforcement – new hope?
Opportunities

• 50% of the industrial workforce in Bangladesh are women, in shrimp, it is 70-75%

• There is good room for improvements
  – Work safety and occupational health
  – Labor compliance
  – Skill development
  – Formation of association (TU) – 12 new TU

• Shrimp and frozen food sector is a strong candidate for continued development
Social Justice

Patriarchic view

• Jobs are made
• Status escalated both in family and society
• Thousands are still unemployed
• Can enjoy spending
• Take part in decision making in family

Feminist view

• Strong discrimination at work
• Deprivation of rights & benefits
• Unequal opportunity
• Violence Against Women

Neutral view

• PGNs are met
• Good space are created
• Understanding of SGN increasing
Some findings

Gendered dimension
- Female, 844, 62%
- Male, 512, 38%

Workers types
- Factory Permanent, 2459, 61%
- Contractor Casual, 1431, 35%
- Contractor Permanent, 161, 4%
Workers category in 9 Shrimp Processing Factories, Chittagong, 2012

- Permanent to Factory M
- Permanent to Factory F
- Permanent to Contractor M
- Permanent to Contractor F
- Casual to Contractor M
- Casual to Contractor F
- Total Labor
Wage discrimination (%) between male & female worker in Ctg

Male
Female

Below 2645 2645-3000 3001-3500 3501-4000 4001-5000 5001-6000 6001-7000 7001-up
Wage discrimination (%) in Kln

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2645-3000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>3001-3500</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>3501-4000</td>
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<tr>
<td>4001-5000</td>
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<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5001-above</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Male
- Female
Some good pictures
Thank you