



Journal Homepage: -[www.journalijar.com](http://www.journalijar.com)

## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/17640  
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/17640>



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### RESPONSES OF RMG PRODUCERS IN BANGLADESH TO MULTINATIONAL BUYERS' DEMAND DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Syedul Al-Amin and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mohiuddin

#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History

Received: 28 July 2023

Final Accepted: 31 August 2023

Published: September 2023

##### Key words:-

Covid-19 Pandemic, RMG Sectors, RMG Owners, Product Demand, Multinational Buyers, Response Policies and Actions, Bangladesh

#### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic affected Bangladesh RMG sectors negatively and the sector producers have undertaken policy and action plans to overcome the setbacks to survive and sustain in the wake of declining buyers' demands. Drastic fall of demand, order cancellation, reduction of the number of orders, payment holding up, order price fall, etc. were the effects that sharply declined the RMG situations. The study found that mainly two policies were taken by the RMG owners to handle the crises. They are the Cost reduction policy and the new market search policy. Under such policies, many action measures were taken. Besides, governmental support helped a lot. All these actions at last ended up with the survival of many firms. Till now they are struggling with the crises. Mixed-form research methods have been applied in the study. The study was confined in the Gazipur district of Bangladesh and 20 firms working there were the sample. Further study needs to be done to know about the scenario and effects in detail.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2023,. All rights reserved.

#### Introduction:-

Different articles and reports along with those of ILO have created a strong assertion that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented globally. Economies have been affected differently due to numerous reasons including the nature and scale of the economies. The labour-intensive industry of export-led RMG is dominant in Bangladesh. Bangladesh being an over populated country seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic primarily due to the massive disruption in RMG sector.

In the global market, the RMG sectors in Bangladesh is the second-largest producer of readymade garments. COVID-19 pandemic affected RMG sectors of Bangladesh in different ways such as international RMGs demand reduction, cancellation of orders, price reductions. The lockdown was internal cause of production discontinuation.

Low-priced labour, women employment generations and their quality of work life have made the RMG sectors of Bangladesh attractive and well-functioning. Bangladesh has a historical background of cloths. Dhaka Muslin was famous and that attracted foreign and transmarine buyer after the establishment of the Mughal capital in Dhaka. The Muslin industry of Dhaka received patronage from the Mughal emperors and the Mughal nobility. A huge quantity of the finest sort of muslin was produced for the use of the Mughal emperors, provincial governors and high officers and nobles.

There has been a lot of research on the COVID-19 situation in general but very little has been done centering on RMG sectors in Bangladesh. It has been found that the majority of COVID-19 research focuses on the psycho-social

aspects of people living in the urban areas of Bangladesh. There is a glaring dearth of studies relating COVID-19 with Bangladesh's RMG industry. This research bridges these information gaps in different ways. First, it has reviewed the scale of impacts of the pandemic on the RMG sector, which is done through a systematic review of literature; Second, it has reviewed how the RMG producers of Bangladesh tackle the power asymmetry with their global counterparts; and Third, it has identified some key policies for the apparel industry of Bangladesh to develop a balanced relationship with international buyers.

To reach the second and third objectives, this research greatly prefers the survey-response received through the empirical technique of research. The empirical element of the research is conducted through online-based interviews. The survey instrument focuses primarily on the readiness of factories to follow COVID-19 protocols and the policies and procedures the firms adopted to maintain a safe working environment while maintaining output and productivity.

This paper describes the circumstances of the RMG sectors in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 epidemic on the basis of interviews with the RMG owners, material that is currently available, and secondary data. The researcher gathered data through interviews with Bangladeshi RMG owners and workers. Newspapers, websites, online journals, and research reports on pertinent cases were investigated. The COVID-19 epidemic has already had an influence on the RMG industries, owners as well as employees' physical and emotional well-being, employment opportunities, socioeconomic standing, and working conditions.

