

OSHE Newsletter



Govt urged to ratify ILO Convention 177 for homebased workers

The government should ratify ILO convention 177 relating to homebased workers legal recognition as the workers have no legal safeguard under the existing Labour Act 2006, observed a group of labour rights activists on 25 August. The speakers while addressing the human chain demanding homebased workers' inclusion in Labour Act in Dhaka also said the step would bring compliance at homebased workers at

textile and garment supply chain as well for the informal economy. 'There is a global standard – ILO Convention 177 on Homework, 1996 – which has been ratified by ten countries. Bangladesh government must ratify and implement the C 177 as a matter of urgency, especially countries with large concentrations of homebased workers. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data on 2009, there are Two millions homebased

workers in the country. Legislation should be amended to comply with ILO Core Labour Conventions and supply chain legislation so that the workers in supply chains are able to hold lead firms and suppliers accountable.' Said OSHE foundation chairperson Saki Rezwana in her keynote speech. CUP executive director Kandaker Rebecca Sania, BFTUC secretary China Rahman, OSHE project manager Arifa As Alam were present among others.

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Breaking down the barriers

Field level experience



We are working on flourishing leadership among workers so that they can be able to operate social dialogue.

Arifa As Alam, Project Manager



At primary stage, workers were not interested to talk with us. Besides, it was difficult to make workers active in taking part at the meetings defying family restriction and workload.

Md. Mocklasur Rahman, Project Coordinator



There is scarcity of spacious venues to organize sensitization meetings for workers at the densely populated areas.

Kaniz Rabeya, Assistant Project Coordinator



In the beginning, sub-contractors did not accept us easily. Now we are working on bringing healthy industrial relationship between owners and workers with efforts to cultivate safety culture at workplace.

Nusrat Jahan, Assistant Project Coordinator



Literacy rate is very poor among workers so that we face challenges to aware them effectively.

Tasmin Jahan, Assistant Project Coordinator



There was a little knowledge on gender-based violence and discrimination among female workers. They are now sensitized after vigorous advocacy.

Nur Alam, Assistant Project Coordinator

Leadership training for homebased workers

Homebased Workers Project on 24 September provided a leadership training for homebased workers who are resident of Mirpur area. Project manager Arifa As Alam, Mocklasur Rahman, Nusrat

Jahan and Nur Alam conducted training sessions. OSHE chairperson Saki Rezwana inaugurated the program. Another leadership training was held on 27 September for homebased workers of

Agargaon area. OHS initiative for workers and community training manager Masud Parvez conducted the sessions while OSHE assistant project coordinator Kaniz Rabeya moderated the program.



National advocacy planning meeting

Homebased Workers Project of OSHE foundation organized a National Advocacy Planning Meeting in order to include Homebased workers in the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 at U Multipurpose Hall in Dhaka on 21 September 2017. OSHE chairperson Saki Rezwana chaired the program.



OSHE program manager Arifa As Alam delivered a presentation on project activities. Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC) president Abdul Mukit Khan, Veteran labour leader Abdus Salam Khan, BFTUC organizing secretary Kamal Siddique, Jahangirnagar University professor Dr. Ainoon Naher were present among others. Speakers stressed on media campaign after formulating advocacy platform to boost negotiation with government to recognize homebased workers through labour law.

Study circle

OSHE's Homebased Workers Project organized a study circle for homebased workers at the capital's Jatrabari on 30 September. Project coordinator Mocklasur Rahman conducted the study circle.



Gender Based Violence platform meeting held

Gender based violence platform meeting with partner organizations was held at U Multipurpose Hall at Mirpur Dhaka on 18 September.

OSHE foundation chairperson Saki Rezwana presided the program. Jahangirnagar University Anthropology professor Ainoon Naher was the chief discussant.

Karmojibi Nari executive director Rokeya Rafique, Fair Wear Foundation country representative Bablur Rahman were present among others.

Community level sensitization action for homebased workers

Community sensitization and mobilizing meeting was held at city's Consul and Millath camp in Pallabi on 25 and 27 September. Female homebased workers learned about organization, workers rights to organize, importance of organization, organizing strategies etc. Nusrat Jahan conducted the program.



Homebased Workers Project objective

Improving income security with better working conditions and legal coverage for homebased workers.

