

Thematic Strategy Paper

Decent and Safe Work Programme

**Prepared by
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List of Acronyms

BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies
BMET	Bureau to Manpower, Employment and Training
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
COPE	Creating Opportunities for the Poor and Excluded People
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
EPR	Excluded People's Rights in Bangladesh
FYP	Five Year Plan
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PCR	Project Completion Report
PDOS	Pre-Departure Orientation Services
RMG	Readymade Garments
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
ToC	Theory of Change
TTC	Technical Training Centers
UP	Union Parishad
UK Aid	A British Initiative for International Development Assistance

1. Introduction

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is a national Non-Government Organisation (NGO) that promotes human rights and good governance through funding, policy advocacy and capacity building of NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). MJF assists in supporting entitlements of people by building their capacity to demand basic services and raise voice against rights violation through support to local /national CSO's and peoples movements. MJF also works on the supply side to promote organisations responsiveness towards the demands of people, especially the poor and marginalized. MJF's work includes policy advocacy which has facilitated enactment of some of the most progressive and pro-poor laws and policies in the past 16 years. MJF is known for testing innovative approaches and willingness to take risk.

MJF has gained credibility over the years as an organisation with high standards of financial and programme accountability along with an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system capable of reporting on achievements, results and lesson learned. MJF is governed by a nine-member Governing Board comprised of eminent personalities from civil society.

MJF received grant from Department for International Development (DFID) in 2002 as a project of CARE Bangladesh to implement HUGO (Human Rights and Governance) Project. After successful completion of four years under CARE management, MJF started its journey as an independent organisation, obtaining registration from NGO Affairs Bureau and Joint Stock Company. Since then MJF has received A British Initiative for International Development Assistance (UKAid) grants in two more phases. In 2013, MJF received over 26 million GBP for the Creating Opportunities for the Poor and Excluded People (COPE) Project which was completed in June 2017. In October 2017, UKAid awarded a five-year Project titled **'Excluded People's Rights in Bangladesh' (EPR)** to MJF.

MJF Vision:

A world free from poverty, exploitation and discrimination where people live in dignity and human security.

MJF Mission:

Promotion of human rights and governance through partnership with different stakeholders including duty bearers to ensure dignity and well-being of all people, especially the marginalized.

MJF supports innovation and new ideas to address the many challenges faced when bringing about positive changes in the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized.

MJF will support CSO's to work on the following programme areas.

- a. Tackling Marginalization & Discrimination (including rights of ethnic people theme)
- b. Security and Rights of Women and Girls
- c. Decent & Safe Work (Protection of Workers and Working Children)
- d. Youth & Social Cohesion
- e. Strengthening Public Institutions

Moreover, two other cross-cutting issues i.e. Disability and Women Economic Empowerment is integrated with all other programmatic areas.

This thematic paper encapsulates the five-year (2017-2022) strategic plan built on strengths and experiences of previous years of MJF. The paper premised lessons learned, contextual realities, EPR Business Case, priorities of the 7th Five Year Plan (FYP) of Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a series of consultations with all level of MJF staff, stakeholders experts and academics. The paper largely clarifies specific challenges associated with this thematic issue,

programme brief, programme implementation approach, coverage, intended key results, Theory of Change (ToC) and monitoring mechanism for the next five years.

Decent and Safe Work: Protection of Vulnerable Workers (RMG and Migration)

MJF is committed to improving the wellbeing of poor and marginalized communities through increasing their voice and capacity and realization of fundamental rights, entitlements and improving responsiveness of institutions. The “Decent and Safe Work” programme has two separate thematic components e.g. “protection of working children” and “ensuring rights of vulnerable workers i.e. Readymade Garments (RMG) and Migrant Workers in Bangladesh”. Both thematic components have separate thematic strategy papers.

