

# Study on the Human Rights Situation in the Shrimp Sector of Bangladesh

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# Human Rights Situation in the Shrimp Sector of Bangladesh

## Section One: Introduction

This study has been done under “Sustainable Oceans: Improving sustainable economic growth and development opportunities through efficient and sustainable use of human rights-centric aquaculture resources in Bangladesh” project in Bangladesh. Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)—a non-government and non-profit organization in Bangladesh works with local organizations to improve the well-being of poor and marginalized communities, through increasing their voices, capacities, realization of their fundamental rights and demand-driven institutional responsiveness—is the implementing authority of the project through partnering with Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies (BILS) and COAST Trust. This project aims at pursuing strategic engagement of human rights actors at local, national, regional and global levels in policy and programming processes related to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and the implementation of SDG 14, by developing strong partnerships and generating knowledge and tools. This study is an endeavor to generate knowledge on shrimp sector in Bangladesh. Though the project is focused on the artisanal marine fisheries sector, the discussion would be more holistic with the inclusion of shrimp sector as shrimp contributing a healthy portion of the country’s export earnings. Against this backdrop, BILS has conducted this study to analyze the shrimp cultivation sector in Bangladesh, including existing status of shrimp cultivation, value chain/supply chain system, human/labour rights condition of the workers engaged in the sector.

The fisheries sector has been playing an important role in the economy of Bangladesh. Fisheries sector contributes 3.61 percent to national GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and around one fourth (25.30%) to the agricultural GDP. Fish and fisheries products contribute 1.39 percent to total export earnings<sup>1</sup>. Bangladesh achieved self-sufficiency in fish production with a per capita fish consumption of 62.58g/day against set target of 60g/day according to FAO report. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018, Bangladesh ranked 3rd in inland open water capture production and 5th in world aquaculture production.

In the overall fisheries sector shrimp holds a significant position. Bangladesh is one of the major shrimp producing and exporting countries in the world. Shrimp is a source of livelihood and income of hundreds of thousand people in Bangladesh; way of poverty reduction; means of foreign exchange earnings; and one of the avenues of Bangladesh’s integration into global supply chain. However, a number of issues are affecting the shrimp sectors workers. The labor and human rights condition in this sector has always been an important area of interest at the national and international level.

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<sup>1</sup> GoB (2019), Bangladesh Economic Review

The broad objective of this study is to explore the overall condition of rights situations in shrimp sector in Bangladesh and to determine the future course of actions. The study would be instrumental to develop action plans and policy advocacy issues for the sector. The specific objectives of this study include: i) to know the existing condition of shrimp cultivation; ii) to analyze the shrimp value chain/supply chain; iii) to understand the human and labour rights condition of shrimp workers; and iv) to develop set of recommendation for promotion of workers' rights in the sector and making the sector sustainable.

This study has employed a mixed method approach—both quantitative and qualitative aspects have informed the study. Information have been collected from both primary and secondary data. Desk review was applied to collect secondary data. Desk review included study published literature at both international and national level. In particular research reports, newspaper articles and reports, and journal articles have been reviewed. For the primary information both quantitative and qualitative techniques have been applied. Quantitative aspect included the questionnaire survey on 228 workers from three major shrimp producing districts of the country—Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira. Workers were selected from shrimp processing factories, depots, and enclosures (*gher*). Sample were chosen purposively based on the availability, accessibility and the willingness of the respondents to answer the questions. Two separate questionnaires were administered to collect data from respondents. The first set of questionnaire included the livelihood related questions. The second set of questionnaire, on the other hand, aimed to know the workplace and rights related information from the respondents. The qualitative techniques included consultation and interviews to understand the opinion and views on shrimp sector and labour and human rights condition of the shrimp sector workers.

## Section Two: The Shrimp Sector in Bangladesh

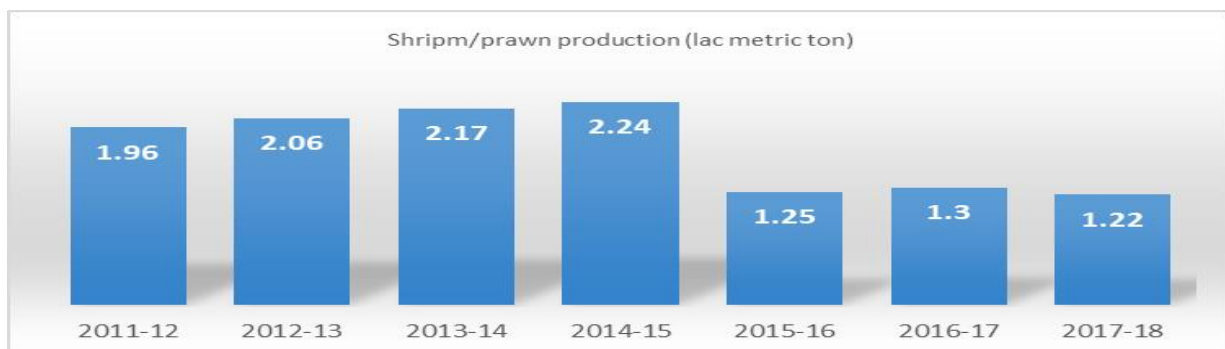
### 2.1 Introduction

Cultivation of shrimp is often termed as 'white gold' in Bangladesh. The prospect of earning great amount foreign currency has attached this level with shrimp cultivation. Objective of this section is to explore the present condition of shrimp cultivation in Bangladesh and to analyze the shrimp supply chain.

### 2.2 Shrimp cultivation scenario

**Geographical locations:** Bangladesh has a long history of shrimp cultivation. Shrimp cultivation first began in Munsiganj of Satkhira in 1972, outside the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) embankment, which was built in the 1960s along the coastline to save land from saline water. International market and short-term benefits brought influential people into the business. Shrimp cultivation reached Khulna and Bagerhat around 1980. In 1979-80, slightly more than 20,000 hectares were under shrimp cultivation. The area under shrimp cultivation tripled in 10 years, from mid-1980s to mid-1990s covering 130,000 hectares by 1999. The shrimp cultivation and production in Bangladesh rapidly expanded during the global "shrimp boom," with shrimp production increasing from 11,000 tons to 94,000 tons between 1984 and 2000<sup>2</sup>.

**Area under shrimp cultivation and total production:** In 2015-16 shrimp/prawn was cultivated 275,509 Ha water area, the production was 125,699 MT.<sup>3</sup> In 2016-17 the total water area under shrimp/prawn cultivation was 272,717 Ha and the total production was 130,296 MT. In 2017-18, the shrimp/prawn was cultivated in 285,681-hectare water area, and the production was 122,550 MT. Therefore the shrimp production experienced a negative growth (-5.94%)<sup>4</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Solidarity Centre (2012).

<sup>3</sup> GoB (2017), Year Book of Fisheries Statistics of Bangladesh: 2016-17. Dhaka: Department of Fisheries Bangladesh

<sup>4</sup> GoB (2018), Year Book of Fisheries Statistics of Bangladesh: 2017-18. Dhaka: Department of Fisheries Bangladesh

**Species of shrimp:** There are about 25 species of freshwater shrimp and 36 species of marine shrimp, *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* locally known as Galda is the most important among the freshwater species and is cultivated commercially in Bangladesh. Other commercially important freshwater shrimp are *M. malcolmsonii*, *M. villosimonos*, *M. lamarrei* etc. The most important marine/salt water shrimp is the *Penaeus monodon* locally called Bagda, the giant black tiger, which is the target species for brackish water farming in Bangladesh<sup>5</sup>. Currently *Galda* and *Bagda* together constitute more than 90% of the total shrimp production in the country.

Sl. No.	Species	Total Production (MT)	Share (%) in total shrimp production
1	Bagda ( <i>Penaeus monodon</i> )	61709	50.35
2	Galda ( <i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i> )	51571	42.08
3	Harina ( <i>Metapenaeus monoceros</i> )	3882	3.17
4	Chaka ( <i>Fenneropenaeus indicus</i> )	2029	1.66
5	Other Shrimp/Prawn	3359	2.74
Total		122550	100

**Workforce in shrimp cultivation:** It is very difficult to have a complete picture on the number of workers engaged in the shrimp sector, since shrimp cultivation and processing take place at different levels mostly informal in nature. However, an estimate shows that some 800,000 people are engaged in shrimp farming in the country but they are not properly educated for farming of high quality shrimp<sup>6</sup>.

## 2.3 Pre and post distribution chain of shrimp production: a focus on shrimp value chain

Shrimp production in Bangladesh includes a series of interconnected activities. Various studies have been conducted on the shrimp value/supply chain in Bangladesh. The studies have shown that the chain is long and complex involving various actors and stakeholder at different level of production. Commonly the actors/stakeholders in shrimp value/supply chain include fry-catcher/hatchery, shrimp farmer, *faria/aratdar*, depot/factory agent, shrimp processing industry, buyer/exporter, and international market.

### 2.3.1 Fry catcher/hatchery

This is the first stage of shrimp supply chain. In the past, shrimp postlarvae (PL) came from two sources, hatcheries (80%) and collection from the wild (20%). Although PL collection from the wild has been banned since 2000, poorer rural communities still engage in this due to a lack of

<sup>5</sup> Masum, S. Jahangir Hasan (2008), Working Together for Responsible & Eco-friendly Shrimp Farming in Bangladesh.

<sup>6</sup> <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/pilot-project-on-vannamei-culture-gets-govt-nod-1574482524>

effective enforcement. At present 99% of fish fries are being produced by private hatcheries<sup>7</sup>. Hatchery owners came largely from Bangladesh's business class, having high social status, and were mostly wealthy entrepreneurs receiving continuing financial support from the government<sup>8</sup>.

### **2.3.2 Shrimp farmer**

Farmers are the producer of shrimp. They grow PL (post larvae) of shrimp with utmost care and nursing in enclosure (*Gher*) and sell them to *faria* and depot owners.

### **2.3.3 Faria/Aratdar**

*Faria* is an intermediary in shrimp businesses who buy small volume shrimp from farmers from remote areas and sell them to depot owner and *aratdar*. *Faria* are small-scale traders who visit small farms at the time of harvest. They purchase, transport and sell small volumes of shrimp directly or indirectly (through an *aratdar*) to depots. *Faria* often do business in their own communities but sometimes also work in more distant areas. Traditionally, *faria* tended to offer credit payments to the farmers. More recently, in order to secure supply, *faria* also offer cash payments to farmers<sup>9</sup>. They do not have a place for buying and selling. *Aratdars*, on the other hand, have a permanent place for conducting their business. They only arrange the buying and selling of shrimp between the seller and buyer. In return they charge a certain amount or rate of money from the seller.

### **2.3.3 Depot/Commissioning agent**

Depot owner have place for storing and purchasing shrimp in the shrimp growing areas. Depots are responsible for cleaning, grading, icing, packing, and transporting to the processing plants. They purchase shrimp from *faria*, and farmer sell it to processing plants via commission agent.

Commission agents charge commission on the selling of shrimp to the processing plants. They conduct the buying and selling of shrimp between depot owners and processing plants on commission basis. They are the main drivers of pricing and have a strong financial position in society. They try to keep the buying price low and take substantial commissions that can depress the prices farmers that receive. Often A commissioning agent maintain contracts with several processing plants, depots, and farmers, to whom they provide financial and material loans. They maintain transaction record, act as guarantor, ensures regular supply of shrimp.

### **2.3.4 Shrimp processing industry**

Processing industries add the value on shrimp purchased from depot owners via commission agents. They have permanent building complex for doing the high technology intensive processing activities. Destination of this produce from the plant is overseas consumer. High level of standard of products is ensured throughout the processing stages.

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<sup>7</sup> GoB, Seventh Five Year Plan

<sup>8</sup> Alam, S.M. Nazmul, Safety in the Shrimp Supply Chain

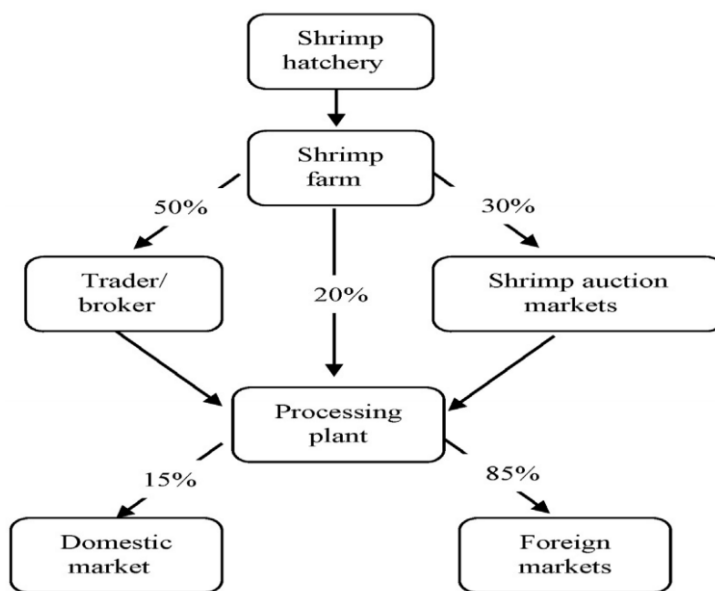
<sup>9</sup>

### 2.3.5 Buyer/exporter

From the processing units shrimps reach to local buyers/exporter. Often local buyers collect the processed shrimps through their agents.