### **Statement of the problem**

The world has been going through an unprecedented health crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As of 23 June 2022, the coronavirus has infected 539, 893, 858 people globally including 6,324, 112 deaths (WHO, 2022). These figures are only documented, and it is assumed that the undocumented number of infected people and deaths is higher than the official figures. The global pandemic has shaken the world market economy and will have a long-lasting effect on the global market. The economic activity of Bangladesh revolves around producing garments for the global market or buyers in the 'global north' that contribute more than 80% of the total exports of Bangladesh. An estimated 4.2 million workers are working in the Bangladesh RMG sector (ILO, 2022: Haque and Bari, 2021). Although the apparel industry has been playing a key role in the rapid industrialization and economic development of Bangladesh (IHRB, 2021:8), there are some significant concerns regarding the treatment of garment workers in Bangladesh and the enormous power imbalance between global buyers and the Bangladeshi supply chains. Due to the pandemic, the pre-existing problems and vulnerability in the relationship between global brands and their Bangladeshi garment suppliers have been exposed more clearly than at any other time (Reza and Jean Jacques, 2022 :1; Uddin et al., 2021:4). The Covid pandemic caused the cancellation and suspension of orders from Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and increased pressure on Bangladeshi garment factories to lower production volumes as well as reduce prices further down. This has, without any surprise, adversely impacted millions of workers and the garment producers in Bangladesh. Against this backdrop, this study investigated the consequences of the Covid pandemic on the relationship between the global buyers and Bangladeshi RMG producers. It unveiled the policy and actions taken by the RMG from the responses of Bangladeshi suppliers to the demands of the global buyers in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Objectives of the research: -**

To advance our understanding of the responses of the Bangladeshi Garment industry to the demand of the global brands during the Covid-19 pandemic, this study aims:

1. To identify the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on both the demand and supply sides of the operations.
2. To capture the ways RMG producers of Bangladesh used to tackle the power asymmetry with their global counterparts.
3. To suggest some key policies for the apparel industry of Bangladesh to develop a balanced relationship with international buyers.

### **Literature review and Rationale of the Research**

A brief look at the existing and ongoing research on the impact of Covid-19 on the RMG industry in Bangladesh reveals that studies have focused on the pandemic from different perspectives. According to Onyema et al. (2020), the COVID-19 outbreak is the greatest pandemic to hit the planet in a long time. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that COVID-19 will result in the loss of 24.7 million jobs (McKeever, 2020).

The RMG workers were also affected by the order cancellation. Kamruzzaman&Sakib (2020, March 26) observed that the purchasers and brands have experienced financial losses, the suppliers' orders were cancelled, and six (6) billion orders have been postponed and consequently the workers were not paid their salaries. According to International Labor Organization (ILO), 72.4 percent of Bangladeshi firms were unable to offer any type of remuneration to their workers when they were furloughed. Order cancellations resulted in worker dismissals, 80.4 percent of Bangladeshi suppliers indicated that they were unable to pay the workers (Anner, 2020). Noyon (2020) mentioned that COVID-19 might result in job losses for number of garment workers. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), COVID-19 would cause 894,930 people in Bangladesh to lose their employment (Perera, 2020). As a result of brand and buyers' demands for factory remediation initiatives following the Rana Plaza collapse, which led to the firing of more than 50,000 workers, more than 70 factories were closed in the previous year and 1,200 in the subsequent four years, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) (Perera, 2020). Therefore, the people working in the garment sector are mostly impacted by this significant event.

For example, Reza and Plessi (2022) examine how the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the vulnerability and pre-existing power imbalance between the MNCs and their Bangladeshi suppliers. Uddin et al., (2021) uncovered various crises such as lowering unit prices, downward pressure on factories' mark-up, cancellation of orders and delay in global buyers' payments which were created by the pandemic in the garment sector of Bangladesh. According to ILO (2020), purchase orders worth more than \$US 3.15 billion, were either suspended or cancelled by the buyers due to COVID-19 which affected 1,136 factories. CPD (2021) showed that 3,57,450 RMG workers in Bangladesh were laid-off or terminated as the international brands cancelled their orders.

Despite the significant setbacks in the RMG sector of Bangladesh, the effects of measures taken by global brands, none of the significant research has yet been focused on the responses of Bangladeshi RMG suppliers to the demands of global brands during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study focuses on how the Bangladesh garment industry deals and tackles the global buyers' demand in the wake of the pandemic.