Developing organizing and social dialogue capacity of homebased workers at local and national level.

Developing gender equality and preventive culture on gender based violence among homebased workers at community level.

Key achievements of Homebased Workers Project

3150

Formation of 150 Self help group comprising 3150 including 2854 female workers

10

10 associations of HBWs at the targeted areas

2120

2120 HBWs are well sensitized on gender based violence issues

20

20 study circles and group meetings where 250 HBWs were sensitized

120

120 female HBWs got sensitization about gender and legal rights to get protection from violence

15

15 local area mapping reports were developed

80

80 community level volunteers are mobilizing HBWs

10

10 area leaders are working to find out supply chain and linkage building directly



According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics about 2 million HBWs are engaged in different types of homework.

Homebased Workers in Bangladesh

80

80 trained HBWs youth leaders with leadership skills

5

5 GBV committees and 5 community based OSH committees have been formed

60

60 leaders obtained advanced advocacy and lobbying skills on HBW issues.

3

Adequate lighting facility at 3 workplaces after collective bargaining

National campaign

'Bangladesh home-based workers rights network' has been launched

National agenda

SKOP, NCCWE included HBWs issues at their national agenda list.

cooperative association

3 cooperative associations have been submitted and 6 under process

National advocacy

National advocacy team has been formed in coordination with trade unions.

Homebased work is the life line of informal economy in Bangladesh and homebased workers are playing significant role in the growth of national economy. This is estimated that about 2 million HBWs are engaged in different types of work, most of them are female.

Homebased work for RMG supply chain is invisible part of production, but the rights of HBWs is neglected though the rights issue for formal workers in RMG is one of the mainstreaming development agenda.

According to the OSHE survey maximum number of respondents belongs to the age group of 15-30 years which is about 77 per cent.

24 per cent workers are engaged in garments based works and rest of the workers are engaged in local market supply. Occupational health and security measures are absent in home based work.

Most of the time workers face some health related problems like pain in whole body, joint pain, and back pain due to long working hour as there is no systematic process to fix the working hour.

Unfortunately existing labour act – revised in 2013 do not applicable for informal sector. So they are not permitted to form trade union and collective bargaining although the country has ratified ILO Conventions 87 and 98. So far, no well integrated initiatives taken at national level on organizing the workers at this sector or engaged on an aggressive policy advocacy campaign at national level towards promotion of rights and social protection of HBWs.





Training of trainers (TOT) on special OHS

OHS Initiative for workers and community project inaugurated 20 days training of trainers with the first batch on September 12, 2017 at Gonoshasthaya Kendra at Savar in Dhaka.

OSHE Executive Director AR Chowdhury Repon joined the inauguration session. BILS executive director Sultan Uddin Ahmed was present.

Basic TOT closing session was on the 16 September 2017 at the same venue. OSHE chairperson Saki Rejwana presided over the program. OHS Initiative for workers and community project Chairman Tamanna Khan, executive board member Kalpona Akter, Gonoshasthaya Kendra director Dr. Mizanur Rahman were present among others.

The non-residential training on special OHS started from September 28, 2017 and it is being conducting to different training venues of the member organizations.

The TOT session will end on November 18, 2017. Certificate will be provided among all the participants at the closing session.



Study circle for household waste collectors

OSHE foundation organized study circle for urban household waste collectors at U Multipurpose Hall in Dhaka on 22 August.

Training topics were – personal hygiene, primary treatment of minor injury, occupational health and safety, and labour rights etc. Hafizur Rahman conducted the program.

Free healthcare for wastepickers

OSHE foundation provided free healthcare and medicine among Dhaka city based wastepickers. A total of 95 female and



children wastepickers of Amin Bazar and Matuail sanitary landfills got treatment and medicine from several health camps at OSHE Welfare & Training center on 19, 24 August and 15, 21 September. Physician Dr. Shariful Alam conducted the campaign.

Study circle for wastepickers

OSHE foundation facilitated study circles on mass education, organizing association, occupational health and safety, and labour rights for wastepickers.

A total of 60 wastepickers of Amin Bazar and Matuail sanitary landfills took part in



the program at OSHE Welfare & Training center on 14, 18 August and 16, 23 September. Hafizur Rahman conducted the program while field organizer Farhad Alam was present.

