

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ON TEXTILE AND GARMENT WORKERS OF BANGLADESH

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1. Background

In last two decades, significant changes have taken place in the textile and garment manufacturing processes. These changes result from global environmental factors including technological, economic, social, demographic, political, and legal. The most important change is related to the introduction to new machines and advanced manufacturing systems. The up-gradation of technologies has changed the traditional production systems of textile and garments towards modern systems. Developed countries including USA, Japan, and the countries in Europe influence the global textile industry because of modern technological capabilities. These countries continuously maintain their share of total value through designing, manufacturing, and marketing of textile products. Developed countries use capital-intensive technologies including Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) to produce textiles and garments. The use of these high-tech production systems have substantially changed manufacturing operations of textiles including weaving, bleaching, dyeing, printing, pattern grading, marker making, cutting, sewing, and finishing. CAD/CAM has been used in textile productions like order processing, management information systems, and the applications to all other areas of manufacturing processes. This has altered the perspective of textile and garment producers in developing countries towards technology-based production systems because of the pressures of globalization of business.

One of the challenges of business globalization for the least developed countries (LDC's) is that technology change erodes the advantages of labor-intensive technology. Textiles and garments are one of the leading labor-intensive industries that is still viewed as the driving force of industrialization in developing countries. These countries have been using traditional technologies for producing textiles and garments. The emergence of new and computerized technologies has changed the production systems of these countries towards capital-intensive technologies. To satisfy the increasing demand of high quality products and the use of new technology by the competitors in international market, textile and garment companies have been introducing new machines in their manufacturing processes. The internal reasons for these adoptions are to support current performance, establish new business lines, and fulfil the demand of international customers. Technological change, thus, refers to adapting a technology that is new to the operating environment and that is more advanced than that used previously. New technologies have a number of properties that are related to the impact on the manufacturing processes. These include small physical size, reliability, adaptability, modularity, divisibility, speed of operation, and low energy consumption.

Technological change modifies manufacturing processes concerned with fabric preparation, cutting, materials handling, fusing, sewing, pressing, finishing, and garment dyeing by bringing new and advanced machines into the company. The change makes the work harder for the workers. It replaces procedures that require performing routine tasks with new methods requiring workers with newer skills. This causes negative impact on the job security and job satisfaction of workers and creates industrial disputes. The impact of the change is more severe for the workers in labor-intensive companies. The change

eliminates lower skilled jobs from the company. Jobs become more insecure and the workers who remain have a higher level of job dissatisfaction, which has a significant negative impact on their work performance. The higher level of job insecurity and job dissatisfaction deteriorates work relations in the company. These, in turn, have an impact on the overall situation of the workers, which are defined in socio-economic terms. It includes income and benefits, and social concerns such as, family or status etc. These are the basic challenges for the management of labor-intensive companies especially for those who are engaged in textile and garment productions. Bangladeshi textile and garment companies face similar challenges for introducing new technologies to improve their production systems.

Bangladesh is a developing country with a weak industrial base. Although agriculture is the main occupation of the people, the importance of the textile and garment industry is increasing. Due to the rapid expansion of the economy in last two decades a substantial employment especially in the garment sector has been created for lower skilled women workers. This economic growth is backed by foreign direct investment. The government of Bangladesh has to implement liberalization policies to attract these investments. This has helped the country to produce export-oriented garment products. Garments are the biggest export earner in the manufacturing sector. In 1998-1999, the garment sector contributed US \$4.02 billion or over 75 percent of the total exports of Bangladesh. With the emergence of young entrepreneurs, cheap labor, favorable national policies, quota-restricted entry into the market of the United States under Multi Fiber Agreement (MFA) and completely unrestricted entry into the markets of the European Union countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), this industry became a significant part of the economy. It employs about 1.50 million people, of which 90 percent are women who are from rural areas. The creation of jobs has encouraged women to leave the rural areas and work for the garment industry. The garment sector started booming with around 400 companies in 1985 that was reached over 3000 in 2005. Most companies (55%) were established after 1990. This sector enjoys the lowest labor cost advantage in the world. In 1983-1984, the export share of this sector was about 4 percent of the total exports and in 1998-1999 this share increased to around 76 percent. Garment sector had been expanding at a rate of 20% per year and was predicted that such growth would continue up to 2005 when the global market is quota-free. However, after the implementation of new WTO resolution i.e., the withdrawal of quota protection from Bangladesh, the impact was not so severe as expected by the policymakers.