### **Contributions of the research**

It is widely known that the Covid-19 outbreak damaged the Bangladesh RMG industry very badly and overall, the economy of Bangladesh. The effects will be continued for a long period of time. However, it is still unclear how the garment factories of Bangladesh have dealt with - and are still dealing- with the global brands. We also don't know much about the impacts of the pandemic on the imbalanced relationship between the Bangladeshi supply chains and the MNCs contracting with them. Given these limitations of the existing studies, this research will shed some light on how the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing the inequalities between the buyer and seller, how the RMG producers have dealt with it and what more possible measures could be taken to deal with the huge governance gap between MNCs and supply chains that needs to be addressed urgently, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Methodology:-**

The main approach for collecting data has been used in this study is designed to be mixed in nature-qualitative and quantitative. Given the purpose of the research, it is necessary to combine different methodological approaches for this study. In-depth interviews with the factory owners have accelerated the inquiry into their responses to the demand of the international buyers. Semi-structured interviews have been used to collect the primary data. Personal observation was also used in conjunction with interviews as it produces findings that are relatively more accurate. In this research, Dhaka division is the sampling unit. What is notable is that most of the RMG factories are in the Dhaka division and particularly in three of its districts which are Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur. The study was restricted to the readymade garment industry located in Dhaka and Gazipur and Narayanganj districts in Bangladesh. A substantial number of factories are found in the Dhaka district. Therefore, many samples have been collected from the Dhaka district. All the owners of the apparel industry of Bangladesh constitute the population of this research. A total of 20 respondents from the Apparel industry constituted the sample size of the study. A stratified random sampling technique has been applied for the study. The study has considered both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from various published materials such as BGMEA, research articles, monographs, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Bangladesh Ministry of Commerce. In line with the purpose of the research, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken to increase our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the RMG sector in Bangladesh and strategies adopted by the government, industry, and other stakeholders to address it. Some statistics and information were collected from published reports of various organizations and

articles. The core data and information were collected through a self-administered interview. In 10 randomly chosen owners, 10 employees were given an online-based and face to face interview. Among the ten employees, the people working in three tiers - high-level management roles, mid-level supervisory roles and floor in-charge positions for various departments were taken as respondents.

### **Discussion and Results:-**

Bangladesh, along with other developed and emerging nations, is one of those that are most adversely affected. Bangladesh's garment sector has been severely impacted by this pandemic. A RMG owner mentioned that a buyer from USA cancelled the products of US\$5,00,000 and all the product was the school uniform. The Bangladeshi business man had nothing to do with the uniform. He could not sell it in the international or domestic market. The products of the cancelled orders sometime can be sold at a lower price to the different international buyers or in the domestic market but in the case of school uniform, it is not possible and therefore cannot be sold. The company sometimes recycle the uniforms of cancelled order. That is also expensive. Hundred percent RMG owners and top-level employees stated that the overhead cost had been increased in the period of COVID pandemic. H & M, one of the biggest buyers of RMG of our nation, is reducing connections with its Bangladeshi suppliers, which results in the closure of their facilities and increases expenses by hundreds of millions of dollars. Due to the present lack of Bangladeshi RMG clothing, major shops like H & M, Zara, M & S, and Primark have all opted to remain closed. The worldwide COVID-19 phenomenon has an impact on consumers' buying patterns and discretionary income that sometimes resulted in completely shutting down of trade.

Order cancellation was one of the major problems for the RMG owners of Bangladesh during the pandemic. Ninety percent interviewed RMG owners mentioned about the cancellation of the orders.

H&M is currently forced to "temporarily stop" the extension of orders and to assess its present ones due to the recent explosion of foreign enterprises, which has affected its capacity to buy additional garments from Bangladesh. For example, H&M not only was used to pay for supplies before the worldwide pandemic, but also was helping to deliver a variety of orders from other countries before the epidemic (Mina et al., 2020; Rahman & Ishty, 2020). But now they are not doing so. Primark gives orders totalling US\$300 million every month that are equal to 2 million people's monthly income in the garment business, according to figures from the Bangladesh Textile Manufacturers and Exporters (BGME), but now it is reduced.

The sickness affects worldwide supply chains, consumer demand, and staff well-being as well. If it continues at the current rate, it is estimated to have lost roughly US\$4.2 billion in export sales by the end of the fourth quarter (Bain, 2020, March 21). The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee conducted a nationwide survey of 2675 respondents from low-income backgrounds in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and discovered that 14% of the respondents had no food reserves at home and 29% only had enough food for 1-3 days.

As of Arif et al. (2021), Star Business Report mentioned, multinational clothing shops and brands are seeking up to 5 percent reductions from Bangladesh's clothes exporters, creating another burden for the suppliers, who are already battling with several challenges amid a turbulent global economic climate. According to Abdullah Al Mamun, vice president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, local textile and clothing providers receive the lowest prices from customers despite paying higher gas and power prices and investing extensively to build the safest plants in accordance with international standards.

