

# Labor Rights of Tannery Workers in Bangladesh: An Overview

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## Abstract

Tannery in Bangladesh has long history as profitable business though it has both environmental and health hazards. Labor rights of tannery workers are disrupted and their standard of living is miserable. Nevertheless, the job of tannery workers is tedious. The aim of this paper is to explore the current status of basic labor rights maintained in tanneries based on Dhaka and Narayanganj districts of Bangladesh. This study is qualitative in nature. Primary data have been collected from tannery workers through four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and five observations from five different factory visits in 2021. The findings reveal that tannery workers are exploited by insufficient employment benefits and lack of welfare facilities as stated in BLA-2006. They also suffer from occupational health, hygiene and safety crisis. Long working hour and pay below minimum wage are also common in this sector. In addition, tannery workers have serious observation on their pay, leave, job security, maternity benefit etc. This paper concludes with the observations that basic labor rights at tanneries in Bangladesh are not protected, which generate grievances. This study also recommends for practicing BLA-2006 in tannery sector in order to avoid further legal obligation and possible labor unrest.

**Keywords:** *Bangladesh, BLA-2006, Labor Rights, Tannery*

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## Introduction

Bangladesh has a huge population with a large and moderate labour force including rural and non-agricultural jobs. Modern jobs are mostly non-agricultural jobs. Rely on all enterprises to far-reaching the labour law of all industries except public institutions which stipulate employment conditions, working hours, wage levels, leave procedures, sanitary conditions, and compensation for injured workers (Law Teacher, 2013). In any case, Bangladesh's tannery industry is one of the most aged manufacturing sectors in more than six decades, and the sector has the opportunity to achieve an absolute economic growth of 3-4% (Azom et al., 2012). Bangladesh has a long history of leather making business. The main tannery in Bangladesh was established in Narayanganj in 1940 by the late RP Saha, a well-known business visionary (Biswas & Rahman, 2013). When the tanning industry started, the tannery was usually located in Narayanganj, but the Hazaribagh area of Dhaka City is currently the main area for the tannery in Bangladesh (Biswas & Rahman, 2013). However, government authorities in Bangladesh are trying to move

the tannery from Hazaribagh to Savar territory. Not all of this area is supervised. As the “Human Rights Watch” report pointed out, the tannery has abused the common freedom of tanners who are suffering from life-threatening diseases. Due to the unsafe use of synthetic substances, skin and respiratory infections are basic health problems among tanners (Sarker, 2014).

So far, the tannery in Bangladesh has been completely privatised, and it may be the most famous pretend that it plays an important role in the country’s economy. According to the statistics of the Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh (EPB 2011), the fare profit of export was 3-4%. Bangladesh has more than 1,750 large, medium and small tanneries, employing approximately 500,000 workers (Sarker, 2014). Although the tannery is one of the rising sectors of trade and commerce, it hurts the people, climate and labour, as well as the tannery business, which has future development prospects in Bangladesh.

Of the eight principle conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO), Bangladesh has ratified seven. The only core convention that was not recognised by Bangladesh is ILC 138 (Minimum Age Convention). However, BLA (Bangladesh Labour Act) 2006 is indeed thorough and reformist. The law is a combination and update of 25 separate laws. It can be included in administrative management and employment, youth employment, maternity advantages, well-being and cleanliness, safety, government assistance, working hours and leave, wages and instalments, wages for overtime, wages for work-injured workers, and the state of inclusiveness in trade quickly collect the complete thoughts of the law, trade unions and industrial relations, disputes resolution, labour courts, support for workers in organisations, employment and welfare standards for workers, provident funds, apprenticeship, penalties and systems of organisation, review and so on (Sarker, 2014). BLA is also regarded as a development because it eliminates some ambiguities in the old and different work practices are resolved, and the legal framework of labour is adjusted with the ILO’s core conventions (Khan, 2013). Afterwards, it is vital to know the extent of the violation of well-being and safety, and to take prompt treatment measures to stop further labour dilemmas and reasonable commitments (Sarker, 2014). Therefore, this article investigated the current working conditions of the tannery in Bangladesh. The rights and difficulties of tannery workers were also revealed in this paper, and finally some suggestions were put forward as feasible solutions.

