

**Longitudinal study of working women and changes in jobs in Bangladesh
Nashid Kamal*, G. Ambler** and Rumana Z. Omar*****

***Professor, Dept of Population- Environment, Independent University,
Bangladesh (IUB)**

****Dept of Statistical Science, UCL,UK**

***** Reader and Head, of Biostatistics Group, Dept of Statistical Science,
UCL,UK**

INTRODUCTION

The effect of global economic restructuring on women's lives has received much attention in the literature (Durano, 2002; Fontana and Wood, 2000 and Oxfam, 2002 ; Pyle and Ward, 2003). Lucrative trade agreements of the developed nations with the members of the developing countries, bear positive fruits for women workers, enabling the country to have greater participation of women in the labour market and thus improving the status of women. However, the effects of withdrawal of trade agreements may have negative impacts on their lives (Bhattacharya and Elliot, 2005). This is mainly because some of the industries utilize the cheap labour of formerly unemployed women, thus providing a steady income for them and their families. Once these jobs are curtailed or lost due to global restructuring, the immediate effect is on the lives of these women and their families who have grown to rely on this income (Pablo, 1999; Pyle and Ward, 2003). This is specially the case where the state does not come forward with any benefits or compensation, neither have they invested in providing alternate sources of employment. The ensuing situation forces the women workers to accept informal jobs through which they are able to maintain themselves and their dependants (Parennas, 2001c; Ward et al., 2004).

The case is exemplified by Bangladesh, one of the developing countries exporting large quantities of readymade garments. In Bangladesh, 90 percent of the garment factory workers are females and they support an estimated 10 million dependents (Bangladesh Observer 2001; Star Business Report 2001b). Bangladesh economy has grown increasingly dependent on the 76% of national export earnings generated by garments and knit wear. Changes in trade agreement have threatened the competitive position of Bangladesh garment industry. Declines in garment orders accelerated rapidly after September 11, 2001. By November 2001, two thirds of the factories had no work orders (Sobhan, 2001). Following this, an estimated 400,000 women lost their jobs (Staff Reporter 2001c). Many female garment workers had few options for employment other than seeking domestic and sex work. In fact, in one study, Ward et al. (2004) report that after November 2001, an influx of former garment workers have been known to enter sex work in Bangladesh. With lack of other parallel industries in the formal sector, Bangladesh has the lowest rate of women's employment in South Asia (World Bank Report, 2008).

Under the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA), duty free and tariff privileges and quantity quotas for garments and textiles were provided to certain developing countries in their exports to developed countries. Since the early 90's Bangladesh has started developing its garment industry. From the late 90's it is one of the developing countries enjoying the MFA agreement. The garment industry boomed there as local and international investors took advantage of this agreement. In December 2004 the MFA agreement ended, which meant that all the countries (including China) could compete with one another without quantity quotas or trade barriers. With no MFA, the Bangladeshi garment industry was expected to experience a major reduction in the orders and this would result in shutting down of many industries (Star Business Report, 2001b). The resultant effect would be the loss of jobs for women workers who were neither trained for any other form of employment, nor had there been any provision made by the Government for their alternative employment in the formal sector. It was predicted that approximately 1.3 to 1.8 million women would lose their

jobs after December 2004 (Staff Reporter, 2002a). This leads to the possibility that many women who were former garment workers would take up either domestic work or sex work or some other informal employment.

To study the effect of post MFA, the current study had been undertaken to follow the changes in women worker's lives. This study presents the findings from a longitudinal survey of women workers in Bangladesh, conducted over a period of one and half years, from June 2004 to Dec 2005. The study followed three hundred women in Dhaka slums (the capital of Bangladesh) and the changes in job categories through this period was documented in four different rounds of survey. Each survey was conducted at six month interval beginning June 2004 and ending Dec 2005. The three hundred women were equally divided amongst garment work, sex work, domestic work and housewives (serving as a control group with no cash employment). Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study attempts to look at the patterns of changes from one job category to another following the end of MFA. The study also investigates the correlates of job change amongst the four category of women chosen in this study.

STUDY BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Since its independence in 1971, the economy of Bangladesh has been dependent on agriculture as most of the people live in the rural areas (Rahman, 2004). The export sector was principally dominated by jute and tea. Following a significant decline in the demand for jute and jute-related products in the world market, the price of jute fibres was negatively affected. Coupled with that was the constant threat of flooding, which led to a substantial decline to the national revenue from the jute oriented exports (Spinager, 1986). Attention was thus thrust towards the garment industry which showed signs of a lucrative future.

In Bangladesh, the garment industry has become the main export sector and in year 2002, it was responsible for 81 percent of the total exports¹ (Bhattacharya and Elliot, 2005). According to Rahman (2005) two non-market factors have played a crucial role in ensuring the garment sector's continual success namely (a) quotas under Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) in the North American market and (b) preferential market access to European markets (Bhattacharya and Rahman, 2001).

According to Bhattacharya and Elliot (2005) 'The MFA was a complex system of country- and product-specific quotas on textiles and clothing; it was an institutionalized aberration under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).' Rahman (2004) defines MFA as 'MFA is a series of bilaterally negotiated quota restrictions on trade in textiles and clothing between individual developed country importers and developing country exporters. Under the quota, the exporter is allowed to supply a certain volume of textile and clothing products up to a specified ceiling, and it is up to the exporter to allocate the quota allowance among its domestic producers'. As a result of MFA, there was a major relocation of production where firms of developed countries shifted their interests to developing countries.