### 2.3.6 International market

International market is the destination of Bangladeshi shrimp. Modern shrimp processing of Bangladesh is done almost entirely for the export market. European countries, the US and Japan are the major shrimp importing countries from Bangladesh and these three markets has a 98% import share of the total export value in Bangladesh<sup>10</sup>.



Source:

Overall, the shrimp value chain practices in Bangladesh is the combination of a series of activities performed by several actors/stakeholder and market participants which is started from suppliers of broods and end with transfer the products from farm to the ultimate consumers at abroad<sup>11</sup>. In this long chain agents in many stages are the most beneficiary actors who serve as intermediaries between different actors. In the chain, farmers are in a weak position in the prawn marketing as they have limited bargaining power on price due to strong position of intermediaries in the marketing syndicate. Farmers are unable to communicate directly with marketing, as market communication is controlled by agents as intermediaries<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Yasin (2016)

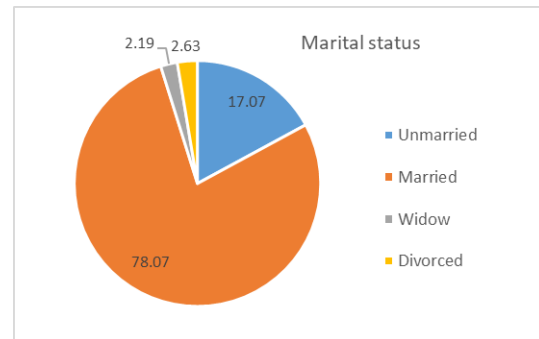
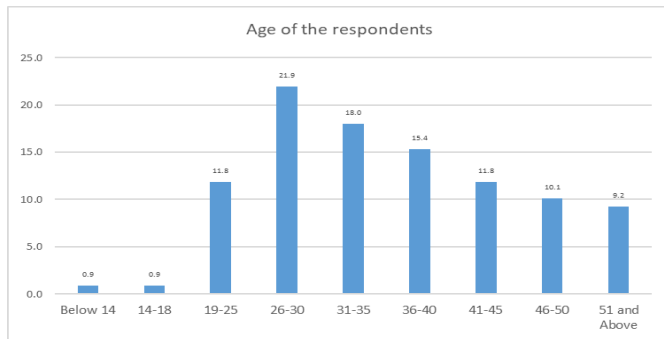
<sup>11</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Al-Amin and Alam (2016)

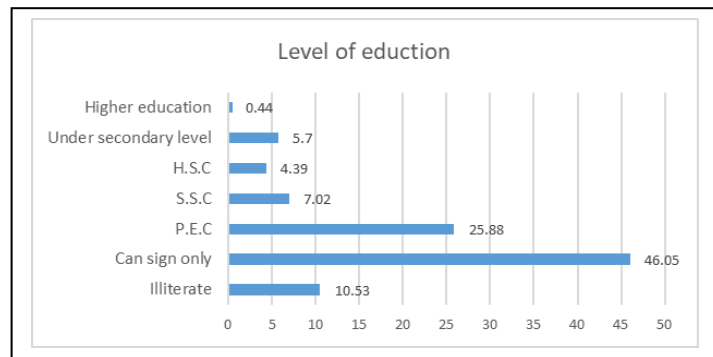
## Section Three: Livelihood Portfolio of Shrimp Sector Workers

### *Sex, age, marital status, and education*

Most of the respondents under this study was male (80.7%). On the other hand, female workers were about one-fifth (19.3%) of all respondents. Majority of the workers are young. According to the National Youth Development Policy of Bangladesh 35 years is the age limit of a person to be considered as youth. The present survey shows that 53.5% shrimp workers are under the age of 35 years. whereas one-third of all workers are in the age group of 19-30 years. Workers who are over 40 years of age are 31.1%. Shrimp sector workers are mostly married. Survey data shows that more than three (78.07%) of every four workers are married. On the other hand, unmarried workers were 17.07% among all the respondents. Besides, few of the respondents were widowed (2.19%) and divorcee (2.63%).

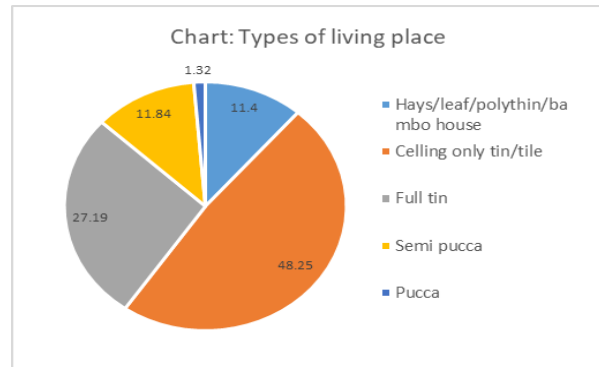
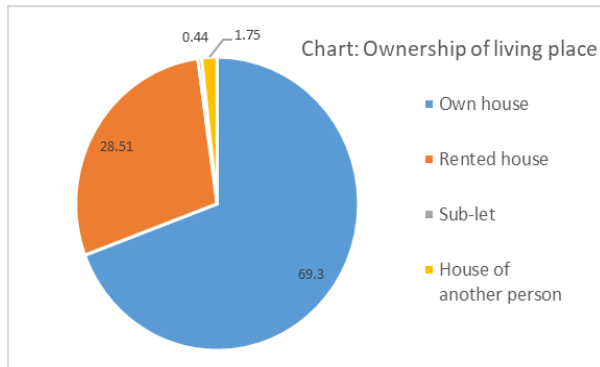


Education status of the shrimp sector workers is poor. Majority (56.58%) of the respondents under this study were either illiterate or could sign only. However, proportions of both illiterate workers and those who can sign only are more among female workers than their male counterparts. Just only one of every four workers (25.88%) have the experience schooling up to class five (PEC). Only 7% have attended the secondary level and 4.39% attended the higher secondary level.

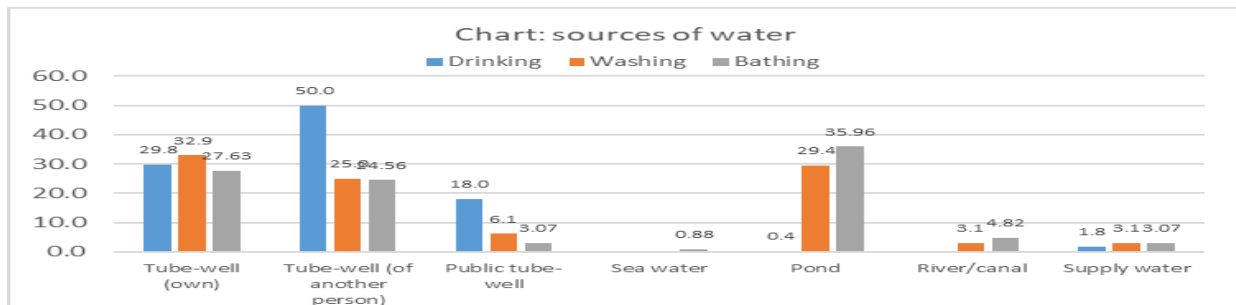


## Ownership and types of living place, water and sanitation

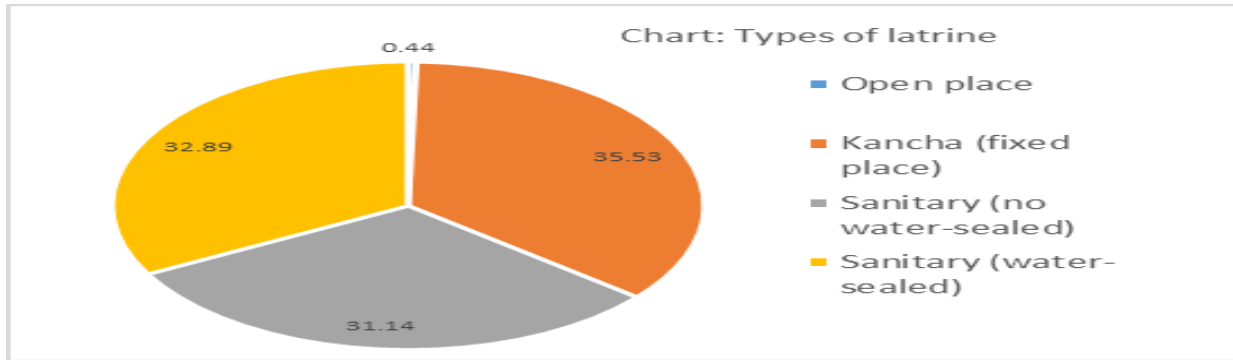
Majority (69.3%) of the workers live in their own house. Workers living in rented houses are 28.51%. Few other workers live on sub-let basis, and others in house of another person. Although majority workers live in their own houses, the houses are constructed poorly, they are mainly living in kancha houses. Only 1.32% workers live in pucca houses, and 11.84% in semi-pucca houses.



For the purpose of drinking, workers collect water from tube-well (97.8%). Among these workers about 30% workers have own tube-well. Half of the workers (50%) collect drinking water from tube-well of another person; and 18% workers from public tube-well. For the purpose of washing water is collected mainly from three sources—own tube-well (32.9%), tube-well of another person (25%), and pond (29.4%). On the other hand, for bathing worker mainly depend on pond water (36%), personal/own tube-well (27.6%), and tube-well of other persons (24.6%).

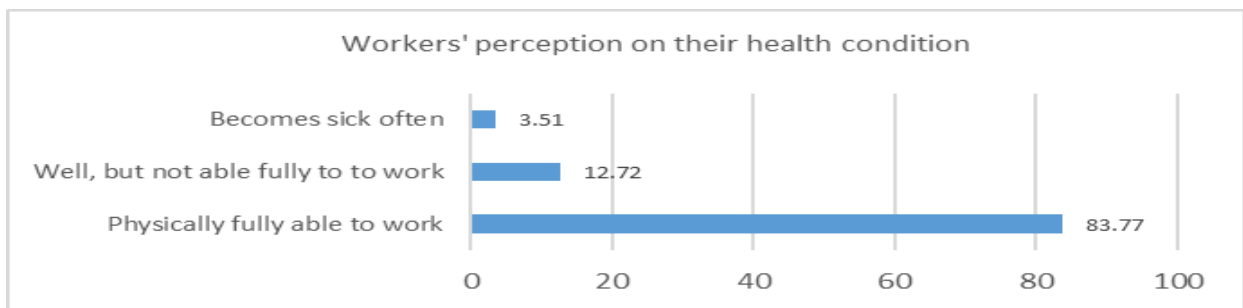


Largest section of the respondents (35.53%) use kancha latrine (fixed place). Two other types of latrines that the workers use are sanitary (not water sealed) and sanitary (water sealed). Proportion of respondents using these types of latrines are almost same—31.14% and 32.89% respectively.

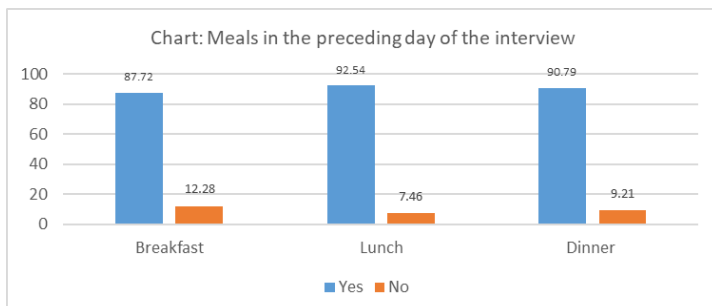
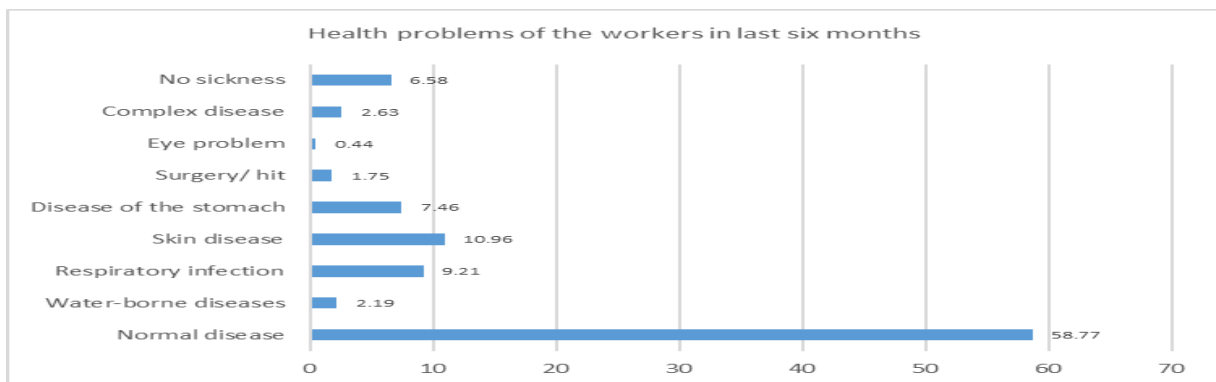


### Self-perception on health and food habit

Most of the workers are fully able to work. The self-perception of the workers shows that 83.77% workers consider themselves fully able physically to work. On the other hand, there are workers who perceive that although their physical conditions are well, they are not fully able to work. Few workers claim that their physical condition is not good and they become sick often.



