

**Faculty of Business**

**Translation of Western Ideals in a Developing Country: A  
Critical Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility  
Practices in Bangladesh**

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## **DECLARATION**

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

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Date: August 02, 2017

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## ABSTRACT

A dividing line in the literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR) rests between those who believe that private companies can make a social difference by applying CSR strategies, those who believe that firms who pursue CSR undermine capitalism, and those who believe that firms do not have any social responsibilities. Relying on institutional theory, both from an organisational and postcolonial perspective, this study has investigated the local effects of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices of Western multinational companies (MNCs) in Bangladesh. The focus was on how local suppliers understand and cope with the demands from their multinational contractors to implement localised CSR policies. Using critical ethnography, this study has conducted a qualitative investigation with MNCs suppliers in the garment industry in Bangladesh.

This study employed Phil Carspecken's suggested five-stage model of critical ethnography, which researchers at Houston University are currently using in the field of education research, social science and management. In the first stage, monological data were collected through observation and during the period from November 2015 to June 2016, 253:50:00 hours of participant observation were conducted in 17 different garment factories located at different industrial zones in the Dhaka division. In the second stage, preliminary reconstructive analysis was made on the data gathered from observation. In stage three, the reconstructive analysis and the horizon analysis were made for the data generated from interviewing the participants, and 51 key participants were interviewed to support this study. In stage four, by re-examining the cultural reconstructions, that were worked out in stages one through three, attempts were made to discover system relationships. Finally, in stage five, using theoretical concepts, attempts were made to establish a link between reconstructive analysis and system theory, and then attempts were made to establish any contribution to real social change.

This thesis concludes Western buyers are practicing an explicit form of CSR in the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh. In this institutional arrangement, coercive isomorphism is guiding the CSR practices in the suppliers' setting in Bangladesh. Though the mimetic isomorphism is visible in this current CSR arrangement, the normative isomorphism does not appear to be present in the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in this study. As a result, this study suggests that when the normative isomorphism is not present in the institutional arrangements of CSR, the stakeholders' framework of CSR could be used as an alternative to solve many issues, and this framework could be achieved by ensuring the involvement of the local stakeholders in the formulation of CSR guidelines.

This study also claims when obtaining legitimacy becomes the pivotal issue for the organisations, all isomorphisms start generating coercive pressures for them, and in this institutional arrangement, the mimetic and normative isomorphisms lose some of their features and start generating coercive pressures for the organisations. Furthermore, this study argues that the developing countries are embedded with peculiarities, which demand a unique institutionalisation process of CSR practices, and where organisations need to respond to the issue of cost effectiveness, the economic motive as institutions guide organisations to undermine their legal, ethical, and discretionary obligations of CSR. Moreover, this study shows that in a developing country context, when businessmen maintain deep political linkages and sit in the parliament, many of the state laws stop functioning properly and in this situation, the workers and the environment as the bottom-line start to suffer.

This study demonstrates that though Bangladesh has freed itself from the colonial arrangement long ago, the Eastern suppliers have not been able to decolonise their mind. As a result, in this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers have succeeded in establishing their dominance over their Eastern suppliers. Moreover, in this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers have succeeded in maintaining a colonial mode of control, and this colonial mode of control has created institutional complexities, which are hindering the implementation of CSR practices in the context of Bangladesh. This study suggests that when the normative environment of CSR is not present in the postcolonial institutional arrangement, giving voice to the oppressed stakeholders in the formulation of CSR policies could help to ensure bottom line benefits.

This study shows that in this current neo-colonial arrangement, the ex-colonies have found themselves helpless and economically bonded to their ex-colonial masters, and exploiting this situation of poor economic conditions in the ex-colonies, the West has imposed the liabilities of poorness (LOP) upon their former colonies. Therefore, this study offers new insights into postcolonial theory and its criticism that in the neo-colonial arrangement, in order to maintain a colonial mode of control, the West has imposed the liabilities of poorness on the developing world. The liabilities of poorness are nothing but a legitimising process of imposing rules in the lives of the uncivilised poor. The liabilities of poorness produce the consent in the West that the uncivilised developing world had no means to control themselves. Consequently, the civilised rich gain their rights to make the decisions on their behalf. As a result, the liabilities of poorness offer helplessness to the developing world, which forced them to implement the decision of others in their lives.

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

**Chapter Summary:** This chapter has five sections. The first section will present background information relating to the study. Subsequent sections will respectively present the normative approach of CSR, the research aim and questions, and the significance of the study. Finally, a section describing the outline of the dissertation will be presented at the end of this chapter.

## **1.1 Background**

A dividing line in the literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR) rests between those who believe that private companies can make a social difference by applying CSR strategies (e.g. Waddock 2002, 3), those who believe that firms who pursue CSR undermine capitalism (e.g. Henderson 2001), and those who believe that firms do not have any social responsibilities (Friedman 1958). Barnett (2007) suggests that CSR includes activities and programs that further the social good, surpass the firm's economic goals, and go beyond legal or regulatory requirements.

Carroll (1979) asserts that business has many obligations to society and as a part of corporate social responsibility; organisations must embody the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary categories of business performance. The first obligation of the organisation is economic in nature where a business produces goods and services based on the demand of society and make a profit selling them. Secondly, society has laid down the ground rules and regulations under which all organisations operate, and society expects businesses to operate within the framework of these legal requirements. Thirdly, as part of an ethical obligation, society expects businesses will not confine themselves only to the legal requirements and will exceed these expectations by offering additional services to society. Finally, any discretionary obligations are left to the business firms to decide because these are purely voluntary.

Over the past several years, these varying perspectives on CSR have been debated and studied by a broad cross-section of scholars (Maignan and Ralston 2002). One particular area of interest receiving increasing levels of study is the relationship between Western multinational corporations (MNCs), CSR, and suppliers in developing countries. Banerjee (2008, 61), for example, argues CSR has become a 'product or service strategy designed to sustain a competitive advantage', i.e. a way of legitimating profit making by Western MNCs in developing countries. Though globalised production and sourcing have brought lower costs and increased profits to such MNCs, there have been negative consequences as well. As Western MNCs confront different cultural standards and expectations while conducting

business with partners around the world (Galbreath 2006), globalization has caused conflicts for many of them in terms of ethics and social responsibility (Ogrizek 2002).

In developing countries, CSR is seen less as an integral part of a good and ethical business practice, but more of a lack of social awareness and responsibility on the part of companies, (Kumar, Murphy and Balsari 2001; Kumar, Murphy and Mortier 2003). However, various institutions (e.g. NGOs, advocacy groups, various stakeholders) continue to apply pressure to Western MNCs to account for their social responsibilities when working with suppliers in foreign—and particularly developing—countries (Emmelhainz and Adams 1999; Kolk and Van Tulder 2002; Egels-Zandén and Hyllman 2006, 2007; Galbreath 2006). For example, within certain industries, due to institutional pressures, suppliers for Western MNCs are adopting CSR Codes of Conduct and international framework agreements. Yet, many local suppliers in developing countries often employ people at low wages, working in unsafe conditions and they lack the necessary understanding of Western ideals such as CSR (Schiller and Widell 2007). Thus, there is a tension between the institutional expectations surrounding Western MNCs global CSR policies and practices, and the extent to which suppliers in developing countries can implement these policies and practices. In fact, Chapple and Moon (2005) suggest that Western MNCs are more likely to adopt CSR policies in their home countries than their suppliers would in developing countries.

Furthermore, in Bangladesh, the lack of accepted ethical behaviour by many of the owners of suppliers' factories has brought labour exploitation to this industry (Rahim 2016) and as these owners also control a large portion of the local media, the news of social and environmental exploitation hardly makes it to the public (Rahim 2016). To continue receiving orders from Western buyers, many of the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh have installed Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP) as part of their buyers' requirement. However, they do not use these ETPs regularly, and only use them when the buyers' or the government inspectors are scheduled (Sarker 2011; Rahim 2016). As a result, many researchers have concluded the suppliers' garments factories in Bangladesh are characterized by their intense profit maximisation, and by non-compliance of many of the regulatory work and environmental standards, which has undermined the basic standards of CSR (Visser 2008; Rahim 2016).

In order to improve relationships with the suppliers' garment factories in developing countries, many Western buyers have established liaison offices in developing countries (Greenhouse 2013; Rojas 2013; Rahim 2016). These liaison offices are also responsible for implementing Western codes of conduct in the suppliers' garments factories (Kolk and Van Tulder 2002; Rahim 2016). However, Egels-Zandén (2014) claims these codes of conduct

have contributed little to improving working conditions, as the main stakeholders consider this arrangement as a means of preserving their supply contracts.

The proposed study begins with the realisation that, Western MNCs and their local suppliers in developing countries responding to various institutional pressures, have established some CSR ‘ideals’ in their operations. However, when it comes to the question of implementation, the suppliers in the developing countries might lag far behind these established ideals. This study will attempt to understand the extent to which Western CSR ideals of MNCs are being translated and implemented in developing countries by studying local suppliers in Bangladesh. In doing so, this study will employ a critical perspective of CSR. Henceforth, it is expected that this new methodological and theoretical perspective of CSR will inform a new strategy for both the developed and the less-developed countries in contributing to the benefits of their CSR arrangements.

To fulfil this research objective, it is essential to ground the study in the processes of institutionalisation through which various types of companies (both the MNCs and suppliers) have institutionalised CSR practices. In addition, considering the differences in cultural settings (Galbreath 2006), it is important to discover the isomorphisms which may trigger local suppliers into adopting MNCs CSR ideals to their local setting.

## **1.2 The Normative Approach of CSR**

Business firms in the USA have had a long history in suffering from a lack of social legitimacy, and a majority of the population “distrust business as an institution” (Freeman and Gilbert 1992, 11). Hence, in the late 19th century Andrew Carnegie introduced philanthropic activities associated with business and attempted to resolve this issue. However, the profit motive character of business has only been able to raise the level of distrust of people, in addition, most people have separated ethics from business (Freeman and Gilbert 1992). In order to solve this particular issue, the field of study of the relationship between business and society is trying to develop a more constructive relationship between the two (Swanson 1999). For the purpose of increasing social good, this field of study applies a normative approach and attempts to develop guidelines for business institutions (Wood 1991).

Porter and Kramer (2011) assert that in recent years, business increasingly has been regarded as a source of economic, social, and environmental problems, and companies are widely perceived as flourishing at the expense of the broader community. The more companies have begun to embrace their corporate social responsibility, the more they have been blamed

for society's failures. As a result, the legitimacy of business has fallen to levels not seen in recent history. This distrust in business has led governments to set new rules for business which is undermining their competitiveness and gradually weakening economic growth. Hence, it can be said that business is trapped in a vicious circle.

The roots of the normative approach are in the fields of philosophy and the liberal arts. Prescription, description and analysis are the major characteristics of the normative approach (Trevino and Weaver 1994), and it is clearly value driven (Kurtines, Alvarez and Azmitia 1990). According to Trevino and Weaver (1994, 120) "*the purpose of normative business ethics is to critique the real by reference to the ideal. Having understood the actual world, the task is to evaluate its propriety and, if appropriate, prescribe a morally better alternative*".

Norman and MacDonald (2004) have argued a sustainable organisation should deliver economic, social and environmental benefits, which they termed, "the triple bottom line" or 3BL. As a result, the success of an organisation should not be measured only by its financial performance, but it should also be measured by its social and environmental performance (Markley and Davis 2007). Freeman and Hasnaoui (2011) have proposed a universal framework for CSR, including the triple bottom line concept of profit, people and planet into the scope of CSR. In a similar vein, Maloni and Brown (2006) have argued an organisation may contribute more to the triple bottom line benefits if it is held ethically and socially accountable by an expansive array of stakeholders including, employees, customers, investors, governments, NGOs, communities, other supply chain associates, regulators, unions, and the media.

The current trend shows some business firms have attempted to integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions into their CSR agenda. However, a majority of the CSR research is "non-normative" in nature, and tends to focus on profitability and competitive advantage while overlooking the social welfare issues of business firms (Lockett, Moon and Visser 2006). Furthermore, very limited CSR research has been conducted in the international business arena, where large multinational corporations are exercising their power and influence over developing countries (Kolk and van Tulder 2010). Furthermore, most of the CSR research regarding international business has been focused on Western Europe and North America; hence, little knowledge has been generated in understanding whether or not Western based CSR ideals transfer across national boundaries (Egri and Ralston 2008).

## **1.3 Research Objectives and Questions**

### ***1.3.1 Research Objectives***

The western influence in Asia, particularly in Bangladesh has a long history. Early adventurers and colonisers perceived this part of the world as an exotic and exciting place, where inhabitants were largely uneducated savages who could easily be tamed into obedient servants. To increase their profitability with cheap available resources, the majority of the MNCs currently operating in Bangladesh have adopted this more or less colonial perspective. This perspective of “the magisterial burden”, as Sen (2005) refers to it, developed primarily during the period from 1700-1800, and has dominated the western view of Asia ever since.

More recently, as part of their broader market oriented development strategy, the economy of Bangladesh, like most other developing countries, has been undergoing a wave of economic and organisational reforms and experiencing considerable economic growth since the late 1980s (Arora and Puranik 2004, 97). At the same time, it is also true the growth that has apparently resulted from embracing the market-based economy has also brought many adverse social, ethical, and environmental impacts with it (Salequzzaman and Stocker 2001; Jones 2005). However, now customers, trade unions and (I)NGOs of these developing economies claim these conditions are no longer acceptable and demand greater transparency and accountability in business and industrial organisations (Byron 2005; Rahman 2003; Spar and La Mure 2003).

The governments of emerging economies seem to be ambivalent to these ongoing processes. The bureaucracy of public institutions (which was largely inherited from the British) is partly corrupt and partly striving to enhance the welfare of the public. On the one hand, these developing countries are trying to project the image of a trustworthy partner in international cooperation by attempting to fight corruption with new laws and heavy fines but, on the other hand, free trade zones (also known as export processing zones) are being created, where private businesses are being allowed to operate with virtually no rules and regulations (Schiller and Widell 2007).

The political parties in these developing countries often control the largest trade unions and leaders of these trade unions seem to be more interested in acquiescing to the political parties than to the interests of their union members. Consequently, workers are showing growing reluctance to join a trade union. However, some workers often attempt to organise themselves into small groups at their respective plant or workplace level without support and

sponsorship from the mainstream trade union movement or political parties. Unfortunately, this type of organizing by small groups of employees, also collectively known as the free trade union movement, frequently faces opposition and suppression from powerful agents. Still this movement seems to be gaining momentum in recent times (Schiller and Widell 2007).

However, in the name of western CSR morality, many local producers have encountered numerous imposed demands by their multinational customers, and their attempts to meet these demands may be more or less superficial. There are voices telling of real improvements, whereas others mean that the wrong things are being done, and only the owners gain something from the efforts. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the CSR ideals of Western companies are being translated into the local suppliers' setting in Bangladesh. In this regard, this research study will examine the garment industries in Bangladesh which are also the major contributor to the national economy (BGMEA 2014). The focus will be on how the local manufacturers interpret and address the CSR demands from their multinational customers as well as how the western MNC's understand and practice the same CSR policies. There are reasons to assume that in these business relationships, institutional processes from different cultural settings meet and adapt in ways which might uncover trends going on in other parts of the world.

This study has chosen the context of the Readymade Garments (RMG) industry of Bangladesh as this sector has experienced phenomenal growth during the last two decades, but which has also experienced significant social, ethical, and environmental exploitation (Byron 2005; Rahman 2003). In 1984, only 384 RMG companies were operating in Bangladesh, and they employed 0.12 million people. The number of RMG companies peaked in 2013 at 5876, which employed over 4 million people. More recently, in 2015, the number of RMG companies has dropped to 4296 but the number of employed in the industry remains at over 4 million people. Currently Bangladesh is the second largest apparel exporting country in the world. From 2015-2016, the country exported RMGs totalling US\$ 28 billion, which equalled 82 percent of total exports for the country (BGMEA 2017).

It is important to mention one of the recent trends in the fashion industry, known as 'fast fashion', which is making fashion trends quickly and cheaply available to consumers. According to Doeringer and Crean (2006, 371) this fast fashion "*is a concept developed initially in France to serve markets for teenage and young adult women who want trendy, short-cycle, and relatively inexpensive clothing, and who are willing to buy from small retail shops and boutiques*". Consequently, prominent retailers such as H&M, Inditex (Zara), Forever 21, and Topshop have targeted the price sensitive, fashion conscious, young people,

and have built their success in the new trend of fast fashion (Taplin 2014). For this business strategy, retailers offered limited quantities of products to their customers and encouraged them to purchase frequently by limiting the product visibility in the store only for ten days to two weeks (Choi 2011).

This newly developed business strategy became very popular among retailers and a huge number of firms find this 'fast fashion' as a means of internationalising their retail business (Runfola and Guercini 2013). As a result, more and more fashion retailers started locating low-cost production sources in emerging economies like Bangladesh (Taplin 2014). It has been well documented this particular business strategy of low cost production brought many adverse social, ethical, and environmental impacts to the developing countries (Cairns and Roberts 2007; Tobin 2013; Taplin 2014). Despite these well documented abuses by suppliers, the majority of Western consumers remain relatively indifferent (Taplin 2014) as they are not ready to pay more to ensure their clothing is not produced in sweatshops (Santoro 2000). However, in response to this particular problem, Western companies have tried to introduce rather ambiguous CSR programs into their suppliers setting. Some Western companies have managed to develop collaborative partnership programs with their suppliers to eradicate these adverse externalities. However, these CSR programmes did not compromise with their policy of low cost sourcing which acts as a competitive advantage for these firms. Some Western firms have remained silent and continue to exploit the questionable local conditions (Arrigo 2013).

As such, though the RMG industry has experienced phenomenal growth, the working environment in most RMG factories can be characterised as "sweatshop". Most of these small factories have failed to offer a safe and healthy work environment for their workers. In these factories, workers are forced to work for long hours with little ventilation and poor lighting conditions (Meenakshi Ramesh 2014). Scholars (e.g. Akhter et al. 2010; Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014) reported that sexual harassment, poor hygiene standards, lack of recreational facilities and a shortage of drinking water are the common features of RMG factories in Bangladesh.

In recent times, various international agencies have generated enormous pressure on MNCs to improve their accountability and transparency while operating in developing countries (Newson and Deegan 2002; Belal and Roberts 2010). As a result, it is expected the suppliers' garment factories will be pressured by their Western buyers to comply with their codes of conduct which have been established in the developed world (Islam and Deegan 2008; Belal and Roberts 2010). However, Belal (2008) claims in the implementation of the buyers code of conduct for the suppliers' factory in Bangladesh, the dominant stakeholders are

neglecting the interests of the weaker stakeholders, and as a result, in the current CSR arrangement, the local community, the greater society, and the environment are often neglected.

Richter (2011) has shown in order to protect workers' rights and establish anti-discrimination policies; many countries have imposed legal restrictions on the business organisations. On the contrary, Rahman and Langford (2014) claim by receiving generous support from the government, the garment industry of Bangladesh has experienced rapid growth, but at the same time many social and environmental problems have been ignored. Moreover, this research study claims the labour organizers in the garment industry have been tortured, abused and a few of the leaders have been murdered in Bangladesh. As a result, in fear of losing their job, workers in this industry avoid union activities (Meenakshi Ramesh 2014).

Bangladesh bears the legacy of Western colonialism, and many of the present government policies have been inherited from their former British colonial master (Belal and Roberts 2010). Many of these rules and regulations continue to guide the management's environmental and social behaviour in the suppliers' garments factories operating in Bangladesh (Belal and Roberts 2010). However, corruption and weak institutional arrangements have helped these suppliers' factories evade any legal requirements (Belal and Roberts 2010; TIB 2013). Furthermore, in Bangladesh, the government has yet to achieve the expertise to assess the CSR arrangements in the garment industry (Belal and Roberts 2010; Rahman and Langford 2014; Rahim 2016).

These appalling and unsafe working conditions have resulted in several major accidents in the garment factories of Bangladesh. In 2005, the Spectrum factory collapse took 64 lives and injured another 80 garment workers (CCC 2013). The Garib & Garib sweater factory fire incident in 2010 killed 21 workers and injured 50 others (BBC 2010). The same year, police opened fire on RMG workers in Chittagong and caused at least three deaths (Muhammad 2011). On November 17, 2012 the Tazreen Fashion factory fire killed 112 workers (Manik and Barry 2014). Finally, the most tragic incident yet occurred when the Rana Plaza factory collapsed on April 24, 2013, and 1135 garment workers lost their lives (Ullah 2014). These incidents show the helplessness of the workers at RMG sites in Bangladesh (Rahman and Langford 2014).

These disasters in the labour-intensive RMG industry in Bangladesh created moral outrage in home and abroad which later enforced few new rules for the RMG industry in Bangladesh (Ziaul and Fara 2015). As a part of this process, just two weeks after the Rana Plaza disaster,

on May 11, 2013, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (Accord) was established by the European buyers to assist Bangladeshi RMG industry to improve their safety arrangements, and proposed an inspection system for Bangladeshi RMG industry (Jacobs and Singhal 2017). On the other hand, on July 8, 2013, the North American buyers formed the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance), and raised a \$42M fund for the safety improvement in the RMG industry in Bangladesh. In Addition, Alliance pooled \$100M low-interest loan for the Bangladeshi factory owners for their safety improvement (Jacobs and Singhal 2017). However, these initiatives only covered those factories who were working for the reputed brands (i.e., Adidas, Nike, H&M, Walmart, Benetton, Gap, Zara, Sprit, Mango, Levi's, Next, etc.), and thus many of factories were not brought under the scope of these arrangements and the bottom-line continued to suffer. Hence, the postcolonial political conditions in Bangladesh as well as the current, well-documented worker abuses in suppliers' sweatshops make Bangladesh a prime setting for carrying out this type of investigation.

Though researchers have attempted to fill many of the research gaps in the context of developing countries, there are still gaps in the CSR literature with respect to the issue of translating Western ideals to developing countries. Furthermore, current studies have not focused on the issue of the institutionalisation processes in implementing CSR practices in developing countries. As a result, the strategies through which local suppliers of MNCs can implement CSR policies and practices more effectively have remained vague. Moreover, the existing studies have not answered how postcolonial perspectives are hindering the translation process of CSR practices from the West to East. Hence, this research study aims to fill these knowledge gaps by employing a more politically and culturally embedded methodology; critical ethnography.

The objectives of the thesis are as follows:

1. To investigate how Western CSR ideals have been translated into an Eastern context;
2. To investigate the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in an Eastern setting; and
3. To critically examine the postcolonial perspective of context-specific encounters between the West and East and to examine the subsequent effects that might have on the present CSR practices of RMG suppliers of MNCs in Bangladesh.

### ***1.3.2 Research Questions***

The aim of the current study is to investigate how local RMG suppliers of MNCs operating in Bangladesh understand, cope with, and respond to institutional pressures to implement CSR practices and policies. This study will compare and contrast the assumptions and actual experiences of local suppliers in coping with institutional pressure for, and translating Western ideas to, the implementation of CSR practices and policies. The current study will include local suppliers of MNCs in the Bangladesh garment industry. Theory generation will be informed by emergent concepts from an inquiry into the organisational context, against the backdrop of existing theory and literature. To accomplish the aims of the study, the following research questions are tested:

RQ1) How are Western MNCs engaging their RMG suppliers in Bangladesh to implement CSR practices and policies?

RQ2) Does a gap exist between the CSR ideals set by the MNCs and the practices of their local RMG suppliers in Bangladesh and, if so, why?

RQ3) To what extent does the interaction of cultural differences, institutional pressures, and postcolonial perspectives help or hinder the implementation of CSR practices and policies with RMG suppliers of MNCs in Bangladesh?

RQ4) Do isomorphisms exist that lead to the institutionalisation of CSR practices in MNCs' RMG suppliers in Bangladesh?

RQ5) What are the most prominent isomorphisms impacting the institutionalisation of CSR practices in MNCs' RMG suppliers in Bangladesh and why are they effective?

RQ6) Do any insight emerges that would inform strategies for local RMG suppliers of MNCs to implement more effectively CSR policies and practices?

### **1.4 Significance of this Study**

MNCs have become among the most powerful institutions in the world, with many of these company's annual revenue streams exceeding the GDP of individual countries. This has created significant interest in the regulation of MNCs across foreign borders as well as their role as global corporate citizens. MNCs, as global corporate citizens are expected to demonstrate proactive CSR in their operations. This study argues the ideals of CSR may be difficult to transfer across dissimilar contexts and countries, particularly between the West and East. While previous research has explored this transfer process, there is still limited

understanding of how Eastern partners of Western MNCs understand, translates, and implements CSR ideals. Hence, this study expects to make the following contributions:

- 1) **Theoretical:** By relying on institutional theory (both organisational and postcolonial perspectives), this study will advance an understanding of the translation process between Western CSR ideals and Eastern contexts. It is expected that new theories will emerge that will inform CSR literature in an institutional context, providing opportunities for future research.
- 2) **Managerial:** The ability of managers of Eastern organisations to apply Western CSR ideals into their operations appears to be a complicated process. This study is expected to uncover insights that could help streamline the translation process, affording Eastern RMG suppliers of Western MNCs to more readily and actively adopt CSR practices.
- 3) **Methodological:** By relying on critical ethnography, this method advances the study of CSR. Existing studies rely heavily on content analysis of annual reports, secondary data, and survey methodologies. However, such methods lack a critical richness and first-person accounts. Since this study will perform a cultural inquiry, which is relevant to investigate the research questions from a socio-political point of view, it will support an understanding of CSR from different perspectives and from various actors' points of view. This is expected to advance the study of CSR, particularly in international contexts and MNCs.
- 4) Moreover, as the study has formulated descriptive research questions, it is expected that this study is going to draw normative suggestions from its descriptive results. By using the suggested theoretical approach, however, there will be continuous dialogue with informants, which will support their developing their own knowledge and, managers, workers and other actors, each from their own perspective, could use this with an emancipatory purpose.

## **1.5 Outline of the Dissertation**

In order to answer the research questions, the dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 1 presents the background information relating to the study, the normative approach of CSR, the research aim and questions, the significance of the study, and the outline of the dissertation. Chapter 2 provides review of literature related to CSR initiatives of MNCs, the background information of Bangladesh, the context of the RMG industry in Bangladesh, and the CSR agenda from the institutional and postcolonial point of view. Methodology is

outlined in Chapter 3 where the readers are introduced with the concepts of ethnography, critical ethnography, rationale for selecting ethnographic sites, data sources and collection procedure, ethical and practical issues in data collection, data analysis procedures, Carspecken's five-stage model of critical ethnography, validation procedures, anonymization and privacy, and the researcher.

Chapter 4 presents the background information relating to data collection, and attempts to identify the main voices to construct the narratives for the analysis. Chapter 5 presents the first two stages of analysis, and five voices are used to present narratives under eleven broad categories, and these categories are: Western buyers and their CSR agendas, institutional arrangements of the Western buyers, responses from the Eastern supplier, the working arrangements in the garment factories, current CSR initiatives and the bottom-line benefit, Accord and Alliance and its' criticism, the paradigm shifts in the garment industry, economic emancipation and the empowerment of female workers, production at the expense of the environment, postcolonial conditions and their implications on the current CSR arrangement, and giving voice to the voiceless. Furthermore, this chapter describes how the eleven broad categories are developed from observation and how the validity claims are made in the first two stages of data analysis.

Chapter 6 presents the stage three of analysis, and five voices are used to present narratives under twelve broad categories and these categories are: Western buyers and their CSR agendas, institutional arrangements of the Western buyers, responses from the Eastern supplier, the working arrangements in the garment factories, current CSR initiatives and the bottom-line benefit, Accord and Alliance and its' criticism, the paradigm shifts in the garment industry, economic emancipation and the empowerment of female workers, production at the expense of the environment, forces generated by different stakeholders for implementing CSR practices, trade unionism in the RMG industry, postcolonial conditions and their implications on the current CSR arrangement, and giving voice to the voiceless. This chapter describes how the twelve broad categories are developed from interviews and how the validity claims are made for this stage three of data analysis. Chapter 7 presents the last two stages of analysis where attempts are made to discover system relations and social systems. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by answering the research questions along with the implications, limitations and the directions of future research.

## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

**Chapter Summary:** This chapter consist of eight sections. In the first segment, CSR initiatives of MNCs will be presented. The next section will discuss the background information of Bangladesh. The third sections will discuss the context of the RMG industry in Bangladesh. The following five sections will discuss the CSR agenda from the institutional and postcolonial point of view, and a review of related CSR literature will be presented accordingly.

### 2.1 MNCs and CSR

It is estimated there are about 70,000 multinational corporations with hundreds of thousands of subsidiaries operating across borders (Waddock 2008), and they seem to be increasing over time (UNCTAD 2010). In addition, the yearly net income of many MNCs are significantly higher than the gross domestic product of many developing nations where they operate (Adler 2008). However, there is not only an increase in the number of MNCs, but also in their political power and social engagement (Dunning and Lundan 2008). The extent of their global influence has grown significantly (Ruggie 2008), with the business ethics and business and society literature now claiming globalization has increased the power of MNCs, which has led to a corresponding decrease in state power (Matten and Crane 2005; Scherer and Palazzo 2007).

During the colonial era, the British Monarchy used ‘royal corporate charters’ to control their corporations. In a similar vein, the United States, in their system of government set up state charters for their corporations. Using these state charters of incorporation, the U.S. government attempted to regulate corporations by stating what corporations were allowed to do, how long they could operate and how corporations were obliged to serve the public interest (Banerjee 2008).

By the end of 19th-century, corporations started ignoring the state charters of incorporation as by this time enforcement of this legislation started to wane. According to Perrow (2002, 41) this was not “*a mistake, an inadvertence, a happenstance in history, but a well-designed plan devised by particular interests who needed a ruling that would allow for a particular form of organization*”. This legal revolution, which removed rules of incorporation and restrictions around corporate activity contributed to the formation of the modern business organization. Henceforth, Banerjee (2008, 54) rightly points out, since the legislative

authority of states for regulating corporate behaviour was removed there was now no 'official' requirement to serve the public interest except in the economic realm'.

More recently, the growing influence of large corporations has led to the creation of CSR guidelines. This growth is not only in terms of the quantity, space and variety of corporate activity but also in terms of intellectual endeavour. When it comes to exploring the CSR topic, it is evident the recent research trend is guided by a broad sense of social and political phenomenon. Hence, currently, CSR is neither being treated simply as a moral-philosophical discourse nor as a profit-driven form of business economics (Vallentin and Murillo 2012). The recent trend shows scholars have started scrutinizing CSR from different perspectives i.e. management studies (Lockett, Moon and Visser 2006), organizational studies (Crouch 2006), post-colonialism (Banerjee 2007), law (McBarnet, Voiculescu and Campbell 2009), development studies (Utting 2007), communication studies (Morsing and Schultz 2006), international relations (Blowfield 2005), anthropology (Sharp, 2006), business economics (Smith and Lenssen 2009) and from a political perspective (Matten and Crane 2005; Scherer and Palazzo 2007, 2011).

CEOs and directors of large corporations, who were reluctant in the early 1980s to operate beyond the accepted legal compliance, started openly advocating in favour of CSR initiatives. Companies, who freely polluted and contributed minimally to the communities where they operate, have experienced a change in their behaviour and morphed into a type of philanthropic company (Hilson 2012). However, the literature has failed to provide an adequate explanation for why this has happened, as Blowfield and Frynas (2005, 500) explain, *"there is no agreement among observers on why the concept of CSR has risen to prominence in recent history"*.

In 2005, Blowfield argued as a body of knowledge CSR has yet to develop a mechanism for its own internal critics. Hence, the field is not in a position to recognize its prejudices, assumptions and limitations (Blowfield 2005). However, the recent discourse on CSR is expanding and the discussion has started becoming self-critical and self-reflective (Banerjee 2007). Banerjee (2008, 61) argues that corporate social responsibility has become a 'product or service strategy designed to sustain a competitive advantage', i.e. a way of legitimating the existence and ways of making profit of Multinational Companies (MNCs). Though the globalised production and sourcing have brought lower costs to companies and consumers, there have been negative consequences as well.

Though corporate social responsibility (CSR) has received significant scholarly attention in the developed world, little is known regarding CSR perceptions and practices in the

developing countries (Frynas 2006), which has led to the production of a Western-centric nature of CSR knowledge (Belal 2001). According to Hilson (2012, 132) “*in developed countries, CSR complements a set of robust command-and-control regulations, in developing countries, where there tends to be weak enforcement of legislation and rampant corruption, companies typically find themselves in positions to self-regulate, the lack of monitoring and consultation often leading to a situation where the company becomes a ‘sort of de facto government’ (after Banerjee, 2001)*”.

The seminal work of Sachs and Warner (1995) shows how the resource-rich countries can suffer from a ‘resource curse’, which leads to reduced growth, increased inequality, and reduced human development in resource-rich countries. Pematzoglou et al. (2014) has argued extractive MNCs in the resource-rich developing countries are often responsible for perpetuating corruption, which leads to poor governance in these countries. Recent studies have shown countries which have strong institutions for supporting democracy and the rule of law tend to escape from the ‘resource curse’, on the other hand, countries with weak democratic institutions often fail to escape from the ‘resource curse’ (Collier and Goderis 2007; Mehlum, Moene and Torvik 2006; Robinson, Torvik and Verdier 2006).

The illicit outflow of money from poor countries to rich countries is almost ten times larger than the foreign aid received by developing countries from the developed world. In his pioneering book, “*Capitalism's Achilles Heel: Dirty Money and How to Renew the Free-Market System*”, Raymond Baker, Director of Global Financial Integrity (GFI) shows the current international financial infrastructure is reinforcing the illicit financial flows (Baker 2005). GFI estimates that in a year the amount of illicit financial flow from poor to rich countries is \$500 billion, which is funding the most damaging economic conditions for the poor. It is a common tendency to blame the corrupt elites, and it is a common belief they are transferring their money to foreign accounts in the western world. However, according to the GFI estimate, corrupt elites of developing countries account for 3% of the illicit cross-border financial flows; crime syndicates contribute 30 to 35 percent, whereas the majority, almost 60 percent, is via tax evasion made by MNCs. According to Baker (2005, 338) “*North American and European countries, as well as other states, maintain legal loopholes that encourage illegal inflows. Gaps are left in statutes that keep opening the doors to criminal and tax-evading money. As a result, every western nation fails in its anti-money laundering efforts*”. Hence, critical management studies have started questioning this western hegemony and have expressed curiosity on how Western-lead CSR can bring benefits to developing countries.

According to Wiig and Kolstad (2010, 178) *“countries fare better whose institutions prevent politicians from using resource rents to shore up power, and whose institutions discourage unproductive rent-seeking by securing entrepreneurs’ claims to returns from productive activities. While we know that the institutions are important for economic development, particularly in resource-rich countries, the interaction between multinational corporations and host country institutions is not well understood. This is unfortunate as multinational corporations are prominent and sometimes dominant players in resource-rich economies”*.

Morck and Lloyd (2007) investigated how capitalism is organised and executed in various countries. They show that when a pyramidal business group<sup>1</sup> is used, corporate social responsibility is more diffuse and hard to trace. Shareholder capitalism, on the contrary, where investors are more informed, avoid firms that are likely to waste their trust, and so tend to produce more reliable and at least more transparent capitalistic structures. Chapple and Moon (2005) describe how the practices of CSR vary considerably between different types of companies and different countries in Asia. They argue the different practices cannot be explained by the differences in development among Asian countries, but by different business systems and conclude that MNCs are more likely to adopt CSR policies than domestic companies, which are operating in their home country. Moreover, Chapple and Moon (2005) show that it is the national business system which shapes the CSR practices in this region. The study also shows that in this region, philanthropic tradition, religion, and colonial legacies have informed CSR systems.

