centre for entrepreneurship development

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MAPPED IN BANGLADESH

RAPID SURVEY: PHASE 2

"Status of the Export Oriented RMG Factories in Bangladesh during Covid – 19 Pandemic"

Research Brief

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INTRODUCTION

To address the operational status of the export-oriented Ready-Made Garment (RMG) factories in Bangladesh during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Mapped in Bangladesh (MiB) project of Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) of Brac University (BracU) has been undertaking a series of Rapid Survey(s). The Phase 1 was conducted during the 1st week of May 2020 and a research brief was published on 1 June 2020, along with the development of Covid-19 RMG Map showing which factories are producing face mask and personal protective equipment (PPE), along with the status of their deployed workers' number during the pandemic. The data for the Phase 2 of the Rapid Survey was collected during 15-23 June 2020.

The major data points for the Rapid Survey Phase 2 are: factory name, operational status of factories, expectation of factories for continuing operation after June 2020, total number of workers deployed in factories at present; percentage of total capacity[1] utilized for operation; whether factories are producing face mask, PPE and/or regular products; the profitability mode (with or without profit margin), the market (domestic/export), and the brands that the face masks and PPEs are being produced for; whether the factories arranged trainings or briefings about Cocid-19 awareness for their workers; and the measures the factories have taken to prevent their workers and visitors from being infected by the virus.

Rapid Survey Phase 1 was undertaken to survey the export-oriented RMG factories of Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj from MiB map when RMG factories were advised to reopen[2] to save the sector from economic collapse by following factory reopening guidelines[3] and Hygiene and Safety Guideline[4] and with the BDT 5,000 crore stimulus package[5] support announced by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) as these factories have been experiencing order cancellations[6] by the global buyers.

On the other hand, when the Rapid Survey Phase 2 was initiated, the RMG sector of Bangladesh has been forced to embrace many issues amid Covid-19. Reportedly, 24,860 workers lost their jobs according to the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)[7], where 16,853 were from 86 factories of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), and 2,298 were from 16 factories listed with Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)[8]. As per BGMEA data, fresh orders dropped to 172 during March – May 2020 period which was 454 in the same period of last year[9]. The country's garments export declined by more than 62 percent in the first 29 days of May this year, compared with that of corresponding period of last year[10]. BGMEA President Dr Rubana Huq informed that the factories are now running at only 55 percent capacity due to

[1] Capacity utilization refers to the manufacturing and production capabilities that are being utilized by an enterprise at any given time.
[2] https://www.ecotextile.com/2020041625965/materials-production-news/bangladesh-to-reopen-garment-factories.html
[3] https://api.fairwear.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BGMEA-Factory-opening-Guidelines.pdf
[4] https://api.fairwear.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Ministry-of-Health-and-Family-Welfare-Translated.pdf
[5] https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2020/03/23/rubana-urges-buyers-to-take-ready-apparel-goods-bgmea-bkmea-urge-workers-to-remain-patient
[6] http://www.workersrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Abandoned-Penn-State-WRC-Report-March-27-2020.pdf
[7] https://www.newagebd.net/article/109175/24860-rmg-workers-fired-after-eid
[8] https://www.newagebd.net/article/108700/21331-rmg-workers-lose-job-after-eid
[9] https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/economy/2020/06/15/apparel-exporters-see-62-drop-in-new-orders
[10] https://www.newagebd.net/article/107345/covid-19-hammers-rmg-exports-for-3rd-month

lesser work orders[11]. Some 67 factories, including seven non-RMG units, have terminated a total of 17,579 workers until 31 May 2020, according to DIFE[12].

While the above-mentioned data are mostly based on the member factories (factories that are members of BGMEA and BKMEA), MiB's Rapid Survey has addressed the non-member factories (factories that are not members of BGMEA and BKMEA) along with the member factories.

To access the status of the export-oriented RMG factories in Bangladesh during the ongoing pandemic, Mapped in Bangladesh (MiB) project conducted Phase 2 of the Rapid Survey. This survey was conducted on factories from Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram (Phase 2 included data of Chattogram district, unlike Phase 1).

Data were collected over phone, and due to methodological limitations of the phone survey, certain factories could not be reached where respondents did not receive the phone or refused to participate in the survey. Despite such limitations, Phase 2 of the Rapid Survey has succeeded to uncover tacit insights over its data points which can be exposed to the RMG industry stakeholders for understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the sector.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of data collection for the Rapid Survey (Phase 2) was based on the following steps:

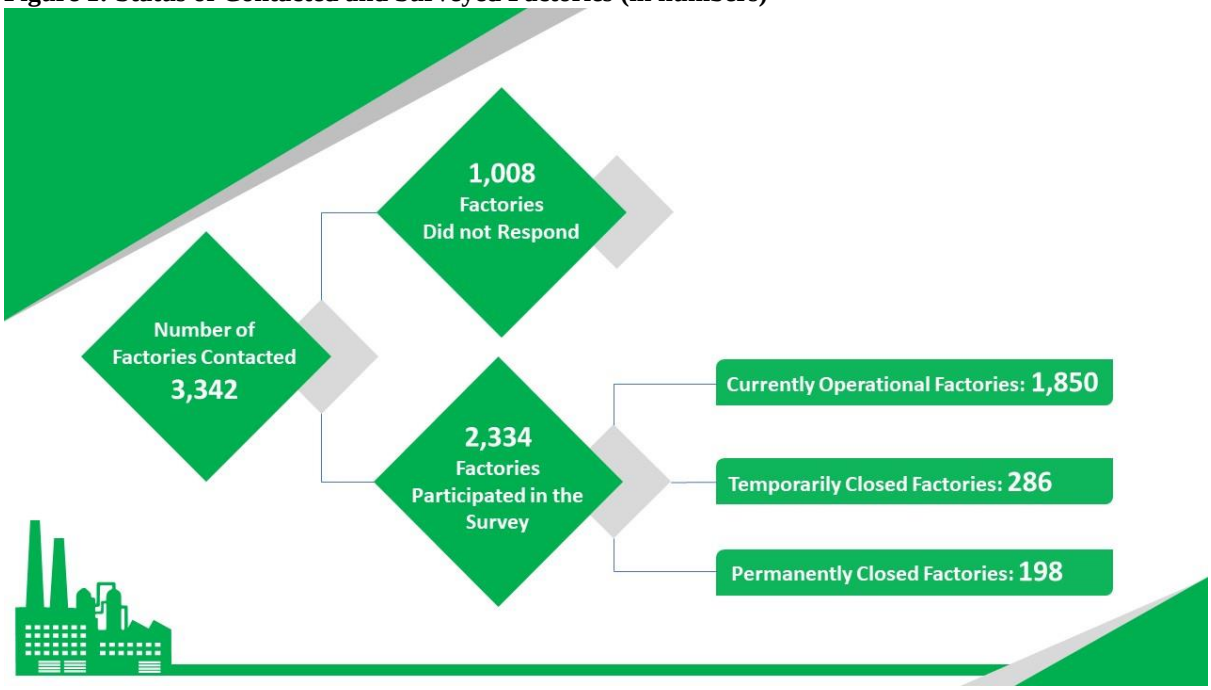
- Using the list of factories from MiB dataset following the factory selection criteria[13] (i.e. Factory Definition) as per project's methodology
- Covering 3,342 export-oriented garments factories from Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Chattogram were surveyed over phone
- Utilizing the survey team who are already experienced in communicating with factories to collect data from factories over phone
- Assigning each team member with a list of factory names and contacts derived from the MiB database
- Input the collected data through electronic survey instrument using KoBo toolbox platform

SAMPLING DISTRIBUTION

A total of 3,342 factories from the MiB database were contacted for the Rapid Survey Phase 2, of which 69.84 percent factories participated in the survey and 30.16 percent did not respond to our calls (Figure 1 and Table 1). The membership variable was defined as: *BGMEA* – factories that are members of BGMEA only; *BKMEA* – factories that are members of BKMEA only; *Both (BGMEA + BKMEA)* – factories that are members of both BGMEA and BKMEA; and *Non-member* – factories that are not members of BGMEA and/or BKMEA. The response rate for participation in the survey was higher for factories that were members of BKMEA only, compared to the other membership groups.

[11] https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2020/06/04/rubana-factories-running-with-55-capacity-job-cut-soon
[12] https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/thousands-of-garment-workers-lose-jobs-1591292993
[13] https://mappedinbangladesh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MiB-Methodology-.pdf

Figure 1: Status of Contacted and Surveyed Factories (in numbers)



Among the factories who participated in the survey, 79.26 percent reported that they were in operation at the time of conducting this survey. About 92.35 percent of the factories who are members of both BGMEA and BKMEA were found to be operational, while 80 percent of the factories that are BKMEA member were operational, and of those that are BGMEA member, 79.64 percent reported that they were operational. Among the Non-member factories who participated in the current Rapid Survey, 72.63 percent factories said that they were operational.

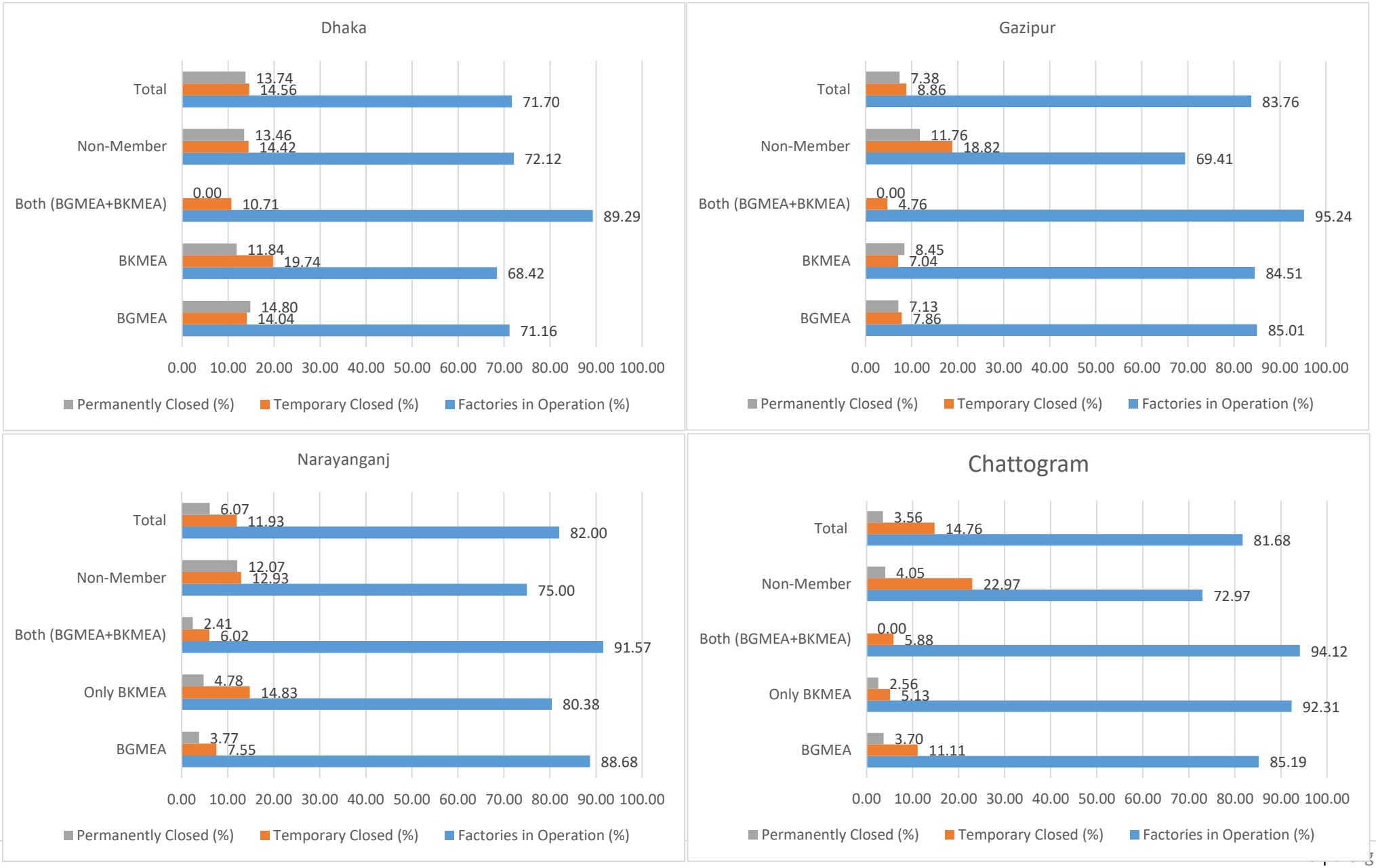
Table 1: Distribution of Surveyed Factories