The wage structure in the garment industry, all over the world can explain the reason of this shift. According to Werner International (1998), hourly apparel labour cost (wages and fringe benefits, US \$) of USA is 10.12 whereas it is only 0.30 in Bangladesh. Because of this difference, world apparel exports grew from a modest \$3 billion in 1965, with developing countries accounting for just 14 percent of the total, to \$119 billion in 1991, with developing countries supplying 59 percent (Murray, 1995). In 1991 the number of employees in the readymade garment sector of

Bangladesh was 582,000 and it rose to 1.404,000 in 1998 (Quddus and Rashid, 2000). Currently, the industry employs about 3 million workers of whom 90% are women (Begum, 2001).

In Bangladesh, garment workers are primarily females who are employed for very low wages, thus enabling the products to be sold at a very modest price. Shirts produced in Bangladesh are sold in developed countries for five to ten times their imported price (Custers, 1997). However, the working conditions are appalling for the workers. Not only do they receive low wages, they have an unhealthy workplace, lack of safety, no job security and forced labour (Rahman, 2004). A study by Sustainable Development Networking Programme (SDNP) finds that there is no law for the national minimum wage in Bangladesh garment industry and most of the garment factories do not follow the labour law and ILO conventions. The study further documents that there is no weekly holiday, gratuity or provident fund for the garment workers (SDNP, 2003). In most of the cases there are no transportation facilities, accommodation arrangement and provision for maternity leave. The study adds that the management has not provided doctors, first aid, sufficient light and ventilation and even pure drinking water and toilets for the workers. Most of the factories do not have day care centres.

Even with such appalling conditions, almost 3 million women are forced to accept garment work because of lack of any alternative, saturation in agricultural sector, lack of skills and education. Studies have shown that young, unmarried girls are usually employed as garment workers (Salway et al., 2003). Marriage being the most desired form of social stability, studies find that many unmarried garment workers save their earnings with a hope of paying the dowry towards their wedding (Amin, 1998). During the period before and after the nine eleven (9/11), Bangladesh lost some garment orders resulting in a period of job loss for garment factory workers. There is no database that lists the fate of women who lost their jobs, but sociological studies based on a few sample observations found that as an alternative, former garment women had resorted to sex work and domestic work (Ward et al., 2004). Studies in other parts of the developing world have also found that 'For survival, many women must resort to earning a living as domestic or sex workers or run small businesses using microfinance' (Pyle and Ward, 2003).

Urban slums of Dhaka

Dhaka is one of the fastest growing cities of the world. Its growth has been particularly rapid since 1972, after its transformation from a provincial capital to the national capital of the newly independent country, Bangladesh. The average annual growth rate of the city's population was 6 % during the 1974-2001 period (World Bank, 2007). Rural-urban migration remained the most dominant factor of the population growth, although natural increase has also been high.

Dhaka (or Greater Dhaka) is currently the 11 th most populous city in the world with over 12 million people and is projected to move up to the 6th position with 18.4 million people in 2010 (UN, World Urbanization Prospects, 1999).

Slums: Estimates and Definitions According to a World Bank Report (2007) Slums (*bastees*) are substandard housing built on privately owned land. According Urban Health Survey Report (NIPORT et al., 2007) slums are defined as areas which have the following characteristics

- Poor housing conditions/poor structure
- Very high population density

- Very poor water and sanitation
- Low socio-economic status
- Lack of security of tenure.

A recent mapping of slums in Dhaka show that slums are located all around the city. In comparison to other cities in the region (India), the proportion of slum dwellers in Dhaka is similar to Kolkata, less than that in Mumbai and greater than three other major Indian cities Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore (World Bank, 2007).

Islam (1985) found that slum dwellers in Dhaka city were paying higher rent per square meter than non-slum households, even though the latter usually benefited from a much better physical environment and level of services. As a consequence of tight budget constraints and relatively high rents, the poor in Dhaka usually live in very small accommodations (2 or 3 square meters per person). Currently 35 % of the total inhabitants of Dhaka live in urban slums. The population density is 200 times higher than that of the rest of Bangladesh. One study finds 90% of the people living in the slums having an income below the poverty line (NIPORT et al., 2007).

The government does not have any structured health facility for the poor, and all the indicators including Infant Mortality Rate, Total Fertility Rate are worse than the national estimates. Non Governmental Organisations are the primary providers of various services but none include housing (World Bank, 2007). However, their services are criticized to be selective (Jamil et.al., 1993).

Sex Work

According to one study there are 100,000 sex workers in Bangladesh whose customers represent all socio-economic segments of society (MOHFW, 2001). Another study claims that there are 19 brothels and 15,000-30,000 sex workers in Dhaka alone (BSS, 2002b). These figures are only rough estimates as the majority of sex work in Bangladesh is clandestine due to unfavourable legal discrimination against commercial sex workers (CSW).

Extreme poverty, environmental degradation, lack of skills and absence of gainful employment for females in the rural areas forces women to become sex workers in Bangladesh. There are two kinds of sex workers: the *formal* ones who are organised in brothels or residences or the *informal* ones who are the floating sex workers (working in streets, parks, hotels and other variable locations) (Dandona et.al., 2005). The formal sex workers work in brothels and other locations which are known to local people as 'red light areas' (Ex Tanbazar in Narayanganj, brothel in Dauladia).

Locating sex workers in these areas is much easier than locating sex workers residing in urban slums of Dhaka who work clandestinely and their actual trade is unknown to the immediate members of the family or neighbourhood. Needless to mention that 'sex work' carries an element of stigma for the women who accept this profession. According to Ward et. al. (2004), in Bangladesh, the sex workers' economic status ranged from floating street workers, hotel, residence and brothel based workers to highly paid entertainers.