In las six months almost all workers (93.41%) suffered diseases/illnesses of different types. However, majority (58.77%) suffered normal diseases. 10.96% and 9.21% workers suffered respectively from skin disease and respiratory infection. Besides, 7.46% have suffered from problems of stomach.



Not all workers can take three meals every day. When workers were

surveyed they were asked whether they could take all three meals in the previous/preceding day. According to survey findings, 12.28% workers did not take breakfast, 7.46% did not take lunch, and 9.21% did not take dinner in the day before the interview.

### *Saving and loan*

Although about 60% workers have claimed that they can save some money every month, a large number of workers (40.35%) do not have any savings. The average savings of the workers in the previous year is BDT 12445.59. Workers use different channel to save money, however the practice of keeping money home is the dominant one. 30.26% workers keep money at home. 26.32% workers save in Bank. Insurance company is the 3rd preference of the workers to save/deposit money, 16.23% workers use this Besides, local cooperatives and local savings/loan organization are the preferred places of savings for 13.23% and 5.7% workers respectively.

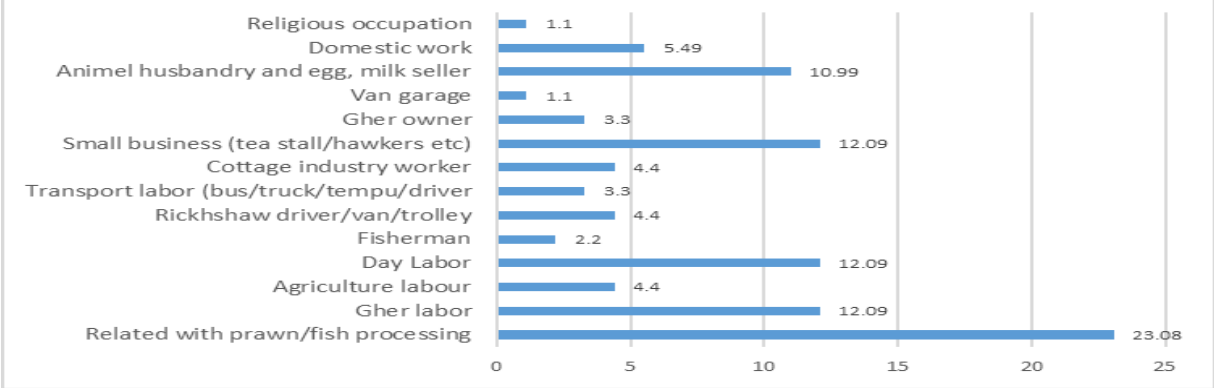
92 of 228 respondents (40.35%) informed that they took loan in the previous year. Among these 92 workers majority (66, 71.74%) took loan from Bank, followed by NGOs (21.74%). There were few workers who took loan from local cooperatives and mahajons--3.26% in both cases. workers used the loan for different purposes. however, the number one cause is the meet the food cost, 67.39% respondents have mentioned this reason. Treatment and house repairing are the causes of loan for 7.61% respondents in both cases. besides, 6.52% respondents informed that they took loan in order to start a small business for their family member.

### *Income earner and occupation of family members*

Most of the workers (77.63%) are the main income earner of their families.

91 of 228 workers (about 40%) have informed that in their families there are other income earners. Those family members are involved in different types of occupations. Among the occupations of the family members the common one is related to prawn/fish processing (23.08%), respectively followed by gher labour, day labour, and small business—12.09% in each case. Besides, animal husbandry is the occupation of family member of 10.99% workers.

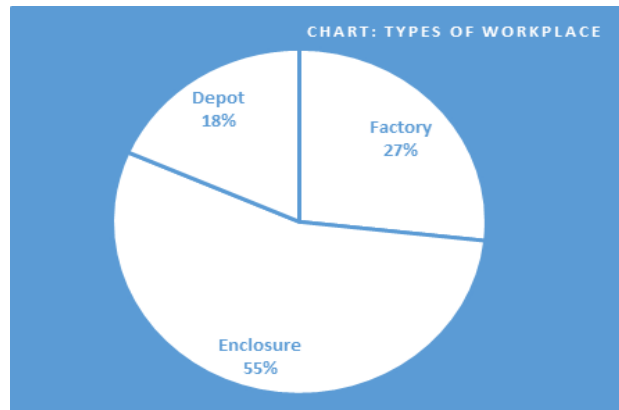
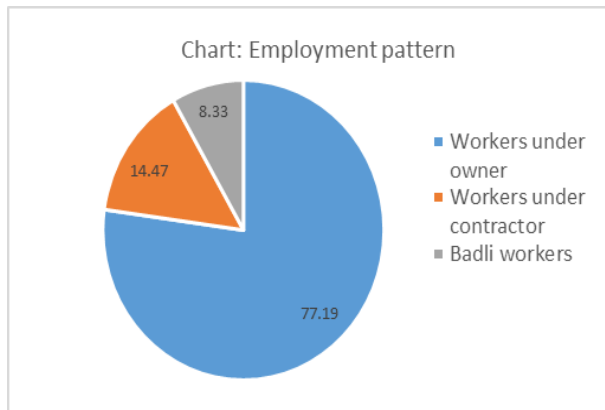
Occupation of shrimp workers' family members



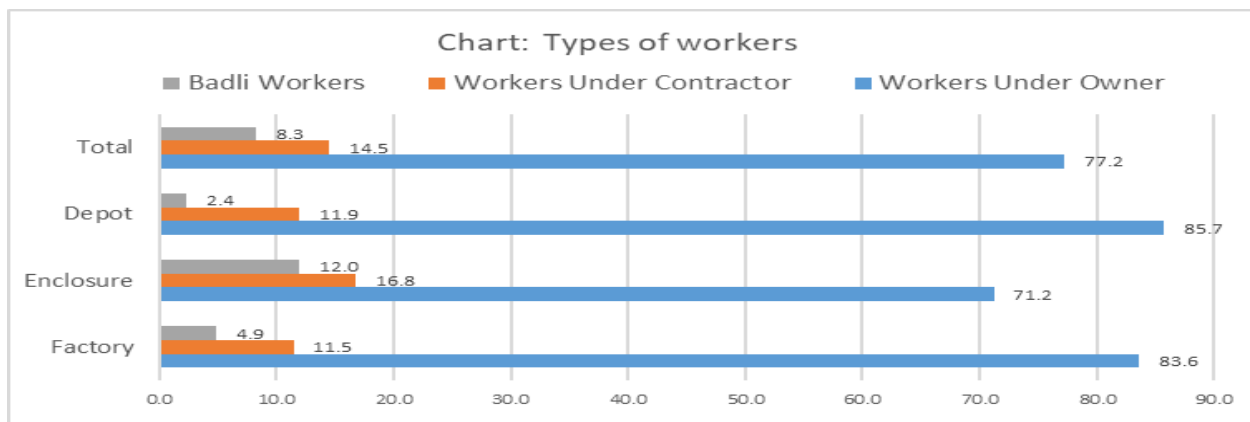
## Section Four: Working Condition of Shrimp Sector Workers

### *Employment relations and contract*

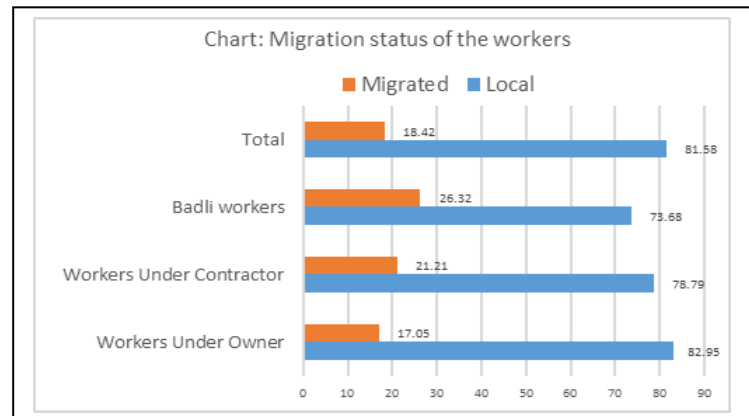
Three types of employment relations/patterns were found—workers employed directly by owners (77.19%), workers employed by a contractor (14.19%). Besides, there were also some workers/respondents (8.33%) who have been working on temporary/badli basis. Of the total workers majority were from enclosures (54.82%). More than one-quarter was factory workers (26.75%), and the rests (18.42%) were working at depots.



Most of the workers at each workplace are recruited directly by employers. Employer-recruited workers' proportions are 83.6%, 71.2% and 85.7% at factory, enclosure, and depot respectively. Contractor provided workers are 11.5% at factory, 16.8% at enclosure, and 11.9% at depot.

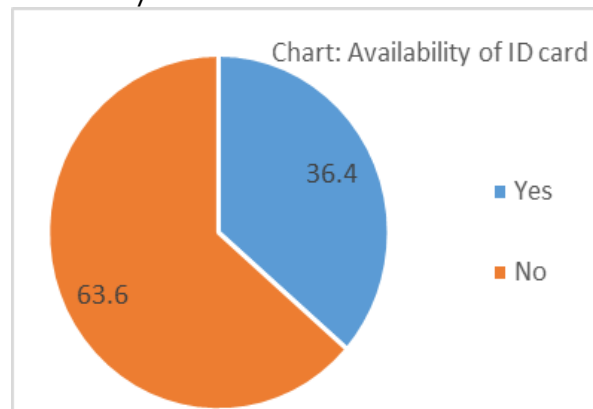
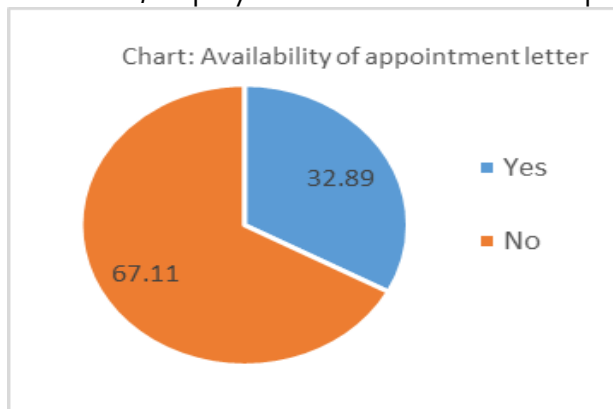


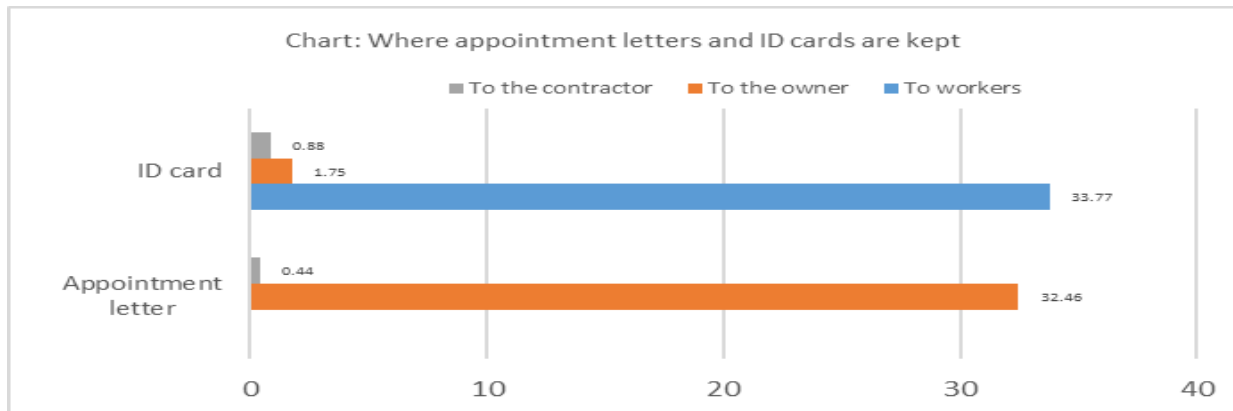
Workers are mostly local people. Around 4 of every 5 workers have reported that they are local people. 18.42% workers are migrated. However, migrated workers' proportions are slightly higher among those who are recruited by contractor and who are working as badli workers, 21.21% and 26.32% respectively.



Majority of the workers do not have appointment letter. Around 2 of every three (3) workers are denied this legal rights. Non-availability of appointment is highest among badli workers (84.21%). On the other hand, 75 of 228 (32.89) workers claimed that they have been provided with appointment letter. availability of appointment is slightly higher (about 37%) among employer-recruited workers. Of these 75 workers 74 have claimed that their appointment *letters are not at their possession*, owners have kept the appointment letters; and the remaining one has informed that contractor has kept the appointment letter

Likewise the appointment letter, majority of the shrimp workers don not have identity card. 63.6% have informed that their employers have not provided them with identity card. Non-availability if identity card is the highest (84.21) among badli workers. Although 36.4% have identity card, the proportion is slightly higher (41.48%) among the employer-recruited workers. Among the 83 (36.4%) workers 76 (33.77% of all workers) report that *identity cards are at their possession*. on the other hand, 5 (1.75%) and 2 (0.88%) workers respectively claim that the owner/employer and contractor have kept their identity cards.