988 workers killed in Jan-Sept

988 workers (216 in formal and 772 in informal industry) were killed and 297 workers (122 in formal industry and 175 in informal industry) were injured in different workplace accidents from January to September this year. OSHE foundation has revealed a recent workplace accident

monitoring report after analysing fifteen prominent national dailies and gathering field level information from its staff during the said period.

Highest number of casualties happened in transport sector, where 385 workers lost lives and 56 severely injured; second highest number of life loses

recorded in construction sector where 137 workers lost their lives. 92 agriculture workers died. Another 88 day labourers were killed at workplaces. Due to workplace accidents 43 garment workers and 22 rice mill workers died. Major causes found for these casualties are road accident, electrocution, thunderbolt, boiler explosion and factory fire.

First aid training for shipbreaking workers

OSHE foundation's shipbreaking worker project organized first aid training for shipbreaking workers at its Bhatary office on 21 August. 24 workers took part in the training. Kumira fire service and civil defence station officer Abdullah Harun Pasha and Md. Mamun Khan were present as resource persons. Labour leader

Abdur Rahim Master inaugurated the program. OSHE program officer Shazzad Kabir Bhuiyan conducted the training. The training topics were- introduction to first aid, emergency rescue process, initial observation of the patients, observation of broken bones and lesions, dressing, bandage and splinting etc.



10 shipbreaking workers killed

At least 10 shipbreaking workers were killed and 13 were injured in workplace accidents in first nine months (January to September) this year. OSHE has revealed workplace accident report after analysing fifteen prominent national dailies and gathering field level information from its staff during the period.

137 construction workers killed

According to OSHE survey, some 137 construction workers were killed and 32 were injured in workplace accidents in the first nine months (January to September) this year. Most of the dead workers were working at informal sector.

329 workers killed in 3rd quarter

329 workers (formal industry 86 and informal industry 243) were killed and 85 workers (formal industry 35 and informal industry 50) were injured in different workplace accidents from 1st of July to end of September 2017. Workers death at workplace declined slightly in third quarter from the previous

quarter as it was witnessed 365 deaths from April to June this year.

The highest number of workplace accidents took place in transport sector with 121 casualties.

And second highest number of workplace accidents have been witnessed at construction sector with 65 casualties.

Agriculture, garments, day labour and shipbreaking sector witnessed 46, 41, 27 and 6 casualties respectively. Major causes found for these casualties are road accident (141 casualties), electrocution (90 casualties), thunderbolt (61 casualties), boiler and cylinder explosion (17 casualties) and hit of workplace material (12 casualties).

Union Skill Development Institute started journey



Newly established Union Skills Development and Certification Institute (USDCI) based in Chunarughat Upazilla of Habiganj started its journey. USDCI is a joint initiative of OSHE and Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC). USDCI is legally registered under Bangladesh Technical Education Board. Its aim is to promote decent work at local level through skill development, youth leadership and

creation of employment in local labour market. Its other goal is to transform USDCI as center of excellence in vocational training filed at Sylhet region by the year of 2020. The objective of USDCI is to facilitate affordable low-cost and quality technical skill and certification scope for youth, local family members of trade union activists and unemployed people at district level together with promotion of decent work by OSHE and BFTUC joint initiative.

Capacity building training for trade unions



OSHE foundation provided capacity building training for national trade unions. As part of 3F and OSHE foundation's capacity building training on occupational safety and health first aid training was held at Mirpur on 28 September. OSHE program officer Md. Taherul Islam and Fire Service and Civil Defence officer Abdullah Harun conducted the training.

Trade union organizers from Bangladesh Garment, Textile and Leather Workers Federation, Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League, Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union Federation, United Federation of Garment Workers, Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation and Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation took part in the program.

Message

According to OSHE report, 988 workers were killed and 297 were injured in workplace accidents from January to September this year. The frequency of casualties is higher than that of previous year. Thorough evaluation is needed to measure govt and non-govt initiatives why workplace accident is not come under minimum level. 10 shipbreaking workers were killed and 13 were injured in this period. Besides, steel and re-rolling mills have witnessed higher casualties this time. It is time to make safety committees effective at all workplaces. Nurturing safety culture at workplace is a crying need.

AR Chowdhury Repon
Executive director, OSHE



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