

A study on “Finding the way towards gender equality and providing an overview of the development of trade unions (Policy Review on the women workers ground.”

Prepared for
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh

Prepared by
Lead Consultant – Dr.. Tania Haque

In Association with
Karmojibi Nari, Bangladesh

Table of Contents

Head page.....1

List of tables and charts 3

Abbreviations 4

Acknowledgements 5

Executive Summary 6

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTORY PART 7

 1.1 Introduction 7

 1.2 Justification 8

 1.3 Major objectives of this study.....10

 1.4 Research Questions10

 1.5 Research Methodology.....10

 1.5.1 Selection of the Study Areas.....11

 1.5.2 Selection of the Samples11

 1.5.3 Methods of Data Collection.....11

 1.5.4 Ethical considerations12

CHAPTER TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN TRADE UNION AND WOMEN WORKERS ACCOUNTS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES.....13

 2.1 The Context and Activities of Trade Union13

 2.2 The state of women workers.....15

 2.3 Female membership in trade union17

 2.4 Women in leadership and decision-making bodies.....19

CHAPTER THREE – THE BARRIERS, STRUGGLES AND ACHIEVEMENTS INVOLVED WITH WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION.....22

 3.1 Obstacles associated with women’s participation in trade union22

 3.2 Structure of Trade Union: dilemma to pursue workers’ rights and gender equality28

 3.3 Existing laws and its application29

 3.4 Normative practice and ground realities30

 3.5 Achievements of women through Trade union so far31

SECTION FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION: A GUIDELINE TO ACCELERATE GROWTH, INVOLEMENT AND SCOPE TO EQUALITY33

 4.1 Recommendations.....33

 4.2 Scopes for further studies35

 4.3 Concluding remarks35

References:.....37

List of tables and charts

Table 1: Qualitative Sample Distribution	11
Table 2: The condition and problems associated with work for women workers	15
Table 3: Data for Labour Profile in Bangladesh	18
Table 4: The reality of and the proposed interventions by the labours	30
Table 5: Recommendations	33
Chart 1: Barriers related to women's participation in trade union	22
Chart 2: Achieved changes through trade unions	32

Abbreviations

BFTUC	Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress
BJSD	Bangladesh JatiyatabadiSrakik Dal
BJSF	Bangladesh JatiyaSramik Federation
BJSJ	Bangladesh JatiyaSramikJote
BLF	Bangladesh Labour Federation
BMSF	Bangladesh MuktoSramik Federation
BSSF	Bangladesh SanjuktaSramik Federation
BSF	Bangladesh Sramik Federation
BTUF	Bangladesh Trade Union Federation
BTUK	Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra
BTUS	Bangladesh Trade Union Sangha
CEACR	ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
IDI	In-depth Interview
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IUTC	International Trade Union Confederation
JSF	JatiyaSramik Federation
JSFB	JatiyaSramik Federation Bangladesh
JSJ	JatiyaSramikJote
JSJB	JatiyaSramikJote Bangladesh
JSL	JatiyoSramik League
JSP	JatiyaSramik Party
KII	Key In-depth Interview
NTUF	National Trade Union Federation
NWF	National Workers Federation
SSF	SamajtanrikSramik Front
TU	Trade Union

Acknowledgements

This research is the result of multiple people involved in different phases from planning to writing up the report. Working with men and women workers, TU leaders, and TU members was a unique experience for us to understand the working sector from different perspectives. Our heartiest thanks go to all of the participants, mainly to the women workers, members and leaders for sharing their life experiences with us. Their spontaneous support was helpful to find out the insights we were looking for. We are also grateful to Karmajibi Nari staffs for helping us facilitating the data collection process. In addition, we want to give credit to the data collectors and transcribers, without their support this research would not be possible. We are also extremely grateful to Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) for funding this research; otherwise, it would never see the light.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary objective of this study is to illustrate the limitations of the conventional policies that are largely inefficacious. The policies related with Trade Union (TU) and its members in Bangladesh has been unsuccessful in shedding light upon different layers of realities associated with the lives of working class people. The policy makers also failed to realize the fact that there is a strong connection between TU and women workers development. This report is a compilation of an empirical study which was carried out in Dhaka by following maintaining standard ethical codes of conduct. The findings and recommendation will help us understand the structure of TU and how legal procedures work as imperatives for women workers. The study followed qualitative research methodology by applying In-Depth Interviews, Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussion methods as tools for data collection where women and men workers, TU members and TU leaders were the respondents.

The findings of this research highlights on few areas considering four sectors – garment, construction, tannery and transport. The women workers are more visible in garment sector having the most benefits of being a worker compared to other sectors, even which was not up to the level of satisfaction. The barriers found for women workers in terms of participating in TU are categorized in various sections. In terms of barriers associated with union are socially perceived discriminatory notion about leadership, discrimination within union about leadership positions, nepotism in terms of training and leadership, inflexible meeting time, sexual harassment, masculine power control.

The harsh behavior women go through in the organization, union or in household are the results of justified discriminatory practices, normalization of violence against women and are inclined to follow the hierarchical structure of the society. Women are highly discriminated in TU for just being 'women'. TU follows the age old patriarchal values and it is very masculine in its structure and decision making process; which neglects the importance of women stepping outside of their comfort zones and climb into leadership positions. However, in 2013 the amendment came in the Labour Act to simplify the process of trade union and increase women's participation in trade union (Islam & Asaduzzaman, 2015). Unfortunately, women are still under represented in trade union, and trade unions have acted to serve male interests, undoubtedly creating challenges to reach the leadership positions. To discover the inside stories of trade union of Bangladesh, this study attempts to concentrate on women workers membership and leadership status to be reviewed, and reformulated.

In such way, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) cannot be achieved where women as a group are left behind in these major sectors. However, study results indicate that implementing strong legal actions, following up of leaders' behaviours and recognizing women as workers can bring positive change in ensuring gender equality in TU.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTORY PART

1.1 Introduction

Trade union, is an organization constituted by workers, in order to negotiate and manage their rights, demands as well as minimize conflicts between employers and employees (Rajesh & Manoj, 2014). This union develops strength to increase collective voice over workers' rights, to be solved mutually with a representation of majority workers perspectives. Communication, as is considered mandatory

between the management and workers, trade union develops a bridge within these groups (Rajesh & Manoj, 2014). In Bangladesh, the participation of labour force was 49.5 million, whereas women accounted for 12.1 million, with an increased rate of 5.45 percent women's participation annually (Hossain, Ahmed, & Akter, 2010); undoubtedly got a formal recognition with the enactment of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, prioritizing trade union to be legally approved and framed. Consequently, trade union has been aligned with gender based rights and needs in recent years to consider both gender differently in terms of specific work related conditions and barriers. In Bangladesh, with the growth of women workers since 1980s – particularly in garment sector – sets a new dimension in economy; although, women have been suffering from religious beliefs, social norms and gendered behaviors (Kabeer, 1991). Selwyn (2009) informs that researchers have highly focused on these socio-cultural barriers - women workers face - along with concern to the employment conditions, impact of employment in gender relations at household, also women's economic empowerment, but very less importance to women's participation in trade unions. Surprisingly, women can develop their rights through trade unions as workers to ensure good working condition, which may turn them into "politically active, and exert a positive influence within civil society (Selwyn, 2009, p. 190). Thus, this research attempts to discover how trade unions can be women friendly and gender neutral in terms of structures, resolutions and applications of policies, to reformulate the rights of women workers, members and leaders.

In Bangladesh, gender has been neglected to understand how it shapes the experiences of men and women verily, also deliberately ignores the needs of women in paid work force, which also manifest the gendered cultures and barriers in trade unions too (Mitter, 1994). Providing men workers with primary concerns and benefits are highly visible in trade unions as women are rarely visible as members, and particularly as leaders, which represents the gendered cultural values of the organizations (Goetz, 2001). In Bangladesh, needless to say that perceived ideology regarding women to be homemakers, with a burden of bulk of responsibilities legitimize their unsuitability in the trade unions as leaders (Marsh, Phillips, & Wedderburn, 2014). In addition, Marsh et al. (2014) state that women are categorized as emotional, indecisive and passive in nature – attributes opposed to masculinity – create hurdles for women to be involved in decision making positions. Culturally, the work of men and women are defined by the society, which entails women with household chores and outside work burden, also the organizations takes into account the issue of double burden by sidelining women in professional activities and limiting their advancement to the top positions (Podshibiakina, 2001). To be precise, leadership is termed as 'relational concept' by Dannecker (2000, p. 31), which is examined through interaction between people, formed through 'gender relations, religion and culture'. When the negotiations are done individually, or restricted to be achieved by the strict laws and regulations of the factories or organizations, the communication between workers are limited, workers get little opportunity to unite or fight against injustice collectively (Dannecker, 2000). Leadership is connected to authority, power and connection, which is very hard for women workers to attain even in trade unions due to the social hierarchy and power structures limiting the interaction between men and women. Also, women's collective voice hardly can be noticed in trade unions or through trade unions if they represent a small number of workforces.

Trade unions, whether part of various forms of enterprises, perform the similar roles without few exceptions that rarely serves the needs of workers or convey the message to employers, and disregards the rights of workers (Heng, 2010). Dasgupta (2002) found in his study that only 9.8 percent of the salaried workers belonged to unions, whereas 18.2 percent were women among them, along with the rate of 6.3 percent women who were into unionization. Following the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, to form a trade union, 30 percent workers of the enterprise should become the member of the union, as well as imposes certain requirements to process the application making the progress lengthy and complex (Islam & Asaduzzaman, 2015). However, in 2013 the amendment came in the Labour Act to simplify the process of trade union and increase women's participation in trade union (Islam & Asaduzzaman, 2015). Unfortunately, women are still under represented in trade union, and trade unions have acted to serve male interests, undoubtedly creating challenges to reach the leadership positions. To discover the inside stories of trade union of Bangladesh, this study attempts to concentrate on women workers membership and leadership status to be reviewed, and reformulated.