Membership Status		Total	Status of calls		Operational status of participant factories		
			Did not Respond	Participated in the survey	Factories in Operation	Temporary Closed	Permanently Closed
BGMEA	Number	1,896	580	1,316	1,048	142	126
	Percentage	100	30.59	69.41	79.64	10.79	9.57
BKMEA	Number	525	130	395	316	53	26
	Percentage	100	24.76	75.24	80.00	13.42	6.58
Both (BGMEA + BKMEA)	Number	245	75	170	157	11	2
	Percentage	100	30.61	69.39	92.35	6.47	1.18
Non-Member	Number	676	223	453	329	80	44
	Percentage	100	32.99	67.01	72.63	17.66	9.71
Total	Number	3,342	1,008	2,334	1,850	286	198
	Percentage	100	30.16	69.84	79.26	12.25	8.49

The incidence of temporarily closed factories was higher for Non-member factories (17.66 percent) and BKMEA member factories (13.42 percent). Of all the factories that participated in the survey, 8.49 percent were found to have closed permanently. Non-member factories and BGMEA member factories had higher rate of permanently closure (9.71 percent and 9.57 percent respectively).

Region-wise operational status of factories of different membership status is provided in Figure 2. Across all the four regions (Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram), major proportion of factories which were found to be operational were members of both BGMEA and BKMEA. The incidence of temporary factory closure was highest in Chattogram (14.76 percent), while the incidence of permanent closure was highest in Dhaka (13.74 percent).

Figure 2: Factory Status by Region (in Percentage)



REGULAR OPERATION AFTER JUNE 2020

Factories that were found to be operational and temporarily closed were asked whether they thought that they would be able to resume their regular operation after June 2020. Among the 1,850 currently operational and 286 temporarily closed factories (total - 2,136 factories), 40.54 percent of the factories were found to be hopeful to resume their operation in full phase after June 2020, while 25.14 percent said that they hope to resume their operations partially (Table 2).

It is worth mentioning here that a considerable proportion of all factories (30.57 percent) said that they did not know or were uncertain about resuming their regular operations after June 2020. A very small fraction of factories (0.23 percent) said that they will permanently shut down after June 2020.

Among BGMEA member factories, 50.59 percent expressed that they will be able to resume their full-fledged regular operations after June 2020, while 39.88 percent of the factories who are members of both BGMEA and BKMEA expressed the same. Among the non-member factories, major proportion (27.87 percent) said that they are hopeful that they will be able to resume their regular operations partially after June 2020.

Table 2: Expectations of Factories to Resume Regular Operations after June 2020 (in Percentage) across Membership Status

Operational Status	Membership				Total (n = 2,136)
	BGMEA (n = 1,190)	BKMEA (n = 369)	Both (BGMEA + BKMEA) (n=168)	Non-Member (n = 409)	
Yes, full-fledged	50.59	31.17	39.88	20.05	40.54
Yes, partial	24.62	25.20	22.02	27.87	25.14
No	3.11	2.71	6.55	4.16	3.51
Will permanently shutdown	0.08	0.27	-	0.73	0.24
Don't know/Uncertain	21.60	40.65	31.55	47.19	30.57

Region-wise expectations of factories to resume regular operations after June 2020 is provided in Table 3. Of the 690 factories from Gazipur, 55.80 percent reported that they are hopeful to resume full-fledged regular operations after June 2020, while 29.56 percent out of 433 factories from Narayanganj said that they will be able to partially resume their operation after June 2020. From the Chattogram region, out of the 379 factories, 5.28 percent said that they will not be able to resume their regular operations after June 2020.

Table 3: Region-wise Expectations of Factories to Resume Regular Operations after June 2020 (in Percentage)

Operational Status	Dhaka (n = 634)	Gazipur (n = 690)	Narayanganj (n = 433)	Chattogram (n = 379)
Yes, full-fledged	41.01	55.80	17.32	38.52
Yes, partial	20.98	27.54	29.56	22.69
No	4.42	2.17	2.77	5.28
Will permanently shutdown	-	0.29	0.23	0.53
Don't know/Uncertain	33.60	14.20	50.12	32.98

CAPACITY UTILIZATION

Among the 1,850 factories those were found to be currently operational, 27.08 percent of the factories were found to be currently utilizing more than 80 percent of their total capacity. Among the BGMEA member factories, 33.11 percent of the factories said that they were using more than 80 percent of their total capacity, while 21.20 percent of the BKMEA member factories were currently utilizing 41-50 percent of their total capacity. For factories those are members of both BGMEA and BKMEA, major proportion of the factories (24.20 percent) were found to be utilizing more than 80 percent of their total production capacity; while 22.80 percent of the non-member factories were found to be currently utilizing 41-50 percent of their total production capacity.