## **-2. Brief History of Bangladesh Tannery**

Tannery business in Bangladesh has long history. Late Mr RP Saha is the pioneer of tannery business in Bangladesh and the first tannery was established in 1940 at Narayanganj (Biswas & Rahman, 2013). Though the tannery factory initially started its production in Narayanganj, it was then transferred to Hajaribag area of Dhaka, which is now moved to Savar, Dhaka in order to consider environmental consequences and community hazards (Sohel, 2019). Tanneries both in Dhaka and Narayanganj areas have sever effect on community people in the neighbourhood. Smell nearby the factories is audacious. Air pollution along with water pollution due to improper tannery waste disposal has environmental and health hazards in

Bangladesh (Mohiuddin, 2019). Skin diseases and other health complications in the tannery neighbourhood are common due to the pollution. Apart from the health and environmental hazards, tannery business has significant role-play for the economy of Bangladesh. Initially, Bangladesh exported wet leather until 1990 (Bangladesh Tannery Association, 2010) after that local tanneries started producing finished leather goods for both local use and export. Bangladesh is now exporting finished leather and leather goods to more than 70 countries employing approximately 0.5 million workers with a vast export revenue per year (Rakib, 2020). Therefore, this sector is immensely contributing to the national economy.

### **3. Overview of Labour Rights in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh's labour law framework is the older one. The main labour law was promulgated in the Indian subcontinent within the time frame established by the United Kingdom in 1881 (Hossain, Ahmed & Akter, 2010). Therefore, the British government has proposed some laws on special work issues, such as working hours, children's employment, maternity allowance, union activities, wages and so on. Workers' Compensation Act 1923, The Factories Act 1881, Trade Union Act 1926, the Trade Disputes Act 1929, the Maternity Benefit Act 1939, the Payment of Wages Act 1936 and the Employment of Children Act (1938) were promulgated within the time frame of the United Kingdom eye-catching working scheme. After the division of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, in fact, the Pakistani government reserves the right to make certain changes and amendments to every law in the time frame before the division as a management guide (Khan, 2013). After freedom in 1971, the Bangladeshi government passed the Bangladesh Laws Order (Presidential Order No. 48) to retain the past laws. It also promulgated other laws based on the changing conditions and needs of ordinary works in the country. In 2006, the country adopted the latest Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA).

The 2006 Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA) included a large number of labour protections of work rights. The BLA has different active focuses in determining the right to work with different limitations, satisfactory penalties for employers for not complying with statutory laws, and lack of an appropriate set of recognised rules for tannery workers. That is why, labour rights have been violated in this sector. In 2006, the BLA recognised various arrangements regarding Occupational Health and Safety rights including welfare, cleanliness, occupational diseases, welfare measures, accidents, safety for women and children in dangerous occupations, and also covers work status, working hours, government assistance offices, occasions, leave, etc (Sections 11, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 91, 92, 93, 94, and 109 respectively of Bangladesh Labour Act 2006). A large part of these provisions require standard quality and are not very broad in nature. In terms of health and medical issues, the situation in Bangladesh is extremely bad; specially the tannery workers are helpless (Mollah and Shirin, 2021). Section 195 of the Bangladesh Labour Act (revised in 2013) made various unrequired labour practices. For example, no employer shall "dismiss, discharge, remove from employment, or threaten to dismiss, discharge, or remove from employment a worker, or injure or threaten to injure him in respect of his employment by reason that the worker is or proposes to become, or seeks to

persuade any other person to become, a member or officer of a trade union” (Chowdhury, 2018).