In 1999, several brothels around Dhaka city were evicted, resulting in higher number of floating sex workers who were more visible in parks and street corners of Dhaka (BSS, 2002b). Although some measures have been taken to rehabilitate evicted sex workers by putting them in vagrant homes, the experiences in the latter turned out to be more abusive than their original profession. The funds and resources allocated for the training and rehabilitation of the evicted sex workers was extremely inadequate and research shows that the women felt they had fared better as sex workers (Islam,

2000). Some women were also given positions in the garment factories and these women found it difficult to adjust with garment work. In fact, sex workers in general had a harder time moving into other work than did other workers (Ward et.al., 2004). The donors who sponsor the rehabilitation of the sex workers provide gender-stereotype work (sewing, embroidery, quilt work) which does not attract the sex workers and does not provide any hope of lucrative earnings in future. Few studies have documented the exact path of evicted sex workers, it is predicted that many return to sex work.

Additionally, in Bangladesh, rural women who are promised good jobs, often fall prey to vicious operating circles who traffic these women to various countries such as India and Pakistan, Middle East and compel them to do sex work. Some legal agencies have been operating in bringing back trafficked women, as well as preventing such practice. There is no documentation as to what happens to the sex worker women once they are legally brought back from these countries. According to Jenkins (1999) 'These women are almost never able to marry and be accepted in the main society'.

Domestic Work

Female domestic workers are very common in Bangladesh. Not only do the urban elite employ young rural women as domestic help, the same is common even in the remotest rural areas. Families in abject poverty offer their daughters and other female members as domestic aid in other relatively more affluent households, thereby incurring some form of economic gain even at the subsistence level. The salaries of the domestic workers do not follow any wage market pattern and the workers are completely at the mercy of their employers. They have no weekly/annual leave, medical care and are often abused by the male employers. They suffer long working hours and there is no intervention by the government unless someone is killed/assaulted by the employer. In Dhaka city, an estimated half a million domestic workers are expected to be working (Akhter, 2006a). The maids are migrant workers who arrive from the rural areas, driven by poverty and need to feed other members of the family. Their families are unable to visit them while they are working in the well to do homes, the employers take advantage of this situation and deprive the young girls of proper wages, food and free time. Many domestic workers had shifted to garment work for better wages and the freedom to live amongst peers (Islam, 1997). Hence, there has been evidence of shifting from domestic work to garment work. In fact, during the early days of the garment factory (during the late 80s), there was a marked scarcity of domestic workers as most young women from the rural areas preferred garment work to domestic work. Currently, entry to the garment industry has become more competitive than earlier. The networks that allowed new migrants to work in garment industries were mainly through sisters, cousins and other fictive ties from their neighbourhood (Opel, 2000). Young girls who did not have such networks were sometimes forced to work as domestic worker at first. Even for domestic work, networking is extremely important, because employers want to employ known relatives of other domestic workers who are already known to them.

Currently, however, some negative aspects of the garment industry have deterred women from taking up garment industry jobs. The lack of fire escape and other safety regulations in the garment industry had caused many deaths causing many parents from the rural areas to be cautious about garment factory work for their wards. Moreover, some cases of sexual harassment, irregularity of pay and tenuous working conditions have prompted another group of workers to prefer domestic work over

garment work One study documents that among the working women in the urban slums of Dhaka, 30% work as domestic workers and 27% as garment worker (Salway et al.,1998).

While the late 80s witnessed a scarcity of young girls for domestic work (mostly preferring garment work), this has been attenuated due to another generation of migrants who could not get work in the garment industry or/and preferred domestic work. Additionally, while child labour is banned by the world wide textile industry, domestic work is not. Currently, in Bangladesh, an estimated two million children work as domestic workers (Akhter,2006b).

Housewife

Couples in rural Bangladesh who live in abject poverty are often forced to leave their homesteads and arrive in the capital Dhaka in search of jobs. Although, marriage as a social contract means that the husband provides for all expenses, in real life the picture is quite different for women living in the urban slums. For majority of these women, their husbands have poor education, inadequate income from odd jobs, lack of job security, ill health and no scope of improvements in their current positions. One aggregate comment from the Salway et.al. (2005) fieldwork summarizes the role of women in the urban slums `Women want to live under the shade (security) of a man. In this way, other men cannot harass her. Though in fact, most of the women feed their husband with their own earnings` Studies have noted that `traditional` roles of patriarchy are more relaxed in the urban slums and women are more likely to seek employment for cash. In one study, Salway et al. (1998) found 44% women in the urban slums of Dhaka working for a living. In another study in the urban slums of Dhaka , 33% women were found to work for a living (Kamal and Rashid,1999). However, women`s work is considered supplementary and when better times prevail, women are usually taken off from work (Salway et.al. 2005). A considerable proportion of women are therefore not working and staying home as housewives.

The slum women suffer from great marital instability (Salway et.al.,2005;Wood and Salway, 2001). In many cases, men desert their wives and leave them to fend for themselves along with their children. The Government does not provide any safety net for such single/divorced/separated/widowed women and they have a particularly difficult plight. In many situations, the deserted women look for job openings to provide for themselves and their dependants. Additionally, women from stable unions also seek jobs to supplement their income.

Study Objectives

The MFA was to end in December 2004.China had joined the WTO and from a very humble origin rose to be the world`s major producer and exporter of clothing (CAFOD,1998). The steep competition in the world market is expected to reduce the orders for Bangladesh in which case many garment workers would lose their jobs. This study had been undertaken to follow garment workers, sex workers, domestic workers and housewives living in the urban slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh and observe the changes in their jobs which would be the post MFA effect. It is posited here that during post MFA more garment workers would be likely to change jobs and enter sex work or domestic work. The housewife category has been taken as a control group

who have no cash income and the job changes in other categories could be explained with reference to the housewives.