Table 4: Membership-wise Capacity Utilization of Currently Operational Factories (in Percentage)

	BGMEA (n = 1,048)	BKMEA (n = 316)	Both (BGMEA + BKMEA) (n = 157)	Non-Member (n = 329)	Total (n = 1,850)
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
≤10	0.95	0.32	0.64	3.04	1.19
11 – 20	1.53	2.53	1.91	4.56	2.27
21 – 30	2.58	7.59	7.01	6.99	4.59
31 – 40	2.48	9.81	8.92	9.42	5.51
41 – 50	11.83	21.20	6.37	22.80	14.92
51 – 60	10.97	11.39	17.20	10.94	11.57
61 – 70	16.32	12.66	17.20	10.64	14.76
71 – 80	20.23	15.82	16.56	14.29	18.11
≥81	33.11	18.67	24.20	17.33	27.08
Total	100	100	100	100	100

To understand the difference of the capacity utilization between the member and non-member factories, a mean test was performed (Table 5). On average, the member factories were using 70.55 percent of their production capacity, compared to 59.83 percent of production capacity being utilized by non-member factories.

Table 5: Average Capacity Utilization between Member and Non-member Factories

	Member Factory	Non-Member Factory	p-value
Average Capacity Utilization	70.55	59.83	**0.000**

Test result shows that this difference in capacity utilization between member and non-member factories was statistically significant at 5 percent level of significance.

NUMBER OF WORKERS CURRENTLY WORKING

Even though the number of workers working at the factories before and during pandemic[14] was low initially (please see our Rapid Survey: Phase 1), it has started to pick up gradually. From Figure 3, it is seen that factories those are currently operational are using almost as much

[14] Before pandemic refers to MiB data collection timeline, whereas during pandemic refers to Rapid Survey: Phase 2 timeline

workers at present as they did before the pandemic. The situation can be understood better if we look at Table 6 below.

Table 6: Comparison of Workers before and during Pandemic

	n	Percentage of workers working during pandemic
Dhaka	527	96.9
Gazipur	623	89.0
Narayanganj	378	94.0
Chattogram	321	92.2
Total	1,849*	92.1

As we can see from Table 6 that the factories that are currently operational are using 92.1 percent of their workforce during the pandemic as compared to normal times (before pandemic). Factories from Dhaka cluster are currently using 96.9 percent of their workforce, while factories from Narayanganj cluster are using 94 percent of their usual workforce at present, compared to the times before the pandemic.

Figure 3: Comparison of Workers before and during Pandemic

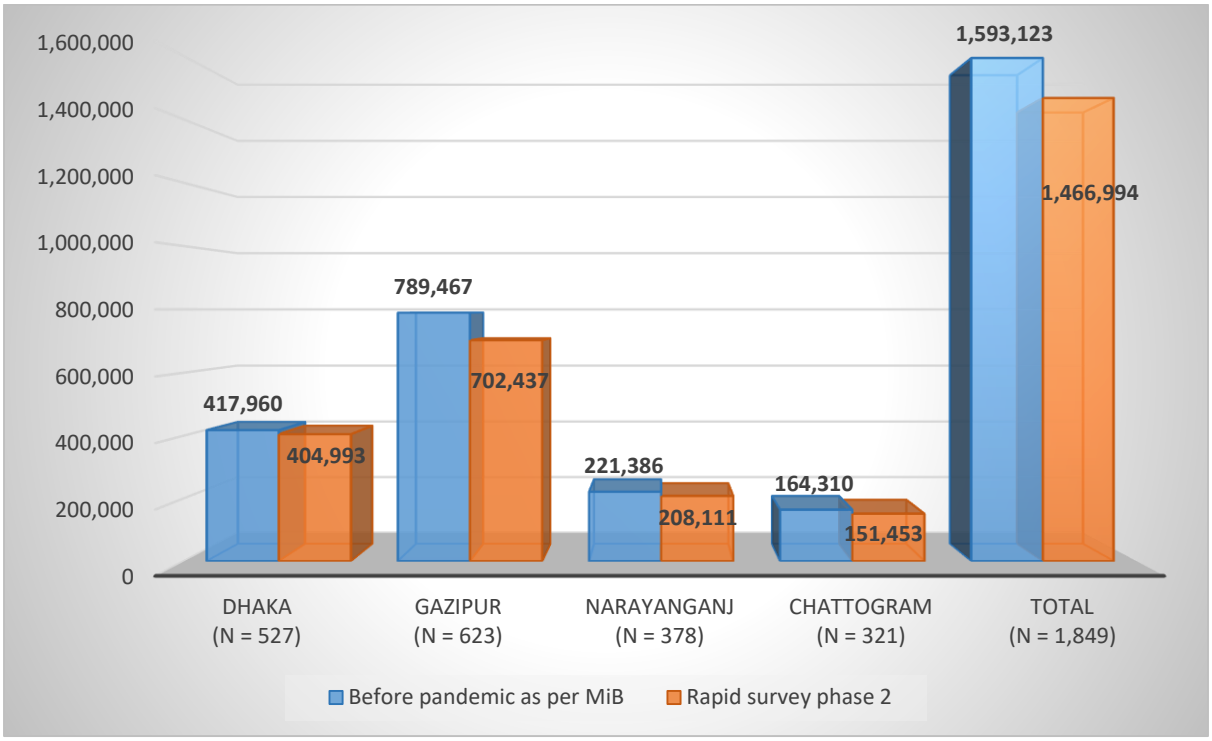


Table 7: Comparison of Worker Utilization between Member and Non-Member Factories

	Member Factory	Non-Member Factory	P-Value
Dhaka	870.99 (n = 452)	150.72 (n = 75)	**0.000**
Gazipur	1208.11 (n = 564)	357.05 (n = 59)	**0.000**
Narayanganj	685.17 (n = 291)	100.30 (n = 87)	**0.000**
Chattogram	658.86 (n = 213)	103.42 (n = 108)	**0.000**
Total	930.78 (n = 1,520)	158.86 (n = 329)	**0.000**

* One of the factories did not provide the number of its current workers.

To see whether there was any difference between the member and non-member factories using their workforce at present, we ran mean test. Results of the mean test is provided in Table 7.

We see that the member factories are using 931 workers on average, while the non-member factories are using 159 workers on average, and this difference is statistically significant at 5 percent or lower level of significance.

We also note that there is significant difference (at 5 percent or lower level of significance) in the number of workers currently working in the member and non-member factories.