Research studies have suggested CSR may be an excellent instrument for enhancing the legitimacy of the firm among its stakeholders (e.g., Handelman and Arnold 1999). It has also been suggested that in gaining competitive advantage, it is important for companies to integrate CSR within a firm’s strategy (Galbreath 2009). In addition, to facilitate CSR Policies and Practices firms need to incorporate the stakeholder demand for CSR into their strategic planning (Galbreath 2010). The study by Gugler and Shi (2008) claim that various developing countries are aligning their CSR approaches to attain a competitive position in global trade.

Baughn, Bodie, and McIntosh (2007) have examined and compared social and environmental considerations of CSR initiatives in 15 Asian countries as well as in other

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<sup>1</sup> A pyramidal business group is usually a family-controlled or state-controlled business group which holds control blocks of the larger parts of the corporate sectors of many countries (Morck and Lloyd 2007).

regions. In this regard, they have surveyed 8700 firms from 104 countries and have found that differences in the economic, political, and social context produce different institutional capacity, which then leads to significant country and regional differences in CSR practices. Moreover, this study demonstrates that where the state has properly taken care of its citizen, less company involvement is expected in societal issues. In addition, this study claims a country's economic freedom, economic development, and level of corruption determine the extent of CSR initiatives.

However, Hymer (1976) points out that in the host country setting foreign firms are inherently subject to greater difficulties compared to local firms. Hence, foreign firms incur greater costs than local firms in host country settings do. This particular competitive disadvantage is the liability of foreignness (LOF) for the foreign firms (Zaheer 1995). By introducing CSR into a LOF study, Campbell, Eden, and Miller (2012) brought the issue of cultural, administrative, geographic and economic (CAGE) distance in their study. This study shows that though it is important for foreign firms to be engaged in CSR activities in the host country to gain social legitimacy, the CAGE distance factor results in foreign firms' reluctance to engage in CSR activities in the host country.

Using data from MNCs with headquarters based in the USA, Canada, or France and subsidiaries located in four countries: the USA, Canada, France, and Spain, Aguilera-Caracuel et al. (2012) examined the impact of environmental institutional distance<sup>2</sup> between host and home countries on their environmental performances. The results show where the formal distance of environment is high; MNCs accommodate divergent practices and conform to local environmental regulations to avoid penalties, legal costs, and sanctions. On the contrary, where the informal differences between home and host countries are high, MNCs adopt convergence practices.

## **2.2 Background Information of Bangladesh**

Following a pair of twentieth-century secessions from India (1947) and Pakistan (1971), Bangladesh became self-governing, independent state. The region's history combines Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Mughal, Arab, Persian, Turkic and British influences. What is now Bangladesh as a part of the state of Bengal; it was ruled by the Mughal Empire

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<sup>2</sup> Environmental institutional distance represents the difference in the national environmental institutional profiles between countries. Formal environmental distance represents the differences in the environmental regulatory situation between countries. Informal environmental distance represents the differences in the environmentally formulated constraints that are not official but embedded in traditions, customs, and social norms or codes of conduct between countries (Aguilera-Caracuel et al. 2012)

for two centuries; and during the latter two centuries of British rule in India. In the latter part of the fifteenth century, Portuguese traders and missionaries were the first Europeans to reach Bengal. Representatives of the Dutch, the French, and the British East India Company followed. During the twentieth century, the country suffered a series of man-made and natural disasters.

One could argue that a sense of CSR is rooted in the history of Bangladesh, where responsibilities of the public sector to the general society have been known from ancient times as a social duty or charity. In the past, charity or social duty was determined by culture, religion, family tradition, and industrialization. During the period from 1972-1975, Bangladesh experienced the paradigm of a “controlled economy” which can be characterized by the state establishing a centralized public sector; the government of Bangladesh nationalised all business concerns. The intention of establishing a centralized public sector was to guarantee the appropriate distribution of wealth to those people most in need, also the public sector was seen as the prime mover of development. However, the trauma and suffering of the population did not end after a violent liberation struggle in 1971, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who is considered as the founding father of Bangladesh was assassinated in 1975. Bangladesh was more or less under military rule until 1990 but democracy was restored in 1991 (Belal 2001).

Bangladesh has historically had an agrarian economy. Before liberation, a few families ran the major industrial sectors, and most of them were non-Bengali people. After liberation, most of wealthy industrialists left the country and Bangladesh faced a problem of not having experienced entrepreneurs. Just after the liberation, in the year 1972, the government of Bangladesh embarked on a huge nationalisation program. However, due to the lack of management capacities, the nationalisation programme did not succeed. In the 1980s, and 1990s, the government initiated a privatization program, and the country started putting more emphasis on the private sector. In order to intensify the privatization process, the government established two stock exchanges, the Dhaka Stock Exchange and the Chittagong Stock Exchange. In addition, in order to attract investments from local private investors as well as overseas investors, several incentives were taken, such as, tax incentives, the establishment of a special industrial zone aimed at foreign investors and the provision of very cheap labour (Belal 2001). According to Osmani (2005) *“The contemporary global debate on globalization and its multi-pronged impact has had a strong echo in the academic and political discussions in Bangladesh as well. After a hesitant start in the mid-1980s, Bangladesh moved decisively to embrace the wave of globalization in the 1990s”*.

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with a population of more than 159 million in an area of only 147,570 square kilometres (BBS 2015b). The Labour Force Survey (LFS 2010) has estimated that the economically active population is 56.7 million, 43.4 million of this population live in rural areas and more than 47.2 percent of this population work in the agricultural sector (BBS 2010). Although a relatively small percentage of people are employed in the industrial sector, industrial labour is organized and unionized in Bangladesh. Labour unions often maintain a strong relationship with the major political parties and are influential in maintaining labour-management relationships. The cultural life of Bangladesh is characterized by strong, traditional family values, powerful elite groups and widespread corruption (Belal 2001). According to Parry and Khan (1984, 34) *“In Bangladesh a small socially important [elite] group dominates the upper reaches of government, industry, commerce and higher education”*. Henceforth, this elitism has led to a very hierarchical society as evidenced by the almost feudal master-servant relationship and the gradation of tasks according to status (Parry and Khan 1984, 36).

Due to the introduction of a market-based economy, Bangladesh has been able to attract a significant amount of foreign investment, and in the last decade experienced a 5% growth in GDP (WorldBank 2002). Despite the Bangladesh economy experiencing growth, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income of only \$440 a year (WorldBank 2005). The poverty problem in Bangladesh is reported to be worsening as evidenced by the increase in the number of people living below the poverty line from 50 million in 1972 to 70 million in 2005 (Khan 2006). Furthermore, the recent economic growth has resulted in many adverse social, ethical, and environmental impacts, which in turn demands a greater transparency and accountability in business and industrial unit practices (Byron 2005; Rahman 2003).

### **2.3 The Context of RMG Industry in Bangladesh**

In 1971, the Bangladesh economy generated approximately 540 million dollars by exporting goods and services, which contributed 6.3% to its GDP. During this period the readymade garments (RMG) industry failed to make any contribution to the economy (Ahmed, Greenleaf and Sacks 2014). Reaz Garments, Paris Garments, Jewel Garments and Baishakhi Garments were the first companies of the RMG industry in Bangladesh. Among them Reaz Garments which began as the Reaz Store in Dhaka is regarded as the pioneer in the RMG industry. It is important to mention the Reaz Store was established in 1960 as a simple tailoring outfit and served only the domestic market for more than 15 years. In 1973, it changed its name from Reaz Store to M/s Reaz Garments Ltd. (Mottaleb and Sonobe 2011). In 1977, Reaz and Jewel Garments began exporting its products to France and Germany and

earned 40,000 USD (Rashid 2006). In 1978, 9 export-oriented garment manufacturing units generated one million dollars export earnings (Mottaleb and Sonobe 2011).

In 1979, South Korean firm Daewoo and Desh Garment of Bangladesh established the first non-equity joint-venture, and started operations as a one-hundred percent export oriented entity (Mottaleb and Sonobe 2011). In this partnership arrangement Daewoo provided the necessary training and equipment to Desh Garment for facilitating exports, and under this arrangement about 120 Bangladeshi workers including 3 women were sent to South Korea for training and these workers started production work in the early 1980s (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004; Ahmed, Greenleaf and Sacks 2014). However, in 1980, the first equity joint-venture, Youngones Bangladesh, was initiated between the South Korean Youngones Corporation and Bangladeshi Trexim Ltd. In this arrangement, the Bangladeshi firm retained 51 percent equity, and made its first export to Sweden in December 1980 (Ullah 2015).

After receiving foreign investment, the Bangladeshi RMG industry has experienced phenomenal growth during the last 20 years. However, at the beginning when Desh Garment was established in 1979 the Bangladesh government was sceptical regarding the potential of the garment industry. Later in 1982, the government started to offer several incentives for facilitating growth in the garment industry which included cash incentives, duty-free import of machinery and raw materials, and bonded warehouse facilities (Mottaleb and Sonobe 2011). In addition, different governments were committed to particular political settlements and offered a viable environment for the growth of the garment industry in Bangladesh (Ahmed, Greenleaf and Sacks 2014). According to Ahmed, Greenleaf, and Sacks (2014) this political settlement *“is a combination of institutions and a distribution of power between organizations (e.g., political parties, military, and bureaucracy) that is reproducible over time”*.

For many low-income countries, exporting RMG products has served as the means of industrialization and economic growth (Asuyama et al. 2013). As such, over the period from 1980-1987, the compound growth rate of RMG export industries in Indonesia, Mauritius, Dominican Republic, and Bangladesh were 31.2, 23.8, 21.1, and 81.3 percent respectively (Rashid 2006). The Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) was phased out on 31 December 2004. Since then the total value chain of the apparel industry started experiencing open sourcing without any restrictions of a quota. Although the phasing out of the MFA initially increased tension in the Bangladeshi RMG industry, in the post MFA period of 2005-2008, the RMG industry successfully maintained a 25 percent growth in its exports (Rahman, Bhattacharya and Moazzem 2008).

However, Bangladesh succeeded in maintaining its export growth during the post MFA era by exploiting low labour costs. The labour costs in the Bangladeshi RMG industry is still the lowest compared to other RMG producing countries. The RMG owners have used cheap labour as their competitive advantage for supplying more and more products to their MNCs buyers (Muhammad 2011). A new minimum wage for garment workers was declared in July 2010, and in association with factory owners, the government has declared a new minimum wage of 3,000 taka/month, which is still considered a poverty wage. Furthermore, RMG workers in Bangladesh continue to earn the lowest wages in the industry (Muhammad 2011). Taplin (2014) has shown RMG factory owners in Bangladesh maintain deep political linkages and currently they hold 10 percent of the seats in parliament. Due to this political linkage, mass protests by RMG workers demanding higher wages has remained unsuccessful (Muhammad 2011).

The current inflation rate in Bangladesh is 6.36 (BBS 2015a). As such, the life of garment worker has become extremely difficult, and they struggle to cope with the increasing cost of living (Meenakshi Ramesh 2014). In addition, Ahamed (2013) has shown garment workers not only receive the lowest wages compared to other RMG manufacturing countries, but also earn the lowest wage compared to other domestic industries. With this real wage, garment workers cannot cover their living expenses (Ullah 2015).

The issue of poor wages and working conditions has been well documented and has received significant international attention. However, none of the initiatives taken by any of the involved stakeholders has succeeded in bringing positive change to the lives of garment workers in Bangladesh (Islam and McPhail 2011; Ullah 2015). From 2001-2011, the Bangladesh garment industry experienced phenomenal growth in export earnings. However, during this same period the cost of living and other expenses increased unexpectedly, and the real wages of garment workers experienced a dramatic decrease which by any means cannot be considered as justifiable (Hensler 2013).

The principal employee-related issues of concern are health and safety, child labour, human rights, and equal opportunity, and these are particularly acute issues in the garment and textile sector, and in other export-oriented industries. In this regard, the media has played a pivotal role in regularly reporting violations of human rights in factories, especially in export-oriented units, relating to the long working hours, unpaid wages, mandatory pregnancy tests, and harsh working conditions (Afrin 2002; Milne 2001).

As far as social responsibility is concerned, there are virtually no disclosure requirements under the Companies Act (1994) and the Securities & Exchange Rules (1987) in Bangladesh.

Some more progressive companies in Bangladesh voluntarily provide some information with regard to social and environmental matters (Chowdhury and Chowdhury 1996). However, their disclosure levels are very poor. Significant effort is required to clearly identify what information is needed for the development of social goals and social responsibilities (Imam 2000).

In addition, for the purpose of CSR studies in Bangladesh, most of the listed companies do not provide any information regarding the environment, human resources, the local community, or their consumers. However, some companies do disclose some information but that information is not at all adequate in determining social responsibility. Moreover, all the information provided by this company was qualitative in nature (Imam 2000). Belal and Owen (2004) examined managerial perceptions of CSR in Bangladesh and found that outside forces such as parent companies, international buyers, and international agencies, are the forces behind current CSR processes.

Currently, in Bangladesh, an increasing number of companies are engaged in CSR. Compared to MNCs, only a few local companies have adopted the CSR concept into their plans. However, a large number of local companies are engaged in philanthropic activity and charity, helping individuals and communities through donations, contributing to infrastructure development and in providing healthcare facilities (Sobhan 2006a). Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) launched its CSR center in June 2005, which has been organized to promote CSR in Bangladesh. To enhance the understanding of CSR, BEI has organized regular monthly roundtable discussions together with key industry stakeholders (Sobhan 2006).

Industrial pollution is a major environmental concern in Bangladesh (Belal, Khan and Alam 1998). According to Salequzzaman and Stocker (2001, 104) *“Bangladesh has the highest density of population among all countries of the world and is the worst victim of environmental degradation....In particular, as Bangladesh proceeds towards industrialization it needs to be careful about environmental impacts. There are several reasons why Bangladesh needs to be extra careful and gain more knowledge of the environment. The country now relies greatly on foreign capital, which is more likely to be guided by immediate profit concerns and lead to many environmentally risky and damaging decisions.”*

WorldBank (2001) figures have identified Bangladesh as having a 29% participation rate for children aged 10-14 years who are working in business or industry. In 2002/03, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) conducted the second National Child Labour Survey

(NCLS). According to this survey, in the age group of 5-14 years, there were 4.9 million working children, which was 14.2 percent of the 35.06 million children in the general population (Child labour Responses 2004). Today, under international pressure, Bangladesh has to some extent succeeded in eliminating industrial child labour. However, the rehabilitation and welfare of these ex-child labourers has been ignored (Murshed 2005), and with few other options children now work in the construction industry which is regarded as less regulated and more dangerous (Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014).

Raj-Reichert (2013) has shown the current governance mechanisms, which MNCs have been using in monitoring their global production networks (GPNs) cannot safeguard the health and safety of workers in distant factories. In addition, the current process of reporting requires onerous documentation, self-monitoring and auditing that provide very little actual knowledge of the health and safety conditions of workers who work in far-off factories. Hence, in order to affect real improvements in the far-flung sweatshops, the current rule based governance approach of CSR should be replaced by a more worker-participative governance process (Raj-Reichert 2013; Ruwanpura 2013). In this regard, Yu (2009) also has demonstrated active participation of workers in the corporate code governance process helps to secure worker benefits from suppliers .

The power inequality between the MNCs and their suppliers within the global production networks of the garment industries have brought undesirable outcomes for vulnerable workers who are working in developing countries (Coe and Hess 2013). When it comes to the question of the codes of conduct in garment industries economic upgrading is given preference over any social upgrading as the latter is more challenging to achieve (Barrientos, Gereffi and Rossi 2011; Bernhardt 2013; Perry, Wood and Fernie 2015). In the current arrangement of the codes of conduct, the MNCs have mainly focused on wages, working conditions, and the health and safety issues at the suppliers firms, and any issues that could enable the rights of workers by giving voice to the voiceless, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining are ignored deliberately (Plank, Rossi and Staritz 2012).

Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini (2014) have claimed some buyers are not serious enough in their social sustainability initiatives, and some of them have used this CSR concept to maintain their brand image. In addition, the government of Bangladesh has not played a significant role in developing the CSR model. Although some NGOs are working on this issue, buyers and suppliers have so far failed to reach a general consensus on the role of NGOs. Some suppliers are not happy with the NGOs activity and believe they have not produced any benefits. However, the buyers believe that NGOs have played an important role in raising awareness. Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini (2014) have also claimed the codes of

conduct developed by MNCs buyers have not been compatible with the cultural and socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh. Hence, inconsistent codes of conduct have led to mock compliance.

The constitution of Bangladesh articulates the equal opportunities for both the men and women. However, if investigating the workplace, there is little evidence of equality (Andaleeb and Wolford 2004, 52). Furthermore, in Bangladesh, women do not have the same level of protection from human rights violations as men do, for disabled women the situation is even worse, and they continue to experience severe deprivation and sexual abuse. Although women are being included more in international development work – disabled women are still largely ignored, and 97% of disabled women are unemployed (ADD 2008).

Article 14 of the Bangladesh Constitution states that, *“It should be a fundamental responsibility of the state to emancipate the toiling masses, the peasants and workers and backward section of the people from all forms of exploitation (GOB 2010)”*. However, after 40 years of independence the condition of the typical Bangladeshi worker is lagging far behind the constitutional vision. The recent reforms of the labour market have also failed to address health and safety issues of the workers (Sharma 2015).

In the last twenty years, labour force composition in the manufacturing sector has changed significantly in Bangladesh. At the same time, many workers have been exploited and human rights violations have been reported from various corners of the country. In Bangladesh as in most developing countries, private and public sector employees do not share similar work benefits. Private sector workers do not enjoy the same benefits such as a pension, provident fund, health insurance, transportation, and accommodation as enjoyed by public sector employees. In addition, private sector employees generally work in unhygienic and unsafe conditions and are subject to delays in the payment of wages and long working hours (Sharma 2015).

Sharma (2015) has revealed RMG workers are paid a fixed-piece rate wage in which it was not clearly stated how to calculate overtime. In addition, most employers do not follow acceptable human resource practices when hiring workers and usually do not provide any appointment letter to their hired workers. Hence, job insecurity has been greatest in the RMG industry. Furthermore, when it comes to the question of working hours, it is not fixed and workers have been forced to work longer hours to meet the target output (Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014).

Ahmed (2007) and Parvez (2007) have showed neither trade unions nor coordination committees were noticeable in 4250 RMG factories. Furthermore, garment workers have had

no freedom in their factories to join unions. In addition, the existing law has not supported forming a new trade union which violates the principle of association and collective bargaining (Sharma 2015).

Not only human rights, employee rights, and environmental issues but also the issue of corruption have raised significant concerns in Bangladeshi society. Moreover Transparency International has ranked Bangladesh three years in a row as the most corrupt country in the world (Mir and Rahaman 2005). In other words, Bangladesh was ranked 1 in the corruption ranking of Transparency International. As such, the media has widely reported many businesses have been involved in unethical and corrupt activities, such as bribery (Khaleque 2005) and tax evasion (Hasan 2002).

However, corruption is not unique to Bangladesh; rather it is a complex universal phenomenon. Corruption is rooted in the history of civilisation and which has led to many administrative problems. From 1757 until 1947, Bangladesh was a part of British India and from 1947 until 1971 was ruled by Pakistan. Haque and Mohammad (2013) have claimed corruption was evident in British India and Pre-independence (East) Pakistan, and the gift giving system of corruption was institutionalized during this period. Specifically, these scholars believe the British East India Company should be blamed for institutionalizing corruption in this part of the world, as they paid subsistence wages to their employees, thereby forcing them to resort to corruption. Corruption was also evident in post-colonial East Pakistan, and the institutionalised system of paying speed money became common in processing documents, in moving files, in clearing customs, and in receiving prompt services (Islam 2004). Consequently, corruption eventually dominated public life of Bangladesh (Haque and Mohammad 2013).

## **2.4 Institutional Theory and Perspectives of CSR**

An institution is a system of norms, which guide the relationships of the individual. Moreover, this system of norms defines "what the relationships of individuals ought to be" (Parsons 1990, 327). Veblen (1919, 239) defines institutions as "settled habits of thought common to the generality of man". Since the late 19th century, various disciplines, i.e. economics, political science and sociology, have used institutional theory to develop theoretical understanding in their specific contexts. The varied applications of institutional theory in these disciplines have not only created a diverse range but also have generated wide-ranging contradictions, which in turn has helped to advance this theory to another level specifically, new institutionalism. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the CSR ideals of the Western companies are being translated by the suppliers' in Bangladesh. In this

regard, as this study will attempt to unravel the institutionalisation process of CSR practices, it will be necessary to know how institutional theory has evolved in sociology, and how scholars have identified institutions, institutionalisation and institutional change for their purpose. Hence, this section will attempt to discuss the major development of the early and the new institutional theory in the field of sociology. Thereafter there will be a discussion on how the new institutionalism is affecting the life of organizations.

#### ***2.4.1 Institutional Theory in Sociology***

The sociological research field has given more attention to institutions and institutional theory compared to economists and political scientists. The different strands of institutions with their distinctive language and arguments have been widely studied in sociology. The works of Freidson and Abbott were published after Cooley and Hughes. Durkheim and Weber are regarded as the predecessors of Parsons, DiMaggio and Powell. On the other hand, Meyer and Rowan have carried forward the work of Mead, Berger and Luckmann (Scott 1995, 8).

According to Scott (1995, 8) “*Cooley and his followers emphasized the interdependence of individuals and institutions, of self and social structure*”. Cooley put emphasis on the independent and objective nature of institutions. He also described it is the interactions of the individuals through which the great institutions i.e. language, the church, government, and the family are developed and maintained (Cooley 1956, 313-314). Hughes focused on the institutional structures of occupations and professions (see Hughes 1958). The earlier empirical studies of Freidson (1970) and Abbott (1988) helped in developing the later insights of Cooley and Hughes and their more recent studies have mainly focused on occupational institutionalism (Scott 1995, 8).

The tradition of European institutional analysis is largely indebted to the French sociologist Emile Durkheim and the German sociologist Max Weber. Symbolic systems of knowledge, belief, and moral authority are the social institutions for Durkheim, and he believed the symbolic systems of belief and collective representations had a religious-like character. Although individuals experience these systems as objective, these systems are actually the product of human interaction which are subjectively formed and become crystallized in the social system (see Scott 1995). According to Durkheim (1961, 474-475) “*There is something eternal in religion which is destined to survive all the particular symbols in which religious thought has successively enveloped itself. There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals, the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality*”.

Many contemporary institutional theorists regard Max Weber as their guiding theorist. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that Weber did not explicitly use the concept of “institution” in his work. In his work, Weber mainly focused on cultural rules systems, administrative systems, economic and social structures, and the pattern of economic and social behavioural. Weber tried to solve many conflicting issues in his research hence, the classification of his theoretical perspectives has become controversial (Scott 1995, 11).

However, differentiating social science from natural science, Weber has argued the researcher and the object of the study, both have attached meaning to events, and individuals attach subjective meaning to their behaviour in a social context (Weber 1968, 4). When a question is presented to respond to the stimuli, the individual takes time to interpret them and then forms their response. In this regard, in order to understand a social behaviour, researchers must consider the meaning through which the social action is mediated. In addition, an interpretive approach was employed by Weber in synthesizing the Marxist material conditions and interests such as constrained choice and action with the idealist interpretations of the normative values of Durkheim such as motivated and activated action (see Alexander 1983a).

Talcott Parsons an American sociologist pioneered research in the advancement of institutional theory. His voluntaristic theory of action was the result of his attempt to synthesize the earlier major arguments made by Durkheim, Marx, Weber, and Freud in particular (Alexander 1983b). According to Parsons (1990, 326) “*the primary motive for obedience to an institutional norm lies in the moral authority it exercises over the individual*”. Parsons viewed institutions as a system of norms, which guide the relationships of the individual. In addition, it defines "what the relations of individuals ought to be" (Parsons 1990, 327).

Alexander (1983b, 242) argued that Parsons put too much emphasis on the cultural patterns in describing the institutionalisation. On the other hand, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) showed the cultural elements that Parsons had used in understanding the institutionalisation process helped to develop the micro foundations of institutional theory. However, they complained Parsons undermined the objective view; he gave too much weight to the subjective view, which showed his disregard for the more cognitive dimensions (DiMaggio and Powell 1991, 17)

In the discussion of self and society, George Herbert Mead gave specific attention to the symbolic system. The works of Mead, Mannheim and Schutz later influenced Berger and Luckmann (1967) who had suggested there had been a paradigm shift in sociological

understanding. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967, 15) “*the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with everything that passes for 'knowledge' in society*”. Berger and Luckmann (1967) had argued social reality is a product of social interaction which is a human creation. Countering Durkheim and Parsons, who had emphasised the production of rules and norms, Berger and Luckmann (1967) emphasized cognitive frameworks over the normative system and argued for the creation of shared knowledge and belief systems. This attempt is regarded as the foundation of new institutionalism in organisations.

#### ***2.4.2 Neo-Institutional Theory in Sociology***

Silverman was an early neo-institutional theorist who introduced institutional influences to the study of society. Silverman (1971) proposed action theory of organisation where he challenged the prevailing models of the organisation which put unnecessary emphasis on order, stability, and technical efficiency. Based on the work of Durkheim (1961), Goffman (1961), Schutz (1962), and Berger and Luckmann (1967), a phenomenological view of organisation was proposed by Silverman. In this effort, the focus of Silverman (1971) was on the meaning of systems, and also on the mechanism through which social actions are constructed and reconstructed (Scott 1995, 29).

However, it is important to mention that Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Zucker (1977) published the two most influential articles in the field of organisational sociology. Furthermore, based on their contributions they are regarded as neo-institutional theorist pioneers in organisational sociology. The research of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Zucker (1977) are heavily influenced by Berger and Luckmann (1967) concept of institution. Consequently, these two neo-institutional theorists put more emphasis on the cognitive dimensions of organisations rather than the normative aspects of organisation (Scott 1995, 30).

Meyer and Rowan (1977) have argued institutionalisation is a process through which social processes and obligations tend to take shape, as a rule, like status in a society. These taken-for-granted classified institutionalized rules may have strong public support or they may be supported by existing legislation. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977, 340) “*organizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society. Organizations that do so increase their legitimacy and their survival prospects, independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures*”.

Highlighting cognitive dimensions of organisations Zucker (1977, 726) argue that “*Social knowledge, once institutionalized exists as a fact, as part of objective reality, and can be transmitted directly on that basis*”. In addition she identified institutionalisation as both process and property variable. According to Zucker (1977, 728) institutionalisation “*is the process by which individual actors transmit what is socially defined as real and, at the same time, at any point in the process the meaning of an act can be defined as more or less a taken-for-granted part of this social reality. Institutionalized acts, then, must be perceived as both objective and exterior. Acts are objective when they are potentially repeatable by other actors without changing the common understanding of the act, while acts are exterior when subjective understanding of acts is reconstructed as inter-subjective understanding so the acts are seen as part of the external world*”.

### **2.4.3 Institutional Theory of Organisation**

The application of institutional theory to organisations is relatively recent compared to the other fields of social sciences. March (1965) demonstrated that institutional theory was introduced into organisations during the period from 1937-1947. In this regard, he recognized Barnard, Roethlisberger, Dickson, Gulick and Urwick for their early contributions. These early efforts received new momentum when Weber’s studies were translated into English. Subsequently, scholars at Columbia University and Carnegie Institute of Technology contributed heavily to the development of early institutional theory of organisations (Scott 1995, 16).

#### **Columbia School**

In the late 1940s, under the guidance of Robert K. Merton a group of students of Columbia University specifically, Selznick, Gouldner, Blau, Lipset, Trow, and Coleman initiated institutional theory into their organisational study (Scott 1995, 16). Among them, Selznick was regarded as the pioneering scholar of institutional theory of organisations. However, it is important to mention that Merton did not employ the term institutionalisation in his research, and his work was best known for the application of Weber’s concept of bureaucracy in understanding the behaviour of an organisation. According to Scott (1995, 17) “*Merton depicts the multiple forces within bureaucracy producing discipline and orienting officials to a valued normative order. The strength of these pressures is such that officials are prone to follow the rules to the point of rigidity, formalism, even ritualism*”.

Merton's research had a significant influence on Selznick’s conception of the institutional process. Earlier, Selznick (1948) tried to demonstrate the formal organisation as a structural

expression which is the result of rational actions. Selznick also argued that this structural expression is designed to achieve specified goals, and this organic system is shaped by the varied pressures streaming from its participants and environment. Selznick (1957, 16) identified institutionalisation as a process and depicted that over time organisations turned into institutions. According to Selznick (1949, 256-257) “*organizations are social systems, goals or procedures and tend to achieve an established, value-impregnated status. We say that they become institutionalized*”.

Selznick's student Stinchcombe (1968, 107) has defined an institution as “*a structure in which powerful people are committed to some value or interest*”. Stinchcombe also argued only values and interests are presumed as protected in organisations, which are backed by the power structure. According to Stinchcombe (1968, 111) “*By selection, socialization, controlling conditions of incumbency, and hero worship, succeeding generations of power-holders tend to regenerate the same institutions*”.

### **The Carnegie School**

Together with March, Simon contributed greatly to the development of institutional theory at Carnegie Mellon University. Simon's theory of administrative behaviour attempted to correct the earlier assumptions about rationality, which Simon found unreasonable. In his theory, Simon demonstrated the link between the organisational structure and the cognitive capacity of individuals. Simon (1957, 220-247) also showed that as an organisational member, individuals internalize organisational values, which guide them in following the rules, procedures, and routines of the organisation. According to Simon (1957, 102) “*the rational individual is, and must be, an organized and institutionalized individual*”. March and Simon (1958, 141-142) argued that for the organisational members “*search and choice processes are very much abridged. . . . Most behaviour, and particularly most behaviour in organizations, is governed by performance programs*”.

While Simon was working on behaviour in organisations, a group of social psychologists were also working on cognitive theory. These cognitive psychologists have shown that individuals create their own identities, which guide them in making their own sense of the world. According to Burke and Reitzes (1991, 242) these identities are the “*shared social meanings that persons attribute to themselves in a role*”. Burke and Reitzes (1981, 1991) argued that interacting with other elements of the society, individuals create these identities for themselves, and symbolically these identities are regarded as reflexively managed. This reflexive and active self also determines what organisational information is important to

them, and how to make the best use of this information for decision making (Scott, 1995 23-24).

#### ***2.4.4 The New Institutionalism to Organisations***

An increasing numbers of scholars are relying on institutional theory to study why organisations are adopting organisational practices (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Tolbert and Zucker 1983; Scott 1995; Zsidisin, Melnyk and Ragatz 2005; Gopal and Gao 2009; Liu et al. 2010; Adebajo et al. 2013; Kauppi 2013). Since institutional theory provides a base for examining a wide range of critical issues, and allows theorizing at multiple levels of analysis (Djelic and Quack 2003), an increasing number of international management scholars are relying on it to study MNCs (Dacin, Goodstein and Scott 2002).

Matten and Moon (2008) suggest that in order to understand how CSR practices are becoming standardized in organisations across industries and national boundaries, researchers need to focus on regulative, normative, and cognitive processes, which Scott (1995) has identified as the three pillars of institutions. By reflecting on the laws and rules of a given social context, the regulatory component of an institutional environment dictates what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in a particular society (Kostova 1999, 314). The cognitive component focuses on the widely shared social knowledge used by the people in a given country (Markus and Zajonc 1985), which helps to categorize and interpret a particular phenomenon. The normative component represents the values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions about human nature and human behaviour held by the individuals in a given country (Kostova and Roth 2002).

There are three instruments through which institutional isomorphism can arise i.e. coercive, mimetic, and normative (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Coercive isomorphism is the force that stems from the more powerful authorities, which impose new rules in the life of the organisations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Liu et al. 2010). Mimetic isomorphism occurs under uncertainty and stimulates organisations to adopt practices of the successful organisation (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Zsidisin, Melnyk and Ragatz 2005). The normative isomorphism comes from the professional body and organisations then adopt these practices as they consider these appropriate in their particular environment (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Gopal and Gao 2009). Considering these different isomorphisms, organisations internalize different norms, values, and practices to achieve legitimacy in their environment and thus, increase their chances of survival and success (e.g., DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

## 2.5 CSR from the Perspective of Institutional Theory

The following table presents the relevant studies that have used organisational perspective of institutional theory and the isomorphisms to answer several questions relating to this thesis. Subsequently, a brief review of these relevant literatures has been made.

*Table 1: Summary of CSR Studies from the Perspective of Institutional Theory*

<i>Author/s</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Gap</i>
Matten and Moon (2008)	To answer why forms of CSR differ among countries	Comparative conceptualization	CSR practices are becoming homogenized in the Northern Hemisphere, which is creating isomorphic pressure for the rest of the world.	This study does not explain how these different isomorphic pressures are contributing in the current CSR arrangements in the developing countries contexts.
Jamali (2010)	To assess the CSR of MNCs in developing countries	Interpretive research	MNCs subsidiaries in developing countries are giving lower priority to their CSR initiatives and in the process of translation, the global ideals of the CSR concept not only became weakened in developing countries but also became significantly diluted at the level of implementation.	This study does not show how different isomorphisms are contributing to the process of institutionalising the CSR practices in developing countries.
Muthuri and Gilbert (2010)	To determine how CSR has been established in Kenya	A web content analysis and survey	The lack of institutional arrangements i.e., government regulations, capacity and commitment to enforce the existing legislation are acting as barriers to promote CSR in Kenya.	This study does not attempt to unfold the gaps between the ideals and the initiatives set by different companies.
Jamali and Neville (2011)	To explore the CSR convergence versus divergence question	Interpretive research	Lebanese businesses have internalized a complex mode of actions, simultaneously representative of both convergence and divergence.	This study does not address the gap between the ideals and initiatives set by different MNC for their subsidiaries.

<i>Author/s</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Gap</i>
Yin and Zhang (2012)	To examine the CSR philosophy and approach in China's emerging market	Multiple case Studies	Understanding of CSR is deeply rooted in their ethical and discretionary context, and, more recently, Chinese companies have been under isomorphic pressures from international organisations to internalize explicit CSR practices.	Though this study has addressed the isomorphic pressures that are present in the context of China, it does not address the process through which CSR is being institutionalised in the context of China.
Bondy, Moon, and Matten (2012)	To investigate the CSR institution within MNCs of the UK	Semi-structured interview	This study presents clear evidence of the presence of an institution of CSR.	This study does not address the process through which CSR practices have been institutionalised in their respective contexts.
Adebanjo et al. (2013)	To examine the supplier selection activities in a service sector organisation	Case study	This study presents the positive relations between the supplier selection strategies of Western MNCs and the behaviour and performance of Eastern suppliers.	This study does not show whether these supplier selection strategies are helping or hindering the implementation of CSR practices in developing countries.
Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen (2013)	To investigate the foundations of the cooperative paradigm of CSR	Critical appraisal methodology	The replacement of a compliance paradigm of CSR with the cooperative paradigm of CSR to enhance CSR capacity of the local suppliers who are working for different MNCs.	This concept is in the developmental stage and empirical testing is needed in a developing country context.