1.2 Justification

Trade unions are considered as the pressure groups who negotiate with the employers to meet the interests of employees with a purpose of protection, security, promotion and other benefits (Bălăneasa, 2009). First Labour Law has been enacted in 1881, in the period of Indian Sub-Continent, related to working hours, employment of children, maternity benefit, trade union activities, wage (Khan, 2013). In independent Bangladesh, the government preserved the existing laws through the Bangladesh Laws Order (Presidents Order No. 48) with some additional laws in support of workers' rights (Khan, 2013), later on in 2006 new Labour Act has been enacted. However, the 2006 Labour Act does not comply with ILO Conventions, though Bangladesh ratified the convention with reservations. ITUC (2012) brings the issue of collective bargaining to understand the scenario of trade union in Bangladesh, which shows the absence of legal provision for collective bargaining. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) has used the information collected from government that *"there are currently 7,297 trade unions registered with the Department of Labour, 32 national federations, 112 industrial federations and 36 garments industries federations and a total of 11 collective bargaining agreements"* (ITUC, 2012, p. 4). However, compared to the millions of workers, the number of trade union is not satisfactory, in particular, when they can raise their voice in favor of workers. As there is a lack of trade union, the conditions of workers, especially women workers are at risk of insecurity, violence and sexual harassment. Moreover, accident is also common in factories as in 2010, 383 people died of workplace accident occurred in 270 organization (ITUC, 2012). However, one feather of achievement had been added in 2009, when Bangladesh High Court ordered to prevent sexual harassment in educational institutions and work places by setting up complaints committees, and implement sanctions (ITUC, 2012).

Trade union, being close to labour markets, allows the gendered behaviours and discrimination found in work force against women to be visible in the unions (Ledwith, 2012). Consequently, masculinity is embedded in the cultures of trade union, as argued by Ledwith (2012), which prefers male leadership over female leadership considering power, authority and courage associated with men. Whereas, the union should work promoting the excluded areas, gender mainstreaming in organizations and demanding reserved seats, and quota (Ledwith, 2012). To do so, Ledwith (2012) proposes to follow Joan Acker's (1992) model of four interacting sets to initiate organizational gendering –

The construction of gender divisions among men and women, with men almost always in the highest positions of organizational power; the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce or sometimes oppose those divisions, such as language, dress and media image; interactions among and between women and men, which include sexism and sexual harassment; and the gendered components of individual identity and presentation of self – the 'internal mental work of individuals' as they consciously construct their own conceptualization of the organization's gendered structures, including persona, and the demands for gender-appropriate behaviour and attitudes (p. 191).

Women's capacity as workers are discouraged and limited by traditional social structures, and also by industrial structure to be exact (Dey & Basak, 2017). The prevailing gender relations dominantly campaign for gender biased structures, patterns and space in working places, which diminish women's capacity to recognize self as 'worker'. The ignorance and unawareness of women workers directed to trade unions should be viewed critically to understand the gaps. These women are left behind as workers, rarely valued or respected by employers and neglected in trade unions. It is coped that the legal framework of trade union in Bangladesh is not beneficial for carrying out trade union functional (Hossain, 2010:5).

The literature found so far mainly highlights three major issues as the barriers for women to participate in trade unions – firstly, problems related to trade unions, secondly, job related problems,

and finally, problems faced in social life (Dey & Basak, 2017; Griffin & Benson, 1989; Ledwith, 2012; Ledwith & Munakamwe, 2015; Pillinger, 2010). Griffin and Benson (1989) elaborate the problems to map out the barriers hampering women's participation as member and leader in trade unions. They point out that women hardly can join the meeting of trade union due to its timing and location, as women are also responsible for managing household chores; they face difficulties to join the meeting organized at night or in locations far away from home. Also, women are not aware of the unions, as they consider it as 'men's domain' (Dey & Basak, 2017).

Moreover, lack of child care facilities at the time of meetings, lack of information regarding union structure and meeting discourage women to get involved actively in trade union. Griffin and Benson (1989) also inform about job related issues to be considered to be engaged in trade union, because involvement in trade union may create insecurity regarding job, disturb the relationship between worker and supervisor, and less scope to get promoted. Accordingly, social issues impose barriers on women due to their double role at home and workplace, following the opposition from partners, childcare responsibilities, and pressure to abide by the norms. Following the existing gender discrimination and barriers, women encounter gender order in employment sector that women are familiar with (Dannecker, 2000). Women's increased participation in various economic forces does not qualify them to occupy the leadership position. Also, women are primarily targeted to be recruited by employers with an intention - who can be dominated easily (Dey & Basak, 2017).

The fact that actors and institutions that formulate such policies are themselves guided by patriarchal norms may be one of the reasons that unpaid care work has not emerged as a major policy concern (Nazneen and Mahmud, 2012). In Bangladesh, women are rarely visible in leading positions in trade unions or federations (Dannecker, 2000), where glass ceiling work as a reason to be noted (Pillinger, 2010). Dannecker (2000) also says that women participation in leading position does not sustain or institutionalized as they have other responsibilities to meet in household, also they have less interest to join the union due to their rural background and lack of education. Moreover, Dannecker (2000) shows through his study that women workers could not relate their interests with the leaders interests, as women's opinions remained unheard and unacknowledged. Moreover, the leaders of trade unions represent political positions or are connected to political groups, where they are more into political interests or activities related to political parties rather than workers' rights (Dannecker, 2000). This political attitude also instigates the leaders to not allow any complaints or keep the hierarchy in the unions, so that no one can go against their will. However, until this situation is changed, or gender equality is ensured trade union, women workers will remain neglected and deprived of socio-economic development. Thus, this study intends to understand the underlying causes of discrimination in trade union about women's membership and leadership positions, along with examining legal framework to be reframed and adopted in making the trade union gender neutral.

1.3 Major objectives of this study

The study attempts to understand the status of women workers in trade unions in terms of membership and leadership analyzing how trade unions can develop gender equality. Therefore the study considered the following objectives:

- a. To underscore the women workers barriers, scope and possibilities as a worker, member and leader in trade unions of Bangladesh.
- b. To analyze the legal framework and policies to recommend further activities to enhance women's participation in trade union.

1.4 Research Questions

To meet the objectives, we have developed few questions –

1. How many basic factory trade unions, federations and centers exist and what is the current scenario of Women representative in Trade Unions?
2. How do the women workers perceive trade union and what benefits they have received so far?
3. How the socio-cultural norms shape the participation of women in Trade Union as a member and leader?
4. What can be done to facilitate women with equal opportunities in work force and trade unions?

1.5 Research Methodology

This section discusses the research methodology intended to discover the status of women workers, their inclusion in trade unions and barriers they have faced so far to participate in trade unions. To do so, the study follows qualitative research methodology in order to seek the in depth information with detailed description.

The study gathers information from both secondary and primary sources. We have reviewed relevant literature on trade union, women as workers, and gender patterns in workforce in connection to women's barrier as workers and the condition of women's leadership. Later on, after reviewing the existing literature, we gathered empirical information from primary sources.

1.5.1 Selection of the Study Areas

In order to collect data as per the research objectives of the study, Karmajibi Nari facilitated the primary data collection process in Dhaka city.

1.5.2 Selection of the Samples

We used purposive sampling as the participants were selected by Karmajibi Nari. Four formal sectors were categorized such as garment, construction, tannery and transport to be explored. Women and men workers, executive committee members, women and men trade union members were interviewed to collect the data. Both genders were interviewed to gather holistic picture and the participants belonged to different age groups and social statuses.

1.5.3 Methods of Data Collection

As the qualitative methods help to discover the realities behind the scene, this research implied In-depth Interview (IDI), Key In-depth Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) methods to collect the primary data from the field. Very briefly, we interviewed eight women workers following IDI method from these four sectors to dig out their working conditions, obstacles they face in working places and also in unions. We also conducted four FGDs with women workers, and one FGD with women trade union members to highlight the condition of trade union and how they perceive trade union. In addition, we also conducted five FGDs with men workers including men trade union members to realize the above issues from men's point of view. Finally, we had interviewed 10 executive committee members from different unions and federations using KII method to have an idea of leadership and decision making process in trade unions along with future directions to be included in recommendations.

Table 2: Qualitative Sample Distribution

Techniques	Participants	Sample
In-depth Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women workers 	8
Key In-depth Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women leaders 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men leaders 	6
Focus Group Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women workers 	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women trade union members 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men workers 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men trade union members 	1
Total		27

1.5.4 Ethical considerations

Maintaining research ethics is pivotal in conducting any study in a standard and bias-free manner. While collecting data from the field, ethical standards were highly maintained to ensure the confidentiality of the participants.

- Before conducting any of the in-depth interviews and FGD, the informed consent was collected from the participants.
- The FGDs and interviews were recorded only after receiving the permission from the participants.
- The research team informed the participants prior to the FGDs and interviews that they were free to leave the discussion or refuse to answer any question they found offensive or too sensitive.
- Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research by not publishing the name of the leaders.
- The researchers were careful about following an ethical code of conduct and showed respect to all that minimized the power gap.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH FINDINGS: UNLOCKING THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN TRADE UNION AND WOMEN WORKERS

This chapter attempts to understand the role of trade union and its importance with a focus to the status of women workers and their participation rate into unionization. The intention lies to observe the connection between the trade union and workers interests to be met, in order to realize the condition of women workers, trade union members and leaders.

2.1 The Context and Activities of Trade Union

Like many other countries of the world, Bangladesh too has enacted labour act. It is popularly known as Bangladesh Labour Act (2006). The act is self-explanatory. This act empowers the labours working in various industries to enjoy basic facilities as a paid employee. The condition of service and

employment, maternity benefits of female workers, special provisions relating to health, hygiene and security issues of the workers, ensuring safe working environment for the workers, labour welfare, maximum working hours and minimum daily wage- all were included in this act. All the industries, sectors and organizations are bound to follow this act. Special focus on women's rights as workers and ensuring special care to them while performing the reproductive duties are mentioned in this act¹. However, it is not difficult to witness that the rights of women are being neglected in many labour sectors; especially when it comes to becoming an acting and influential member of the union. According to the act, workers are free to form trade unions and they can be part of the union as they feel like. In reality, the picture is different. Women are categorically stripped of their rights both in the labour market and also in joining the union.

