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**Implementing ethical standards in business: An example of
Bangladeshi garment industry**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to explore, examine, validate ethical standards implementations in businesses in regard to the Bangladeshi garment industry. Policies, procedures, code of conducts are important for any business entities, and these are often considered as the business conduct guidelines or ethical standards of the business itself and for its associated peoples. Throughout this study author's objective is to research, analyze, describe how organizations in Bangladeshi garment industry create and implement ethical standards, how they involve and aware different stakeholders to these ethical standards and approaches.

The empirical approach is used to continue with the study. Best fitted mix methodology is undertaken from designing to concluding the study. To research and collect the required primary data, an online questionnaire and telephonic interview process are used. Based on the literature review and research questions, the online survey questionnaire was developed. For secondary data, scientific and peer-reviewed articles, journals, books, web articles, handbooks were used. Data is analyzed in descriptive statistics manner. Key findings are highlighted which was collected via a telephonic interview. Findings show policies, guidelines, and code of conducts are still not effective as it should be, and few cases actions do not reflect ethical standards. Findings indicate there is a big gap among garment companies to involve all parties such as employees, workers, and to establish ethical standards which will regulate all parties' behaviors regard to business activities. Employees, workers, and environmental concerns and consequences are still undervalued.

Keywords: Business ethics, Ethical standard management, Involvement, Implementation, Ethical production, Bangladeshi garment industry

INTRODUCTION

Business ethics is a growing concern for any business industry. Failing to manage ethical aspects of businesses may lead to failing main objectives of businesses. Business ethics may not directly have linked to profitability like other activities of businesses such as manufacturing, marketing, etc. but consequences are pricey. To manage ethical aspects of businesses, ethical standards play a vital role. In this modern era ethical impact is very important and for an industry like Bangladeshi garment industry which is accounted for over 80% of countries total export, is very crucial. In last few years it gained more negative impression than what fame they earned over its lifecycle. It is a good case for studying the ethical aspects of this industry.

The modern view of business is to generate more revenue, maximizing shareholders wealth, higher market shares, more customer base, with minimal expenses and operating under global parameters. Most often to achieve these goals, businesses end up doing which are expressed as unethical concerns. By those actions, it not only impacts its peoples, societies, natural environments, but also jeopardy its own entity. Houston based energy company Enron got bankrupted for its planned accounting fraud activities. Its share lost its price to \$.50 from \$90 which led to a huge financial crisis for thousands of employees and millions of investors (Healy and Palepu 2003). The new view of business illustrates business is not about only making money rather how it makes that money. All the activities business undertakes has impacts on others. Business ethics fundamentally deals with how the business should conduct its activities so that social value, norms, responsibilities, faith remain intact. It's "the implementation of a moral code of behavior to the tactical and operational administration of corporations" (Odongo and Wang 2018). This study is based on the ethical instruments and standards used by organizations to manage ethics in businesses.

Bangladesh is one of the largest garment product manufacturers and exporters in the world. In recent years few incidents such as Rana Plaza factory collapse, Tazreen Fashions tragedy, etc. shake the whole garment industry in Bangladesh. It not only kills a few thousands of workers and employees but also left a negative note to the whole world how they were doing unethical activities. The current valuation of the global fashion industry is about 3 trillion US dollars and which is equivalent to two percent of the world's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) (Strijbos 2018). Due to the profitability and huge demand, competition in this industry is so immense that

fashion businesses always push themselves to reduce the cost or cheap sub-sourcing. To meet their demand often garment manufacturers end up doing unethical practices. To manage ethics in businesses and industry, ethical standards are mandatory, and it defines how business activities or associated peoples' activities will behave.

Bangladesh is the second largest country to manufacture and export garment products in the world behind China. In 2017 its exports 29\$ billion worth garment products worldwide and it has 6.8% world market share (WTO 2018). This industry is famous to produce low-cost quality products among competitors and popular to international brands. Despite these competitive advantages and popularity, garment industries often forgot about their ethical implications towards business ecosystem, humans, society, environment, and culture. The author belongs to this country and have seen the growth and fall down of this industry very closely. This research enables the author to dig down the issue further, find out the causes and effects and recommend something constructive which may be helpful for the industry. This research is not only a requirement for graduation for the author, rather use the earned knowledge throughout the educational program in a meaningful way to the society where he belongs.

The aim of this work will be to access all the relevant materials related to the business ethics and garment industry in Bangladesh, practices, policies, code of conducts, how they create, engage different stakeholders and way to improve overall situations. This study objective includes:

1. To describe information related to business ethics in the garment sector in Bangladesh
2. To identify current situations, standards, and problems
3. To analyze recent business ethical issues in this industry
4. To develop ways to improve the situation in this stiff competitive sector based on the findings and theoretical framework
5. To inquire how organizations, promote ethical standpoints between employees and workers.

Research questions for this study include:

1. What steps organizations follows to set their own ethical standards?
2. To what extent organizations involves management, employee, and workers to create ethical standards?
3. How organizations create employees' awareness and attitudes toward business ethics in organizations?

The approach of this study is pragmatic, and it will collect, determine and analyze the information from respondents, interview, scholarly articles, books and other publications in response to information, concerns, examples, and suggestions from employees, organizations, governing body, students, sufferers. Theoretical information will be collected from scholarly articles, publications, books, journals, legislative bodies of the industry.

To complete this study, the mix method research process has been used. The mixed method includes collection and analyzing quantitative data over 100 anonymous respondents who are working in this field, a qualitative method for interviewing a compliance officer. The author believes, both qualitative and quantitative method will allow to understand and analyze the subject matter with more in-depth knowledge, enable to validate the issue in current time and interpret findings.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Principles of Ethics

Ethics is now a long-standing discussion topic in the business world where it has both agreeable and non-agreeable facts. Generally, ethics considered as what is right, right to people, society, norms, and values. The word “Ethics” comes from Ancient Greek word “Ethikos” and it refers to the character or custom or moral philosophy in general. Fieser described on the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “The field of ethics (or moral philosophy) involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior” (2018).

According to world-renowned Indian philosopher Swami Vivekananda, “Ethics always says, “Not I, but thou.” Its motto is, “Not self, but non-self.” The vain ideas of individualism, to which man clings when he is trying to find that Infinite Power or that Infinite Pleasure through the senses, have to be given up — say the laws of ethics. You have to put yourself last and others before you. The senses say, “Myself first.” Ethics says, “I must hold myself last.” Thus, all codes of ethics are based upon this renunciation; destruction, not construction, of the individual on the material plane. That Infinite will never find expression upon the material plane, nor is it possible or thinkable.” (Vivekananda 1964, p 63)

World's one of the most top thinker and author Peter F. Drucker wrote, “in complete agreement on one point: There is only one ethics, one set of rules of morality, one code, that of individual behavior in which the same rules apply to everyone alike” (Drucker 1981). Another American philosopher, classical scholar and literary theorist Philip Wheelwright said, “That branch of philosophy which is the systematic study of reflective choice, of the standards of right and wrong by which it is to be guided, and of the goods toward which it may ultimately be directed” (Wheeler 1959).

All of these philosophical views on ethics led us to one concern which is right and wrong. This is the moral principle and set of values which separates right from wrong, true from false, good from bad and which are right, true and good are ethical and which are wrong, false or bad is unethical. Prospects of ethics also concern individual to groups, social inventions, standards and morality of humanities.

1.2. Principles of Business Ethics

In general terms, business ethics refers all the ethical values, principles and standards are conducted and managed in business activities. “It is the study of how personal moral norms apply to the activities and goals of commercial enterprise. It is not a separate moral standard, but the study of how the business context poses its own unique problems for the moral person who acts as an agent of this system” (Nash 1990). John (1989) described, “business ethics in short can be described as a systematic study of moral (ethical) matters pertaining to business, industry or related activities, institutions or practices and beliefs”. According to Strenberg, “business ethics applies ethical reasoning to business situations and activities. It is based on a combination of distributive justice – that is, the issuing of rewards for judgment that is placed on all activities” (Strenberg 1994).

Business ethics also study decisions and behaviors which are taken different levels in business processes. It can be both in individual level and business level. Buchholz, Rosenthal and Sandra (1998) described, “business ethics is the study of moral standards and how they apply to the systems and organizations through which modern societies produce and distribute goods and services, and to the people who work in these organizations”.

Similarly, business ethics also widely deals with the concern of doing right and wrongs by the activities businesses undertakes. “Organizational ethics is concerned with good and bad or right and wrong behavior and practices that take place within a business context. Concept of right and wrong is increasingly being interpreted today to include the more difficult and subtle questions of fairness, justice and equality” (Carroll and Buchholtz 2001). On the other hand, Peter F. Drucker concerned about moral aspects of business discipline as business ethics. Business ethics as “it asserts that acts that are not immoral or illegal if done by ordinary folk become immoral or illegal if done by ‘business’” (Drucker 1981). “Drucker looked at business ethics as more of a ‘media event than philosophy or morals’ and recognizes that, while ‘fashionable’, business ethics is more of an ‘ethical chic’ based on good politics” (Malcolm and Hartley 2009). Some other authors also have a similar opinion as Peter F. Drucker. According to Murty (2006), business ethics is “moral principles that define right and wrong behavior in the world of business. What constitutes right and wrong behavior in business is determined by the public interest groups, and business organizations, as well as an individual’s personal morals and values”.

Based on these concepts and definitions, it can be said that business ethics studies businesses, its activities and decisions which are morally right to the individuals, society and businesses itself, more compliant with codes, rules, legalities, principals and wellbeing of the society, people and business environment.

Renowned professor Phillip Lewis sorted out common concepts of ethics which can be associated with business ethics as well (Lewis 1985):

- Rules, standards, or codes governing individual behavior at work;
- Moral principles developed in the course of a lifetime;
- What is right and wrong in specific work situations;
- Telling the truth;
- A belief in social responsibility;
- What is fair and above board;
- Honesty;
- Sets of values;
- What is in accord with one's religious beliefs.

Corporate Social Responsibility: Corporate social responsibility which is also known as CSR can be generalized by the wider view comparing with business ethics. Fridman (1962) described CSR as a narrow economic perspective of increasing shareholders wealth. Similarly, Johnson and Scholes explained, "Corporate social responsibility is concerned with the ways in which an organization exceeds the minimum obligations to stakeholders specified through regulation and corporate governance" (Johnson and Scholes 2002). According to Jamali's (2008) perspective, CSR is concerned and committed to contributing company's sustainable development, maximizing shareholders interest and improvement of social condition. On the other hand, Hopkins defines corporate social responsibility "concerned with treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner." (Hopkins 2007). He also added, "The wider aim of social responsibility is to create higher and higher standards of living, while preserving the profitability of the corporation, for peoples both within and outside the corporation" (Hopkins 2007).

From this contextual view, it can be said that corporate social responsibility is a formal approach of businesses where they are responsible for contributing organization's sustainable development, maximizing inside and outside shareholders' interests and improving social

condition with responsible and ethical manner. CSR is self-regulated and helps organizations to be socially accountable for all parties of the business.

Though CSR mainly concerned with the stakeholder's interests and it can be categorized in different levels. Carroll defines CSR compromises four levels of responsibility (Carroll 1991):

- Economic Responsibilities: Economic responsibility is to generate profit for organization and stakeholders;
- Legal Responsibilities: Legal responsibilities is to follow and maintain the laws (local and international);
- Ethical Responsibilities: Be ethical in each step and do what is right and fair;
- Philanthropic Responsibilities: Behave and undertake activities that are expected and desired by society. Contribute to the community and improve quality of life.