The Bangladesh Constitution guarantees the freedom of association and the right to join a trade union. In addition, the right to organise a trade union is guaranteed, but it must be approved by the government. In any case, the union is not allowed to set up a framework in the fare processing. About 3.5% of the workers in Bangladesh is unionised (Rea, 2013). Workers’ organisations are most deeply rooted in the fields of jute, garments and transportation. Despite this, people are still gradually feeling uneasy in the exchanges, thinking that the trade union may now be filling in the fare processing, and has nothing to do with the hypothetical boycott. In Bangladesh, labour laws are clear and unmistakable, but these laws are not modern. The Bangladesh government has not made enough improvements to ensure basic employment rights, including the basic rights of free expression and freedom of association or to a large extent strengthened the acceptance of laws and order for labour and ordinary social activists. Workers in Bangladesh face dangerous working conditions, and what is terrible is the minimum wage allowed by the law, regardless of whether it has recently increased or not, while neglecting to take care of the most basic living expenses. Similarly, the minimum wage allowed by laws and regulations and other labour rights insurance also faces real strict requirements. The lack of a principled interpretation and the implementation of the labour law is the employers’ ignorance just like the government. Therefore, in Bangladesh, debauched workplaces, low wages, discrimination, child labour, and many illegal activities in the work environment are extremely common, while legal positions are ignored (LawTeacher, 2013).

Bangladesh’s labour laws are generally not upheld (Hossain, Ahmed and Sharif, 2017). The latest labour law states that long-term workers in an organisation should notify their boss 14 days in advance during the leave period they wish to stop, or notify him one month in advance if the worker receives a consistent salary. The end is considered workers are dismissed by employers due to mental or practical deficiencies, illnesses or other reasons, but workers have not taken unfortunate actions and were dismissed. When one end of the employment is disconnected from the discharge, the employer shall pay compensation. Section 100 has an arrangement of 8 working hours per day for an adult employee, however, as long as each state in the section 108 is fulfilled, adult workers can work 10 hours a day. According to this section, the company needs to pay workers for over time, which is twice its standard salary, such as basic salary and dearness remuneration (if any). In addition, the company also needs to keep a record of over time. The new law stipulates the total 48 working hours of workers; it may likely to be as long as 60 hours, but it must be paid as overtime according to the section 108 of the law. Children under the age of fourteen will not be required or allowed to work in any factory. Children over the age of fourteen, if they are learners, or get health approval and government authorisation, will be allowed to work in the factory. The law also allows workers to establish trade unions and protect their rights. The ‘Bangladesh Labour Law’ 2006 points out that every worker should enjoy paid vacation, easy-going holiday and leave. Female workers will also receive

paid maternity leave until a certain critical point is reached. The law also explains the well-being and welfare of workers and the settlement of various disputes and injustices. Although the government passed these actions, they knew nothing about the facts of enacting these laws. Therefore, the government did not implement these actions in Bangladesh as expected, and the government ignored the declassification of these provisions among individuals practice (LawTeacher, 2013).

Some institutions and associations in the world have expressed genuine concern about the desperate situation of labour rights in Bangladesh. The United States Agency for International Development described this situation as follows: “Labor rights are commonly ignored by the private sector, particularly for the most vulnerable workers such as women and children.” The US State Department’s Human Rights Report in 2009 on Bangladesh further states: “Because of high unemployment rates and inadequate enforcement of laws, workers demanding redress of dangerous working conditions or who refused to work under hazardous conditions risked losing their jobs.” Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (ILO) assessed that in Bangladesh, “11,700 workers suffer fatal accidents and a further 24,500 die from work related diseases across all sectors” (Mahmudur Rahim, 2013).

Despite the fact that the government guarantees the formation of trade unions, it is reasonable to some extent to establish and protect the right to work in certain areas. The majority of Bangladeshi workers’ unions are related to ideological groups. In mid-1995, conflicts between the jute factory workers and the police caused various casualties and several casualties. The brutality and barbaric dangers of the union have led to wage inflation, because excessive profitability has increased the labour cost of the unit. It may be necessary to reduce the employment or the simple danger of reducing powers before it can cause the most real labour disputes. Labour disputes really should not be heard under the watchful eyes of general courts. Many organisations believe that determining issues in the ‘Labour Court’ is mandatory. Work in private areas is usually non-union and is relatively more profitable. The profitability of Bangladesh is affected by the call of political groups and development organisations which causes strikes. This provocation causes major losses during the holidays by scaring individuals away from their homes. In this way, people raised a question: “Do workers’ organisations really work for workers, or do they work for their own interests consistent with political groups?” Another normal situation in Bangladesh is child labour. Family assistance for children is an endless practice in Bangladesh. Most children are usually between 12 and 17 years old. However, it is also found that the youngest possible children are working. A study of local experts in children found that 38% were 11 to 13 years old and almost 24% were 5 to 10 years old. Where the law is engaged in tedious child labour activities in Bangladesh, but no one is worried about such ruthless behavior (Mia & Islam, 2012).