Garment companies in Bangladesh mainly use labor-intensive technologies in their production because of the availability of low cost labor. Competitor-exporting countries are using more capital-intensive technologies in producing garments and are continuously moving towards more value added and high quality products. As such, competitiveness in international market is a great concern for the Bangladeshi garment companies. These companies have been upgrading steadily their production technologies by adapting new and advanced machines. Although, this technology is not considered to be 'advanced technology' by computerized standards of speed and efficiency, it nevertheless represents an upward shift in the use of technology for industrial production in a country like Bangladesh. The workers perceive that the technological change reduces their job satisfaction and work performance because they are mostly lower skilled and are involved in very narrow range of low value added tasks. As technological change brings new machines into the company, reorganizing and redesigning work has negative impact on workers. This demands technical training of the lower skilled workers. The lower skilled

jobs in Bangladeshi garment companies are flexible, short-term forms of employment, and workers have severe occupational health and safety risks. Inadequate employment security and the industrial support facilities increase the severity of the consequences on these workers.

2. The Change in Textile and Garment Industry

The globalization of business has increased the shares of international trade of the developing countries. It has increased the interaction of domestic economies with the world economy. Technological change is one of the major driving forces for business globalization. It erodes the advantages of labor-intensive technology in these countries. Technological change has replaced labor-intensive textile and garment manufacturing processes with new and advanced technologies requiring workers more sophisticated skills. The underlying reasons of these replacements is international competitiveness, new demands of customers, avoid labor problems, cost-effectiveness, and the demand that human resource management contributes to the organization's financial and corporate performance. The better performance of a company is related to workers concerns such as compensation, job satisfaction, job security, training and development etc. Congenial work relations and improved working condition influences company performance.

The globalization of business has facilitated textile and garment production to be more international. The main factors contributed to the globalization of this industry include labor-intensive nature of production technology, the loss of comparative cost advantage of developed countries, dramatic decline in transport and communication costs, search for production sites with lower labor costs, and shift in exports from more restricted to less restricted among the developing countries due to the discriminatory nature of the restrictions imposed by the Multifibre Arrangement. In last three decades, half of the total production capacity of textile and garment production has shifted from developed to the developing countries. The main reason for this shift could be attributed by the low labor costs in production. Developing countries enjoy low labor cost advantages in producing textiles and garments. Globalization has facilitated increasing world exports of textiles and garments. It increased at a rate of 17 percent since 1985 to 1990, which is higher than the world trade in manufacturing of 15.50 percent during the same period. This production performance is achieved by using labor-intensive technologies. But globalization has increased the need for using advanced technologies in developing countries. This has created a challenge for these countries because they enjoy low labor costs in producing textiles and this advantage is disappearing because of modern sophisticated technologies.

Essentially, technology is defined as machines and manufacturing devices that are used in production. Technology could be classified into two types such as, embodied and disembodied technologies. An embodied technology is 'contained', for example, a piece of equipment or machine while, a disembodied technology is a new procedure, technique or method that is available largely through learning, without the purchase of new equipment. However, the present innovations provide both the uses of new machines and advanced techniques. High technologies might be seen as requiring major capital investments and a high degree of specialized technical knowledge and skills. This is termed as 'high tech - low tough' technology. In contrast, low technologies could be seen as requiring a high degree of human skills with small capital expenditures that is called as 'low tech - high tough' technology. The use of the most advanced technologies are different in textile and garment manufacturing in developing countries because they enjoy an advantage in low

labor costs.

With the change in production technology, regulatory measures, economic issues, and demographic factors textile and garment manufacturing processes have been changing. Technological change (e.g., CAD, CAM, CIM) is the most powerful change driver in this sector that includes new and advanced machines, computer-aided production, design, and control. The CAD/CAM for grading, pattern making, marking, and sewing is most important among the technological developments in this sector. For exporting with greater design content and high value-added products, technological change is crucial for the garment company. This is the main balancing factors between suppliers and customers for satisfying their demands.

Technology has become a major shaping force of textile and garment sector to satisfy the requirements of customers. The rapid development and diffusion of textile technologies are contributing to changing both the environment in which people work and the location of that work. Essentially, technology demands specialized knowledge and skills that raise concerns in terms of cost, utilization of capacities, length of educational and training programs, availability of human resource etc. Understanding and controlling the diffusion of technology are important considerations for human resource planning.