1.3. Ethical standards

Ethical standards define the expected behaviors within the parameters of activities related to the workforce, society, customers, partners, etc. Policies, code of conducts, code of practicing, principals, handbooks, etc. are considered as ethical standards. In this century of doing businesses, it is necessary for every organization to have proper and lawful policies and standards of doing things. In many companies and organizations code of conducts, policies are well known as acceptable norms. According to Kline, human rights, labor standards, corruption, environmental protection, financial practices, etc. are the current core concerns of international business ethics (Kline 2005). On the other hand, tackling and managing these sensitive business issues and search for better business ethics became a global phenomenon (Ruskin 1860). To resolve these conflicts and ethical issues managers need proper guidance (Brown 2005). According to Kleiman (2013), expectations of ethics can only be met by setting up a standard for ethical behavior. Code of conducts, policies, principles came under into light when businesses look for guidance. Many researchers suggest these ethical instruments as ethical guidelines, guidance and standards for organizations. Through these principles, organizations build legitimacy, trust, and commitment toward its employees, workers, customers, suppliers, and society. These principles and code of conducts also serve as the framework for ethical decision making. They also considered as believe, expectations, requirements, and the picture of organizations which provides how they are going to value its relationship with everyone else in

the process of business. Nowadays many organizations make policies and code of conducts to make their organization more attractive toward its employees, customers, partners, and societies. Organizations must embrace themselves to create proper policies or code of conducts which can cover all elementary issues and include proper guidelines for doing things. A proper ethics management must include an effective three steps process of development, alignment, and communication. All three steps have great concern with the involvement of all parties including employees, partners, suppliers, buyers or customers, legal entities such as governing bodies. While creating policies, code of conduct, participatory style results more effective than others. Organizations must proactively promote their conduct policies toward their employees and workers. This promotion and communication can be done at a different level in the organization with different approaches. To create employees awareness and attitudes, communication plays a vital role. Christabel M. F. Ho demonstrate a four-step of communication method to create employee and workers awareness and influence positive attitudes toward ethical conducts (Ho 2013):

- 1) Distribution by the immediate supervisor;
- 2) Internal circulation;
- 3) Posting on company website/ intranet;
- 4) Distribution by the human resources department.

1.4. Ethical Production

This part will discuss ethical production and its different phenomena including why it is important, how to achieve it and what are the factors needs to be considered to acquiring them in the manufacturing process. This chapter will also talk about sustainability and the code of conduct for ethical manufacturing process.

Ethical production is relatively a newer term in the field of manufacturing and ethical point of view of the business. This is related to product manufacturing and operation management of a product and organization. Consumers buying habits and patterns are getting changed and now consumers want to buy those products which are manufactured ethical way and businesses that follow social responsibilities. “This term includes consideration of sustainability, pollution issues, quality management, the search for renewables, responses to climate change, development of new materials, labor issues, as well as all of the traditional aspects of production

management” (Collins 2008, p 461). This view of ethical perspective says how ethics are integrated into production function and manufacturing activities and ensures it does not damage consumer, society, and environment. Fashion and garment industry are famously known as industries for unethical practices for production, people, ignored environmental and social impacts. Due to the increasing awareness among customers from all over the world, environmental and social impact plays an influential role in consumers buying decision. This concern pushed the boundary of ethical and sustainable fashion into the manufacturing process of the industry.

Businesses are always staying upfront to meet customers demands and expectations. Once popularity for cheap products was high and retailers and big brands moved to third world countries to manufacture their products in a cheaper way. Due to the heavy dependency on resources and manual labor, third world countries became a great option for them. On the other hand, to keep retailers and buyers (big brands) expectations, often they followed unethical practices in business practices, sourcing materials, unsafe working conditions, child labor, etc. Another key impact was their consequences on the environment. They were completely reluctant to understand their outcome on the environment. Higher production of products also means the consumption of higher natural resources, need for higher inputs such as electricity, and higher waste. Improper waste management had a great impact on the environment and society. Customers movements and expectations for ethical products already started changing the scenario of the fashion industry which caused the higher need for ethical production or manufacturing. Many retailers and big brands already included ethical slogan and mission statement on their brand's values. For instance, Tribesports a clothing brand claims they follow the complete ethical production process for their brand. Apart from the higher quality of their products and they ensure all products are “produced under safe, fair, legal and humane working conditions throughout the supply chain” (Tribesports c2018).

Ethical manufacturing can be explored at different levels of the manufacturing process.

Product: One of the key aspects of ethical production is the product itself should be a sustainable and ethical product. Every organization and operation management need to address the ethical approach to its every component of the product. It involves ethical decisions and choices regarding design, material, location, facilities, labor, and all the related strategies. This approach can also be translated product innovation and development.

Process: According to life cycle assessment (LCA), if the consumer demand for the ethical products, producers and sellers must be able to provide ethical information and each steps of product cycle must be accurate in terms of ethical point (Collins 2008, P 462). It refers all the facilities, management, supply chain management and other processes it undertakes must be focused on the ethical approach. All the steps at supply chain process, including suppliers and actual manufacturers, sourcing, etc. should follow ethical fundamentals in each activity.

Practices: Claiming 100% ethical product and process does not make the manufacturing process ethical. It must practice ethical approach as a core of practices at each level of manufacturing and other activities. Whenever required they must provide information and answers regarding ethical practices which are followed. Practices include maintaining the proper quality of the product and process, accurate documentation, managing health and safeties, proper use of resources, follow and show support to legislation, government, governing body, pressure groups, and customers.

Key Concepts: There are also a few key concepts involved with the ethical production process. These key concepts are supporting areas to the core ethical manufacturing process and must be included in each step of ethical production.

Compliance: Compliance is considered a separate business function and closely work with corporate social responsibility and ethical business. In general, compliance is complying with rules, regulations, standards, policies, and specifications, etc. Compliance can also be treated as the program to meet specification, policies, and standards. For any manufacturing, it's important to meet the manufacturing and quality standard set by the industry and standard quality control like ISO (International Organization for Standardization). For instance, for the quality management system they need to implement ISO 9000 standard, for environmental management system they need ISO 14000 standard implementation, for occupational health and safety standard they need ISO 14000 implementation in whole organization and in manufacturing process. Each step of manufacturing, managers must ensure that standards are followed properly, and they must account for independent audits. Rather than meeting minimum benchmark, they should work for continuous improvement at each level which brings efficiencies and improvement in manufacturing and managing standards.

Sustainability: Sustainability in manufacturing can be defined as managing sustainable development and growth in production and product management. Sustainability is a growing concern which includes proper use of resources, think of future, society, and people. In today's

world sustainability is very important where world has limited resources and high product demands. Sustainability talks about consequences of actions which we take today and how it will affect our future. For instance, for garment and fashion industry cotton is one of the key natural resources. To increase the productivity of cotton if anyone uses excessive amounts of pesticides and fertilizers on a regular basis, after for a short period of time productivity will definitely increase, but that will destroy the natural ecosystem of that land's soil. Once it will stop growing cotton there and it is not good and sustainable for our future. To make it sustainable, need to follow methods which can limit usage of pesticides, fertilizers and move to the organic and natural way to improve productivity which will also keep balances of our natural ecosystem. Hence, "Sustainability and sustainable development focuses on balancing that fine line between competing needs - our need to move forward technologically and economically, and the needs to protect the environments in which we and others live" (Mason n.d.).

Sustainability is a combination of three pillars which has been identified by World Summit on Social Development (Mason n.d.):

- Economic sustainability;
- Social sustainability;
- Environmental sustainability.

To achieve sustainability and to maintain sustainable development in manufacturing, managers associated with the manufacturing process, operation management, and product management must take into account important factors such as sourcing materials, efficient use of raw materials and natural resources, increase efficiencies, futuristic designs, use of four Rs model, etc. Four Rs model consists of reducing, reuse, recycle and recover to reduce waste of resources and materials. On another note, Parker (2011) described to consider sustainability in fashion industry they must answers questions like "Which issues are more important, water consumption in cotton production or the use of oil in polyester? If we reduce consumption, what does this mean for the jobs in developing countries? Whose information do you believe? How do we treat the symptoms but also address the root causes? Is it possible to create a different model of producing and consuming clothes?".

Principles of Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP): WRAP (n.d.) is a non-profit organization (NGO) which is founded by American Apparel & Footwear Association on 1997 to provide education, training and certification for safe, legal and ethical manufacturing

process systems to manufacturing organizations worldwide. Currently they provide training and certification to worldwide apparel and footwear factories on ethical manufacturing, compliance and ethical workplace practices which are based on internationally accepted standards and lawful (WRAP n.d.). WRAP has been developed 12 principles to ensure its activities over follower facilities and factories (WRAP n.d.):

- Compliance with laws and workplace regulations: Facilities will comply with laws and regulations in all locations where they conduct business;
- Prohibition of forced labor: Facilities will not use involuntary, forced or trafficked labor;
- Prohibition of child labor: Facilities will not hire any employee under the age of 14 or under the minimum age established by law for employment, whichever is greater, or any employee whose employment would interfere with compulsory schooling;
- Prohibition of harassment or abuse: Facilities will provide a work environment free of supervisory or co-worker harassment or abuse;
- Compensation and benefits: Facilities will pay at least the minimum total compensation required by local law, including all mandated wages, allowances, and benefits;
- Hours of work: Facilities will follow the work rule described by the local law and provide at least one day off in every seven-day period;
- Prohibition of discrimination: Facilities will employ, pay, promote, and terminate workers on the basis of their ability to do the job, rather than on the basis of personal characteristics or beliefs;
- Health and safety: Facilities will provide a safe and healthy work environment;
- Freedom of association and collective bargaining: Facilities will recognize and respect the right of employees to exercise their lawful rights of free association and collective bargaining;
- Environment: Facilities will comply with environmental rules, regulations, and standards applicable to their operations, and will observe environmentally conscious practices in all locations where they operate;
- Customs compliance: Facilities will comply with applicable customs laws, and in particular, will establish and maintain programs to comply with customs laws regarding illegal transshipment of finished products;
- Security: Facilities will maintain facility security procedures to guard against the introduction of non-manifested cargo into outbound shipments (i.e. drugs, explosives, biohazards, and other contraband).

1.5. Garment Industry in Bangladesh

Bangladesh located in south Asian subcontinent with the home of more than 160 million inhabitants. Despite of having a large population size in a small country, it enjoys high growth in the economy, especially in the last few years. “Bangladesh has been placed 34 at the emerging economies in World Economic Forum (WEF) Inclusive Development Index-2018 and placed at 64 at the comparative performance: IDI verses GDP” (The Financial Express 2018). “Bangladesh has climbed four steps to 23rd position in an annual ranking of the world’s leading emerging markets, the second-largest gain in the 50-country 2018 Agility Emerging Markets Logistics Index” (Daily Sun 2018). According to Dhaka Tribune (2018) it’s market-based economy has the GDP growth of 7.86% and total GDP is \$274.11 billion (nominal) in the year 2018.

Rapidly growing economy of Bangladesh offers competitive and strategic advantages to businesses, especially to garment industries. This industry alone accounted for more than 80% of the total export earning of the nation. Previously the whole country was depended on agriculture and jute products which shifted later to the garment industry. History of garment industry began in Bangladesh in 1978. Back then jute industry was one of the largest industry in Bangladesh. Jute was also known as golden fiber. Due to the low-cost labor, availability of raw materials and export quota facilities, garment business started being popular there. Notably, there were only a few garments started there and only a few of them were with the international partnership. Manual labor and low skilled workers were key of this industry. Quickly this industry become one of the blessings for Bangladesh and this industry has more than 4560 registered factories with 4.5 million peoples employment (BGMEA 2018).

During the year 1980 to 1985, the total number of registered garment factories were 384 and till November 2018 this number stands to 4560. There are more than 600 garment factories more exists in the country which is not registered or operated locally or on a very small scale. During 2012 -2013 financial year, the maximum total registered garments were listed which was 5876. According to the BGMEA, the regulatory body for Bangladesh garment manufacturers and exporters association, a total number of current employment is 4 million which is maximum in the history of the garment industry in Bangladesh. Another 10000 people directly or indirectly also involved with the industry. Total readymade garment exports during the year 2017 to 2018 is 30.61 billion USD which is 83.49% of the total export of the nation (BGMEA 2018).