This study has two major objectives:

To study the change in job categories following the end of MFA

To study the factors which prompt change in categories amongst the various subgroups of women studied.

METHODS AND DATA

The data for this study was collected in Dhaka, Bangladesh during a period of one and half years starting June 2004 and ending December 2005. It was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF SES-0243215). The study was designed to collect longitudinal data from the respondents every six months to observe the post- MFA effects on women workers.

A total of 300 women were followed up for a period of one and half years. They were equally divided among four job categories viz sex work, garment work, domestic work and housewives. The latter was used as a reference category of women who, at the beginning of the study, did not work for cash. In each round, along with their categories women were asked questions on their socio-economic and demographic correlates.

From a previous study, conducted by Ward et al. (2004), former sex workers were recruited as field workers for the *sex worker group*. The field workers identified both floating and non floating sex workers who were personally known to them from their experience in this area. According to Ward et. al (2004) 'Floating sex workers are referred to women who contacted their work in the streets, parks and public places of Dhaka rather than their homes, residences or brothels'. Equal number of women were chosen from ages 15-19,20-24 and 25 years and older.

For *garment factory workers*, the Wahab colony (a slum in Dhaka) was used as a base and snowball method was used to locate seventy five garment factory workers. The same age scheme was followed to have equal number of respondents from ages 15-19, 20-24 and 25 and above.

For *domestic workers*, the study took the help of the list of members of Shoishob, a non governmental organisation (NGO) that has organized domestic workers. The domestic workers come from diverse backgrounds in Dhaka, which provides heterogeneity to the sample. The same age stratification was followed for this group.

For *housewives*, another slum Korail was chosen as the main population. This is a slum located in a 12 acre area in north central Dhaka in Ward 19, Gulshan Thana. Korail is a relatively stable but growing slum of 13,000 households, a total population of 65,000 people consisting of 33,800 females and 31,200 males. The first author of this paper had already established some baseline research in this slum (Kamal and Rashid,1999). Random sampling was utilized to locate households and women were sampled according to the age stratification mentioned above.

The field office was based in Dhaka in one of the premises of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB). For each category of the respondent three female field workers were recruited. Each field worker had twenty five women in her group. Each study

group was headed by a supervisor (four in total). The field workers were responsible for contacting the respondents, obtaining data for structured questionnaire as well as detailed qualitative study including life cycle analysis. The supervisors aided their field workers with filling in the questionnaire, case studies, locating respondents when they moved residences, accompanying field workers during untimely interviews at night or in the early mornings or in unusual settings including hotels and park corners where sex trade is common. The supervisors and field workers held weekly debriefing meetings with PI and co PI and discussed the field work at every stage. The quantitative data was entered into the computer using the assistance of a computer operator. A research assistant oversaw the entire research and was responsible for data entry, cleaning, editing etc. The statistical analysis of the data was conducted in the Dept of Statistical Science, University College London (UCL), UK during the period Jan-March'08.

STUDY VARIABLES

Dependant variable

In this article, the main variable of interest is the change in category experienced by the women during the period of the survey. There are four observations in this study, recorded over a period of two years, allowing us to study three changes in category. For the sex worker group no changes were recorded. During this period, no sex worker left their trade and neither did any woman from this study enter the sex trade. For other categories, the changes are discussed below in a chronological order.

(Table 1 about here)

Independent variables

Several individual level independent variables were investigated in this study as correlates of change in category. They include the woman's age, education, initial category of occupation according to the first round of survey, marital status, husband's education, total household income and number of household members.

Additional variables, which are termed 'background variables' for this study are enumerated below with some rationale of being chosen as correlates of change in this study.

Status of migration

The length of stay in the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka is an important differential of change in category. It is posited that women who have lived in the capital for greater length of time have more networks, more information about possible job availability and are more likely to have more changes in categories. (Opel, 2000). Women who have recently migrated from rural areas are more helpless and lack negotiating skills as well as any capital and may be less likely to change categories (ibid). In the urban slums of India, Mitra (2005) finds that 'With a rise in the duration of migration, the probability of getting employment in manufacturing and repairing increases'. In this study, status of migration is therefore considered to be a plausible predictor of change.

Father/ mother's educational level

Father/mother's educational level is considered a differential of 'change of category'. The parent's educational level here is a proxy for her socio-economic condition. It is

posited that when the father's educational level is high, his socio-economic condition is better and his daughter is in a better position to change categories. Women whose father/mothers have low levels of education are less likely to change categories as they are unable to receive any parental support during the transitory phase of giving up one job and looking for another, or getting married by fulfilling dowry¹ requirement of the bridegroom. (Explain dowry in footnote)

Number of brothers

In Bangladesh, where patriarchal society prevails, in the absence of parental support (or over and above), brothers are expected to provide for their sisters. The natal ties are very important for women living in the urban slums (Salway et al.,2005). Many women are partially supported by their brother's economic contribution. The presence of a brother(s) implies some form of economic and emotional support for the woman. Thus, those women who have a brother or several brothers who offer them financial support may be more likely to change categories as they have higher bargaining power and more likely to sustain themselves during the transition from one category to another. Those who have no brothers (implying no safety net to fall back upon) maybe less likely to change categories.

Ownership of land

Women who own land in their native village or elsewhere are in a more advantageous position, compared to those who do not own land. Income from their land enables them to have more bargaining power in life and they are more likely to change categories because they are able to sustain themselves through the transition/or pay for the dowry for marriage. Thus, this variable is considered a predictor of change in category.