Due to the presence of external change drivers, many companies are experiencing pressures to ensure continued growth through enhanced competitiveness in international market. Textile and garment manufacturers recognize that a workforce with the high skills to implement new business strategies is the key component to their future success. These create significant negative effects on lower skilled workers. New human resource requirements need to be considered through an impact analysis of technology before its adaptation. Technological change influence managers to consider change in training requirements, job content, skill levels and demand of workers. Identifying new, emerging and existing technologies, place of use, functions, degree of development, probability of their being introduced and their impacts on workers are important for the sustainable growth of these companies.

3. The Change in Manufacturing Processes of Textile and Garment Companies

Essentially, technology is the key to achieve competitive edge of a company. New and advanced machines and manufacturing systems turn the attention of labor-intensive companies towards technological competitiveness. Computer technology such as CAD/CAM has been changed the patterns of development of developing countries in 1990s. Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) affected the manufacturing functions of textiles such as, grading, marking, and cutting of patterns and fabrics. It encouraged the integration of CAD and CAM with other areas including accounting, order processing, payroll and management information systems, and their application to all other areas of textile manufacturing. These include manufacturing functions and technologies used in textile and garment production processes, which has a relationship with job security, job satisfaction, and work relations of workers.

Fabric preparation is a critical area of interface between textile and garment production that is related to the steps of preparing fabrics for sewing. These activities facilitate the operations of cutting, fusing, sewing, pressing, and coloring of garments. Pre-patterning of undyed fabrics is one of considerable potential steps for fabric preparation. Harnessing of

new technologies to fabric and garment sampling are closely linked to this pre-patterning systems. Ink jet is an economic method for high volume printing of fabric and garment that sometimes provides the capability to print a cutting outline directly onto a fabric for the sample garment production.

The cutting operations are fully automated now days. The textile and garment companies use American 'Gerber System' for this purpose. For retrieving fabric from storage, loading it into the carriage, and removing cut materials, robotics have been using by these companies. Knife system, lasers, and water and plasma jets are used for cutting. For the fault detection, laser technology is widely used by textile companies.

To speed up the materials flow in the factory, textile and garment companies have used simple moving belts to extremely sophisticated computer-controlled automatic overhead conveyers. This new technology has been used from cutting through sewing and finishing to warehousing and dispatching. For materials handling, robots pick up cut pieces from the table and place onto automatic conveyer systems. Computers are often used for handling these materials.

The process of fusing is important for sewing operations for the production of quality garments. The flexible pneumatic roller system is one of the latest fusing technologies that ensure the application of pressure across the whole fusing area regardless of the thickness of the fabrics. This system is even useful for the parts of different thickness at the same time.

There are not many developments in the sewing technology of garment production. The basic sewing actions are still almost unchanged. The development is only incremental in nature. For ensuring flexibility in sewing, some developments have been taken place in garment production processes. Pre-programmable sewing machines can adapt to a succession of small orders in different styles involving changing stitch sequences and machine settings. Some specific sewing operations are also able to attach pockets to jeans, stitch collars for shirts, hem underwear and T-shirts. Pressing and finishing are still labor intensive in many Asian countries for producing textiles and garments.

The technology for dyeing has widely been used by the Asian companies in a number of years. Major improvements in this area are in the design and microprocessor control of machinery, fluid re-circulation systems and the use of specialized dyestuffs and additives. These dyeing technologies have reduced the coloration response time from 10-12 weeks to 2-3 weeks.

4. Impact of Technological Change on Textile and Garment Workers

The workplace of textile and garment companies has been changing due to continuous adoption of new and advanced technologies into the manufacturing process. This change restructures the forms of internal organization, nature of jobs, and employment situation of the company. Job security, job satisfaction, and work relations are influenced by the technological change. New and advanced technology has a significant impact on the overall socio-economic situation of the workers.

Job security is negatively affected by the technological change in the company. These negative effects are concerned with learning new tasks, future of one's job, and worry

about one's ability to adapt to the new work environment. Companies need reduce excess capacity and move towards high performance models of work organizations to be more competitive in international markets. This demands modification of organizational structure that includes broadening jobs, intensifying work, and creating new divisions of labor. A number of studies have stressed on how technology is changing workplace security. These studies primarily argue that the technological change alters job structure. The consequence is the reduction of workers by eliminating medium and lower skilled jobs from the company. Replacing people with technology facilitates this downsizing process. This causes a negative impact on the morale and the overall commitment of workers to the organization. The principal jobs that remain in the company are those that involve higher level of skills, computer programming intelligence, and knowledge of technology.