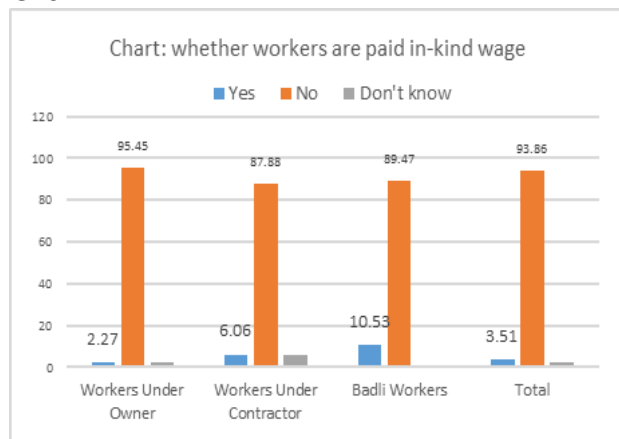
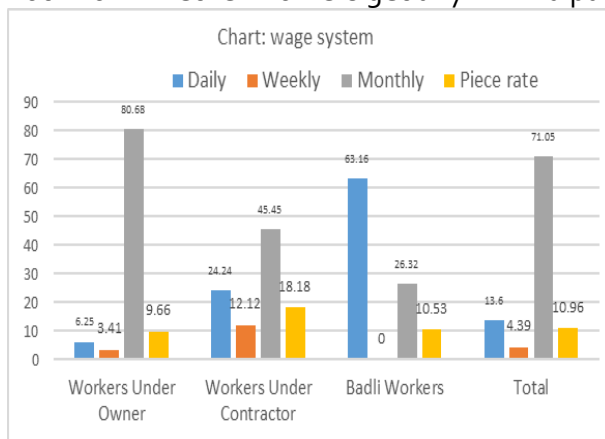


### Wage and wage system

The average income of the shrimp workers is BDT 7875.62. Among the three workplaces, workers of depot earn more than the workers of other places (factory, enclosures). Depot workers earn BDT 8960.71, whereas factory workers and enclosure workers respectively earn BDT 8535.09 and BDT 7246.25 every month.

Wage system/period/methods of shrimp workers show that majority get wage on monthly basis. Workers getting wage on monthly basis is 71.05% among all. 13.6% and 4.39% workers respectively get wage on daily and weekly basis. Daily basis workers are slightly more among workers of enclosures, 15.2%. On the other hand, about 11% workers get wage on piece-rate basis. Piece-rate workers are more among workers of enclosures (17.4%).

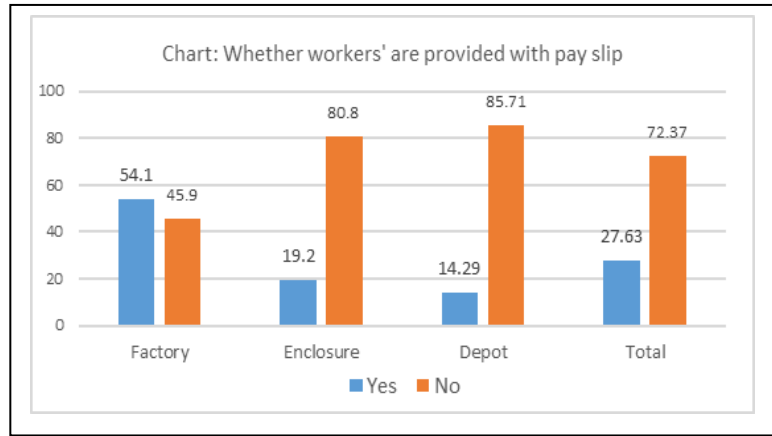
Wage of the workers are mostly paid in-cash, in-kind payment is not observed mostly. About 94% workers report that their employers never pay in-kind in lieu of cash/money. Just 3.5% workers claimed in-kind payment of wage sometimes. In-kind payment is totally absent in depots. There is also lack of awareness among a tiny proportion (2.63%) of workers, they do not know whether workers get any in-kind payment.



Though majority of the inform that they always get the wage timely, a large number of workers still do not get their wage on right time always. Survey data shows that 64.47%

workers always get the wage timely, and the rests (35.53%) do not. The trend of providing timely wage is comparatively better in factory, and worse in enclosures.

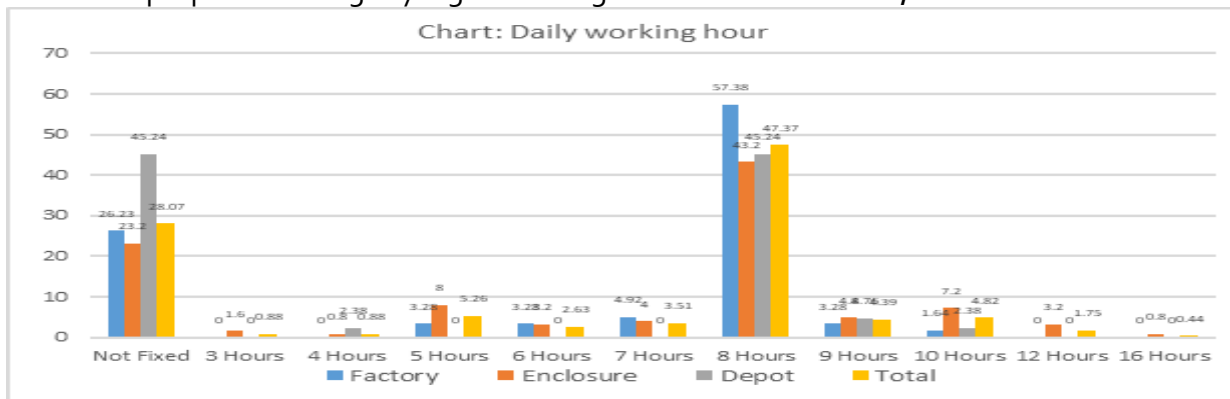
The practice of providing pay slip to the workers are very infrequent. About three-quarters (72.37%) of all workers do not get pay slip. The comparative scenario of the shrimp workers of different workplaces show that condition of pay slip is better in factory. 54.1% workers get pay-slip, despite the fact that many factory workers (45.9%) are still deprived.



It is also a striking feature the pay-slips usually do not include mentioning the total working hours. Of the 63 workers (out of 228) only 12 workers (factory workers 4, enclosure 3, and depot 1) have claimed that working hours/days are usually mentioned in the pay-slip.

### Working time and overtime

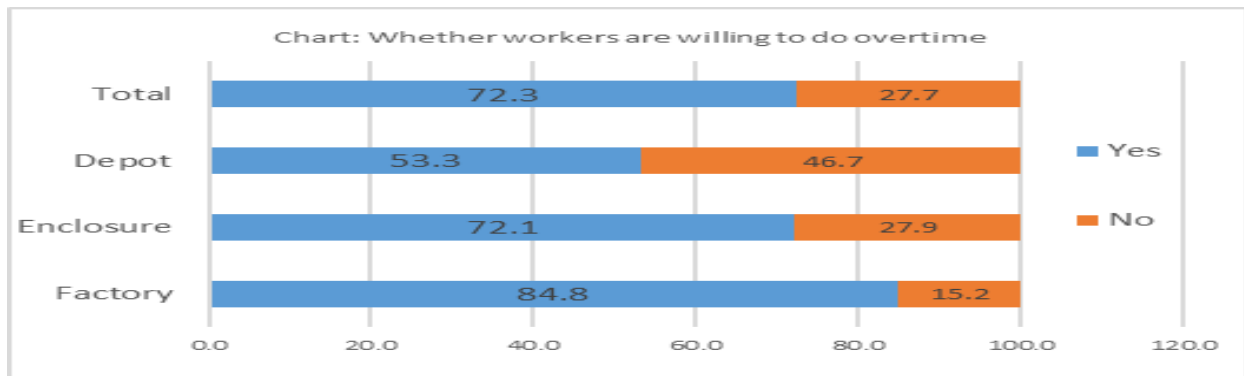
The largest section (47.37) of the workers work eight (8) hours daily. However, the fact is that many workers are deprived of any fixed daily working hours. 28.07% workers have claimed that the length of their dialy working hours is not fixed. Share of workers who do not have fixed work hours is higher for depots, 45.24%. Just about 12% of all workers work more than 8 hours. The proportion is slightly higher among workers of enclosures, 16%.



Majority of the workers claim that they need do overtime. Overtime is more frequent among the workers of both factory (75%) and depot (71.4%) than the enclosure (34.4%). However, overtime is not available throughout the month. About one-third (33%) workers do overtime for 1-10 days. 1-10 days' overtime is more among factory workers (42.6%). About 10% of all workers (higher in factory, 24.6%) do overtime for 11-20 days a month. Mover than 20 days of overtime work has been reported by about 10% workers, yet higher in depot (28.6%).....

Overtime hour is not fixed in majority cases. Although 52.26% workers do overtime, 26.75% of all the workers claim that there is no fixed time, it depends on the work load and will of the employers. 20.61% claim that they work 1-2 hours as overtime, and 4.85% work more than two hours.

It is also important to note, overtime work is not a choice of many workers, rather there are bound to do. 37.72% workers inform that they are willing to do overtime work, whereas 14.47% do overtime work against their will. 35.53% of all the shrimp sector workers claim that they have the chance to deny the overtime work. In contrast 16.23% workers have no chance to deny the overtime work, when it is scheduled.



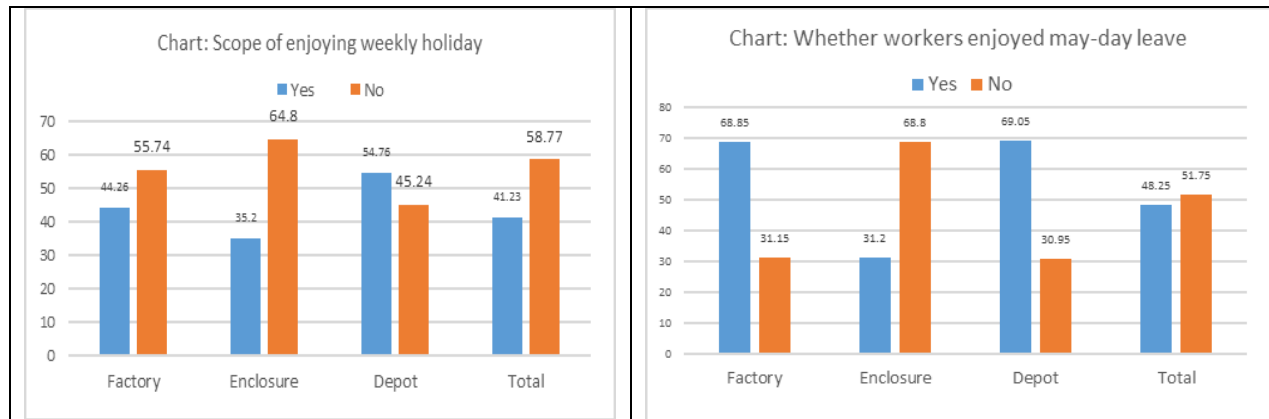
Majority workers do not get overtime payment/allowance at the that is twice than the normal rate. About 30% do not get overtime allowance according to legal provision, twice than the normal working hour. 22.37% get the overtime allowance following the law.

Generally, deduction from wage is not frequent. 86.84% workers claimed that wage is not deducted. However, among the factory workers the practice of wage deduction is comparatively more. 13.16% among all workers, but 21.31% of factory workers, have reported wage deduction. Wage is deducted mainly for two reasons—absenteeism (9.21%), and late

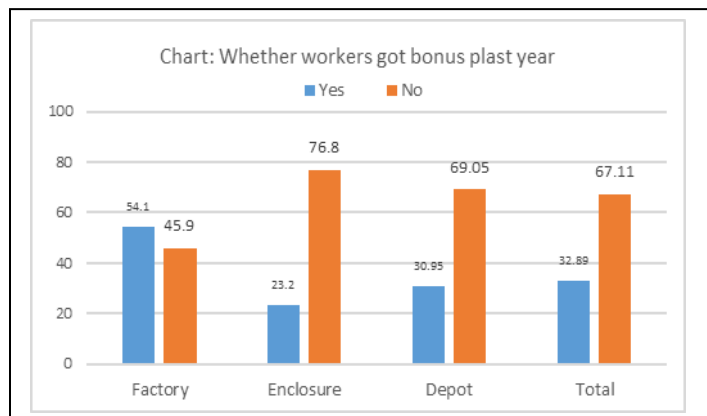
presence (3.95%). workers' who experienced wage deduction, have further informed that on an average BDT 172.75 wage deducted from their wage.

### Weekly holiday and other facilities

Large number of workers do not get weekly holiday always. Majority (58.77%) of the workers can not enjoy at least one holiday weekly. In contrast 41.23% workers have this chance. Majority (51.75%) even was not provided with a holiday/leave on last May Day. However, among the factory workers the condition of enjoying leave on May Day is comparatively better 68.85% workers enjoyed the leave.