Definition: MJF defines Decent and Safe Work as a condition where Worker’s (Migrant and RMG) rights are protected as per Labour Law, their entitlement ensured and they are able to work in a situation of safety and security. Under Decent and Safe Work Programme, “protecting vulnerable workers” thematic component will be implemented through partners CSOs, and will include policy advocacy, campaign, capacity building of workers and trade unions, supporting returnee overseas migrants organisations along with a special mandate to provide limited services (legal and links with other government supports and services). The aim of “Protecting vulnerable workers” is to ensure a decent livelihood of RMG workers and establish their rights through realization of minimum wages, improving working condition and safe migration of overseas labour migrant.

The theme will work on ensuring legal rights, workplace safety, and dialogue with employers, legal migration, reduction of migration cost, violence-free environment for female workers and migration etc. Workers’-rights-focused intervention will focus on the following issues:

- (1) Employment relations;
- (2) Occupational safety and health;
- (3) Labour relations and social dialogue with Trade Union leaders;
- (4) Promote safe migration;
- (5) Welfare and protection of returnee migrants and left behind family members; and
- (6) Strong relationship with GoB officials to intervene if and when cases of exploitation and violence are reported.

2. What Causes Vulnerability of RMG Workers and Overseas Labour Migrants

In spite of having an impressive performance, the RMG industry has several problems, especially in terms of frequent conflict and unrest between workers and management making workers vulnerable. There is a growing concern of workers which are usually ignored by the owners of the RMG factories. Typically, the factory owners also actively control the role of management. This controlled management sometimes disregards some fundamental entitlements of workers (like- minimum pay, unfair wages, irregular and untimely payments, unfair dismissal and retrenchment, physical and verbal harassment, discrimination on grounds of gender aspects) which causes serious hindrance to the productivity of workers.

Khan (2011)¹ found that the major causes of labour unrest and vulnerability are “irregularities in payment, low wage, mistreatment of the workers by managers/officers, absence of trade unionism, conspiracy, non-execution of labour laws, unruly nature of the workers and political intervention.” Apu (2010)² also found that wage discrimination is the cause of labour unrest and vulnerability.

Female RMG workers are subject to violation and harassment in the work places. Jeremy and Rikke in their case study³ stressed that there are also well-documented cases of exploitative conditions in the RMG industry that point to widespread human rights abuses for this industrial army of women. Their safety, security, health and welfare are often gravely compromised, as witnessed by the tragic blaze at the Tazreen Fashion factory in Ashulia in 2012 and the collapse of the Rana Plaza in Savar in 2013. These two disasters alone left thousands dead or injured. On-going incidents of factory fires, accidents with machines, violent exploitation and the long-term effects of poor and abusive working conditions are rarely reported widely. By the age of 40-45 garment workers are unable to keep up the pace. Due to decades of hard physical labour and bad working conditions their bodies are worn down, and without a family to take care of them they can even become destitute.

Overseas temporary labour migration is an important sector in the Bangladesh economy. Therefore, safe migration is a vital issue but different factors create vulnerability for labour migrants. Higher cost of labour migration causes potential migrants vulnerability. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) study⁴ stated that a migrant worker has to spend up to Tk 1.2 million from about Tk 500,000 to go to Saudi Arabia with job whereas the government has fixed the cost at Tk 165,000. To migrate to Malaysia, Singapore and some other Middle East countries, a worker has to spend up to Tk 800,000 from a minimum amount of Tk 250,000. According to International Organisation of Migration (IOM), the Bangladeshi migrant workers bear the highest cost of migration in South Asia⁵. Lack of awareness of potential migrants and less responsive duty bearers are also causes problem related to labour migration. Khoda and Akram (2017)⁶ stated causes of unsafe labour migration problems such as (1) Illegal sales of visa in country of destination and siphoning off money through *hundi* to buy visa (2) Irregularities and corruption in attesting demand note by labour wing of the Bangladesh mission (3) Charging higher price during selling of visa to migrant workers by brokers (4) Diagnostic tests of migrant workers and allegations of irregularities (5) Allegations of unnecessary delay, harassment and charging money illegally against some embassies of host countries while stamping visa on passports (6) Charging money illegally while collecting police clearance certificates (7) Different irregularities and corruption in the receipt of emigration certificates.