Comparing to the last 5 fiscal year's export data, this industry kept its ratio of exporting to total county's export constantly more than 80%.

1.6. Ethics in Garment Industry in Bangladesh

Ethical view of Bangladeshi garment industry always seems questionable. Despite of having competitive advantages than competitors, unethical practices in this sector is very high. This industry gained key focus attention from the ethical point of view after the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in 2013 which was the workplace of more than 5000 workers. Different reports suggested that this incident killed over 1135 workers and seriously injured another 2515 workers and employees from a single building (Mortimer 2015). After these incidents, unethical practices followed by this industry came into the light which also considered as a threat of nation since this industry accounted for more than 80% of nations export. Different local and international news agencies and research firms reported high numbers on unethical practices going on in this industry to keep the labor cost lower and earn more. Most often ethical factors are under looked in this industry. Followings are top ethical issues reported in different journals and newspapers in this industry.

- Occupational health and safety issue
- Sexual harassment of women
- Child labor
- Forced labor and working hours
- Workers unions issues

Occupational health and safety issue: Occupational health and safety issues in one of the top ethical issues in garment industry in Bangladesh. In 2013 Rana Plaza disaster happened due to violating of building construction codes and safety standards. Occupancy rate was few times more than the capacity. Lots of improvements made during last few years but still many factories are in vulnerable state which can again bring serious harms to employees and workers health and lives. According to Barua and Ansary (2016, p. 579) "most of the RMG factories of Bangladesh do not comply with national and international standards". Though overall situation have been improved a lot due to international programs taken over last few years.

Sexual harassments of women: More than 80 percent of workers are women in this industry but lots of reports suggested that rate of sexual harassments specially in factories increase a lot over

the years. In a research conducted by Shojag Development Research Initiatives among 382 female garment workers shows that 22% reported themselves faced violence or sexual harassments in workplace and among them 80% said they faced verbal abuse and 41% said they faced verbal sexual harassments (Sultan 2018).

Child labor: Child labor is another ethical dilemma well known in Bangladeshi garment industry. To save wages and reduce overhead costs, garment factories often employ child labors. Poor working conditions and long working shifts also hampers child workers physical and mental growth.

Forced labor and long working hours: Force labor policy made completely prohibited by the Labor law of Bangladesh and ILO. But many reports suggested that Bangladeshi garment industries still practice forced labor policy. Due to the temporary nature of the job and most recruitments for worker levels, proper worker registrations are missing. As a result, they end up by forced labor and long working hours.

Workers unions issues: Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 and ILO provided the permission to form and join workers union to employees and workers of organizations. It has been observed that garment organizations do not let their employees and workers to form and join workers and employees associations and unions. “On 27 May 2017 local thugs threatened and physically attacked workers and leaders of the proposed union at the Azim Group’s Orchid and Savar factories in Chittagong in front of the gates of the two factories, located in the same building. Attempts to form a union at the factories had been repeatedly rejected on flimsy grounds” (International Trade Union Confederation n.d.). Many reports suggested that garment organizations restrict their workers and employees to join such unions and few cases they undertake unethical practices such as denying or refusing unions registration, suspend workers, violent attacks on workers, etc. Though labor law of Bangladesh made it clear that workers can form and join workers unions and on behalf of workers and employees, workers unions will act as a bargaining agent and work for betterment of employees, workers and employers.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

Research methodology generally describes the steps and actions taken to investigate and validate the research problem, specific procedures used to identify, process, collect, analyze the raw data into meaningful information in a systematic way. This paper is considered to be descriptive research. Descriptive research uses surveys or fact-finding inquiries. Researchers try to find out details to particular problems where they do not have control over output factors. Usually, this method is best suited where solutions are already known and throughout the research, the researcher tries to find newness of that available solutions. Researcher uses the respondent's data to analyze according to the specific problems. Mix method methodology research is a method which uses qualitative and quantitative both research process together for the study. To illustrate mix method Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) described "Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry.

As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone". Quantitative method helps to collect closed-ended information through the survey, questionnaires and effective to analyze data on statistical manner. The qualitative method helps to collect open-ended data and information through interviews, observations and process data through categorical information. On the other hand, the mix method is a combination of both method and enable the researcher to study the problem with deeper understanding and concrete findings. Moreover, conceptual research relates to abstract theories, ideas which are generally produced by philosophers, thinkers, writers, etc. Empirical researches are based on observations and experiences with data dependent research.

2.2. Research Method

This chapter of the study will discuss the methodologies undertaken to complete this study. Different authors, writers, and researchers described different types of methods and steps for researches.

Through this study author wants to know how organizations implement the process of ethical standards in their organization. To understand further, it will seek information about creating standards, involving all the stakeholders in the process, awareness, etc. It is important to analyze the actual situation of the study topic in the industry, their practices, approaches. For this research, the mix method of research is best fitted which includes both qualitative and quantitative approach. Using both approaches together, it will help to gain deeper knowledge with complete and comprehensive understanding and context-specific measurements. Due to the pragmatic nature of the study, empirical approaches were undertaken to enable data-driven process.

Based on the topic and problem statements, it was decided to have a questionnaire survey and a telephone interview. Questionnaires are designed to get the responses from respondents. To convert the responses to a meaningful way, it is very important to design the survey questionnaire in a way that each question can be converted into numerical values and can provide insight into the research. Quantified question method was used for all questions. Quantified question method refers to collecting answers or responses which can be converted in numerical figures and measure statistically. For quantified approach, an online questionnaire was designed through the help of Google Forms online-based platform. Different types of questions patterns used to make the questionnaire such as Likert questions, Dichotomous questions, Bipolar questions, Rating scale questions, and all the questions were closed-ended with single and multiple answers.

Likert questions help to measure respondents attitudes toward any specific statement. It also provides the degree to which the respondents agree to some portrayal. These questions include five response categories and represent an interval level of measurement. This research paper includes bipolar type question. Bipolar scale refers scale survey questions and from the poll respondents can select the most appropriate proportions from two different relative qualities. Both nominal and ordinal question pattern was used for this research. Dichotomous questions are

simply those question who has two possible responses. It includes yes and no or true and false or agree and disagree types questions. These questions are closed-ended, short in type and very easy to comprehend. The quasi filter was also used in questionnaires. The quasi filter includes 'don't know' option among possible responses. Also, question placement was carefully chosen. Often, we see respondents do not want to answer questions or feel demotivated. To keep up the respondent's interest toward the survey, general and easy questions were kept in beginning. Difficult and not-interesting questions were kept toward the end and related questions were kept together and in sequences.

For this research, the author wanted to have information and data from both standpoints of garment industry as employees or workers and management body or employers. To get the data from the industry, this research was conducted within the garment industry in Bangladesh. Respondents were workers, employees, and associates of production companies, retailers, buying houses, intermediaries and third party or outsourcing companies. All of these garments and associated organizations were members of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Export Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Garments Accessories & Packaging Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGAPMEA), Bangladesh Garment Buying House Association (BGBA), etc. and their target customers are local markets, foreign market and for few organizations both. A randomly online questionnaire was sent to more than 450 garment factories through email and among the top to bottom all types of garments were listed. The questionnaire was also delivered to employees and workers through relevant closed social media groups and physical interview of workers. The duration for the survey was one week (seven days) which started from 1st December 2018 to 7th December 2018. One reminder was also sent on the 7th day to sample organizations and respondents so that survey goal can be achieved. All the respondents were related to the garment industry, selected randomly or chosen by sample organizations or via personal source. The survey kept anonymously and no personal or organization data were collected through this survey which can damage their personal or organizational reputation, privacy or confidentiality. The survey questionnaire consists of total 3 chapters. Each chapter was designed to know overall and related information about the specific subject matters. It includes general characteristics, ethics in organizations and participation and awareness of ethical approaches. For the qualitative approach, one telephone interview was conducted, and the participant was from a renowned garment from Bangladesh who has several years of working experience in compliance and ethical field.

Secondary data means data or information which is or are already collected for other purposes and available for use. According to Business Jargon's blog (2016), "the secondary data are readily available from the other sources and as such, there are no specific collection methods. The researcher can obtain data from the sources both internal and external to the organization". These data are already being published in different media such as books, newspapers, online portals, journals, and can be used with or without citation. Since those data or information were collected by someone else, the author does not have any relation to those data collection process. Some of the popular sources for secondary data are government censuses, business journals, social books, magazines, blogs, web platforms, libraries, etc. The advantage to using secondary data are readily available, free or inexpensive, detailed oriented, covers vast information and sample size, can be used with or without citation and depth analysis. Though, the main disadvantage is no control over the data and unavailability of data validation.

For this research, the author had few options to get secondary type data. Few researches were already conducted internationally in the ethical field of garment industry of Bangladesh. The author used thesis concentrated in the similar field, books, website and blogs, information portal network portal such as Emerald Insight, Google Scholar, etc., journals, publications, articles, statistics, and censuses, etc.

2.3. Research strategy and data analysis

Formulating research strategies defines the pre-planning of all the possible activities to complete the research. Irrelevant and unpractical strategy formulation can take the research in another direction or can provide the wrong outcome of the research. The main idea of these steps was to keep the research dynamic. It means keep it open for all possibilities, harvesting of new and existing ideas and knowledge, validate each step and improvise if it does not work to achieve the objective. Relevancy to the problem statement was also in the core of strategy. For this study, the author has both qualitative and quantitative data. Data analysis plays a key role to provide required and important output from collected data and information. For qualitative part of the research descriptive statistical manners are used. Firstly, for quantitative data collection online questionnaire was created via Google Forms (an online survey platform). Total 109 respondents responses were received and collected in Google Spreadsheet. Then they were exported to Microsoft Excel data. Then each question was analyzed based on frequency, percentage, ratios,

etc. in regard to distribution, central tendency and dispersion analysis of descriptive statistics. Each question data are presented in the relevant figures.

Qualitative data for this research is collected from the interview of a compliance officer of a renowned garment in Bangladesh. Method of this interview was a telephonic interview which was made from Estonia to Bangladesh. To capture and analyze data from the interview, firstly interview was captured as a transcript. Then this data is analyzed through content analyze. Hsieh and Shannon described “research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text” (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Conventional content analysis method was followed. For this, interview questions were open-ended questions which give the author to ask more questions based on the findings from the answer to one question. The key concepts and thoughts are captured and highlighted from the interview. As a next step, the author used this highlighted key concepts and thoughts to initial analysis. These key thoughts were coded as labels as referred in the coded scheme plan. Then these coded key thoughts are explained based on descriptive manner and converted into meaningful findings. Manifest and latent contents were helpful to analyze these data.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. General characteristics

The survey questionnaire was divided into several parts and each question was designed to know information based on that particular category. The first part of the questionnaire was an overview. This overview included questions about respondents and organizations they work for.

This overall study is based on the ethical aspects of businesses. For the author, it is important to know about respondents and the author wanted to collect data from both male and female. So, this question provides information about the ratio of respondent's genders. According to recorded data, 74% of survey respondents were male, 25% respondents were female and 1% among them do not want to specify his/ her gender. Figure 1 shows that the number of female respondents was very less compared to male respondents whereas more than 80% of employees and workers are women in this industry.