Round of survey

This study started in June 2004 and ended May 2006. The MFA ended in December 2004. Thus the round of survey is very important as a predictor of change in category. In the first round, the workers are expected to be in their respective categories. As the MFA agreement ends December 2004, the next two rounds of survey were conducted for this study. The effect of post MFA should be evident in the changes of the second and third round of the survey. Thus this variable is an important determinant of change of category.

PROFILE OF THE STUDY RESPONDENTS

In this study there were 300 respondents, seventy five each from garment work, sex work, domestic work and housewives who were followed over a period of two years starting June 2004. The independent variables and their frequencies are presented in Table 2, according to the study group to which they belong.

(Table 2 about here)

The age distribution is similar for garment workers, domestic workers and housewives, clustering more (66%) towards ages below 19 and 20-24. For the sex workers, there is a markedly low frequency in ages 30 -34 and 35 and above (8%),while the age group 25-29 has higher frequencies compared to other groups.

For educational attainment too, the sex workers differ markedly from the other groups. Table 2 shows that, compared to other groups, sex worker category have

higher percentages of women with both primary (37.3%) and post primary education (53.3%). The garment workers have highest number of women who have primary education (54%), while the domestic worker group has the highest number of women with no education (80%). Compared to the housewife category (62.7%) the sex workers have the lowest percentages of women with no education at all (9.3%). In 1999 one study reported 85.8% illiteracy among sex workers from a brothel in Tangail, Bangladesh (Jenkins, 1999).

With respect to marital status, the three categories of women were compared with housewives, where by definition all women were married. Among garment workers, there were almost equal percentages of unmarried and married workers. Among the sex worker group, we observed the highest number of unmarried workers (42.7%), while among the domestic worker group there were the highest number of married workers (73.3%). Highest number of 'currently single' women were also found in the sex worker group (30.7%). 'Currently single' category includes ever married women who are divorced, widowed, abandoned.

Regarding number of members in their current household, this study finds that the highest percentages of women who have a single member household are the sex workers (33%). This group also has the lowest percentages of women with more than five members in the household (8%). 'More than five household members' was higher in the garment workers group (25.3%), although the reference group of housewives have the highest amongst all (36%). Single member households are few both among domestic workers and garment workers (5.3%). On the average the average size of a household for this group of women in the study is three.

Quantitative analysis

In this study, we use a logistic regression model that relates a change in job from period i to $i+1$ as a function of explanatory variables measured at period i and expressed as

$$\text{Log} (p_{ij}/1-p_{ij}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1ij} + \dots$$

The model was adjusted for repeated measures using robust standard error which allows for estimation of cluster data. This method uses a sandwich estimator of variance, which has a long tradition of being used in the survey literature (Huber, 1967; White, 1980).

RESULTS

Bivariate analysis

The 300 hundred women were observed in four surveys. Three records for change were available from the four rounds of survey. This gave us 900 observations to record if any change had occurred in the job situation, compared to their status at previous round. The merged file thus started with 900 observations. Bivariate table showed that the sex worker category made no changes during these three rounds. They were excluded from this analysis and we had 675 observations. Sixteen observations were excluded from the study because of incomplete information on change of category. Another 21 observations were excluded as the new job categories did not match the given categories that we were testing (they include categories such

as self employment in sewing work, sales, vendor etc). The final model consists of 648 observations.

Firstly, each variable was tested in a univariate logistic regression model. The outcome variable was binary, change in category (coded 1 if yes, 0 otherwise). Those variables which were significant (p value less than equal to 20%) were retained as independent predictor variables for the final logistic regression model.

The variables tested in univariate logistic regression models as predictors of change in category were :age, education, initial category, total income, number of household members, land ownership, has a brother, father's education, mother's education, round of the survey and marital status. Variables found to be significant at the 20% level of significance were: round of the survey, initial category, total income, land ownership and mother's education.

Multivariate analysis

These variables were used as independent predictors to model the change in category using binary logistic regression. Forward selection method was employed to choose variables for the final regression model.

The final parsimonious model presented in Table 3 finds that the initial category, total income and round of survey, are significant predictors of change in category.

(Table 3 about here)

Final Model

From the model, we find that compared to housewives, garment workers are less likely to change categories. They have an estimated 87% (95% CI: .05, .35) lower odds of changing category. Regarding changing category, the domestic maids did not show significant difference from housewives.

Compared to the first round of the survey, women were more likely to change category in the third round of the survey, estimated log odds was 2.89 (95% CI: .47, 5.70). However, women interviewed in the second round did not have significant difference from the first round.

Compared to women who had no income, those who had total household income below Taka 1400 (USD 20) were more likely to change categories. The estimated log odds was 8.18 (95% CI: 2.47, 27.03). For those whose total income was between Taka 1400 and 2100 (USD 20-30), the estimated log odds were higher than those with no income, (OR: 7.27, 95% CI: 2.02, 23.99). In this model, compared to women who had no income, women who had total income above Taka 2100 (USD 30+) had the highest estimated log odds of changing categories (OR: 24.9, 95% CI: 3.74, 166.63).

Separate files were constructed for the different job categories to investigate whether there were other variables associated with category change in specific groups. Since the sex worker group had recorded no changes in category, there were three regression results for domestic maids, housewives and garment workers.