<i>Author/s</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Gap</i>
Mohammed Ziaul and Fara (2015)	To examine the state of CSR in labour-intensive industries in developing countries	Content analysis of leading newspapers in Bangladesh, and review of existing literature	This study claimed the economic motive is guiding the current Western led CSR arrangement in the context of Bangladesh where the suppliers RMG factories are not in the driving seat.	This study fails to present how to operationalise the stakeholders' perspective of CSR in the RMG industry of Bangladesh.
Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman (2016)	To investigate the influence of isomorphisms on the adoption of CSR initiatives in a developing country	A web content analysis	This study has shown due to the weak institutional arrangements; the Western MNCs operating in developing countries are focusing more on their economic values and global reputation, and in this institutionalisation process, the coercive isomorphism guides organisations to defuse their CSR activities.	This study does not address the process through which CSR is being institutionalised in the context of developing countries.

Matten and Moon (2008) have shown CSR practices are becoming more homogenized in the Northern Hemisphere, which is creating isomorphic pressures for the rest of the world. As a result, a shift from implicit to more explicit CSR practices is evident among countries around the globe. In addition, the study showed how institutional arrangements appear to help firms in the USA to internalize more explicit CSR practices than in Europe. This study asserts the isomorphic pressures are forcing MNCs who are operating in developing countries to choose a more explicit form of CSR practices. However, this study fails to show whether firms in the Northern Hemisphere as well as firms in the Southern Hemisphere are benefiting equally from homogenization of CSR practices. In addition, this study does not explain how these isomorphic pressures such as coercive, mimetic, and normative are contributing to the current CSR arrangements in the context of developing countries.

In assessing the CSR of MNCs in a developing country, Jamali (2010) has conducted interpretive research in Lebanon. The author claimed MNC subsidiaries in developing countries are putting a lower priority to their CSR initiatives and in the process of translating the global ideals, the CSR concept not only became weaker in developing countries but also significantly diluted at the level of implementation. The study also showed in order to obtain legitimacy at the global level; developing countries are internalizing a few mimetic CSR initiatives. However, this study does not show how isomorphisms are contributing to the process of institutionalising CSR practices in a developing country.

Muthuri and Gilbert (2010) have shown the normative philanthropic considerations are playing a pivotal role in the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in Kenya. This study also demonstrated though international institutional pressure is present, lack of institutional arrangements i.e., government regulation, capacity and commitment to enforce existing legislation are acting as barriers in promoting CSR practices in Kenya. In addition, the role of civil society is missing, which could lead to a more effective CSR environment. Thus, in the process of institutionalising CSR practices, normative and mimetic isomorphisms have played a major role. However, in its attempt to explain the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in Kenya, this study does not focus on whether or not companies are maintaining their original CSR ideals in their home-country.

To find the answer why CSR practices differ among countries Jamali and Neville (2011) have conducted interpretive research in Lebanon. In doing so, they have tried to address different isomorphisms and to identify the divergent and convergent nature of CSR practices. The research study showed in responding to global CSR pressures, Lebanese businesses have internalized a complex mode of actions, simultaneously representative of both convergence and divergence. The authors also argued that this signifies a superficial level of global convergence in explicit CSR practices. In addition, this research study favours the strengthening of national institutional arrangements for CSR convergence in developing countries. This study also has shown mimetic isomorphism is forcing companies in the developing countries to internalize explicit CSR practices and the absence of coercive and normative isomorphisms is hindering the standardisation process of CSR practices in the context of developing countries. However, this study does not explain how developing countries can internalize externalities that are more positive by adopting explicit CSR practices. In addition, this study did not address the divergence between the ideals of the MNCs and the initiatives set for their subsidiaries and also did not attempt to address the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in the Lebanese context.

After conducting multiple case studies, Yin and Zhang (2012) have found in China, the understanding of CSR is deeply rooted in their ethical and discretionary context, and, in recent times, Chinese companies have been under isomorphic pressure from international to internalize explicit CSR practices. The research study also claimed that when it comes to the issue of institutional arrangements and instruments, China is lagging far behind developed countries, and thus CSR practices are still evolving at a preliminary stage in China. However, though this study has addressed the isomorphic pressures present in the context of China, it does not address the process through which CSR is being institutionalised in China.

To investigate CSR as an institution within MNCs in the UK, using a semi-structured interview method, a qualitative study was conducted by Bondy, Moon, and Matten (2012). This study has provided clear evidence of the presence of an institution of CSR. In addition, the study has shown how MNCs in the UK have applied institutional arrangements for their CSR initiatives. This study has argued that in the current CSR arrangements, MNCs are experiencing strong coercive and mimetic pressures. However, normative pressure is missing here and the absence of any normative pressure has brought a critical shift to the CSR arrangement. In this new arrangement, the MNCs in the UK have started undermining social and environment considerations to accommodate their immediate economic concerns. Hence, it could be said that in the current arrangements of CSR, the MNCs are deliberately turning their CSR practices into business-as-usual practices. Though the study presents clear evidence of the presence of an institution of CSR, it did not attempt to explore the institutionalisation process of CSR practices.

Adebanjo et al. (2013) has shown the positive relations between the supplier selection strategies of Western MNCs and the behaviour and performance of Eastern suppliers. They also argue that in the context of developing countries, where the institutions are weak, to ensure the enforcement of the existing rules and regulations, coercive isomorphism may be replaced by normative isomorphisms, which might encourage the prospective suppliers to engage in CSR practices. However, this study does not show whether these supplier selection strategies are helping or hindering the implementation of CSR practices in developing countries. In addition, this study does not attempt to identify the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in developing countries.

Using a critical appraisal methodology, Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen (2013) have made an attempt to establish the foundations of the cooperative paradigm of CSR practices. The study started with the proposition that in order to achieve legitimacy organisations around the globe are internalising the Western conception of CSR in their home country. In this regard, isomorphisms i.e., coercive, mimetic, and normative are playing a pivotal role. Likewise, Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen (2013) have argued for the replacement of the compliance paradigm of CSR practices with the cooperative paradigm . They claimed the proposed new paradigm would enhance the CSR capacity of the local suppliers who work for MNCs. They also pointed out that by keeping the existing power relationships in the global value chain, the cooperative paradigm of CSR will help to bring more sustained improvements in working conditions and, improve the CSR monitoring by local organisations in the developing country. Though the study has sought to establish new institutional arrangements in the global value chain, it has yet to be empirically tested in a developing country context.

Mohammed Ziaul and Fara (2015) have found the economic motive is guiding the current Western led CSR arrangement in the context of Bangladesh where the suppliers' factories are not in the driving seat. Moreover, this study claimed, though the suppliers' factories cannot escape from adopting CSR practices in their setting; it would contribute little to undo the social and environmental damages that they have caused by ignoring these issues for many years. This study claimed, to ensure a sustained CSR arrangement, there is a need to adopt a stakeholders' perspective of CSR in the RMG industry of Bangladesh. However, this study fails to present how to operationalise the stakeholders' perspective of CSR in the RMG industry of Bangladesh.

Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman (2016) have shown due to the weak institutional arrangements; the Western MNCs operating in developing countries are focusing more on economic values and global reputation. In this process, they often neglect the local priorities and adopt home-based CSR arrangement in developing countries. This study claimed, in the business-to-business (B2B) engagement where organisations have less visibility and fewer relationships, the economic and legal pressures guide the Western MNCs to adopt CSR practices in their operations. In this institutionalisation process, the coercive isomorphism guides organisations to defuse their CSR activities. However, this study did not address the process through which CSR is being institutionalised in the context of developing countries.

To this end, it is evident that gaps exist in the CSR literature with respect to the issue of the conversion of Western ideals into Eastern cultures. Furthermore, though numerous research studies have addressed the issue of the institutional arrangement of CSR practices in developing countries, these studies do not focus on the issue of the institutionalisation processes of CSR practices in developing countries, nor do they inform the strategies through which the local suppliers of MNCs can implement CSR policies and practices more effectively. Hence, this research study aims to fill these gaps by employing a more politically and culturally nuanced methodology; specifically, critical ethnography, to explore the isomorphisms and the process of the institutionalisation of CSR practices in Bangladesh. This study is expected to uncover differences between the CSR ideals of the Western MNCs and the CSR initiatives applied to the Bangladeshi suppliers. In addition, this study will fill gaps in the current CSR literature by adding knowledge related to how the social, cultural, and political conditions as well as the different institutional arrangements are helping or hindering the implementation of CSR practices and policies of suppliers of MNCs in Bangladesh.

## 2.6 Postcolonial Theory and Organisational Study

During the last few decades, scholars have used various scholarly approaches in the investigation of management and organisations. As such, scholars have examined Marxism and neo-Marxism, critical theory, feminism, postmodernism, and post-structuralism to try to understand the organisational reality. During this period, postcolonial theory received significant attention in a wide range of disciplines, but only recently have scholars started to look at other theories to study management and organisations (Prasad 2003, 9).

In the past few scholars (e.g. Jaya 2001; Mir, Calás and Smircich 1999; Prasad 1997b, 1997a; Prasad and Prasad 2002a; Prasad and Prasad 2002b) have used postcolonial theory in their study of management and organisations. More recently scholars (e.g. Adanhounme 2011; Banerjee 2000, 2008, 2011, 2014; Banerjee and Linstead 2001; Banerjee and Prasad 2008; Boje 2009; Boje and Khan 2009; Drebes 2014; Jack et al. 2011; Khan and Lund-Thomsen 2011; Khan, Westwood and Boje 2010; Mir and Mir 2009, 2012; Mir and Sharpe; ÖzkazanÇ-Pan 2008; Ceci Misoczky 2011; Farzad Rafi and Basit Bilal 2011; McKenna 2011; Nkomo 2011; Gopinath and Prasad 2012) have started using postcolonial theory and criticism for advancing knowledge within this discipline, and helping to stimulate a new approach to organisational phenomena (Prasad 2003, 30).

Today, a significant number of management scholars are engaged in postcolonial studies and are conducting research in the field of CSR, knowledge production, organisational processes, and workplace diversity (ÖzkazanÇ-Pan 2008). By addressing the assumptions and limitations of Western management discourse (Banerjee and Linstead 2001; Cooke 2004), postcolonial scholars of international management studies have outlined the ways in which Western epistemology dominates management knowledge (Jaya 2001; Prasad 2003). Combining postcolonial theory with organisational study, Banerjee (2000) has asserted the dominant groups of society are still using the colonial mode of control.

Kao, Sinha, and Wilpert (1999) have shown Western management practices are considered the universal norm. According to Prasad (2003, 32) *“the postcolonial perspective can be helpful in addressing such ethnocentrism, and thereby, developing an alternative understanding of non-Western management. Relatedly, the postcolonial approach can be useful for offering a new understanding of the “transfer” of management knowledge and practice from the West to the non-West. In addition, post-colonialism’s nuanced and in-depth analysis of colonizer–colonized dynamics can be usefully employed in management research for developing fresh insights about power, control, and resistance in organizations”*.

Institutional theorists (e.g. Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Scott and Meyer 1994) claim that organisations are contributing to the construction and reconstruction of social and cultural boundaries. To this end, it is important to note the role of colonialism in the construction of social and cultural boundaries cannot be ignored. Consequently, the postcolonial theory can be applied to help understand how the colonial legacy is transforming the work organisation, and can bring new institutionalist insights (Prasad 2003, 33). In addition, according to Prasad (2003, 33) “*postcolonial theory is relevant for management and organization studies because it offers a uniquely radical and ethically informed critique of Western modernity and modernity’s overdetermined accoutrements like capitalism, Eurocentrism, science, and the like*”.

Frenkel and Shenhav (2006) have argued that by challenging the existing canonization of management and organisational theory, postcolonial theory is not attempting to establish the sub-altern voice as an alternative to the existing one, rather it is attempting to challenge the current assumptions of the global reality. The study claims organisations are embedded in the fusion of colonizer and colonized reality. Furthermore, the study advises students of critical management and cultural diversity to acknowledge the hybridization of Western and Eastern management culture.

Hence, this current study will use the lens of postcolonial theory to examine the actual process through which CSR practices have been institutionalised in the context of postcolonial Bangladesh. In addition, by giving voice to the voiceless stakeholders’ of CSR, this study would inform a new strategy for improving its current limited benefits. In this section, how the concept of postcolonial theory has evolved in management studies and its’ importance was examined. The following section will attempt to define postcolonial theory and will make an attempt to describe how it has evolved.

## **2.7 Postcolonial Theory**

The seminal works of Said (1979, 1993), Spivak (1987, 1999b), and Bhabha (1990, 1994) have helped to develop the postcolonial perspective, in which they show how the Occident (West) has established their textual and material domination over the Orient (East) “*by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it*” (Said 1979, 3). It should be noted that the radical critiques of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism have acted as the impetus for postcolonial theory (Banerjee and Prasad 2008). After receiving initial inspiration from anti-colonial activists, freedom fighters, and political activists from South America, Africa, India and other regions, postcolonial theory has been attempting to contest the unquestioned and unchallenged

sovereignty of Western epistemological, political, economic and cultural categories (Prasad 2003).

Western colonialism has a long history. In fact, it began in the fifteenth century. According to (Prasad 2003, 4) “*The voyages of Columbus and da Gama prefigure that confluence and commingling of commercial and financial interests, (religious) ideology and belief, military force and political cunning, and the deployment of unimaginable violence and cruelty, which was to become the hallmark of modern Western colonialism*”. During the early twentieth century, western colonialism occupied approximately 84.6 percent of the earth (Loomba 1998, 15). However, the actual occupation does not reflect the same scenario of actual territorial control and during this period directly or indirectly, European colonial powers controlled over 90 percent of the globe (Young 2001).

However, scholars (e.g., Loomba, 1998; Young, 2001) have found fundamental distinctions between earlier conquests by past empires and the more recent European colonization. They have argued that economic consideration was the main motive for the territorial conquests made by the Aztec Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Empire of Ghana, the Inca Empire, the Empire of Mali, the Maurya Empire, the Mongol Empire, the Mughal Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Roman Empire, the Vijayanagara Empire, and other earlier empires (Prasad 2003, 4). On the other hand, the authors have found that in addition to their economic gain, modern western colonialism constructed a complex structure of unequal exchange and industrialization between them and their colonies. This structure not only made the colonies economically, politically and socially dependent upon their colonizers but also helped to build the pillar of European capitalism (Loomba 1998, 4). Consequently, modern western colonialism “*represents a unique constellation of complex and interrelated practices that sought to establish Western hegemony not only politically, militarily, and economically, but also culturally and ideologically*” (Prasad 2003, 5).

Colonialism and imperialism are widely debated issues which hold multiple and shifting meanings to people (Loomba, 1998: 2 ff.; Young, 2001: 15 ff.). The features of colonialism include actual direct physical conquest and direct occupation where colonies are administrated by colonizers. On the other hand, imperialism does not demand direct occupation in exercising economic and political control over other countries. The British and French empires are the perfect example of colonialism which reached their peak during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Prasad, 2003 6). The current political and economic domination of the USA can be identified as imperialism which is not exercised by direct occupation but through powerful institutions such as the World Bank (WB),

International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Young 2001).

The decolonization process of the western colonialization which began during the middle of the twentieth century has initiated the use of the term neocolonialism. However, this decolonization process did not start automatically, rather various anticolonial movements helped to bring political independence for the colonies. However, it is the irony of the fate for the ex-colonies that after decolonization having political independence in their possession they found themselves helpless and economically bonded to their ex-colonial masters (Prasad 2003, 6). Neocolonialism is the term that can used to portrait this particular situation(Young 2001, 44).

According to (Prasad 2003, 7) *“Postcolonial theory and criticism is explicitly committed to developing a radical critique of colonialism/imperialism and neocolonialism. In doing this, postcolonialism is not attempting something entirely new; quite to the contrary, the critique of colonialism offered by postcolonialism forms a part of that long and impressive history of oppositional criticisms of, and resistance to, Western colonialism, which is as old as Western colonialism itself”*. It is important to mention postcolonial theorists use the terms “postcolonial theory and criticism” and “postcolonial theory” to mean the same concept. In addition, scholars commonly use “postcolonialism” as the short form of these two terms (Prasad 2003, 7-8)

## 2.8 CSR from the Perspective of Postcolonial Theory

The following table represents the relevant studies that have used postcolonial theory in organisational study to answer questions relating to this thesis. Subsequently, a brief review of the relevant literature has been made.

**Table 2: Summary of CSR Studies from the Perspective of Postcolonial Theory**

<i>Author/s</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Gap</i>
Banerjee (2000)	To unmask the colonial relations of power in Australia	Case Study	This study unmasks the postcolonial conditions in Australia	This study covers only first world country conditions.
Munshi and Kurian (2005)	to critique ongoing neo-colonial aspects of CSR and sustainability in the space of public relations	Concept Paper	showed at the expense of the marginalised public, the political and economic elite use the concept of CSR as a colonial strategy of image building.	This study does not answer how the postcolonial perspective could affect the translation of Western MNCs ideals into the local subsidiaries or suppliers settings.

<i>Author/s</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Gap</i>
Banerjee (2008)	To critically analyse the contemporary discourses of CSR, sustainability and corporate citizenship	Discourse Analysis	This study shows how the jargon of CSR, “sustainability” and “corporate citizenship” serve the narrow business interests of corporations	This study does not address the postcolonial issue related to MNCs and their subsidiaries or suppliers operating in developing countries.
Mir and Mir (2009)	To examine the transfer of knowledge across international boundaries	Ethnographic case study	Colonial relationships still prevail between MNCs and their contractors located in the Third World.	This study does not show how this domination is affecting the CSR transfer process to an Eastern locale.
Boje and Khan (2009)	To identify how the entrepreneurs use CSR stories in the Third World.	Interviews and textual study	This study shows companies are using CSR stories to strengthen their brand and organisational success	This study does not show how the postcolonial perspective could affect the translation of Western MNCs CSR ideals to a local suppliers’ situation.
Khan, Westwood, and Boje (2010)	How post-colonial conditions affect Western Based CSR initiatives in the Third World, and the role of NGOs in this regard.	Field work	Western imperialism still prevails in the context of the Third World, and the present postcolonial conditions create the complexities and ‘messiness’ challenging Western based CSR interfering in the Third World and those charged with implementing them.	This study does not provide an operational method (strategy) of the authors’ proposed bottom-up approach.
Khan and Lund-Thomsen (2011)	To explore how the local manufactures interpret the Western-based CSR initiatives	Phenomenological study	This study shows that Western lead initiatives of CSR have failed to be rooted in Eastern realities, and the local suppliers are interpreting these initiatives as a type of Western imperialism.	This study does not attempt to explain how the commitment-based approach could be implemented to give voice to the voiceless.
Adanhounme (2011)	To explore the extent to which CSR reproduces the colonial mandate of the civilizing mission	Ethnographic study	Occidental states use CSR in Oriental states as part of their civilizing mission. This study also shows despite the presence of old colonial behaviour, evolutionary changes are taking place.	This study does not elaborate on how current conditions are affecting the transfer process of Western ideals into an Eastern locale.

<i>Author/s</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Gap</i>
Drebes (2016)	To unmask how CSR is producing the postcolonial power relations between the 'West' and the 'Rest'.	Concept Paper	This study shows the Western power domination over East is rarely been addressed in the CSR discussion. As a result, this study has suggested four dimensions for CSR discussion.	This study has only created the avenues for future research.

*“The corporation lies, steals and kills without hesitation when it serves the interests of its shareholders to do so and it obeys the law only when the cost of crime exceeds the profits. Corporate social responsibility is impossible except in so far as it is insincere (Bakan, 2004. Cited in Munshi and Kurian 2005, 514).”*

Using the case of the highly controversial Jabiluka uranium mine, Banerjee (2000) has attempted to unmask the postcolonial conditions of a first world country specifically, Australia and illustrates how the uneven distribution of power in Australian society has affected the life of aboriginal people. Bringing postcolonial theory into this organisational study, Banerjee (2000) asserts the dominant groups of society are still using colonial modes of control for their own self-interest, and the major stakeholders are often excluded and their voices are being marginalized in this process. However, this study only analyses first world country conditions. Thus, the context of a developing country could bring different dimensions to the discussion of postcolonial conditions.

Using postcolonial theory Munshi and Kurian (2005) have shown that at the expense of the marginalised public, the economic and political elite have used the concept of CSR as their imperialist strategy of image building. The authors argue a diversity of public voices should be addressed in public relations when designing new concepts of CSR and sustainable development. Furthermore, the Western lead existing hierarchy of political elites should be deconstructed to allow the voices of the marginalized public into public relations. However, this study does not answer how the postcolonial perspective could affect the convergence of Western MNCs CSR ideals within the local subsidiaries or suppliers situation.

In this discourse of CSR, sustainability and corporate citizenship, Banerjee (2008) has shown that these terms serve the narrow business interests of corporations where other affected stakeholders interests are ignored. However, he also asserts when it comes to the issue of social welfare, corporations can not and should not be a substitute for government, as the economic imperatives of the corporation will never allow them to contribute in any meaningful way to social welfare issues as many governments do. This postcolonial study

also shows how the concept of sustainability is often disregarded by the concept of corporate profitability. In addition, the study has shown though the CSR concept was developed to serve the greater society, corporations have successfully used this concept as a profit-making tool and have marginalised the general public. Hence, by opening up new spaces for a diversity of stakeholders, Banerjee (2008) has suggested a new framework for CSR, giving voice to the voiceless. However, this study does not attempt to discuss the dynamics of CSR practices by MNCs and their subsidiaries in the context of postcolonial theory.

In order to understand how knowledge transfers across national boundaries Mir and Mir (2009) have conducted an ethnographic study in India and have asserted colonial relationships still prevail between MNCs and their contractors located in the Third World. This study has also shown that in this transfer process, MNCs have been the dominant group while contractors in the Third World have been the subordinate groups. However, this study does not show how this domination is affecting the transfer process in Eastern settings.

After studying the Sialkot Child Labour Elimination Project, Boje and Khan (2009) have developed a new terminology 'story-branding', which they have used to focus on how corporations gain legitimacy. They have also claimed that companies have used CSR stories to strengthen their brand and organisational success. This study has claimed it has successfully unmasked the imperial face of First World entrepreneurs, and showed how the voices of the subaltern are being marginalized in the Third World. This study does not show how the postcolonial perspective could affect the translation of the Western MNCs CSR ideals in the local suppliers' settings.

Khan, Westwood, and Boje (2010) have claimed Western imperialism is still prevalent in the context of the Third World, and the present postcolonial conditions have created the complexities and 'messiness' challenging Western-based CSR interferences in the Third World and those charged with implementing them. Their study also claims the voice of local actors (i.e., NGO staff, business people, and workers) remains "voiceless" both in local political dynamics and in international research, and a continuation of this perspective will see CSR become a Western ideal that has little promise in developing countries. This study has also shown colonial conditions are hindering the implementation of CSR practices in the local setting and suggest a "bottom-up" approach to solving this issue. In the "bottom-up" approach, the local actors take part in the decision-making process and contribute to the formulation of the strategy of the company, especially in selecting the priorities that are to be pursued in their local area. This study does not provide an operational method (strategy) for their proposed bottom-up approach.

In order to explore how local manufacturers interpret Western-based CSR initiatives, Khan and Lund-Thomsen (2011) have conducted a phenomenological study in the Sialkot soccer ball industry, and argue that the Western led initiatives of CSR have failed to become ingrained in Eastern realities, and local suppliers are treating these initiatives as a type of Western imperialism. This study also shows how a compliance-based approach to CSR and its auditing system are not sufficient to expose the reality in the current context and will only produce false images of the Western-led ideals. Hence, under present initiatives CSR is unable to produce positive externalities for the developing countries. This study acknowledges the suggestions of Locke, Amengual, and Mangla (2009) and has argued for using a commitment-based approach in the relationship between international buyers and local suppliers. However, this study does not attempt to explain how the commitment-based approach could be implemented to give voice to the voiceless.

After examining the mining sector in Ghana, Adanhounme (2011) has claimed the West is using CSR in the East as a part of their civilizing mission. This study also shows that despite the presence of old colonial behaviour, evolutionary changes are taking place. These changes are taking place by the incorporation of informal local rules and norms, and the voice of the subaltern in the CSR initiatives. This study has also suggested in order to maximise the benefits in the current situation; the West should substitute its postcolonial “otherness” concept with a “principles of differences” concept. In this postcolonial study, the term “otherness” is used to show the conscious effort by the West where they have created the binary division of “West” and “East”, and by doing so claim their supremacy over the East (Said 1979, 45). The author has developed the term “principles of differences” based on John Rawl’s two principles of justice, fairness i.e. the equality of basic liberties and the difference principle. The first principle suggests that CSR should provide equal benefits to all, and the second principle suggest that by considering the inequality of the current distribution process, the greater benefit should be offered to the least advantaged local community. However, this study does not elaborate on how current conditions are affecting the transfer process of Western CSR ideals into an Eastern setting and how the postcolonial perspective may be hindering the translation process of CSR practices from the West to East.

Banerjee (2011) has asserted most of the CSR studies conducted using stakeholder theory has deliberately overlooked where corporate profits were generated at the cost of certain stakeholders, and remained silent in finding strategies to solve this problem. Hence, strategy-based CSR studies have helped corporations create a smoke screen for concealing their real motives, and permitting them to continue their exploitive activities towards society and the environment (Banerjee 2008).

Relying on Foucault's perception of power, Drebes (2016) asserts the West is exercising their power over East which is rarely addressed in the discussion of CSR. As a result, Drebes (2016) has suggested CSR discussion should address the following four different aspects: (1) CSR needs be identified as a system of differentiations which is developed in the colonial era by suppressing the East. This suppression has led to global acceptance that the Western centric knowledge is only true, and the Eastern knowledge is childlike and naïve. As a result, the Western power domination over East not only accepted in the West but is also accepted into Eastern reality. (2) In the developing country context, the Western MNCs are maintaining the colonial mode of control to make the best use of the cheaply available resources, and they will continue this power relation with East for the purpose of accumulation of profits. (3) The West is using CSR as a means of threat of violence for East, and the Western MNCs are exercising this power by having the possibility to immediately end the business relationship with a supplier in an Eastern setting. (4) CSR is the way through which the West has institutionalised their power relation into the Eastern setting. This institutionalisation process is deeply rooted in the centuries of colonial oppression. Furthermore, different Western regulating authorities have initiated the second phase of institutionalisation that is helping to maintain a sustain domination of the West over East. However, this study did not show how current conditions are affecting the translation process of Western CSR ideals into an Eastern locale.

From the above studies, it is evident that though these postcolonial studies have advanced knowledge, several questions remain unanswered with respect to CSR, and none of the studies has mentioned how postcolonial perspectives are hindering the translation process of CSR practices from the West to East. In this regard, the proposed study will attempt to fill these gaps in the literature. Using critical ethnography, this study will add new knowledge to offer an understanding of to what extent postcolonial perspectives help or hinder the implementation of CSR practices and policies to the suppliers of MNCs in Bangladesh.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

**Chapter Summary:** This chapter consist of ten sections. In the introductory section, readers will be introduced to the concept of methodology. The following nine sections will discuss the concepts of ethnography, critical ethnography, rational for selecting ethnographic sites, data sources and collection procedure, ethical and practical issues in data collection, data analysis procedures, validation procedures, anonymization and privacy, and the researcher.

### 3.1 Introduction

The methodology is the mechanism through which theory finds its application (Ellen 1984, 9). According to Brewer (2000, 2) *“If 'methods' are technical rules that define proper procedures, 'methodology' is the broad theoretical and philosophical framework into which these procedural rules fit. It is because these procedural rules reflect broader theoretical and philosophical ideas about the nature of knowledge, explanation and science that the research community gives them authority to endow knowledge as reliable and objective”*. Schwandt (2007) finds methodology as the guiding theory, which dictates how the investigation should proceed. To Schwandt, methodology is a specific social scientific discourse which shows how researchers are going to act, talk and speak in a scientific investigation, and help them in taking the middle position between the discussion of philosophy and the method (Schwandt 2007, 193).

Kuhn (1996, 23) began the discussion of research paradigms decades ago and presented paradigm as *“an accepted model or pattern”*. Lincoln and Guba (2005, 191-215) have explained the basic beliefs of alternative inquiry paradigms and have shown how different paradigms are connected within the ontology, epistemology and methodological realm. Ontologies are the theories of existence (Carspecken 1996, 24). According to Flew (1979, 256) ontology is *“the assumptions about existence underlying any conceptual scheme or any theory or system of ideas”*. On the other hand, according to Flew (1979, 109) epistemology is *“the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. Traditionally, central issues in epistemology are the nature and derivation of knowledge, the scope of knowledge, and the reliability of claims to knowledge”* (Flew 1979, 109). In this study, the ontological and epistemological stance which was discussed in the earlier chapters, eventually led to adopting the critical inquiry paradigm (Crotty 1998; Lincoln and Guba 2005, 195).

I believe that most of us live in a taken-for-granted reality (Thomas 1993, 3). According to Schutz (1967, 74) this taken-for-granted reality means *“that particular level of experience that presents itself as not in need of further analysis”*. This taken-for-granted world is too

powerful, confusing, and mysterious and hence, it is challenging to see clearly the fundamental problems that most people confront daily. In so far, our culture entraps us in a multiple segmented world in which a variety of mechanisms i.e., interactional norms, organisational rules, institutional patterns, and ideological concepts assure social harmony and conformity (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 19-28, 53-55).

According to Carspecken (1996, 6) *“the phrase “critical methodology” however, refers to the epistemological principles we criticalists advocate: not just for people motivated in the same ways that we are, but for all researchers. This is because critical theory has provided the most convincing answers to knotty epistemological questions begged in every act of inquiry”*. However, it should be noted that critical epistemology does not offer any formula for helping the poor and oppressed; it rather shows us the right path and the guiding principles for conducting valid inquiries into the human experience (Carspecken 1996, 8). Critical epistemology helps us to understand the relationship between power and thought. In addition, it helps to identify the relationship between power and truth claims. Furthermore, by providing a precise definition of values and facts, it provides an understanding of how they are connected (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005, 304).

In this investigation, I took my position as a criticalist. Thus, I have presented my work as a form of social criticism. In addition, I have accepted the basic assumptions that all thoughts are socially and historically constituted and these thoughts are fundamentally mediated by power relations. Furthermore, as a criticalist, I believe that these facts cannot be isolated from the domain of values. As a criticalist, I also believe that certain groups in all societies are privileged over others and the subordinate groups usually accept their social status as inevitable and natural. However, society forcefully represses oppression, where they perceive challenges from oppressed group (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005, 304). In this regard, as a critical researcher, I entered into my investigation with above-mentioned assumptions on the table, hence, there is a limited scope of confusion concerning the political and epistemological baggage that I brought in my research site (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005, 305-306).

In this study, as critical researcher I employed a critically conscious approach to analyse and interpret how the power relations were produced in the research setting. In addition, following the suggestions of Madison (2005) and (Willis 2008) I went beyond the general process of identifying the unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain and made and attempt to move from "what is" from "what could be" (Carspecken, 1996; Thomas, 1993). In this study, “I was more like the loosely Scheduled traveller” (Bogdan and Biklen 1982, 49) and latter improvisation helped to unfold the journey. In this study, my destination

was the garment factories of Bangladesh. I positioned all my participants as central to my investigation and tried to construct meaning and tried to make sense of their lives as they operate in their own unique contexts (Merriam 2002, 39).

Leininger (1992, 401) argues that *“the goals of qualitative research are not to measure something but rather to understand fully the meaning of phenomena in context and to provide thick accounts of phenomena under study”*. Hence, in this study, I employed qualitative research method to determine how the corporate social responsibility (CSR) ideals of the Western companies are being translated into the local suppliers’ setting of the garment industry in Bangladesh. Moreover, combining the organisational and the critical postcolonial perspective of institutional theory, I tried to find out the process through which CSR practices have been institutionalized in the context of local suppliers setting. I chose qualitative method as it helped me in integrating participant perspectives with my own insights (Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Mikalson 2004). By incorporating ethnography as my methodology, I intentionally departed from traditional methods of CSR investigation which are heavily dependent on self-reporting techniques (Wolcott 1990; Muecke 1994). Instead, I observed the encounters and interactions of the participants over a time span of approximately eleven months. I added a critical stance to the traditional ethnographic framework for invoking a social consciousness which could lead to positive societal change (Thomas 1993, 4).

### **3.2 Ethnography**

In management studies, to unravel organisational reality, ethnography has proved to be a highly effective method (Mintzberg 1979; Gummesson 2000). According to Brewer (2000, 11) *“ethnography is not one particular method of data collection but a style of research that is distinguished by its objectives, which are to understand the social meanings and activities of people in a given 'field' or setting, and its approach, which involves close association with, and often participation in, this setting”*. In ethnography, overtly or covertly the researcher participates in the participants’ daily lives for a significant period of time. Through this process, the researcher tries to watch what is happening and to listen to what the participants are saying. In addition, the researcher collects documents and artefacts from the setting and arranges for formal and informal interviews. In this way, the researcher generates data for writing their ethnography and shines a light on the research process (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 3).

### 3.3 Critical Ethnography

Educational researchers first used the term “critical ethnography in the 1980s and many educational researchers have used critical pedagogy theory, feminist theory, neo-Marxist theory, and postmodern theory in their research studies to understand critical theories of education (Anderson 1989; Carspecken 1996; Lather 1986, 1991; McLaren 1993, 1998; Thomas 1993). However, qualitative researchers from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCs) at the University of Birmingham initiated critical ethnographic-like research in the 1970s, and their focus was on solving the many theoretical problems of neo-Marxism (CCC 1978; Carspecken 1999).

Qualitative researchers like Althusser and Thompson engaged in intense debates regarding their Marxist-structuralists and Marxist-culturalists positions (Althusser 1969; Thompson 1963, 1978). The Marxist-structuralists claimed human choices and social routines are the product of social structure while the Marxist-culturalists claimed social structure is the result of human choices patterned by cultural milieu and the social environment. However, the CCC has frequently supported the Marxist-culturalists claims (Carspecken 1999, 31). In organisational studies, critical ethnographers attempt to describe what takes place in an organisation, describe the cultures of these sites to locate the organisation within a larger social system, examine the function played by action consequences for maintaining social systems and provide a direction of unplanned system change (Carspecken 1999, 39).

In critical ethnography, the researcher endorses a subversive worldview and challenges the conventional cultural logic of the society. Furthermore, this type of ethnography does not conflict with conventional ethnography i.e., the ethnography commonly used in grounded theory, action research, discourse analysis and phenomenology (Crotty 1998). Rather, by broadening the scope of conventional ethnography, critical ethnography attempts to examine the relationships of knowledge, political actions, and society more critically. Critical ethnography allows a researcher to maintain both the scientific and critical stance together in analysing social structures and systems of power (Thomas 1993, vii). According to Thomas (1993, 2-3) “*critical ethnography is a type of reflection that examines culture, knowledge, and action. It expands our horizons for choice and widens our experiential capacity to see, hear, and feel. It deepens and sharpens ethical commitments by forcing us to develop and act upon value commitments in the context of political agendas. Critical ethnographers describe, analyse, and open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain. Critical scholarship requires that common-sense assumptions be questioned*”.

Critical ethnography is committed to an ethical responsibility, which addresses the unfairness and injustice of a particular lived domain. According to Madison (2005, 5) this ethical responsibility means *“a compelling sense of duty and commitment based on moral principles of human freedom and well-being, and hence a compassion for the suffering of living beings. The conditions for existence within a particular context are not as they could be for specific subjects; as a result, the researcher feels a moral obligation to make a contribution toward changing those conditions toward greater freedom and equity. The critical ethnographer also takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the status quo, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control”*.

In conventional ethnography, usually the researcher speaks on behalf of their subjects to other researchers. However, in critical ethnography, the researcher shows her commitment for empowering the oppressed group by allowing more authority to their voice. Thus, a critical ethnographer invokes a call for action in addition to the presentation of knowledge, and thus invites social change. In conventional ethnography, researchers are aware normative and other biases could affect their research findings consequently, they try to repress these biases in their inquiries. On the other hand, in critical ethnography, the researcher celebrates her normative and political position, and invites value-laden judgments for the purpose of invoking social consciousness and societal change (Thomas 1993, 4).