According to the ILO Convention (2003), 'All workers and all employers have the right to freely form and join groups for the support and advancement of their occupational interests. Freedom of association means that workers and employers can set up, join and run their own organizations without interference from the State or one another.' This study will try to unlock the real scenario of the trade union activities of Bangladesh and compare it with the standards laid down by ILO.

The constitution of Bangladesh promotes gender equality and equality before the law. It also instructs specifically about the rights of working class. Unfortunately, the laws and policies regarding women's rights both as a citizen and as a member of the working class has been denied since the birth of Bangladesh (Stewart, 2011). So, the laws are there to ensure rights of women but the proper implementation is lacking. The same situation is prevalent in the cases of women in the TU. The laws are not against them but the normative culture hinders women from entering the union and claim their deserved place.

Trade union is developed to protect the rights of workers, as mentioned in the findings of the research. The prime concern has remained to secure the needs of workers since the British era in Bangladesh, when the workers' rights have been neglected by the employers or authorities. The socialist political leaders came forward to initiate the union in terms of ensuring right wage, working hours and other facilities globally; also, in Bangladesh, many socialist political leaders, intellectuals and workers were united to form the trade union – informed by the Executive Director, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies. Trade union are of three-tiers such as “ (a) basic unions at the establishment level; (b) industrial unions at the sectoral level; and (c) national unions” (Ahmmmed et al., 2009, p. 8). Trade union mainly works to unite workers to demand collective rights, as well as tries to bring changes in society with a focus on human rights. There are 7885 trade unions found in Bangladesh for the approximately 200,000 industrial units engaging both men and women workers. According to the General Secretary of SamajtanrikSramik Front (SSF) –

By considering the classical concept of trade union, a union should work to solve the wage related issues, problems of long working hours to ensure good environment to work, with a retirement policy to be claimed, along with maternity leave and pay related safety, and compensation in case of accident.

He also stated that trade unions could not be able to negotiate in achieving the above demands due to the chain of law found, which patronized the 'anti-trade union' and 'anti-workers law' along with the misconception regarding trade union. The leaders concern towards 'collective voice' was found really important to be affected by the loss of unity. Also, after the In-depth interviews with men and women workers, the question raised to the functionalities of trade unions. Most of the participants, who were working in various sectors, had no information about the existence of trade union or what could be the possible benefits of being a member. Very few participants we found in our research, who were the members of trade union irrespective of their gender. These unawareness of workers revealed the facts of the visibility of trade unions in the context of Bangladeshi employment sector, where the unions

¹ See <http://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/238195/Workers%E2%80%99-Right-and-Labour-Law-of-Bangladesh-> (accessed 9 February 2018)

could not turn into a strong entity to present workers voice in the policy making level. General Secretary of National Women Labourer of Jatiyo Nari Shromik Trade Union Center explained the reason stating that -

The situation and context of trade unions have been changed in recent years. In the past, mostly after the independence of Bangladesh, the workers could be organized easily or had good relations with other workers. Even, they had no fear of losing job, no tension about getting formal letter from the organization. At this moment, workers are scattered and engaged in informal sector, where there is no rights to be a member of TU. Most importantly, the interpersonal relationship between workers has been changed over time and the employers take the advantage of both men and women.

In addition, TU is blamed to be highly politicized for being run under political leaders, who have good connection with employers and pursue political interests through the help of employers. The Executive Director of Bangladesh Labour Studies informed that the political control over decisions of TU could be found at many places; however, he believed the main problems lied in the mindset of employers about TU and ignorance of government. The representation of TU as trouble makers provided a negative image among employers and government leaders to solve the problems in a less conflicting manner. Moreover, trade unions were less successful to reach women workers in a broader scale in Bangladesh. The General Secretary of National Women Labourer of Jatiyo Nari Shromik Trade Union Center informed that many women had joined trade union in recent years, but were entitled to limited power within TU. She also emphasized on the dominant power structures of TU that allowed men to uphold leadership position, lack of coordination between workers and political leaders inclusion and interference as the reasons for women's less participation in TU. The decision making process followed the patriarchal power structures that neglected women's visibility in a platform, where negotiations skills were aligned with men and also were connected to power, courage and strength. Perceiving women as 'inferior' workers was found in TU, thus, women were less targeted by the union who would fail to dedicate time and improve skills due to their household responsibilities. Consequently, women also lacked unity and interest to be a part of a union, though women workers are now highly prioritized in TU and Federations to develop organized behavior and awareness about laws.

2.2 The state of women workers

Women's participation in workforce has been increased in recent years, yet they face severe discrimination in all sectors of work. The major dichotomies between men and women workers were found as women hardly got the recognition as 'workers'. They are the less prioritized section when it comes to equality, equal pay, and specific health care benefits. In addition, President of ShammilitoSromik Federation argued that women were the first to lose jobs as they were less organized and considered as 'less valued' workers. Ayesha from Construction sector informed how much the women suffered to find a job if they had lost one, as they had to use own networks to get the daily labourers work. The uncertainty and patterns of work in different sectors imposed extra load on women more than men due to their sex and gender. For example, they were given jobs that required less physical strength; besides, the jobs were not always available for them in construction, tannery and transport sectors. The casual or part time workers were deprived of benefits given in permanent jobs, informed by President of ShammilitoSromik Federation. She explained that in construction sector, the contract based job did not cover any ideal benefits a worker must get due to the pattern of work. The workers could be hired by anyone at any time, opening more scopes to make women workers vulnerable and discriminated as they also remained unpaid after finishing the work. Apparently, garment and tannery sector were safer for women due to the factory guidelines, equally exploiting women workers in terms of paying low wage, no health benefits and committing abusive behaviors in all sectors. From the interview we found that the abusive behavior left women with disgraceful and disrespectful feelings towards self, undoubtedly hampering the production target and their skills to grow. However, women participants agreed that having 'no choice' was the reason for

their tolerance to injustice, discrimination and violence. Certainly women's choices often affect their capabilities and destabilize their lives because their limited choices have damaged their capabilities. Moreover, they had not received any training on how to develop skills of work, interestingly; they acquire the skills by just observing other workers. The following table states the type of work women do with the problems associated with those work and in workplace.

Table 2: The condition and problems associated with work for women workers

Types of work	What women do?	Condition and problems associated with work
Garment work	Operator, supervisor, loop section, button section, iron section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of proper sitting arrangements such as no chair for the workers who run machine, no sitting arrangements in some section; - Lack of adequate light and fan; - Lack of maternity benefits; - Pregnant women are restricted to drink water as they want to use toilet frequently; - Sexual harassment; - Low wage; - Job insecurity; - No formal appointment letter; - Limited day care opportunities - Inadequate toilet facilities such as lack of separate toilet, restrictions on using toilet for more than twice a day; - Abusive and slang words by supervisors or superiors; - No complain centre
Construction worker	Breaking the brick, setting tiles, cleaning tiles and building homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No toilet at the work place; - Lack of job sustainability; - Low wage; - Losing money due to contractors; - No sick leave; - No maternity benefits; - Injury in hand, finger and miscarriage due to the pressure in abdomen occurred while breaking bricks; - No gloves, sandals or first aid benefit; - Back pain, skin infection, blister or rashes in hand; - No day care centre; - Children's respiratory diseases due to construction materials dust; - No formal appointment letter
Tannery worker	Cleaning the skin of animals, cutting the skin and processing the skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No separate toilet; - Injury and rare medical support from factory; - Abusive words and behavior from supervisors; - Lack of health protection such as use of gloves while spreading salt over the skin of livestock; - Sexual harassment; - Low wage; - No formal appointment letter; - Job insecurity; - Rare maternity benefits; - No day care facilities

Transport worker	Conductor in bus, in ticket counter, in office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very few women are in this sector; - Poor salary; - Only in BRTC bus service; - Social pressure to leave the job; - No women bus driver; - Lack of confidence in driving a bus; - Lack of maternity benefits and day care centre; - Poor working conditions; - Job insecurity; - No formal appointment letter; - Lack of interest of managers or employers to hire women in transport sector; - Time consuming
------------------	--	---

Source: From the fieldwork

The situation of women workers in every sector represents the underlying facts of deprivation, which supposedly impacts on the growth of women as ‘workers’ and become able to receive the benefits from TU. The above mentioned problems implicated the working conditions of women, neglecting their human rights to be counted. The lack of facilities and problems in the workplace also gave an impression of how the employers perceived women workers – not less than ‘born to be deprived’ group – who would keep working in any given situation due to poverty. Moreover, women’s lack of knowledge about TU and less participation in TU made their situation difficult to improve socially, economically and politically. The problems mentioned in the above table will be discussed elaborately in third chapter, where barriers are outlined.

2.3 Female membership in trade union

One major finding of this study identifies the participation of women workers in TU as members, with a focus to explore the factors impacting their nature of participation and developing association. Precisely, we discovered a huge gap in the ratio of women workers and women members of TU, which appealed us to extract the causes responsible for this situation. Participants of this research informed us that women were the prey of employers, as they were having fear of losing jobs and benefits for joining TU. The fear was justified as the employers were powerful enough to decide workers fate without restraints. Most of the women skipped trade union not only because of unawareness but also to protect selves from social humiliation. Following the traditional mind set, people did not possess positive attitude about TU as members and leaders act aggressively sometimes to meet their needs. All the women participants, who were not the member of TU, expressed their interest to become a member, but also pointed out the societal negative perceptions about the women who are involved in TU. Moreover, it was also difficult for women to manage family, work and union altogether and dedicate extra time in union. Women were regarded as ‘unskilled’, ‘docile’ and ‘less committed’ in not only workforce but also in TU. Reversely, men were the primary targets of work force, equally recognized and valued as ‘workers’ in the TU. Referring to this, Mila said

In our tannery, the employer does not want to recruit women as they cannot do heavy work. Employer considers women’s recruitment as his ‘loss’ and we have very limited option of work here. We also have no women leader in our union, and I have seen women discouraging or envying other women, who have expressed their interest to become a leader. Women also prefer men to be their leader as we think men are more capable, powerful and strong to take decision. We women are also responsible for our poor situation in union.