The lockdown was like to add insult to the injury. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) proclaimed a state of lockdown throughout the country from March 26, 2020, to May 30, 2020, because of the daily rise of COVID-19 infections in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) halted their operations in response to the lockdown in accordance with the government's lockdown directive. Even though demand for online purchases may have risen, supply chains were unable to keep up with demand owing to changes in freight alternatives as a result of the rising worldwide lockdown caused by COVID-19. As a result, 10 million working people, including RMG employees, returned to their home towns from Dhaka, as they would be unable to maintain themselves in Dhaka without work. Unfortunately, on the return trip, safety measures relating to the avoidance of COVID-19, like keeping a minimum social distance from others, were not maintained.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on these RMG employees are severe and include uncertainty about their right to compensation during the pandemic, as well as related problems like a lack of funds for necessities like food

and worries about the reopening of factories during peak COVID-19 infection periods. Other issues include the health dangers associated with the absence of workplace safety precautions and the emergence of mental health illnesses brought on by the effects of job loss and COVID-19-related anxiety. Bangladesh, as many other nations, is struggling to fulfil the continued demands of their enormous population during the COVID-19 epidemic and is unable to deliver the assistance packages being supplied in wealthy countries. As a result, the COVID-19 lockdown and accompanying economic slump has led to a substantial loss of income for the working poor, who will be compelled to leave home, breach isolation restrictions, and risk infection in an attempt to find ways to feed their families.

According to Sadequee Hossain, the owner of Elham Fashion Ltd. the incentive that was given by honourable Prime Minister came to him as a resort to survive during COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the RMG owners received incentives. Though that was insufficient, but beneficial for the RMG owners, employees and workers. Workers were paid that incentive as their wages through mobile banking. The probability of corruption was less in this regard. To combat the COVID-19 epidemic, the honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh (Sheikh Hasina) proposed a stimulus package worth BDT 5000 corer (US\$587 925 000) for the export-oriented economy on March 25, 2020. She told the factory owners to utilize this money to pay the employees' and workers' wages. Unfortunately, the factory owners failed to pay overdue salaries on time and failed to pay the workers' entire earnings for the months of March and April 2020, which prompted hundreds of workers to protest in the streets and demand their full wages. This is also found by Arif et al (2021) too. RMG employees execute work that generates billions of dollars in exports annually (more than US\$30.61 billion in the 2017–18 fiscal year) for the benefit of factory owners (Arif et al., 2021).

The BGMEA abruptly announced that, with the government's approval, garment manufacturers will reopen on April 26, 2020, in order to fulfil shipments of already ordered apparel. This was announced during the ongoing infection (when COVID-19-related illnesses and mortality rates are rising). The study reveals that 2526 RMG employees allegedly received calls from factory management warning them that if they don't come back to work, they would lose their jobs and any unpaid wages. During the lockdown, there was no alternate transportation offered to bring them from their home villages, which were frequently in rural regions, to the manufacturing location, making it more difficult for them to return to work. As a result, workers had to organize their own transportation to get back to work, which required them to use packed trucks and tiny cars, increasing their risk for contamination with the virus causing their illness.

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the world's supply networks. Therefore, it is important to think about how the COVID-19 epidemic made changes in the structure of the supply chains for apparel in the long run. The COVID-19 pandemic breakout made several cancellations of clothing orders from multinational companies and purchasers. On March 27, 316 suppliers from Bangladesh took part in research on the effects of the COVID-19 issue in the RMG sector performed by the "Centre for Global Workers' Rights" and the "Worker Rights Consortium." It is found and reported in the Financial Express (April 1, 2020) that multinational retailers and brands have halted apparel imports from Bangladesh worth up to US\$3 billion.