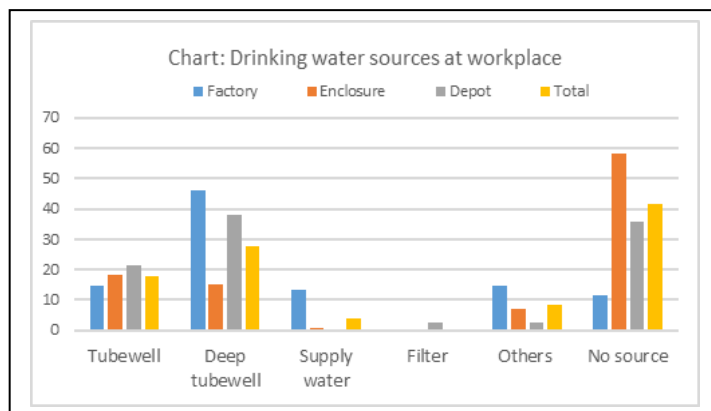


Large majority of the workers are deprived of festival bonus. Two of every three (67.11%) workers did not receive bonus last year. The condition is better in the case of factory workers than the situation of workers at enclosures and depots. At the factory, majority 54.1% received bonus, yet a large proportion (45.79) of factory workers were denied.



The survey data shows that

arrangements of drinking water is available at workplaces of 88.52% factory workers. For

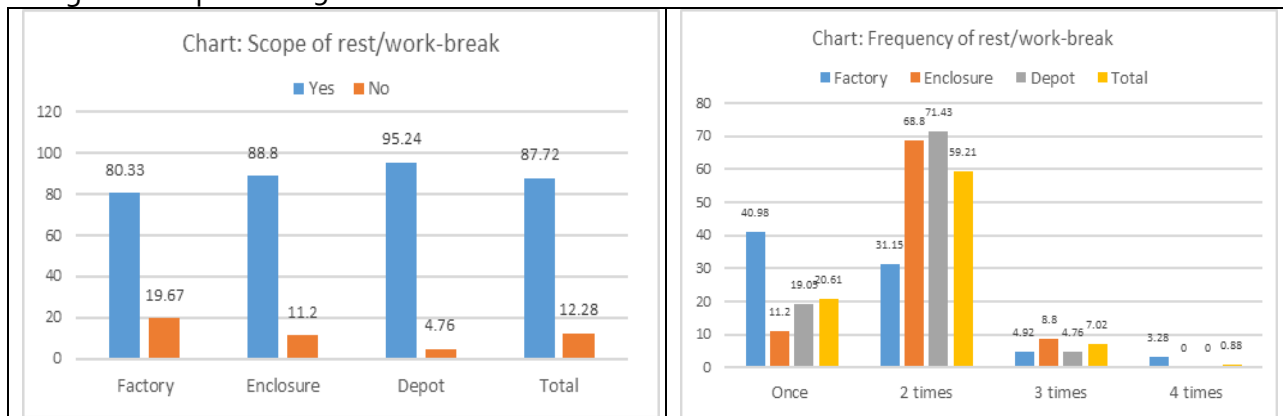


enclosures and depots arrangement of drinking water has been reported by 41.6% and 64.29% workers respectively. Therefore, the condition of drinking water varies according to the nature of workplaces of the shrimp sector workers. Mainly tube-well and deep tube-well are the source of drinking water at workplaces. Since

the Khulna/Satkhira/Bagerhat areas there are problems of salinity they need to depend on deep-tube well.

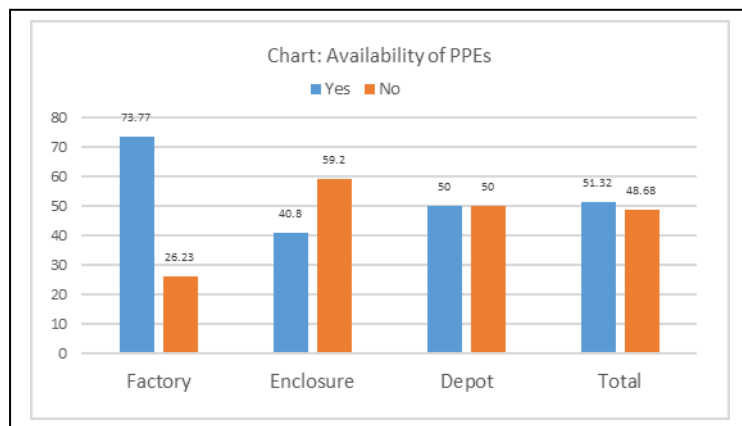
Medical facility is available at workplaces of just 36.84% workers. Therefore, for majority of the workers there is no arrangement of medical/health care facility at their workplaces.

Not all workers get work-break/rest period. The situation is comparatively bad in factory. Although 87.72% of all workers get rest period. However, among factory workers the proportion is a bit lower, 80.33%. For majority (59.21%) of these workers get break twice, whereas 20.61% workers get rest time once. The average rest period is 26.16 minutes, and range of rest period is 5-60 minutes.



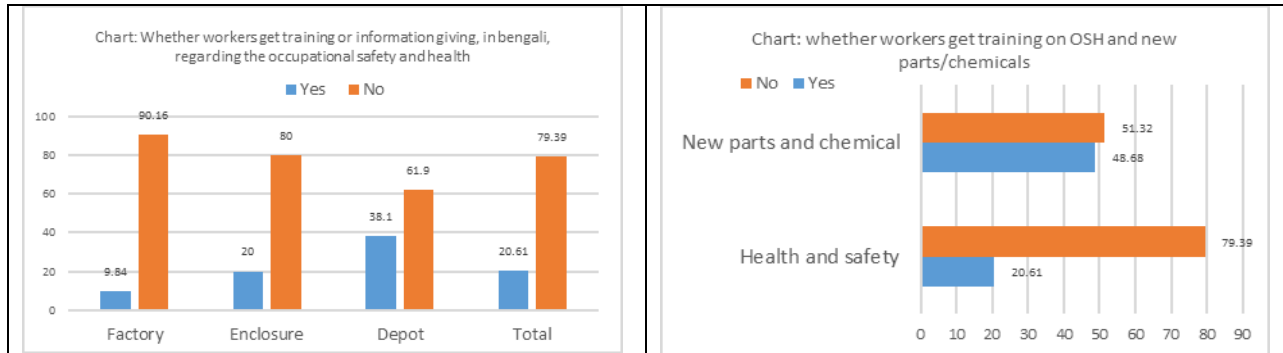
### Occupational Safety

About half (48.68%) of the respondents claimed that they were not provided with any personal protective equipment (PPE). On the other hand, 51.532% workers get PPEs. However, the condition of availability of PPEs is better among factory workers, 73.77% workers receive PPEs although 26.23% workers are still deprived of. Different types of PPEs are available for the workers. among different PPEs, gloves (86.32%), masks (82.05%), and boots (81.2%) are more available than the other PPEs like chest guard (), and heat/cold protective dress (). PPEs are provided to workers at free of cost. only 2 of 117 workers (who get PPEs) claim that they need to pay a portion of total cost of PPEs given to them. When necessary, in order to change the PPEs just 4 of 117 workers talked about paying partial cost by worker.

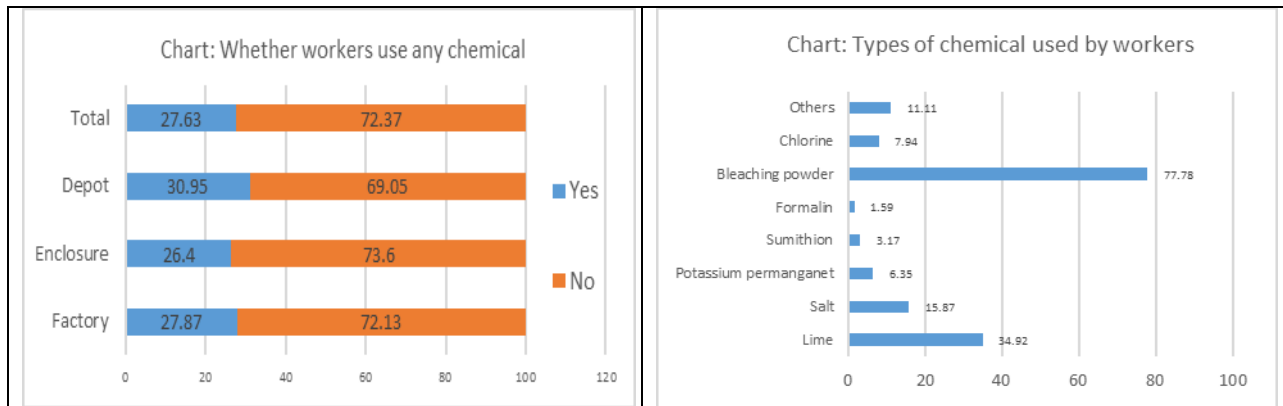


Training or information giving to the workers, in bengali, regarding the occupational safety and health on regular basis is not provided in most cases. Just about one in every five (20.21%)

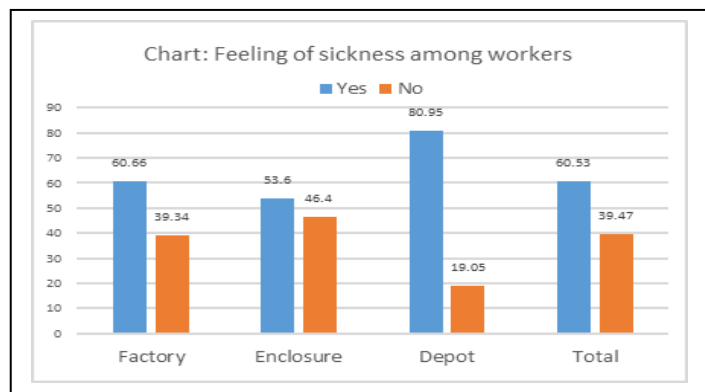
workers has claimed that they receive training/information regularly. Majority (51.32%) of the workers did not receive any training before using new type of machine/parts or chemical. however, the situation is comparatively good in the case of factory workers where 65% workers have claimed that they got/received training before using new parts/machine/chemical.



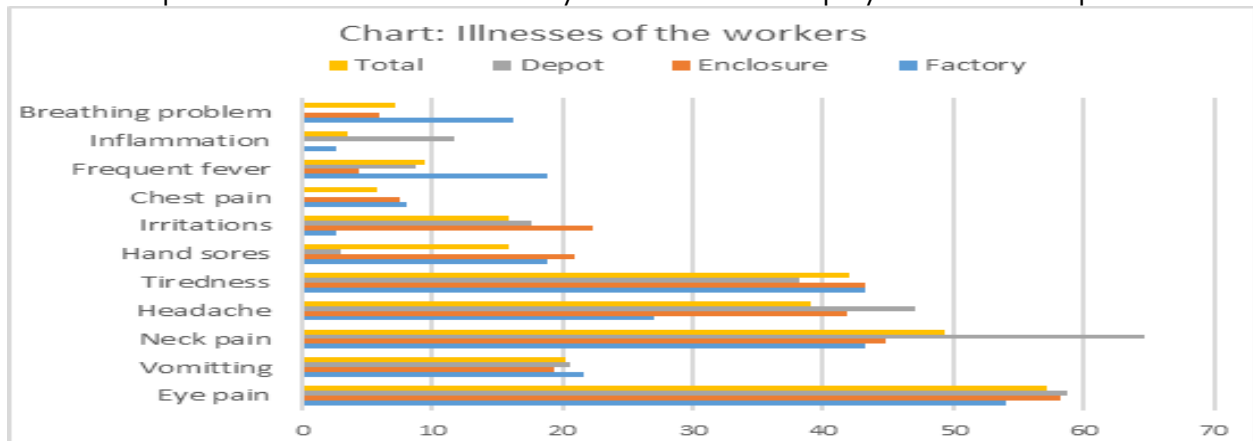
Majority of the workers (165 of 228) do not use, as they claim, any chemical at their workplaces. In contrast 27.63% (63 of 228) workers use chemical. Among different types of chemicals these workers mainly use bleaching powder (49 of 63 workers), Lime (22 workers of 63) and salt (10 workers). besides, small number of workers also use potassium (4), and chlorine (5). Of the workers who use chemical about two-thirds (22 of 63) did not receive any information from employer/workplace regarding the health impact of these chemicals. it is to be noted that at factory level, the condition is better where 58.82% workers, of those who use chemical, received the information.



Majority of the shrimp sector workers have different health complaints. 138 of 228 surveyed workers (60.53%) have reported health related problems. Among different problems of these workers (138) eye-pain (57.25%) is the most frequent one respectively followed



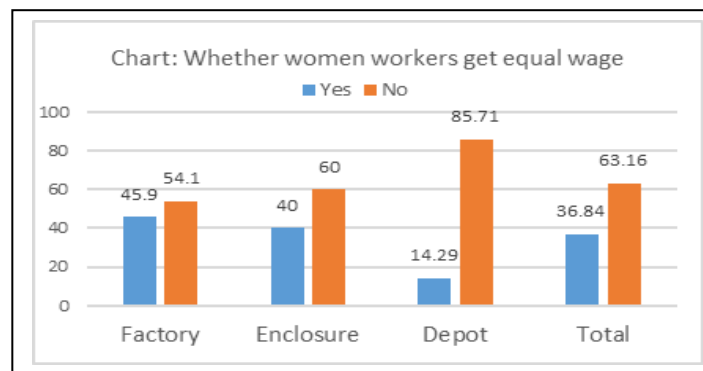
by neck-pain (49.28%), tiredness (42.03%) and headache (39.13%). the prevalence of neck-pain and headache is higher among workers at depots. Large proportion (71.74%) of the workers with health problems has claimed that they informed their employers about their problems.