Technological change demands newer skills, higher workability, and knowledge about new manufacturing processes. New technology requires a different use of workers, different workers with different skills. Workers are compelled to learn how to operate new and advanced machines. Lower skilled workers cannot adapt these new technologies easily. They are often unable to operate machines because of less knowledge and low skills. Frequent failures in working with the new technologies increase uncertainty and make their jobs vulnerable. Workers are neglected by management and are often transferred to other low-tech factories. The ultimate consequence is dismissal of workers from their jobs. However, this is not always the case. Levi and Young claimed that technological change is more likely to change the nature of jobs than to significantly reduce the number of workers.

Increasing stress is the result of introducing new technology into the company. Cooper and Payne identified that the increased stress on job is due to the role conflicts, role ambiguity, and high work assignments. Stress concerns the negative effect on one's job. Technological change makes the workers' roles complex and more diversified. They get confused about their responsibilities. Workers cannot decide the tasks that are to be performed. This increases unnecessary work and decreases the performance of workers.

Technological change increases anxiety among the workers about their jobs. Workers become worried about the new and advanced machines, which are brought by the change. The higher level of anxiety makes the workers frustrated. Job assurance reduces work anxieties of workers. The assurance of one's job and anxiety about one's ability to adapt with new situation is important for job security.

Workload is a concern for the workers in technological change. Professor Sotelo, in an study, found that the replacement of new technology creates a higher workload for the workers. Technological change broadens jobs and makes the work more intense and diversified. Workers are increasingly being asked to do more and varied work than the past. This results in high workload and time pressure on workers.

Technological change is also positively related to job security of workers. The change might be beneficial for the lower skilled workers. A renowned researcher Professor Saving claimed that the creation of employment opportunity is the positive side of technological change, which increases the opportunity for workers to work in suitable jobs. He argued that the technological advancements play a key role in helping overcome the disadvantages of lower skilled workers. Those who lack strength or mobility can use machines to lift objects or move from one location to another. Those who lack dexterity

can operate machines that perform manual labor.

The job satisfaction of workers is significantly influenced by the technological change. The studies related to job satisfaction primarily follow a combination of three broad theoretical approaches including social-psychological, neoclassical economic approach, and a more sociological approach. Some researchers used facets of the job to conceptualize job satisfaction, while others used total satisfaction as the basis for this conceptualization. However, the social psychological approach seems to dominate the literature, which argues that a number of factors determine job satisfaction of workers. These are mainly two kinds - intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic factors include worker participation, autonomy, communication, task significance, distributive justice, career growth, and job variety. The extrinsic factors are pay, benefits, promotional opportunity, job safety, supervisory support, co-worker relations, work overload, role ambiguity, role conflicts, and resource inadequacy.

Essentially, job satisfaction is a self-reported positive mental state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or from one's experience. This attitude towards work is thus necessarily within the context of environment, which includes job itself and organizational characteristics, and the interaction of these two with workers characteristics. Monetary compensation such as salary, benefits and allowances are the most important explanatory variables for evaluating job satisfaction. Workers' job satisfaction is related to the supervision quality. Job characteristics related variables are also consistent to job satisfaction. Workers become less satisfied with the jobs, which requires using advanced machines than those of simple nature jobs. Workers with higher level of skills tend to be less satisfied. Job satisfaction increases with age. The older workers are comparatively more satisfied than the younger. The direction of all these studies on job satisfaction tends to be consistent to the self-reporting inner state of an individual. These are related to job itself and one's experience in the job. These beliefs and attitudes on job are substantially modified by the technological change.

Fair pay is an important issue in technological change of the company. Workers feel that new and advanced technologies increase unfairness in pay. Lower skilled workers are paid lower than the standard amount. Workers perceive that the company discriminates against them by paying less and rewarding higher skilled workers. Temporary workers (e.g., contract workers, workers working in absence of other workers etc.) feel it is unfair when they are assigned more workload with low wages. Workers satisfaction is hardly a concern for the managers. These workers obtain comparatively lower level of social supports and experience more unfair pay. These results in a comparatively lower level of job satisfaction than those of skilled workers do.

Technological change increases the significance of the job and reduces boredom in job. New and advanced technologies are skill biased and the workers with higher skills get more benefit. Workers with the high skill variety, autonomy, and job significance experience a higher level of job satisfaction than their lower skilled counterparts. The higher skilled workers are able to work with complex machines and can earn more. Working with a significant job improves the job satisfaction of workers. They feel proud of working with good jobs. But workers efforts to do good jobs are often blocked by the bureaucracy of the company. Professor Hackman and Oldham observed that working with significant jobs with fewer procedures and formalities improve the job satisfaction of workers. Five core job dimensions including skill variety, task identity, task significance,

autonomy, and feedback determine the level of motivation potential of workers at work.