The study reveals that from a country-specific viewpoint, 'Mosaic Brands', one significant Australian retail firm (which owns Katies, Rivers, Noni B, Rockmans, Millers, Autograph, W. Lane, and Beme), has hold or cancelled orders and delaying payment for a total of US\$15 million. This conclusion has the potential to produce joblessness and decreased negotiating strength of the RMG workers over salaries and other rights-related concerns (ABC NEWS). BRAC institute stated that it is clear that more than a million RMG employees have lost their employment as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Workers from RMG have protested in the street to demand the restoration of their employment but eventually did not produce any result because of inherent weakness of the working class in Bangladesh. Similar situation was reported by Khosla (2009) in his research too. He said that even if the workplace is dangerous, the fear of losing their jobs has eventually silenced them more in this already exploitative labour market. Another study revealed that if the current supply chain is disrupted, plant owners may be justified in continuing to pay their employees' wages irregularly (Kabir, Maple, & Usher, 2020). We know that in the RMG industry, irregular salary payments have been a big issue and any kind of disruption causes unrest and stoppage of production.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the RMG sectors were facing multidimensional problems. All the interviewed RMG owners have mentioned that international orders had been cancelled and reduced. So, many organizations have already been abolished. An owner of the RMG factory told that there was no continuation of his factories

during COVID-19 because of the shortage of orders from the multinational buyers. Some factory owners were unable to continue the production. An owner (who didn't want to disclose his name) told that his factory had been discontinuing for two months due to COVID-19 loss of orders.

RMG industries have faced order reduction problem during the COVID pandemic period. The multinational buyers during the pandemic period stopped their selling or sold less or remained close their stores. The business organization used to sell only the products of apparel industry mainly in the European countries. The super stores were discontinued or reduced their operations. So, the multinational buyers or the brands placed fewer orders. And competition increased much during the COVID to get orders. The international buyers placed their orders to the RMG factories that could sell their products at the lower price. The international buyers invited tenders through online from the RMG owners and bought from the lowest bidders. That enhanced the competition among the RMG industries.

International buyers sometimes told the RMG owners to send the products quickly by air otherwise s/he would cancel the orders. The afore mentioned condition given by the international buyers was very uncongenial for the Bangladeshi RMG owners. A factory owner from Dhaka stated "A buyer told to send the products by air. If I don't send by air, he would not take the product. So, I was bound to send the product by air." It created less profit for the owners.

It took more time to load the products on board. Jaheedur Rahman, head of the department, DVC Bangladesh liaison office, told "Usually it takes 22 to 28 days but during the pandemic it took about 40 days in port for the activities related to export. It sometimes led to cancel the shipment." Some Indian middlemen took the advantages of COVID-19 pandemic. They took some compensation from the buyers for the cancel of orders as well as they took orders from the other international buyers for the same products but gave less money to the Bangladeshi Owners. And the Bangladeshi owners thought that it is better to get less than not to get anything. As the products of the cancelled orders cannot be sold and sometimes, they sold it on 75% discount. The Indian buying houses or middlemen made huge profit during COVID pandemic in such a way.

#### **Policies taken by the RMG Owners:**

Different policies were taken by the owners of the RMG factories of Bangladesh to combat the situation. More or less all the respondents described the same policies and procedures that they used to respond the international buyers' demands. But it sometimes depends on the size of capacity of the factories.

- (a) The overtime of the factory workers had been stopped. Before the COVID 19 period there were overtime for the workers. Overtime was one of the main earning sources for the garment's workers. When it was off, the workers' migration increased. The factories did not fill those positions to reduce the cost.
- (b) As the orders were less, the factory owners prioritized on their survival. So, they wanted to reduce their cost. They produced less or sometimes remain closed their productions.
- (c) Workers were given layoff by force and sometimes fired without any fault.
- (d) Some factory owners were unable to pay the salaries of the employees. One of the respondents said that he/she could not pay the wages of the workers one and a half months.
- (e) Increment of the employees were held-up.
- (f) The workers were not given any extra benefits during the pandemic.
- (g) As the orders decreased, factories produced less. There were two shifts in some factories before the pandemic but during the pandemic, the factories were producing in a single shift. The owners reduced the hidden cost of the production and operations of their organizations.
- (h) New employment was totally stopped in the RMG sectors during the pandemic period.
- (i) Order cancellation did not create much problem for the factories before the collection of the raw materials. And the situation when the raw materials collected but the production was not started, the raw materials could be used in another production. If the product is ready and that is uniform, cancellation of that order is very problematic for the organizations.
- (j) Factories of RMG stopped to give sub-contract to other smaller factories. Before the pandemic, most of the respondent-owners provide subcontract to other smaller factories. Due to the orders reduction and cancellation during the pandemic, they stopped to provide subcontracts. Some other related factories had already been stopped. When there is the question of their own survival how they would provide subcontract to other smaller factories.

(k) Some factories were operating on break-even-point. Some organization also made less profit. One respondent says, "Our turnover before the COVID pandemic were about one hundred sixty million US dollars per year but during the pandemic our turn over were only sixty million US dollar.