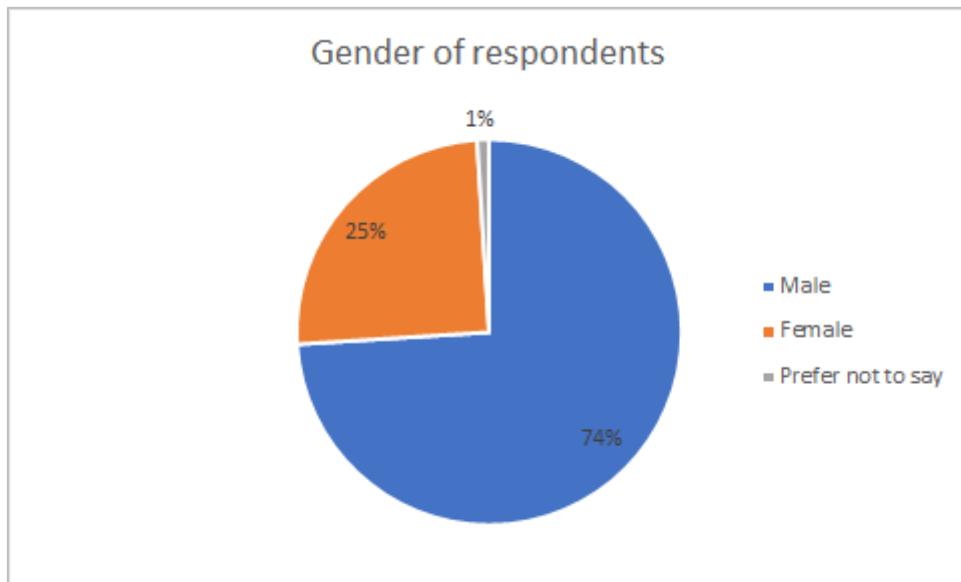


Figure 1. Gender of respondents

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 1

Depending on the company type, there is a possibility to have different survey answers. According to collected data, more than half of population of respondents works for production or manufacturer companies. Based on the overall company types from the garment industry, four

choices have been given to respondents and asked to choose the best-fitted type where they work for. 56% of the overall population from respondents works for direct manufacturing or production company. 30% of respondents work for the buying-house company. Buying-house company or business refer to partner businesses who work between manufacturers and buyers/retailers. They are responsible to collect order, place order to manufacturers, paperwork, product shipments, payment collection, etc. Most cases they enjoy mutual commission from the trade or both parties. Other intermediaries company refers to those businesses who cannot be categorized as direct buying house companies but sometimes work between buying house/buyer and manufacturer or does few specific tasks only. Figure 2 shows the graphical overview of respondents company types.

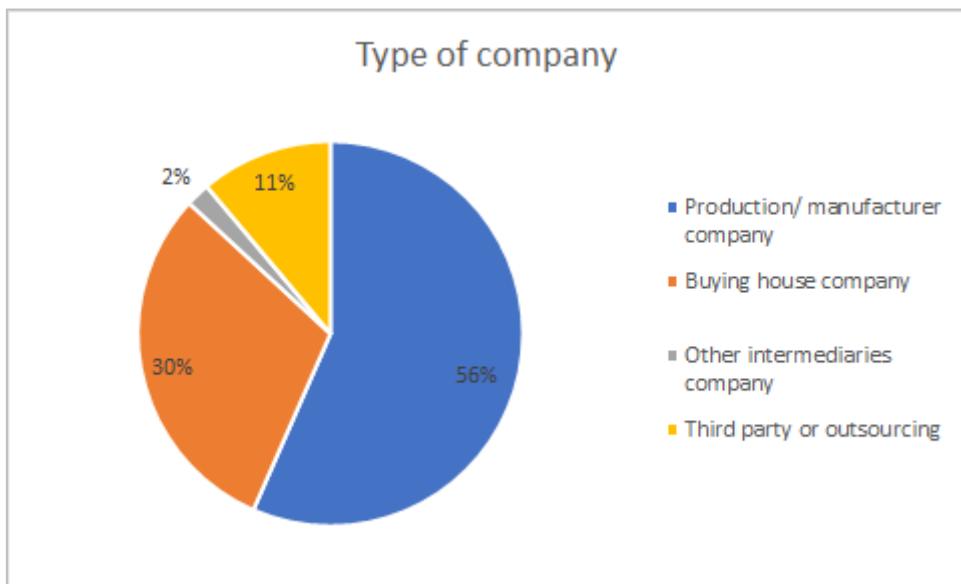


Figure 2. Type of company

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 2

The aim of the next question was to know in which functional department respondents work for. Majority percent of employees and workers in this sector work for manufacturing jobs, though the author wanted to know specifically which function they work for. This survey is based on ethical point of view and for few job functions such as operation level ethical issues observed in mass level in different researches. A majority percentage of respondents (35%) works in the production department. Though this survey questionnaire was sent to anonymously and randomly. The author put an open-ended option for respondents where they could put their job function name if they are not in the general category. The author found almost from all departments respondents participated in this survey. 12% of respondents belong to Human

Resource and Marketing department, 11% belongs to Sourcing department 10% from accounting, 9% from Design and 6% from the Supply Chain department. Total 6 (almost 6%) respondents of this survey belong to other categories where their true job function belongs to Planning, Industrial Engineering, Quality, Guideline for Production & Quality (GPQ), Merchandising, R&D departments. Figure 3 shows the details category of job functions of respondents.

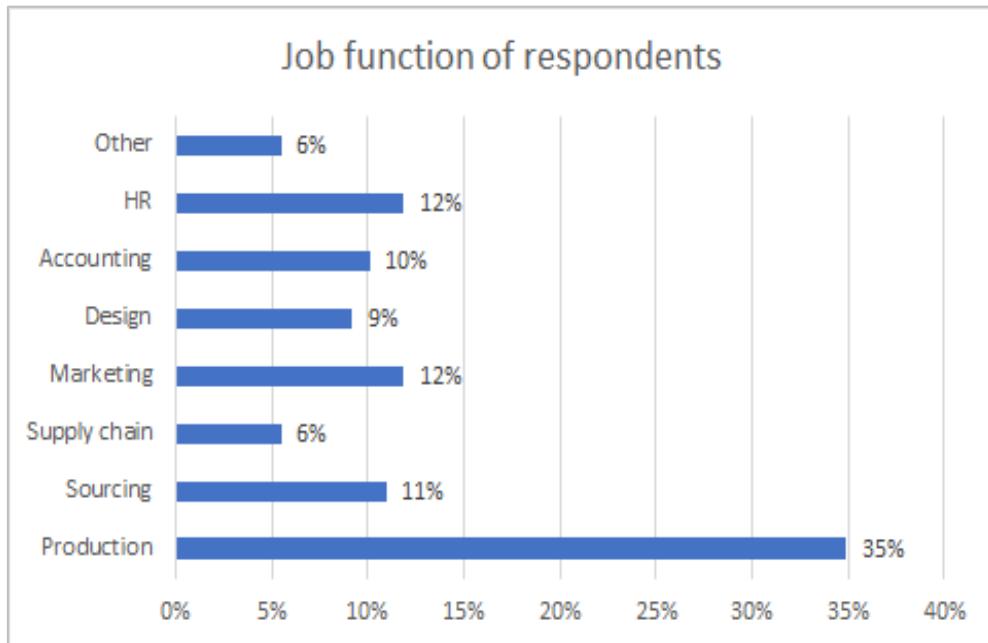


Figure 3. Job function of respondents

Source: Source: compiled by the author through survey question 3

This question was to know respondents organizations target customers. Bangladeshi garment industry is an export-oriented industry and this industry is accounted for more than 80% of countries total export. According to the Figure 4 data, 83% of respondents companies target customer is foreign customers. 10% of respondents work for companies who make products for local customers. Rest 4% respondents have both local and foreign customers base and 3% has the B2B customer base.



Figure 4. Target customers

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 4

Throughout this question, the author wanted to know about respondents organization's employee base. 50% participants of the survey worked for companies who have more than 1000 employees and workers in their organization. Second largest employee base belongs to between 100 to 500 employees base with 30% of the population. 7% respondents belong to organizations who have employees between 501 to 1000 and rest 13% belongs to less than 100 employees and workers base companies. Figure 5 shows the graphical overview of total employee size cluster of respondents organizations.

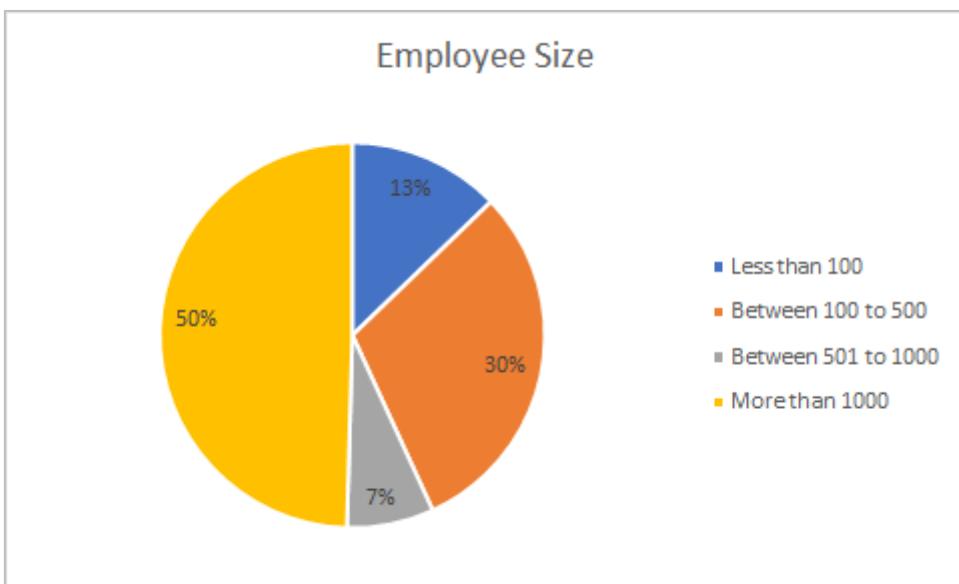


Figure 5. Employee size

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 5

Organization's ownership structure plays a key role to implement ethical standpoints in organizations. It has been observed that sole proprietorship organizations follow more bureaucratic process than other types of ownership structured organizations. Figure 6 data shows 83% of respondents organizational structure is based on the private limited company. Rest belongs respectively to partnership organization 7%, sole proprietorship 6% and public limited company 4%.

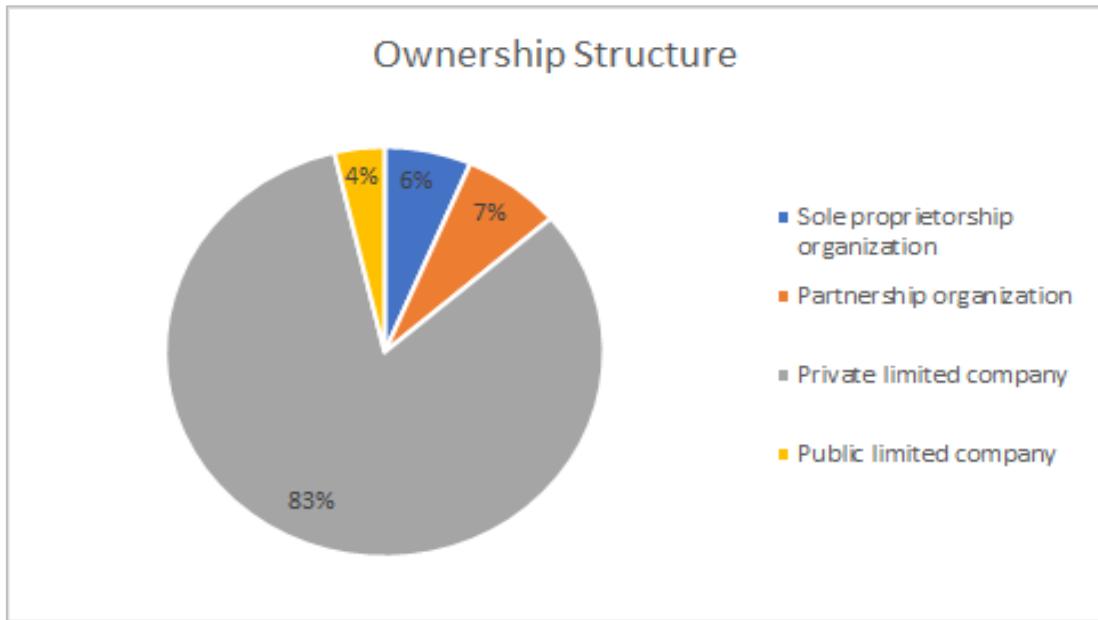


Figure 6. Ownership structure

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 6

Women are one on the key workforce for the garment industry in Bangladesh. Respondents were asked about women participation in their respective organizations. According to the collected data shown in Figure 7, 37% of respondent's organization has more than 75% of women employees or workers. 30% of respondents said their organizations' ratio falls within 50% to 75% comparing to the total employee base. 15% of respondent's organization has women workforce within 25% to 50% and rest 18% said they have women workers or employees within 25% in their organization.