Domestic workers

There were a total of 190 women with complete information in this category. Out of them only 35 category changes were recorded. Each variable was entered as a predictor variable in a univariate binary logistic regression model. The variable 'father's education' was found to have significant coefficients in the binary logistic regression model. According to Peduzzi et al. (1996) there should be at least ten events for each parameter fitted in a logistic regression. Hence the final model for domestic workers (with 35 events) was able to fit only one independent variable (having three categories). The final model presented in Table 4 finds that compared to women whose father's have no education, women's whose father's have post primary education have an estimated 4.72 (95% CI: 2.05,10.85) times higher odds of changing categories. The model also finds that women whose fathers have primary education do not differ significantly from those whose fathers have 'no education'.

(Table 4 about here)

Housewives

In this category there were 239 women, and 20 cases of change were observed for this period. In univariate logistic regression models, at the 20 % level of significance, age, mother's education, total income and marital status of the woman were observed to be significant predictor variables. Applying the rule of Peduzzi et al. (1996) , only one independent variable could be entered into the final logistic regression model. The variable 'total household income of the woman' was found to be the most significant predictor of change in category. The final model for housewives is presented in Table 5.

(Table 5 about here)

Table 5 shows that compared to women with total income below Taka 1400 (USD 20), those with income between Taka 1400 and 2100 have an estimated 16.32 times higher odds of changing categories (95% CI: 5.44,49.41). Those with total income above Taka 2100 had an estimated 8.16 times higher odds of changing categories (95% CI: 1.62,41.53).

Garment workers

In this category there were a total of 219 women and only 12 changes. The univariate binary logistic regression models found age, mother's age, migration status and education of the women to be significant at the 20 % level. Applying the rule of Peduzzi et al. (1996) only one variable (education of the woman) was used as an independent variable for the final logistic regression model .Table 6 finds that compared to women with no education, women who had post primary education were more likely to change categories (OR: 5.72,95% CI: 0.98,33.36..

(Table 6 about here)

DISCUSSION

This study finds that contrary to what had been posited, the garment workers had not made significant changes during the period of study. Out of seventy five workers, only five had shifted to other categories. In fact, the study finds that, compared to the housewives, the garment workers are less likely to change categories. Bangladesh garment industry fared well after the MFA and very few factories had to be laid off. According to Faiz (2006), one of the reasons was that 'The competitive position of China became so important that the developed countries decided, soon after the official phasing out of MFA, to use safeguard measures to continue to impose some restrictive quota on their imports until the end of 2008'. Additionally, in the post MFA period Bangladesh was able to increase exports. This was mainly due to the knitwear industry, exports of which increased by about 27% during the same period, while that of woven garments slightly decreased (ibid). Many factories shifted to knitwear and did not need to lay off their workers. Thus, in this study, following post MFA we do not observe a large exodus of former garment workers shifting to either sex work, domestic work or housewives.

However, the fact that housewives have experienced frequent changes in category is an important finding on its own. In this study we have found that housewives (ie women who had no cash income) were more likely to change categories and join employment in the areas that we were studying (garment and domestic) and others. This finding indicates that there is a huge demand for employment among women who are in the urban slums even when they are married and their spouses possibly have some income. With high rates of inflation and rising costs it is difficult to sustain with one person's income. Thus, we find many housewives changing categories to become garment worker, domestic worker or others.

In this study, among three hundred women, one fourth were from sex worker category. During the two year period of this survey, not a single change was observed in this group. The study finds that among the study groups, the 'sex worker' group has the highest percentage of women with education above primary level and highest household income. Ward et al. (2004) had remarked in their paper that for this group change of profession is very difficult as they suffer a social stigma and the earnings are nowhere near what they earn as a sex worker. For example, *Rani (28) became a sex worker from age 11, because she was born to one. She met Sumon and she decided to get married and leave sex work. She moved to a rented premise in the slums of Dhaka, but once her daughter was born, Sumon left her. She was so weak that she could not go out to work, she borrowed money from her neighbours and survived a few days. Then she looked for some job so that she could raise her daughter as a normal human being, she tried domestic work, but the income was not sufficient. Not finding any other alternative, she went back to prostitution.*

About the shift to sex work, there is one word of caution, that in case someone had joined the sex trade it would be very difficult to ascertain as the respondent may not willingly provide this information. In this study, the field workers for the original 'sex worker' group were former sex worker themselves. They had privy knowledge of who were in this trade. The sampled sex workers resided in different urban slums, they were not from a single brothel, as has been the case of other studies on sex workers (Jenkins and Rahman, 2002). Thus, the field workers in this research who were employed for this group were able to trace the sex workers for the period of two

years. If any respondent (from garment work or other category) joined the sex trade in some other location of the country, which is not within the purview of our field workers, they may have gone unnoticed. However, in this study almost 95% of the garment workers remained in their jobs from the beginning until the end. Hence, the possibility of misclassification is minimal.

In view of no change being recorded in this group, they were excluded from the analysis and the remaining analysis pertains to the two groups only viz garment worker, domestic help, with reference to housewives.

The study (excluding sex workers) finds that the women with the lowest levels of total household income are less likely to change categories, while women with higher total household income are more likely to change. It is possible that women from the latter group have some economic ability to sustain themselves during the period of change and thus more bargaining power compared to their counterparts. One study conducted in the urban slums of Dhaka, finds that 63 % of the migrants had no income immediately before their migration from rural areas (Opel, 2000). 'This suggests that migrant people cannot afford to bring with them any financial capital to invest in the urban market' (ibid). In this study, those with lowest total household income would be synonymous to this group and unable to take the risks of changing categories (either seek alternative job or get married by paying dowry). Moreover, the networking which is needed to obtain information about openings in the labour market can only be developed after a sufficient period of time has been spent in the city . Opel (2000) comments about workers in the urban slums of Bangladesh that 'Those who are rich in social relations are also rich in information and gain opportunities in the labour market'. Mitra (2005) writes in the context of women workers in India 'Constrained choice, limited contacts of women and physical segmentation of the labour market perpetuate forces that entrap women workers in a low-income situation'. The findings from this study also support the same.