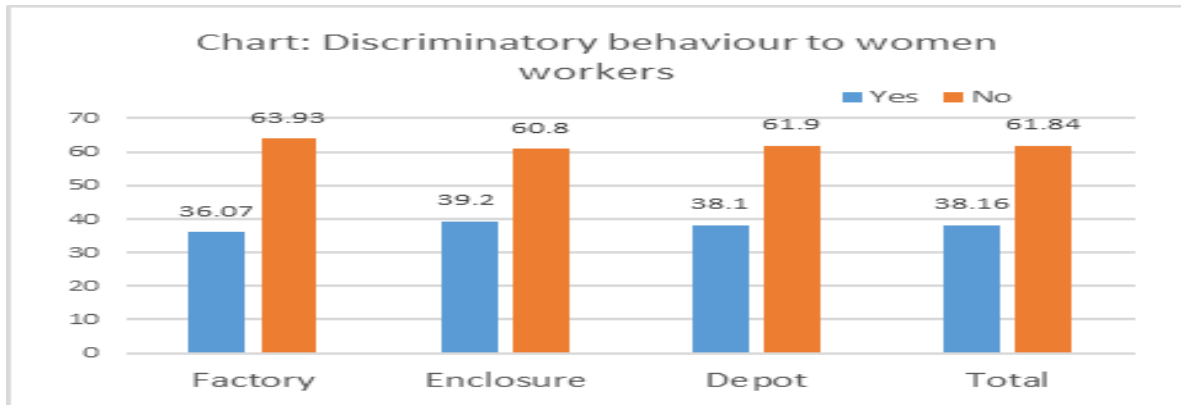
Almost all (97.81) workers have reported that they have not observed any incidence of accidents or death at their respective workplaces. Just 5 of 228 workers (2.19%) have reported workplace accidents.

### Women workers' issues

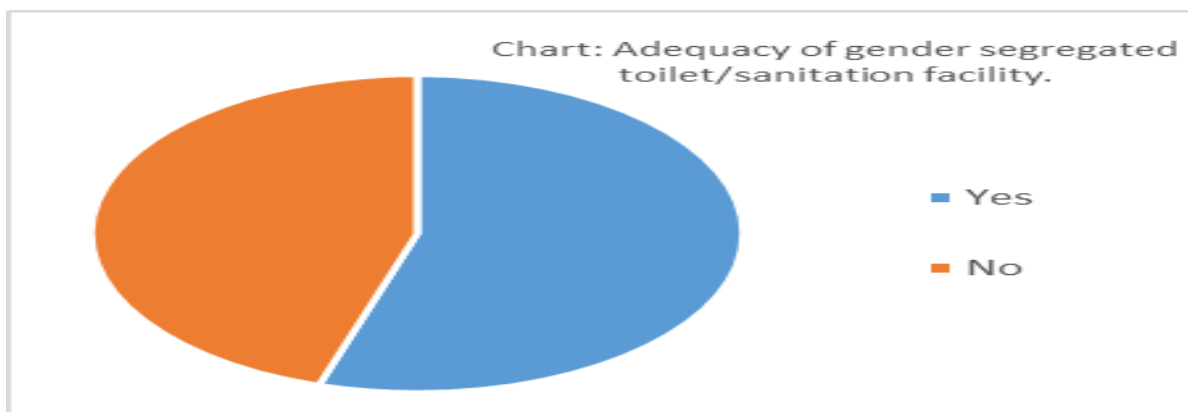
Gender wage-gap has been reported by majority workers. 63.16% workers claim that women workers do not get equal wage against their male counterparts in same position. Among the three types of workplaces the condition is worst in depots where 85.71% workers have reported the wage-gap. The gap has been reported by 60% workers of enclosures, and 54.1% of factory workers. On an average the women workers get BDT 566.38 less than the male workers.



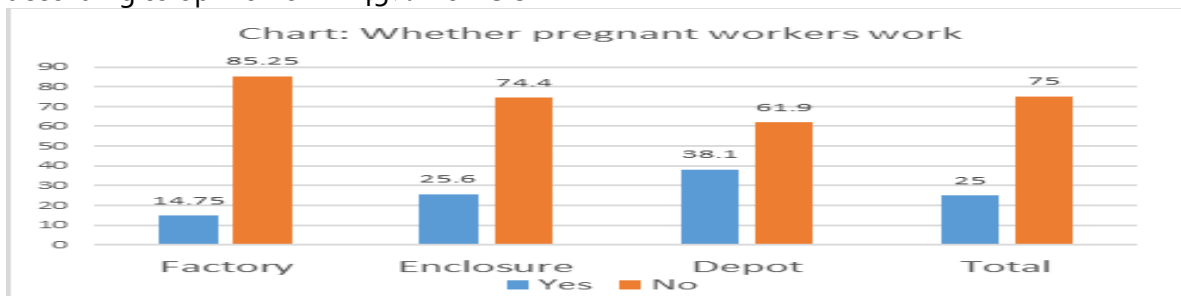
Workers generally do not face indecent behavior at their respective workplaces. 96.93% respondents of this study claim that women get decent behavior. 38.16% workers have claimed that they know incidents/events where women workers faced discrimination or harassments. Almost same proportions of respondents from different types of workplaces have reported harassment/discriminations for women are almost

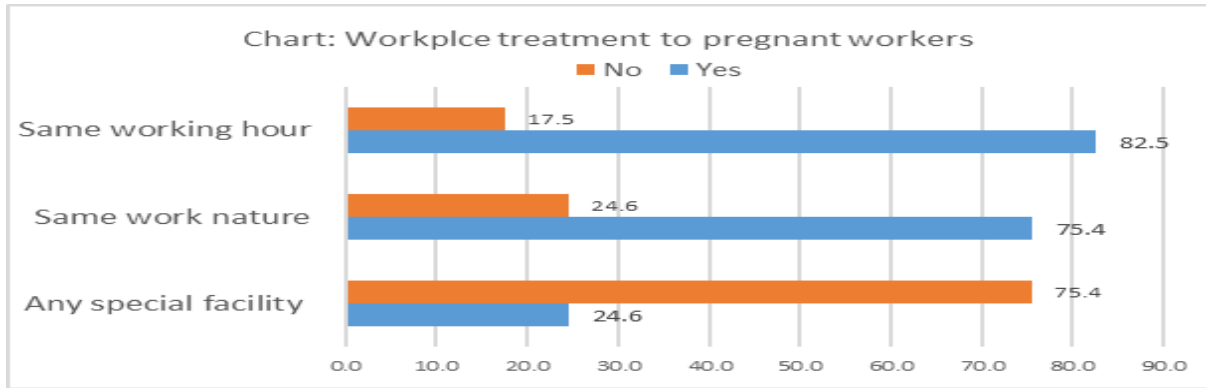


Majority of the workers claim that separate toilet/sanitation facility is available at their respective workplaces. However, many women workers are still deprived of. 36.84% workers report the non-availability separate gender segregated toilet. Even the adequacy of the arrangement is not satisfactory always. 45.13% workers, among those who report separate toilet/sanitation, claim that the arrangement is not sufficient.

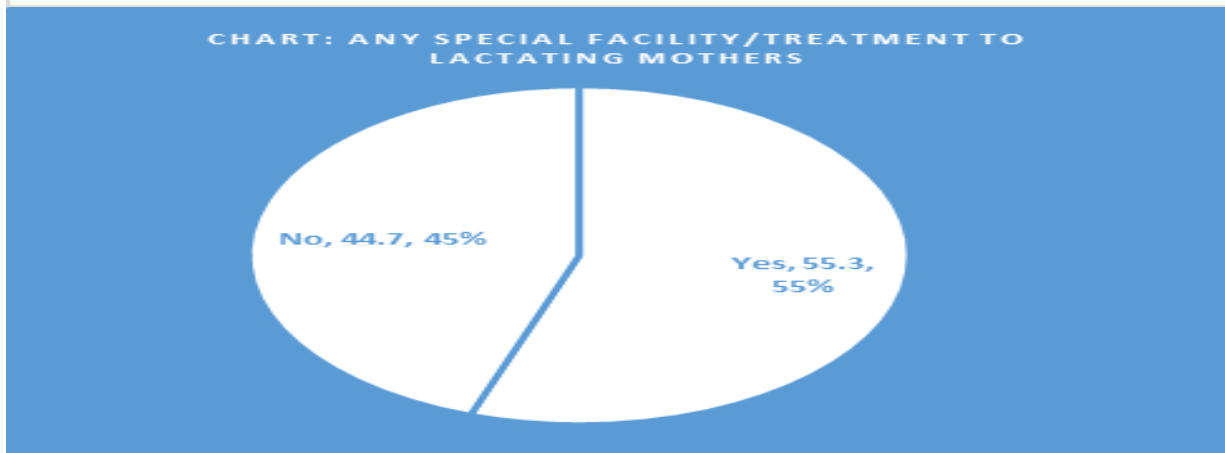
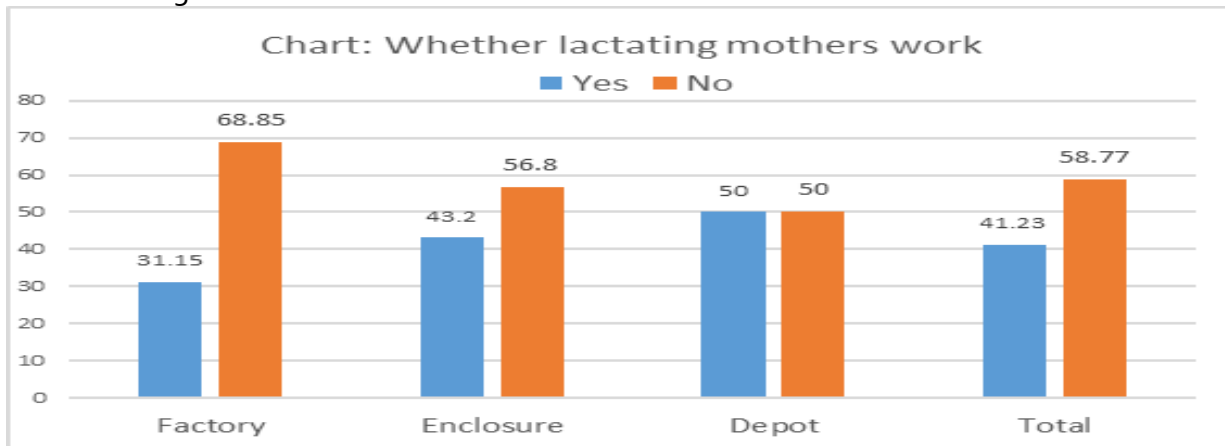


Three of every four (75%) respondent workers have informed that pregnant workers are not working/do not work at their workplaces. In contrast just 25% workers (57 of 228) report that pregnant women workers work at their respective workplaces. All of these workers (57) perceive that the pregnant workers' working condition is moderate. Two-thirds (75.44%) of these workers claim that there is no special facility for pregnant workers. Same proportion of workers further inform that the work-nature of pregnant workers are same as the normal workers. Besides, pregnant workers work the same hours as normal women/workers do according to opinion of 82.45% workers.