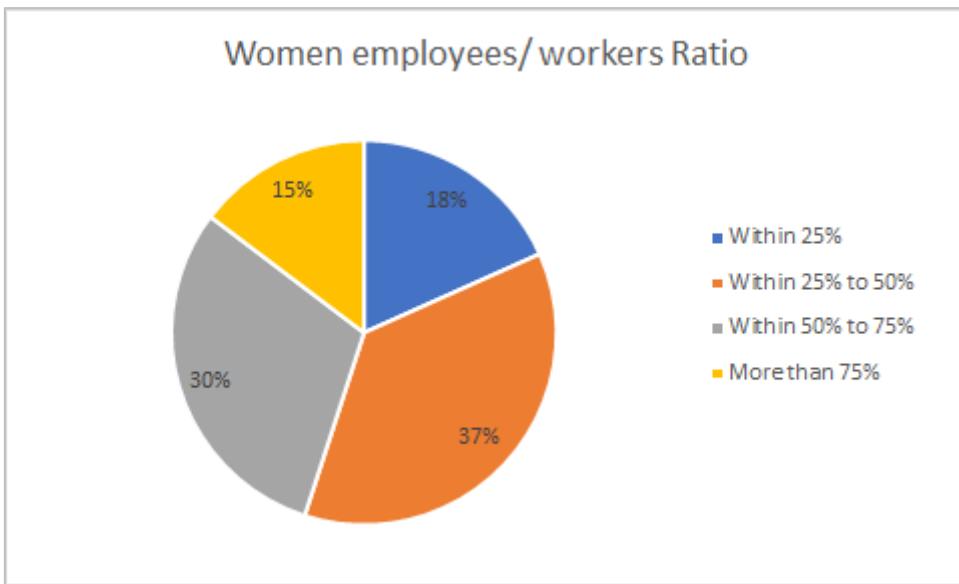


Figure 7. Women employees/ workers ratio

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 7

3.2. Ethics in organizations, participation, and engagements to create ethical standards

Respondents were asked about overall ethical standpoints of their organizations. They were asked to rate their respective organizations within 1 to 5 rating parameters. There were total 5 rating parameters which include very ethical to not ethical at all. According to the survey data, 39% of respondents think their organization is very ethical and another 37% thinks their organization is somewhat ethical. 3% of respondents think their organization is somewhat not ethical and 2% thinks not ethical at all. Rest 20% thinks their organization nor ethical or unethical. It could be due to unaware of the ethical approach of their respective organization or they do not want to disclose this information. Overall data shown in Figure 8 is satisfactory since total 76% of respondents think their organization falls under somewhat ethical to very ethical.

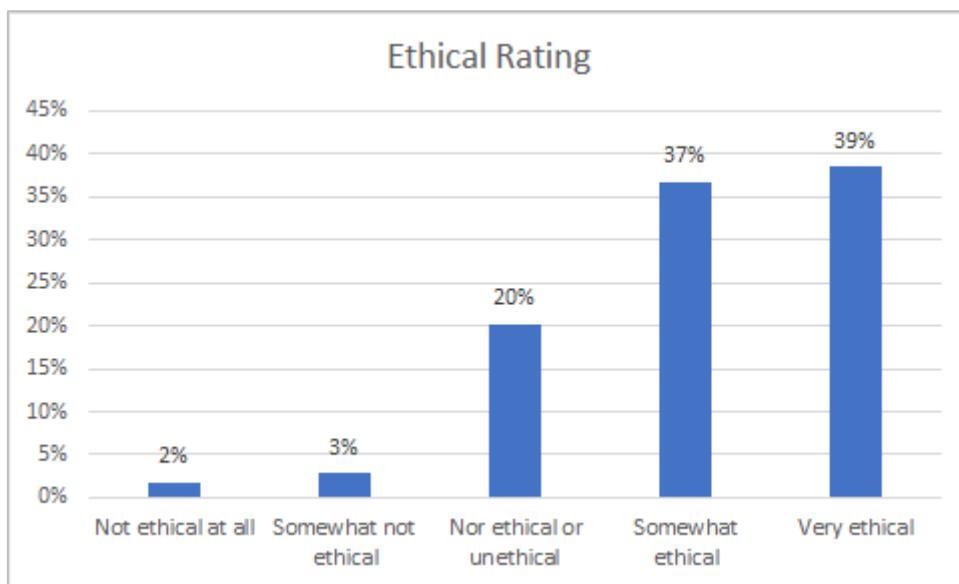


Figure 8. Ethical rating of organization

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 8

This question involves the ethical approach of organizations to its employees and workers. This is a rating based question and respondents had the option to choose between very ethical to not ethical at all. 36% of respondents think their organizations are ethical in regard to employees or workers. Another 40% thinks their organizations also somewhat ethical. 5% of respondents think their organizations are not ethical and falls within the parameter of not ethical at all to somewhat

not ethical. Rest 19% of respondents think their organizations nor ethical or unethical. Figure 9 shows the ethical standing of respondents organizations toward employees and workers.

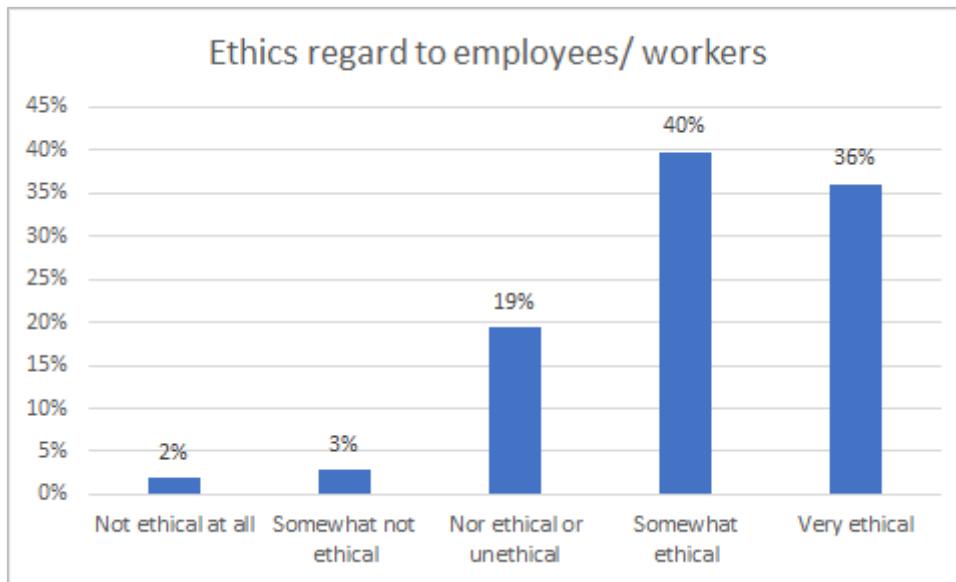


Figure 9. Ethics regard to employees

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 9

Every ethical organization needs to be ethical responsible to their local governments and institutions. The aim of this question was to know to which extent respondents organization are ethical to local government and legal institutions. It is very important that each organization applies ethical approaches regard to governmental and legal institutions by following rules, regulations, policies and by providing access to information and auditing practices. Rating scales including not ethical at all to very ethical. 37% of respondents think their organizations are very ethical in regard to government and legal institutions. Another 40% believes their organizations fall under the somewhat ethical category. Total 5% respondents said their organizations fall within not ethical at all to the somewhat not ethical category. 18% said their organizations nor ethical or unethical. Figure 10 shows the graphical overview of ethical rating of respondent's organizations toward government and legal institutions.

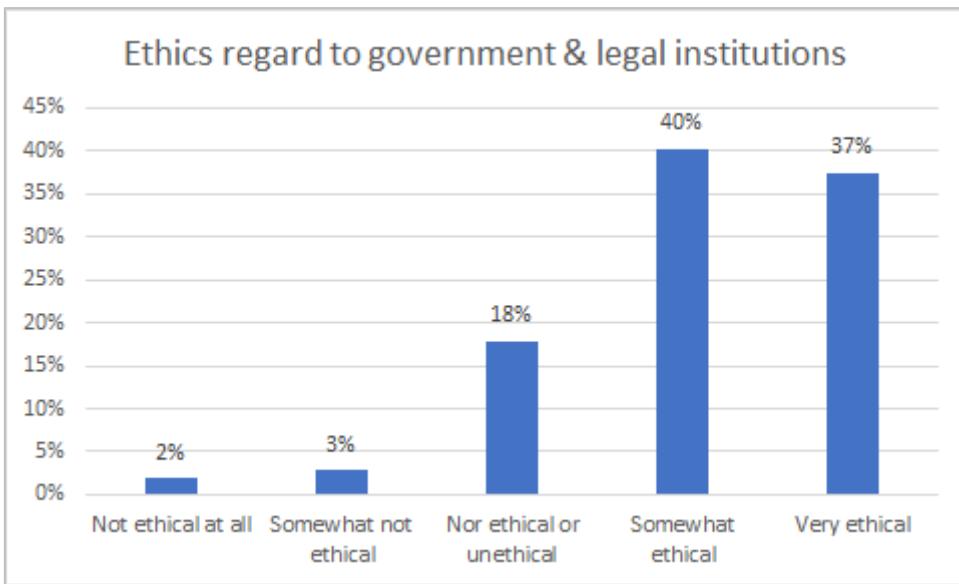


Figure 10. Ethics regard to government and legal institutions
Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 10

The compliance department in this industry is responsible to make, manage, promote, relate business ethics to their organizations. Respondents were asked about the existence of compliance department in their organizations. 89% of respondents said they have a compliance department in their organizations. 9% said they do not have it and 2% respondents said they do not know about compliance department existence in their organization. The result of this question shown in Figure 11 is highly satisfactory.

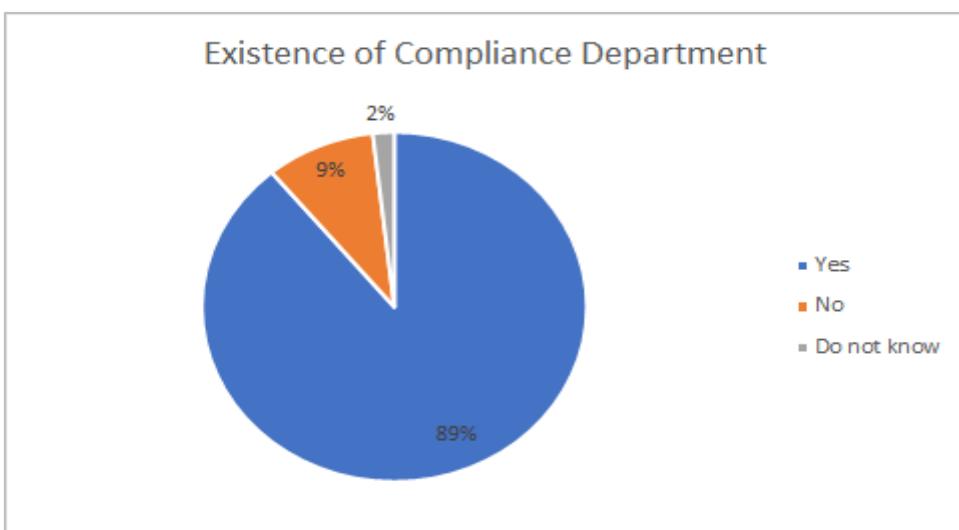


Figure 11. Existence of the compliance department
Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 11

Workers unions or trade unions are associations of workers who work on behalf of workers or employees with organizations and legal bodies of the particular industry. This also enables workers and employees to speak up and bargaining power over different issues. The author wanted to know whether respondents have these kinds of unions or associations in their respective organizations or not. When respondents were asked, 78% of respondents said they have workers union in their organizations. 20% said they do not have workers union and rest 2% said they do not have any information about workers union existence in their organization. Though the existence of workers unions depends on many factors such as workers size, workers willingness, organizations interest and openness, and legalization. Figure 12 shows the workers unions existence in respondents organizations.