Accordingly, other participants including both men and women expressed the same stereotypical view that women could work ‘less’ than men, and ‘less’ capable in organizing unions too. The unawareness is not only the result of biased social structures that subjugate women, but also the implication of that structures in unions by trending ‘masculine culture’ to consider men as powerful, strong, and decision

maker in emergency situation. Moreover, the problem lies in the coverage strategies of trade union, which can't reach women workers in a broader scale to provide women workers with enough information and services. In support of women workers, the General Secretary of SSF informed that women's increased participation in job sector could not ensure increased rate of women's membership in TU due to working hours, labour exploitation, wage discrimination and perception towards women as a worker.

Table 3: Data for Labour Profile in Bangladesh

Trade Unions in Bangladesh ^a							
Members, Dues, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and Occupational Safety and Health committees							
Trade Union Centre	National affiliation	Total Members (2012)	Female Members	Dues	Number of CBAs	Workers covered by CBAs	Number of OSH committees at workplaces
BFTUC Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress	BILS	85,000	21.3 %	-	-	-	-
BJSD Bangladesh Jatyatabadi Sramik Dal	BILS	180,000	14.5 %	-	-	-	-
BJSF Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation	BILS	10,050	12.4 %	-	-	-	-
BJSJ Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote	BILS	82,000	42.7 %	-	-	-	-
BLF Bangladesh Labour Federation	BILS	102,000	19.6 %	-	-	-	-
BMSF Bangladesh Mukto Sramik Federation	BILS	204,000	31.7 %	-	-	-	-
BSF Bangladesh Sramik Federation	BILS	5,989	9.9 %	-	-	-	-
BSSF Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation	BILS	155,000	2.0 %	-	-	-	-
BTUK Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra	BILS	80,970	11.1 %	-	-	-	-
JSF Jatiya Sramik Federation	BILS	38,000	32.9 %	-	-	-	-
JSFB Jatiyo Sramik Federation Bangladesh	BILS	15,881	5.0 %	-	-	-	-
JSJ Jatiyo Sramik Jote	BILS	2,260	4.4 %	-	-	-	-
JSL Jatiyo Sramik League	BILS	150,000	4.7 %	-	-	-	-
BTUF the Bangladesh Trade Union Federation	-	1,648	-	-	-	-	-
BTUS Bangladesh Trade Union Sangha	-	150,000	0.2 %	-	-	-	-
JSJB Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh	-	65,000	10.0 %	-	-	-	-
JSP Jatiya Sramik Party	-	110,000	22.7 %	-	-	-	-
NTUF the National Trade Union Federation	-	1,798	-	-	-	-	-
NWF the National Workers' Federation	-	10,467	-	-	-	-	-
SSF Samajtantrik Sramik Front	-	2,285	5.9 %	-	-	-	-
TUK the Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra	-	50,180	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Bangladesh Labour market Profile; 2014

The table shows that the maximum membership of women in trade union and federation is 42.7 percent with an average percentage between 10-20 percent. The condition of women's participation as member is highly dissatisfying that underscores the gender imbalance in unions. General Secretary of SSF became pessimistic saying that rectifying law to include 50 percent women in TU can't even improve women's participation. However, women's membership in TU had brought some positive sides too under consideration. Women workers were provided with information from trade union about maternity leave and benefits by union workers to encourage them in becoming members of union, as found through the interviews. Moreover, in a FGD conducted in tannery, women informed us that women members could manage minimizing their trouble due to their involvement in TU such as security of job, three months advance payment if they wanted to fire, relief from supervisor's abusive behavior, eliminated physical abuse and reduced working hours from 12 to eight hours.

However, the women members of TU in their FGD gave some important information to explain why women didn't want to join the TU or left it after joining. Here are some facts provided by those women –

1. Women from informal sector did not want to join trade union, is a cause of women's less participation in union.
2. The society and the men didn't want to see women in superior or powerful positions. In fact, the men leaders didn't encourage women to become leaders or acquire the skill to negotiate with stakeholders. They tried to keep these women behind as if their power would be lessened in the union.
3. Family also didn't support women's participation in trade union as society stigmatized women who were involved in union due to their movement in roads. These women were not considered as 'good' women according to the norms of the society.
4. Many women in union suffered from sexual harassment by the male members or leaders. They objectified women based on their sexuality and made comment on their physical parts. Also, they discussed about their sexual lives in front of women to make them embarrassed, as well as touched them without concern or hugged them. Some men also tried to take advantage of women in the name of dropping them home after the late night meeting. In most cases, the intention was to touch the women. Whoever protested against this, were at risk of being dismissed from her position in trade union.
5. The risks of dismissal from job threatened women workers to join TU.
6. Women's inferiority developed from perceiving only men as 'workers' due to wage gap, demoralized them to achieve leadership positions.

2.4 Women in leadership and decision-making bodies

The under-representation of women in leadership position and decision making bodies unravels the socio-cultural background with an emphasis on how it intersects with sex, gender, age and context. The findings came forward depicts that traditional norms and prejudices adhere to be protected by institutions and organizations or vice versa. The notion towards women as 'incapable' placed more difficulties for women to prove their capability to get selected as leader in TU, though men were free from this perspective – mentioned by the president of Bangladesh JatiyoSromikJote. She also blamed the structure of TU that adopted masculine behavior to pursue control and domination over inferiors. Women lacked confidence due to constant pressure of proving self-qualities to make a place in 'men's TU'. In fact, the women who were working as President or Executive Committee members, had given more than two or three decades to acquire such positions, whereas many young men could become executive members in few years only because of their sex. In addition, the women having good education and family background could be seen in leadership positions, necessarily described the contextual benefits these women received than the women born in poor families grew up without education. On the other hand, men leaders did not bear any discrimination due to their context or education, rather their skills were measured, which was absent in women's cases.

According to the law, 10 percent of women should be included in the Executive committee of TU, which has hardly been met. According to the interviews with participants, women could perform their duties as leaders very spontaneously and effectively, yet huge gaps had been indentified in this research in terms of women's leadership and decision-making capacities. From the FGD with trade union members, it was clarified that women were found in leadership position only in a minimum number, mostly occupying the post of General Secretary, Treasurer, Women affairs related Secretary and members. On a different note, the president of Bangladesh JatiyoSromikJote accused women for being the flag bearers of masculine social structures, who did not want to see women in leadership positions. The same information came from other women workers too, which needs to be taken into consideration as it works as a barrier to self-development. Male members of TU had the perception that women were more comfortable with their traditional household roles, as the union organized a training session to increase women's involvement but failed to bring women in the platform. Accordingly, women workers from tannery expressed through FGD that women workers were not capable of being a leader. Compared to men, they perceived women as beings who lacked courage, inner strength, and negotiation skills to meet the leadership demands. They also informed us that many men also opposed the idea of women's inclusion in leadership position due to the socially

constructed power structures. There were no leaders found in tannery in leadership positions. Fatema told that

I would love be a representative of trade union. My father also supports me, but my mother opposes my interest as she thinks that I will face trouble to get married. People don't perceive women leaders as good women as they talk loudly, walk around like men and meet many people. Still, I think to work in trade union and want to learn how men leaders negotiate with employers strongly. Trade union gives us the opportunity to reach them while facing any problem and I plan to learn the skills from trade union.

To increase the participation of women in leadership, the General Secretary of Bangladesh Workers Party, suggested meeting with the family members of women workers assuring the safety of the women. This might strengthen the moral values of the families as well as societies about women's entry in decision making positions. As women were less visible in leadership positions, women workers issues were not properly addressed as it should be in the TU. Additionally, the activities of trade union did not work to ensure the well-being of workers. Instead, workers had to run the union by collecting fees from their own pocket. Thus, women workers lost their interest to continue their TU membership.

The TU represents stereotypical notion in terms of women's decision making power, for this, women leaders need to be sharp enough to make people understand with logical justification and convince them by validating why she needs to take the decision. Women Affairs related Secretary from JatiyoSromik league argued that -

I won't say that they don't listen to us. If a woman representative can place her demand logically in the meeting, other members will support her. But we hardly say 'we are doing this' instead we say 'will do this.' The pattern of language represents the lightness of our decision. However, more women should come forward to lead the committee and make path for junior colleagues. Federation can play important role in this regard by providing training on leadership, decision making power, capacity building in association with stakeholders.

However, the participants of a FGD, conducted with men trade union members described that women representatives were limited to think about only women-related affairs; whereas men leaders took care of other issues. It shows the power discrimination within the committee by limiting women's decision making power and not letting them enter into the broader activities of TU. They also accused women's limitations for not getting full control over TU as women leaders would not be able to present with workers for 24 hours due to their own security. Reversely, men leaders could handle any emergency situation regardless of time, place or security. Most importantly, the environment and culture of TU also played negative role in women's participation as leaders. Sexual harassment as an important factor came out through both women leaders and workers interviews. The male leaders victimized women sexually instead of saving them from employers. The President of ShammilitoSromik Federation informed about her experiences of getting immoral proposals from male leaders, though she did not pay heed to these things. She also was objectified sexually, which she had handled successfully. However, not all women can handle such situation, therefore, the union should be monitored by Federation or other parties to provide women a safe environment in TU.

CHAPTER THREE – THE BARRIERS, STRUGGLES AND ACHIEVEMENTS INVOLVED WITH WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNION

This chapter outlines the obstacles of women workers found in family, society, and trade unions, and the challenges they have faced so far for actively taking part in TU. This chapter explains women’s struggles in a manner that also shows enthusiasm and strength of a worker.