Purvez (2016)⁷ found that the lack of accountability of government officials and other structural constraints have paved the way for a new power bloc to emerge and take control of the entire labour migration process in Bangladesh. The same study also found that some social and institutional factors such as influence of middlemen, obsession for going to foreign countries, poor performance of formal channels, weak

¹ Khan, Mohammad Aminul Islam (2011) Labor Unrest in the RMG Sector of Bangladesh: A Public-Private Cooperation Perspective; Dhaka: North South University, Department of General and Continuing Education

² Apu, Abrar Ahmed (2010) “Labor Unrest in Clothing Industry: Reasons and Solutions”, Bangladesh Textile Today

³ Jeremy Holland and Rikke Molin, Workers’ Rights: A case study of MJF’s engagement with the garment industry, MJF, Dhaka

⁴ Khoda, Manzoor E and Shahzada M Akram (2017) Good Governance in the Labour Migration Process: Challenges and the Way Forward, TIB, Dhaka

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Purvez, Salim Ahmed (2016), Irregular Labour Migration from Bangladesh: Crisis and Ways Forward, MJF, Dhaka

governance in handling labour migration (e.g. high cost, uncertainty, lack of supports and services etc.), lack of political will and inefficient diplomacy make the labour migration process more complex and troublesome. Purvez (2016) also found that irregular labour migrants, particularly the failed labour migrants, experience a higher level of social isolation. About 16 percent failed labour migrants sensed a growing isolation from social life.

3. Situation in Bangladesh

Out of a total 62.5 million working population, Bangladesh's current employed population is 60 million and with an annual growth of 3 percent, around two million workers are being added to the labour force each year. The labour force growth derives from two main sources: the demographic transition which is resulting in a surge of youth entrants into the labour market, and the sharp increase in female labour force participation. The growing gaps between the creation of employment and the required number for the new entrants into the labour force, besides those who are currently underemployed is one of the major challenges the country face.

In Bangladesh, a large share of the RMG workers are in low income waged jobs. Government regulations exist on maximum working hours, but those are routinely violated. Minimum wages are also too low to meet living costs. The country also has a rising trend of precarious and casual forms of employment. Legal occupational safety and health standards exist but they are rarely implemented. Bangladesh's economy favours the employers due to the large surplus of cheap labour, which leads to low wages and bad jobs.

There are 4306 garments factories and about four million employees engaged in the RMG sector of Bangladesh, of which 85 percent are women. Today, the RMG sector contributes around 3/4 of Bangladesh's total export earnings (Source: BGMEA quarterly report, April-June 2016). Nevertheless, due to the size, the RMG is still the highest foreign exchange earning sector. However, RMG workers rank 8th within Bangladesh's domestic minimum wage structure⁸.

Overseas temporary migrant workers constitute a growing share of the workforce. Women are independently migrating from rural areas for work in considerably larger numbers than in the past. The unskilled often have difficulty obtaining visas and work permits. Demographic trends and uneven patterns of development within and between countries suggest that overseas labour migration will not only continue but will grow, posing immense challenges as well as opportunities for the country. For overseas migrant workers themselves, many, especially low skilled workers, experience serious abuse and exploitation. In the face of rising barriers to cross border labour mobility, the growth of irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling of human beings constitute major challenges to the protection of human and labour rights.

Fraudulence with potential overseas temporary migrants are very high in Bangladesh. Purvez (2016)⁹ found that the labour migration process is dominated by informal channels in Bangladesh and more than half of the labour migrants went abroad through *dalals* (middlemen/brokers) and the rest with support from relatives, friends, private recruiting agencies and the government. Same study findings also stated that failed migration from Bangladesh created extreme emotional trauma, social isolation, changing social identity, joblessness, loss of savings and time, children's school dropout, displacement from homestead, insecurity and even physical disability.

4. MJF's Previous Work:

⁸ Daily New Age of August 13, 2010.