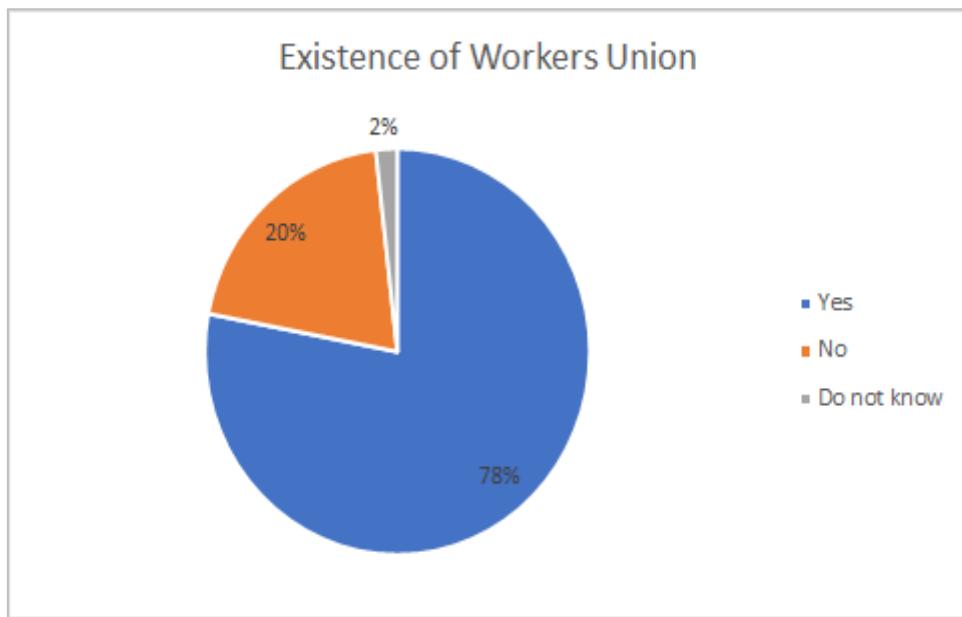


Figure 12. Existence of workers union

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 12

Having workers union as important as having rights to join those unions or associations. Respondents were asked whether they have rights to join such unions or not. Figure 13 shows 47% of respondents said they have rights to join workers union and 43% of another respondents said they do not have those rights. Rest 10% said they do not possess any information about it. In many garments in Bangladesh only have unions for workers and thus employees cannot join those unions. It could be a great reason for getting negative answers from a large population of respondents.

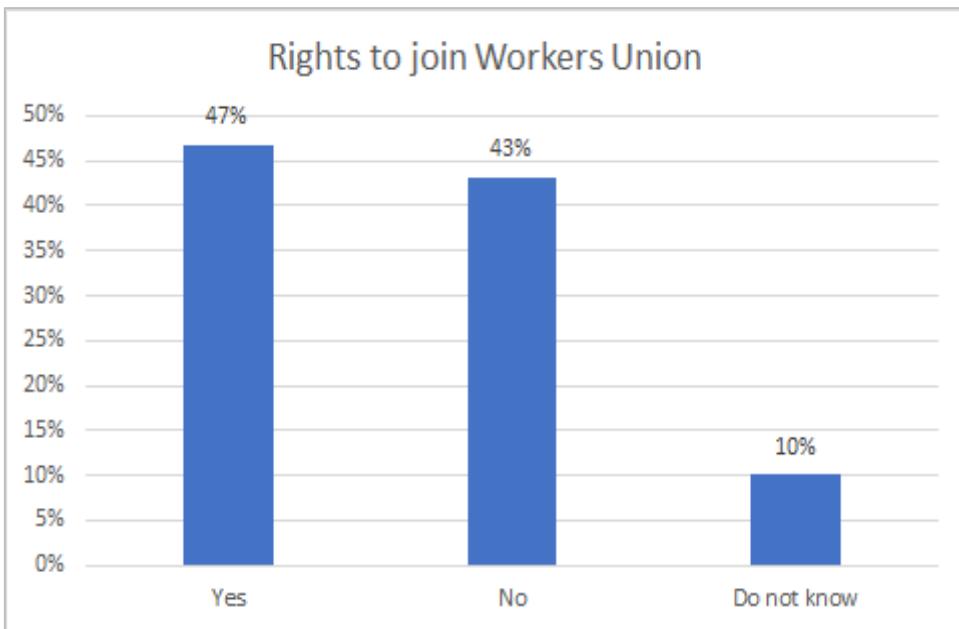


Figure 13. Rights to join workers union

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 13

The aim of this question is to know about few benefits existences in their organizations. Respondents could choose answers from yes, no and no knowledge about it choices. Overall answers of these questions related to benefits existence in organizations seem at a satisfactory level. On average, 90% said they have all these mentioned benefits in their organization. When they were asked about provident fund benefits and gratuity, insurance policy, respondents positive response were respectively 83% and 80%.

Figure 14 data shows organizations need to work on these benefits since provident fund and gratuity ensures employees and workers financial future. Insurance policy ensures employees and workers are insured and their life is protected. Organizations must work on these benefits to ensure workers and employees are insured with proper benefits.

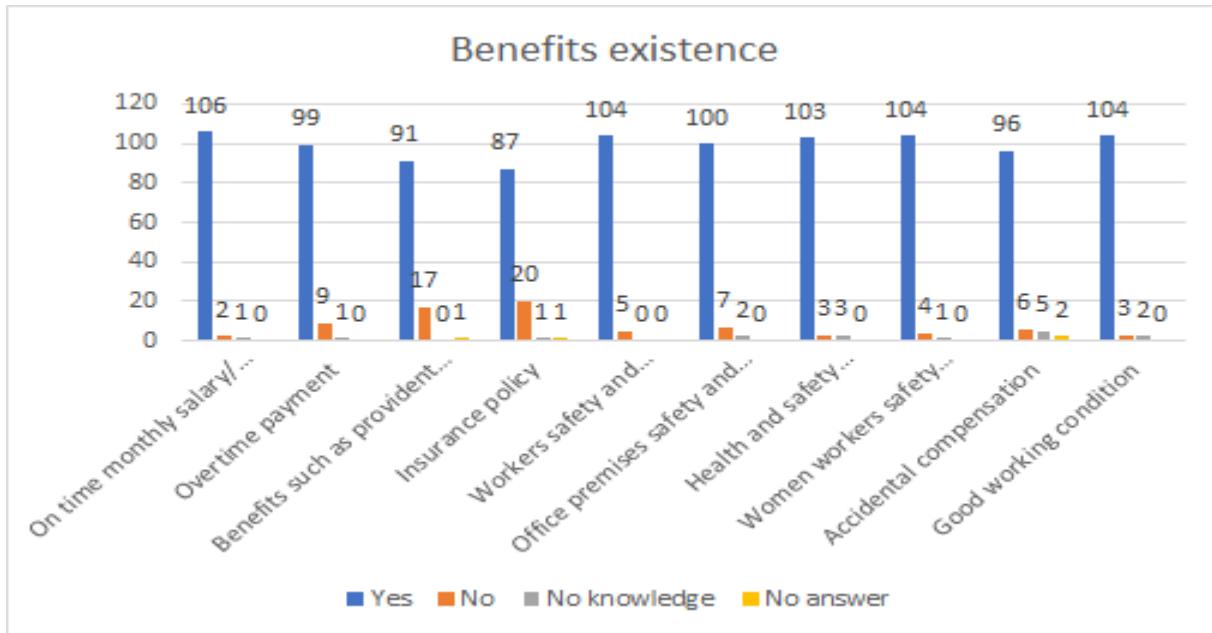


Figure 14. Benefits existence

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 14

A series of questions related with ethical situation packed in one multiple choice question and respondents were asked to choose their answers from yes, no and do not want to disclose options. The aim of these questions is to know whether respondents had experienced such ethical issues while working for that organization or not and if it's yes, then which type of ethical issues. Most of the responses from respondents are at a satisfactory level and most of them said they did not experience such issues in their organization. Though few respondents said they experience few ethical problems in their organizations. Among them tracking employees and workers, violation of human rights and inequalities has a higher rate. Each organization should do independent researches on their own organizations and work on improving situations. Each issue should be studied and dealt with individual manner. Figure 15 shows the graphical representation of ethical situation experiences by respondents.



Figure 15. Ethical situation experience

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 15

This part of the questionnaire talks about ethical support and materials in their organization. Respondents were asked to choose their answer from yes, no, no information and not to answer the question options. When talking about ethics in business parameter then ethical support is very important and crucial. Otherwise ethical issues will arise but there will be no systematic way to resolve it. 87% of respondents said they have ethical consultation in their organizations. 12% said they do not have it. It is very important to provide consultation time to employees and workers since ethical issues are a very sensitive matter and it could have a big impact later if it is not solved in the primary stage. Responses of other questions are also at a satisfactory level. 10% of respondents said organizations do not take feedback from employees and 11% said they do not have ethical or compliance hotline which are shown in Figure 16.

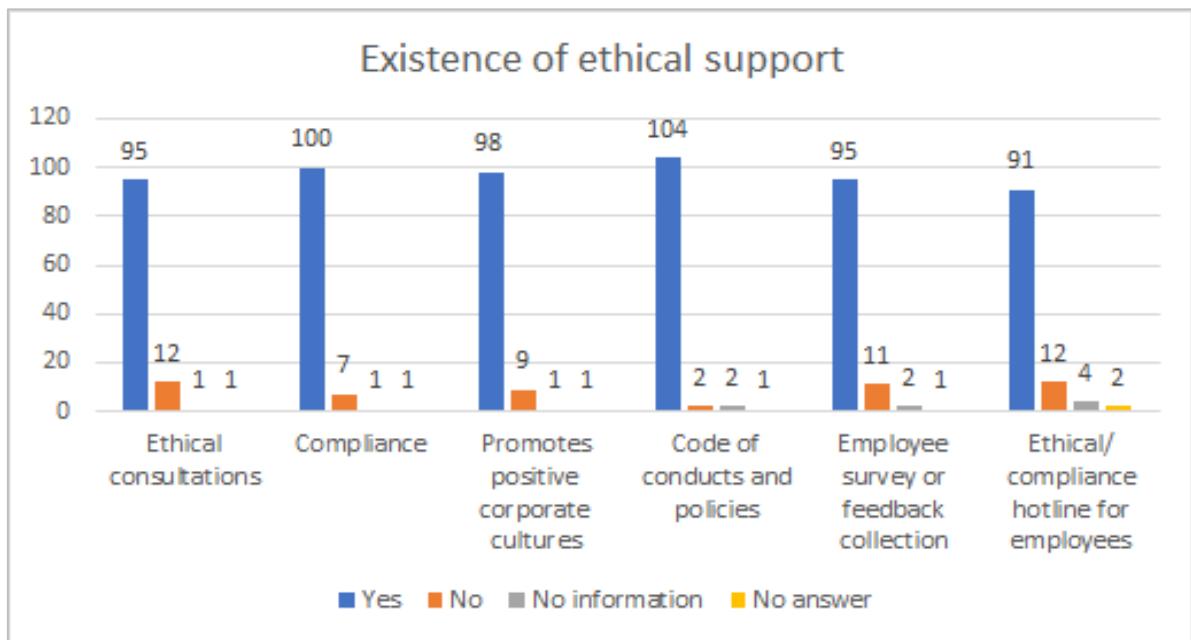


Figure 16. Existence of ethical support

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 16

Respondents were asked about their awareness of ethical issues in their respective organizations. In many cases, employees and workers remain unaware of ethical issues and dilemmas in their organizations. As a result, they never come ahead if they ever face any such issues. Also, it is important for workers and employees to know that if any ethical issue arises, and they are solved. By these way, they can learn what to do in such cases and how compliant their organizations are. 90% of respondents said they are well aware of ethical issues in their organizations. 5% responded they are not aware and rest 6% said they do not have such information. It is good that majority percent of populations are aware of ethical issues of their organizations. Organizations need to be proactive in such cases and then it will create a positive culture in organizations and unethical issues can be reduced. Figure 17 shows the graphical representation of awareness on ethical issues by respondents.