3.1 Obstacles associated with women’s participation in trade union

This research intends to draw attention to the barriers associated with women’s participation in trade union to outline future activities to be considered. Understanding the participants views gathered from men and women workers, trade union members and leaders, the barriers can be identified and categorized in few sections. Following the pattern of Griffin and Benson (1989), the findings of this research regarding the barriers and struggles of women fall into four categories precisely – personal/social obstacles, union related obstacles, work related barriers and miscellaneous. The social/personal obstacles found in this study depict the lack of agency of women in patriarchal power structures. Women workers grew up in particular cultural settings; where women are positioned with certain beliefs and perspectives to undermine ‘women’ compared to men. When women workers entered the job market, they carried the notion with them and kept distance from all information that required courage, strength and power to oppose any discriminatory situation. They lacked knowledge and information about trade union because of their lack of interest and the overall culture and structure of TU. The underestimation of women workers is embedded in the mind of all groups – workers, employers and leaders/members of TU- developed by the existing gender discrimination.

Chart 1: Barriers related to women’s participation in trade union

Social/personal obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness • Lack of self-recognition as workers • Household responsibilities • Childcare responsibilities • Place of residence • Socially perceived discriminatory notion about leadership
Union related obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination within union about leadership positions • Nepotism in terms of training and leadership • Inflexible meeting time • Sexual harassment and sexual advantage to be taken • Lack of budget • Masculine power control over ‘positions’ • Structural problems • Ignorance to women representative
Work related barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecurity of job and threat from employers • Long working hours and inflexibility • Shifting and part time jobs
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Day care centre and transport • Considering workers as homogenous group

- Legal framework
- Lack of confidence in transport sector

Trade unions were established to ensure the legal rights of the workers working at various sectors. Yet, in many cases of Bangladesh, trade union and its activities are not playing the role it is supposed to be. The participation of women in the trade unions of Bangladesh is very rare. Although women have made tremendous advancements in contributing to the GDP of Bangladesh, yet somehow their primary duties are still considered to take care of the domestic chores. The public-private dichotomy also creates minimal if not any opportunities for women to actively participate in the activities of trade unions. The findings of the FGD demonstrates only a glimpse of the magnitude of the issue. The discrimination of the working class people has many layers and cannot be explained in a unitary statement. The gender gap is obviously one of the major areas where the focus can be drawn. But the diversity of the problems of the different working class people do not match but we can find some similarities among the areas where this study was conducted. Some of the major barriers for women to contribute in the trade union can be explained below:

3.1.1 Lack of information and knowledge:

Lack of information about trade unions is one of the main reasons women do not and/or cannot actively participate in the activities. In most cases women are employed informally. They do not have any specific contract. They work in shifts or daily basis. Many of the women who works as day labourer do not receive significant level of education to know what their rights as workers are. Even if someone knows a bit about trade union, they are not given enough information by their male counterparts to let them participate in trade unions. Such lack of information often results in almost zero number of women participating in trade unions. They do not even idea about the labour laws of Bangladesh. Even if someone has any ideas those ideas are shallow and insufficient. It often seems like the trade union is has a secret life and that it is not sharing its important matters to many of its potential members. The responses from FGD also reflects such condition:

Most of the factories do not have any trade union. (FGD Four)

Only a few members lead the trade union. (FGD Four)

Good women to do not participate in the trade union. (FGD Five)

We do not know about the registration fees, about which form to fill up for the TU membership and the minimum number of days required for completion of the registration. (FGD One)

The trade union is has a secret life and that it is not sharing its important matters to many of its potential members the majority of the labour force in Bangladesh faces a harsh reality. That is informal appointment and firing by the employers. The labour force who are employed formally and are working actively are entitled to enjoy many benefits and minimum wage as per national and international standards. The employers, however, learnt that employing these workers on a daily wagger basis can be much more beneficial for their own good. This is informal employment. No appointment letter or job circular is posted and the workers do not get to enjoy actual benefits. The condition of female labourers are even worse. They are considered as the weaker sex. They do not raise their voices. In some cases, they are so poverty-stricken that they just want a job with minimal payment; nothing more. Thus, the employers get a chance to employ these workers on a verbal basis and they also fire them verbally. So, they do not get to enjoy their rights as workers. The trade union cannot intervene in such condition as they need papers to claim that some workers are not being treated with minimum standards. As responses from FGD denotes such claims.

The owners often employ those workers who are known to them or their distant relatives. (FDG One)

We fear that we might lose our jobs at any time. (FGD Two)

You do not need to come anymore. You can come only after you are done with your motherhood duties. (FGD Two)

We used to get a new job earlier if we were fired but now it has become very difficult to find a new job if one is fired. (FGD Five)

3.1.2 Not having specific activities and timetable:

Most of the respondents under this study expressed that a crucial reason for women not willing to join the trade union is that the union do not have a specific timetable and the union also do not have any structured activities. The trade union often calls their meeting on urgent basis and most cases those meetings are called late at night. It becomes near to impossible for women to attend these meetings as these meetings run late into the night. Women are expected to take care of domestic chore as well. So, they seldom attend these meetings. Along with some urgent meetings, the activities of trade union is pretty limited. They only remain active occasionally or just in case of any emergencies. Not having fixed activities and urgent meeting called late at night often makes women workers uncomfortable in joining the union and in most cases they remain absent from the activities of the union. Some responses from FGD are mentioned here.

Our trade union do not have any specific time table or activities (FGD One)

If a factory is shifted to a new location then most often the activities of the trade union also vanishes. (FGD One)

The Black Law (Article 26 of Labour Law) is almost unknown to us but we suffer a lot for this law. Our TU do not have any information about it. We should have some activities protesting this law. (FGD One)

3.1.3 Perception towards female worker:

The easy availability of female workers at the labour market is one of the biggest reasons for employers not willing to ensure minimum work standards at the mentioned sectors. The population of Bangladesh is more than 165 million and active workforce is estimated 65 million. So, the availability of day labourers was never a headache for the employers. As Shirin Akhter said

“ভাতছিটাইলেকাকেরঅভাবহয়না (It is never too difficult to find a cheaper lot of workers)”.

In addition the barriers are inclined to social responses towards gender, which moulds the perception of employers, workers and union leaders in the same frame to not consider women as ‘workers’. The perceived notion disrespects women’s capacity in employment sector, keep them away from benefits to be attained from TU and increase their adherent behavior to accommodate injustice. Women are considered as weak and submissive workforce. Usually they do not have a strong voice against any form of discrimination at work place.

3.1.4 Fear of verbal and sexual abuse:

Many respondents from FGD shared that they are very afraid of the constant verbal and sexual abuse from both their employers and also their coworkers at trade union. Most of the respondent said that they are verbally abused day in and day out by their managers and employers. If they are sluggish and if they are late for work, they are heavily bantered. Calling by names, defaming their identity and personal character are some common incidents in the lives of female workers. When and if they attend trade union meetings then they are faced with double chances of abuse; both from the managers and

also from their coworkers. Even some members of the law enforcing agencies try to exploit them sexually. Again, attending meetings late at night may jeopardize their safety and security. Roaming in the city late at night is not safe for women; especially given the law and order situation of Dhaka. The respondents were afraid and also angry while discussing about this issue. As some responses can be denoted here.

*I f**k you, you w***e. I f**k your mother. Do not enjoy working here? Go somewhere else. (FGD One)*

The mother of this girl is TU member. She roams around the streets and demonstrates slogans. She is a 'bad woman'. She is surely unmoral in her life. (FGD Two)

Sometimes, our coworkers' starts sharing what they did with their wives during night. The starts praising us and forcefully gropes us. (FGD Two)

Often the policemen asks us to visit the police station during 2:30 in the morning. They say, they are our brother in law and asks us to have tea with them in the middle of the night. (FGD Two)

3.1.5 Gendered division of labour:

Gender division of labour has been a constant reality since the time we were hunter gatherers. Even in the modern era, such division strongly exists. In the lives of female workers, gendered division of labour has become a harsh reality. Many respondents expressed that they are given limited opportunities as employers consider women and weaker work force. They are given nifty and crafty works where the chances of better payment and promotions are limited. The wage gap between men and women is evident. Minimum wage is applicable for men only. Women are seldom paid equally to men. Women also complained that they not given the best machineries to work with so that the employers can claim that they (women) are the inefficient workforce. In the construction sites, women are only allowed to break the bricks and carry them to the mixer. Such division of labour causes discrimination as the women who work doubly hard do not get the proper recognition as workers. Their voices are kept low. Thus, their position and voice in the trade union is also suppressed.

We are not given good tools and machineries to work with. Only men are provided with good machineries to work with. (FGD Two)

The society never expects that a woman would go to the top position and exercise power. The male workers do not like it, the managers do not like it.

The family members ensures we do not do well in our jobs. (FGD Two)

We are not paid equally with men. We get minimum wage of 150 BDT whereas the males get 250 BDT as minimum wage. (FGD Three)

3.1.6 Public-private dichotomy:

Women working in the labour force of Bangladesh are facing another barrier when it comes to joining the trade union. That is the inherent public-private dichotomy. Most women do not break the shackles of this dilemma. Often they have to compromise and sacrifice many deserved opportunities in the name of upholding the gender roles and responsibilities imposed upon them. Mobility and freedom is often restricted for women. No matter what is the profession of women, they are always expected to prioritize their household responsibilities in the first place. Same situation is prevalent in the cases of female labourers. Their mobility is confined to workplace and household only. They are not welcomed in the trade union. If they stay late and attend the meeting, they are considered as 'bad

woman' according to the employers and also by their coworkers. Sometimes, the male coworkers misinterpret such presence as some sort of sexual invitation to them by the female workers. In most cases, they do not receive support from their family members to join actively in the trade union. The study found some responses which suggests

We do not have time for TU. We have our family responsibilities. If you want to do it, you do it. (FGD Three)

Why do you have to work so late? Cannot you come early and take care of the family? Who will perform the household chores? (FGD Four)

Good woman do not roam in the streets. They have their families to take care of. (FGD Four)

3.1.7 Lack of basic hygiene and health care facilities:

Maintaining basic hygiene and health care is not a suitable option for the female workers in the labour force. In most of the workplaces, the washroom facilities is not up to the mark. The number of washroom is not even sufficient. The cleanliness and maintenance of these washrooms is nothing short of a nightmare. In most of the workplaces there is no facilities of separate washrooms for women. It is a standard that for every 25 person one washroom is a must. Yet, many employers are reluctant to organize washrooms for women. Often these working women are given maximum five slips that means they can use the washrooms only five time in a shift of 10 hours. Still, if a woman takes a break to use the washroom then, the employers/managers scold them adversely saying if they are to use washrooms so frequently then they can try to find new jobs for them. Pregnant women and women going through their menstruation cycles finds it very difficult to work such long hours without using the washroom when necessary. Trade union offices have similar facilities or should we say lack of facilities when it comes of having washrooms for its members. The harsh words of the managers are reflected in the responses of FGD.