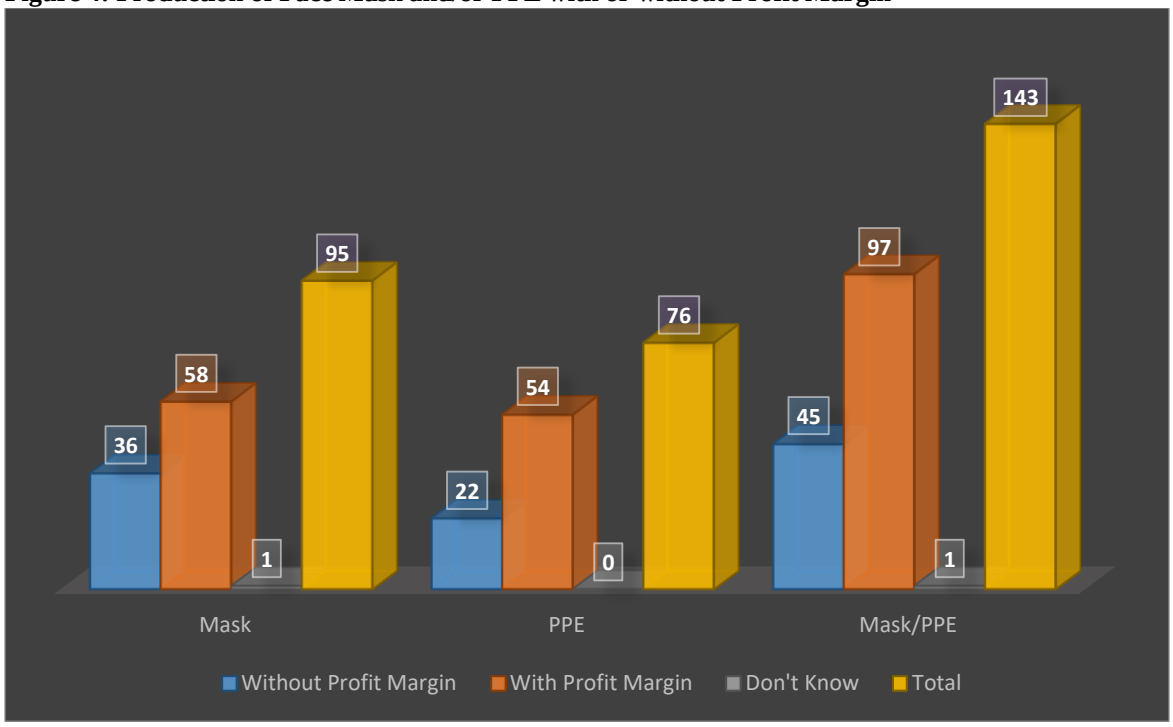
WHAT ARE THE FACTORIES PRODUCING AND FOR WHICH MARKET ARE THEY PRODUCING?

Table 8 below depicts what products the factories are currently producing. As we can see, major proportion of the factories (92.27 percent) reported they were producing only their regular products. The remaining 7 percent of the factories produced a combination of face mask, PPE and regular products.

Table 8: Types of Products Produced

Types of Products	Number of Factories	Percentage
Only Face Mask	10	0.54
Only PPE	10	0.54
Face Mask and PPE	6	0.32
Face Mask and Regular Products	56	3.03
PPE and Regular Products	38	2.05
Face Mask, PPE and Regular Products	23	1.24
Only Regular Products	1,707	92.27
Total	**1,850**	**100**

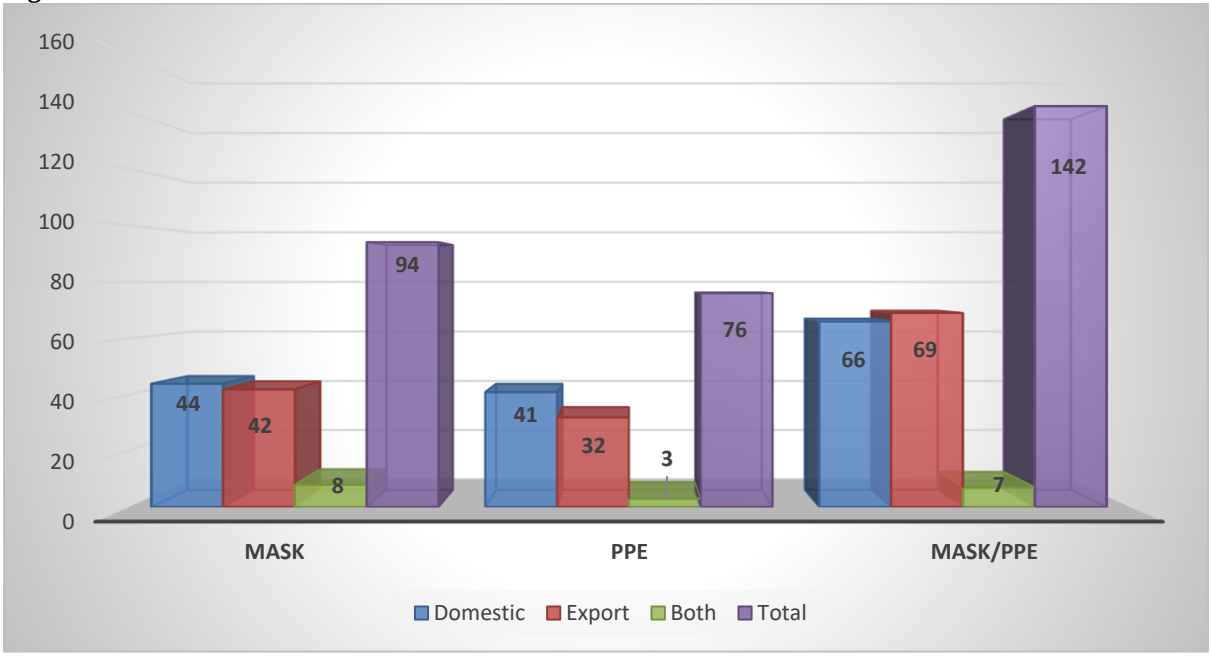
Figure 4: Production of Face Mask and/or PPE with or without Profit Margin



Out of the 95 factories that were found to be producing face mask[15], 58 factories said that they were producing those with profit margin, while 36 said that they were producing without any profit margin. Out of the 76 factories that were found to be producing PPE[16], 54 factories said were found to be producing those with profit margin, while 22 were producing without any profit margin.

