



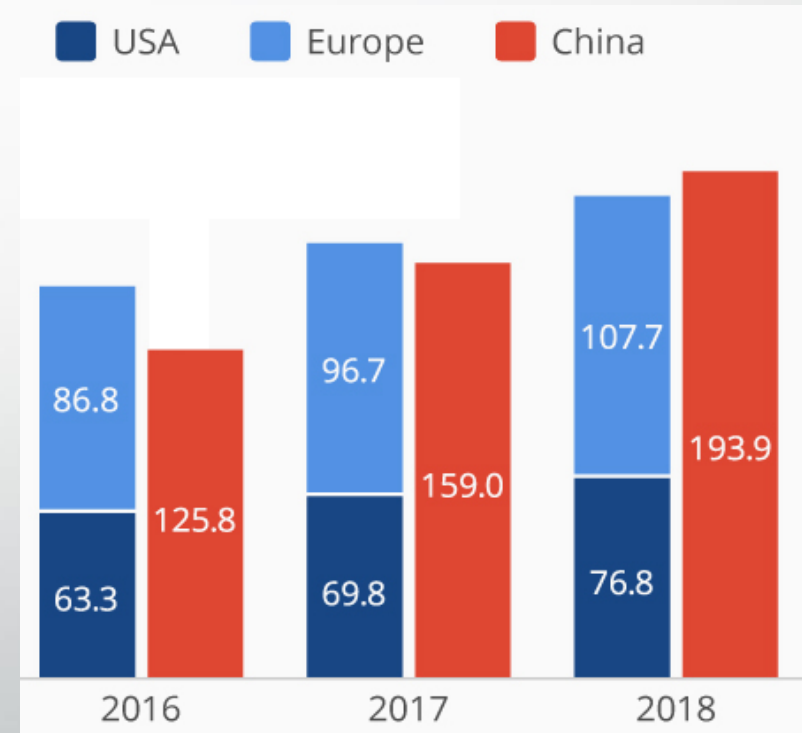
Unethical Practices in Bangladesh Apparel Industry

A study of Dhaka based factories

Waqas Nawaz
Student ID : 1302480

Introduction and Context

- Global apparel industry increased at fast pace post 2008 economic dip.
- Bangladesh Apparel Industry
 - Employs more than 4 million people
 - 80% of total foreign trade of country
- Demand in Western markets for:
 - New fashion at faster pace
 - Cheaper prices
 - Higher Quality



(Source: StatistaCharts, 2018)

Introduction & Context (Cont...)

- High competition forced large Western organisations to move to developing countries in search of:
 - Cheap labour and raw material
 - Relaxation in taxes
 - Encouraging domestic policies
- Domestic garment manufacturers compete for foreign orders with lower bids, thus impacting negatively on:
 - Workforces
 - Environment

Ethical Issues in Bangladesh apparel industry

- Offering lower wages
 - Winning foreign order on lower bids
 - Not enough profits to pay higher wages
 - No fringe benefits or bonuses are offered
- Unsafe working environment
 - Small profits leave less money for refurbishment
 - No health and safety assessments
 - Factories are situated in low-cost unsecure buildings
 - Fire in Tazreen Plaza killed 112
 - Collapse of Rana plaza killed more than 1100



(Source: The Guardian, 2012)



(Source: BBC, 2013)

Ethical Issues in Bangladesh apparel industry (Cont...)

- Slave Labour
 - Forcing workers to work longer hours
 - Forcing workers to work without pay
 - Using children to increase their workforce
 - Aged between 11 and 14
 - Hiring female workers with sexual intentions
 - Offering additional cash benefit for sexual favours
 - Using threat of unemployment
 - Using Force (rape)



(Source: Kelley, 2015)



(Source: Moulds, 2018)

Research Questions

- The main question answered by the research is:
 - How ethical is the management of labour forces in apparel industry of Bangladesh, especially in the Dhaka based factories?
- The objectives of the research are:
 - To identify the ethical best practices defined by international standards
 - To evaluate management of labour force in Dhaka based apparel manufacturing factories
 - To analyse the ethical issues that the labour forces face in the apparel industry of Bangladesh

Philosophy and Methods

- Epistemological study
- Methods:
 - Review of pre-published literature (Secondary sources)
 - Individual interview of workers from apparel industry of Bangladesh
 - Individual interview of senior managers of apparel industry
- Bengali Human Rights Programme (BHRP), a small Dhaka-Based NGO is used to conduct interviews.

Findings

- Workforce interview findings
 - All agreed that
 - They work in sub-standard environment
 - They work in unsecure and unsafe buildings
 - Rented buildings are used and neither owner nor tenant wants to spend money
 - They are required to work long hours forcefully
 - They are paid not enough for their efforts
 - Work for children is important for their families to support themselves
 - Male workers reported
 - Better wages as compared to females
 - Comparatively higher security belief than females
 - Female workers reported
 - Low wages, no support when pregnant
 - High level of sexual harassment from male colleagues and senior managers.

Findings (Cont....)

- Senior manager interview findings:
 - Both managers showed awareness related to workforce issues such as:
 - Low wages
 - Unsafe environment
 - Forced long hour working
 - Child labour (although they tried to justify it)
 - Both did not accept or agree to sexual harassment in workplace
 - Both agreed that low wages and sub-standard environment is due to low profit margins.
 - Both agreed that forcing workforces to long hour work is required to meet deadline.

Analysis and Limitations

- Study confirmed ethical issues identified from literature review
 - Workforces are underpaid
 - Working in unsafe and unsecure environment
 - Child labour still exists
 - Force and slave labour still exists
 - Female workers face sexual harassment
 - No fringe benefits are offered
 - Government of Bangladesh overlooks ethical issues for foreign investment.
- There were limitations to the study
 - Data was only collected from 2 Dhaka based industries
 - Number of respondents was low (4 workers, 2 senior managers)

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