The study finds that women are more likely to change categories during the last round of the survey, which means that for the period June 2004 to June 2005 there were few changes and the changes mainly occurred during Jan '2006 to June 2006. This also indicates that the changes may not be due to the post MFA effect which should have been evident in the first or second round of the study (Dec 2004 or June 2005). This finding also supports the statement that the 'Bangladesh garment industry fared well after the post MFA'.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The main objective of this paper was to follow the garment workers through the period of phasing out of the MFA. It was posited on the basis of earlier qualitative research that once they were jobless, they were likely to become domestic workers, sex workers or housewives. With this hypothesis in mind, equal numbers of sex workers, domestic workers and housewives were also followed, not only to observe job change among garment workers but also to observe the change of women from one category to another.

The study finds that out of the total 219 garment workers who were followed over a period of two years (starting number was 225 and 6 women were lost to the

study), only 12 women had made any change. None of them shifted to sex work, although some shifted to housewife or domestic worker category.

Because of the phasing out of MFA, it was predicted that around 1.3 million garment workers would lose their jobs (Economist, 2004; Independent, 2004). This study finds that only 5 percent of the observed garment workers left their jobs for various reasons and they were not laid off. This finding supports the fact that Bangladesh garment industry did not suffer after the post MFA. In fact, it matches the overall countrywide picture where none of the garment factory workers had to be laid off. Many factories shifted to knitwear which increased production and fared better after phasing out of MFA. Additionally, in the international scene, fearing the aggressiveness of China as a garment producing country, some sanctions were still imposed on them until 2008. Thus, for Bangladesh, the apprehension of 13% unemployment proved wrong and no garment worker was forced to lose job or submit to abject poverty.

Having established the fact that Bangladesh fared well in the post MFA situation and garment factory workers were not laid off in huge numbers, we now turn to the situation of women's work and livelihood in Bangladesh. This study finds that the sex worker category has the highest number of women with primary and post primary education. This may indicate scarcity of employment for women with some education. Amin et al. (1998) find that in the garment factories, at the entry point there is no gain for literate women over illiterate ones. Since garment work does not give an edge to literate women over illiterate ones, it prefers unmarried young women and requires networks for entry into one, this possibility may be ruled out for those who seek higher wages, have some form of education and have no network with other garment factory workers.

For example, in her native village of Chapainawabganj Anowara (30) became a widow with two small children. She came to Dhaka city and arrived at Mohakhali bus stand where she was just standing by when the police started rounding up street sex workers and she happened to be one of the bystanders. In the prison, her only friends were the fellow street workers and upon release from jail (after eight months) she looked for a job. She had completed primary education but did not find a suitable job. She took the help of her friends from jail and became a sex worker. She sends her money to her mother to support the two sons, but does not reveal her work to anyone.

This case study reveals the vulnerability of Bangladeshi women, faced with poverty, widowhood, lack of social security benefits or any kind of organised form of recruitment for factory jobs.

This study recommends that policy makers should make provisions for vocational training of currently jobless rural women. Currently the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Exporter's Association (BGMEA) has set up some centres in various districts of Bangladesh, where they are providing skill development training to women. These efforts which involves training only 600 (per month) women for joining garment industry per year, is only a miniscule contribution to the future predicted labour force (predicted need per month 25,000 workers). These efforts need to be replicated many times and in many remote locations of Bangladesh, so that the number of skilled workers can rise and women can get gainful employment. Increase in vocational training for garment work or otherwise will also work towards reducing the number of women joining sex work or domestic work.

In the next decade, Bangladesh will experience a huge growth in the number of women entering the work force. This study recommends that apart from garment sector, the policy makers should concentrate on the expansion of the backward linkages (to the garment industry) which could also accommodate women workers with low levels of education and vocational training (Hate et al.,2005). Additionally, there should be an increased investment in the growth of other industries. Some of the areas that hold potential for strengthening Dhaka's labour market include food processing, assembly industries such as electronic goods, toys, construction, etc. and in the services sector, the development of data processing and telecommunication both for domestic and export markets (World Bank,2007).

The study finds that 'currently single women' meaning divorced, separated or widowed are more likely to join the sex trade. The study recommends expansion of the safety net to provide 'benefits' for women under this category. Currently the new Government has announced several schemes under which vulnerable women will be provided for. These schemes cover a very small percentage of the population and the amount provided is scanty. The policy makers may consider housing and benefit schemes targeted towards single mothers with small children (below five) and these schemes should cover all geographical areas.

The study also finds that men who have primary education may be better off in terms of looking after their unmarried daughters. There is a need for skill development and educational subsidies for men in Bangladesh. Men with higher vocational training can seek jobs not only in the country but can make a decent living by migrating abroad. An increase in their income levels will also enable them to maintain and educate their daughters instead of marrying them off at early ages and seeking respite from financial responsibility.

All the findings from this study have implications at the local, national and global level for countries and regions contesting with changing trade and production regimes, development strategies and socio-economic lives of men and women. The lesson from the experience of Bangladesh after post MFA is very positive. Other countries facing similar situations may initiate diversifying their production sector at an early stage so that the changes in global restructuring does not have an effect on the lives of women workers.

Strengthening skill development and educational skills for both men and women, providing social security to destitute women and single mothers can be a common recommendation for women of the region where low education, poverty and low opportunities compel women to work in the informal sector and experience bitter discrimination in wages.