(l) Owners had responded the international buyers through two ways: cost reduction and increasing their sales. But sales enhancements were not on their hands. Some factories also tried to increase their sales. They searched for new customers or markets making very less profit. Their main objective was to survive at the pandemic period. Cost reduction was occurred through less production, firing or without hiring employees, without giving benefit or giving less benefits to the workers, sending the employees layoff, closing production, not providing sub contract, without providing overtime to the workers, closing more shift of works etc.

**Policies taken by the Government that facilitated RMG Sector**

Most of the countries all over the world were using active non-therapeutic treatments to stop the COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh had also taken some significant initiatives to reduce the problems caused by of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Islam et al. (2020), Bangladesh has followed the same path as the rest of the globe. In order to combat COVID-19, the government of Bangladesh had taken the following initialises:

- 1) The formation of a national COVID-19 response committee headed by the Minister of Health;
- 2) Postponment of the grand inauguration of birth centennial celebrations of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman;
- 4) All public and private offices were closed;
- 5) All educational institutions were closed;
- 6) All public gatherings and transportation services were prohibited;
- 7) The cancellation of the Bangla New Year festivities scheduled for April 14;
- 8) The 50th Independence Day celebration were postponed;
- 9) The implementation of the "Rice for Tk. 10 per KG" project for disadvantaged residents around the nation (about 12 cents per kg of rice).
- 10) Additionally, the philanthropic community, wealthy people, and members of the civic society generously supported the underprivileged class of society by giving them food and money (Arif et al., 2021 & Kamol, 2020, Mar. 9).

Small and medium-sized businesses, cottage industries, physicians, and the homeless are among the groups that have received one of the government's several initiatives, which are included in an overall US\$ 11.90 billion package for business. By providing homeless people with a US\$ 10 million covering medical, agricultural and healthcare facilities, the financing is in place to help defend the nation's food and nutritional security (Desk, 2020, April 13). Five months after the Corona virus was discovered, therapy in Bangladesh was deemed to be too risky and impractical due to the patient's level of immobility and difficulty for coordinating their diagnosis and care (Bain, 2020, March 21).

However, despite the fact that Bangladesh's general health care system has flaws and problems, efforts are being made to improve it by expanding access and standardizing care that is good enough, and only a small percentage of the population is currently experiencing the effects of a terrible health event. The public health authorities were involved in a comprehensive pandemic preparation assignment to meet the COVID-19 pandemic campaign, during which they were ready to tackle any potential situation before the situation had gotten out of hand.

But on the ground, the governance was not exhibited rightly in many cases. The worst signs of this sort of governance were clear: Effective policies are frequently disregarded or overruled by politicians and their workers, and there is a lack of teamwork across many government departments (Zahid, 2020, May 10). Furthermore, though it was forbidden by the government for travelling from the COVID -19 nations, governments are unable to properly regulate the individuals entering the country (Anwar et al., 2020). The government of Bangladesh was unable to identify those who had COVID-19 because of departmental confusion. As a result, other crucial steps needed to be taken to address the problem, such as organizing airports and taking measures to find out if any other travellers had it.

However, four more outbound departures were made via Bangladesh's border crossings with other countries, one in Chittagong, and another five were existed through Bangladesh's border crossings with other countries' outlets. Since no procedures for disinfection were completed and no sample was present, confirmatory testing for any contaminants or microbiological evidence in passenger blood may be done.

Bangladesh initially said that a lockdown would be implemented for 10 days in order to be enforced. Prior to the time of the initial lockdown, about a thousand service providers and manufacturers were already being moved (often from areas like Gazipur and Narayanganj), and others chose to travel considerable distances despite the fear of the H3N2 bird flu pandemic, i.e., from Dhaka. After the broad evacuation and dispersion, the government issued a directive permitting residents to return to their homes within 500 miles of the lower 48 states, and those who had been living outside of these states started to travel back to their original residences (Anwar et al., 2020). Alternatively, the government made an exception and consented to a relatively slow rate of recovery when the majority of people—including small company owners—felt the economic damage would be too large to be avoided (Zahid, 2020, May 10). This allowed them to continue operating.