⁹ Purvez, Salim Ahmed (2016), Irregular Labour Migration from Bangladesh: Crisis and Ways Forward, MJF, Dhaka

MJF has been working since the last 16 years to address the vulnerability of workers and assist them to ensure their rights and entitlements in RMG industries and overseas labour migrant sector, RMG workers are deprived of fair wages, leave facilities, safety and security. Often the unhealthy work environment results in serious health hazards affecting the productivity of workers. The overall programme on RMG industries focused at four levels during COPE phase. First, most of the implementing partner organisations carried out organisational activities directly with the workers at home or at the factory. These demand side interventions were designed to spread awareness of workers' rights and existing legislation as it applies to the daily lives of the project beneficiaries (e.g. equal salary for men and women, workplace safety). A second mode of activity is the formal trade union sector, and the project partners supported union efforts to organize the workers and assist them to make collective demands. At a third level, some partners worked with the industry representatives and factory owners in order to negotiate agreements on worker issues. Finally, MJF has been very active at the national level in developing legislation that underpins worker protection. Recently issues such as minimum wage of the workers, worker access to disability compensation in the case of job-related accident or death have been incorporated in the amended law.

RMG-focused projects under COPE addressed the issues of payment on time, fair overtime rates, appropriate wage grade, leave facility, proper hiring and firing system, separation payment on time, maternity leave and workplace safety issues etc. It is important to note that all these benefits are clearly included in the national labour law.

MJF works on overseas migration and not internal migration. During COPE period, overseas labour migration projects focused on awareness building on safe migration, grassroots level services, reintegration to local economy for returnee migrants, and fraudulence issues on labour migration cases. MJF also has been active at the national level that underpins safe migration and protect potential labour migrants. The Project Compilation Report (PCR)¹⁰ reveals that potential migrant workers were provided with services such as information and training, visa checking, online registration, opening bank accounts, and complaints handling. Many of these services are provided by potential and returnee migrants supported to form community groups. At the higher levels, community-led Migration Protection Committees (including local elites and government officials) provide mediation services, file cases, connect citizens to legal aid, and use their position to influence the responsiveness of duty bearers. Following the enactment of the Overseas Employment and Migrants Welfare Act 2013, MJF continues to advocate for the effective implementation of that law and are included as members of the core technical group under the government's "Standardisation of the Pre-Departure Orientation Services (PDOS) Training Programme for Potential Migrants". The overall programme contributed to decrease dependency on local brokers for migration in the EPR Project areas of MJF.

5. Lessons from Previous Work

In the last phase, MJF worked to address the vulnerability of workers and assisted them to realize their rights. In the RMG sector, through formation of factory-based Trade Unions, MJF and partner organisations tried to address the wage, benefits and safety issues of workers'. For migrant workers', the programme addressed fraudulence cases and exploitation in labour migration process. As a result fraudulence issues on labour migration cases gradually reduced in the MJF's project areas. Migration victims also got quality support (e.g. receive compensation, death benefits) from the government (district employment and manpower office) and local Union Parishad (UP). Dependency on local brokers was reduced and potential interested migrants became aware about the legal process of migration.

As a response to national and international pressure and observation that the amended Labour Law did not adequately address fundamental workers' rights, the government initiated a Rules drafting process. At the

¹⁰The project compilation review, conducted by a review team of DFID , 2017

invitation of the then secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, MJF took the lead in formulating the Rules through consultations with employers, government agencies, trade unions, workers and other key stakeholders. Once again, MJF drew on its grassroots networks to achieve this, consulting on a day-to-day basis with grant-funded NGO partners such as the Awaj Foundation, which was active in supporting workers mobilisation in factories

MJF achieved the followings in the COPE Project, most of which have been reflected in the PCR¹¹ undertaken by DFID, and the learning from the previous project is also given below:

What Worked Well

Strong relationship with relevant ministries enabled MJF and partners to minimize risks and hostility created from employers, employer's association, recruiting agencies and creates working space for civil society organisations.