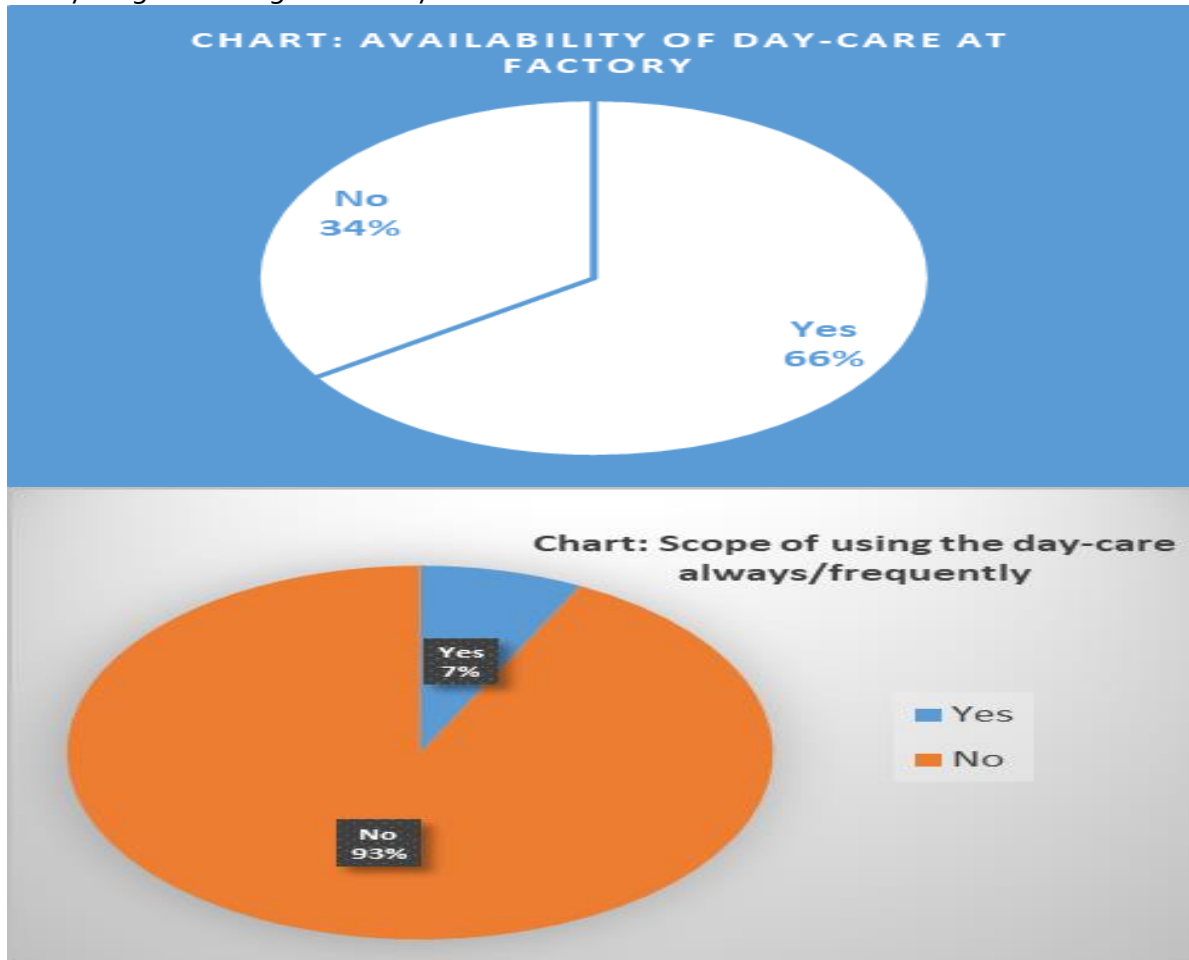


94 of the 228 respondents (41.23%) have informed that at their workplaces mothers who breastfeed their children are working. More than half (55.3%) of these respondents further claim that the breastfeeding mothers get extra facilities including work-break for breastfeeding.



Not all factories have day care. Though majority workers (65.57%) have reported the availability of day care, this facility is absent at work places of 34.43% workers. However, it is to be noted that the day cares, where it is available, are not used frequently. Only 3 of 40 (7.5%) workers who reported the availability claimed the at their workplaces workers always get

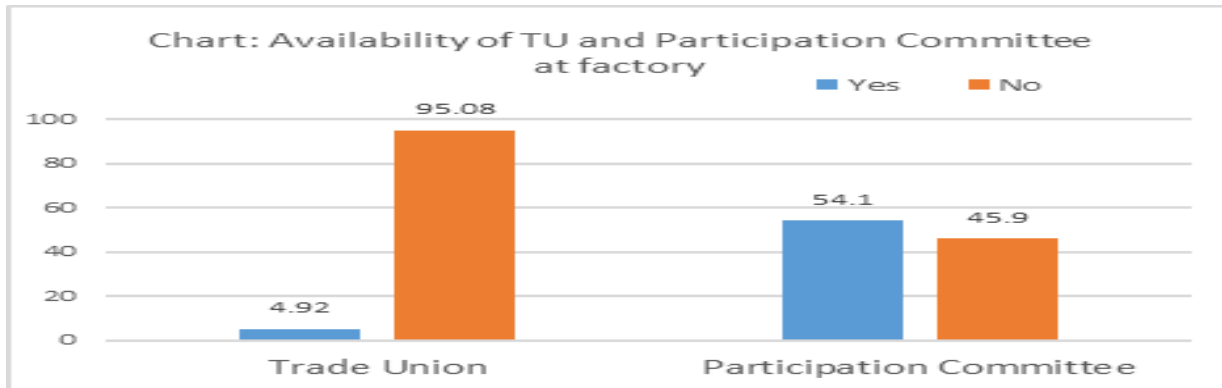
chance to use the day cares. The day cares are cost-free, and no money is deducted from salary/wage for using the facility.



### *Workers' union: availability and role*

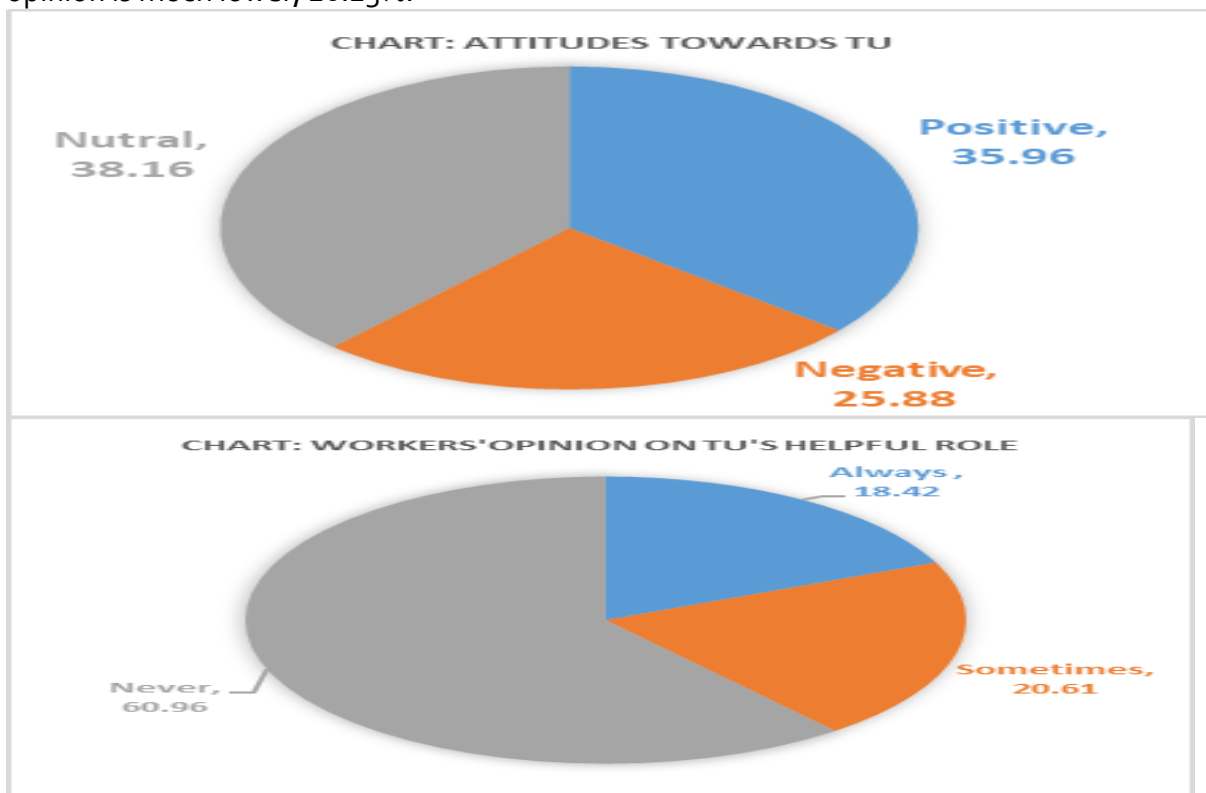
Only 7.02% workers are engaged/involved in workers' union (reported the availability of union). The unions mainly work for job security. The factory workers who reported the availability of unions, also claim that they pay the monthly subscription to their unions. Majority (114 of 212 respondents) of those who reported the unavailability of unions at workplace further claimed that workers did not try to form union.

Participation committee is available at workplaces of 54.1% factory workers.

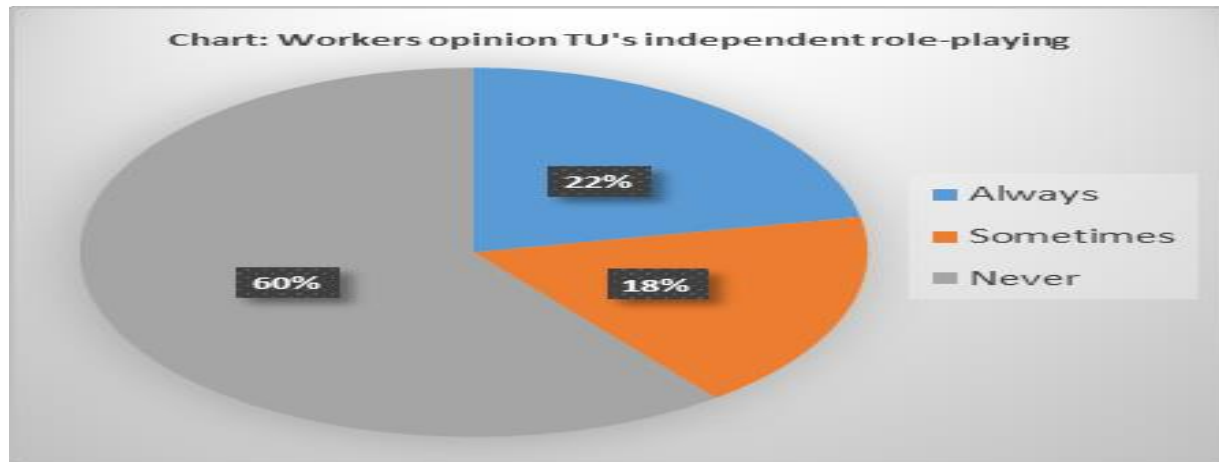


Opinion regarding the Trade Union is diverse. The largest section (38.16%) of the respondents are neutral in this regard. Positive opinion/attitude has been expressed by about 36% respondents. In contrast one in every four (25.88%) respondents hold negative attitude with regards to TU. Workers holding positive attitude towards unions are comparatively high among factory workers, 62.3%.

Diverse opinion is also existing among the workers regarding the role of unions. Although only 18.42% of all respondents claim that unions always help workers, among respondents of factory workers 42.62% workers hold similar opinion. Likewise, though 20.61% of all respondents think that unions sometimes help workers, similar opinion has been expressed at higher rate by the factory workers, 29.51%. On the other hand, 60.96% of all respondents claim that unions never help/co-operate with workers. however, factory workers holding same opinion is much lower, 26.23%.



Opinion of the respondents regarding the role playing of the union independently is of similar pattern of opinion on whether unions help/co-operate with workers. Although majority (60.53%) of all respondents claimed that unions never can work freely/independently, among factory workers just 27.87% hold same opinion. In contrast, just 21.93% of all workers report that unions always can act freely. Yet the proportion of factory workers holding same opinion is much higher, 45.9%.

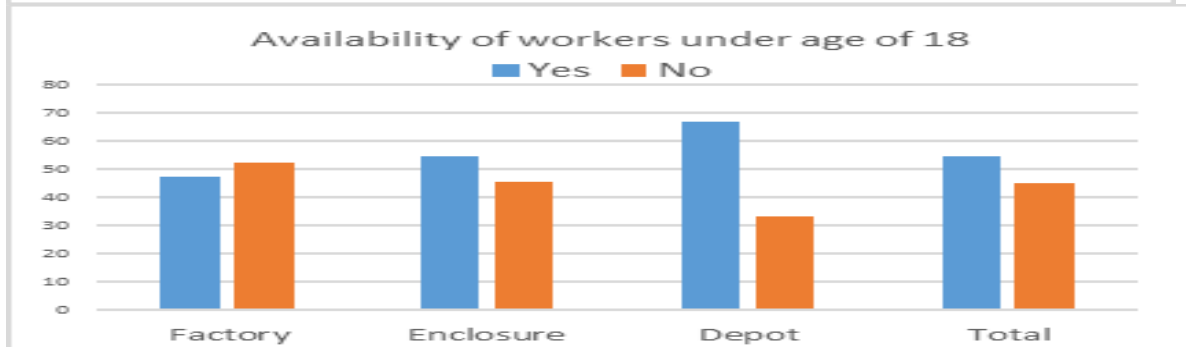
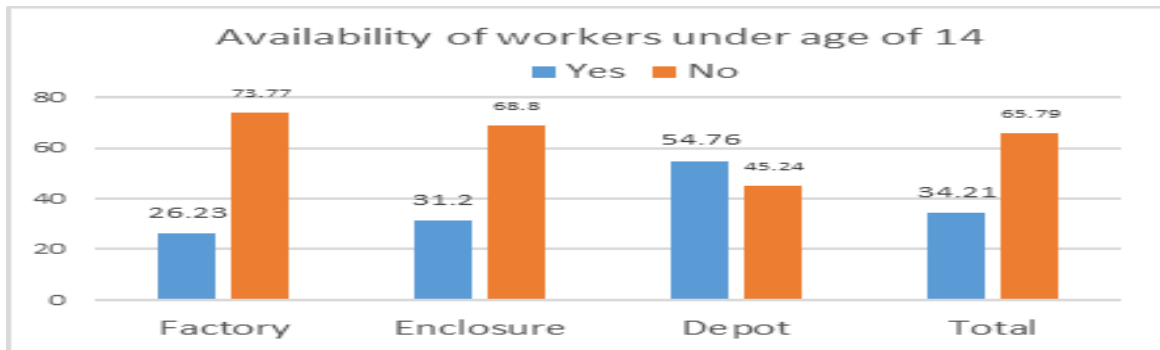


### *Complaining mechanism at workplace*

Majority (53.07%) of the workers have claimed that at their respective workplaces mechanism of complaining regarding workplace issues are available. The availability is the highest in cases of factory workers, where 85.25% respondents report the availability. However not all workers have used this method/mechanism. Out of 121 workers, who report the availability, 58 (48%) have used the method. note, the trend is higher among factory workers, 61% (among those who report availability of complaining mechanism) have utilized the methods/channel. (Q 5.5.1 and 5.5.3-5 missing)

### *Adolescent workers*

More than one-third of all respondent's report that at their workplaces children under the age of 14 work. However, under 14 children's work is more frequent at depots where 54.76% respondents report the availability. On the other hand, majority (54.82%) of the workers claim that at their workplace they find children under 18 yeras are working. under18 children's availability has been reported more by the depot workers (66.67%).