According to Thomas (1993, 4) *“critical ethnography is more than just the study of obviously oppressed or socially marginal groups, because researchers judge that all cultural members experience unnecessary repression to some extent. Critical ethnographers use their work to aid emancipatory goals or to negate the repressive influences that lead to unnecessary social domination of all groups. Emancipation refers to the process of separation from constraining modes of thinking or acting that limit perception of and action toward realizing alternative possibilities. Repression is the condition in which thought and action are constrained in ways that banish recognition of these alternatives. Critical ethnography is simultaneously hermeneutic and emancipatory”*.

Critical ethnography as a method, affords opportunities to perform a cultural inquiry, which is important to investigate the research questions from a socio-political point of view. As a result, it supports an understanding of CSR from different perspectives and from different actors' points of view. The study will investigate the suppliers thoroughly by visiting them and their local environment (e.g. socially, culturally, and politically). Hence, as a criticalist, I employed critical ethnography in this study (Willis 1977; Carspecken 1996; Lee and Myers 2004; El-Amir and Burt 2010; Tavakoli and Sadeghi 2011). Like other ethnographers, I

gathered data by observing, listing, talking, interviewing, and by collecting artifacts/documents from the study setting.

### **3.4 Rationale for Selection of Ethnographic Site and Interview**

#### **Participants**

Taking institutional theory (both from an organisational and critical, postcolonial perspective) as the guiding framework and critical ethnography as my methodology, I entered into my research site with the motive of invoking social consciousness and societal change (Thomas 1993, 4). As mentioned earlier this research study has three aims: (1) to determine how the corporate social responsibility (CSR) ideals of Western companies were being translated into the local suppliers' garment industry in Bangladesh; (2) to examine the process through which CSR practices have been institutionalized in the context of a local suppliers setting in Bangladesh, and (3) to critically examine the postcolonial perspective of context-specific encounters between the West and East and to examine the subsequent effects on the current CSR practices of suppliers of MNCs in Bangladesh.

Using purposive sampling as prescribed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007), a variety of ethnographic sites were selected within the garment industry. The main reason for choosing purposive sampling in selecting sites of the garment factories was to ensure selected factories were maintaining direct relationships with the Western buyers which were important to understand the translation process of CSR ideals from West to East. In Bangladesh, there were many garment factories engaged in subcontracting businesses who were not maintaining any direct relationships with Western buyers. As a result, these factories were not considered under the scope of this study. Furthermore, it was found the garment factories in Bangladesh were located in different industrial zones, and their sizes were also different. As a result, factories from different locations and sizes were selected using purposive sampling method to oversee how these factories were internalising the CSR ideals suggested by their Western buyers.

This study used purposive sampling in selecting interview participants from inside the garment factories, and chose workers, members from different levels of management teams to ensure that they had the information needed to support this study. In addition, using the snowball sampling method (Patton 2014), interview participants were selected from the stakeholders who were working on this issue from outside the garment factories i.e., trade union representatives, representatives of garments owners and exporters, NGOs, educators, and representatives of political and social organisations.

Interview participants of 15 to 60 are customarily considered as sufficient in organisational study (Saunders and Townsend 2016). Some scholars have empirically justified the upper limit of interview participants for a single case as 20 (Marshall et al. 2013) and others justified this limit for interview studies as 25 (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). On the contrary, Morse (1994) and Adler and Alder (2012) have suggested for the upper limits for a single organisation as 50 and 60 respectively. In selecting the interview participants, though different scholars (i.e., Guest, Bunce and Johnson 2006; Marshall et al. 2013) considered the concept of data saturation as an important aspect in selecting the number of interview participants, the researchers who conducted their studies in organisation and workplace failed to offer supporting evidence in favour of this claim (Saunders and Townsend 2016). However, Saunders and Townsend (2016) have depicted the concept of data saturation could be considered appropriate under some conditions especially when the researcher’s epistemological positions and methods demand for it (e.g., grounded theory).

Saunders and Townsend (2016) have argued the number of interview participants depends on the research purpose, broad characteristics of the population, and the researcher’s ontological and epistemological positions. Considering all these facets, Saunders and Townsend (2016) have suggested 30 interview participants from single organisational studies and 50 interview participants from multiple organisations studies might be considered as credible for selecting the upper limit of the interview participant. As a result, in this investigation, preliminary, I chose 50 interview participants, and as I used snowball sampling, I had to include an additional participant who was later found to be an important source of information for my study. Thus, the total number of interview participants became 51 in this study. Following table shows the percentage of representation and the average length of interview from each sections of the participants (designation-wise) that were covered during the interview (see Appendix I: Interview Log for detail):

**Table 3: Percentage of Representation and Average Length of Interview from each Section of the Interview Participants**

<b>SL</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Average Length of the Interview (in minutes)</b>
1	Workers (Sewing operators, Helpers, Workers’ Participation Committee Members)	20	39.22%	16.11
2	Low-level Management (Welfare officers, CSR executives)	4	7.84%	39.39
3	Mid-level Management (CSR Managers)	15	29.42%	35.15

SL	Classification	Number	Percentage	Average Length of the Interview (in minutes)
4	Top-level Management (Factory Owner, Chief Executive Officer)	2	3.92%	61.29
5	Stakeholders from outside the garment factories (Representatives from BGMEA, Buying House, Political Party, Trade Unions, Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, Journalist, and Educator)	10	19.60%	46.75
<b>Total</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1596.83</b>

### 3.5 Data Sources and Collection Procedures

As mentioned earlier, one of the principal purposes of the thesis was to draw normative suggestions from its descriptive results. Hence, throughout this ethnographic study, I used different types of ethnographic data collection methods, including participant observations at different locations, collection of artifact/documents from the research sites, and semi-structure interviews. I collected different Western buyers' code of conduct related artifacts/documents from the research sites which I used to broadening my understanding relating to the CSR institutions that were present in the suppliers' factories setting. Furthermore, these artifacts/documents helped me in understanding the gap between the CSR ideals set by the MNCs and the practices of their local RMG suppliers in Bangladesh. In addition, throughout the course of this ethnographic study, I was continuously engaged in a dialogue with informants. Dyson (2003, 22) identified this kind of study as "*a hallmark of a trustworthy interpretive study*" as I used diverse data sources.

#### 3.5.1 Participant Observations

Initially, I was not so sure how and where to start my investigation, and I was also confused in selecting the participants for the observation (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 4). However, observation in the initial period helped me to orient myself to the research site (Purcell-Gates 2004, 113). During my ethnographic research, for the purpose of participant observations, I spent 253:50:00 hours observing subjects from January 2016 to June 2016 (see Appendix E. Participant Observation Log). In order to understand how the corporate

social responsibility (CSR) ideals of the Western companies are being translated into the local suppliers' setting in the garment industry in Bangladesh, I had to choose different suppliers' garment factories as my primary observation sites. In addition, to understand the institutionalising process and to examine the postcolonial perspectives, I had to also observe the other stakeholders' institutional sites such as trade unions, employers association, NGOs, and political, religious and social organisations. I wrote down all my observation notes in my research journal and later I transferred everything to a computer database.

During my observations, I was aware of the "Hawthorne effect" where the participants may modify their behaviour as they would believe themselves as more important as they were participating in an investigation and this situation has often led researchers to the wrong conclusion. In the 1920's the 'Hawthorne' studies were carried out at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company. The Hawthorne studies were designed to determine the effects of certain variables and as a qualitative researcher, I did not measure any variables as these would not fit in a qualitative study. In order to minimize the Hawthorn effect, from the beginning, I acted as a passive observer and as I believe that all actions are conditioned, in the analysis of the observation, I considered both the actions and their conditions (Carspecken 1996, 52).

In this investigation, I used "*the method of priority observation*" (Carspecken 1996, 48). As the focus of my investigation was the CSR arrangements, processes and associated institutions and instruments, in my observation, I tried to focus on the actions and their conditions relating to my research domain. During my observation, I would identify a person of interest, and by capturing a lot of detail, tried to record the person's actions as thick as possible, and I categorized this person as 'first priority'. The people who interacted with my 'first priority' subject during this period of observation were regarded as a 'second priority' person and anything else observed was considered as 'third priority'. In order to minimize any biases, I chose a flexible observation schedule (Carspecken 1996, 48). The longer period of observation could "*produce burnout when a thick record is being compiled*" (Carspecken 1996, 49). Hence, I tried to keep all observation periods no longer than two hours and chose random two-hour blocks for observation.

I continued the participant observations until saturation occurred (Saumure and Given 2008). I realised I had reached the point of saturation when I found in my primary record I was recording the same basic things repeatedly. At this point, Carspecken (1996, 49) had suggested researchers make sure they have given their participants enough time to feel comfortable in the observation conditions, and he also suggested to make sure that participants' movements, voices, gestures and verbatim speech were producing solid

information. When I understood that I met these above-mentioned conditions, I moved to my next stage of the research study.

### **3.5.2 Field Notes**

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995, 11) draw four implications from their understanding of ethnography which they describe “*as the inscription of participatory experiences: (1) what is observed and ultimately treated as “data” or “findings” is inseparable from the observational process; (2) in writing fieldnotes, the field researchers should give special attention to the indigenous meanings and concerns of the people studied; (3) contemporaneously written fieldnotes are an essential grounding and resource for writing broader, more coherent accounts of others’ lives and concerns; and (4) such fieldnotes should detail the social and interactional processes that make up people’s everyday lives and activities.*”

As the primary data collection method, I used handwritten field notes, which I wrote while observing the participants. The field notes helped me to "construct a case" and gain “ethnographic sense” (Dyson and Genishi 2005, 63). Following the suggestion of Carspecken (1996, 45), I used two different journals in my research study to write field notes. I used one notebook to record thick descriptions of what I observed during the participant observations and captured a lot of detail. I used another notebook to record descriptions of important events that I observed out of the participant observations such as in the cafeteria, public transport, mosque, market, neighbourhood etc. Carspecken (1996, 45) named the first notebook the “primary record” and the second notebook the “field journal”. The primary records served as a sort of "data anchor" from which the analysis has been made (Carspecken 1996, 45). In my primary record, I wrote descriptions of observations at the time of occurrence, and I wrote descriptions in my field journal from recalling my memories, usually sometime after the occurrence of the event. In addition these two notebooks, I used another notebook to write down my feelings I experienced during my study. I called it my subjective journal and it helped me to discover my own biases throughout my research project (Carspecken 1996, 41).

While writing the field notes, I tried to record all speech, body gestures, and postures as thick as possible. In writing field notes, I used a low-inference vocabulary such as “as if,” “appears to be,” and “it seems” in suggesting the normative or subjective inferences. Before writing the thick descriptions of my observation, I wrote the contextual information in my notebook. In this section, I tried to incorporate a brief description of the context including my arrival time at the research site. In addition, I included my own observation comments

(OC) in my field notes to present my thoughts at the research site regarding what was happening there, however, I carefully did so by distinguishing the speculations from the objective-referenced data (Carspecken 1996, 47).

### ***3.5.3 Researcher as Participant***

In this investigation, I had to choose between three different modes of participation in space, specifically detached participation, minimal participation and full participation (Gray 2014, 67). I randomly chose these different modes in a reflexive manner. In the early stages, I took the detached participatory role and did not make any explicit verbal communication with the participants. Through this process, I generated monological data for my study and gave the participants enough time to accept my presence in their daily lives. However, when I realised the participants had accepted me into their setting, I changed my position and moved towards a more active participation. In addition, depending on the situation and receiving an invitation from my participant, very often I would change my position, and at the later stages in the data collection, I used the interventionist approach for instigating an interaction from the side of my participants.

### ***3.5.6 Interviews***

The interview is the process through which we try to discover those things, which we cannot directly observe. Neither can we observe feelings, thoughts and intentions nor can we see the events that occurred at a previous point in time. We cannot observe how people created their own world and constructed the meaning of it. We interview people to enter into their perspectives. We the qualitative researchers, interview people to gather their stories and believe that these stories are meaningful and need to be made explicit (Patton 2002, 340-341). According to Madison (2005, 25) *“the ethnographic interview opens realms of meaning that permeate beyond rote information or finding the “truth of the matter.” The interviewee is not an object, but a subject with agency, history, and his or her own idiosyncratic command of a story. Interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning, and experience together.”*

I used the interview to democratise my research process. In the process of interviewing, I gave the participants a chance to challenge my other research materials. In doing so, in this stage of my research study, I considered them neither my colleagues nor did I share all of my ideas with them for their comment. At this stage, I played a facilitator role and tried to create a safe normative environment for them. In this process, I never attempted to impose my thoughts and theories on the participants and let them reflect on their experiences and

ideas in their own vocabularies, metaphors, and ideas (Carspecken 1996, 155). Scholars such as James P. Spradley (1979), Phil Francis Carspecken (1996), and Michael Quinn Patton (2002) have suggested various models for the ethnographic interview. These models particularly help ethnographers in developing their questions for the interview. However, in this study, I used Carspecken (1996, 157) suggested flexible interview protocols (see Appendix F. G. & H.). It offered me the flexibility to make the necessary adjustments during and after the interview session. In constructing this interview protocol, I specifically chose the concepts of topic domains, lead-off questions, follow-up questions, and covert categories (Carspecken 1996, 157; Gray 2014).

Before an interview, I developed two to five lead-off questions to channel the participants' discussion to the direction of a particular topic domain. I jotted down a few important items in each topic domain. These were the covert categories, which I wished the interview participants to address. However, I did not ask these questions explicitly to my participants, rather I responded in order to guide the participants' discussion so they cover all the covert categories without my leading. I jotted down these categories so as not to forget any important information or observations. In addition, by anticipating the possible focus of the discussion with interview participants, I wrote down a few follow-up questions for each topic domain. I only raised these follow-up questions when I found the discussion failed to generate enough responses in a particular domain (Carspecken 1996, 157).

I used interviews as a means of dialogical data collection. In my interviews, I used a typology of interviewer responses which Carspecken's (1996, 159-161) took from the work of Kagan (1980). This typology of interviewer responses includes: "*bland encouragements, low inference paraphrasing, non-leading leads, active listening, medium-inference paraphrasing, and high inference paraphrasing*" (Gray 2014, 71). Bland encouragements could be one-word utterances or facial expressions or both. These are the signals I made during the interview to encourage the interviewee to keep talking. I used it regularly at the beginning of each interview session and continued throughout the session. I used low inference paraphrasing when the participant disclosed a portion of a new topic of interest and then would ask for my encouragement to fully cover the issue. In order to maintain the rhythm of the discussion, I used this technique often during the beginning of the interview session. Non-leading leads offer good variation from low-inference paraphrasing, in which without taking the lead in the interview, I used different non-leading questions at the beginning of a topic discussion. I used active listening responses for the purpose of establishing good rapport and to help my participants to open up on certain issues. I used medium-inference paraphrasing to determine whether or not my ideas were important to

analyse. Finally, at the very end of the interview, I used high inference paraphrasing to articulate my suspected background beliefs that my participants had yet to state explicitly.

### **3.6 Ethical and Practical Issues in Data Collection**

As humans were involved in this study, I needed to address a number of ethical issues and thus I required ethical clearance from Curtin University. In addition, as the garment industry is the most economically critical industry in Bangladesh, the different stakeholders attached with this business regard information related to this industry as highly sensitive. In addition, as the readymade garments industry is facing stiff global competition, they are reluctant to invite researchers in to analyse their business practices. In addition, the government is also suspicious about researchers who are conducting research in the field of CSR in the garment industry and very often researchers in this field are treated as foreign agents who are plotting to destroy this industry. Hence, I encountered many practical challenges in sourcing participants for the interviews and observations. I also faced some practical challenges in collecting data from different secondary sources.

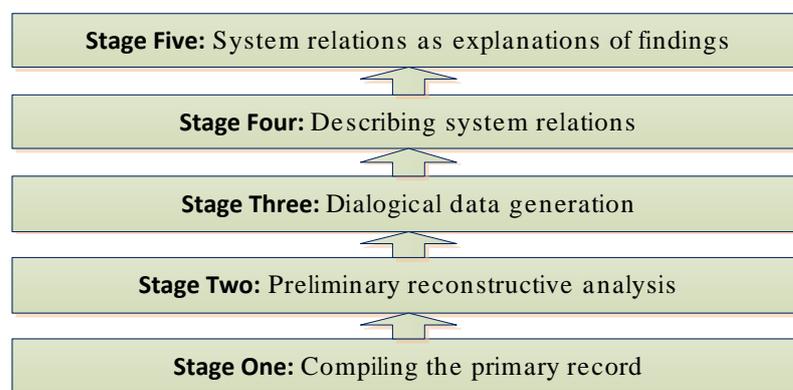
#### ***3.6.1 Ethical Clearance***

As I am a doctoral student of Curtin University, and this study involves human participants, I was required to obtain an ethics clearance. In my research, I sought written consent from the participants to interview, and observe them. Hence, in my ethical clearance application I needed to attach the participant information sheet (Appendix A.), a consent form for observation (Appendix B.) and a consent form to interview (Appendix C.). As my study location was in Bangladesh, I was required to translate all these documents into the national Bengali language. In this regard, my thesis chairperson, whose first language is Bengali, acknowledged the fairness and accuracy of the translation (Appendix D.). Curtin University strictly follows the Australian Code for human research, and the Ethics Coordinator in the Office of Research and Development and the Human Research Ethics Committee, Curtin University, approved this study under the Curtin University process for lower-risk studies (Approval Number CSEA 300115). This process complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Chapter 5.1.7 and Chapters 5.1.18-5.1.21)

### **3.7 Data Analysis Procedures**

As mentioned earlier in this study, I explicitly took a criticalist stance for the emancipation of oppressed actors involved in my study. In this regard, I often introduced corresponding value judgements to support the alternative voices and have attempted to empower them to

“become more fully human”(Freire 2000, 55). To this end, I employed the Carspecken (1996) five-stage model of critical ethnography which researchers at Houston University have used in education research, social science and management (Carspecken 1996, 2). The following figure shows the different stages of critical ethnography I have used in this thesis:



**Figure 1: Five Stages for Critical Ethnography Adopted from Carspecken’s (1996, 43)**

In the first stage, I collected monological data by taking notes through observation. In the second stage, I made the preliminary reconstructive analysis on the data gathered from the first stage. I chose reconstructive analysis for this stage as it articulates those cultural themes and system factors that are not observable and that were usually unstated by the actors themselves. In stage three, the reconstructive analysis and the horizon analysis were made for the dialogical data generation. In stage four, by re-examining the cultural reconstructions I worked out in stages one through three, I tried to discover system relationships (Carspecken (1996, 197). According to Carspecken (1996, 172) “in stage five the idea is to consider one's findings in relation to general theories of society, both to help explain what has been discovered in stages one through four and to alter, challenge, and refine macro-sociological theories themselves”. Therefore, in stage five, using theoretical concepts, I attempted to establish a link between reconstructive analysis and system theory, and then attempted to establish any contribution to real social change.

I analysed the monological data collected through observation by the preliminary reconstructive analysis. I then generated the dialogical data, from the interview participants. In this regard, first the participants signed a consent form before taking part in the interview session. I recorded all the interviews electronically and later transcribed them for analysis. I supplied the transcription copy to the participants later to ensure whether the transcription was accurate or if any modifications were needed to comply with the true meaning of the participants’ discussion. I coded observation and interview data respectively by using low-

level and high-level coding (Carspecken 1996). It is important to mention that Carspecken (1996, 149) has discouraged the use of software in coding and analysing the data in critical ethnography; hence, I used a word processor for the coding. In the final stage, institutional theory from organisational and critical postcolonial perspectives guided me in analysing the data.

For analysing the data in this study I used reconstructive analysis, pragmatic horizon analysis, and system analysis (Carspecken 1996; Hardcastle, Usher and Holmes 2006). In addition, I used the following methodological concepts, specifically, intersubjective space, meaning fields, ontological categories and validity claims, the validity horizon, and reflexivity.

### ***3.7.1 Intersubjective Space***

In order to have a good understanding of the “intersubjective space” concept first we need to understand the concept of “setting” and “taking-position” as these two terms are closely related to intersubjective space. According to Zhang and Carspecken (2013, 210) “*a “setting” is not a site, nor a physical and temporal place where interactions occur, but rather an intersubjective co-construction that can be understood only by taking a participant’s position and noticing what commitments and entitlements, norms, and so on are assumedly shared by the actors so that their interaction can take place.*” The concept of setting is deeply rooted within the intersubjective space. In the communicative act, participants must have some desire for the interaction to occur, and if the participants’ desires are found to be low then the communication would produce barely integrated setting, and the communication act would result in a highly integrated setting when the participants’ hold a high desire for interaction. If the setting fails to ensure a minimum level of integration, it would not be able to produce sufficient detail and the purpose of interaction would be in question.

In the intersubjective space, the setting determines the possibilities of position-taking of the participants (Zhang and Carspecken 2013, 210). According to Carspecken (1996, 99) “*to infer meaning fields, you must “take the position” of the actor, the ones addressed by the act, and other people present but unaddressed, in order to note the impressions of meaning possibly experienced by each party. This is intersubjectivity, which consists of taking the subjective position from a variety of perspectives on the act; it is position-taking.*”

The intersubjective space is the metaphor, which helps us to understand the social relations of human beings. In this space, the human self is assumed to be intersubjectively constituted.

According to Zhang and Carspecken (2013, 213) *“intersubjective space is emergent from normed symbol use, the use of normed symbols to mediate interactions by allowing for position-taking. Intersubjective space in an array of possible subject positions from which acts come and to which acts are addressed. Personhood is dependent upon intersubjective space; and it suffers, exalts, oppresses, affirms, and negates within forms of the subject-subject relations.”* As a result, varied degrees of anticipation are the keys to success in taking other possible subjective positions. Otherwise, it will be not possible to predict the forthcoming acts of the participant. Through this position-taking it will be possible to uncover the attached implicit assumptions and structures of the acts.

### ***3.7.2 Meaning Fields***

In the communicative act "meaning field" offers the different possible claims for the researcher in constructing the initial meaning. According to Carspecken (1996, 96) *“you cannot know for certain what an actor intended with her act, you cannot know for certain what impressions of meaning were received by those witnessing the actor directly addressed by the act, but you can specify possibilities. A meaning field is such a range of possibilities.”* In the meaning reconstruction, a researcher can use “or”, “and”, and “and/or” statements to present the difficulties attached to that meaningful act. The success of meaning reconstruction depends on the degree of familiarity a researcher has with the culture of her subject. Thus, the initial meaning reconstruction is viewed as very preliminary and subject to error which a researcher can refine by the use of peer de-briefers and member checks (Carspecken 1996).

Epistemologically, there is no hard and fast rule that a researcher would follow in the reconstruction of meaning. It is a hermeneutic process, where a researcher takes the position of virtual participants to obtain a holistic view of the setting (Carspecken 1996). The hermeneutic process helps the researcher to shift her initial holistic modes of understanding to more explicit and delineated modes of understanding, and subsequently, this process helps the researcher to alter her holistic understanding of meaning (Carspecken 1996, citing Palmer 1969).

### ***3.7.3 Ontological Categories and Validity Claims***

The works of Jurgen Habermas (1984, 1987) have provided a solid foundation for critical epistemology. Carspecken (1996, 8) asserts *“we criticalists have both witnessed and directly experienced forms of oppression. We do not like them. We want to change them. The precise nature of oppression, however, is an empirical question and not a given belief”*. However,

we need to remember that the critical epistemology does not offer us any formula for helping the underprivileged and oppressed; it guides us in conducting valid inquiries into human experiences. Furthermore, as the act of conducting critical research is value driven, it is the obligation of the researcher to come up with standard validity claims to avoid any biases. Therefore, in critical research, the validity claims and the values are closely connected through the relationship of democratic principal and truths. As such, critical researchers have to pay more attention to validity claims than the truth (Carspecken 1996, 8).

In critical research, by following certain universal standards the 'truth' claims are made to win the consensus of a cultural group. However, these standards are not culturally specific and do not offer the answer to a truth claim but helps to establish the validity of a truth claim. Habermas (1984, 1987) a pragmatist, suggested a different understanding of validity that was not found in traditional philosophy and logic. Pragmatists believe the truth itself depends on consensus. As such, it would not be wise to simply restrict the validity claims to the logic of an argument (Carspecken 1996, 56-61).

Carspecken (1996) addresses three ontological categories for validity claims, which he developed from the theory of communicative action of Jurgen Habermas. However, in his theory of communicative action, Hebarmas talked about the objective world, the social world and the subjective world (Habermas 1984, 100). On the other hand, in his concepts of ontological categories, Carspecken (1996) examined the objective, subjective and normative-evaluative categories. In his objective ontological category, which Carspecken (1996) identified as "The World", there is a structure of opposition between appearance and reality. This ontological realm is structured by ensuring multiple accesses of all humans. As such, it represents a single world where all individuals can understand and judge whether a statement is true or false. However, when the same world is interpreted in different ways by different people, this could be addressed by the differences between the appearance and the reality distinction (Carspecken 1996, 65).

Carspecken (1996) identified the subjective category as "My," "Her," and "Your" World. In this category, only those who can understand and judge all statements as true or false have privileged access to that domain. According to Carspecken (1996, 70) the "*subjective-referenced truth claims are claims that the person whose subjectivity is referred to would confirm the statement about her subjective state if she were honest in her self-disclosure. Because this category is structured fundamentally according to the principle of privileged access, it involves a notion of my world, her world, and your world.*"

Carspecken (1996) identified the normative-evaluative category as "Our" World, and this ontological category is very different from the principles of multiple accesses and the privileged access. According to Carspecken (1996, 83), *"the normative-evaluative realm is an ontological category presupposed by all meaningful action. It consists of truth claims about what behaviour is proper, appropriate, and conventional. Normative-evaluative claims can always be articulated, as "should claim"; people should act in such and such ways at such and such times. Normative-evaluative claims thus concern the nature of our world rather than "the" world or "my" world"*.

### **3.7.4 Validity Horizon**

Carspecken (2008, 742) has claimed by using a validity horizon, it is possible to reconstruct all meaningful expressions. The validity horizon is a matrix where the three ontological claims of objectivity, subjectivity and the normative-evaluative are placed on the horizontal axis and their corresponding foreground to background relations are arrayed in the vertical axis. According to Carspecken (2008, 742) *"validity horizons will reveal background claims that occur frequently in the typical actions of cultural insiders such that an entire worldview or ideology is instantiated and reproduced in routine social interactions and practices. In addition, the identity claims of actors will draw on cultural milieu supplying identity components in structured relations"*.

Validity horizon is a flexible and powerful interpretive framework. However, in using validity horizon as a means of meaning reconstruction, the researcher has to give his full attention to the temporal axis of the meaning horizon (Carspecken 1996, 119). The temporal axis of meaning horizon helps the researcher to understand the fact that what has just occurred has some impact on what is expected to come next. According to Carspecken (1996, 106) *"All acts of meaning are contextual: the meaning fields associated with them will be constituted by an interactive syntax of past action in relation to expectations of what will come next. The meaning of any particular act will depend in part on its location within a stream of interaction: thus a syntax"*

### **3.7.5 Reflexivity**

According to Shacklock and Smyth (1998, 6) *"reflexivity in research is built on an acknowledgment of the ideological and historical power dominant forms of inquiry exert over the researcher and the researched."* In critical research, through reflexivity researchers invite open debate on their own critical assumptions, beliefs and ideologies (Stahl 2008, 140). Simon and Dippo (1986, 200) argue that while conducting research in critical

framework a researcher must '*reflexively address their own situated character*' in showing how the research account is affected by historical factors.

### **3.8 Validation Procedures**

According to (Carspecken 1996, 57) "*in critical social research, we immediately translate truth claims into validity claims, understanding that some of the content of any truth claim is going to be culturally bound. Our aim is to produce truth claims that have met their validity requirements and that are therefore well supported. We never claim to have the final "truth" of any issue pinned down, however, because we agree with the pragmatists that any assertion will always be fallible. We do think that following the validity requirements of any truth claim carefully will give us research findings that point toward truth.*"

Lincoln and Guba (2013, 104) identified several techniques for assuring credibility in a qualitative study, including "*prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of sources, methods, theories, and researchers, peer de-briefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks.*" In my observation, I tried to follow the techniques Carspecken (1996, 88-89) suggested to support my objective validity claims. In order to disrupt unconscious biases, I used a flexible observation schedule. I had collected data required for my study over an eleven-month period, and this prolonged engagement in space helped to minimize potential threats of the Hawthorn effects. I used low-inference in recording my primary field notes, and I used brackets to record any potentially higher-inference reflections. I used peer debriefing to ensure I had not ignored certain people, given unnecessary attention to others, or used any incorrect vocabulary. I used member checks on the record and asked my participants to verify whether I accurately recorded the field observation or not.

To support subjective validity claims for my interview data, I tried to follow the Carspecken (1996, 165-166) suggested procedures. I recorded all interviews using a mobile recorder and later checked whether or not the participants were consistent throughout the session. While interviewing, I repeatedly checked my observation data with the interviewee. I strictly followed the non-leading interview techniques, giving the participant a chance to take the lead in her discussion. In this regard, I used peer debriefing to ensure that I was not leading the interviewee to a particular answer in the interview session. I used members checking at the end of interview sessions. I shared with them some of my reconstructive analyses and invited their comments on these analyses. In addition, I encouraged them to use their own vocabulary in the interview session to know their world.

### **3.9 Anonymization and Privacy**

As per the requirements of Curtin University, I had to distribute the participant information sheet before commencing the observation and interview. In the participant information sheet, I had to incorporate the title and objectives of the study. In addition, I needed to introduce the participant with the research team. In addition, all participants signed a consent form allowing them to take part in this investigation. This consent form clearly states the identity of the participants, participative organisations will be protected and the participants were informed of the right to withdraw from my research at any time without prejudice. In addition, I affirmed any collected artifacts or documents would not bring any negative consequences to the involved stakeholders.

### **3.10 The Researcher**

I was born and raised in a third world country, Bangladesh, and am currently studying at a first world university. I have experienced life both in the postcolonial East and in the West. After graduating with a degree in Management from Rajshahi University, Bangladesh, I went to Sweden and received an MSc in international management from Gothenburg University. I then returned to Bangladesh. However, when I was studying in Sweden, I became aware of critical management studies, institutional theory and critical ethnography. In my master thesis, employing Benson's (1977) dialectical view, I examined the institutionalisation process of diversity in a reputable Swedish automobile company, and was engaged in a critical ethnography for a period of five months.

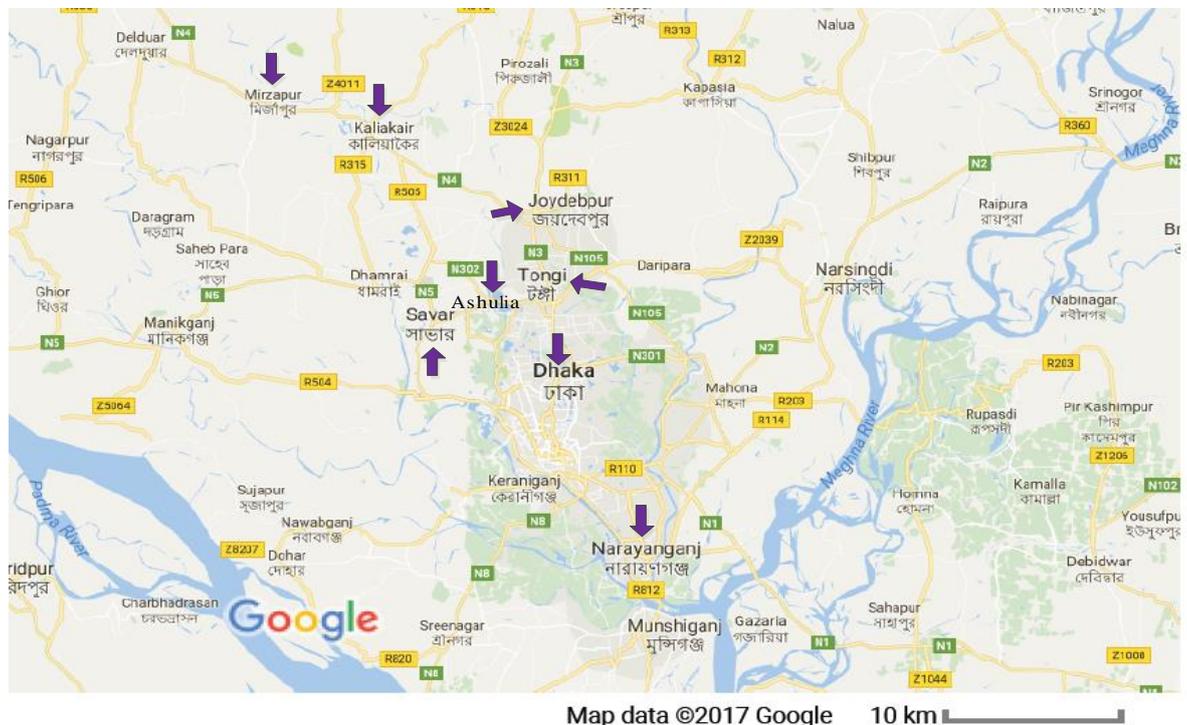
Subsequently, I enrolled in Curtin University to pursue my doctoral study. In my current study, my main supervisor is from a first world country and my co-supervisor is from a middle-income country. Hence, I believe I am working in a dynamic research team, where I have the opportunity to receive different perspectives and advice from my supervisory team. For conducting this study, I had to complete multiple surveys in the different ethnographic sites. For a period of eleven months, I was engaged in this qualitative investigation, which provided me with a rich sociocultural and political understanding in this research area. In addition, as I conducted my research study in my native country, I shared a common language with my participants, which helped me in the construction of their world, at the same time I was at risk of the tendency of unnoticed biases.

## Chapter Four: Giving Voice to the Narrative

**Chapter Summary:** This chapter will present background information relating to data collection, and will attempt to identify the main voices to construct the narratives for the analysis.

### 4.1 Background Information of Data Collection and Identification of Voices

For collecting data, I went to Bangladesh on 4th November 2015, and after completing the data collection process, I returned to Curtin University on 17th September 2016. At the beginning, I had to spend two months arranging approval from the factory owners in order to conduct my research study. I conducted participant observations and interviews in seventeen different garment factories. These factories were located in the following industrial areas; Mirzapur, Kaliakair, Savar, Joydebpur, Ashulia, Narayanganj, and Dhaka. For safety reasons, I was advised to reside in the capital city Dhaka, and to commute daily to each of the research locations from Dhaka, which was challenging and time-consuming due to the heavy traffic in the capital city Dhaka.



**Figure 2: The Location Map of the Suppliers' Factories Visited during the period of Study**

However, the approval process from the factories was not smooth, as the garment industry of Bangladesh was experiencing dramatic changes during the period of my study. A few major accidents brought the industry under stiff scrutiny locally, nationally and internationally. Hence, my efforts to gain access to the factories were initially unsuccessful. Consequently, I had to depend on several sponsors who assisted me in gaining permission from the garment factories. In order to access the facility premises, I had to observe a strict approval process. In this process, firstly, my sponsor assisted in arranging an introductory meeting with the factory owner or with the director, where I had to submit all of my documents relating to my research study and then had to explain to them my research plan in detail. Subsequently, after obtaining management consent, I had to go physically to the sweatshop to receive their approval. Finally, the plant management was responsible for arranging any assistance needed for my study. Usually, it took one or two working days to arrange the approval from the factory.