At other times of the year, when there was less demand for their nations' hospitality, Eid-UI-Fitr is also significant for expats who are immigrants, even if Dhaka has a vast population. Due to delays in enforcing restrictions, government agencies have failed to develop adequate collaboration across departments and authorities, which has allowed unlawful operations to grow (Anwar et al., 2020). One notable health care professional mentioned that among the 40,000 people being accused of selling fake COVID-19 credentials, the people from the ministry of health were involved with ill-practice in buying caps, gowns, plastic coveralls, and shoe covers and regular respirators and private security equipment (Ullah, 2020, April 18). More than 1,400 of those people were later discovered to have engaged in criminal activity (Sumon, 2020, July 11).

### **Conclusion:-**

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the whole world and the RMG sectors of Bangladesh are not out of that. The RMG industry badly affected during the pandemic period. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and due to drastic reduction in multi-demands of the international buyers to the RMG products made the industry destroyed. The Bangladesh RMG sector needed urgent coordinated and effective actions from all actors, including the global health communities, BGMEA, international brands/retailers, the Government of Bangladesh, and the International Labour Organization (Kabir, Maple, & Usher, 2020). Both the RMG owners and Bangladesh government have taken much measures and policies to appease the problems created during COVID-19 pandemic. This paper investigated the responses that have been initiated by the RMG owners for the decreased demand of the multinational buyers besides the measures taken by the GoB to protect the RMG sectors during the pandemic situation. The discussion will corroborate the researchers to further study on how to deal with the post pandemic situations of RMG sectors of Bangladesh.

### **References:-**

1. ABC News Suppliers Under Pressure as Australian Retailers Ask for Discounts, Hold Orders During Coronavirus Pandemic. 13 May 2020 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-13/australian-retailers-delay-supplier-payments-amid-coronavirus/12236458> (15 May 2023, date last accessed).
2. Anner, M. (2020). Abandoned? The impact of Covid-19 on workers and businesses at the bottom of global garment supply chains. PennState Center for Global Workers' Rights (CGWR), 29. <https://www.workersrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Abandoned-Penn-State-WRC-Report-March-27-2020.pdf>
3. Anwar, S., Nasrullah, M., & Hosen, M. J. (2020). COVID-19 and Bangladesh: Challenges and How to Address Them [Policy Brief]. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8(154). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00154>.
4. Arif I, Karim M. M, Rahman M. S, Hamid A. A. (2021) "How Government Response to COVID-19 in Bangladesh? An Overview". *Journal of Business Strategy Finance and Management*, 3(1,2). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12944/JBSFM.03.01-02.09>
5. Bain, M. (2020, March 21). Coronavirus threatens the livelihoods of garment workers around the world. QUARTZ. <https://qz.com/1821511/coronavirus-threatens-jobs-of-garment-workers-in-southeast-asia/>
6. BRAC Institute of Governance and Development Effect of COVID-19 on RMG Sector and Trade
7. Union Efforts to Mitigate Fall Out. 2020 <https://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/study/effect-of-covid-19-on-rmg-sector-and-trade-union-efforts-to-mitigate-fall-out/> (10 May 2023, date last accessed).
8. Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) (2021). Vulnerability, Resilience and Recovery in the RMG Sector in View of COVID Pandemic: Findings from the Enterprise Survey. <https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Presentation-on-Vulnerabilities-Resilience-and-Recovery-in-the-RMG-Enterprises-.pdf>