Pregnant women are often sacked due to their condition. The managers fire them verbally. No formal process is needed. (FGD Two)

Pregnant workers are supposed to get vitamin supplements worth of 300 BDT but they do not get it. (FGD Two)

During our menstruation we are not allowed to use the washroom when it is needed. It becomes very tough for us to work hours together wearing the same pad. (FGD Three). Sometimes the managers' shouts at us by saying have you lost control over your bladder? (FGD Six)

We do not enjoy any sick leave. If we are absent for two days due to sickness, salary worth of four days are deducted. (FGD Four)

There are no washrooms at the construction site. Not even a mobile toilet. (FGD Five)

If a mother comes to work with a new born the manager yells and says, should I prepare your house here? If you demand so much then you do not need to come here anymore (for work). (FGD)

3.1.8 Class and migration based differences:

The female workers working in the labour force are not a homogenous group. There are certain differences among these workers. They are often treated differently based upon their class, identity and places of origin. Women hailing from Dhaka and surrounding areas are not viewed as not that

much vulnerable compared to a woman originating from a far district. The age, marital status and level of education is also among other important factors take into consideration as how to behave with them.

If a woman is destitute and if she is married then the behaviors tend to become harsher and words of the managers become thornier.

Women who are pregnant are prone to greater level of exploitation from the managers. Correspondingly, marriage, pregnancy, age limit, fear of losing family lives damaged the enthusiasm and spirit of a woman worker. The gendered behaviors, perceptions disregarded women's negotiation skills, capacities to lead any organization. In addition, lack of confidence found in women workers due to the socially imposed discourses limited their participation in few sectors such as tannery, and specifically in transportation. Women conductor in her interview revealed that she was not confident enough to drive a bus, even though she could drive a car. The lack of interest developed by the perception that women drivers were more prone to accidents than men. The perception society upholds about women rarely permits them to do something unusual, uncommon or unrecognized for women. In Bangladesh, perception towards worker is gendered. This perception commonly exists not only in men but also in women. So, changing processes must challenge the patriarchy as well as classic patriarchy, which are carried out by women.

The study has identified some important deficiency in the way union works in Bangladesh. On the other hand, the internalization of patriarchal ideology encourages most of the women feel that the home should come first. The study reveals that family culture and class positions that transmit dependency and a culture of silence which ultimately interlock women's way of life into the patriarchal framework. It is recognized that most of the women cannot deny the social norms whatever the personal costs to themselves. Social norms and core family responsibilities have disabling effects on women; whereas, employment allows women to step out of the cover of tradition but doesn't actually strengthen their agency. A large number of participants felt that overall women workers are not aware of the trade union values and its activities.

The gendered labour market and patriarchal priorities intersect to secure the public and private space for men in Bangladesh. Gender and other related factors blocked women from the positions of power within union. Most of the women are sacrificing their self-interest as they invest their time and work for family interests. Their heterogeneity requires us to take into account the fact that women workers do not experience discrimination and privilege in the same way. This study shows that women are suffering from discrimination not only because of gender; marriage, pregnancy and their age, social class, geographical location are also related causes of discrimination. Therefore, a sameness approach cannot protect and promote women's rights as women have been in disadvantaged position for different reasons. Therefore ensuring equal opportunities for advancement and career development we need to rearrange the labour market system through using inter-sectional lens.

3.2 Structure of Trade Union: dilemma to pursue workers' rights and gender equality

The structure of TU plays an important role to ensure gender equality in all different layers such as membership, leadership and decision making bodies. From the findings of this research, the problems we could discover regarding gender inequality in TU include strict administrative structure of TU, less opportunities to women following the law, the culture of discrimination formed through masculine mind set and lack of follow up from upper sources.

The secretary of Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote in his interview gave detailed information on structural side of TU and Federation. To form a National Federation, 20 basic TU's are needed according to the law. This provision was termed as a constraint by the Secretary as organizing 20 trade unions would be really tough. In fact, in Bangladesh, there are 34/35 federations can be found, and only 4/5 federations met the required the number of unions. Moreover, to form a union, the rules are complicated and create obstacles. The forms to develop a trade union should be filled by workers, and the employers get to know about this as workers submit a letter of joining in trade union. At these

circumstances, workers lose their job and can't form any union. In addition, trade union could not negotiate with employers effectively, or it was due to the corruption and nepotism found in trade union. Raising collective voice seemed very difficult in trade union as internally most of the leaders were having connection with employers. These occurrences hindered women's participation in trade union as men leaders did not want to lose their control due to the masculine power structures. Consequently, the requirement of 10 percent women in executive committee also did not raise women's issues, thus, the number should be increased.

The environment of TU itself worked as a problem for women's participation as the issue of sexual harassment, ignorance, and perceived biased behaviors came out in this research. Only legal structural amendment cannot bring change in the membership and leadership state, until the people behave gently, sensitively and equally to both gender. This masculine domain needs to increase the 'ethical quality' to save the union from nepotism, political interference and gender biasness. To increase the gender equality in TU, the process of developing TU should be changed - argued by the Executive Director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies. He claimed to assemble workers under the provision of law, and to ensure negotiation with various stakeholders to secure rights. In addition, the condition to have 30 percent workers as members to be included in developing a trade union should be reduced to 10 percent. Workers should learn that their demands will be met through various meetings. Women workers are given the post of Secretary just to fulfill the rule or show sympathy towards women. Women should be involved in trade union to bring the issue of gender equality and make a place for other women workers.

3.3 Existing laws and its application

The labor law of Bangladesh does not encourage freedom of association, right to collective bargaining and right to strike. The law hardly meets the international standard given by ILO as it complicates the procedures of TU registration, take no actions against employers for practicing illegal actions against workers, the government hardly supports the need of workers when they are in a conflict state with employers. The legal rights of workers can be found in Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, which has many structural problems to be revisited. The labour law of Bangladesh seemed weak according to the leaders of trade union. From the interview of General Secretary of SSF we came to learn about his opinions regarding article Section 26 and 180 of labour act 2006, where article Section 26 informed of the liberty of employers to fire the worker without any reason from work by paying two month's salary, and article Section 180 put a condition that only permanent workers would be able to become a member of trade union. The twist remains in these sections - as employers can discharge workers anytime - may hinder the process of being permanent employee; thus, very less people can become members of trade union. For this reason, only 5% of total workers belong to trade unions, which certainly reveal the poor condition of trade union in Bangladesh.

Participants informed us that the workers must provide two months' notice before leaving any job, whereas the employer could terminate the worker from job with one month's notice. According to the Labour Act, article Section 26 outlines that employers can sack workers without giving any cause except the member of trade union. The participants informed us that in reality trade union members are terminated mostly with an excuse of misbehaviour or misconduct of rules. Moreover, to meet the need of 30 percent workers to be member of a trade union to be officially recognized, some people from employer's side also enter the union to keep track of their activities. Also, the union can be dissolved if it fails to keep the membership of 30 per cent of the enterprise's employees or the government decides that the organization did not follow or respect the charter. Also, before registering the trade union, the members name list should be seen by employers. To do so, the male trade union members suggested reducing the timeframe of registering trade union from 60 to 15 days to stop interference of employers and termination of leaders from the job. ITUC (2012) in its report adds the following information of Labour Act -

The law does not protect unions from interference by employers. Unions do not have full freedom to elect their officers. The Labour Act prohibits anyone from running candidate for office if she or he is not employed or engaged in that establishment in which the trade

union is formed. Therefore, electing persons outside the enterprise that could be employed full time on trade union matters is impossible. The law prohibits strikes that could be considered prejudicial to the national interest and in such cases the 1974 Special Powers Act can be employed in order to detain strikers without charges. Strikes in public utility services like railways, airways and banking are also prohibited (pp. 3-5).

In terms of ensuring women workers rights, General Secretary Bangladesh Workers Party told that there must be provision of quota for women workers in trade union with direct election facilities in reserved seats to ensure women’s participation. The issues directly connected to women’s health should be taken into consideration, thus, maternity leave should be given for six months with job security and payment. There should be formal documents of her maternity leave to claim the further liabilities. In terms of sexual harassment, there is no specific provision to be mentioned, which needs to be reframed to stop sexual harassment both in workplaces and unions. Also the provision on overtime should be changed by allowing women workers to work after 10 pm with transportation facilities. In addition, the provision related to day care facilities to be provided if 25 percent of workers are women and have children under five, needs to be reduced by 10 percent. Overall, the laws should be implemented to ensure the mentioned benefits. Moreover, the emphasis should be given to increase bargaining power of various sectors to contribute in the reformation of law.

3.4 Normative practice and ground realities

The ground reality of women’s participation in the TU often are different from what laws suggest. In most cases, the normative culture plays a bigger role than the state enforced laws. The patriarchal mindset, gender division of labour and private-public dichotomy is so deep rooted that women have minimum opportunities to get involved in TU and its activities. The existing gap in formation, regulation and implementation of TU and activities are the main culprits here. The responses from the fieldwork also echoed similar. The key findings and suggested changes and suggestions are given in table below:

Table 4: The reality of and the proposed interventions by the labours

Recommendations	
Existing situation	Proposed legal interventions
Lack of day care centres/facilities for male workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study proposes to consider day care centres in all public and private organizations not targeting women workers but men workers also. Uniform rules for the employees should be in place at least where protection of the children is concerned.² Provisions should be made for setting up of crèches within the office premises so that the mothers and fathers can conveniently and usefully leave their children there without any worries.
The flaws in the structure of TU in Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure and the formation of TU is a bit tricky. 30% of the existing labours of a factory has to become members for a TU to be formed. In most cases the owners appoint their designated members

²The policy in Bangladesh is to be silent about addressing the contradictions in the legal framework because the state itself is institutionalizing care work as women’s work by enabling day care centres, where only female workers are available. This law reconfirms that childcare and nurturing are women’s sole responsibility by employing only women workers at these places.