At all of the factories, the Human Recourse (HR), Admin & Compliance managers acted as my local sponsor, and they provided me with all the support needed to carry out my study. In each factory, I spent three working days with the participants, observed and recorded their communicative activities and after completing all the participants' observations, I had to return to the plant to conduct the interviews. In some cases, I found that my local sponsor for the company had left his job or had been promoted to the corporate office, which resulted in difficulties for me entering the factory for the second time to arrange the interviews. In these cases, I had to communicate with the top executive again to arrange my access to the plant for the second time to conduct the interviews.

During the period of my study, in addition to participant observations at garment factories, I was also involved in communicating with various stakeholders, later I needed to construct these narratives. In this process, within the factory, I engaged in communications with helpers, operators, supervisors, line quality supervisors, line chiefs, the floor in-charge, HR representatives, welfare officers, workers' participation committee members, assistant production managers, production managers, HR personnel, administrative and compliance managers, general managers, chief operating officers, directors, and factory owners. In addition, to secure a holistic view of the subject matter, and to construct a complete narrative, I interacted with some participants outside the factory. These participants were the additional stakeholders; specifically, representatives of the buying house, the safety engineers of Alliance, NGO representatives, trade union activists, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Representatives, inspectors of the

Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, journalists, and educators (see Appendix I. Interview Log for more detail).

I did not have any prior experiences regarding the life of garment workers and the garment industry as a whole. Thus, I developed all the narratives by taking the middle space among the participants (Gray 2014, 87). In this regard, I adopted various roles while communicating with participants and I selected these roles based on the context of the situation, and inevitably, it had some impact on the narratives constructed here. Though I communicated with participants of different positions, I identified five main voices from these interviews and observations and in my thesis; I presented narratives of these five voices. These voices are:

1. Workers (Both helpers and operators are considered here as workers. In the garment industry, helpers are the novice workers who are assisting the operators in the production process, and the operators are the skilled workers who are operating the machines)
2. Low-Level Management (The assistant manager for production, HR representatives, welfare officer, the floor in-charge, the staff member of the industrial engineering department, the line quality staff and the line supervisors are all considered here as low-level line and staff members)
3. Mid-Level Management (The production manager and the HR Admin and Compliance manager are considered here as mid-level managers. In this study, the HR Admin and Compliance Manager is generally regarded as the CSR manager)
4. Top-Level Management (the general manager, chief operating officer, director, and the factory owner are considered here as the top-level management)
5. Stakeholders ( representative of the buying house, representatives of Accord and Alliance, NGOs representatives, trade union activists, BGMEA representatives, journalists, inspectors from the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, and educators are considered here as the stakeholders)

At this point, I will now examine the epistemological and the ontological status of the five voices and show how they have emerged in the space and how I have constructed the final narratives from their communicative acts. I will also discuss how the narratives offered here are connected with the ethnographic site (Gray 2014, 89). I affirm that all five voices emerged in communicative acts, and I recorded these voices and constructed their narratives from participants' observations and ethnographic interviews. During the observations, I

directly observed the activities of the workers, as well as the management staff. I constructed the voice of the workers and the management from their communicative acts I had recorded earlier. I constructed other stakeholders' voices by engaging with them in the ethnographic interviews. In writing the narratives of these different voices, I reconstructed the structure of those voices in line with the empirical data, and I ensured that these narratives were deeply rooted in their system relations and structures (Gray 2014, 89). Therefore, the narratives presented here can be readily understood by all actors of the same time and space.

In order to gain greater familiarity of the plant, I usually took a tour of the factory before commencing my observation. In this industry, the 'swing floor' is the main production floor, and thus where most of the garment workers are active. Consequently, I conducted all of the participant observations by taking a position on these swing floors, which provided me the opportunity to collect rich data for my study. During the tour of the factories, I found the operations on the swing floor were carried out under different production lines, and these production lines had an influence on the experiences of the workers. As such, in most cases, I positioned myself next to an idle machine within a production line. It gave me the opportunity to observe closely the participant's different communicative acts that took place during my stay in the factories. In addition, during the period of my observation in the factories, I tried to maintain the same position, which gave me the opportunity to witness a participant's communicative acts over a prolonged period, and it gave the participants enough time to accept my presence in their daily work life.

## **Chapter Five: Welcome to the Minefields**

**Chapter Summary:** In this chapter, the first two stages of analysis will be presented. In the introduction section, a discussion will be made on how the eleven broad categories were developed from observation and how they will be used for analysing the data in these two stages. Moreover, in the introduction, an attempt will be made to clarify how the validity claims were established throughout the first two stages of analysis. Thereafter, five voices will be used to present narratives under these eleven broad categories.

### **5.1 Introduction**

The aims of the study are to investigate how local suppliers' garments factories in Bangladesh understand and cope with the demands from their multinational contractors to implement localised CSR policies, and to critically examine the postcolonial conditions and their implications regarding the current CSR arrangements in the garment industry of Bangladesh. As a result, in this study, I chose a particular cultural community for my observation whose members belong to a subordinate social class (Carspecken 1999, 33), and observed the work life of garment workers in Bangladesh.

In this regard, during the eleven months of my study period, I observed the staff at 17 different garment factories in Bangladesh and spent 253:50:00 hours doing participant observations (see Appendix E. Participant Observation Log). Subsequently, I made an attempt to reconstruct the core themes of the culture of that community. In this reconstruction, I made an explicit linguistic formulation of the tacit understandings the group members shared with me during the period of study (Carspecken 1999, 34). These themes bear the social identity of the cultural group, which was constructed and maintained in a cultural milieu. Thereafter, I made an attempt to explain these core themes as the products of dominant social relations which placed the members of the community in a subordinate group (Carspecken 1999, 34). Finally, I attempted to reconstruct the themes of resistance and opposition against the dominant social order by giving voice to these voiceless (Carspecken 1999, 35).

In this chapter, the first two stages of data analysis, the building of the primary record and the reconstructive analysis, is discussed. The primary record was made through participant observations from various ethnographic sites. Thereafter, low-level and high-level coding was used to conduct the reconstructive analysis. As low-level coding needs little abstraction, I needed to ensure multiple access in this low-level coding process (Carspecken 1996, 146-147). For the low-level coding, I made little effort at abstraction and tried to maintain the objective features in the primary record. On the other hand, in high-level coding, I made a

greater effort on the abstraction process, and I used this high-level coding for explicit meaning reconstructions and horizon analysis (Carspecken 1996, 147).

The validity horizon is a matrix where the three ontological claims of objectivity, subjectivity and the normative-evaluative are placed on the horizontal axis and their corresponding foreground to background relations are arrayed in the vertical axis (Carspecken 2008, 742), and I used the horizon analysis only to reconstruct the meaning of the speech acts. While coding the primary record, I used my supervisors as peer de-briefers, and requested they check my choice of codes and to check the interference level in the low-level codes, I also requested them to check carefully whether or not the greater amount of abstraction I had made in my high-level codes had generalised the findings.

After the coding process, I started reconstructing the meaning of my primary record. In this meaning reconstruction, I used low-levels of interference and higher-levels of interference. Low-levels of interference were used in initial meaning reconstruction, whereas the higher-levels of interference were used in the horizon analysis (Carspecken 1996, 96). The initial meaning reconstruction was used to add more description for the observed actions, and the aim was to reconstruct the entire meaning of the observed actions (Carspecken 1996, 97). In addition, for this reconstruction, on many occasions, I included my own observation comments, and these comments were the speculations of meaning I constructed at the research site when describing what had happened there (Carspecken 1996, 47). These observer comments are the researcher's reflexivity, which I inserted to invite open debate on my critical assumptions, beliefs and ideology (Stahl 2008, 140).

However, epistemologically, there are no hard or fast rules how to come up with possible meanings, and the hermeneutic process in formulating possible meanings guided me. The inter-subjectivity feature of the hermeneutic process allowed me to take a variety of subjective positions in a communicative act, which as a communicative being allowed me to take a first-, second- or third-person position when analysing a communicative action (Carspecken 1996, 98-99).

Moreover, while reconstructing meaning, I also considered the concept of cultural typification and the personality factors of the individuals. The cultural typifications helped me by explaining the tacit generalities of the typical culture, and it helped me in the position-taking process. In addition, in reconstructing the meaning, I carefully created a boundary in identifying the cultural routine patterns and the individual routine patterns (Carspecken 1996, 99-101). Once this information was analysed, the same peer de-briefers were used to check my biases in the reconstruction of the meaning. Thereafter, different broad categories

were constructed from the developed cultural themes, and thereafter, these categories were used to give voices to the narratives.

In this chapter, in order to reconstruct the meaning of the observational data, I developed eleven broad categories from the codes I created. In developing these categories, I used researcher reflexivity (Whiteman and Cooper 2011, 894) and tried to articulate the cultural themes I identified from the communicative acts at the intersubjective spaces. These categories helped me to constitute the personal identity, values and beliefs of the participants (Carspecken 1996, 37). As a result, some of the categories apparently seemed to be loosely connected with the research questions. However, as per the requirement of the methodology I needed to incorporate a few categories from the cultural themes to inform the emancipation of the subordinate social class, which is the aim of the critical ethnography.

As a result, the categories of the working arrangements in the garment factories, the current CSR initiatives and the bottom-line benefit, economic emancipation and the empowerment of female workers, and giving voice to the voiceless were presented as methodological requirements. On the other hand, Western buyers and their CSR agendas, institutional arrangements of the Western buyers, responses from the Eastern supplier, Accord and Alliance and its criticism, production at the expense of the environment, postcolonial conditions and their implications for the current CSR arrangement, and the paradigm shifts in the garment industry were examined to satisfy the research questions. Moreover, I did not present these categories differentiating the above mentioned requirements, instead the categories were analysed in a manner so the narratives can freely speak for themselves. In the following section, the primary observation records and the reconstructive analysis are discussed under the eleven categories and in this process; five voices were used to explain the narratives.

## **5.2 The Working Arrangements in the Garment Factories**

On 19 January 2016, I was able to enter the first garment factory. A week before, one of my sponsors introduced me to one of the directors at their corporate office who approved and arranged my entry at the factory. The director contacted the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the factory and asked him to arrange all the facilities needed to support my study. In addition, the director asked the COO to attach me with their HR Admin and Compliance department as my work is related to this department. The HR, Admin and Compliance Manager (hereafter I will refer to as the CSR manager) welcomed me from the security office located at the factory gate where I needed to register my name and the purpose of the visit. The CSR manager then took me to his office and gave a brief introduction of the

readymade garments (RMG) industry of Bangladesh. I conducted participant observations in 17 garment factories, and I had to more or less go through the same procedure to receive approval from the corporate offices and had to follow the same rules before entering these factories (A.1.1, 19012016).

The CSR manager informed me there are two different types of factories operating in the industry; specifically, knitwear garment factories and woven garment factories, and this factory was a knitwear garment factory. I was also informed some of the factories run only the sewing operations while in other sweatshops everything including the knitting, dyeing, sewing, and washing operations are performed. He also told me that the company was running all of the operations in their premises and was considered a ‘composite’ garment factory. Meanwhile, he offered me coffee and snacks and later asked one of his welfare officers to arrange for my visit to the factory. It was common that before conducting the observation, I was taken overall comprehensive tour of the factories. After these tours, I usually requested to be allowed into the most labour intensive section of the factory to conduct my observations. During my first tour in the factory, I noticed that the sewing section was the most labour intensive section, and there is a popular concept that the sewing floor represents the ‘real’ picture of the garment industry of Bangladesh. Moreover, my presence in the crowded workplace had little impact on the behaviour of the employees working in this section, and this anonymity helped in minimising the “Hawthorne Effect”. As a result, very often, I was placed in the sewing sections to make my observations, and I was able to retain this same position while conducting my observations in these factories, and this position gave me the opportunity to oversee the same participants’ communicative acts over a long period. In addition, it gave the participants’ enough time to accept my presence into their daily lives (A.1.1, 19012016).

### ***5.2.1 The Worker: The Work Life***

There were 400 ‘workers’ employed in this particular sewing floor and they were arranged in eight different production lines. A production supervisor and a quality supervisor were assigned for each production line to oversee the workers’ progress. There were 34 operators and 8 helpers working in the production line next to me. Out of these 34 operators, 23 were women. There were 4 workers working on a production table close to me where 3 of them were female workers. While working they were also engaged in conversation. I noticed a male worker was singing while working. It could be assumed the workers had tried to make their workplace more tolerable for themselves and they experienced some form of autonomy in their work lives. I realized later nearly 400 operators worked in this plant as temporary workers. However, the physical environment was satisfactory, and there were separate toilets

for male and female workers, the factory had supplied purified drinking water, had installed a cooling system to control the temperature of the floor and there were cleaners cleaning the floor at regular intervals (A.2.1, 20012016).

Due to the loud noise from the machines and the fans, I could not record all their conversations. In addition, for their personal health and safety, the workers wore masks, which made the situation even more difficult for me to record their speeches. As a result, I had to rely on their body language, facial expressions, and gestures when keeping a record of their communicative acts. All the workers were barefoot, while staff members wore footwear. The workers were not suspicious of my presence, which helped in minimising the “Hawthorne Effect”. As a result, my presence did not have any impact on their work life. However, the management staffs were informed about my presence on the sewing floor and this may have had some impact on their behaviour. During the lunch break, the workers behaved like school kids and left the workplace in a hurry (A.2.1, 20012016).

Many of the staff members and workers communicated with me during my stay at this plant. At the beginning, most of them thought I was a job seeker. All the workers dressed quite neat and clean and they seemed to wear different dresses every day. Some of the male operators wore rather fashionable and fancy clothes while most of the female workers wore conservative Muslim dresses and the hijab. That meant the female workers were maintaining their religious obligations while working. One more thing should be noted, during the Muslim prayer time both the male and the female workers participated though there were different prayer rooms for each. During lunch breaks, the workers, especially the female workers, left the place behaving like school kids (B.3.1, 25012016).

The workers dressed differently whenever a buyer’s representative was going to inspect the factory. Some workers wore a firefighter’s uniform, some wore a fire rescuer’s uniform and some helpers wore the uniform of a first aider. Many of the operators and helpers did not have a chair to sit on. Some sitting arrangements seemed to be dysfunctional as some of the seating was rather inappropriate for the size of the worker (C.2.1, 07022016).

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***Observer Comments (OC):** The workers were wearing different clothing because of the factory inspection. It seemed that a ‘drama’ was staged on the floor, which could not be considered a sustainable system.*

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The labour turnover in this factory was noticeably high, and new workers were evident almost every day. Some workers looked weak and tired. I came to know that in most sweater factories production is somewhat intermittent, and for at least one to two month this factory

closed due to not having sufficient orders from buyers. During this temporary slack period, the workers only received a minimum wage from the factory, and this minimum wage was not enough for their survival. As a result, the workers continuously asked their managers when the production would start again. When the factory runs at full capacity, including the overtime a worker receives which can be two or three times higher than their minimum wage, and in return, workers had to work from 8 AM till midnight. Though it imposes many difficulties on their lives, they still want to work more and earn more money to lead a better life. Their goal is to work hard for a short period and after saving some money return to their family and village and start their own small business (D.2.1, 17022016).

The workers in the linking section of the factory, where they join different parts of the sweater did not able to work standing up to avoid boredom, as all the linking machines were placed on low tables and workers must work sitting on a very low chair. However, the workers in the makeup section and at the quality inspection table were able to work standing up as well as sitting, whenever they wanted. The line-supervisors did not show any aggressive behaviour, which is not common in garments factories. The quality inspection workers standing beside me seemed to be very tired. The production was scheduled to continue until 11 PM and some of the workers wondered how they would be able to continue their work until 11 PM. The workers started taking breaks frequently and tried their best to overcome the situation. It was 4 PM and the next half hour break was scheduled at 7 PM. In this situation the workers would not be able to perform fully due to their tiredness. Workers who were employed in this factory were paid both a fixed rate and a piece rate. The piece rate workers received their wages based on the amount (of pieces) produced. Whereas the fixed rate workers received fixed wages at the end of each month and would only receive extra financial benefits if they worked beyond 9 PM. Hence, it could be said the normal working hours set for the fixed rate garment workers was 12 hours a day (E.1.2, 22022016).

Light music was played over a loudspeaker, and no sooner had the music started then the workers started cleaning their machines. I came to know this was the norm for the factory, when the music started to play over the loudspeaker the workers had to start cleaning their machines. Meanwhile, a female worker served me a bottle of drinking water, only later did I realise she had physical disability. She told me a number of workers with physical disabilities were working in this factory, she had been working in the factory for the past 12 years and the workplace was a truly ideal place to work. She also mentioned a majority of the production lines run until 5 PM and in the rare case of an emergency, a few production lines would operate until 8 PM (G.1.2, 28022016).

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**Meaning Field:** *I came to know from other sources that though there was fixed start time of the production which was 8 AM, there was no fixed closing time in the factory. Production operations usually ran based on the requirements of the production (work order). The female worker who tried to mislead me by providing wrong information was a loyal worker of the factory. She may have thought it was not good for the company to share unfavourable information to an outsider. She may have known more recently, Western buyers were showing greater concern over forced labour, and the overtime system employees were subject to. As a result, she may have thought disclosing this more sensitive information could impose difficulties in their lives. Moreover, she may have been instructed to deliver this information to me.*

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A production staff had declared work would continue until 12 AM that night, but the female workers seemed to be happy after hearing the announcement. The factory provided food for those employees who worked for extended hours. As a result, the production department had to keep records of how many workers would be engaged in that extra duty. There was no sitting arrangements provided for the workers who were working on the inspection table. As a result, in an extended working day, they had to work on their feet for about 16 hours (H.2.1, 03032016).

Two helpers working together seemed to be of post-adolescence age only. One helper was looking back and forth with fear on her face. She was a hesitant and shy worker and she was very careful in her every step and she was so innocent that it seemed she might start crying at any moment. Her job was to help the operators and to bring them the things needed for the production. She was also responsible for performing some technical work, though. For three days, I did not see her sitting. Another helper who was working along-side this shy worker seemed to be the exact opposite to her. She was very confident and enjoyed every bit of her working life. (I.3.1, 07042016)

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The two young women referred to may have had different family situations, though they were from the same socio-economic structure. The difference in their social construction of reality might have shaped their contrasting behaviours. Most of the workers working here had started their work life when in their post-adolescence. Their lives bloomed like a flower in this factory. The battle of life started very early for them. They were working hard to change their lives. At a certain period, they would be able to gain greater economic freedom, but by then hard work would become a part of their lives. Their humanitarian needs were being ignored and they could hardly become free of this. They were dreaming of a prosperous life. However, their dreams never come true.*

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The workers were working in seven different production lines. The workers were talking to each other while working but it did not seem to be lively. However, I could not hear anything due to the loud noise of the machines and fans. Many of them seemed to be tired. All the workers were working barefoot while staff members were working on the floor wearing shoes or sandals. I was informed that out of the 600 workers in the factory, only 100 of them were regular workers and the rest of the workers were either piece rate temporary workers or contract workers. The regular workers were the permanent workers receiving fixed monthly salaries at the end of the month. The temporary workers were working under a piece rate basis but were considered the most skilled workers. The contract workers were recruited from the labour supply firms, and usually the factories do not pay their wages directly to the contract workers but instead paid the labour supply firms through whom they were recruited. These contract workers were considered a less costly option compared to the permanent and temporary workers (J.2.1, 10042016).

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***Observer Comments:** The wages of these temporary workers were paid on a weekly basis and usually, on the last working day the supervisors would prepare the contract workers' bills. I was told that 5 percent was deducted from the contract workers' wages to compensate the factory for their wastages. However, after observing a number of factories I realized the actual wastage rate was much lower than 5 percent, as the workers had to correct even their small garment faults. In addition, when the suppliers originally fixed the manufacturing costs for the product, they included the cost of wastages therein. As a result, the temporary workers were unfairly paid their weekly wages.*

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All the workers were working modestly. Most of the female workers wore a headscarf. Even the older women were not exempt from wearing it. A middle-aged female cleaner was working on the floor. The workers were self-motivated and needed very little monitoring from their supervisors. Some of the contracted workers had to shout requests for additional work to the input in-charge. They were shouting because the input in-charge would not be able to hear them otherwise because of the loud noise from the machines and fans. The supervisors were shouting due to the same reason though none of the supervisors were observed abusing any of the workers. It could be assumed that the culture of this factory does not permit them to do so (K.1.2, 24042016).

Some female workers working beside me were talking continuously while working. Helpers and the operators were quite free from their work pressure. Meanwhile, they started talking about their salary and overtime. They were discussing how they could present a proposal for increasing their salary to the staff. (K.1.2, 24042016)

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**Observer Comments:** *It could be assumed that it was very difficult for the female workers to approach their superior to increase their wages and benefits. I t had no idea to what extent the factory was following the labour code. However, it could be assumed that the literacy rates of the workers were very poor and as a result, most of the workers were not aware of their legal rights. In addition, with the labour supply in abundance, and an absence of trade union activity, combined to allow the factories to pay low wages to their employees.*

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The operators in this factory on average could earn BDT 10,000 (USD 126)<sup>3</sup>, and the helpers could earn BDT 7000 (USD 88) per month. However, this salary structure fluctuates with the variability in production. Last month, a temporary worker who was working on a piece rate basis earned BDT 25,000 (USD 315), and the highest wages earned by a worker was BDT 36,000 (USD 454) who was working in the ironing section (K.1.2, 24042016).

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**Observer Comments:** *The government had fixed the minimum wage for garment workers at BDT 5300 (USD 67) per month. As such, earning BDT 36,000 (USD 454) by a garment worker was not only surprising but also raised serious concerns regarding what the worker had to sacrifice in order to earn that amount of wages in a month.*

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I asked a worker whether he knew for whom they were sewing the garments. In reply, he told me they were sewing garments for American buyers. I asked the same question to many of the other workers and low-level managers and most of them had no idea for whom they were working. However, I was told by a mid-level manager the factory was mainly working for European buyers (K.3.1, 26042016).

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**Observer Comments:** *I raised this particular question to know whether workers were supplied with some basic information about their employer or not. I believed if the workers were aware how and where the buyers sold the garments they were sewing in their factory, they may feel some pride. However, the management was not eager to offer this information to their workers, as they were afraid if the workers were knowledgeable about this they might organize and demand an increase in their salaries. As a result, workers could not see the real faces of international business from this very corner of their marginalized life.*

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<sup>3</sup> 1 USD = 79.2945 BDT, Pound Sterling Live, Accessed 7 July, 2017, <https://www.poundsterlinglive.com/best-exchange-rates/us-dollar-to-bangladesh-taka-exchange-rate-on-2017-07-07>

The work environment seemed to be similar during my visits to the factories. Managers or supervisors were not harassing the workers and workers were do the work with little supervision or instructions. Few staffs from the Industrial Engineering (IE) department were giving directions to the operators on this floor. One staff was giving directions to a female worker about how to minimise wastage. The factory was using sophisticated automatic machines and encouraging their employees to follow the lean production system. The “lean” production system was defined on wall posters posted in various locations at the factory. I noticed the IT staffs were addressing the operators respectfully, which I did not notice in the other factories. A supervisor was found to be giving directions loudly but he was talking with the workers respectfully (M.4.1, 29052016).

Initially I would talk with a few workers in other factories. However, in this particular factory many of the workers started communicating with me. They showed curiosity towards my work and helped me as well. A young worker told me that “*all the garments are the same; you will not be able to see anything new here.*” She also said, “*A worker is good if she could meet the target and the same worker would be considered bad if she failed to meet the target.*” In response, I asked her whether the working environment was getting better over time. She did not reply to my question and left the place (N.3.1, 02062016).

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**Meaning Field:** *It seemed this woman did not reply to my question because she did not have faith in me, she considered me a spy for the owner or she really did not have any hope for her future.*

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A male worker had made me a face/dust mask in the meantime. He said, “*Boss, I guess you need some face/dust masks and I am going to make those for you.*” A worker brought me some drinking water as he saw that my water bottle was almost empty (N.3.1, 02062016).

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**Observer Comments:** *A question came to me, do I deserve this love from them, as I did not have the ability to give anything in return.*

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Fear gripped the crowd as the fire alarm started ringing. Some workers tried to escape the building although it was a false alarm and when they realized it was a false alarm, the workers immediately returned to work. The duration of the incident was less than one minute but it had a great impact on their psyche (N.1.2, 31052016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *It was understandable the workers, especially the female workers are very afraid of this kind of calamity and their first instinct is to run out of the sweatshop. The female workers are not capable of facing such calamities. Therefore, whatever safety*

*measures the factory might have in place, the female workers may act irrationally. Several horrific accidents over the years have shaped their mind. As a result, though the factories have instituted new safety measures, these have failed to assure the workers future accidents would not cause any harm to them. This instinct to panic and run might cause a greater loss than any calamities in the future.*

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The production line next to me was sewing a type of off-the-shoulder blouse for a western buyer. A female worker asked her male co-worker the name of the dress they were sewing. The male worker said that he did not know the name of the dress (N.2.1, 01062016).

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***Meaning Reconstruction:*** *It was very difficult for uneducated Bangladeshi workers to know the names of the Western dresses. In this age of fast fashion, it is difficult for even an educated rich Bangladeshi to follow the latest Western fashion trends. In addition, the workers did not have any idea about the price of the dresses they were sewing. However, they did not need to know the price and name of the dressed they were sewing as this knowledge would not change their lives. As a result, it was important for them to keep working to meet their production target. At the end of a working day, they did not have the energy to get out of this never-ending loop of thought.*

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Due to some problems in the operation, a line-supervisor had slapped a female worker next to me. She began crying loudly. I did observe workers being abused in many of the factories. However, this event was perhaps the cruellest incident I experienced while observing in the garment factories. The management quickly settled the matter and the female worker returned to work again. The accused supervisor was still standing next to her (N.3.2, 02062016).

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***Observer Comments:*** *This was not a desirable event and no excuse can justify this action. The female worker could expect no justice. The line-supervisor was passing time next to the female worker whom he slapped few minutes ago. It seemed these types of taken-for-granted acts had imposed many difficulties upon these garments workers. This matter seemed to end here. There were several welfare officers working in this factory. In addition, the company should have a workers' participating committee to negotiate grievances. It seemed nothing would bring justice for the victim and this slavery would continue in the workplace until the oppressed group could establish their voices in their workplaces.*

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Like other sweater factories, the supervisor or the quality inspectors did not shout at their workers. The workers were talking to each other while working but due to the loud noise of the machines and fans nearby, I could not hear them clearly. Like the other factories, the

workers here were also working barefoot but they were also wearing neat and clean clothes. Both male and female workers seemed quite conscious about their appearance. I could not see any tiredness on the workers' face. The workers at the table to the left of me were talking in a very low tone with each other and as a result, I could not hear them. The workers were quite focused on their work and they needed very little supervision (O.1.1, 12062016).

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***Observer Comments:** The workers were attentively working and the supervisors did not abuse their authority in managing their workers. The workers were linking different parts of a sweater flawlessly in this section and wanted to avoid any mistakes if they were to become careless or distracted for a moment. Therefore, the workers were working with care on their own will.*

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It was a knitwear factory where around 1000 workers were working. Seventy-five percent of the workers were women. I was positioned in the sewing section near a table adjacent to a production line close to the needle change station. The work environment was suitable for the task. It was evident the factory had progressed towards the establishment of greater safety required by their buyers. The workers were wearing neat and clean attire. They were talking with each other while working. I saw very few workers were wearing washed-out and shabby dresses. Due to the loud noise of the machine, I could not properly follow all the workers' conversations despite sitting very close to them. The workers did not seem to be tired. They were rather working with a smile on their faces. The operators and helpers were working barefooted as in other factories (P.1.1, 19062016).

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***Observer Comments:** I observed the workers in this industry prefer to wear cotton clothes while working. They had to work for a long time at a stretch and as a result, they had to wash their clothes every day. The cheap cotton clothes start to fade after a couple of washes. Though the more expensive cotton clothes maintain their colour after many washes, it was not possible for the garment workers to afford the costs of these clothes. As a result, the garment workers had to wear cheap shabby clothing while stitching the more expensive clothes for their western buyer.*

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The vacation for Eid al-Fitr was arriving shortly and I saw many workers discussing the upcoming festival. Normally this is the longest vacation observed by the garment factories with the duration of the vacation ranging from 7 days to a maximum of 14 days. Usually, the government declares a holiday for 3 days, and the factory workers had to earn the rest of the holiday vacation time by working extra shifts. In order to get 7 days paid holiday, workers had to sacrifice 4 weekends. The workers in many factories had to work 8 to 9 weekends to enjoy around 2 weeks of vacation during the Eid al-Fitr (P.2.1, 20062016).

A worker expressed concern regarding his income to me. He said that currently, the factory did not have sufficient production orders on hand. In this type of situation, workers were only engaged in a normal production period and would expect to receive the lowest wages. With this level of income, it would be very difficult for them to survive. He said if they could work 100 hours overtime a month, they could earn almost double the standard wage. He also said workers would eagerly wait for days until they could work more overtime to improve their life (P.3.1, 21062016).

I was observing them sitting very close to a working table. However, I could not hear all of their conversations due to the loud noise of the fan. Sometimes I understood they were talking about the work. It could be assumed that their targets were fixed based on each team. As a result, workers were very often talking with each other about their targets. The workers would almost stop their conversation when I began observing here (Q.1.1, 23062016).

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**Observer Comments:** *The workers might have considered me an owner's representative as they saw me talking to the owner. Moreover, it was not common here for an outsider to sit and observe their work for a long period. Consequently, they might think of me as someone special or they might have been instructed from their superior. As a result, it might be hard to observe their natural behaviour and expressions during my stay at this smaller factory. The factories I had visited earlier were considerably larger factories and the presence of an unknown person was relatively common because many people went there every day for various purposes. Moreover, it was very hard for the workers to identify a person in a crowd of thousands but my presence might have an impact on the behaviour of workers in a smaller factory.*

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This room was worker-friendly as the area was well lit and air moved easily through, even though there were no air conditioners. Additionally, the workers had a more social relationship between them due to there being fewer workers. The workers were talking to each other while working. They were not resting even though they were talking. They were relentlessly working. The workers would sometimes work on their feet when they were tired of sitting. Many workers splashed some water on their faces and re-joined the work again. The tiredness seemed to over-take them and I saw the workers were going to the washroom one by one (Q.2.1, 25062016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The workers were not resting while talking unlike the workers in other factories they were always working. Even this tedious work failed to diminish their resilience to succumb. They worked with a never-ending spirit like mythical warriors. They*

*were fighting against all odds, against all the superstitions and against all deprivation to make a stronger and better Bangladesh.*

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*Now I will switch the voice of the Worker to the voice of Low-level Management. From this point forward, I will not give any information to the change of voices and it will be easily recognised by the title of the voice.*

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### **5.2.2 Low-Level Management: Supervision and Attitude towards Workers**

A line-supervisor closely monitored the production from each line. In addition, quality control staffs were checking each production line to ensure the quality of the finished product. From observing their body language, it seemed the supervisors were acting aggressively, and were intimidating the workers harshly. On the way to a sewing section, a woman was seen to be sitting on the staircase. She acted as if she might be sick. The welfare officer who was with me, suggested she visit the medical centre immediately but the woman refused and responded she was OK. On the other hand, two sub-contracted female security workers were observed sitting on the staircase lazily relaxing. (A.1.2, 19012016)

The Production supervisor checking the production line next to me seemed to be very efficient. During the preliminary visit, I observed a different side of this supervisor and found him scolding a worker using rough language. As I was placed very close to an HR officer, I closely observed his communicative acts with other workers. I found that very often workers would come to him with their problems. Especially, workers who were visiting the HR officer to request sick leave. A female worker went to the HR officer and expressed her unwillingness to continue her service. The HR officer asked the worker why she was planning to resign and the worker replied she did not want to continue her job, as the supervisor constantly undermined her efforts and now she was experiencing depression. In response, the HR officer claimed her frequent absence from the workplace made the supervisor upset and this was not allowed at the workplace. Subsequently, the worker asked the HR officer for her final salary payment. The HR officer responded the worker could not claim her last wages without following the established resignation rules of the company. The discussion ended at this point and both of them left the room. Later, I discovered the line supervisor was busy fixing a problem with a machine. In addition, I found the quality supervisor was very busy helping other workers at their jobs with a smile on his face (A.2.1, 20012016).

The line supervisor strictly scolded a female worker for making a mistake in her work. The supervisor was furious as time passed. The workers seemed to accept this work environment.

The quality supervisor was monitoring the work at every step in the production. These quality staffs reported to the line supervisor if they found any problems with the product, and they would suggest a corrective action even in the case of a small mistake. Usually the line supervisor gave instructions to the workers in a loud voice. The quality supervisor shared his life story with me while I was visiting the factory. He told me how the factory brought financial solvency to his life. He had been doing this difficult work for a long time now. He seemed to be grateful to the factory for his affluence. He claimed the workers and the institution both were satisfying each other's needs. He was saying this to me as he thought I was expecting a job here. A female worker came to the HR officer and told him she was absent for four days, and now she needed to make-up the 4 days she missed. The HR officer asked her to explain the reason behind her absenteeism. She replied she wanted to avoid the night shift and did not show up for this reason (A.2.2, 20012016).

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**Observer Comments:** *During the stay at this plant, the HR officer helped me by providing me with a great deal of information. As he handled a variety of workers' issues at the factory, he turned out to be one of the most important sources of information. Moreover, the night shift seemed to be a very frightening experience for some of the garment workers.*

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Many of the management staff showed curiosity regarding my research but the line operators and the helpers did not seem to have any problems with me observing their activities they were just trying to keep up with their production targets. Again, I saw the supervisor scolding a female worker using very unprofessional language. He told her to leave the job if she could not meet the target (A.3.1, 21012016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The female worker was harassed because she had failed to meet her production target. It was assumed the job involved significant levels of stress.*

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There were four welfare officers working at this particular plant. I had a chance to meet with all of them and learned about many work related issues, which I would not have known otherwise. I learned from them they were required to follow a checklist. They were required to monitor everything on that checklist and at the end of the day; they had to submit a report to the CSR manager. Their duties usually started in the morning when the workers entered the factory. It was part of their duty to counsel those who came to work late. In addition, they had to monitor all the complaint boxes that were located in the factory lavatories. Once a week, they were responsible for opening all the complaint boxes and informing the CSR manager of the grievances. When female workers made any complaint about their co-workers or staffs, the company took it very seriously. The factory management had taken a zero tolerance stand against sexual harassment. They also said they take all complaints very

seriously and if needed, they would establish an inquiry committee to investigate all serious issues. After an investigation, if anyone is found guilty they would take serious measures and punish the accused based on the weight of his offence (B.2.2, 24012016).

Many incongruities of working the floor came up for discussion. The welfare officers also claimed they maintained friendly relationships with the staffs and workers. As a result, workers shared their difficulties with them and they had the information if the workers had any questions regarding their working hours, production target pressures, and supervision. They acknowledged many female workers did not feel safe while returning home late after work. They suggested building an on-campus dormitory for female workers to solve the problem (B.2.2, 24012016).