#### **4. Importance of Labour Rights and Welfares in Tannery Sector**

Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 was hailed as a milestone achievement for factory workers. In the 40 years since Bangladesh gained freedom, the new law has unified 25 independent acts and expanded the scope and substance of transnational labour standards. A series of partners participated in making labour laws, including labour rights groups, human rights associations, the United Nations, International Labor Organization (ILO) and employers. The law vowed to benefit workers by ensuring from companies to abuse their rights. For example, the law has strengthened maternity welfare by extending the period of maternity leave from 12 weeks to four months. It also expects the organisation to provide workers with a letter of appointment, which can prevent employers from defrauding workers from benefits. In addition, the law also stipulates the deadline for payment of wages, determines compensation in the event of an accident in the work environment, and establishes stronger welfare and safety regulations for factories. Although Bangladesh's laws ensure freedom of association, the efforts of tannery workers to form trade unions have been suppressed. Many workers active in the development of trade unions discussed the factory manager's badge and abuse. Another basic problem in the country is political instability. Based on these interpretations, government strategies, rules and regulations are constantly evolving. Workers' organisations are also subject to political influence. Therefore, politicians work for their own goals in order to achieve their political goals, not for the establishment of labour rights (Islam, Mia & Islam, 2021). So the strike happens. Pollution is another problem, but there are prejudices in the protection of the right to work in Bangladesh. Depreciation is a problem that cuts across all fields, and in this way it subverts the various arrangements of the law. For example, there is an evil relationship between the factory owner and the union registration agency. When the heads of workers with the required signature join the union, they are attracted by bureaucratic strategies. Some officials of the recruitment authorities not explain the union to specific owners of the factory. Therefore, pioneers, including outstanding labourers, need to obtain danger and immunity from their profession. The union issue is by no means an isolated issue. Due to the intensification of bargaining and the promotion of labour unions, the aggregates are cleared, which poses a danger to all UN core convention pending ratification, just like 'Bangladesh's Labour Law' (Khan, 2013).

In this way, there are current laws that ensure adequate labour rights, but most of these laws are written in books only. In Bangladesh, countless peoples work in the tannery. However, not many tanneries comply with the law. A large part of the factory cannot guarantee the safety of workers. Workers work in unsanitary and dangerous environments. As a result, the worker becomes weak and feeble. There is a strong connection between the factory and the fire. However, in Bangladesh, most of the factories do not have many fire extinguishers, and the buildings are so congested. Countless unfortunate accidents happen every day. In addition, in private areas, wages are determined by industry and due to the high unemployment rate and labourers' interest in career stability, general bargaining rarely occurs. The legal weekly working hour is 48, of which one day is weekly

holiday. This law is sometimes unfollowed, especially in the leather industry (Strasser, 2015).

In addition, the law prohibits children under the age of 14 from working in factories, but they can work in different companies (within the prescribed hours). However, such restrictions are rarely maintained, and children's work in every area of the economy hurts their prosperity (Ahmed, 2013). Although there is a unique regulation, which states that children between 12 and 14 years old may be used to engage in 'light work', and this will not harm their health, growth and guidance. However, companies tend to hire children because they are cheaper compared to adults, and they are considered more consistent and loyal. Although Bangladesh's labour law recognises the so-called children's light industry; the frequency of occurrence and the circumstances indicated that Bangladesh's children work in unsafe locations, such as blocks, iron factories, silver factories and the tanning industry. Bangladesh is inevitably engaged in child labour, although the most obvious child labour issue has been approved. It is shocking that Bangladesh knows nothing about age-based child labour, but it does not recognise that the so-called child labour is in the most extreme and terrifying structure. This is also contradictory and controversial. This is based on when it is confirmed; normally, it will be outrageous for a while. Finally, it is clear that the Bangladesh government cannot approve the performance of child labour has taken into account the financial reality (Khan, 2013).