Table 1 Distribution of changes in job category of women workers in the three rounds of survey June 2004-Dec 2005, Bangladesh				
ROUND 1	G	D	H	O
Garment	-	-	-	3
Domestic	-	-	8	-
Housewife	-	1	-	1
ROUND 2				
Garment	3	-	-	1
Domestic	1	-	9	2
Housewife	1	2	-	2
ROUND 3				
Garment	-	-	-	1
Domestic	1	-	9	2
Housewife	1	2	-	2

O stands for others and includes categories such as embroidery work, packet making, cleaner and small trader.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to selected individual-level variables.

Variable	Garment work	Sex work	Domestic	Housewife
Age of woman (years)				
≤ 19	28(37.3)	25(33.3)	25(33.3)	25(33.3)
20-24	24(32.0)	25(33.3)	25(33.3)	25(33.3)
25-29	5(6.7)	19(25.3)	5(6.7)	5(6.7)
30-34	9(12)	5(6.7)	10(13.3)	4(5.3)
35+	9(12)	1(1.3)	10(13.3)	16(21.3)
Missing	0	0	0	0
Marital status				
Unmarried	31(41.3)	32(42.7)	5(6.7)	0
Currently married	32(42.7)	20(26.7)	55(73.3)	74(98.7)
Currently single	12(16.0)	23(30.7)	15(20)	1(1.3)
Missing	0	0	0	0
No. of living brothers				
None	9(12.0)	14(18.7)	10(13.3)	9(12.0)
1	22(29.3)	21(28.0)	20(26.7)	23(30.7)
2	23(30.7)	22(29.3)	15(20.0)	22(29.3)
3 or more	21(28.0)	16(21.3)	30(40)	21(28.0)
Missing	0(0)	2(2.7)	0(0)	0(0)
Total household income in Taka				
None	1(1.3)	4(5.3)	0(0)	75(100)
<361	15(20.0)	0(0.0)	55(73.3)	0
362-770	53(70.7)	4(5.3)	20(26.7)	0
771+	6(8.0)	67(89.3)	0(0.0)	0
Status of migration				
Lived here	23(10.5)	84(37.3)	1(0.5)	17(7.1)
1-10 months	72(32.9)	30(13.3)	69(36.3)	78(32.6)
≥ 11 months	124(56.2)	111(49.3)	120(63.2)	144(60.3)
No of household members				
None	4(5.3)	25(33.3)	4(5.3)	1(1.3)
1	16(21.3)	16(21.3)	26(34.7)	23(30.7)
2	19(25.3)	16(21.3)	19(25.3)	15(20.0)
3	19(25.3)	12(16.0)	9(12.0)	9(12.0)
4	17(22.7)	12(16.0)	17(22.7)	27(36.0)
5 or more	19(25.3)	6(8.0)		
Respondent's Education				
None	21(28.0)	7(9.3)	60(80.0)	47(45.0)
Primary	41(54.7)	28(37.3)	14(18.7)	107(35.7)
Post primary	13(17.3)	40(53.3)	1(1.3)	58(19.3)
Ownership of land				
Yes	23(30.7)	18(24.0)	38(50.7)	22(29.3)
No	12(16.0)	8(10.7)	27(36.0)	53(70.7)
Missing	40(53.3)	49(65.3)	10(13.3)	0(0)
Husband's education				
Primary	16(7.3)	9(4.0)	35(18.4)	62(25.9)
Post primary	64(29.2)	57(25.3)	25(13.2)	63(26.4)
Missing	139(63.5)	159(70.7)	130(68.4)	114(47.7)
Father's education				
None	26(37.3)	14(18.7)	51(68.0)	36(43.0)
Primary	21(28.0)	13(17.3)	10(13.3)	11(14.7)
Post primary	25(33.3)	16(21.3)	4(5.3)	5(6.7)
Father not alive/missing	9(12.0)	24(32.0)	10(13.3)	23(22.0)
Mother's education				
None	53(70.7)	23(30.7)	69(92.0)	58(77.3)
Primary	10(13.3)	31(41.3)	1(1.3)	5(6.7)

Post primary	6(8.0)	8910.7)	1(1.3)	3(4.0)
Mother not alive/missing	6(8.0)	13(17.3)	4(5.3)	9(12.0)

Table 3 Logistic regression of change in category, all women combined (except sex worker).			
Variable	Odds Ratio	CI	P value
Initial category			
Housewife ^a	1		
Garment	.13	0.05,0.35	
Housemaid	.58	0.23,1.49	.000
Round of survey			
First ^a	1		
Second	1.92	0.92,4.02	
Third	2.89	1.47,5.70	.001
Total HH Income			
None ^a	1		
Below 1400	8.18	2.47,27.03	
1400-2100	7.27	2.02,23.99	
Above 2100	24.9	3.74,166.63	.007
Total N=648			

Table 4: Logistic regression of change in category, domestic workers only			
Variable	Odds Ratio	CI	P value
Father's education			
None ^a	1.00		
Primary	1.07	0.41,2.83	.885
Higher	4.72	2.05,10.85	<.001
N=190			

Table 5: Logistic regression of change in category, housewives only.			
Variable	Odds Ratio	CI	P value
Total income			
Below 1400 ^a	1.00		
1400-2100	16.32	5.44,49.41	
2100+	8.16	1.62,41.53	<.001
N=239			

Table 6 Logistic regression of change in category, garment workers only.			
Variable	Odds Ratio	CI	P value
Education			
None ^a	1.00		
Primary	1.67	0.33,8.51	
Post Primary	5.72	0.98,33.36	.08
N=219			

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