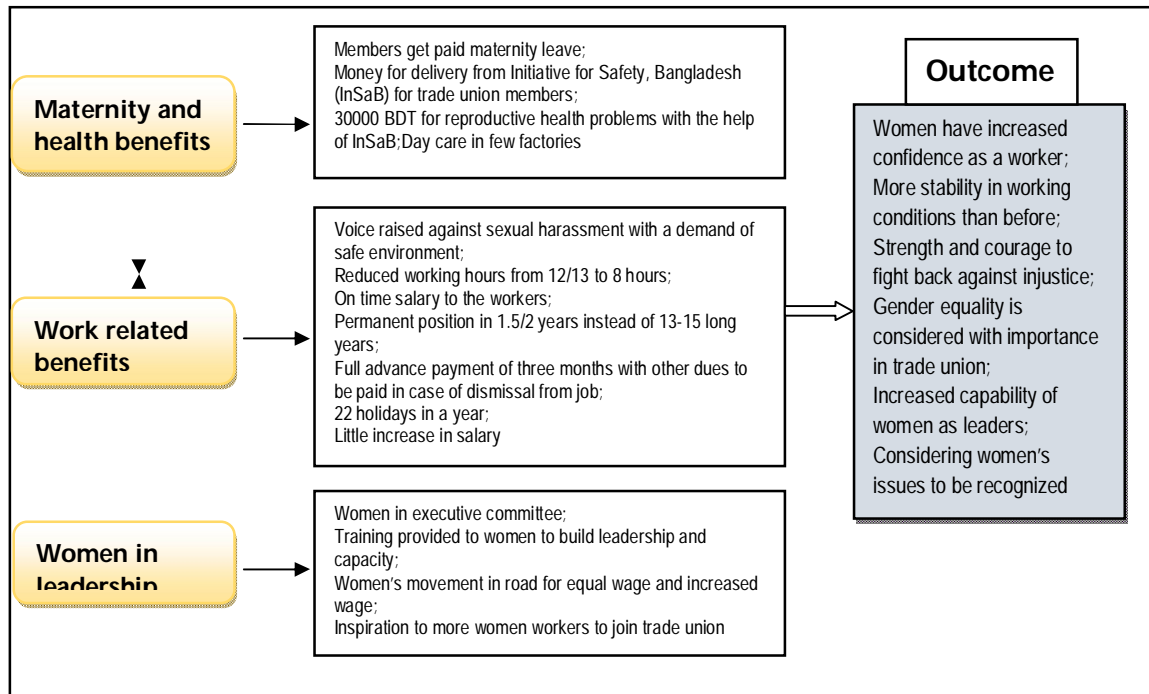
	<p>in these positions. Such disparities should be reformed as per the responses found in this study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TU registration laws should be made flexible in order include small scale factories. • Contractual labours should also be included under the TU law • There are no specific quota for female labours in the TU act. At least 33% of the total TU members should consist women members as per the respondents. • The workers should have the right to form trade union without any percentage barrier (Ref: ILO Convention 87 & 98).
The labour act is self-contradictory in some cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rights of the pregnant labours are mentioned specifically but the act does not indicate what can the legal actions if one do not abide by the act.
Disparities in parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government should introduce new laws to calculate acceptable time duration for parental leave. • The laws relating to maternity leave should be reviewed and not be used as an excuse for employing women on short-term basis. • The government should also incorporate paternity leave, which is a pre-requirement of justice in the workplace.
Labour act is not practiced in all the labour sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an act of Bangladesh it is expected that it will be followed by all the organizations of the country. In reality, not all the factories are following the provisions of the act; it is difficult to implement the act in all factories and establishments, especially in the Transport & Construction sector- the labour act is not implemented because the employers are not providing identity card or appointment letter to the workers. Due to 'definition' of worker a huge number of workers are not enjoying their rights in the factory & establishments, abiding by the act. The reason being, it is not a law that is why it is not mandatory for the factory owners to abide by. Some of the garment owners and tannery owners maintain the act but the transport and construction organizations do not tend to follow the act as they are not situated in a particular address. A universal law needed to be established and implemented to avoid such confusions according to the respondents under this study. A universal law (formal and informal sector) should come into effect which should be made mandatory for all the labour oriented factories to be followed properly.
Lack of personal hygiene of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The labour act should include washroom and standard hygiene facilities to be provided for labours.
Absence of anti-sexual harassment cell and act for labours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cell should be there to file complaints about incidents of sexual and verbal abuse of female labours in all the labour oriented factories/industries. • A robust and effective anti-sexual harassment policy is needed to combat issues of sexual harassment.
Female labours are frequently verbally abused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Labour Act should have a specific provision to ensure punishment to perpetrators; in this case imprisonment is necessary.

by managers, owners and co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The anti-sexual harassment act should include verbal abuse as well. • The respondents also demanded that the act should be transformed into law to become universal and mandatory for all. • Also, gender sensitivity training should be made mandatory for the all the labours.
Black law of labour act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The article Section 26 of the labour act is called as the ‘Black Law’ by all the labours. This article Section gives allows the owners to fire any workers without any prior notice. If the office bearers are sacked from their job then they can’t continue their engagement with their trade union. Yet, the act also demands for the rights of the labour about enjoying job security. The labours demand that this article Section to be abolished and also demands for a uniform law that keeps both party happy. The labours demand that the article no. 26 of the labour act to be abolished and also demands for a uniform labour law.
Negative intervention of the owners in the TU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per the labour act, at least 30% of the total labours of a factory should registrar for forming a TU. The owners misuse this probation provision. They send their trusted labours to have an authority over the TU. The general labours want the government to intervene in this matter and change this clause from the labour act of Bangladesh.

3.5 Achievements of women through Trade union so far

Trade union, with all the flaws and challenges involved within the process, has tremendously impacted on women workers lives. The findings related to the benefits were not extremely impressive, yet was pleasing and exciting to know. The women workers who were involved in trade union could visibly outlined the changes they observed in factories due to trade union. The changes happened so far include maternity benefits, sexual harassment policy, wage and work-related demands. As a matter of fact, women workers who were not even the members of trade union could identify the benefits provided in terms of wage, pregnancy, and security. Surprisingly, few participants still had no clue of how to get involved in the union, or were not interested to get involved due to family pressure or fear of losing job.

Chart 2: Achieved Changes through Trade Unions



Source: Fieldwork

The important findings came out through the FGD with men from tannery, where they advised other workers to not follow conflicting ways and maintain a healthy negotiation with employers. They came to learn about this patience from trade unions, specifically instructed not to become violent, break cars or destroy resources. Union leaders informed them to act silently so that employers would not be able to file complaints against them. The workers also got training about law and how to claim rights without increasing conflict between workers and employers. However, silent mode did not work for illiterate employers, and the workers decided to adopt different strategies to ensure benefits from organizations. Using legal steps would be a solution in this case according to their opinion. Overall, the achievement of trade had been experienced by both male and female workers. Men received benefits in terms of working hours, job security, right to join trade union, increase of salary and dismissal from job like women workers.

SECTION FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION: A GUIDELINE TO ACCELERATE GROWTH, INVOLEMENT AND SCOPE TO EQUALITY

This chapter discusses the findings of the research as well as provides necessary recommendations to improve the participation of women in trade union, also their rights as workers.

4.1 Recommendations

The study focuses upon to understand the status of women workers in trade unions in terms of membership and leadership analysing how trade unions can develop gender equality. During and after the field work many issues related with this objectives popped out and many issues which are not relevant with this study but indirectly influences the whole subject matter also came out. The study claims that there is a need of gender responsive rebalancing policies to ensure gender neutral working environment to ensure the women's leadership in Trade Union in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a class-based society but most of the government policies didn't consider the class oriented need and requirements. A context and class specific tailored policy plan is the only way to ensure gender equality in the workplace; reconciliation of work and family responsibilities appropriately and effectively. In Bangladesh the policy is silent on addressing the *cultural inequalities* that obliges the actual capability of women in Bangladesh to engage in productive work and challenge adverse social system. The social constitution determines which agenda will be accepted for bargaining and which will not. Time use has strong gender dimensions, which should be a matter for policy intervention. The legal pluralism that operates in the country, especially on *family law*, does not serve the interests of women. There is a need to synchronize the laws and make them uniform to serve the interests and needs of women and men equally. Thus social dialogue and public debate is powerful for transforming traditional mentalities or cultural norms. There is no doubt that social dialogues take different roots, new ideas, and bring diversity. Gender equality cannot be attained in the absence of equal rights and women themselves have to be the active agents for this change. The exclusion of women in the trade union is unjustified and competitive loss for any society. Moreover, creating an enabling environment of equal opportunity and treatment in the labour market for both women and men, would also contribute tremendously to poverty reduction, the achievement of the SDGs and social justice. Wieringa claims that on the question of transformation, women should learn to define their own problems (1994; 844). Gender equality cannot be attained in the absence of equal rights and women themselves have to be the active agents for this change. Upon analysing the findings of the study some recommendations can be noted here along with scopes for further studies.