Supervision quality is an important matter for the workers. Unfair treatment regarding pay, allowances, work distribution, and the unfair behaviors of supervisors increases with technological change. Supervisors work at the floor level and they should be involved in the design of jobs involved in the change. The nature of job design includes task complexity, task variety, and task interdependence which are correlated with job satisfaction. Task interdependence demands similar skilled workers at the different stages of manufacturing process to produce a high quality product. This requires the active role of supervisors in the change. Engineers often perform job design without using the experience of supervision. This results in the negative motivation of supervision.

Workers benefits are significantly modified by the introduction to new and advanced technologies. Lee found that the higher skilled workers get more financial and non-financial benefits than the lower skilled workers in the change. Non-financial benefits are related to promotion in higher position and employ in significant task. Workers with higher skills can easily adapt to the new work environment. They are able to perform a variety of jobs that increases their benefits. The change increases advancement in job for the higher skilled workers. The positive impact of technological change is improving one's career within the company. The benefits of lower skilled workers are reduced due to their inability to work with complex machines, which results in more dissatisfaction.

The technological change influences the communication of goals and sharing information in the company. Workers are enthusiastic to know what is happening in the company by the change. But very often the company hides information to avoid potential resistance. Continuous job survey and informal communication improve the effectiveness of organizational communication. Workers feel a sense of inclusion when the company shows considerable interest to share information with them. Workers get skeptical about the future of their jobs if the goals are not fully communicated to them.

Co-worker relations is an important influence on a congenial work environment. This is even more important when the company introduces new technologies into the company. Co-worker relations will be higher when they work as team with similar feelings and attitudes about the change. Workers satisfaction will be higher when working as members of a group as compared to working as an individual. But technological change creates conflicts among the workers. The higher level of conflicts causes divisions among workers, which lowers their job satisfaction.

Work habits are influenced by the technological change. Professor Pedrick analyzed how technological change modifies the habits of workers. He explained that the workers get habituated with the old machines and manufacturing processes because they have been working with those for a long time. The long term working experience creates a sort of prejudice to a particular production technology. But technological change replaces old machines with more advanced ones, which causes inconvenience for the workers. This leads to workers being dissatisfied with their jobs.

Work relations are defined as positive and negative relations between the management and workers. Positive relationships include worker support for the change, less militant unions, no confrontation, management support for skill development, and workers involvement in the work decisions. While, the presence of conflicts, confrontations, strikes, and

psychological withdrawals of workers indicate negative work relations. Good work relations are an important factor for better performance of a manufacturing company. Technological change often hampers good work relations by bringing new and advanced machines into the company. The increase in frustration and dissatisfaction of workers leads to poor work relations.

Workers involvement in technological change activities improves work relations. The involvement of workers can improve the quality of the change process through increasing their commitment to it. However, workers involvement requires communication and management skills of team participants, knowledge of advanced systems, and coordination among related change attitudes, which affect effective workers involvement. Lower level workers lack communication and management skills. They have very low knowledge of advanced technologies. Workers do not have a clear understanding of the change process. This negative view of management on workers decreases their involvement in the change process.

Training and skill development are significantly related to the technological change. For introducing advanced manufacturing systems training becomes essential for workers to fit the new system. The company should conduct a needs assessment to decide which workers will be trained for new positions. It is also essential to address the anxiety of workers about learning how to operate new and advanced machines and languages. Lack of time and limited resources restrain the effectiveness of the training and skill development initiatives of the company.

Communicating change plans to workers is another important step for implementing technological change. These are also positively related to work relations. Lack of communication of change-plans to workers causes resistance to change. Top management should emphasize open communication and act on it. These include more meetings with workers, increased use of internal publications, communication skills training with workers, and providing more resources to support training programs. Workers can adapt to change better if they are informed about the change earlier.

Personal control over the work is an important determinant to improve work relations in the company. Technological change transforms production systems from traditional to automated control systems. It restructures jobs in the company and reduces the functional authority of workers. This transformation of jobs increases the personal control of workers. The more personal control regarding workplace reform and leverages results in better work relations at workplace.