I was observing the sewing floor. A female helper was working in front of me. She seemed to be tired. The workers were not looking as energetic as yesterday. The quality supervisor was quite gentle and both male and female workers were talking to him easily. The room right next to me was the DGM operation room and the production staffs were conducting a meeting in that room. Some quarrel could be heard going on in the meeting. Someone was heard abusing someone else. Suddenly, the line supervisor came out of the room and started shouting at the workers on the production line. He seemed to be very rude and said something impolite to a male operator. He was obviously angry about something. Suddenly he insulted a female worker very rudely and which was quite unprofessional (B.2.3, 24012016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The work environment on the morning shift was relatively quiet and peaceful. From personal observation, it appears the work environment becomes more stressful as the day progresses. At the end of the day, the supervisors behave more crudely. This may be due to the production targets given to the workers. As the end of the workday nears any production gap becomes clearer and the top management begin to put pressure on the supervisors. As a result, the supervisors will then attempt to eliminate the production deficit by bullying the fellow workers.*

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I was observing on the 6th floor. On the way to the ground floor, I noticed a poster explaining the security, baby care, and work regulations. These regulations had been set as per the demand of the buyers. I saw these regulation related posters, especially about fire regulations, on every single floor. During the visit, I heard over the loud speaker the management declared there would be an audit the next day; as such everybody had to comply with the expected norms. In addition, suggestions were given how to operate the production lines. (C.1.1, 06022016)

The production department had introduced an informal arrangement of penalties, as such; if the production line failed to meet their given production targets, the concerned supervisor would face a financial penalty. After collecting the money from the supervisors, the department regularly arranged feasts where all the production staffs were required to participate in. As a result, in order to avoid the penalty supervisors worked hard to ensure the targeted production from their workers was met. (C.3.1, 08022016)

Two assistant production managers were responsible for overseeing the operation of this floor. They had a strong command over their subordinates. A leave was granted immediately when a worker claimed that her mother had been admitted to hospital. One female worker was arguing with her supervisor relating to her task, and the supervisor's superior kept him cool and handled this matter very respectfully. An inspection team was conducting their inspection on the floor. From the reactions observed of the employees, it seemed they were not bothered by the inspection and it was a routine matter for them. As a result, no behavioural change was evident from the side of the employees during the period of inspection. Before the lunch break, a male quality worker requested leave for an hour after the lunch break from the assistant production manager. The production manager refused the request and asked him not to provide such a lame excuse to request leave. The assistant production manager asked him to take a half-day leave instead. The manager later told me this kind of gate pass, which was issued under unacceptable conditions, was ruining the discipline of the factory. The worker re-joined the production line half an hour late and told me that he would not face any punishment for this, as he had notified his supervisor earlier (E.2.2, 23022016).

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***Observer Comments:** Apparently, the workplace is often characterized as inhuman but many signs of humanity were present there. The management was strict with the workers due to the production requirements of the factory. However, their sympathy still reaches the bottom line workers.*

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Just out of curiosity, a quality supervisor came to me and asked my name. As I gave my brief introduction, he returned quickly to work. There was a gathering in a distant production line. Because of a problem, the assistant production manager and the line quality controller were shouting. The situation cooled down after a minute or two. The whole team was standing together, so it may have been a serious issue. After 5 or 6 minutes everything returned to normal. Because of the problem in the production line, the workers who were cutting the extra strings had nothing to do and were taking a break and sitting on the floor. The line in-charge came and started scolding them with the use of offensive language. The production manager noticed I was writing about this in my notebook. He sent the line in-charge to ask

me to not write about this issue in my notes. The line in-charge told me if the upper management came to know that he was rude to the workers, he might lose his job. I responded to him by claiming I would not let management know about this incident, and I would only present this as an anonymous event in my research study. However, it seemed I failed to satisfy him with my answer (H.3.2, 05032016).

A female line chief was trying to give directions on how to perform a certain task; the female worker responded by shouting at the line-chief. The line-chief staff responded by 'schooling' the worker. The supervisors were found to be using offensive language in handling their workers. The female worker might have some anger management issues or the flexible supervision system had allowed the workers the right to disagree with their superiors if they had a valid reason to. A female quality inspector was found to be scolding a female worker for her flawed sewing technique. The female worker was smiling during this exchange. It seemed that they had a friendly relationship with each other. The staff remarked later I was watching both of them and tried to explain the situation. She told me the worker was not careful at all and their several attempts to remedy the situation had failed to make any improvement in her work responsibilities (I.2.1, 06042016).

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***Meaning Reconstruction:** When a female supervisor was seen to be suggesting an improvement, the female workers accepted it with ease. Many times the workers were cracking jokes in front of their female supervisors. It seemed the workers enjoyed being supervised by a female staff. On the other hand, from their body language, it was evident when a male supervisor was directing them they took it very seriously. Many management staffs stated male supervisors were needed to control the female workers, as the male supervisors knew how to handle tough situations. However, in other factories, the female staffs succeeded in proving they had the ability to improve output compared to their male counterparts. As a result, the claims by managers that males can manage a garment factory better than female staffs needs to be verified. Moreover, it's unclear whether this questionable claim is being used as a tool to maintain male supremacy in the workplace.*

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A supervisor asked me what I was doing sitting in one particular place only. He believed I could learn more by walking around the floor. I did not want to disappoint him, so I requested he give me a tour of the factory. He seemed to be expecting an affirmative response and happily agreed and took me to his line. He seemed to be proud to show me the numbers of workers who were working under his supervision (J.2.2, 11042016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *Low-level management staffs and garment workers work very hard to earn their salaries. Not very often are they appreciated. Many of them do not even hope to be appreciated.*

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Conflicts between production staffs and quality staffs have been quite common in the garment industry. In every factory, a dialectic relationship prevailed between the two. The production department has the line authority and they directly control the production. On the other hand, the quality department has the staff authority and can only provide advice to the line authority. However, without the approval of the quality department, the production department cannot run their production line. The line authority often tries to undermine the staff authority as a result; it often creates a conflicting situation in the garment factories. The production and quality departments have often been found arguing over various matters. At one point, the quality staff brought a complaint against one of his operator's to the APM. No sooner had the complaint been received then the APM fired the operator (J.3.1, 12042016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The temporary female worker lost her job because of the reoccurring conflicts between the line and staff over authority. The factory did not seem to be following any regulations relating to the hiring and firing of temporary workers. Moreover, there was always more cheap labour available for the factory. Due to the availability of workers, the factory does not hesitate to fire employees for unwarranted causes. Many unfortunate souls from all over the country are forced to find employment in garment factories as they have few other options. This sector is the only sector which is providing opportunities for hundreds of thousands of workers every day. Due to the high labour turnover, every day many positions are available for skilled and unskilled labour. However, very often destitute job seekers face many difficulties in finding employment in the garment industry.*

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Garment factory supervision was very strict and the line in-charge and the assistant production manager (APM) vigorous in conducting their duties. They rarely compromised with the production targets given to their supervisors, frequently forcing supervisors to increase productivity in their respective production lines. As a result, the supervisors kept their worker on their toes and were frequently observed abusing workers. In addition, the line in-charge and the assistant manager were often abusing the supervisors for not meeting their targets (L.2.1, 05052016).

A supervisor was shouting to one of the female workers and was blaming her for laziness. Later, the production manager started shouting because of a low production rate and was shouting around different lines (L.2.1, 05052016).

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**Observer Comments:** *I was not sure whether the production lines were arranged in any particular order as many of the workers were lazily sitting. Actually, they had yet to receive their work for their table. I do not believe this kind of shouting helps to increase the productivity of the workers; rather it might demoralise the workers. There might be a flaw in the production process or the workers may have started a new sewing task, which needs time to learn proficiently. From my prior observations, it normally takes a day to get used to the new task and the workers will then meet their targets the next day.*

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A management staff became sick and was sent to a hospital. Two female workers were observed laughing about this issue and one of them said, “Only the workers are blamed by the staffs when they report sick. Then how come the staff is sick today?”. A female worker came to me and I tried to cover my observation notebook so she would not see my comments. She laughed and said, “No worries I cannot read”. The APM started screaming in the line next to me. He came up to me and asked me what I was doing. I tried to explain to him I was conducting a research study on CSR practices. In reply, he said, “You will not find any CSR here. You will only see the management staffs acting very tough and are always abusing their subordinates. In fact, we are forced to do this. We have production targets given to us and our superiors also treat us in the same manner if we fail to meet the target” (L.4.1, 08052016).

The supervisors in this factory had a tendency to abuse the workers. It was very common for the senior officers to be given permission to abuse their subordinates. The female worker near me was pushed by her supervisor twice to try to increase the pace of her production. I observed her to be a very serious worker. The nature of her work seemed to be complex and there was a possibility of making a mistake if the worker speeded up her operation. As a result, after the supervisor had left she started shouting and was told that ‘even your mother would not work any faster.’ A female worker started scolding her supervisor for using rough language with her. Taking the side of the female worker, some of the other workers began to protest. As a result, the APM had to come and solve the issue (L.4.2, 08052016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *This system of abuse was kind of a blame game. No one was benefiting from it. However, it became part of their culture and was difficult to abandon. This practice does not help increase production. Rather it negatively affects the mind and body in the end.*

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During the first day of my observations, I did not see any rough behaviour from the low-level management staff. Rather, I found the workers were doing their jobs with little pressure from their supervisors. In addition, I did not see any tough talking from the management

staff. However, as time passed, the situation started changing very rapidly. The management staffs were abusing workers very often. I saw a supervisor repeatedly scold a female worker for some problem. The behaviour was so intense the worker was forced to protest and she asked the supervisor to behave properly. The matter ended when the supervisor left. The female worker erupted in anger when she found the supervisor had left. The same supervisor was scolding another female worker later using rough language (N.1.1, 31052016).

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**Meaning Field:** *The management staffs started behaving roughly with their workers whenever the production target was not met. Maybe the workers were facing difficulties in making the new dress so, the desired pace of production had not been achieved. The workers would need less supervision when they are able to meet their hourly target but the management staffs would continue to shout at the workers until the production targets had been met. Another reason I did not notice earlier, my presence might have inhibited the supervisors from abusing the workers on my first day. However, they reverted to their real form after accepting my presence in the factory.*

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### **5.2.3 Low-Level Management: The Gendered Workplace**

A female supervisor was comparing the actual production with the production target given to her workers. Her voice was very harsh. It seemed that her voice had become permanently harsh (P.2.1, 20062016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *This change in the female supervisor's voice might be because of the tendency for the female staffs to compete with the male staffs. It was a common belief as most of the garment workers were illiterate, the staffs needed to firmly supervise the workers and female supervisors were inherently unable to render. As a result, many of the female staffs were adopting the verbally abusive behaviour of male staffs, and they do so to become more successful in this gendered workplace.*

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The supervisor was going from table to table and recording the amount of production. She expressed her displeasure at one table. It seemed she was controlling her expression of displeasure due to my presence. The supervisor expressed her displeasure to the workers at the table. The workers had fallen behind their target. The supervisor told the workers to go home if they cannot do the work or work properly if you want to work here (Q.1.1, 23062016).

I had a courtesy chat with a female supervisor working here. The workers had already grown accustomed to my presence. The supervisor said that she had been working here for the last 10 years. She had joined as an operator 10 years ago. I asked her where she sees herself in

the future. She remained silent for a while and replied there was no possibility to work in the position of a floor in-charge. I asked her how long she wanted to work here. She said, ‘As long as it is written in my fate’ (Q.3.1, 26062016).

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*Meaning Reconstruction: She wanted to surrender life to her fate. It seemed there was no dream in her life. She did not have the energy to dream after working 12 hours a day or maybe she did not want to disclose it to a stranger like me.*

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#### **5.2.4 Mid-Level Manager: Culture of the Garment Industry**

The CSR manager asked me why I needed to observe so many factories. He said observing 2 or 3 factories would be enough to develop a cultural understanding of the industry. He believed all the garments factories are more or less same. After having their breakfast in the morning, the workers returned to their work. For lunch, some of them brought rice while others brought homemade bread and worked until the afternoon or night based on the requirements of the production. This was the way some workers would work for 2 or 3 years and some would work for a longer period in this industry. In most cases, the husband and wife work in different factories. However, some female workers’ husbands pull rickshaws and some of them were involved in criminal activities. Many of the workers were married several times. The CSR manager concluded that this is the culture of the readymade garment factories (D.1.1, 16022016).

The CSR manager informed me that the labour turnover in this industrial zone was very high. Therefore, there was a lot of demand for labour in this industrial area. As a result, people from all over the country gathered here seeking employment. This factory was quite large and during this period the factory was engaged in sub-contracting and was sewing on behalf of one of the largest suppliers of Bangladesh. I came to know factories like this do not want to become involved in sub-contracting, as this is not particularly profitable for the factory. However, when they do not have sufficient orders, to remain financially viable they are forced to become involved in sub-contracting. (K.1.2, 24042016)

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*Observer Comments: Sub-contracting is very common in the readymade garment industry. When a factory was unable to meet production quotas factories engaged in sub-contracting. There is nothing wrong with sub-contracting unless the work went to a non-compliant factory. Non-compliant factories were those that do not satisfy the requirement of the buyers’ code of conduct, and from the buyers’ point of view; it is illegal to become involved in sub-contracting with non-compliant factories. As the non-compliant factories do not invest in meeting the legal requirements, usually the cost of production at these factories is much*

*lower compared to a compliant factory. As a result, few greedy profiteers become involved in sub-contracting with non-compliant factories.*

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***Meaning Reconstruction:*** *Many changes have occurred in the garment industry in Bangladesh. The facilities and safety regulations at the factories have improved significantly. Now the work is easier in the factories compared to earlier times. However, the lives of the workers have remained unchanged. In this current arrangement, as the suppliers' factories have been forced to increase workers' wages, they are now demanding higher productivity from their employees. As a result, their newly formed industrial management department is treating workers like machines, and are forcing them to meet high production targets. Consequently, the production system, which was accused of being callous in the Western world, is in operation in garment factories in Bangladesh, and on one was there to challenge this system. It would be very difficult to separate the machine from the life of the garment workers, as they did not have other options. As a result, they were forced to find meaning in their lives in the garment factories. The helpless garment workers were working with a smile on their faces, and no one would know about their sacrifices.*

*In the garment industry, workers pride and the quality of life had a dialectical relationship with the wages paid to the garment workers. Workers in some factories had to surrender their pride and their quality of life and forced to work long working days in difficult conditions. The lives of the workers who are working for these factories have become stressful. However, workers in some factories maintain their social life, as these factories do not force them to work for extended periods. As a result, most of the workers from the first group were planning to go back to their village after working for 8 to 10 years, and dream of making a brand new start with the money they had saved from their hard work. On the other hand, the second group of workers who enjoy some flexibility in their work lives are planning to establish a longer career in this industry.*

*It is a matter of debate whether the workers want to work longer hours, or they prefer to enjoy a more social life by choosing not to engage in excessive overtime. I had seen many workers who tried to escape from working overtime and I had also seen workers who were very eagerly looking to work the extended hours. However, the workers had few work options. That means if someone is happy with less income and fewer working hours they might have difficulty finding a job in any of the factories that fulfil their interest. This dilemma is also applicable to workers who want to engage themselves in more overtime. In the present system, the capitalists have the liberty to choose where to invest; however, the*

*labourer has fewer options to choose from. As a result, it is the prerogative of the employers to choose the type of lives for their workers.*

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### **5.3 Western Buyers and their CSR Agendas**

#### ***5.3.1 Mid-Level Management: The Pressures from the Western Buyers***

The CSR manager told me in more recent times the Western buyers have imposed new compliance regulations on the factories, and the suppliers' factories were forced to implement these new rules and regulations. The incidents at Tazreen Fashion and the Rana Plaza seemed to add to the buyer's strength and the suppliers' weakness. The European buyers threatened their suppliers they would not sign any deal if the suppliers failed to abide by the new rules that were set for safety reasons. This threat had significantly changed the suppliers' life. Many factories had been shut down because of failing to abide by the new codes. The regular factory inspections had created a panic situation for the suppliers. As a result, third parties have often found themselves in a favourable situation. The third parties who were working between the buyers and the suppliers often were extracting most of the benefits from the business. Some vicious groups who called themselves 'stakeholders' of this garment section tried to make a profit and took advantage of the situation, even though they did not have any role in the garments' CSR. The buyers' used to show their concern only over the workers' salary before. However, things changed after the incidents of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza. Nowadays, the workers' safety has become the main focus of Western buyers and they are not ready to compromise on these issues (D.2.2, 17022016).

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***Meaning Reconstructions:*** *Pressure from the buyers helped to bring many positive changes to the garment industry in Bangladesh. Previously, the workers' salary was the main concern for the buyers. However, recently their focus has shifted to the workers' safety, and the Western buyers had taken strong measures to ensure the workers' safety in the garment industry in Bangladesh.*

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## ***5.4 Institutional Arrangements<sup>4</sup> of the Western Buyers***

### ***5.4.1 Mid-Level Management: The Buyer's Inspection and the Power Distance***

The buyer inspection was occurring in the factory. The production AGM and his team had joined the buyers for the inspection. Initially, I thought that a European would inspect the factory however, I later realised a quality controller (QC) from the buying house came here to oversee the quality of the product. As the buying houses performed their duties on behalf of the Western buyers, they were regarded as 'the buyers' by the factory, and factory management did everything it could to satisfy these people. As a result though the position of AGM was at a much higher position than the QC of the buying house, I found the AGM production bowed in front the buyers' agent and did his best to satisfy him (H.2.2, 03032016).

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***Meaning Reconstruction:*** *The Western buyers have installed a monitoring system in the garment industry of Bangladesh. In this arrangement, at any time they themselves or their nominated bodies may perform inspections at the suppliers' factories. The power distribution between the buyers and the suppliers was such that the buyers are the dominant group who oppress the suppliers' factories in this system. As the suppliers' businesses depend on the buyers' orders, they had to respond to the needs of the Western buyers.*

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## **5.5 Responses of the Eastern Suppliers**

### ***5.5.1 Mid-Level Management: Garment Factory Located in Export Processing Zone (EPZ)***

The production manager took me to visit the factory. It seemed the factory fulfils all the conditions regarding workers' safety. The production manager claimed that as they were operating inside Export Processing Zone (EPZ) they were bound to observe all the laws of the land. The authority acts as a watchdog in this regard, and in order to maintain their reputation they have never attempted to avoid any of the legal codes. There was no issue of child labour or forced labour in this factory. The workers were enjoying all the public holidays and if they were needed to work on a holiday, they were paid an extra amount. The factory also strictly observed the conditions of overtime. The female workers are eligible for maternity leave when needed. However, I only visited the factory. The production manager

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<sup>4</sup> *"Institutional arrangements are the policies, systems, and processes that organizations use to legislate, plan and manage their activities efficiently and to effectively coordinate with others in order to fulfill their mandate" UNDP*

informed me that I would need approval from the EPZ authority to carry out any research observation in this factory. The EPZ was under the Prime Minister's Department, and in order to avoid the hassle associated with a formal request and approval, I decided not to observe any of the factories from the EPZ (F.1.1, 25022016).

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***Observer Comments:** After pressure from the Western buyers, the readymade garment industry of Bangladesh succeeded in eliminating child labour from this industry. However, the existing law permits child labour under certain conditions; factories have tried to avoid child labour as it has become expensive for them to employ child labour under these new conditions. Obviously, the readymade garment industry has created a significant opportunity for employment in the country. However, due to the restrictions on employing child labour, a large number of poor children remain outside the scope of formal employment in the garment factories. This has created social disorder as not having any employment opportunities or apparently not attending school, many street children become involved in crime and substance abuse.*

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### **5.5.2 Top Management: Corporate Good Practices**

Completing the security check I was taken to the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) office. The CEO welcomed me with a smile. He informed me there were two different factories operating here under the same management. Both factories were 'compliance' factories, which meant both factories succeeded in meeting all the requirements of their buyers. . They worked for a few reputable brands. The CEO told me as per the requirements of these reputable brands; they employed a number of physically disabled workers in both of their plants. In addition, the CEO informed me in partnership with an NGO, they were working on health and hygiene issues including supplying sanitary napkins to female workers. After the discussion, he called a welfare officer and asked him to take me on a factory tour. In addition, he asked him to help arrange the facilities needed to conduct my observation sessions (I.1.1, 05042016).

### **5.5.3 Mid-Level Management: Arrangements at the Factory**

After the security clearance, I went to the CSR manager's office. He took me on a factory tour before arranging the facilities for conducting my observations. It was a sweater factory and there were 1200 workers in the factory. The majority of the workers were women and I found the operations were being done in a well-organized and healthy work environment. There was enough space to walk and the factory was subject to all the requirements of both

the Alliance and the Accord since it was working with both North American and European buyers (O.1.1, 12062016).

I did not know the specific requirements regarding building codes for structures, and fire and electrical safety codes but apparently, with the installation of fire doors and firefighting instruments it appeared the factory had come a long way in achieving their safety goals (O.1.1, 12062016).

The factory had recently installed smoke detectors. Two individuals were putting labels on the smoke detectors on the roof. I found there were labels in English and Bangla on the fire extinguishers, emergency health care boxes, staircases to the toilets, at exits and near alarm lights. It could be assumed the Bangla labels were installed so workers could understand and the English stickers were for the buyers so they could understand the instructions that had been posted for the workers. I observed this system in every factory I visited. In addition, many factories had posted their security regulations, work regulations and the rights of the workers adjacent to the staircases. This new signage might be part of the obligations from the buyers' side (O.2.1, 13062016).

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***Meaning Reconstruction:** The suppliers' factories have already implemented most of the issues included in the buyers' code of conduct, and the remaining are still in the developmental stage and are expected to be completed very soon. In addition, they have made considerable progress in ensuring safety regulations at their workplaces. When it comes to the question of observing the codes of conduct, in some cases, the suppliers' factories are implementing the codes of conduct and they are arranging to incorporate many supplementary CSR-related issues that are not included in any of the buyers' codes of conduct.*

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## **5.6 Current CSR Initiatives and the Bottom-Line Benefits**

### ***5.6.1 Worker: Disability Parade but Not the Disability Pride Parade***

A number of physically challenged workers were working in this factory, and I found a few of them walking together while a number of other people were taking photos of these workers while another woman was videotaping the actions of these disabled workers. An entrepreneur at the garment factory who is also a politician had a license to also operate a television station, and the TV station was planning to telecast a documentary on the good corporate citizenship of the garment industry. As a result, in order to project the good practices of recruiting disabled workers they were videotaping activities of the disabled workers. The CSR manager approached the snap button section and asked the female

physically disabled worker to walk around, and while she was walking around the reporter was videotaping the female worker. (G.2.1, 29022016)

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *Recently, many garment owners have become very powerful in Bangladesh. They succeeded in exercising their power in the system not only as they were rich but also as they were involved in politics. As such, a number of garment factory owners were also representing themselves as lawmakers by sitting in the parliament. In order to establish their power in the system; they were participating in every part of society. Controlling both print and electronic media was part of their empowering process. However, in order to dignify themselves, they often attacked the working class and often played with their misery. As a result, they did not bother to arrange the disability parade in the factory to project the helplessness of these people, and they did not bother to seek their subjects' permission before videotaping them. Asking a physically disabled person to walk around and be videotaped without giving their consent was not only inhuman but also should be considered as a punishable offense. The taken-for-granted attitudes of management often undermined the main spirit of all of their good initiatives and often went against basic principles of humanity.*

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### **5.6.2 Low-Level Management: Pride to Share**

A production executive came to me and said in recent times; managing jobs in the garment sector had become more difficult. Previously it was easy to get a job in the garment factory but now, you must be able to operate several machines and only then, might you get a job as an operator. In recent times, it is almost impossible to manage a worker's job without having some educational background. He said that every week, at least 200 people submit their applications looking for jobs. He also said many of the workers have graduate and post-graduate degrees. Whereas, in the past workers rarely had any educational background. He admitted one of his relatives who was in a high position at the factory had hired him (G.1.2, 28022016).

### **5.6.3 Top-Level Management: Safety or Business**

An Executive Director said, "How much improvement in the factory can be made from outside pressure? Having pressure from our Western buyers, we are replacing doors with comparatively less wide fire doors. As a result, in case of an emergency, fewer people can pass through these doors. Therefore, in many cases, the workers' safety had decreased instead of increased. We have been forced to import fire doors and other fire safety equipment from foreign countries. In this arrangement, definitely, some people are

benefiting. We have not had the chance to discuss these issues with the Western buyers. Without verifying the needs of the situation, Western buyers are imposing many regulations upon us. Consequently, this strategy fails to bring the desired bottom line benefits” (P.1.1, 19062016).

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***Meaning Reconstruction:*** *The current CSR arrangements have brought many changes to the garment industry, and benefits have been observed. However, in constructing their codes of conduct, Western buyers have not considered the socio-economic context and needs of the society. As a result, often the CSR codes fail to bring all the desired bottom line benefits.*

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## **5.7 Accord and Alliance and its Criticism**

### ***5.7.1 Mid-Level Manager: Inspection of Accord***

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After the Rana Plaza incident, a tripartite agreement was signed between the Government of Bangladesh, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance), and the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (Accord) in 2013. In light of this agreement, in order to ensure the structural, electrical and fire safety codes at the suppliers’ factories, Accord and Alliance are conducting remediation and training programs on behalf of the Western buyers.

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A CSR manager was preparing the factory for a follow-up inspection that would be conducted by Accord. All the employees were wearing an apron, and the female workers put on their headscarf. All the workers were supplied with masks and they were wearing clean uniforms. The Accord representative came to the floor and began taking photos of the different objects and places. The CSR manager was beside him all the time. The Accord representative was explaining their workplace requirements to the CSR manager. The representative of Accord finally left to inspect other floors. The workers removed their dust masks as soon as the representative left the floor (J.2.1, 11042016).

### ***5.7.2 Mid-Level Management: The Contradictory Direction of the Buyers and its Outcome***

The factory was of steel construction so as a result, a false ceiling had been installed to control the temperature but the room was still quite hot. Fans in the factory could not reduce the heat consequently, the CSR manager told me, in the past to help control the heat in the factory their buyers asked them to install an extra heat shield in the ceiling/roof. However, the management had to remove it as per the instructions from the fire safety team of Accord in order to reduce the fire risk associated with it. Therefore, the temperature remained high

during the summer. He also said these contradictory instructions only increase the expenses for the factory and did not bring any benefits (Q.2.1, 25062016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *Accord and Alliance were working to ensure the safety of the workers on behalf of the Western buyers. They were invited to work with the garment industry after the incident at Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza. Accord was working under the platform of the European buyers whereas Alliance was working for North American buyers. Both organizations brought massive changes to the lives of the garment factory workers in Bangladesh. A number of below standard and dangerous factories had been shut down, as they were not in a position to fulfil the safety requirements. However, how many benefits they have added to the industry is still under scrutiny. Furthermore, research should be conducted on the impact of their initiatives on employee safety and quality of life. The garment industry is the largest economic sector in the country, which has employed millions of female workers. The garment factories are one of the few places where these destitute, uneducated female workers can find employment and have a chance to empower themselves. If the initiatives of the Accord and Alliance are bringing negative effects to these female workers then this should be treated as a cause for concern for these destitute workers.*

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## **5.8 Economic Emancipation and the Empowerment of Female Workers**

### **5.8.1 Low-level Management: Perspectives of the Welfare Officers**

There were four welfare officers working at the plant. I had a chance to meet with all of them and learned about many issues that were not possible to know otherwise. They also talked about the issue of promoting female workers to the supervisory level and said though there were many female workers working in this factory the number of female supervisory staffs were very limited. They said most of the female workers said they were not ready to be promoted, and their unwillingness was seen as one of the main barriers in promoting them. Often female workers claimed in addition to working in the factory they had to take care of their husband and children. As a result, the extra supervisory duties might further worsen their situation. Although some confident and strong female staff had been assigned as supervisors, their performance had not been scrutinized yet. However, recently the management had taken an initiative to award the best supervisor in the factory, and two out of the three female supervisors had been selected as the best supervisors. They further stated that until the outlook towards women changed in society, it would not be possible to bring conclusive changes to the working life of female garment workers (B.2.2, 24012016).

### ***5.8.2 Low-level Management: Promotion Opportunities of the Garment Workers***

The HR representative said a male worker would have the opportunity to reach a better position if he is educated. In the past a line-worker became a General Manager but even if women had educational qualifications; it was difficult for female workers to assume a position beyond that of a floor in-charge. The factory management promoted many female operators to the supervisory position but they have failed to prove their performance worthwhile. Thus, the path to promotions for women is in question. As a result, many female workers were seen working as an operator though they had worked for many years in the factory (C.2.2, 07022016).

### ***5.8.3 The Worker: Life and Dream of a Garment worker***

Jamila has been working in the quality department for the last 8 years. Jamila enrolled in agricultural science studies after passing her 12 standards however, she could not complete her degree after she married. She was proud to say her husband was a graduate and was serving as a low-level management staff of a garment factory. She had two daughters. The elder was 8 years old and the younger daughter was two and half years old. Her children lived in the village with their maternal grandparents. Jamila did not miss any opportunity to visit them and tried to see them during every vacation. It was her decision it was time to go back and raise her daughters, and she was planning to retire within 2 years. She said that she had managed to save some money and would try her best to save more money in the upcoming two years before retirement. She did not want to return to this workplace. She was dreaming of spending happier times with her children (I.1.2, 05042016).

### ***5.8.4 Worker: A Happy Face***

Sharia was from, Sirajganj district. She had been working in this factory for the last 4 years. She had come to this factory because she was having difficulties repaying her debts. She had to leave her house and look for temporary residence at the factory because of the debt. She lives with her husband and two daughters. Her husband does the work of repairing shallow machines. Her daughters also work in the garment factory. Her expressed satisfaction when she described her current financial status. She said she had already repaid all her debt, and in addition, she managed to save sufficient money to start living in the village again. She had separate savings, which she planned for the marriage of her two daughters. She was planning to quit her job after another 2 months. Thereafter, she would be able to lead a free life. The garment sector had given Sharia financial solvency and freed her from her debts. Sharia dreams of a brand new start. She was very close to fulfilling her dream (K.3.1, 26042016).

### ***5.8.5 Low-Level Management: The Faded Life***

A middle-aged management staffs was working for the first time on this floor. She had not been present in the previous two days. She was assigned to a higher post than the line supervisor it seemed as she was giving many instructions to her line supervisor. Unlike in the other factories, the supervisors and staffs at this factory were also working barefooted like the workers. The lower-level management staffs normally wear sandals in the other factories. The upper management staffs were wearing sandals here but I did not know until later at what management level wearing sandals was allowed in this factory (Q.3.1, 26062016).

The middle-aged woman came to me and revealed her identity and said that she was working here as the floor in-charge. She was absent the last three days due to sickness. She also said she had been working here for the last 12 years and had joined here as a supervisor. She also said that she had not been able to achieve her dream career. She said she joined the garment industry as an ordinary worker 28 years ago in 1988. She was working as an assistant production manager before joining here. A person she knew brought her here saying there was less work and she would have a better chance to improve her career here. She also claimed that she could draw anything she sees on TV or on a paper. She was assigned here due to her drawing and artistic skills. However, all the complex work now was performed by machines. As a result, she was passing her days monitoring workers and supervisors (Q.3.1, 26062016).

She said she had made a very big mistake coming here. She said that her salary could have been around BDT 60,000 (USD 757) per month if she had not come here. She said that all the staffs who continued working at the previous factory were receiving the same high salary as mentioned earlier. She currently earned only half of that amount here. She had no other alternative except working here as her husband had died in the meantime. She had not gained economic freedom even after working for 28 years. She had stopped dreaming now. She was thinking that she had to keep working as long as her strength continues. Her dreams had faded away after so many years in the garment industry (Q.3.1, 26062016).

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***Meaning Reconstruction:*** Millions of female workers are working in this garment industry, and it is assumed they represent more than seventy percent of the of the total garment workers. The number of women at managerial positions represents the complete opposite scenario, and only a small percentage of women could be found working in managerial positions. However, though male workers can succeed in being promoted to top management positions, female workers only manage to reach the low-level management positions. Yet, these working women have succeeded in bringing some form of economic

*freedom to their lives. Nevertheless, when it comes to the question of empowerment, they have made little progress in empowering themselves in the societal levels. This situation will not change until society at large changes its outlook towards female workers. Women will be truly empowered when the dominant class in society allows them to be empowered.*

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## **5.9 Paradigm Shifts in the Garment Industry**

### ***5.9.1 Top Management: The Paradigm Shift***

After the security clearance, I met with the General Manager who was responsible for managing the plant. I came to know from him that he was responsible for one washing plant and two garment units at this location. He asked me which unit I would prefer to conduct my observations. I told him I would be happy if he could make arrangements for any of the sewing floors. When I first entered his office, he was conducting a meeting with his finance team. He was very kind and told me that if I wanted to I could spend some time with him discussing the factory as it might help my research study. He told me the industry had become very cost sensitive and he was worried about his increasing production costs. He said he called this meeting with the finance department to discuss some unpopular decisions like downsizing. He also said to me that the outcome of the meeting was to fire a few staffs and workers who were not directly involved with the production activity. Though the number was not very high, they were planning to dismiss 15 personnel from each of the plants (L.1.1, 04052016).

The top management was not satisfied with the present productivity rate and the payments for overtime. The GM said the production rate was below standard during normal operation as well as for extended hours. The payment for the extended hours or overtime was excessive compared to the production and as a result, the top management decided not run the production after normal operating hours. The management seemed very efficient to me. The owner had appointed a Sri Lankan as a production manager in this factory. The institute had employed some brilliant management staffs at very high salaries in order to maximize the profitability. During our discussion, he talked about the paradigm shift the industry had experienced over time. He said the industry began with few laws but had changed to establishing more laws in addition, he told me the inclusion of a more professional management style had helped the garment industry become the leading industry of Bangladesh (L.1.1, 04052016).

Furthermore, he said, “in the beginning, the factory operations were carried out in residential buildings and there were no rules to be observed. The change started at the beginning of the 21st century when some skilled and educated professionals entered the sector. During this

period, some owners began handing over their business to professional managers and the industry was recognised as a formal sector and then started expanding as production moved from household operations to large factories. In addition, from this point forward, the government started regulating this industry. After the Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza accidents, the industry experienced a significant changes in its operation and was forced to restructure their facilities to ensure the safety of its workers” (L.1.1, 04052016).

***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act Top Management (L.1.1, 04052016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *“In the beginning, the factory operations were carried out in the residential buildings and there were not rules to be observed”.*

(AND/OR)

“In the past, there were no large factories operating in the garment industry”.

(AND/OR)

“During the initial stage, the garment industry of Bangladesh did not follow any rules and regulations in their facilities”.

(OR/AND)

“In the past, the garment operations operating in residential buildings, were not safe for the workers”

***Table 4: Validity Horizon of (Top Management L.1.1, 04052016) on the Paradigm Shifts in the Garment Industry***

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b><i>Foreground</i></b>	“During the initial stage, the garment industry of Bangladesh did not follow any rules and regulations in their facilities”.	“I think in the initial period the garment industry received generous and unlimited assistance from the state”.	“There should be fairness at the workplace”.
<b><i>Intermediate</i></b>	“The situation in the garment industry has been changing”.	“I think in the initial period, garment workers were forced to work under poor working environment”.	“The workers should be provided a clean and safe workplace”.
<b><i>Background</i></b>	“During the initial period, the government, suppliers and the buyers all were reluctant to enforce the rule of law in the suppliers’ setting”.	“I think this period could be characterised as the extraction and exploitation paradigm in which the garment owners were given the license to maximise their profits at the expense of everything else.”	“The garment industry should enforce all the rules in their operations”.