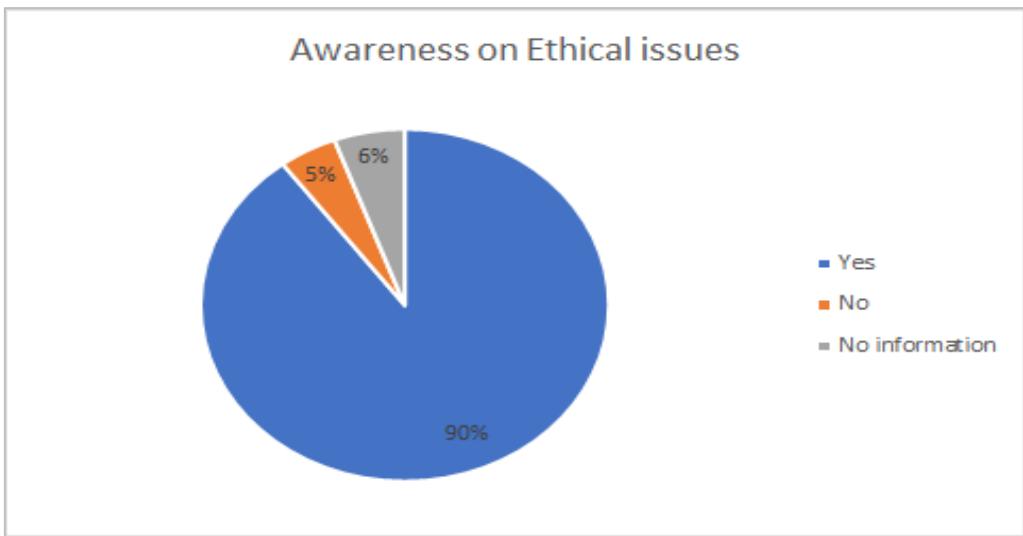


Figure 17. Awareness of ethical issues in organizations
Source: Source: compiled by the author through survey question 17

Employers, employees, and workers participation are very important for any policy or standard making. Usually, policies and standards are made to implement and follow properly. If employees and workers are not involved then it became difficult to understand whether those policies and standards are made for betterment or forced. Respondents were asked about their participation in ethical dialogue or setting to create ethical standards in their organizations. Figure 18 shows that 84% respondents said they are allowed or had participated in setting up ethical standards and ethical dialogue. According to different reports suggested that employees or workers or unions participation is important for such dialogue or standard making.

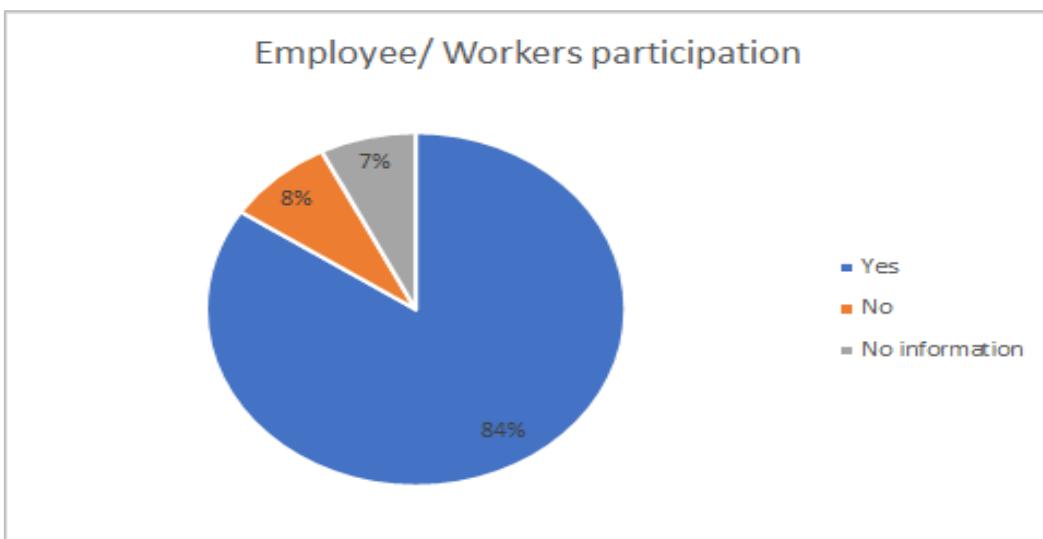


Figure 18. Participation in dialogue or setting ethical standards
Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 18

In the last question of the survey, the author asked how organizations usually make their ethical standards. Since there are possibilities that organization may have multiple ways to make ethical standards, participants of the survey also had the option to choose multiples from the list. 68% of respondents said management creates ethical standards for their organizations. While 48% said they are made by yearly review and 39% said it is made with collaboration with employee/ worker and management. 9% said it is being made by the government and 5% said these are forced by the regulatory body. Another 5% of respondents said their organization takes help from the third party located locally and another 2% said their organization takes help from partner organization from abroad. Through 3% said they do not have it in their organization. Creating ethical standards by collaborations and participation has a good rating but still, majority percent of respondents said only management makes the standards for their organizations. Figure 19 graphically represent respondents answers.



Figure 19. Creating ethical standards

Source: Compiled by the author through survey question 19

3.3. Results from the interview

For this study author also conducted an interview with a compliance manager to know and identify key areas about ethical standpoint of organizations. Mr. Rokon a senior compliance officer from Fakir Apparels Ltd. voluntarily participated in the interview process and will discuss his and his organization's viewpoint in the next few paragraphs in a transcript manner.

Importance of business ethics in the subject organization?

During the interview, Mr. Rokon said business ethics is very important for their organization. He claimed his organization is one of the top garment organization in Bangladesh who takes business ethics very seriously and 100 percent compliant. His organization believes they have to be compliant each way of doing business in order to create a sustainable business environment for them and secure their business future.

Is there any pressure from buyers or the government or some other party to maintain some sort of ethical conditions?

Mr. Rokon said they are not pressurized by any party such as buyers, governments or industry governing body yet, but they realized long ago that they need to maintain ethical standpoint to sustain their business. If they do not then their business will collapse and it could lead to business closure. Also, their management body is very strict about this part. Their compliant team has been instructed to maintain ethics and business compliances strictly. He also thinks this is one of the success factors for his organization since they recognize compliances in each activity of their organization. Also, he described buyers wanted to buy products from organizations who meet buyers ethical and compliance requirement. As a manufacturing company, it is also very important to deliver how buyers want from them. But they are never pressurized from any buyers yet since they do their business very openly and systematically.

How do you or your organization manage ethics in your organization?

During the interview, Mr. Rokon said they have a systematic process to manage ethics. They have policies and code of conducts. These policies and code of conducts are communicated to all employees. For workers, they communicate via labor union and workers nominated persons. If any issues arise, then they measure and compare with policies and code of conducts. Their policies also include strict punishment process for violating those conducts. If any code of conducts or policies are violated or anyone experience ethical issues, then they can communicate

via written letter or application, through the designated hotline, compliance officers. They can submit letter or application directly to compliance officers or they have complaint boxes in each floor or they have designated employees in each floor to deal with such issues. Complaint hotline is dealt by a higher official and they are committed to resolving each at their earliest.

Is there any code of conducts in your organization?

Mr. Rokon answered they have a formal code of conducts and policies and all of them are properly written. Among them, few are mentioned as follows:

- Overtime: Before overtime, they need to take consent from employees or workers. Any work was done after 8 am to 5 pm considered as overtime and they have payment process for overtime. For any usual overtime, they can keep employees and workers maximum 2 hours after their work hours and for the busy schedule they can keep them maximum 9 PM.
- No forced labor: They do not allow any kind of forced labor in their organization.
- No child labor policy: They are very strict about child labor policy. They do not allow any workers or employees who legally fall under child category. Usually, anyone under 18 years old is considered a child.
- Equal employment: They believe in equal employment for their organization. They do not allow liaison recruitment or do not entertain any special favored recruitment. They believe everyone who will work for their organization has required skills and knowledge to work on that particular positions.
- Anti-corruption and anti-bribery: Their management set strong rules for anti-corruption and bribery. They do not offer or receive any kind of bribery in their organization. Even they do not buy any material if sellers offer any bribery or gifts.
- Bargaining power: They accept worker unions and believe in collective bargaining. Before taking any key decisions related to employees and workers, they conduct a periodic meeting with bargaining agents.
- Health and safety issue: They recognize health and safety issues very seriously. They follow industry standards and international standards for health and safety issues. They also follow proper buildings and infrastructure codes for their premises and also conduct periodic auditing to ensure proper safety is ensured.

- Compensation and benefit: They offer competitive compensation and benefits to their workers and employees. They also offer proper accidental and termination benefits and compensation.
- Environmental policy: Fakir Apparels believes in future sustainability and they do not conduct any activities which hamper society and environment.

How do your organization set and implement ethical standards?

Mr. Rokon explained they have a predefined process to make ethical standards. First, they have the management team's instruction to make ethical standard in a systematic and constructive way. Their standards and policies are made in combination with legislative policies, labor laws and policies, governments instructions, feedback and constructive discussion with bargaining agents such as workers unions. After compiling all policies and changes, then take approval from the management and then labor ministry of Bangladesh. Then they communicate and implement in their organization. He also added that their policies and code of conducts are changeable and modifiable. For instance, the labor ministry of Bangladesh published a new gazette in November 2018 about employee policy and currently they are working on to integrate it with their policies. They ensure employee and workers have proper bargain power over policy-making and they held monthly, yearly and when needed dialogues regarding policy changes with bargaining agents.

Do you involve employees, workers or management to this ethical approach and how?

He said, we have review policy where employees and workers can provide feedbacks. Apart from that, we have monthly, yearly and when needed dialogues with bargaining agents such as workers unions.

How do you promote awareness ethical approach among your employees and worker?

He replied we have more than ten thousand workers. It is not possible to communicate with everyone every time. Whenever any changes are made, we communicate with employees directly and for workers, we communicate through workers unions and nominated persons from workers. We do a proactive approach so that every one of us can be on the same side in regard to ethical viewpoint.

3.4. Discussions and Limitations

The survey questionnaire was prepared to understand the overall ethical situation of the garment industry in Bangladesh. To enlarge the ethical implications, participants were asked different views of ethics in their respective organizations. All the participants are working different functions of this industry. Different reports show that majority percent of workers are women in this industry but women participation in this survey found very less compared to male employees and workers participation. Organizations they work for seems to have larger employees and workers base and almost all of their target customers are foreign-based. After deadly Rana Plaza incidents in 2013, many international buyers imposed mandatory ethical requirements for health and safety issues for manufacturers. From this point of view, further ethical findings are expected to have a positive outcome. Collected data shows, majority respondents companies are listed as private limited companies. This form of organizations typically have benefits of greater management, higher capital, less taxation, less liability and most importantly standardization. Due to reporting management requirements, these types of organizations has standardized policies, code of conducts in their business activities.