- MJF experience confirms that supporting government in the drafting of labour law , policies and rules increases the scope to include favourable clauses in policies for workers
- COPE experience shows that in fraud and failed migration cases, redressal mechanism is much more effective and less expensive than formal court cases to recover money from migration broker
- Formation of self-help groups is effective to reintegrate returnee migrants in local economy
- Micro-macro linkage is important to identify policy gaps and reflect grassroots voice in labour policy e.g. festival bonus and protection measures of pregnant women in RMG has been included in Labour Rules 2015 due to consultation of MJF with workforce.
- Pre-decision training is very important and effective to analyse situation in destination country and cost-benefit analysis for a particular aspirant migrant.

What Did Not Work Well

- Political affiliation of employers hamper policy advocacy process. Sometimes government officials failed to include favourable recommendation from civil society and trade unions due to lack of political will. During the drafting process of labour laws, MJF tried to include a number of issues of workers but because of the influence of employers failed to do so at the final stage. These are: number of minimum wage grading, gross wages and festival bonus for workers, control on government on outsourcing recruitment, and the number of safety parameters to be fixed in the law.
- During COPE, MJF was involved in the enactment of laws for RMG industries and overseas migrant Workers. But the laws were not widely implemented since the last 3 years. MJF will make effort through the decent work programme to improve implementation and wider dissemination of these laws.
- A number of Trade Unions were formed in RMG but failed to get registration and performed their active initiatives due to employers influence, thus created obstacles to wider dissemination of awareness programmes. MJF motivated aspirant migrant workers to become skilled and then migrate as skilled workers demand is high in the destination countries. However, potential migrants tend to migrate urgently and do not want to spend time for skill trainings or work experience.

Some of the weakness of the previous programme will be identified and a mechanism will be developed to overcome those. The following measures will be taken:

¹¹ The project compilation review, conducted by a review team of DFID , 2017

- Development of an information system covering social security, conduct awareness raising and communication activities for workers, rights at work, better work, green jobs, prevention of violence against women at workplace etc.
- Partner organisations will build capacity of Trade Unions promoting a unified response to the priorities and challenges that the Trade Unions face at the local level. Meetings will be organized with the relevant stakeholders to promote social dialogue, build technical and management capacities of beneficiaries for the promotion of decent and safe work, support establishment and operation of the employment units within RMG sector.
- On completion of the training course from MJF's vocational training centre, the trainees will get exposure to job application and interview skills as well as obtain a certificate which is acknowledged in RMG factories. Finally the trained girls, will be placed in nearby factories, to identify suitable and secure residential facilities within the working area and monitor their situation for at least three months after job placement.
- Strengthen returnee migrants' and left behind family members' organisations/associations, building of legal, policy and institutional capacities, improve protective measures for male and female migrants and their families; and develop monitoring and referral schemes for returning migrants.
- Special attention will be provided for better regulation of private recruitment agencies registered bodies in order to reduce migrant recruitment fees and costs.

6. Programme Brief

Goal: Readymade Garment (RMG) and migrant workers have improved socio-economic conditions in the environment of decent work.

Outcomes:

- RMG workers received minimum wage and financial benefits.
- RMG workers enjoyed improve working conditions.
- Potential men and women workers safely migrated.
- Returnee migrants successfully reintegrated in the society.
- Adopt/revise existing laws and policies to strengthen workers' rights.

Outputs:

- RMG workers are organised and capable of claiming their rights and entitlements.
- Factory management are sensitized to provide rights and entitlements of workers.
- Knowledge-based evidence generated.
- Advocacy and lobbying to change existing laws/policies and adopt new laws and policies.
- Organise returnee migrants groups.
- Knowledge on safe migration of potential migrants (especially female) enhanced.
- Public and private institutions are sensitized to render services to aspirant migrant workers.

- Potential migrant workers and returnee migrants linked with institutions for skill training and financial support.
- Legal services were provided to resolve fraud cases.