Just 19.74% of all respondents claim that the children are to do heavy/hazardous work. .... these children do not get any training and they are not provided with equal wage/salary as adult workers. Out of 127 workers who report the availability of under 18 aged workers 45 workers (35.43%) have claimed that they need not to do hazardous work; 122 (96%) have reported that no training is provided; and 116 (91.33%) have claimed that they are not getting the equal wage/salary as adults.

### *Visit of inspection department*

Just one of every four workers (25%) have claimed that they have seen officials of DIFE to visit their workplace. Among all the respondents who have reported visits of DIFE personnel, the proportion is factory workers is highest, 44.26%.



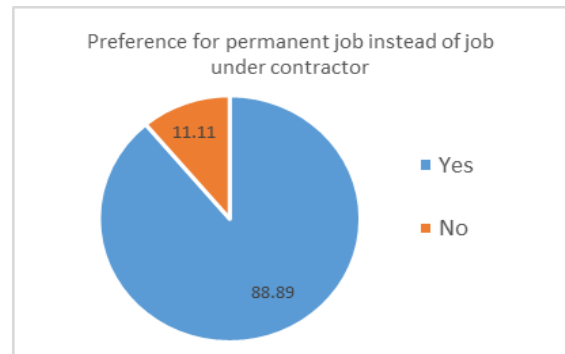
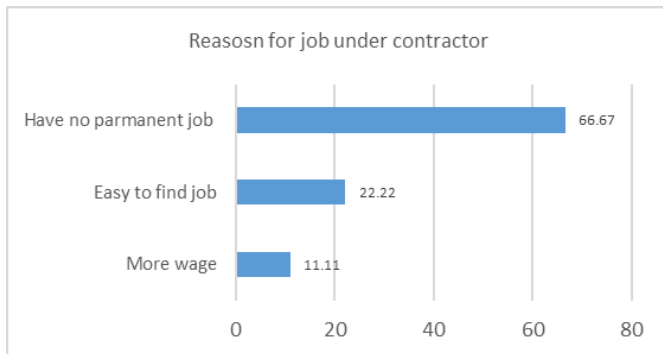
Workers usually do not get chance to meet with the representatives of DIFE. Only 2 of 27 respondents of factory who saw representatives of DIFE had the chance to talk with them. Just only one of these 27 respondents claimed that positive changes occurred/was seen due to the visit of the DIFE representatives. Workers usually do not complain to DIFE. Only 6 of 228 (2.63%) respondents claimed that they complained to DIFE.

### *Issues of Contract workers and workers at enclosures*

There is practice of work under more than one contractors. On an average, a contract worker works under 2.80 contractors. All of the contract workers have claimed that they need not pay any money to contractor in order to get job.

Contract workers work in more than one factories via/through a contractor. On an average they work in more than five (5.4) factories. These workers do not get chance to work throughout the month. On an average a contract worker gets the chance to work 16 days monthly, where the range is 9-26 days.

Lack/absence of permanent job is the main reason to take work under contractor. Two-thirds (68%) of all contract workers have mentioned this reason. Besides, 11% workers have taken job under contractors because of more wage, and in opinion of 22.22% workers it is easy to manage a job through contractors. 88.9% of the contract workers have informed that they would prefer for permanent job instead of job under contractor, if possible.

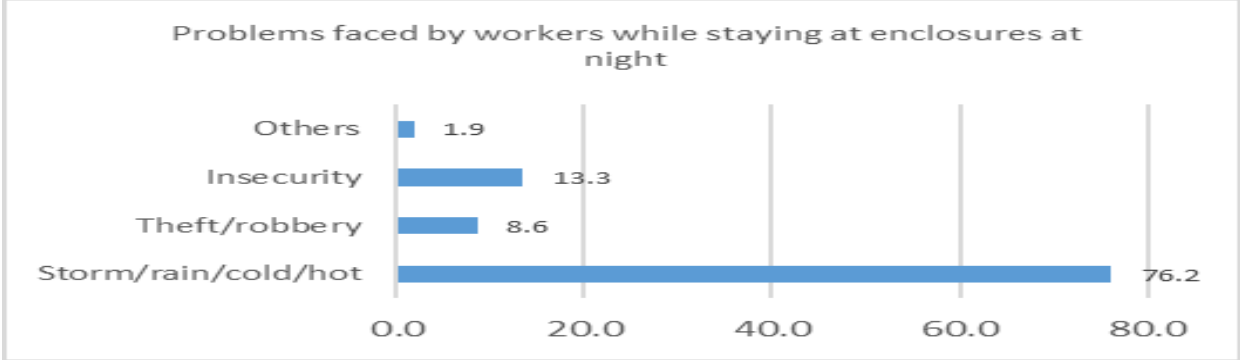


### **Workers at enclosure/gher**

Most of the workers in enclosures (84%) need to spend nights at gher/enclosures. The largest section of these workers (49.6%) need to stay at night for 21-30 days monthly. 17.6% workers of enclosures informed that they stay at night for 11-20 days every month. besides, 16.8% workers stay up to 10 days monthly.



Majority (64.76%) of these workers spend the night on platform over water. Rests stay in the shacks built on the banks of the enclosures (35.23%). while staying at night these workers face several problems among which environment related problem is the number one—76% enclosure workers have talked about storm/cold/heat/rain. Insecurity and theft/robbery have been mentioned as problem by 13% and 8.5% enclosure workers among those who stay at enclosures at night.



## Section Five: Challenges Behind Sustaining Industrial Growth and Labour Compliance

### *Food safety*

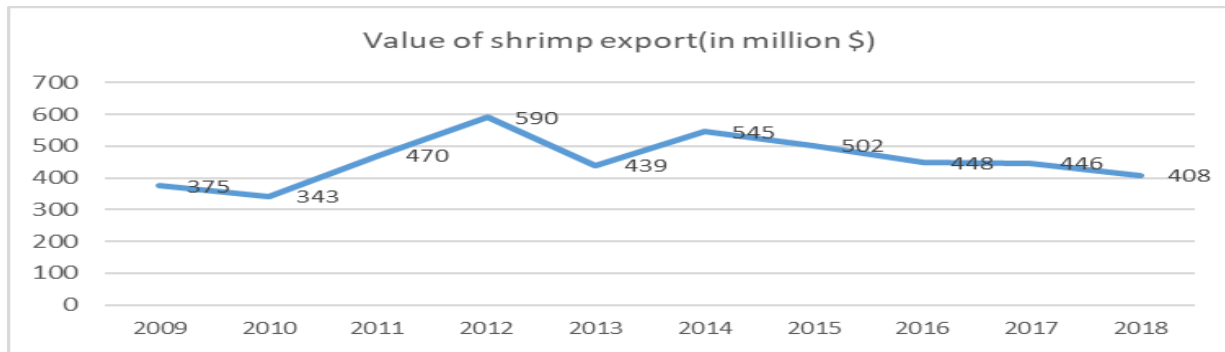
Ensuring food safety is a major concern as well as challenge for shrimp sector growth in Bangladesh. Food must be safe for human health. Food must be produced, handled and stored strictly complying with hygienic and sanitation rules, at all levels. Food must be free from pathogenic bacteria, prohibited antibiotics (nitrofurans and chloramphenicol) and other hazardous chemicals: pesticides, heavy metals, hormones, histacin, and of course filth & dirt, etc. Compliance of Good Aquaculture, Environment and Hygiene Practices at all relevant levels. Food must be produced and handled in an environment-friendly and socially responsible manner and in compliance with labour rules, maintain traceability regulations is highly recommended.

In the past contamination with pathological bacteria was a major problem in this sector. Rejections of the finished products due to contamination with pathogenic bacteria: Vibrio, Salmonella, Escherichia, and occasionally Shigella. Proper sanitation at farm and subsequent levels important

Bangladesh shrimp industry has substantially upgraded processing factories and improved sanitation of the farms, field depots to guard against pathogenic bacteria. DoF conducts aquaculture residue monitoring: (i) chemical—Antibiotics, pesticides, heavy metals, dye, steroid, stilben, growth hormone; and (ii) microbiological—three DoF labs routinely conduct following microbiological tests including total Plate Count, Total coliform, faecal coliform/E. coli, Vibrio cholerae, V. parahaemolyticus and Salmonella. Further, on any special demand from buyers, Streptococcus and Shigella are also tested. Important to note, all EU approved processing factories have a microbiological lab.

### *International competition*

Bangladesh exports its shrimp to a number of countries of which USA, Belgium, UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, Russia are important destinations. Export earnings from shrimp is gradually decaying over the past years. In the year 2018 total export earnings from shrimp was USD 408 which was 8.37 percent lower the export earning of previous year. In fact, the volume of export has been falling due the new changing demand of shrimp species in global market.



The country now holds on 2 percent of the global market share, down from 4 percent five years ago<sup>13</sup>. One of the main reasons of declining export is the change of demand of Bangladeshi locally cultivated shrimp international market. Whiteleg shrimp is a low-priced but high-yielding hybrid variety. It has captured the global market occupied earlier by other varieties of shrimp and prawn – most notably the black tiger shrimp. India, Vietnam, Thailand and some other countries have gotten huge success by farming of Whiteleg shrimp. Vannamei is sold \$2-\$2.5 less than the prices of black tiger per pound in the international market, he added. The prices of both black tiger and freshwater prawn have been declining for the last couple of years owing to the increased demand for Vannamei. Consequently, many of the shrimp factories have been shut down by the owners. According to opinion of a key informant currently about 25-30 factories are in operation

### *Environment and climate change*

Bangladesh has been mentioned as the fourth vulnerable country to extreme events resulting from climate change by Germanwatch in their Global Climate Risk Index 2013. In this context climate change and environmental issues are major concerns for shrimp sector and the people engaged here. Cyclone, flood, and shortfall of rain all affect shrimp cultivators/farmers. A newspaper reports that shrimp farmers in the country's coastal region are facing a hard time as a lion's share of fries perish in shallow water before being mature because of the changing global climate.

<sup>13</sup> <https://tbsnews.net/economy/trade/bangladesh-loses-export-market-whiteleg-shrimp-35693>

## Section Six: Moving Forward

Towards a sustainable shrimp sector in Bangladesh pragmatic initiatives are needed from different stakeholders.

### ***Government and Policy makers:***

- Develop policies for diversification of shrimp sector in terms of both shrimp cultivation and shrimp market.
- Appropriate policies, measures, and mechanism to ensure food safety.
- Strengthening research and education on shrimp sector development.
- Introducing training on modern and sustainable shrimp cultivation.

### ***Law enforcement agencies:***

- Effective and regular workplace visit.
- Capacity of DIFE to visits workplaces need to be strengthened.
- Bringing the depots and ghers under the scope of inspection.

### ***Shrimp industry owners/employers:***

- Responsible behavior towards labour compliance:
  - Factory owners/employers must ensure that that working conditions in the factory comply with laws including the provision of employment contract, occupational health and safety, and welfare provisions.
  - Employers must comply with the relevant provisions of laws relating to the welfare of female workers who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or on maternity leave.
  - Initiatives are needed to eliminate wage discrimination, and make workplaces fully free from any type of harassment including verbal and psychological.
  - Create facilitative environment so that workers can join unions and exercise their rights to collective bargaining.
- Educating workers on health and safety risks at workplace with particular focus on chemicals used at workplaces and what possible risks that may pose to health. Information should also be provided regarding the machines used at workplaces.
- More focus on food safety at every stage of production and processing.

### ***Civil society/NGOs:***

- Campaign: To ensure worker rights and labor law implementation for all workers.
- Advocacy: NGOs/CSOs could do advocacy with government for adopting appropriate policies for shrimp sector.
- Training: NGOs/CSOs could initiate training programmes for the shrimp farmers.

- Awareness raising: Workers are poorly educated and mostly lack awareness about labour law provisions. NGOs/CSOs can design programs aimed at workers' awareness raising in this regard.
- Research: NGOs/CSOs could conduct scientific study focusing on worker rights situation in shrimp sectors and the ways to improve the condition. These studies would ultimately provide background materials for advocacy and campaign of the NGOs.