Out of the 143 factories that were found to have been producing face masks and/or PPE along with their regular products, only one factory could not say for which market they were producing those. Out of the 142 factories, 69 factories said that they were producing for the export market, while 66 factories said that it was for the domestic market, and only 7 factories said that the face masks and/or PPE were being produced for both the domestic as well as export market (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Markets for which Face Mask and/or PPE are Produced



FACTORIES ARRANGED TRAINING OR BRIEFING WORKERS ABOUT COVID-19

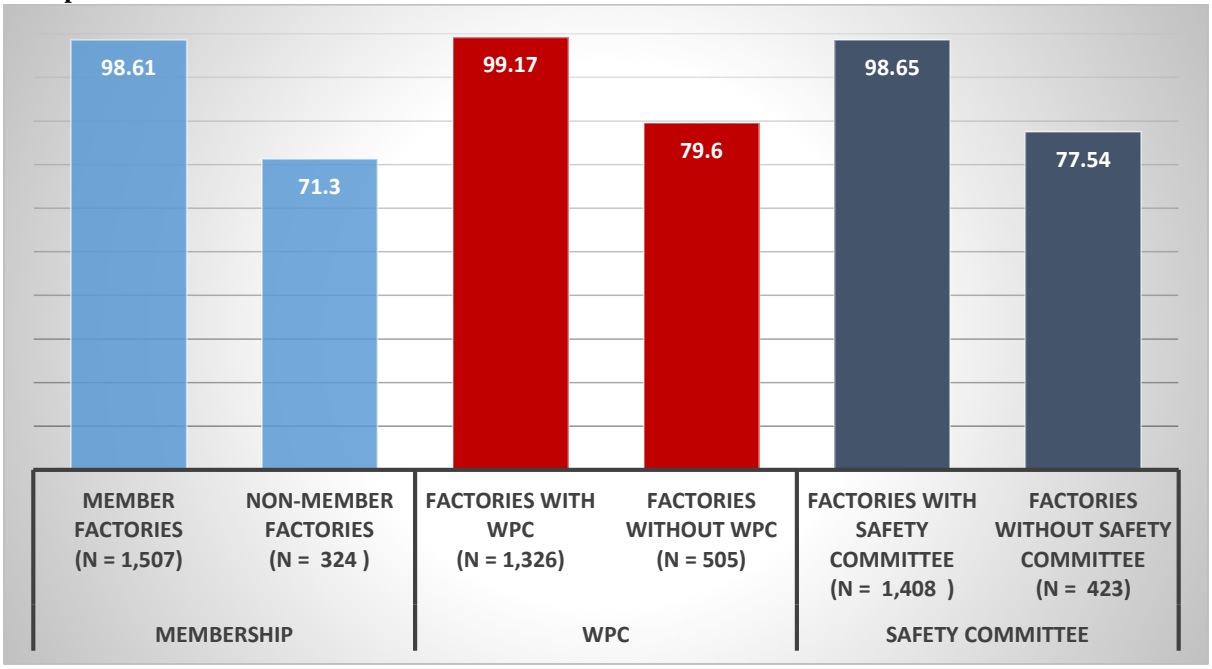
There were factories that arranged training or briefing about Covid-19 for the awareness of workers. We have analyzed the data into groups – factories who are members of BGMEA and/or BKMEA and who are non-members; factories that have Workers Participation Committee (WPC)[17] and those do not have WPC; and factories that have Safety Committee (SC)[18] and those do not have Safety Committee. The result is provided in Figure 6 below.

[15] Only mask, or mask and PPE, or mask and regular product, or mask, PPE and regular product
[16] Only PPE, or PPE and mask, or PPE and regular product, or PPE, mask, and regular product
[17] Workers' Participation Committee: Participation Committee (PC) is a legal requirement for establishments which employ fifty or more workers. The functions of the PC include promoting mutual trust and cooperation between workers and employers; ensuring application of labour laws and supporting workers' education and welfare services which have a positive effect on productivity.
[https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Informationresources/Publicinformation/features/WCMS_654366/lang--en/index.htm]
[18] A Safety Committee is a team composed of management and union / workers representatives that assists the employer in creating and maintaining a safe workplace. It is mandatory in every factory/ industrial establishment where 50 or more

Results show that there is significant difference (at 5 percent or lower level of significance) between factories that are member of trade associations, have WPC and have SC, and factories who are non-members, do not have WPC and do not have SC respectively. Majority of the member factories (98.61 percent) were found to have arranged some sort of training or briefing about Covid-19 for their workers, compared to 71.3 percent of the non-member factories.

Furthermore, 99.17 percent of factories that have WPC arranged training or briefing for their workers about Covid-19, which was only 79.6 percent for factories that did not have any WPC. About 98.65 percent factories that had SC reported that they arranged training or briefing for their workers related to Covid-19, which is only 77.54 percent for the factories without SC.

Figure 6: Comparison of Arranging Training or Briefing about Covid-19 for the Workers among Different Groups of Factories



MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT COVID-19 IN FACTORIES

As reflected in Figure 7, factories those were members of any of the trade associations, had WPC, and had Safety Committee, took higher number of measures in the factory to prevent Covid-19 than factories those were non-members, did not have WPC, and did not have Safety Committee. Statistical tests also suggest that difference in the number of measures taken among these three groups (member/non-member, with/without WPC, and with/without Safety Committee) were statistically significant at 5 or lower level of significance. One of the reasons why member factories were found to have taken higher number of measures is that BGMEA and BKMEA have their own guidelines which are mandatory for the factories to follow if they want to keep their factories open/operational during Covid-19.