Conflicts and strikes are important considerations for technological change. Technological change increases the threat of job loss. Workers react to this threat by decreased work effort, increased resistance to change by strikes, lowered supports, increased negative attitude towards work, and more likely to leave the company. The more conflicts and more strikes lead to less work relations at the workplace. Cohesion and conflicts come forth when workers are actively involved in the change process. Workers always seek their inclusion in the change process because they like to know about the change.

A forum for continuous dialogue could be formed to reduce the conflicts between workers and the management by the management. Management requires the highest

priority to improve the job-specific skills of workers. Vocational training for empowering workers should be an important way to avoid the resistance to change. Financial and non-financial supports could be provided to workers. Financial supports include salary, benefits and allowances. Empowerment through workers participation, personal control, and involvement in the change process improves a sense of community feeling and enhances supportive relationships between worker and the employer. Training programs and strategic alliances in the areas of obvious mutual interest, such as health and safety, equal and fair treatments are important factors to improve work relations in the company. The efficiency in change management reduces the feelings of anxiety, occupational stress and other negative consequences of technological change.

Managing technological change is a critical problem for the textile and garment managers. Technological change necessitates a greater concern about the appropriateness of human resources strategies. At the enterprise level, new technology should be complemented by change processes including human resource planning, work organization, training and development, worker participation for improve work relations to reduce the negative consequence of the change on workers. In such situations, management requires a proactive approach to adapt technological change efficiently.

There is a significant relationship between technological change and the overall socio-economic situation of workers. In one way, technological change has direct influence on the overall situation of workers. Income and status of workers are significantly influenced by the change. The overall situation of workers is affected, in other way, by the job security, job satisfaction, work and relations through the influence of technological change. Technological change affects job security, job satisfaction, and work relations and, in turn, impacts on the overall socio-economic situation of workers. Technological change impact on overall situation of workers is defined in socio-economic terms. This includes economic factors such as, income, benefits, allowances and social concerns, such as, family, or status. Job security, job satisfaction, and work relations are related to this overall socio-economic situation. Technological change increases skill demands, work pressure, uncertainty and frustration among the workers. The change eliminates jobs from the company. Technological change has influence on job satisfaction of workers. It often increases job dissatisfaction of workers because the change modifies financial and non-financial benefits. The change lowers salary, alters work assignments, deteriorates supervision quality, lowers information sharing, declines promotion opportunity, and deteriorates co-worker relations. These negative influences of technological change increase conflicts between management and workers. The higher level of conflicts increases strikes, which has a significant negative effect on work relations in the company.

5. Technological Change and Women Workers in Textile and Garment Workers

Technological change has significant impact on women textile and garment workers. The life and work of women workers in developing countries is full of challenges and social constraints. Women make up the majority of workers in the textile and garment industry throughout Asia. But they are disadvantaged both as women and as workers. They are low cost and easily available in labor markets. Due to the fierce competition in international market and abounds in low-skilled unemployed workers women cannot command high price. Women workers do not have adequate training in most the cases. They rarely have access to the same training and education as men. Therefore, if prior training is required, they are deprived of it. In addition, women are not considered suitable without training and

they are not promoted to the areas of work where the training is necessary. Textile and garment managers admit that the women are more accurate and diligent than men. But they are often paid less than standard wage rates. The management of the company often suppresses women workers by paying less than standard wages and providing poor working conditions. For the similar work, women are paid at a lower rate than the men. Although, there are some good laws for protecting women workers rights such as equal pay for equal work between men and women, but in practice these are not followed. Women are treated poorly at the workplace because they are mostly unskilled and are unable work with significant jobs. Women have hardly any chance to mutual dialogue concerning work, pay, and benefits with the management.

With a subordinate position in society women cannot exert their rights and have hardly any control over their work and working environment. The social status of women workers depends on the changing economic circumstances of the economy. Usually, lower income women undertake reproductive, productive, and community managing activities. There are practical needs and social needs. Practical needs are related to the socially accepted roles of women in the society and concerned with the necessity to provide a living which are affected by the inadequacies in living conditions such as, water provision, health, employment etc. Social needs are associated with the gender divisions of labor, power and control, legal rights, equal wages, women's control over their bodies, etc. Appropriate work related policies like, welfare, equality, efficiency, and economic and social empowerment are very important approaches to fulfil both needs of women workers in developing countries like Bangladesh.

Note: *The present study is a part of Doctoral Dissertation of Nazrul Islam conducted at Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand with the supervision of an American Professor Dr. Fredric William Swierczek. It examines the technological change impact on socioeconomic situation of textile and garment workers of Bangladesh. This study has been conducted only at the enterprise level and it is primarily based on survey of workers.*

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