7. MJF's Thematic Approach

In terms of institutional strength the decent work programme will work with two tiers of partnership. One group of partners will be those who are organisationally strong, retain communication and network with the workers' organisations/trade unions and specialised on advocacy. The other group could be small but locally-based and directly linked with beneficiaries, but need more capacity-building support.

- People living in vulnerable geographical locations, urban slums, climate vulnerable areas and migrant prone areas
- Addressing the legislation implementation gap through training for legal and relevant government sector actors;
- Addressing the risks of exploitation linked to RMG and migration;

Advocacy initiative will be undertaken with labour ministry by MJF and its partner organisations for reformulation and implementation of labour law 2013. With the ministry of expatriate welfare and overseas employment advocacy will be continued to implement migration Act 2013, and reduction of migration costs.

MJF will contribute to the advocacy for the formulation of national minimum wage for all sector workers; this would replace the current piecemeal legislation that sets minimum wage by sector and presently covers only 42 of the 60 sectors of Bangladesh. Through its role on the Occupational Health and Safety Council it will also advocate for more effective safety regulations across sectors. MJF currently meets regularly with NGOs and the government to coordinate action to support workers' rights, with agencies taking forward specific responsibilities. However, NGO advocacy aims continue to be divergent and uncoordinated. For MJF to bring about a new national minimum wage that encompasses all sectors it will need to convene together a range of stakeholders and strengthen both advocacy capabilities and coordination. The PCR identified the need for a more formal NGO Advocacy platform – or the strengthening of existing mechanisms –to achieve this. This echoes our overarching recommendation for MJF to build the capacity of upstream national-level advocacy networks as well as downstream delivery partners and Community Based Organisations (CBOs).

- MJF will conduct a number of new researches to establish national minimum wage, new minimum wage for RMG workers and Law Reform for both RMG and migrant workers. More non-compliant factory (and tire 3 factories according to ACCORD/ International Labour Organisation (ILO) assessment) will be identified and support provided for better working conditions through partner organisations.
- MJF and partner organisations will develop linkage with NGOs/civil society organisations of destination countries to assist migrant workers to establish their rights. For the cases in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia assistance will be taken from the labour Attaché office as there is no NGO working there.
- Support Bureau to Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET): Total of 3764 women migrated for housekeeping work from 2015 -2017 through MJF support (by receiving training from Keranigong Technical Training Center). BMET is the only responsible institution for providing

skill training on housekeeping for female migrant workers and this course is mandatory. But they have only one full time trainer for housekeeping course for Dhaka based Technical Training Centers (TTC). Due to huge demand of housekeeping course BMET decided to decentralize their training to the TTCs in migrant prone areas. As Keranigonj is one of the migrant prone areas and had huge pressure on female migration training on housekeeping, MJF was requested for assistance and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BMET on April 2014 to provide training equipment's and one trainer's salary to run the courses effectively. MJF intends to support BMET in future programme for providing training on Care Giver as there is huge demand in Japan, Russia and Hong Kong. BMET has sought MJF assistance in this regard based on the recent job market assessment by Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry. For this MJF proposes to support salary for Trainer/s and other cost related to training for example, revising training module, preparation of training materials including audio-visual and documents.

- It should be mentioned here that according to the Business Case EPR Project: “12500 potential female migrants will be safely migrated to their destination countries for work” (page 10). For achieving safe migration skill training of potential migrant workers' is one of the important areas to send skilled workers. According to all three outputs of women's economic empowerment of ToC of BC, skill training will help potential and returnee migrant to improve their skill, income and have better livelihood options.
- In next 5 years MJF will support one or two TTC's out of 71 TTC to provide training for Care Giver and so far no organisation is supporting BMET for such training.
- Facilitate process to mainstreaming Violence against Women (VAW) prevention and mitigation in both RMG and migration and also included person with disability in the RMG sector.

8. Programme Coverage:

Target population: RMG workers and potential labour migrants

Geographic location: RMG sector programme will be implemented mainly in the Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram Districts as these are the garment industrial zones.