Irrespective of membership, WPC, and Safety Committee status, top four measures undertaken by the factories include: sanitizing workers' hands using hand sanitizer or wash hands with soap

workers are employed.
[https://dife.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dife.portal.gov.bd/publications/006ad2dc_dd7b_46e3_a865_671a1d508b1e/4%20Safty%20Community_English%20V8.pdf]

before entering the factory premises; ensuring that the workers wear face masks; checking body temperature of the workers and staff while entering the factory premises; and maintaining at least 1m or 3ft distance between workers (Table 9).

We found significant difference between member and non-member factories, factories with and without WPC, and factories with and without Safety Committee taking the measures to disinfect all workers and employees through disinfectant chamber/tunnel. This measure was taken by 35.83 percent of the member factories while only 6.99 percent of the non-member factories took this measure. While 37.34 percent of the factories with WPC took such measure, only 13.31 percent of factories without WPC took this measure. We also found that 36.71 percent of the factories with Safety Committee have taken such measures, which is only 10.75 percent for the factories without Safety Committee.

It is a good sign to find that most of the factories were practicing to maintain at least 1m or 3ft distance between their workers. In short, Table 9 reflects that the factories are aware as well as concerned about the health and safety of their workers and staff.

Figure 7: Average Number of Measures Taken as per Status of Membership, WPC and Safety Committee

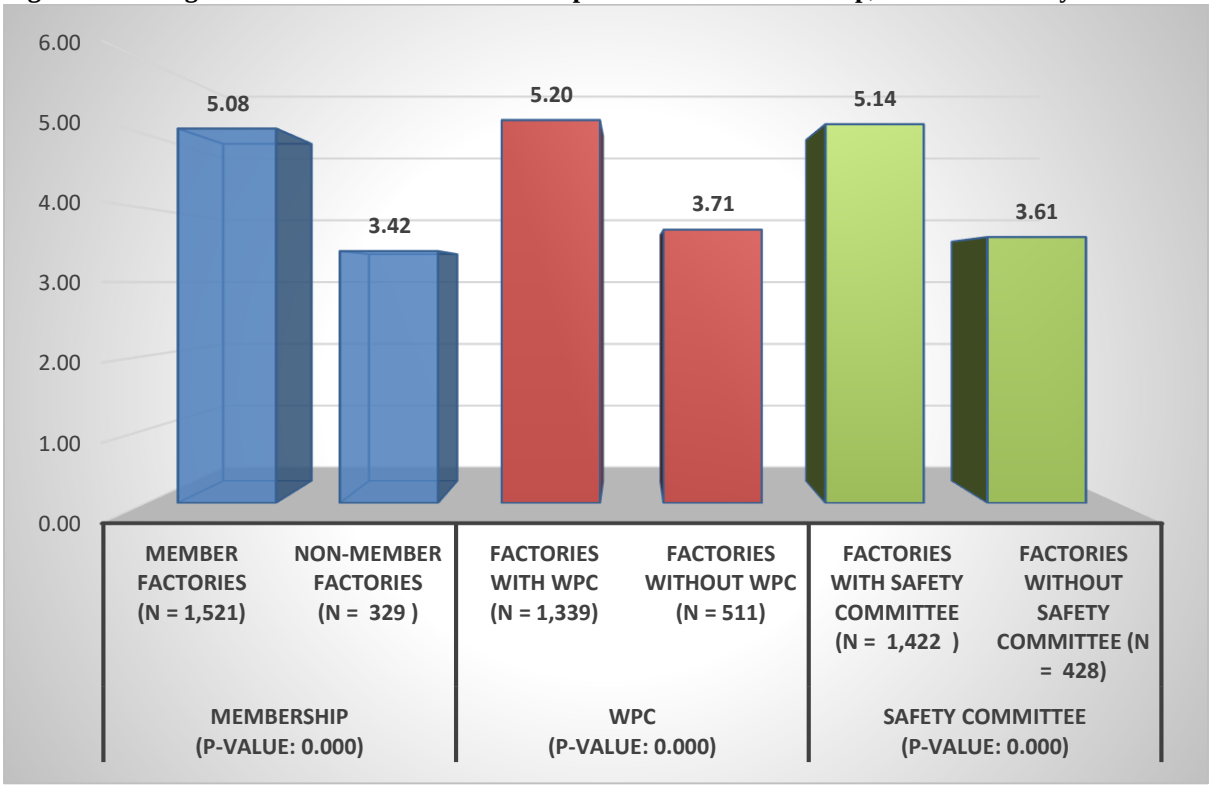


Table 9: Measures Taken across Different Factory Groups (Percentage)

Types of Measure	Membership			WPC			Safety Committee		
	Member Factories (n = 1,521)	Non-Member Factories (n = 329)	p-value	Factories with WPC (n = 1,339)	Factories without WPC (n = 511)	p-value	Factories with Safety Committee (n = 1,422)	Factories without Safety Committee (n = 428)	p-value
Checking Body temperature of workers and staff while entering the factory premises	79.68	40.12	**0.000**	82.23	47.55	**0.000**	81.29	43.93	**0.000**
Disinfect all workers and employees through disinfectant chamber/tunnel	35.83	6.99	**0.000**	37.34	13.31	**0.000**	36.71	10.75	**0.000**
Disinfect all visitors through disinfectant chamber/tunnel	11.90	2.74	**0.000**	12.92	3.33	**0.000**	12.59	2.57	**0.000**
Disinfect workers and employees' shoes using disinfectant tray (tray filled with bleaching powder or Savlon mixed with water)	55.36	30.40	**0.000**	57.88	32.68	**0.000**	56.89	31.07	**0.000**
Disinfect all visitors' shoes using disinfectant tray (tray filled with bleaching powder or Savlon mixed with water)	21.63	6.38	**0.000**	21.96	10.96	**0.000**	21.38	10.75	**0.000**
Sanitize workers' hands using hand sanitizer or wash hands with soap before entering the factory premises	95.40	93.01	0.072	95.82	92.76	**0.007**	95.71	92.52	**0.008**
Disinfect workstations and frequently used equipment	37.67	10.64	**0.000**	39.51	15.46	**0.000**	38.61	13.79	**0.000**
Ensure that the workers wear face masks	88.82	86.32	0.199	88.35	88.45	0.95	88.19	89.02	0.637
Maintain at least 1m or 3ft distance between workers	74.95	64.74	**0.000**	75.95	65.75	**0.000**	75.25	66.12	**0.000**
Providing isolation unit for Covid-19 suspected workers	6.84	0.61	**0.000**	7.62	0.78	**0.000**	7.31	0.47	**0.000**