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The garment industry of Bangladesh began in the late 1970s, and CSR as an institution, brought a paradigm shift. The first paradigm, in which the CSR institution was missing, was the ‘extraction and exploitation’ paradigm in which the garment owners were given license to maximise their profits at the expense of everything else. During this period, having received generous and unlimited assistance from the state, the suppliers’ factories literally observed no rules in their settings. The first paradigm shift occurred at the beginning of the 21st century when some skilled and educated professionals entered this sector and the Western buyers began imposing codes of conduct on the suppliers’ garments factories in Bangladesh. This second paradigm was the ‘expansion and recognition’ paradigm. In this paradigm, the industry began expanding as production moved from household operations to large factories. After the Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza accidents, the current isomorphic pressures brought a new paradigm, which was the ‘restructuring and awareness’ paradigm, in which, to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad, the industry began reorganising their facilities to ensure the safety of the workers, and the awareness of the workers began to build.*

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## **5.10 Production at the Expense of Environment**

### **5.10.1 Top Management: Environment at Risk**

The COO was visiting the floor, came to me and asked me to follow him. He took me to the roof of the factory and started a casual conversation. He said, “I was born and brought up here and everything changed before my eyes.” Pointing to the river flowing beside the factory he said, “I used to swim in this river. But the water stinks now.” He also claimed the people do not want to eat the fish from this river; the water has turned pitch black. The lives of the animals and trees were in danger now. He showed me a garment-dyeing factory located outside the industrial area and said the garments only absorb 15 percent of the dye. Where does the remaining 85 percent go? Pointing to the river, he said industry usually discharges their untreated effluents into the nearby rivers. He asked me who is responsible for this. The environment is in danger not only here but also in Ashulia, Joydebpur, Tongi, Savar, Narayanganj, and Dhaka (J.3.2, 12042016).

He further said, “If the buyers want to pay less than a dollar for a piece of clothing, how can we survive and how can we help the environment? Only 10 to 15 buyers pay the fair price for our products. I used to think a factory should have a playground, residences, and ponds, but it is not possible under the present conditions since even a small factory is running under the ownership of 3 to 4 people. As a result, it has become quite impossible for us to protect the environment, and though many factories have established an ETP, they do not operate

these ETP in accordance with the given guidelines. Hence, there is some doubt about who is benefiting from the current arrangement” (J.3.2, 12042016).

***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Top Management, J.3.2, 12042016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *“If the buyers want to pay less than a dollar for a piece of clothing, how can we survive and how can we help the environment?”*

(AND/OR)

“Buyers are paying a very low price for their product”.

(AND/OR)

“Nowadays, suppliers’ factories are having difficulties protecting the environment with the low prices they are offered for their products”.

(AND/OR)

“It is not possible to protect the environment with the low prices paid for piece-work”.

(OR/AND)

“In this arrangement, the environment will continue to suffer”.

(AND/OR)

“The suppliers’ factories are forced to compromise on environmental issues due to the poor price for their product”.

***Table 5: Validity Horizon of Top Management (J.3.2, 12042016) on the Production at the Expense of Environment***

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b><i>Foreground</i></b>	“The price paid for garments is cheap in Bangladesh”.	“I think the suppliers’ factories are finding difficulties protecting the environment due to the low prices they are offered for their products”.	“The Western buyers have a responsibility to protect the environment at the suppliers setting.”
<b><i>Intermediate</i></b>	“The competitive environment in the garment industry in Bangladesh is resulting in negative externalities for the environment”.	“I think it is not possible to protect the environment with these low prices”.	“We need to work together to protect our environment”.
<b><i>Background</i></b>	“The garment industry is causing environmental damage in Bangladesh”.	“I think the environment will continue to suffer if we cannot change this current arrangement”.	“To protect the environment, the Western buyers should offer higher prices for piece-work”.

***Meaning Reconstruction:*** *This industry is causing huge environmental damage in Bangladesh. The Western buyers are offering very low prices for the piecework in*

Bangladesh. As a result, the suppliers' factories are having difficulties protecting the environment due to the low prices they are offered for their products. Moreover, the competitive environment in the garment industry of Bangladesh creates negative externalities for the environment. Therefore, the environment will continue to suffer if we cannot bring change to this current arrangement. We all need to work together to protect our environment, and in this regard, the Western buyers have to come forward to offer higher prices for the garment piecework.

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## **5.11 The Postcolonial Conditions and its Implications on the Current CSR Arrangement**

### ***5.11.1 Top-Level Management: The Liabilities of Poorness***

After the security clearance, the CSR manager took me to the executive director's office. The executive director assured me he would provide any support needed to conduct my study. He also said he did not want to influence my study. He said, "There is no one to protest or to say anything if anything goes wrong in the factories of developed nations but, if the media find any problems in a poorer nation, it sells very well all over the world and becomes a headline. Anyone who has some power tries to impose their solutions to correct the situation in the poorer nations. A recent Oxfam report revealed the workers at chicken processing factories in a certain Western country are not even allowed go to the washroom while working on the processing line. However, no research report was found about this, and there was no one criticizing it. Moreover, no steps were taken to solve this issue. However, when any problem is found in a poor country like ours, all the world's powers vow to provide a solution to this" (P.1.1, 19062016).

### ***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Top-Level Management, P.1.1, 19062016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *"There is no one to protest or to say anything if anything goes wrong in the factories of the developed nation but, if the media find any problems in a poorer nation, it sells very well all over the world and becomes a headline. Anyone who has some power tries to impose their solutions to correct the situation in the poorer nation"*.

(AND/OR)

"Bangladesh is a poor country".

(AND/OR)

"News of industry problems in the developed world receives less attention in the media compared to similar problems in developing nations."

(OR/AND)

“Negative issues in poorer nations receives much more publicity compared to similar problems in rich countries”

(OR/AND)

“Everybody has a say on the problems of the poorer nations”.

(OR/AND)

“Poorer nations cannot escape from their minor problems”

(OR/AND)

“All powerful nations intervene in the internal matters of the poorer nations”.

(OR/AND)

“Poorer nations do not have the power to find solutions to their problems on their own”

**Table 6: Validity Horizon of Top-Level Management (P.1.1, 19062016) on the Postcolonialism and the Current CSR Arrangements**

	Possible objective claims	Possible subjective claims	Possible normative-evaluative claims
<b>Foreground</b>	“Bangladesh is a poor nation”.	“I think the poor nations are suffering from liabilities of poorness”.	“The poor should not be victimised for their poorness”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“Poorer nations have many problems.”	“I think the rich nations have legitimised their power in solving the problems in the poorer nations”.	“The poor should try to solve their problems on their own”.
<b>Background</b>	“Poorer nations do not have the capabilities to find the solutions to their problems on their own”.	“I think the rich countries have taken it for granted they can impose their decisions on the uncivilised poor”.	“Rich countries should not legitimise their power in controlling the poor’.

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The liabilities of poorness produce the consent in the West that the uncivilised poor in the East have no means to help themselves. This process starts with imposing liabilities on the poor. Thus, the liabilities of poorness are nothing but a legitimising process which offers the rich the right to impose their decisions on the uncivilised poor. Consequently, the liabilities of poorness provide the helplessness to the poor, which then forces them to implement the decisions of others in their lives.*

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## 5.12 Giving Voice to the Voiceless

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*Observer Comments: When the observations first began I found many of my participants were observing me from a distance. From the second day they realized I was not there to cause them trouble and they made several attempts to introduce themselves to me. Later they started sharing a great deal of information without my lead. Some of them started sharing stories about their lives and about their dreams. By the final day when I was leaving the factory, in many instances I was leaving many relationships behind. I found these garment workers to be friendly and humble, and these people did not hesitate to show their affection to those who respected them.*

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### 5.12.1 Low-level Management: A Self-Inspired Narrative of a Welfare officer

Shrabonty was working as a welfare officer in the factory. Her father was a public servant and due to his constant reassignments, she studied at many schools. She completed her post-graduate degree from the National University of Bangladesh then after moving to Dhaka she started her career in the pharmaceutical industry and worked one year in that industry. After getting married in 2009, she joined the ready-made garment industry. Subsequently, she completed her diploma in Human Resources and started working in the HR department. In addition, she attended several training programmes as per the requirement of her job. She had been working as a welfare officer for 3 years. In the meantime, she had also completed training in human behaviour. On a daily basis, she had to work very closely with the workers. As part of the requirements from the buyers, she had to coordinate a number of training programs for their employees. In addition, she had to do a great deal of filing work and was responsible for preparing files of employees relating to their salary increment, leave and promotion. (C.3.1, 08022016)

She described herself as a hard worker who started for her work-day at 7 in the morning and returned home at 8 at night. As a result, she was not in a position to give much attention to her household chores. She believed her career had not progressed much compared to her educational background and the services she had rendered to the company. Her husband also worked in the same industry; however, he worked for another factory. She had a child who was five years old and she was upset that due to her financial situation, she was forced to send their child back to the village, and he was being raised by his granny. Shrabonty consoled herself by reminding herself 80 percent of female workers in this industry could not raise their own children by themselves. They raised their children by keeping them in the village due to extended work hours and the high cost of living. She believed it was financial needs, which forced them to take this step, and they were helpless in this regard. She claimed

there were several examples she knew of where mothers had to leave their one-month-old child at the village in order to work in the garment factories. Shrabonty dreamt of a better life, and it was her simple demand that she would like to lead a normal life with her husband and child (C.3.1, 08022016).

### ***5.12.2 Worker: Dream of a Physically Challenged Worker***

Sabiha's father was a brave freedom fighter during the liberation war in 1971. At the age of two, she was diagnosed with Polio and lost some of her physical abilities. Despite her father's poverty and her disability, she completed high school. She married at 19 and gave birth to a baby boy a year later. Less than a year later she learned her child was suffering from a serious eye disease, which was a result from Sabiha not eating nutritious food while she was pregnant. She had to move to Dhaka to find better treatment for her child. Life further worsened when her husband refused to take responsibility for his child's health and left her. For the past 9 years, she has been a single parent for her child (G.3.1, 01032016).

Later she learned her husband married someone else, without formally divorcing Sabiha. After completing her higher education, she began working for the garment industry 4 years ago. She kept her son with her parents. Recently Sabiha's salary had increased to BDT 7000 (\$88) but including overtime, she earned nearly BDT 10000 (\$126). This salary, including overtime was able to cover all her expenses. However, the overtime was not always guaranteed in the factory, and if there was no overtime during the month that could make her life miserable as she would not have any money to send to her child. Sometimes the stress caused her to be depressed that after receiving a college certificate she had to accept the life of a garment worker. She dreamed of a better life and wanted a chance to live with her other family members. Keeping her son's face in her mind, she continued working hard (G.3.1, 01032016).

### ***5.12.3 Worker: Concern for Children***

Jasmine started her career in the garment industry in 2004 with a salary of BDT 1960 (USD 24) per month. Her husband drove private cars. Jasmine had a son who was 14 years old who was studying in the eighth standard. In the past, she lived in an extended family with her mother-in-law but more recently had moved away due to some domestic problems. Currently, Jasmine's salary was BDT 7600 (USD 96), and every month she received around BDT 11,000 (USD 139) per month including her overtime benefits. She expressed her grief for not being able to look after her son. I asked her why she had only 1 child and she replied there was no point for garment workers giving birth too many children as they would not be

able to look after them. Jasmine planned to raise her son properly. She dreamed her son would lead a better life. It was her ultimate goal and she vowed to continue working until her dream came true. As a result, she was ready to accept the hard work and wanted to continue working until her son finished his education. She did not want her child to have the same experiences as she has had (I.3.1, 07042016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *Millions of Bangladeshi from across the country have been working in the garment industry. Age, education, and region have differentiated them from each other. They have different aspirations and drives. Younger workers have more motivation and drive than the older ones. Someone was working for a better life; someone was working to feed his or her family. The female workers working here had broken the stereotype custom that the male would be the only breadwinner of the family. They had achieved freedom and gained many new rights and now they were in a position to make many of the decisions for their lives.*

*The change in this marginal society had brought about a revolutionary change in the society as a whole. The inclusion of female workers in the garment sector had shaken the whole society. Nevertheless, few women were able to reach top management positions; Bangladeshi society is still regarded as a male dominated society and has very often seemed to be reluctant to perceive women as bread winners. As a result, males and the society in general have imposed many difficulties upon those women who were working in the garment industry. However, nothing could stop the advancement of women working in this industry.*

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#### **5.12.4 Mid-Level Management: The Land of Sinners**

A linking error was detected in a sweater and later it was found in every sweater of the same design. A supervisor had brought this issue to the APM. The APM scolded him and asked why he had not fixed this problem earlier. He added the supervisors were worthless and were not capable of doing their duties. In addition, he said, “If I scold you now then everyone will say that I am a bad guy”. He also stated with grief working in the garment industry is a sin, and the God is punishing the garments employees for their sins that they had committed in their previous lives (O.2.1, 13062016).

#### **5.12.5 Low-Level Management: A Cursed Life**

A supervisor from another section came to meet one of the management staff I was observing, for some work. He said yesterday his team worked until 1.30 AM. He also said with regret, this morning when some of his workers arrived 5 minutes late to work, the administration department asked for the workers to provide explanations for their lateness.

He also said he had been in this profession for the last 16 years and this job had become a cursed life for him. After hearing this, the management staff of this section said there were 1200 people working in this factory and out of the 1200 only 100 enjoyed any benefits, while the remaining 1100 were deprived. He said, if laws and ethics could be implemented in this industry, this country could have become 'The Bengal of gold'. He also said by keeping millions of workers deprived, this industry has contributed very little to the real development of this country. He believed if justice were to be implemented and a minimum living wage could be realized, this industry could have improved the fate of millions of workers and could have changed the socio-economic situation of this country. He said in the present system we are worked to death and few people enjoy any benefits. He said this was a cursed system and there was no way to escape it (O.2.2, 13062016).

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**Meaning Reconstruction:** *The lower level management staffs work as hard as the workers and there is not much difference in their salaries. They could be categorized with the workers in terms of salary. From my observations at many factories, the production manager and similar officers earn twice as much as the lower level staffs. These lower level management staffs joined the factory as workers, and based on their merits and qualifications, they were gradually promoted to supervisors, line chiefs, the floor in-charges and APMs (Assistant Production Manager).*

*Many of the production managers and equivalents had also started their careers as workers. However, the salaries of the mid-level management staffs could not be compared with that of the top management such as the General Manager (GM), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), Executive Director (ED), Director, and Managing Director (MD). There were huge differences among the salaries of high-level management and the rest of the management team. However, occupying a top-level position was not an easy task, and normally the more highly skilled, experienced, educated people were appointed to these positions. The salaries of the management team could be higher than the sum of all the workers' salaries of a medium-sized factory with 1000 workers. I received this information from talking to managers at different levels of the factories I had visited in the last 9 months.*

*Because of this income disparity, though the garment industry contributes significantly to the national economy, it had contributed very little to various development indexes in the marginalized communities of the country. Millions of unfortunate workers had managed to gain economic freedom by working in this industry. They had been able to take responsibility for supporting hundreds of thousands of families. They had improved their living standard and purchasing power. However, this achievement was nothing compared to their sacrifices.*

*Long working hours had sucked the essence out of their lives, given them loneliness, the pain of sexual harassment or the fear of being sexually harassed and many other social inequities.*

*They feel delighted to have their salaries at the end of the month but also the fear of an uncertain future. They search for a secure future, which often remains unachieved. . However, they continue working to bring some happiness to their families. They keep working for their old parents or their offspring who are being raised in the village. No work seems too hard for them. No obstacle will prevent them on the way to their goals. No colourful dresses they made can bring colour to their lives. No pain can paralyse them as they have many 'promises to keep'.*

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## **Chapter Six: Exploring the Minefields**

**Chapter Summary:** In this chapter, stage three of analysis will be presented. In the introduction section, discussion will be made to explain how the categories for analysis were developed from interview data and how the validity claims were established for this stage. Finally, five voices will be used to present narratives under these twelve broad categories.

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present stage three of my analysis; the dialogical data generation which was reconstructed from the participants' interviews. I started the interview process after I had completed all of my observations. In this dialogical data generation process, I gave the participants a chance to raise their voices in the research process. In addition, in this stage, they were given an opportunity to challenge some of my assumptions I had structured from the observations. It is important to mention in conducting these interviews, I used Carspecken (1996) suggested flexible interview protocol and the typology of interviewer responses (see Chapter Three for details). In constructing the interview protocol, my supervisors acted as peer debriefers and helped me in checking whether I was using any leading questions in my interview protocol. They also helped me in identifying the valid questions for my interview. While conducting the interviews, I took a facilitator role and offered a supportive as well as safe normative environment for my interview participants, and this gave them the opportunity to explore issues with their own vocabulary, their own ideas, and their own metaphors.

An interview helps to generate subjective truth claims from participants, in which the participants only have privileged access. Throughout the interview process, I attempted to learn about the subjective states of the participants in which I hoped to receive an honest and accurate self-reporting of the subject (Carspecken 1996, 165). In my interviews, I tried to include all the key informants and interviewed 51 informants individually (See Interview log for detail Attachment I). In doing so, all the interviews of the workers, WPC members, welfare officers, CSR managers, top management, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) representative, and NGOs representatives were conducted in their respective workplaces. However, some of the interviews with the stakeholders were conducted at their residences. Later, to generate the dialogical data from these interview transcripts, I used preliminary reconstructive analysis and pragmatic horizon analysis.

In order to establish the validity of this stage, I tape-recorded all the interviews, which gave me the opportunity to use consistency checks. In addition, I conducted consistency checking

between the observations' findings and the interview findings. In this regard, my thesis supervisors helped me as peer debriefers and helped me in identifying whether I took the unnecessary non-leading lead in the interview process. I subsequently requested they check some of the interview transcripts at the beginning. In addition, I used member checking to establish the validity of the interview transcripts by requesting a few of the interview respondents to check the validity of the reconstruction I made from the observation notes and interview materials (Carspecken 1996, 166). As all the interviews were conducted in the native Bengali language, I had to translate these interview transcripts into English, and later the accuracy of translations was checked and certified by a faculty member of Curtin University who's native language was Bengali (Attachment J.). Subsequently, the initial meaning reconstruction and the pragmatic horizon analysis were used to reconstruct the meaning of the dialogical data, and these dialogical data were presented in twelve broad categories.

In this chapter, I reconstructed the meaning from the interviews under twelve broad categories, which I developed from the cultural themes I discovered from the communicative acts while conducting the interviews. The categories of current CSR initiatives and the bottom-line benefits, economic emancipation and the empowerment of female workers, and giving voice to the voiceless were presented as the methodological requirements. On the other hand, the categories of: Western buyers and their CSR agendas, institutional arrangements of the Western buyers, responses of the Eastern supplier, forces generated by different stakeholders for implementing CSR practices, Accord and Alliance and its criticism, production at the expense of the environment, postcolonial conditions and its implications on the current CSR arrangement, and the paradigm shifts in the garment industry were presented to satisfy the research questions. Moreover, I presented the categories in a manner so the narratives can freely speak for the interview participants.

In the following section, dialogical data were generated under the above-mentioned twelve categories, and in this process, five voices were used to present these narratives. In order to establish the objective validity claim, in the presentation of narratives, I put a few verbatim quotes in italics, and other speech acts were presented after the meaning reconstructions were made through horizon analysis. In addition, in order to establish the objective, subjective and normative validity claims, one verbatim quote from each category were reconstructed using the meaning field and horizon analysis matrix.

## **6.2 Western Buyers and their CSR Agendas**

### ***6.2.1 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

Farida had been working in the garment industry for the last three and half years as a welfare officer. It is a regulation for the garment factories to employ welfare officers and the number of workers employed in the factory determines how many. The responsibility of the welfare officer is to respond to the worker's concerns. During the observations, I found they have a very close relationship with the workers, and the workers usually do not hesitate sharing their problems with them. However, when I asked the respondents whether the Western buyers had any requirements relating to CSR, Farida replied, *“Yes, of course, they have. Firstly, they want us to conform to the local laws and subsequently monitor us to see to what extent we have succeeded in implementing these rules in the factory”* (Farida, 08082016). She also mentioned based on the requirements from a Western buyer they have recruited 60 physically challenged workers through the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP). In addition, despite local laws establishing directives regarding childcare centers, restrooms, and medical centers, many of the Western buyers have established their own guidelines in their code of conduct for these issues (Farida, 08082016”).

In response to the same question Mina, a welfare officer who had been working in this industry for four years said, *“All the Western buyers have their own code of conduct, and if we want to work with any of them, we are bound to observe their code of conduct”* (Mina, 13082016). She also said presently, they are working with five buyers. In this regard, they had to comply with the code of conduct from these five buyers separately. In addition, recently all buyers have started demanding enforcement of worker's occupational health and safety issues. As a result, currently, they have focused on Fire Safety, Building Safety, and Electrical Safety issues and local managers have organized their factory based on the requirements set by these Western buyers (Mina, 13082016).

### ***6.2.2 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

This Mid-Level Management category represents HR and Admin & Compliance officials from the garment factories. These managers are solely responsible for meeting the various CSR requirements of the Western buyers. As such, in this thesis, I have considered them as the CSR managers. All the CSR managers whom I interviewed had work experiences ranging from four to twenty-two years in the garment industry. However, most of them had been working in the industry for more than twelve years. As a result, data gathered from interviewing these CSR managers helped me understand the translation process of Western

ideals applied in a developing country context, and helped me also understand the institutionalising process of the current CSR practices in Bangladesh. When I asked the respondents questions regarding CSR requirements from Western buyers, I realized all Western buyers have their own code of conduct and compliance regulations in which they include their CSR agendas for their Eastern suppliers.

Rahul stated that in their code of conduct the Western buyers were giving instructions for three areas, technical, social and environmental. In the technical part, they give instructions to follow a certain process through which they try to ensure the quality and safety of the product. In the social part, they include guidelines relating to workers and the work environment. In their environmental part, they give directions on how to protect the environment. Generally, large factories work for several Western buyers. As a result, they are required to comply with all the requirements of these buyers. However, there are several common issues found in the codes of conduct from these different buyers and through their codes of conduct, they give us guidelines regarding child labour, forced labour, working hours and overtime, health and safety of the workers, fair and timely payment of wages, and maintaining discipline at the factory (Rahul, 13082016).

According to Reaz, *“The Western buyers sign an agreement with the Eastern suppliers before placing their orders. Based on this agreement, the suppliers’ factories are required to comply with the buyers’ code of conduct. In this code of conduct, the Western buyers impose some liabilities on the Eastern suppliers regarding the protection of their brands and code compliance. In addition to local laws, the buyers might impose some other regulations in their code of conduct, and the suppliers’ factories must maintain all these conditions if they want to preserve the relationship with these buyers. There are some differences between the code of conduct provided by the Europeans and the code of conduct from the American buyers. The patterns are different to be precise. However, the objectives of these codes of conduct are almost the same. They want us to work to protect their brand, obey the local law, maintain health regulations, and maintain safety and security. They want us to provide freedom of speech to the workers and to pay the wages on time”* (Reaz, 18082016).

Dalia said, *“In the past, product quality was the only concern for Western buyers. However, presently they have extended their concerns with various worker related issues and the environment. As a result, the suppliers’ factories have no choice but to enforce these new regulations and to contribute to the protection of the environment. In addition, more recently, factories are compelled to comply with the buyers’ safety requirements in building safety, fire safety and electrical safety”* (Dalia, 15082016).

Alim said, *“The code of conduct from the buyers addresses more or less the same issues where they show their concern for the implementation of local laws. As a result, issues like wages, working hours, discrimination, equity and equality, and sexual harassment are included in their code of conduct. However, in addition to the local laws, some buyers demand more and provide guidelines for employing physically disabled people, empowering female staff, establishing green factories, etc. In some cases, they take a strong position in implementing local laws, whereas in other cases they have given us some concessions. For example, some buyers take a strict position regarding the weekly holiday while some do not. Some buyers do not support more than two hours of overtime a day, which is stated in national law while some buyers are supporting four hours of overtime a day. However, in this case, they want us to ensure workers are getting fair payment for their overtime. Now, along with product quality and workers issues, they are providing special direction on the issue of the environment. They are suggesting there should be no harm to the environment by any means and they are monitoring this with the help of many organisations. Foreign agencies like the IFC, USAID and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are monitoring our activities regarding this issue through their different projects”* (Alim, 21082016).

### ***6.2.3 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

Mr. Rouf started his career in the garment industry in 1999. Currently, he is serving as a chief executive officer of a garment factory. However, when I asked him whether Western buyers had any requirements relating to CSR, Rouf said all the reputable Western brands want to make sure their suppliers are maintaining some standards of CSR. In this regard, in the name of the code of conduct, they try to enact some of their guidelines in the suppliers' factories. Every Western buyer has a different code of conduct and policies, and they want to make sure suppliers' factories are observing all the regulations stated in their codes of conduct before placing a work order. In their guidelines, they include two major issues, technical issues and social compliance issues. In the technical guidelines, they give the suppliers' factories directives regarding product quality and operations. On the other hand, in their social compliance guidelines, they give directions on how to comply with the local rules of the country and the policies of the International Labour Organization (Rouf, 22082016).

### 6.2.4 The Voices of a Stakeholder

Chowdhury said, “By imposing their code of conduct on the suppliers’ factories, the Western buyers have established a compliance based CSR framework in the garment industry of Bangladesh” (Chowdhury, 05092016).

#### **Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Mina, 13082016)**

**Original Speech Act:** “All the Western buyers have their own code of conduct, and if we want to work with any of them, we are bound to observe their code of conduct.”

(AND/OR)

“The buyers’ code of conduct is a very important issue for the suppliers’ factories.”

(OR/AND)

“Buyers are forcing us to comply with their code of conduct.”

(OR/AND)

“We do not have any choice but comply with the code of conduct.”

(AND/OR)

“As the codes of conduct of the different buyers are different, we are forced to comply with a wide variety of issues.”

(OR/AND)

“We should maintain the buyers’ code of conduct in the factory.”

**Table 7: Validity Horizon of Mina (13082016) on the Western Buyers’ CSR Agendas**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	"The Western buyers are forcing us to comply with their code of conduct."	"I think the Buyers’ code of conduct is a very important issue for the suppliers’ factories”.	“We should maintain the buyers’ code of conduct in the factory.”
<b>Intermediate</b>	“We are maintaining the buyers’ code of conduct in our factory.”	"I think now we do not have any choice but to comply with the code of conduct."	“We should be given some choices in our CSR arrangements.”
<b>Background</b>	"We had a tendency to ignore many rules and regulations.” (OR) “Western buyers want us to get involved in different CSR issues.”	“I think in the name of the code of conduct, the Western buyers’ have imposed a compliance based CSR arrangement in the suppliers’ factories.”	"There should be uniformity in the buyers’ code of conduct.”

### **6.3 Summary**

Imposing their codes of conduct on the suppliers' factories, the Western buyers have established a compliance based CSR framework in the garment industry of Bangladesh. Through this arrangement, all the reputable Western brands want to make sure their suppliers are maintaining some standard of CSR. In this regard, in the name of the code of conduct, they have enacted some of their guidelines on the suppliers' factories. In the past, the buyers only showed their concern over the product quality. However, presently they have extended their concerns to include worker related issues and the environment. As a result, the suppliers' factories have no choice but to enforce these worker related issues and contribute to the protection of the environment. In addition, more recently the factories are compelled to comply with buyers' safety requirements to ensure the building safety, fire safety and electrical safety of their factories.

All the Western buyers have their own code of conduct and compliance regulations. As a result, if a suppliers' factory wants to work with five different Western buyers, it has to comply with five different codes of conduct. However, there are differences in the codes of conduct of different buyers, in their code of conduct and compliance guidelines the Western buyers generally address similar issues of regular payment of wages, working hours and overtime, child labour, the working environment, sexual harassment and discrimination, and the health and safety of the workers. Moreover, through this arrangement they want to make sure that their suppliers are maintaining the rules and regulations of the land. However, there are many issues in the codes of conduct, which a factory needs to comply with, that are not stated in the local law. In addition to protecting the brand values of the Western buyers, these codes of conduct are helping to protect the rights of the workers and the environment as well and whatever changes have occurred in this industry are due to pressure from the Western buyers.

### **6.4 Institutional Arrangements of the Western Buyers**

#### ***6.4.1 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

I was curious to know whether the Western buyers have established any mechanisms to monitor the suppliers' responses regarding their code of conduct requirements. Consequently, when I asked the respondents how the Western buyers monitor these regulations Mina said all the Western buyers had installed a monitoring system to see whether the suppliers' factories were following their codes of conduct, and they have been conducting various kinds of audits. These audits generally are of two types. One is the social

audit and the other is the technical audit. Few buyers conduct these audits themselves instead; most of the buyers select a third party audit firm to conduct these audits on their behalf. In addition, the buyers decide which method for conducting these audits. Sometimes, they give the suppliers' factories an exact time for their audit and they conduct the audit on that day, which is an announced audit. Sometimes they come to visit the factory without giving any prior notice, which is an unannounced audit. Alternatively, they may give a time range for the audit and perform their audit within this period, which is a semi-announced audit (Mina, 13082016).

When I asked the respondents to describe the scope of these audit activities, Frida mentioned the Western buyers include a variety of issues in their audits. However, in doing so, they must engage an assortment of organisations to perform the different tasks. For instance, Accord and Alliance will only monitor safety issues; housekeeping would not fall under the scope of this type of audit. Some buyers conduct the audit on their own and again, some conduct audits through a third party. In this regard, the buyers have nominated their audit firms, and each third party audit firm prepares their guidelines according to the demands of their Western buyers. Initially, they come to the factory directly and verify documents, such as documents related to child labour, the factory approval letter, the building plan, fire license, ETP license, etc. Then they physically inspect the factory to determine if these regulations are being observed. Thereafter, they provide the management an audit report and a remediation plan with a timeline. After correcting the situation based on the remediation plan, the management invite them back to conduct a follow-up audit, and if they are satisfied with the factory's remediation they close the file and declare management in compliance. Generally, audit activities are performed in this manner (Farida, 08082016).

#### ***6.4.2 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

When I asked the respondents how the Western buyers were monitoring the suppliers' responses to their code of conduct requirements, Rahman replied the Western buyers had established a mechanism to oversee what was happening in the suppliers' factories. Accordingly, some of the buyers employ third party audit firms to conduct the audit in the suppliers' factories. If the buyer conducts the audit, they provide the suppliers' factory a report of their findings and give them a remediation plan, and in their follow-up audit, they want to make sure the suppliers' factory has incorporated all suggestions made by them. If the audit is conducted by a third party audit firm, they upload the factory status on their website and all the buyers who have access to the platform can see the status, and they also conduct the follow-up audit to oversee whether or not the suppliers' factory have made the necessary changes (Rahman, 08082016).

Today, in addition to the physical verification, buyers have installed an electronic surveillance system to monitor their suppliers' factories, which must be updated daily and monthly. As a result, now the suppliers' factory cannot hide as many questionable practices from their buyers, and if the salary of a worker increases significantly in a month, they consider this a result of excessive overtime and identify this matter as a non-compliance issue (Alam, 09082016).

In order to maintain close relationships with the suppliers' factories, Western buyers have set up their local offices in Bangladesh. As a result, many of these buyers are closely monitoring their suppliers' factories and are ensuring they maintain their codes of conduct in their factories. In addition, many of the buyers have nominated third party audit firms to examine these regulations on their behalf, and after the audit, these audit firms are uploading the audit reports on their websites from where their partner buyers can review the condition of the factories. Thereafter, comparing the audit findings with their codes of conduct, they can identify the major, minor and critical problems and suggest to the suppliers' factory a corrective action plan (CAP) for the remediation. They also arrange periodic follow-up audits to ensure the suppliers' factories are maintaining their CSR responsibilities (Rihan, 09082016).

Dalia said, *"We are under constant supervision as our buyers conduct announced, semi-announced and unannounced audits to determine whether we are maintaining their code of conduct. As a result, we need to prepare our factory for an audit all the time. Sometimes the buyers conduct the audits themselves and sometimes they send their nominated third party audit firms to conduct the audit. More recently, the buyers are focusing more on safety and security in the factory than their code of conduct"* (Dalia, 15082016).

All the Western buyers or their nominated audit firms conduct audits to see whether we are following their code of conduct. They conduct an audit at the beginning of the work contract, identify any problem areas and give us a report. They give us a deadline to make all the necessary corrections and then check our progress with a follow-up audit. They conduct announced, semi-announced and unannounced audits to verify the sustainability of our management system. The Western buyers have used different inspection platforms and have contracted with various audit firms for their expertise. As such, there are many firms who are conducting the social audits in our country such as, BSCI, SEDEX, SGS, ITS, ETI base code and so on. Every audit firm uses their own checklist while conducting an audit in the suppliers' factories. However, we do not see any significant differences in their checklists. In order to satisfy the demand of the Western buyers, we need to invite several audit firms in order to conduct several audits with the same criteria (Ali, 15082016).

Today, the Western buyers, the suppliers' factories and the third party audit firms are working under an arrangement, which can be described as "a development team". In this arrangement, the buyers or the third party audit firms physically oversee the conditions of the factories and based on their findings, they prepare a report on the suppliers' factories. Based on this audit, the buyers or their nominated audit firms, classify factories under different categories. The factories under a "C" category must arrange a social audit every 180 days, and as we are under category 'B', we need to arrange an audit once a year. In all follow-up audits, they want to make sure we are following their remediation plan. As a result, it seems we are always under their surveillance (Raton, 17082016).

Reaz mentioned the Western buyers mainly conduct two different types of audits. Firstly, they monitor all the details regarding the quality of the product through the technical audit. This audit can be done by the buyers' themselves or they could nominate third party audit firms to do the work. The second type is the social compliance audit and like the technical audit, this social audit can be done by the buyers' themselves or they could nominate third party audit firms, and if the factory achieved the "needs improvement" status in the audit, they then would receive the license to come back and audit for the following year. However, in this case, the suppliers' factory has to achieve the expected changes within one year to retain the relationship with the buyers, and at the end of the year; the buyer will arrange a follow-up audit to oversee the progress of the suppliers' factory (Reaz, 18082016).

All the buyers have developed their mechanisms to oversee whether their codes of conduct are being observed in the suppliers' factories. In doing so, many of them physically monitor their suppliers' factories. However, most Western buyers are working under different platforms and based on these platforms they have nominated third party audit firms to perform these audits on their behalf. These third party audit firms try to ensure factories under their platform are observing all the local rules and regulations, maintaining International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, and maintaining all the requirements of the buyers' code of conduct. In addition, the buyers require factories to comply with the C-TPAT (Customs-Trade Partnership against Terrorism) audit to ensure the security of their supply chain (Chandan, 22082016).

### ***6.4.3 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

When I asked the respondent how the Western buyers monitor these issues Rouf said, *"Every buyer has an annual inspection system for the social compliance. This annual inspection may be conducted by the buyers themselves or by any third party nominated by them. If a third party conducts the inspection, the buyers submit their comments after*

*reviewing the inspection report. If they conduct the inspection themselves, they provide us a remediation plan for the non-compliance issues identified by them then after the given period they come back to monitor whether we have made the corrections accordingly . Generally, they supervise us with this system. Moreover, their representatives visit our factory throughout the year. Actually, their representatives for quality control and social compliance can visit the factory at any time and during their visit, if they find any non-compliance matter; give us directions to remedy the problem. Apart from implementing the local laws and ILO policies, very often they impose some of their own regulations on us. In addition, the Western buyers demand the factories hold certifications from different bodies. The buyers from the UK require their factories possess the certificate from the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (SEDEX). Similarly, buyers from America ask their factories to obtain certification from the Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP). Moreover, European buyers require a Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) inspection” (Rouf, 22082016).*

#### **6.4.4 Voice of a Stakeholder**

Opu, an owner of a buying house<sup>5</sup> said previously that all the Western buyers would source their garments through buying houses. Now, many suppliers’ factories are managing their own buying operations. However, as the different independent buying houses can offer more competitive price to the Western suppliers, they are still controlling more than seventy percent of total orders in Bangladesh, and in doing so, they are performing many of the tasks on behalf of their Western buyers. It is very common that before placing an order to a factory, all the Western buyers want to ensure that the suppliers’ factories have the ability to comply with their code of conduct requirement. As such, first, they want us to provide them a list of factories. Thereafter, few buyers physically oversee the conditions of these factories by themselves, and the majority of them perform this task with the help of their nominated third party audit firms. In addition, all buying houses try to ensure that the suppliers’ factories are maintaining the buyer’s code of conduct (Opu, 25082016).