Table 5: Recommendations

Recommendations	
Areas	Proposed interventions
Understanding workers' rights to increase awareness	In order to increase the awareness between the workers, the training sessions must be provided by organizations to know their roles, responsibilities and rights as workers. Trade union also can initiate campaigning their activities through providing trainings to members, and use them to reach other workers to be aware of issues related to working hours, pregnancy and maternity facts, safety of job and role of trade unions in achieving all these.
Formal employment and ensuring minimum work standards	One of the major problems of women workers in the TU is that in most case they are not employed formally. The verbal employment can and has become a bitter reality for them. The inclusion and exclusion of women workers can happen in an instance. The formal employment procedures can become an effective tool to ensure minimum work standards for women workers.
Accountability and formation of TU	It seems that the TU is accountable to no one. In such manner, they are not bound to listen to any of the issues raised by many of their members. Often, the TU works as a shadow partner of the employers. The CBA election needs to be held every two years and at least 50 percent members should consist women workers. The mushroomed

	federations need to be closed as having many federations creates confusions among women workers.
Perceiving trade unions as bridge makers	There must be an option of monthly gathering between trade union members and employers, so that they can form a good understanding with the authorities and work for workers development more conveniently. Federation must monitor through confidential check if any member or leader is involved in corruption or has personal relations with employers to stop potential disadvantage for the workers.
Concentrating on work-life balance to increase women's participation in trade union	Managing both work and personal lives are difficult for women workers. To ensure the balance, they should include their family members in her process of development as a worker, member and leader. Women should negotiate with family members, especially husband, by informing the importance of her participation in trade union. Also, trade union can arrange training sessions for the husbands to change their minds and allow their wives to come forward.
Women's reproductive health and role to be considered	Firstly, women workers should be provided with menstruation kit from organizations at the working hours, along with time to change sanitary napkins after few hours. There must be women supervisor in the floor to be informed in case of need. Secondly, there must be legal provision to not push pregnant women to do heavy work that can harm the baby. Thirdly, day care centre should be established in each factory to ensure safety of the children and increase women's productivity due to their stress free mind. In addition, women workers as well as men workers should be covered under the health policies in case of injury, accident or fatal disease.
Flexibility and gender sensitivity in the activities of trade union	The meeting should be held once in a month immediately after 5 pm. The time of meeting must not exceed two hours and late night meetings can be called in emergency situation if there is transport service for the women members. The location of the meeting should be very close to organization, so that time can be saved and women become interested. During the meeting, taking care of children would be difficult, thus, child care facilities must be available for the time being.
Reframing the structural laws of trade union	The structure of trade unions should be changed to secure women's integration in trade union. The condition to have 30 percent workers as members to be included in developing a trade union should be reduced to 10 percent. The need of 20 basic trade unions to form a federation must be revised and the number should be minimized considering the benefits of the workers. In addition, trade unions need to change the structural set up where executive head will be either man or women, decided by election, female secretary and equal male-female percentage of the membership.
Implementing the labour law and ensuring a healthy environment for women	The labour law is there but the TU seemed reluctant in proper implementation of the labour law. The managers and factory owners do not even care about this law. That is why, they like to hire people on ad hoc and verbal method. In all the four areas under the study exhibited very poor standards in hygiene, health care facilities and emergency response mechanisms. Mobile toilets can be a great

	initiative at the tannery and construction industries. A strong TU might make the owners create standard health care facilities for women.
Encouraging women workers to develop leadership	To increase the ratio of women's leadership, the ratio of women workers, union members and leaders should be matched. Also, women should be given scope to become the president of the trade union or federation if they are capable enough to help workers in negotiation and development. 10% post in executive committee for women had not been effectively occupied. To change the situation, women's participation in leadership should be inspired by engaging women in capacity building trainings, by convincing their families to support them and by changing the discriminatory notion of male members though gender sensitive trainings.
Strengthening trade union	Trade union should be strengthened financially by making liaison with government or NGOs and develop alliance to organize trainings facilities. Unity should come forward to keep the harmony between federation and trade unions to work in support of each other. Also, having an eye on employers to stop the termination of union members form job due to their membership would inspire workers to gather under the umbrella of trade union.

4.2 Scopes for further studies

This current study is the eye opener. We all were more or less aware about the discrimination and oppression of the working class people face in their day to day lives; especially women workers. Yet, while conducting the study new dimensions and layers of oppressions came out. The diversity and differences of these new issues need to be addressed properly. This study cannot cover all the aspects of the status of women workers in trade unions in terms of membership and leadership. This study was an explorative study. As a researcher, I believe we just tapped the surface area of this issue. In order to get the in-depth data, which might broaden the research horizons, more funding and more intensive studies are required. Action researches are needed to intervene and actually find out whether the recommendations are feasible and effective or not. Different areas also need to be incorporated to enlarge the research canvas and also to get a practical idea about how other sectors are doing in terms of ensuring women's participation at the TU. A special study can be conducted only upon the migrant workers or upon the married women or upon the single women in similar and different sectors. Also, the government policy analysis is needed to find out what are the lacking of existing laws and how those laws and policies can be improved to meet the special needs of women workers.

4.3 Concluding Remarks

This research interjects with many issues associated with women involved in employment sector. In Bangladesh, there have been many researches in women's involvement in employment sector, their development and economic empowerment. However, the issue of trade union has emerged in recent years defining its utmost contribution to work as an active actor in increasing women's leadership and growth as workers. This research attempts to understand the scenario of women's participation in trade union with a focus to dig into barriers restricted women to come under unionization. Accordingly, the barriers have been found in many stages to be involved with women, categorized in four sections – personal/social, union related, job related barriers and miscellaneous. Women's role in family is a major drawback for their growth in job sector as they have to undergo double burden and

the insecurity to lose husband due to their negligence in family roles. All the barriers intersect with each other as these are defined and developed based on the social acceptance of women and the existing power structures. The behaviour women go through in organization, union or in household are the result of justified discriminatory practices, and are inclined to follow the hierarchical structure of the society. Following that pattern, women also receive discrimination from other women instead of support in many cases, as the women supervisors had not showed sympathy towards other women workers. Moreover, women workers are treated as submissive groups recruited to be dominated by the 'masculine' behaviours in organizations. The same behaviour is found in trade unions, where men don't want to lose their leadership for women, as their masculine traits make it difficult to lose superior position and work under women – 'the inferior being'. However, this research provides with information on why gender balance is required in trade unions to add contribution in the overall economic sector.

References

- Ahmed, S. S. U., Hossain, J., Mahmood, K., Khan, A. K., Halder, P., & Khan, M. M. (2009). *WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNIONS IN BANGLADESH: STATUS, BARRIERS AND OVERCOMING STRATEGIES*. Retrieved from Dhaka, Bangladesh:
- Bălăneasa, C. (2009). The Role Of Trade Unions INFascicle of The Faculty of Economics and Public Administration Regulating Labour Relations. *Fascicle of The Faculty of Economics and Public Administration*, 9(1), 341-347.
- Dannecker, P. (2000). Collective action, organisation building, and leadership: Women workers in the garment sector in Bangladesh. *Gender & Development*, 8(3), 31-39. doi:10.1080/741923779
- Dasgupta, S. (2002). Attitudes towards trade unions in Bangladesh, Brazil, Hungary and Tanzania. *International Labour Review*, 141(4), 413.
- Dey, S., & Basak, P. (2017). Out of the shadows: Women and wage struggle in the RMG industry of Bangladesh. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 23(2), 163-182. doi:10.1080/12259276.2017.1317702
- Griffin, G., & Benson, J. (1989). Barriers to Female Membership Participation in Trade Union Activities. *Labour & Industry: a journal of the social and economic relations of work*, 2(1), 85-96. doi:10.1080/10301763.1989.10669064
- Heng, H. (2010). Concerns About the Trade Union System's Independent Interests. *Chinese Sociology & Anthropology*, 42(3), 61-73. doi:10.2753/CSA0009-4625420304
- Hossain, J., Ahmed, M., & Akter, A. (2010). *Bangladesh Labour Law: Reform Directions*. Retrieved from Bangladesh
- Islam, F., & Asaduzzaman, M. (2015). Legal Framework for Trade Unionism in Bangladesh. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 20(11), 13-19.
- ITUC. (2012). *Internationally Recognised Core Labour Standards in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Kabeer, N. (1991). Cultural dopes or rational fools? Women and labour supply in the Bangladesh garment industry. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 3(1), 133-160. doi:10.1080/09578819108426544
- Khan, T. H. (2013). Labour and Rights. In R. A. M. Titumir (Ed.), *Accumulation and Alienation: State of Labour in Bangladesh 2013* (pp. 143-160). Dhaka, Bangladesh: Shrabon Prokashani.
- Ledwith, S. (2012). Gender politics in trade unions: The representation of women between exclusion and inclusion. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 18(2), 185-199. doi:10.1177/1024258912439145
- Ledwith, S., & Munakamwe, J. (2015). Gender, union leadership and collective bargaining: Brazil and South Africa. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 26(3), 411-429. doi:10.1177/1035304615596316
- Marsh, L., Phillips, M. A., & Wedderburn, J. (2014). Gender and Trade Union Development in the Anglophone Caribbean. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 60(3), 39-57. doi:10.1080/00086495.2014.11672525

- Mitter, S. (1994). A comparative survey. In M. H. Martens & S. Mitter (Eds.), *In Women in Trade Unions: Organising the Unorganised* (pp. 3-14). Geneva: ILO.
- Nazneen, S.,Mahmud, S.(2012). Gendered Politics of Securing Inclusive Development' *ESID Working Paper* No. 13, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre: Manchester
- Pillinger, J. (2010). *From Membership to Leadership: Advancing Women in Trade Unions*
Retrieved from
<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/sites/default/files/attachments/pdf/From%20Membership%20to%20Leadership%2C%20a%20ressource%20guide%20ETUC.pdf>
- Podshibiakina, N. (2001). Women and Trade Unions. *Problems of Economic Transition*, 43(9), 47-60. doi:10.2753/PET1061-1991430947
- Rajesh, S., & Manoj, P. K. (2014). Politicization of trade unions and challenges to industrial relations in india: A study with a focus on northern kerala. *International Journal of Business and Administration Research Review*, 1(2), 45-54.
- Selwyn, B. (2009). Trade unions and women's empowerment in north-east Brazil. *Gender & Development*, 17(2), 189-201. doi:10.1080/13552070903009734
- Stewart, A. (2011). *Gender, Law and Justice in a Global Market*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, UK.
- Wieringa, S.(1994). Women's interests and empowerment: gender planning reconsidered, *Development and Change*. 25: 829-848.