The overseas migrant workers programme will be located in migrant prone zones and adjacent areas in different districts such as Sirajganj, Narsingdi, Cumilla, Mymensingh, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Lakshmipur, Madaripur, Brhammanbaria and Dhaka.

9. Institutional Capacity of MJF

MJF has long experience of working on this issue and has established its presence at the national level. The programme will be run by competent and experienced staff within MJF lead by a Director. The team has also proven advocacy and mobilization skill from micro to macro level. The relationship building, networking and linkage building capacity with different government and non-government actors is also one of the key strengths of MJF team to implement this programme effectively. MJF has a good programme, financial and monitoring team with adequate knowledge and expertise on programme planning, monitoring through partnership approach. The strength of MJF is its convening ability to bring together different stakeholders to work collaboratively on a common issue and gather evidence for learning.

10. Integration of Cross Cutting Issues

Most of the RMG workers are females, coming from rural village of Bangladesh and don't have adequate knowledge of their rights and working conditions. Therefore, MJF and partners give priority to women

workers in the training sessions on money realization, reinstatement of job and other legal entitlements recovery. A good number of women participated in leadership development training programme which has enabled them to represent workers in Trade Union executive committee, participation committees, and safety committees. The women workers also participated in decision making in the aforesaid committees and during the wage/other legal entitlement bargaining time.

In the overseas temporary migration sector: Most Bangladeshi female migrants are employed in low-wage and low-status occupations where they are subject to violations of their labour and human rights. Female workers who are less-skilled in low-wage occupation become exposed to different forms of abuse including sexual abuse. Female migrants, unlike men, tend to have limited access to education and training and limited decision-making power concerning their mobility. Through MJF's programme the targeted female migrant workers bargaining power will increase, reduce gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence.

Gender issues will be addressed in this programme in the following ways:

- MJF and its partner organisations will create pressure on BMET, concerned ministry and Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) to address the issue of exploitation, abuse and violence in the process of migration as well at the destination countries. BMET can also discuss in the pre-departure training for potential female migrants about possible problems including abuse and violence can happen to them and how to protect themselves and receive assistance from Labour Attaché of the embassy.

To address VAW related issues in RMG, partners will raise awareness for workers on the issue, initiate the process for anti-harassment committee formation within the factories, make linkage for support services with legal aid organisations and rehabilitate (economically and socially) them in society through networking organisations. The poor living conditions of garment workers is one of the causes of violence and MJF will try to address it through negotiation with factory owners and house owners.

- Returnee female migrant workers and female members of male migrant workers' families will have access to skill training and economic opportunities and they will be empowered for controlling their own income and remittance.

Integration of cross-cutting issues - Persons with Disabilities:

Persons with disabilities do not get opportunities to get employment in the RMG sector. Few employers are sensitive to issues of disability or don't have understanding the benefits of an inclusive and non-discriminatory employment policies hiring persons with disability. From this project, MJF will help to change attitudes through special disability related events, remove barriers for employment and provide those skills and other related training to become a RMG worker.

11. Risk Analysis

Risk of Decent and Safe Work programme will be dealt with by MJF's overall risk management strategies.

12. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning

Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system of MJF has been developed in light of its core principles of a rights based approach. In the EPR Project it will be focused on gaining knowledge and

evidence and explore best practices to evaluate progress and apply learnings to enhance programme efficiency and effectiveness.

- Decent and Safe Work programme will keep track of the positive or negative changes, success/achievements, failure, challenges and new information that results from the implementation and initiatives. Process Monitoring will be undertaken to tracking the progress and also changes taking place.
- As the programme is rolled out, regular monitoring will help MJF and partners to decide what actions have been the most helpful and what actions have been the least helpful for workers in the garments and migration sectors.
- M&E unit of MJF will guide the programme staff to set baseline and milestone of this programme at the beginning of the Project and will also assist the partners to develop their M&E plan. Partners and MJF M&E unit will jointly undertake certain monitoring task in a systematic manner. Quarterly and annual progress reports will be completed by partners and MJF contact person will validate those reported data during field visit. Six monthly and annual reports will be sent to DFID as part of donor reporting plan.
- In addition to annual and quarterly report, case studies related to project achievement or challenges will be prepared by partners'. M&E unit will analyse partners reported case studies to understand nature of project achievements and contextual challenges and provide feedback as relevant.
- Detailed indicators will be finalised through a participatory discussion process with DFID and MJF. However, some of the research questions and indicators are suggested in the following table:

Name of the Programme	Key research question (suggested)	Key Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent & Safe Work (Protection of Workers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of working environment in the RMG sectors. • How reintegration mechanism works for the retune migrant labour? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of factories improved their working environment. • Number of returnee migrant engaged in income opportunities.

- Furthermore, MJF will commission an external consultant to produce final evaluation and generate a yearly achievement report of the completed projects. MJF will also undertake a number of research and surveys to get updated information on situation of the two sectors and link with national and International experts for learning and knowledge enhancement.

MJF sees this thematic paper as a living document which will be reviewed periodically to integrate new ideas, learning and experiences while working with the RMG and migrant workers.

TOC: *Decent and Safe Work (RMG & Migrant Workers)*

IMPACT

Readymade garment (RMG) and overseas temporary migrant workers have improved socio-economic conditions in the environment of decent work.

OUTCOMES

Potential men and women workers safely migrated

Returnee migrants successfully reintegrated in the society

RMG workers received minimum wage and financial benefits

RMG workers enjoyed improve working conditions

Adopt or revise existing laws and policies to strengthen workers' rights

OUTPUTS

Knowledge on safe migration of potential migrant workers (especially female) enhanced. Public and private institutions are sensitized to render services to aspirant migrant workers.

Potential & returnee migrants linked with institutions for skill training and financial support.

Legal services were provided to resolve fraud cases

RMG workers are organised and capable of claiming their rights and entitlements.

RMG factory management are sensitized to provide rights & entitlements of workers

Knowledge based evidence generated. Advocacy and lobbying to change existing laws/policies and adopt new laws and policies

INTERVENTIONS

1. Establish migrant support centre
2. Awareness raising activities on safe migration
3. Organize Pre-decision & pre-departure training for selected migrant workers.

Self and formal employment creation for returnee migrants

1. Counselling for migration victims
2. Arrange mediation sessions, send cases to BMET arbitration cell

1. Conduct need based research.
2. Workshop with relevant stake holders on female migration, orient GOB officials on migration support services
4. Provide legal aid support or linkage for legal cases for both migrant and RMG workers

1. Workers' Groups formation
2. Awareness session for RMG workers
3. Capacity building of workers
4. Leadership training and form Trade Union

Dialogue between workers and management

1. Organise workshop/seminars with policy makers
2. Review/drafting law
3. Submission of draft laws and policy to concerned authority

BARRIERS

1. Potential migrants have very limited access on legal migration information.
2. Local brokers have very strong influence to misguide aspirant migrant and their family.

1. Returnee migrants or migrant families are not able to use remittance properly.
2. Financial institutions are not migrants friendly

Most of the time migrant workers don't have proper documents to file cases or submit to arbitration cell.

Workers are not aware about their rights and not united. Owners and management of RMG are not interested in formation of TU.

Very limited dialogue between workers and employers. NGOs are not allowed to work on rights of RMG sector workers

Govt. security agencies are following activists working on RMG Govt. monitoring agencies are influenced by the RMG owners

PROBLEMS

- a. Local brokers misguide potential migrant workers and their families and make them socially and economically vulnerable.
- b. Migration Fraud victims are disorganised, less aware about their rights, entitlements and institutional supports.
- c. Government monitoring mechanism on implementing government declared cost on migration is weak.
- d. Workers in RMG are in hazardous working environment, deprived of payment on time and fair wages.
- e. Less number of Trade Union and bargaining capacity of workers with management,
- f. Policy makers are less active to protect workers' rights