In terms of the existence of provident fund, gratuity and group insurance, Bangladesh does not often allow workers for the benefits and the rights are violated in this way one after another. According to the law, each employer shall pay its workers compensation for work-related injuries, incapacity and death. In Bangladesh, few institutions have experience with this. Most owners in Bangladesh attempted to deliberately avoid liability. Due to filth and bureaucratic complexity and neglect of legal requirements including police, courts and relevant offices or government departments to track the case, the case is closed as soon as possible (Khan, 2013).

Bangladesh's labour laws are current and appropriately promote the rights of certain workers. In any case, it is undeniable that there are frequent violations of the right to work in this country. The logical contradiction between health or suitability and the degree of infringement raises a typical question. Therefore, the major drawback of guaranteeing the right to work is that the relevant authorities of the Bangladesh government have weak calculations and weak infrastructure offices. Finally, such as the defects of state administration, the progress of the monopoly class and the bourgeoisie, the largest share of industrial proprietors comes from major political party, or they have some other ideological tendencies. Therefore, the evil collusion between the owner classes is the ideal of political power, and they pay little attention to management or resistance. This is the main danger to guarantee the labour rights in Bangladesh (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019).

The tanning industry in Bangladesh is not very advanced and supervised. As stated in the Labour Law of Bangladesh (2006), factories should be cleaned and

extensive ventilation should be carried out to remove residual and smoke-free workplaces. Bangladesh's Labour Law (2006) also instructs factories to have sufficient offices to provide adequate lighting, safe drinking water, separate toilets and urinals for men and women, and provide insurance for potential accidents to ensure that workers provide a safe working environment (Sarker, 2014). Nevertheless, tanneries are not always practicing this approach. Illness among factory workers in the tannery and nearby residents is a serious problem, but Bangladesh has not received legally authorised inspections and actions (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Human Right Watch (2012) also elaborated on the dangerous child labour activities carried out by the Bangladesh tannery industries, which is inconsistent with the ILO conventions. Tannery workers are not getting the compensation they deserve, and they do not have proper working habits, because isolation and abuse are gradually expanding. The tannery in Bangladesh is facing an emergency in terms of welfare and safety. It also makes the environment dirty. The toxic openness of Bangladesh's tannery compounds is the main explanation behind the welfare and safety violations (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Occupational Health and Safety (OHAS) is a specific field that can promote and maintain the physical, mental, and social prosperity of workers, and can prevent unfriendly benefits to representatives due to work cycles and workplace hazards (Sarker, 2014). OHAS also manages the work changes of representatives by considering issues related to the cleanliness of the workplace, designing health, safety, toxicology, drugs, ergonomics, etc (Sarker, 2014). All tasks face the representatives practical or intellectual danger, and the practice of OHAS enables companies to ensure the prosperity of workers.

Bangladesh's labour law has been around for a long time. The focus of the law is to unquestionably guarantee the rights of Bangladeshi workers, and if it can work properly, it can undoubtedly do so. In any case, these laws cannot understand the conditions that result from the feminisation of work, the informalisation of work, and relocation. The law does not apply to recreational areas and flexible work where there are no dedicated offices and owners. In fact, due to the shortcomings of executions, these laws also lose their applicability, but it relies on other authorised organisations. This is a flaw in the law, because they may have a lot of emphasis on requirements (Khan, 2013). Nonetheless, there are deduction under the accompanying term 'wages' such as office expenses for lighting and water supply, corporate commitments to provident funds, transport allowance and payments to workers related to the different amounts expected to cover the work. In addition, certain government assistance and social benefits have been improved or organised. For example, past benefits (money assistance to the ex-employed labour group), the use of provident fund benefits for all workers in the private sector, and maternity benefits increased from 12 weeks to about 4 Months, to allocate protection to institution with at least 200 workers, and expand workers' compensation to work-related injuries, incompetence, and death (Khan, 2013). Therefore, it is clear that Bangladeshi tannery sectors will start to get into trouble in the near future. Under the current circumstances, it is said that the government and tannery companies are troubled with the Occupational Health and Safety



problem. For solution, the tannery industry should be removed from the metropolitan area to the industrial processing area to maintain a strategic distance from ecological pollution and well-being risks (Khatun, 2016).