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The export-oriented RMG industry of Bangladesh contributed about 11.2 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. However, due to the novel coronavirus (Covid-19), as the export has drastically reduced, the RMG sector of Bangladesh at this point is on the edge of an unprecedented economic and social catastrophe. In order to alleviate the impact of Covid-19, we need to explore and understand the industry in multidimensional ways.

MiB of CED-BracU, through their series of Rapid Survey on the RMG sector, has analyzed and presented its findings on the industry in multidimensional ways, which include:

1. Current workforce being employed and proportion of the capacity being utilized during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic,
2. Innovation and contribution to combat Covid-19, and
3. Developing and updating the MiB Covid-19 map with updated data from time to time.

In our finding section, we analyzed the data through the membership status, districts, WPC, and Safety Committee; to find similarities and variations in the industry, and also presented the industry's safety strategies to cope with this emergency pandemic situation.

This research paper and data are expected to contribute to the policymaking in order to mitigate the impact of Covid-19, and to maintain the successes of the RMG industry as a key contributor to the economic and potential social sectors.

The result of the *Rapid Survey: Phase 2* can be related to following recommendations for policy implications, interventions, and further explorations:

1. Importance of Non-Member Factories for Further Exploration

The information flow of RMG factories that newspapers capture and cover is mostly concentrated on member factories revealed by respective trade associations (BGMEA and BKMEA). As a result, non-member factories, albeit contributing to the country's export, received limited attention since the Covid-19 started. However, as non-member factories are also part of MiB Rapid Survey(s), data collected from such factories can be useful to provide distinct attention to unearth the situation of these factories during this Covid-19 crisis. Inclusion of these non-member factories in the Rapid Survey has brought a new dimension unlike the information of RMG sector which mostly rely on data from member factories only.

2. Depicting Region-wise RMG Scenario and Interventions

The current *Rapid Survey: Phase 2* covered factories from Chattogram district as well, despite the fact that data of these factories are pending to be published on the MiB map. Thus, unlike the *Rapid Survey: Phase 1*, Phase 2 has been able to bring broader region-wise coverage of the RMG factories. Comparing the region-wise data, it can be depicted that in which region RMG factories are losing more workers, to what extent the RMG factories are operating in these regions, along with the region-wise capacity utilization by factories, region-wise production of masks/PPE/regular products, and region-wise factories' responses to prevent Covid-19. Using the data, relevant authorities can depict which region requires further interventions for resettlement of workers and capacity enhancement of factories regarding production, and appropriate responses to Covid-19.

3. Identification of RMG Factories Unable to Resume Regular Operations after June 2020

A small number of factories have reported in the Phase 2 of the Rapid Survey that they will not be able to resume regular operations after June 2020, and a number of them even may get permanently shut down. A significant number of factories are also uncertain to continue their regular operations after June 2020. Using MiB map and the data of the current survey, relevant authorities can trace these factories on priority basis and provide them incentives, so that they can continue their regular operations without forcing employment cuts and thus causing unemployment in the sector. The brands and buyers can also prioritize such factories for placing orders not in terms of business perspective, but adopting a humanistic way of sourcing and distribution of orders in a way to help survive these factories during this Covid-19 crisis.

4. Identification of RMG Factories Operating with Lower Capacity

Similarly, factories whose capacities have decreased during the current Covid-19 crisis can be identified and be brought under incentive initiatives from relevant authorities.

5. Tracking the Changes of Total Number of Workers

The total number of workers in the RMG sector has been debated. According to latest Labour Force Survey, the number is 3.3 million, while BGMEA data has been showing a stagnant figure of 4.0 million workers for last several years. It is quite clear that during the current crisis, the total number of workers will be decreased as workers are experiencing job loss due to factories being shut down because of order cancellations by global buyers. It can be tracked to what extent the total number of workers is decreasing as MiB has factory specific total number of workers collected before the pandemic period, which can be compared to factory specific total number of workers data collected through the different phases of the Rapid Survey series.

6. Envisaging Local and International Supply Chain of Face Masks and PPE Production

Face masks and PPE have become mandatory products for the new normal life triggered by the coronavirus. The capacity of Bangladeshi RMG factories for producing such products can be depicted through the Rapid Survey(s) that MiB project of CED-BracU is conducting. As this phase of Rapid Survey has collected brands, buyers, and types of markets (domestic and export) for which factories are producing face masks and PPE, the local and international supply chain of these products can be envisaged. In order to do that, more detailed supply chain data can be coupled with the existing data.

7. RMG Factories' Response to Prevent Covid-19

Arranging training or briefings about Covid-19 for the workers and different measures taken by the RMG factories to prevent being infected in factories can be considered as indicators to identify RMG factories' responses to keep the factories safe from the virus. Comparing the data of MiB factory census which collected the existence of WPC and Safety Committee in a factory, the current Phase 2 of the Rapid Survey series has shown that these RMG factories are more proactive to exhibit responses against the virus which have WPC and Safety Committee. Such findings can be channeled to the policymakers to encourage them for ensuring workers' participation in the decision-making inside the factories through arrangements such as WPC and SC, not only within the period of current ongoing crisis/pandemic, but also during post-pandemic period.

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*****NOTE***

This Rapid Survey Phase 2 is based on data of 2,837 factories from Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj that are already published on the MiB map, and 505 unpublished data from Chattogram which are to be uploaded in the map soon.