It is important to take feedback from respondents about their organization's ethical situations. In the survey, respondents were asked to rate their organization in terms of general ethical standing, ethical to employees and workers and local governments. Majority percent of respondents suggested their organizational ethical ratings are somewhat ethical to very ethical. This result contradicts with the assumptions found from different news agencies, reports, etc. Many international news agencies report ethical issues in this industry whereas respondents responses found positive. These results show their organizations are in a satisfactory level in terms of ethical perspective. In both scenarios, they have a very good scope to improve ethical perspective in their organizations. Workers unions and associations play a vital role to establish the rights of workers and employees in their respective organizations and the purpose of regulating the relationship between workers and employers. To analyze to have workers unions and rights to join, respondents were asked whether they have such options in their organizations or not. The survey found most of respondent's organizations have workers unions, but a very good number of respondents said they do not have rights to join such unions. In the garment sector in Bangladesh, labor or workers union works as a bargaining agent for workers and employees to the management and employers. Bangladesh labor act also made it mandatory for all workers and employees have rights to form and join trade unions. If employees and workers

do not have rights to join such workers union then those unions do not have rights to work for those employees and workers. Respondents answers suggested the perceived problems regarding workers unions exists in severe manner. Root cause should be researched further for this specific problem since this study nor the research survey questionnaire follow in-depth analysis of this problem. Though the problem is clear and suggested reports which shows reasons such as ignorance of workers and employees rights, their betterment, empowerments, ensuring proper bargaining power, unwillingness for cooperation, etc. could be the reason behind it. The government of Bangladesh and the Ministry of Labour and Employment must intervene to enforce the amendments of labor acts to this sector. Further studies are required to explore possible explanations of this difference with the impact and implications of workers unions roles and activities.

Similarly, it is also important to observe the benefits and facilities provided by studied organizations for their workers and employees. Survey data shows a majority of respondents said they get benefits such as on-time payments, overtime payments, insurance policies, safety and protection, health compensation, good working conditions, etc. Interview results also show subject organization provides such benefits for their employees and workers. This is a good gesture toward the overall situation.

Moreover, to understand the ethical standing of studied organizations, they were asked about ethical situation experiences in their respective organizations. This ethical situation includes some burning topics like abuse, discrimination, sexual objections, pressurized to work, violation of human rights, inequalities, etc. Three-fourths of respondents expressed they never experienced such situations in their workplaces. Interview data also shows subject organization does not allow such ethical issues in their organization and they manage it through the proper process of conducts and compliance program. Yet many reports from unions and rights groups suggested that these ethical issues exist in garment industries and they are in a severe manner. It is found that most cases these issues remain unreported or ignored due to job security and social concerns. This outcome must be explored further with greater emphasis.

It has been observed that most of the respondents said they have an ethical code of conducts and policies in their organization. The interviewee also said they have these in their organization. These policies and code of conducts are guidelines and principles how organizations and employees and workers will behave and how their professional relationships will be with each

other in regard to the business activities. It is also found that to manage ethical aspects in organizations and implement and collaborate, they have compliance workforces. They also offer different value-added services in regard to ethics such as ethical consultations, support services. These findings refer organizations positive attitudes toward ethical approaches and promoting good wellbeing. One of the aims of this study was also to study how organizations create these standards. Survey outcomes show most of the organizations follow participatory style to create standards and employees and workers have some participation over it. In recent days it has been seen that organizations that care about their employees and workers take feedback from employees in regular interval. Many organizations organize periodic meetings and yearly feedback and, in some organizations, management has KPIs (key performance indicators) over employees feedback and satisfaction over ethics management in organizations. Most respondents emphasized that they participate in ethical dialogues or creating ethical standards. The interviewee also illustrated that they involve workers unions and legislative body during the process of creating ethical standards and policies. Many reports suggested that employees, workers and worker union often under looked during the process and has very minimal contribution toward creating ethical standards. Through the analysis of this study shows most organizations use a formal method to involves employees and workers.

Yet, findings from collected data via survey, interview process and external reports clearly contradict with each other in many cases. It clearly suggested that there are identifiable differences between collected data, and real situations, and perceived problems for the study. Though participation for this study was voluntary but seems like they did not respond in according to the real situations of their organizations. The reason behind it could be afraid of being honest, do not want to disclose information about their organizations, did not understand the questions and reason of the study properly or context situation is too good.

Limitations: During the completion of this study, the author had faced a few limitations and they have some impact on the overall study.

Sample size and respondents attitude towards survey: For any study, it is important to have an adequate number of sample size and get the required responses from respondents. One of the key limitations was survey sample size and responses. Though there are more than 6000 garment factories located in Bangladesh and has over 4 million workforce but respondents seem uninterested to response the survey questionnaire. Also a few cases they refused to participate in the survey. Many respondents seemed unaware of the topic situation and do not want to disclose

information about their organization. Though the survey was anonymous and no personal data was collected.

Survey method: For this study, electronic survey method was used and mediums were email, telephone conversation, and social media. To conduct the survey, the author sent an email to over 450 garments where the success rate to reach respondents was about 55% to 65% and the response rate was less than 10%. To meet the minimum response requirement, the author needs to take help who physically went to different garment factories, talked with workers and then capture responses.

Access to information: For any study, it's crucial to collect real information from targeted participants. Business ethics is a complicated and sensitive sector at least for Bangladeshi garment industry. Often, they think it might cause a problem if they disclose real information about their business. During the survey and data analysis, it seems few respondents they did not answer truthfully.

Language barrier: The survey questionnaire was made in English. Many of the respondents find it difficult to read a foreign language and respond accordingly. Also, many employees and workers are not familiar with ethical terminologies. It was also a great concern for respondents to convey the right message.

CONCLUSION

Garment industries contribution toward Bangladeshi economy is enormous. This industry accounted for more than 80% of countries total export and almost 5 million people work in this industry. The whole world now stands for ethical buying. Where this industry depends heavily on exports and other competitor countries trying hard to take away positioning opportunity, it is the right time for the industry to be ethical in every way. It is very important to create ethical standards based on the collaboration of each party. These not only enable them to create a better standard rather than aware and stay in the same track with all parties of the business. Throughout this study, the main aim is to explore Bangladeshi garment industry from the perspective of business ethics. This ethical perspective includes a subsection of business ethics such as procedure, code of conducts, policies, how to make it, to which extent they involve parties such as employees, workers, workers unions and associations, and management. It was also important to know to assess the awareness of employees and workers toward the ethical perspective of businesses.

What steps organizations follows to set their own ethical standards?

To answer research question 1 author found code of conducts, policies, procedures in businesses are widely known as ethical standards since it demonstrates, and guides expected behaviors, responsibilities, and actions by everyone associated with that business even the business organization itself. These provide guidelines and benchmarks to confront ethical situations and conflicts. Findings showed that there are still lots of gaps between having these and practical implementations and lived by it in organizations. Collected data shows a gap between creating the code of conducts as a collective process. Most of the organizations make an ethical code of conduct by themselves. Though they keep consideration of local labor law, ILO labor act, instructions from management, and some extent they include buyers guidelines. The regulatory body plays a great role to set standards. After creating a draft of ethical standard or guidelines, companies need to take approval from local labor ministry before implementations. Even after any changes or modifications, they need to go through for approval again. Since these code of conducts, guidelines, and procedures has a great impact on doing businesses and guiding employees and workers, they should opt-in for a more collective process. More researches and user testing should be undertaken since it has implications for business. Indeed, many organizations started translating and implementing ethical aspects and standards to the

organizational values and visions. They also held periodic feedback collection process and management KPIs to ensure that standards are followed and met.

To what extent organizations involve management, employee, and workers to create ethical standards?

Involvement plays great roles for any effective policies or guidelines. Data shows the involvement of all parties such as business, its employees, workers, unions or associations, and society still missing in Bangladeshi garment industry. Ethical standards and approaches are not made to follow by workers or employees forcefully. All parties involved should be treated equally and respects to ethics are mandatory. Few reports suggested that management or organizations started taking ethical perspective seriously after the pressure from buyers. To meet the buyer's requirements, they are considering ethical concerns seriously. In some serious ethical situations, then involve workers unions in the process. But it should be treated as 'business ethics is for the betterment of business'. Employers have the moral obligation to recognize the welfare and betterment of employees and workers. On the other hand, employees and workers also has the same obligation. When all the parties work together it became relatively easier to manage ethical standards and approaches to business activities. This also increases business reputation, brand value, and trustworthiness among each other.

How organizations create employees' awareness and attitudes toward business ethics in organizations?

Awareness among employees and workers also have great concern. Collected data shows that survey participants are aware of ethical situations and majority percent of respondents never experience serious ethical issues in their organizations. These results indicate a positive atmosphere of ethical awareness of employees and workers. But business ethics does not cover only a few issues like employing child labor or fire safety issue. Business ethics also covers other issues like ethical sourcing, not bribing, treatments of equalities, etc. (discussed in chapter 3 and 4). Research data shows garment organizations usually aware its employees about ethics and related issues but for workers, they take help of workers unions or workers nominated persons. Policies, rules, and regulations, laws are subject to change and for their own betterment employees and workers need to aware of ethical prospects. Employers should take a proactive approach to inform and aware ethical conducts on a regular basis so that ethical issues can be minimized.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Online Survey Questionnaire

A survey to understand the Business Ethics of Garment Industries in Bangladesh

Garment industry is one of the largest export-oriented industry in Bangladesh and second largest exporting nation. Cheap labor, very low-cost manufacturing and raw material availability made this industry a competitive industry comparing to other garment manufacturing nations.

However, this industry is also known for practicing unethical strategies to achieve the competitive advantage. The aim of this survey is to understand and determine the current scenario of Business Ethics in your organization and overall in this industry. Data collection and outcome of this survey will be only used to academic research purpose and it is anonymous.

Part one: An overview

Your gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

What type of company you work for:

- Production/ manufacturer company
- Buying house company
- Intermediaries company
- Third party or outsourcing

In what function you work in that company

- Production
- Sourcing
- Supply chain
- Marketing
- Design
- Accounting
- HR
- Other: _____

Target customers of your organization

- Local customers
- Foreign customers
- B2B (business to business)

What is the appropriate employee size of your organization?

- Less than 100
- Between 100 to 500
- Between 501 to 1000
- More than 1000

Ownership structure of your organization:

- Sole proprietorship organization
- Partnership organization
- Private limited company
- Public limited company
- Other: _____

Women employees/ workers ratio in your organization?

- Within 25%
- Within 25% to 50%
- Within 50% to 75%
- More than 75%

Part 2: Ethics and your organization

From Ethical point of view, rate your organization



To which extent your organization is complaint in an ethical way to its employees



To which extent your organization is complaint in an ethical way to government and legal institutions

1 2 3 4 5

Not ethical at all Very ethical

Do you have compliance department or workforce in your organization?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

Do you have workers union in your organization?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

Do you have rights to join workers union?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

Answer following benefits exists in your organization or not.

	Yes	No	No knowledge about it
On time monthly salary/ wage payment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overtime payment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benefits such as provident fund, gratuity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers safety and protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Office premises safety and protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety compensation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women workers safety and protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accidental compensation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good working condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forced labor policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you ever-faced following situation while working for this organization?

	No	Yes	Don't want to disclose
Abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual objections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Sexual objections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pressurized to work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring or tracking employees or workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Violation of human rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pressurize to do bad/ unethical things by organization or superior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inequalities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have following in your organization.

	Yes	No	No information
Ethical consultations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think your organization promotes positive corporate cultures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Code of conducts and policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee survey or feedback collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethical/ compliance hotline for employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you aware about ethical issues in your organization?

- Yes
- No
- No information to you

Do you take part in ethical dialogue or setting ethical standards in your organization?

- Yes
- No
- No information to you

How ethical standards are made in your organization?

- By management
- Collaboration with employee/ worker and management
- Yearly review
- Help of third party or independent consultancy firm
- Standards are forced by regulatory body or legal organization of the industry
- Government
- I do not have this in my organization
- Partner organizations from abroad

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