## **5. Research Methodology**

This is a qualitative study and it has collected primary data from Dhaka and Narayngnj tannery industrial belts. Five tanneries have been visited initially in April, 2021 in order to observe the overall industrial production system and tannery management activities. After that, four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) have been conducted among tannery workers, supervisors and managers from another four different tanneries between June and August 2021. Through the FGDs, extensive information on overall labour rights protections and practices in tannery sector in Bangladesh have been identified. The identities of participants and tanneries are kept anonymous, and the discussions during the FGDs have been facilitated by researchers based on semi-structured questionnaires on different areas of Bangladesh Labour Act 2006. Synergy of the group interaction on specific areas has been used for analysis and it was then coded to mention in the finding part. Internal consistency and frequency of the data have been maintained, and extensiveness of the comment was considered while drawing the finding statements.

## **6. Findings and Discussions**

In order to investigate the current status of labor rights at tannery sector in Bangladesh, this study has conducted both four FGDs and five observations, which are explained in subsequent sections.

### **6.1 Findings from FGDs**

The following issues are found in four FGDs taken place between January and March 2021.

**Leave & Holiday Entitlement :** Workers are not aware of holiday and leave entitlement ) F . 1 . 3, F . 2 . 5, F.3.2 and F.4.1 . ( They rarely get leave and they often work on the weekend with no day off later on ) F . 1 . 2, F . 2 . 3, F.3.5 and F.4.3 . ( Many factories often do not offer sick leave facilities to their worker ( F.3.2 and F.4.7).

**Maternity Benefits :** Female workers get maternity benefit which is below the 112 days as stated in Bangladesh Labour Act-2006 (BLA-2006), and their payment are not given according to BLA-2006 ) F . 1 . 5 and F . 2 . 5 . ( Pregnant workers often work for long hour in the factory which has health risk ) F . 2 . 5 and F . 2 . 6. Most interestingly, many female workers are unaware of the maternity benefits ) F . 1 . 2, F . 2 . 1 and F . 2 . 6 . (

**Salary :** Salary workers get from the factory is not sufficient enough for standard of living ) F . 1 . 1, F . 2 . 1, F . 2 . 6, F.3.5 and F.4.7 . ( Probationary worker ' s salary is below 60 USD and average salary of workers is below 120 USD ) F . 1 . 4 and F . 2 . 2 . (

**Overtime Pay :** Over time pay of the workers are insufficient and are not paid as per the Bangladesh Labour Act-2006 ) F . 1 . 6 and F . 2 . 1 . (

**Day Care :** The factory has no arrangement for day care facility though half of the workers are female with children below six years old) F . 1 . 2, F . 2 . 2, F.3.8 and F . 4 . 3 . (

**Toilet facility :** Separate toilets for male and female are available but toiletries and cleanliness are not maintained properly) F . 1 . 4, F . 2 . 4 and F . 2 . 6 . (

**Fire Safety :** Fire Exit doors are available, but these are kept locked ) F . 1 . 2, F . 1 . 3, F . 2 . 4 and F . 2 . 5 . (Workers do not know how to use fire defensive tools and they do not get training on fire safety ) F . 1 . 2 . 3, F . 2 . 2 and F . 2 . 6 . (

**Noise Pollution :** Production area creates noise but no air plug or any other precaution measures are not supplied by the authority) F . 1 . 3, F . 1 . 5, F . 1 . 6 and F . 2 . 1 . (

**Unsafe Storage :** Chemicals and wastages of the production are left on the working passage which often has the chances of accidents and injuries) F . 1 . 4, F . 1 . 5, F . 2 . 3 and F . 2 . 6 . (