10. Desk, T. (2020, April 13). BB issues guideline for Tk 5000cr stimulus package for agriculture. Dhaka Tribune. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/banks/2020/04/13/bb-issues-guideline-over-tk5000cr-stimulus-for-agriculture>
11. Haque, A. E., & Bari, E. (2021). A Survey Report on the Garment Workers of Bangladesh 2020 (1st Edition ed.). Dhaka, Bangladesh: Asian Center for Development.
12. IHRB & Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh studies at UC Berkeley, "The Weakest Link in The Global Supply Chain: How the Pandemic is Affecting Bangladesh's Garment Workers" (May 2021), at: <https://www.ihrb.org/focus-areas/covid-19/bangladesh-garment-workers>
13. ILO (2022). Recommendations for garment manufacturers on how to address the COVID-19 pandemic
14. Islam, M., Talukder, A., Siddiqui, M., & Islam, T. (2020). Tackling the COVID-19 pandemic: The Bangladesh perspective. *Journal of Public Health Research*, 9(4), 1794. <https://doi.org/10.4081/jphr.2020.1794>.
15. Kabir, H., Maple, M., & Usher, K. (2020, Jul 31). The impact of COVID-19 on Bangladeshi readymade garment (RMG) workers. *J Public Health (Oxf)*.
16. Kamol, E. (2020, Mar 09). Mujib birth centenary inauguration to be on small scale. NEWAGE
17. Bangladesh. <https://www.newagebd.net/article/101645/mujib-birth-centenary-inauguration-to-be-on-small-scale>
18. Kamruzzaman, M., & Sakib, S. (2020, March 26). Bangladesh imposes total lockdown over COVID-. *Anadolu Agency*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/bangladesh-imposes-total-lockdown-over-covid-19/1778272>.
19. Khosla N. The ready-made garments industry in Bangladesh: a means to reducing gender-based social exclusion of women. *J Int Women's Stud* 2009;11(1):289–303.
20. McKeever, V. (2020, March 19). Nearly 25 Million Jobs Could Be Lost Globally due to the Coronavirus, UN Labor Organization Estimates. *CNBC*. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/19/nearly-25-million-jobs-could-be-lost-globally-due-to-the-coronavirus.html>
21. Mina, F. B., Billah, M., Rahman, M. S., Das, S., Karmakar, S., Faruk, M., & Hasan, U. K. A. (2020). COVID-19: transmission, diagnosis, policy intervention, and potential broader perspective on the rapidly evolving situation in Bangladesh. *J Adv Biotechnol Exp Ther*, 3(4), 18-29. CrossRef
22. Onyema, E. M., Eucheria, N. C., Obafemi, F. A., Sen, S., Atonye, F. G., Sharma, A., & Alsayed, A. O. (2020). Impact of Coronavirus pandemic on education. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(13), 108-121.
23. Perera, W. (2020, March 16). Bangladesh government downplays COVID-19 threat as job losses mount. *World Socialist Web Site*. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/03/16/bang-m16.html>
24. Rahman, S., & Ishty, S. I. (2020, June 24). COVID-19 and the ready-made garment sector. *Asia & The Pacific Policy Society*. <https://www.policyforum.net/covid-19-and-the-ready-made-garment-sector/>
26. Reza, N., & Du Plessis, J. (2022). The Garment Industry in Bangladesh, Corporate Social Responsibility of Multinational Corporations, and The Impact of COVID-19. *Asian Journal of Law and Society*, 1-31. doi:10.1017/als.2022.9
27. Star Business Report: Sun May 7, 2023 12:00 AM Last update on: Sun May 7, 2023 04:01 PM, Visited date: 2023-05-25.
28. Sumon, S. (2020, July 11). Health workers in Bangladesh charged with selling fake COVID-19 certificates. *Arab News*. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1702946/world>
29. The Financial Express Clothing Brands Abandon BD Workers in Pandemic: HRW. 1 April 2020 <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/clothing-brands-abandon-bd-workers-in-pandemic-hrw-1585735159> (29 April 2023, date last accessed).
30. Uddin, M., Sharmin, E., Chowdhury, O., Islam, F. (2021). The Impact of the COVID Pandemic on the Cost of Production and Orders in Bangladesh. Available at : <https://api.fairwear.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Impact-of-the-Covid-19-Pandemic-on-the-Cost-of-Production-and-Orders-in-Bangladesh.pdf>
31. Ullah, S. (2020, April 18 ). Healthcare workers in Chattogram dissatisfied over low-quality PPE. *The Business Standard*. <https://www.tbsnews.net/coronavirus-chronicle/covid-19-bangladesh/healthcare-workers-chattogram-dissatisfied-over-low-quality-ppe>
32. ABC News Suppliers Under Pressure as Australian Retailers Ask for Discounts, Hold Orders During Coronavirus Pandemic. 13 May 2020 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-13/australian-retailers-delay-supplier-payments-amid-coronavirus/12236458> (15 May 2023, date last accessed).
33. BRAC Institute of Governance and Development Effect of COVID-19 on RMG Sector and Trade Union Efforts to Mitigate Fall Out. 2020 <https://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/study/effect-of-covid-19-on-rmg-sector-and-trade-union-efforts-to-mitigate-fall-out/> (10 May 2023, date last accessed).
34. WHO (2022). WHO Coronavirus Dashboard <https://covid19.who.int/> (21 May 2023, date last accessed).
35. Zahid, S. H. (2020, May 10). Problems of falling sick. *The Financial Express*. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/problems-of-falling-sick-1589127469>.