**Lack of safety measures :** Most of the workers do not wear globes while working with electric machine, glue and chemical) F . 1 . 3, F . 1 . 5, F . 2 . 4 and F . 2 . 5 . (Workers are not provided with safe guards by the company ) F . 1 . 5, F . 1 . 6, F . 2 . 5 and F . 2 . 6 . (

**ID Card :** Many workers do not have ID card which is mandatory according to BLA–2006 . ID card is written in English and very few workers know what is written on the ID card) F . 1 . 3, F . 2 . 3, F . 2 . 5 and F . 2 . 6 . (

**Unsafe wastage management :** Wastage of the factory is disposed to nearby neighborhood ) F . 1 . 5 and F . 2 . 6 . (Disposal of wastage are not done properly and the method are not environment friendly .

**Presence of young workers :** Though child Labour ) below age 18 (is officially prohibited, the factory employs adolescence workers who look very young and have managed fake age identity) F . 1 . 4, F . 1 . 5 and F . 2 . 4 . (Their age is not officially certified by registered doctors .

**Long working hour :** Workers in this sector work for long minimum nine hours per day and they regularly do overtime which is sixty hours on an average week ) F . 1 . 3, F . 1 . 5, F . 2 . 5 and F . 2 . 6 . ( Most of the time worker do overtime till late evening .

**Improper way of first aid service :** The factory has first aid facilities but these not sufficient enough according to the numbers of workers) F . 1 . 2, F . 1 . 4, F . 1 . 6, F . 2 . 3 and F . 2 . 5 . (There is no trained up first aid provider as mentioned by respondents .

**Health Care Facilities :** There is no doctor in the factory, but there is a nurse who often prescribes medicine to the workers when they get sick ) F . 1 . 3, F . 2 . 3, F . 2 . 4 and F . 2 . 6 . ( Most of the factories do not have sick bed or rest room for their sick workers (F.1.3, F.2.6, F.3.1 and F.4.5).

**Canteen & Dining facilities :** The factory does not have any canteen but has one tiny dining hall which is unhygienic and not spacious) F . 1 . 1, F . 1 . 3, F . 2 . 4 and

F.2.5 . (Most of the workers go home during lunch break for food and it has impact on productivity ) F.1.2, F.2.3 and F.2.4 (

**Lighting in working area :** Lighting in the working area is not sufficient and workers often get injured ) F.1.2, F.2.3 and F.2.4 (

**Absence of Trade Union and Participation Committee :** Workers are not aware of the functions of trade union and participation committee and these are not encouraged to practice in the factory ) F.1.3, F.1.4, F.1.5 and F.2.6. ( However, BLA-2006 states that the factory should have the trade union practice and presence of participation committee is mandatory whenever the number of workers gets fifty.

**Poor relationships between manager and employees :** Supervisors often revoke the subordinates in the working area for which workers get demoralized and workers are scared of communicating with management ) F.1.1, F.1.6, F.2.3, F.2.5 and F.2.6 . (Worker's participation in decision making are not encouraged .

**Insurance Coverage:** Most of the factories in leather goods manufacturing sector do not have full insurance coverage for their workers. Compensation in case of injury and work-related disease is not fully paid and they are often deprived of group insurance facility (F.1.6, F.2.4, F.3.7 and F.4.8).

**Insufficient Pure Drinking Water Facility:** Factories have the arrangement of pure drinking water facility but this is not sufficient enough as per the demand (F.2.3, F.3.2, F.4.2 and F.4.8). Most of the workers bring drinking water from home (F.3.4 and F.4.3).

**Work-related disease:** Workers in leather goods manufacturing sectors suffer from breathing, migraine and skin diseases (F.1.3, F.2.5, F.4.5 and F.4.7)

**Lack of training and learning environment:** Workers in this sector do not get formal training, and the learning environment is inadequate (F.3.1, F.3.4, F.4.3 and F.4.6). Workers get on the job training which is also insufficient and most of the workers in this sector are unskilled (F.2.3 and F.3.5).

## **6.2 Findings from Observation**

Before conducting the FGDs, five tannery factories were visited with the permission. Observations during the factory visits have been noted, but taking photos and videos were restricted. Based on the observations from five different factory visits in April 2021, the following issues are found.

**Day Care :** The factory has no arrangement for day care facility though half of the workers are female with children below six years old .

**Toilet and Wash Room :** Separate toilets for male and female are available but toiletries and cleanliness are not maintained . There is no privacy maintained in the toilet area since both men and women use all the toilets and wash rooms.

**Fire & Emergency Exit :** Fire Exit doors are available, but these are kept locked. Emergency exit of the factories are unseen most of the cases.

**Noise Pollution:** Production area creates noise but no air plug or any other precaution measures are not supplied by the authority .

**Unsafe Storage:** Chemicals and wastages of the production are left on the working passage which may have the chances of accidents and injuries .

**Lack of safety measures:** Most of the workers do not wear globes while working with electric machine, glue and chemical . Machine operators mostly do not use safe guard tools.

**ID card:** Many workers do not have ID card which is mandatory according to BLA–2006 . ID card is written in English and very few workers know what is written on the ID card .

**Unsafe wastage management:** Disposal of wastage is not done properly and the methods are not environment friendly .

**Child Labour:** Though child Labour ) below age 18 is officially prohibited, the factory has child workers who looks young and have managed fake age identity . Their age are not officially certified by registered doctors .

**Presence of young worker:** Many workers in the factories look younger and their age not well verified.

**Improper way of first aid service:** The factory has first aid facilities but these not sufficient enough according to the numbers of workers . There is no trained up first aid provider .

**Health Care Facilities:** The factory does not have doctors but has one nurse who is not professional and well trained up . It also do not have rest room for sick workers .

**Canteen & Dining facilities:** The factory does not have any canteen but has one tiny dining hall which is unhygienic and not spacious .

**Working & Rest Period:** Though the factory gives one hour break for eight working hour, but workers do overtime till late evening .

**Lighting in working area:** Lighting in the working area is not sufficient and it may cause incident at any time .

**Record Keeping:** There is improper record keeping the factory . There is no service manual, registrar books for health service and safety records in the factory . Appointment letter, salary sheet, leave registrar and job description are not found in most of the factories.

**Bullying:** Supervisors are revoking the subordinates in the working area for which workers get demoralized .

**Inadequate and Dirty Work Space:** Work place for each worker is very narrow and the production areas are often left dirty.

## 7. Conclusion

This article attempts to analyse the basic labour rights of tanners based on Bangladesh's Labour Law. The study is dedicated to testing the practices of sanctioned programs in Bangladesh, collecting necessary information through

focus group discussion, and collecting possible information from various sources. It is also here that recognised some of the institutional deficiencies or defects in the performance of the International Labor Organization and the implementation of Bangladesh's Labour Law. The lack of authority required by the law and skilled manpower are significant obstacles that must be implemented. According to the findings of the investigation, especially the arrangements of Bangladesh's Labour Law and the core convention of the International Labor Organization, almost all have encountered infringements. Subsequently, it became clear that there was indeed a loophole between the ILO's ratification and practice. At present, discovering loopholes to improve these conditions to properly protect labour rights and laws will be the central goal of policy makers and the government. The current laws and projects need to be reconsidered and updated to adapt to the unfair situation of the tannery workers. Unless the government finds proper ways to establish labour rights, proper improvements and manageable workplaces will remain smooth.

Therefore, from the perspective of the authors, the law is normal for ensuring the labour rights, but the components are poor for ensuring the basic labour rights in the tannery sector. In order to ensure the labour right, the government should explain the law to all over the factory, industry and many institutions, screen the activities of trade unions, and monitor the arrangements of private companies. As the country enters the 21st century, it focuses on accelerating financial development, the improvement of human assets and independence. The key to every effort to achieve these goals will be to reduce demand, make simple improvements in the entire public activities, and enable a well-developed country to face the difficulties of a rapidly developing global society. If all these tasks have been completed, labour rights will be ensured one day.

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