#### **Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Dalia, 15082016)**

**Original Speech Act:** *“Our buyers are conducting announced, semi-announced and unannounced audits to examine whether or not we are maintaining their code of conduct” (Dalia, 15082016).*

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<sup>5</sup> Buying houses act as an intermediary to establish the contractual relationship between the buyers and the suppliers’ garments factories and they provide all the necessary support to the buyers and suppliers.

(AND/OR)

“The Western buyers are serious in their code of conduct talk.”

(AND/OR)

“The Western buyers are using different monitoring systems to ensure their suppliers’ factories are maintaining their code of conduct”.

(AND/OR)

“The suppliers’ factories are required to maintain all the codes of conduct as the buyers could visit the factory at any moment”.

(OR/AND)

“Suppliers’ factories cannot fake the status of the codes to their buyers as the buyers can visit the factory without giving any prior notice.”

**Table 8: Validity Horizon of Dalia (15082016) on the Institutional Arrangements of the Western Buyers**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“The Western buyers are not using their codes of conduct as mere lip service ”.	"I think the Western buyers are very serious in their CSR talk”.	“We should maintain the buyers’ code of conduct so our buyers do not find any noncompliance issues while inspecting our factory”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“The suppliers’ factories cannot escape from implementing the code of conduct as the buyers are continuously monitoring the status of the suppliers’ factories”.	"I think the Western buyers want a sustained CSR arrangement at the suppliers setting”.	“We should ensure a sustained CSR arrangement at the factories”.
<b>Background</b>	“The suppliers’ factories had a tendency to avoid implementing the buyers' code of conduct and often presented false reports of the factory.”	“I think the Western buyers are using various monitoring systems to ensure their suppliers’ factories are maintaining their code of conduct”.	"We should develop trust between us”.

## 6.5 Summary

Western buyers are not using their codes of conduct as mere lip service—they also have introduced a monitoring system to ensure their suppliers’ factories are complying with their

code of conduct in their management decisions. Before placing an order with a factory, the buyers always want to make sure the factory has the ability to fulfil their code of conduct. As a result, they continuously pressure suppliers' factories to maintain all the codes of conduct. In this arrangement, they inspect the factory physically, verify any supporting documents, and very often conduct interviews with garment workers to examine whether the factories are complying with their codes of conduct. Some of the buyers themselves do the auditing and others engage a third party audit firm to conduct the audits on their behalf. Firstly, the audit team verifies all the documents before they make the physical verification, and later based on their observation; the audit team provides the suppliers' factory with a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to solve any noncompliance problems. In their follow-up audit, they want to make sure the suppliers' factory has incorporated all of their suggestions, and if they are satisfied with the remediation work, they declare the suppliers' factory as a compliance factory.

Based on the buyers' code of conduct, the suppliers' factories have to satisfy three types of audits, a technical audit, a security audit, and the social audit. Through their technical audits, the buyers want to ensure the quality of their products. In this technical audit, they examine the production processes of a factory, and they examine any production related documents. Many buyers demand the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) audit to ensure the security of the supply chain of their suppliers' factories. In their social audit, the buyers examine different labour related issues and the safety conditions in the suppliers' factories. Today, in addition to the physical verification, buyers have installed electronic surveillance systems to monitor suppliers' factories, and they ask them to provide inputs of daily and monthly data in the monitoring system. As a result, now the suppliers' factory cannot hide as many things from their buyers, and if the salary of a worker increases significantly in a month, they consider this a result of excessive overtime and identify this matter as a non-compliance issue.

The Western buyers are using different monitoring platforms, and based on these platforms have nominated audit firms and certification authorities, and if a suppliers' factory wants to work with buyers who use these different platforms, it has to be audited and certified by these same agencies. Consequently, suppliers' factories are required to be audited and certified by multiple agencies such as, TÜV SÜD, Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) base code, SGS, Bureau Veritas, Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (SEDEX), Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP), and Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), ISO 9001, and ISO 14001. In this arrangement, the nominated third party audit firms and the certification authorities upload their audited and certified suppliers' factories status reports

onto their on-line system, which then the buyers can monitor easily. Moreover, buyers' representatives visit the suppliers' factory throughout the year, and during their visits, if they find any noncompliance problems, they ask the suppliers' factories to address them in a timely manner. Sometimes, they ask the supplier to give visual evidence of compliance after the remediation work has been done, and sometimes they arrange follow-up audits to physically verify the progress of the factory. To ensure the sustainability of the principles of their code of conduct, the Western buyers conduct announced, semi-announced and unannounced audits in their suppliers' factories.

As the suppliers' factories have to bear all the costs associated with these audits and certifications, sometimes they consider it a financial burden to be audited and certified by multiple agencies for the same issue. In addition, almost every month, the suppliers' factories must participate in at least one audit or follow-up audit activity, which generates significant pressure on them. Accordingly, often they forget that we are doing this as a moral duty and often become tired of these arrangements.

## **6.6 Responses of the Eastern Suppliers**

### ***6.6.1 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

When I asked to what extent the suppliers' factories were able to satisfy the demands of the Western buyers CSR codes, Farida said, "*As I have worked for only a factory, my experience is very little. However, based on what I have seen we have already satisfied nearly eighty-five percent of the CSR demands of the Western buyers*" (Farida, 08082016). Whereas Mina answered, she thinks the suppliers' factories have achieved seventy percent success in meeting the demands of the Western buyers (Mina, 13082016).

### ***6.6.2 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

When it comes to the question of maintaining the code of conduct in the factory setting, Rahman argues "*different factories have succeeded in fulfilling eighty percent of the demands from the Western buyers and the remaining twenty percent is still under development, and will be fulfilled soon*" (Rahman, 08082016). However, Alam believes his company has not only succeeded in satisfying all the needs of the buyers but also has exceeded the requirements (Alam, 09082016). According to Rihan, "*A majority of the factories have made remarkable progress in meeting the demands of the Western buyers and currently they have succeeded in satisfying eighty percent of the requirements of the code of conduct*" (Rihan, 09082016).

Rajiv (11082016), Idris (11082016), Badsha (14082016), Ali (15082016), Raton (17082016), and Nasim (27082016) also believe the suppliers' garment factories have succeeded in satisfying eighty percent of the requirements from the Western buyers when it comes to meeting their code of conduct. However, Dalia believes the suppliers' factories have been able to fulfil seventy percent of the demands from the Western buyers, and if the Western buyers were to increase the price of their products it would be easier for them to satisfy all of their requirements within a very short period of time (Dalia, 15082016). On the other hand, Alim argues suppliers' factories have succeeded in satisfying sixty percent of the requirements of the code of conduct (Alim, 21082016).

### ***6.6.3 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

Rouf said previously, the owners of the suppliers' factories tended to downplay the role of engineers in the establishment of their factories. After the disaster of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza when Accord and Alliance came into force, the factory owners have realised the importance of engineering knowledge in constructing a factory. As a result, all the newly developed factories are aligned with the accepted understanding of the legal construction standards needed to establish a factory. Nobody even thought there would be any need to appoint an electrical engineer, civil engineer and fire engineer in a garment factory. Factory owners have accepted the new issues the Accord and Alliance raised in building safety, fire safety, and electrical safety, and realised that without solving these issues they cannot run their business anymore. Therefore, the majority of the factories have already completed their remediation work for electrical safety, and fire safety. The correction of structural defects will require much more time and factories are moving slowly where massive corrections are required. Besides, there are some structural problems that cannot be remediated; therefore, owners are trying to repurpose their factories to a new set up. When it comes to fire safety, the majority of the factories have already equipped themselves with the fire doors, sprinkler systems, hydrant systems and smoke detection systems in the factory (Rouf, 22082016).

### ***6.6.4 Voices of the Stakeholders***

Ahmed said all the suppliers' factories have made considerable progress in implementing the buyers' requirements in their setting. Today, the majority of the factories maintain all the rules except the freedom of association for their workers. All the large and medium-sized factories follow the safety rules, and some of them have made tremendous progress in this regard. Recently, a few 'green' factories have started operating in Bangladesh. In addition, I would say the buyers' pressure has brought many changes to the suppliers' factories. However, in this arrangement, the voices of the suppliers' factories have been marginalised.

As a result, in a few cases, they have had to accept the irrational demands of the Western buyers, and could not raise their voice to ask why multiple factories cannot operate in a shared building if the structure would physically support such reorganization (Ahmed, 25082016).

The safety engineer of Alliance argued that in the meantime, some factories have succeeded in complying with all the safety requirements while forty percent of the factories have satisfied seventy percent of their required codes. As the remediation of the building structure is time-consuming, I would like to consider this on-going progress as satisfactory. In addition, the majority of the safety-related equipment must be imported from foreign sources, which is also a time-consuming process (Sourav, 30082016).

**Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Rahman, 08082016)**

**Original Speech Act:** “Factories have succeeded in fulfilling eighty percent of the demands of their Western buyers and the remaining twenty percent is in the developmental stage” (Rahman, 08082016).

(AND/OR)

“The suppliers’ factories have taken the buyers’ code of conduct very seriously.”

(AND/OR)

“Factories have made tremendous progress in meeting the needs of their Western buyers.”

(OR/AND)

“Suppliers factories are progressing to meet all the requirements of their Western buyers.”

(AND/OR)

“In the near future there would not be any noncompliance issues in the suppliers’ factories”.

(OR/AND)

“Suppliers factories should meet all the demands of their Western buyers”.

**Table 9: Validity Horizon of Rahman (08082016) on the Responses of the Eastern Suppliers**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“The suppliers’ factories are required to take the buyers’ code of conduct very seriously ”.	"I think in the near future there will be no noncompliance issues in the suppliers’ factories”.	“The suppliers’ factories should meet all the rules and regulations”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“The suppliers’ factories are working on satisfying their buyers’ code of conduct”.	"I think the suppliers’ factories have made tremendous progress in meeting the needs of their Western buyers ”.	“The suppliers’ factories should take the compliance issue seriously”.
<b>Background</b>	“The suppliers’ factories were reluctant to observe the buyers’ code of conduct in the past”.	“I think the suppliers’ factories have made progress on the code of conduct due to the pressure from their Western buyers”.	“The suppliers’ factories should be ashamed for not meeting all the guidelines”.

## **6.7 Summary**

Factory owners have accepted the fact that without complying with the buyers' guidelines they cannot survive in this business. As a result, all the suppliers' factories have made considerable progress in implementing the buyers' requirements in their setting. Now, the majority of the factories maintain all the rules except the freedom of association of their workers. All the large and medium-sized factories follow the safety rules, and some of them have made tremendous progress in this regard. Recently, a few 'green' factories have started operating in the garment industry of Bangladesh. As a result, it could be said the buyers' code of conduct has brought many changes to the suppliers' factories. Furthermore when it comes to the question of complying with these codes of conduct, factories have succeeded in fulfilling eighty percent of the demands of the Western buyers and the remaining twenty percent is in the developmental stage, which will be fulfilled soon.

## **6.8 Forces Generated by Different Stakeholders for Implementing CSR Practices**

### ***6.8.1 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

Farida claims that currently, Accord and Alliance are putting significant pressure on the factories to improve building safety, electrical safety and fire safety. As a result, factories were forced to address these issues. She also said, *"We have worked on safety issue earlier, but practical details were never monitored, and now they are monitoring everything carefully. A small crack in the wall or a minor fault in the structure will also be included in their remediation plan, and we had to take immediate measures on these issues. We have conducted a couple of internal audits and identified 106 safety issues on our own. We took the necessary steps to correct the situation ourselves before the inspection by the Accord took place. In the past I never would have seen this type of initiative from our side"* (Farida, 08082016).

When I asked the respondents regarding the involvement of different parties in the current CSR arrangements, Farida said, *"Apart from the owner, the government, and the buyer some NGOs are working with us on some CSR issues. However, I believe our Western buyers are the major players here. In addition, I would like to mention the role of the government as a factory inspector, for example, the health inspector, the fire department and many other government officials are closely working with us. However, though we do not have any direct link with the trade union, our workers' participation committee is serving to establish workers' rights in the factory"* (Farida, 08082016).

### **6.8.2 Voices of the Mid-Level Management**

According to Alam, *“In the current compliance-based CSR framework, the suppliers’ factories are receiving significant pressure from their Western buyers. In this arrangement, the government is also playing an important role. However, the employers’ association of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) is putting more pressure in implementing the new labour laws and compliance guidelines than the government has. The BGMEA is also helping in awareness building. Neither the NGOs nor the local community has any influence in this CSR arrangement”* (Alam, 09082016).

In this current compliance-based CSR arrangement, the management of the suppliers’ factories are implementing the buyers’ directives in their factories. The buyers’ are monitoring the progress and are giving them feedback on their achievements. Furthermore, the government and the BGMEA are also monitoring whether the factories are implementing the labour laws and ILO directives. The Western buyers’, whom we consider our customers, are playing a major role in this arrangement. However, the role of the trade unions and NGOs are missing here, and there is no need to involve them in this arrangement. In addition to the directives from the Western buyers, if a factory implements any good practice, it inspires other managers, and all responsible factories try to implement that good practice in their factories (Rajiv, 11082016).

Idris mentioned that in this current CSR arrangement, the suppliers’ factories, the Western buyers, the government, and the workers are working together. However, the pressure comes mainly from our buyers. The government is also playing an important role by helping the factories to become compliance factories. In the suppliers’ factories, we have a Workers Participation Committee (WPC) and this is giving the workers an opportunity to raise their voices in this process. In this current arrangement, the local community, NGOs, and trade union do not have any role to play. He also suggests there is no need to include trade union or trade union federation in this current arrangement (Idris, 11082016).

Ratan thinks the government, Western buyers, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) are the main stakeholders in this current CSR arrangement. Like the buyers the government, BGMEA, and BKMEA are also conducting periodic audits in the suppliers’ factories. He also thinks the trade union has a role as well because they are working to improve the interests of the workers. However, as the trade union role is missing here, the Workers' Participation Committee is performing the role of the trade union in this current arrangement. The role of NGOs and the local community are not evident here.

Therefore, the factories do not take any action that goes against the workers. In addition, factory representatives often visit other factories and if they discover a good practice in other factories, they try to implement something similar in their respective setting (Raton, 17082016).

According to Anis (23082016), *“The buyers are playing the most important role in the current CSR arrangement. In this current CSR arrangement, in addition to the Western buyers, the government, BGMEA, and BKMEA are also putting pressure on the owners of the suppliers' factories. Some NGOs, trade unions and worker participation committee members are also working in this arrangement. However, we consider their roles as secondary”* (Anis, 23082016).

### ***6.8.3 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

When I asked the respondents regarding the involvement of other parties in the current CSR arrangements, Rouf said that at present, the suppliers' garments factories, the government, Western buyers, owner's organization like the BGMEA and BKMEA, trade unions, local and foreign NGOs and some foreign embassies are involved in the structure of implementing these corporate social responsibility practices. However, he also thinks in the current arrangement the role of trade unions is negligible as they do not have any contact with factory workers and we can only see their existence in the arbitrations held by the BGMEA and BKMEA (Rouf, 22082016).

Rouf also said in this arrangement, the buyers are playing the main role, and are continuously pressuring us though more recently, the government also has become more active in these issues. In addition, the BGMEA and BKMEA are also directly monitoring their member factories. In the garment industry, we do not have trade unions, we only have a Workers' Participation Committee (WPC) and it has been the practice of the factory management to nominate the members of the WPC. However, in 2013, the government made some changes in the rules and according to this new rule, now during elections workers must use secret ballots to elect members of the WPC. At present, there is pressure from the Western buyers to make WPC stronger and more effective. Considering the present context, I think the issue of the trade union cannot be suppressed any longer (Rouf, 22082016).

### ***6.8.4 Voices of the Stakeholders***

Roy, who is an inspector from the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), said the DIFE works under the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the main aim of this department is to ensure the welfare, safety, and health of the

workers who are working in factories and establishments. As such, the DIFE is working closely with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) with the aim of achieving these goals. Roy said, *“While inspecting a garment factory, we closely monitor whether the factories are observing our labour laws. In this regard, we use a checklist, and if any problem is found, we give the owners a timeline to solve the problem. Later, in the follow-up inspection, we want to make sure they have resolved the problem, and if the owners have not then we give them another chance to correct the situation, and we take legal action if they fail to bring change. As a result, it could be said that on behalf of the government, the DIFE is forcing the garment factories to observe the local rules and regulations in their setting”* (Roy, 20082016).

Azom argued the BGMEA is actually a trade association and is associated with every accomplishment this industry has ever achieved. The BGMEA has always provided the right direction for this industry. That is why we have been able to create an industry worth 28 billion dollars. We exported 28 billion dollars’ worth of goods during the last fiscal year but this thirty-five year journey has never been smooth. We had to overcome many problems and difficulties in the past but our achievements are the success we earned on many occasions. Successfully accomplishing this industry’s compliance is one of those successes. The first target was to eliminate child labour. We have always made sure this industry moves in the right direction. It had to make many hard decisions to keep it on track and working for the collective good. This organization (the BGMEA) has been doing this since it was created and we are determined to continue into the future (Azom, 24082016).

According to Azom, *“BGMEA held many training programs with the help of its development partners in order to increase awareness among the owners, managers and workers before those terrible events took place. We also kept an eye on the duties of the factories. We have been raising awareness regarding compliance and capacity building and are monitoring with the best of our abilities but we are not a law enforcement authority and neither do we have law enforcement authority at our disposal. We can monitor, we can raise awareness, we can persuade, we can create resistance but we cannot penalize. We do not have the authority to enforce labour laws overall. We are working to implement compliance guidelines while keeping this in mind. Today, compliance is not confined to social compliance only. Compliance does not only mean workers’ rights and working conditions. It has been extended to include environmental compliance also and we are monitoring this as well. We are making an effort so the industry can be more sustainable in the end. Cost competitiveness and price competitiveness are very important to survive. In addition, the present business model says factory owners/managers must take care of the workers and*

*your community as such. Owners/managers should take responsibility towards protecting the planet and not destroy it. You must be able to make a profit at the same time. Keeping this motive in mind, we are trying to make our industry viable by all means” (Azom, 24082016).*

Wahid mentioned that many of the NGOs are working on workers’ safety, workers’ rights, and human rights issues in the garment industry. Organizations like the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Ayeen Shalish Kendra, Bangladesh Mohola Ayeenjibi Shomiti, Karmojibi Nari, Nijera Kori, Adhikar, the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), and the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) are working on different issues in the garment industry. These organisations have also contributed to a few joint legal actions in special cases. For example, in the case of the Spectrum factory disaster, these eight organizations jointly filed a writ petition in 2005 and pled for determining the work environment of a factory. In addition, they appealed for determining reasonable compensation for the casualties due to the factory building collapsing. Moreover, and the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) participated in the case of the fire at the KTS factory and demanded just compensation, then filed a case challenging the merit of the insufficient compensation arrangement of the existing Factories Act of Bangladesh. Those cases are still at the level of hearings and are referred to as ‘Continuing Mandamus’ because they haven’t finished yet. These cases are still open and the court is playing a role in the establishment of labour rights by issuing legal orders over time. In this way, NGOs are continuously pressuring this industry to eradicate its unlawful actions which have been documented (Wahid, 28082016).

According to Sourav, “The Accord and Alliance could not have made this progress if the BGMEA had not led them in this fight in the first place. Essentially, the BGMEA is the leader in this effort. The factories in which Accord and Alliance provide a corrective action plan (CAP) are most likely not going to listen to us. The factories are more liable to the BGMEA and this relationship of liability is somewhat institutional. We ask the BGMEA to announce the standard was fixed by us. We cannot directly do anything in the factory without the BGMEA’s approval. We cannot put pressure on any factory, only the BGMEA can do this for us (Sourav, 30082016).

### ***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Anis, 23082016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *“In this current CSR arrangement, in addition to the Western buyers, the government, the BGMEA, and the BKMEA are also putting pressure on the suppliers’ factories” (Anis, 23082016).*

(AND/OR)

“The pressure comes mainly from the Western buyers”.

(AND/OR)

“The suppliers’ factories cannot ignore the pressure from their Western buyers.”

(AND/OR)

Apart from the Western buyers, the government, the BGMEA, and the BKMEA are also playing an important role in the current CSR arrangement”.

(OR/AND)

“Currently, the suppliers’ factories have started receiving pressure from the government, the BGMEA and the BKMEA.”

(AND/OR)

“Currently, the pressure on the suppliers’ factories to implement the CSR issues has increased.” (OR/AND)

“The suppliers’ factories should meet all the demands from their Western buyers”.

**Table 10: Validity Horizon of Anis (23082016) on the Forces Generated by the Different Stakeholders for Implementing CSR Practices**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“In addition to the Western buyers, the government, the BGMEA, and the BKMEA are forcing the suppliers' factories to meet their CSR requirements”.	“I think the pressure comes mainly from the Western buyers”.	“The suppliers’ factories should create an environment where they do not need to be forced by others in maintaining the rules in their operation”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“Currently, the pressure has increased on the suppliers’ factories to implement the CSR codes of conduct.”	“I think the suppliers’ factories cannot ignore the pressure from their Western buyers.”	“The suppliers’ factories should positively use all the pressure of their stakeholders”.
<b>Background</b>	“In the past, the pressure from the government, the BGMEA, and the BKMEA were missing in this CSR arrangement.”	“I think the cumulative pressure has increased on the suppliers’ factories to implement the CSR agenda.”	“The suppliers’ factories should be ashamed for waiting until some outsiders’ pressure their business model”.

## 6.9 Summary

In this current CSR arrangement, the owners of the suppliers’ factories, the Western buyers and their nominated agencies, the government, the employers’ association BGMEA and the BKMEA, NGOs, trade unions, and some foreign embassies are all playing some role in in

establishing and enforcing the new codes of conduct. In the current compliance-based CSR framework, the suppliers' factories are receiving the most pressure from their Western buyers. In this arrangement, the government is also playing an important role. Furthermore, the government and the BGMEA are also acting as watchdogs with respect to whether or not the factories are implementing the labour laws and the ILO directives in their settings. However, the employers' association BGMEA is generating more force than the government in implementing the labour laws and compliance guidelines in the suppliers' factories. However, many of the respondents believe in the current arrangement, the role of trade unions is missing as they do not have any direct contact with the factory workers, and their existence is only evident in the arbitrations held by the BGMEA and the BKMEA. The role of civil society and the local communities are also missing in this context.

Currently, the government of Bangladesh has strengthened the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to ensure the welfare, safety, and health of the workers. As a result, the DIFE is working closely with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) with the aim of achieving these goals. On behalf of the government, the DIFE is forcing the garment factories to observe the land laws in their sweatshops. Apart from the DIFE, the Fire and Civil Defence Authority, and the Department of the Environment are also closely working with garment factories. In addition, some NGOs are working on issues of labour safety, workers' rights, and human rights in the garment industry. Organizations like the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Ayeen Shalish Kendra, Bangladesh Mohola Ayeenjibi Shomiti, Karmojibi Nari, Nijera Kori, Adhikar, the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), and the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) are working on different CSR related issues in the garment industry. On a few occasions, these organisations have also joined forces to combat the CSR-related issues in the garment industry, and are keeping pressure on this industry to eradicate the unlawful actions occurring regularly. In addition, there are some NGOs who are directly working with many garment factories and helping workers on issues such as, health and sanitation, child care and education, physical disability, awareness building, and so on.

Therefore, it can be said coercive isomorphism is guiding the present CSR arrangements in the garment industry of Bangladesh where the Western buyers are generating most of the pressure for the suppliers' factories. In addition, the government and the BGMEA are also generating coercive isomorphism for the suppliers' factories. Some NGOs are also trying to put pressure on suppliers' factories to help workers establish their rights in the garment industry. Pressure from the trade unions is missing, as the workers in this industry do not have the legal right to organize. However, there is an arrangement with the Workers'

Participation Committee (WPC) through which the workers can express their concerns. However, the WPC have failed to represent the true voices of the workers. No normative isomorphism has been found in the context of CSR practices in the garment industry of Bangladesh. However, mimetic isomorphism plays an important role in current CSR arrangements, and if a factory implements any suitable practices, this inspires others and all responsible factories will try to implement a similar practice in their settings.

## **6.10 Current CSR Initiatives and the Bottom-Line Benefits**

### ***6.10.1 Voices of the Workers***

Rosy said her husband started working in the garment industry before her and he was paid the minimum salary of Taka 400. In 1998, Rosy got married and soon after joined the garment industry. Now, she feels her life has changed a lot and she has improved many of her financial issues. She did not hesitate to say she did not have any financial problems. She was happy in saying her only son is reading in a good school and is making outstanding results. She acknowledged the contribution of her workplace, which has helped to bring many changes to her life (Rosy, 08082016).

*Amina said, “Before working here, I used to study at the village school. At that time, I was in a relationship with a boy and got married to him. Both of our families did not accept our marriage at that time, and to make a living, we came to Dhaka and worked for the garment industry. When I first started working, I was in a helpless situation. After our marriage, we did not get any support from our families. We tried our best to improve our condition. For at least five years, we faced many problems and struggled a lot to survive. Later, our lives started improving and now I would like to say we succeeded in overcoming our misery and has been the garment industry which has given us a happy life” (Amina, 09082016).*

Morium said, “As most of us are illiterate and poor it is nearly impossible for us to find employment in other sectors besides the garment industry. As a result, my helplessness brought me here to the garment industry. My parents arranged my marriage, and we were forced to come to Dhaka to try to make a living. Initially, I started working in the garment industry whereas my husband was working as a day labourer. However, soon after, my husband also got a job in a garment factory and later we both started working as operators. We managed to improve our life working in this garment industry. With our earnings, we managed to buy a small piece of agricultural land, and built a house in our village. I have two sisters-in-laws, and it was our responsibility to educate them. We are illiterate, that is why we helped them to become educated. One of them got married, and we are arranging the

marriage for the other. My two sister-in-laws are dark-complexioned and that is why we need to spend a lot of money to arrange their marriage. Other than that, I have two children. My eldest daughter is studying in kindergarten. I want my daughters to be happy in their life and that is why we are working hard. I have become exhausted after working for so many years. My parents want me to quit this job. However, if I quit my job, it will be tough to support our family with the income from only my husband. That is why we are still working. I have a plan to quit this job after working for another two more years (Morium, 11082016).

Bina started working in the garment industry with the hope of changing her fate. She had to put pressure on her husband for him to permit her to join this industry, as he was not eager to allow her to join the garment industry. At the beginning, her husband asked her to find employment in another sector not in the garment industry. However, she insisted on working in the garment industry and she considered this a great move as it helped her to bring many positive changes to her life. With her income, she bought land and constructed a house in the village. She argued that by working in this industry she has brought many positive changes in her life (Bina, 13082016).

Kulsum started working at the garment industry after getting marriage and it was her first job. At that time, she was having difficulties managing her family, as her husband was the only breadwinner in their extended family. Moreover, her parents were elderly and did not have any income. As a result, she was rather forced to join the garment industry. She claimed her life was going well by the grace of Allah. Many positive changes have come to her life. She bought a house in her village with her earnings and she could take care of her parents better than before. (Kulsum, 16082016)

*According to Shahida “I was a housewife before but, suddenly my husband became sick and first I had to sell some of our property for his treatment later, I had to take some loans for his treatment. We had a little land of our own and I thought if I sold the land to repay the loan, it could put me in greater financial risk in the future. Therefore, to solve the problem, we both decided to come to Dhaka and later started working together to improve our lives. My husband worked as a loader and I was a helper. However, this has brought a huge improvement to our lives. Now, with the increased income we can save a sizeable amount of money. I have bought some land in the village and I have sent my children to school. I succeeded repaying all of my loans working for only three years in this garment industry. My life has improved a lot in the last four years” (Shahida, 16082016).*

According to Shopna, *“Our family moved to Dhaka with the hope of improving our fate and solving my family's financial problems. At the beginning, my parents started working in the*

*garment factory. However, their incomes were not sufficient to support the family. In addition, we had a huge loan burden on our shoulders. A neighbour who was then working in the garment factory asked me whether I would like to work in the garment factory. I took a chance and began working at this factory. As I have mentioned earlier our family migrated to Dhaka with the hope of improving our destiny. After working in this industry, we successfully managed to overcome many of our problems. Now, we do not have any financial problems and we have repaid all our loans. Working in this industry, we have managed to save some money and have bought some land in our village. Our life has improved and I got married. So whatever I am doing now, it is for my family” (Shopna, 17082016).*

### **The Career Growth**

Morium argued that in the garment industry male and female workers have an equal opportunity for advancement. As a result, many of the female workers have been promoted to low-level management positions like the male workers. In addition, many female workers, working in production were asked to become a supervisor in the factory, and she claimed she was also offered the post of a supervisor but she did not accept it because it would have resulted in extra pressure for her. However, as most of the female workers do not have the required education, they cannot be promoted beyond a low-level management position. This situation will improve as many of the more educated female workers have started working in the garment industry and they will be definitely promoted to the upper levels in management based on their education and expertise (Joly, 11082016).

### **Balancing Work life with the family life**

Rosy said the normal operating hours in a factory start at 8 AM, and production usually continues until 5 PM, and if needed, the factory could run for another two hours paying overtime to their workers. As a result, now, workers do not have any difficulty in managing their family (Rosy, 08082016). On the other hand, Amina said we have accepted the fate we will not be able to give enough time to our families. In most cases, both the husband and wife have had to work together to bear the costs of raising their family and they have accepted the idea they would not be able to give enough time to their families. Many of these families are forced to send their children to their villages. Therefore, many of us had to sacrifice our family life for our livelihood (Amina, 09082016).

Tinni stated she missed her child a lot. They sent him far away at an early age. When she misses him too much, she takes leave from her job at the factory to visit the village to see him. In addition, she communicates with him mobile phone. Her father-in-law and brother often bring her child to her so she could see him (Tinni, 23082016). According to Tithi, “I

*would suggest no worker should give birth to a child while working in the factory. It's very hard for someone to work as well as take care of a baby. In most cases, our children will face many problems. Though we have childcare facilities, after a certain time we cannot leave our children there. As a result, either we are forced to send them to our villages or are forced to leave them alone at the home” (Tithi, 23082016).*

Every worker respondent said male and female workers receive the same privileges in the garment industry. Amina argued that currently, issues like sexual harassment and gender discrimination are hardly seen in the garment industry. The overall work situation has improved a lot. As a result, many female workers have been promoted to supervisors, and a few of them have reached the position of the floor in-charge. Therefore, I do believe the industry has made considerable progress when it comes to the issues of sexual harassment and gender discrimination (Amina, 09082016).

### ***6.10.2 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

When I asked the respondents regarding the current compliance-based CSR initiatives and the benefits they are bringing to the bottom line, Farida said, “If I give an example of fire doors only, then it can be said Accord and Alliance are asking us to install one or more fire doors on every floor in the factories. Installing these fire doors is very expensive and is questionable whether spending this huge amount of investment would bring much benefit to workers. In my view, the safety of the workers could have been considered without installing these very expensive fire doors. As such, instead of investing these huge amounts of money on fire doors, if we would instead invest in workers’ healthcare and their other issues, it could bring more bottom line benefits” (Farida, 08082016).

Farida also said, “*If you look at the factory you will see many of the workers have been working there for more than 20 years. However, I do not think their standard of living has improved significantly during this time. As part of my job, I need to visit their residence often, but I do not feel comfortable visiting their house as most of them are living in very poor conditions. In addition, compared to their earnings, their cost of living is too high. As a result, they cannot afford to eat a balanced diet for the entire month. Our factory physician has reported that when the workers receive their salaries, they try to eat a lot and suffer from stomach pain and discomfort” (Farida, 08082016).*

### ***6.10.3 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

Rihan stated the company has been receiving many more benefits from the current compliance-based CSR arrangements. The workers’ pay has increased to a satisfactory level.

Moreover, due to the implementation of the buyers' codes of conduct, forced labour has been reduced, and workers have started receiving many more benefits like fair payment of overtime, maternity benefits, medical care, and childcare facilities. In addition, receiving pressure from the buyers, this industry has successfully solved the child labour issue, and now no factories are employing child labour as part of their social responsibility (Rihan, 09082016). According to Rajiv (11082016), the living conditions of the garment workers have improved gradually. They have improved their social condition and status with their increased income. They could now afford better accommodation and they are in better position to support their families. As a result, the lives of the garment workers have improved a lot (Rajiv, 11082016).

As the current arrangements have forced the garments factories to uphold the new rules in their operations, workers have started receiving the benefits they deserve. As a result, the standard of living of the garment workers and their safety and security at the workplace has improved a lot. At present, buyers have taken a strong position on the issue of forced labour. Now, the buyers are monitoring whether the suppliers' factories are forcing their workers to work beyond the time limit stated in the existing labour law. As a result, factories are forced to implement new labour laws especially relating to working hours. Consequently, the garment workers are enjoying more quality time to spend with their families, which is helping to resolve many family and social problems (Rahul, 13082016).

Dalia stated that though the present system could not ensure the maximum benefits to the bottom line; the workers have started benefiting from it (Dalia, 15082016). Ali said the workers are directly benefitting from these current arrangements. They are receiving the facilities stated in the local law and they can work in a safe environment as well. Similarly, some new initiatives for reducing pollution have started playing an important role in the preservation of the environment (Ali, 15082016). Raton mentioned the current arrangement brought improvements in the earnings, work conditions, and the safety of the workers in this industry. As a result, they can now work and have peace of mind (Raton, 17082016).

Suza acknowledged the present system has forced the suppliers' factories to implement the code of conduct of the buyers', which has contributed to the bottom line benefits. The current system binds the suppliers' factories to a monitoring system and they cannot escape these local laws and regulations. As a result, the industry is developing in a manner where automatically it starts offering many benefits. Workers are benefiting from their fair pay, work hours, working conditions and the safety and security arrangements made by the factories. In addition, environmental issues are receiving prominence and many of the factory owners have started considering the idea of 'green' investment. As a result, both the

workers and the environment have started benefiting from this current arrangement (Suza, 20082016).

#### ***6.10.4 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

Rouf believes the factories need to help with the education of the children of garment workers. The BGMEA and BKMEA should take responsibility for this measure and develop education facilities for the factory owners in that particular area. Moreover, the factories need to offer medical facilities for their workers. In this case, factory owners, the BGMEA, the BKMEA and the Government could establish a hospital in the industrial areas. Currently, due to high medical expenses, many workers try to hide their many health problems and end up later having to pay a larger bill. Another big problem for the workers is the housing problem. At present, they do not receive benefits of their salary increase as the housing owners know the workers have received extra pay for housing and so increase the rent of their house accordingly. As a result, the workers are not receiving the housing benefit of their increased salary. I think it will be a better contribution if we help them by offering accommodations. To help the workers, we can establish a system of provident funds in the factory. In addition, the factory can help the workers by installing a rationing system and sell commodities with subsidised costs. If we could fix a few of these issues in our industry, it would help to eradicate labour unrest within this industry (Rouf, 22082016).

#### ***6.10.5 Voices of the Stakeholders***

Ahmed argued, *“When a father refuses to take care of his children, others have to come forward to solve this problem. As such, when the factory owners and government continuously ignore many of the problems in the garment industry, the Western buyers have felt compelled to fill this gap. In this current arrangement, both the buyers and the suppliers have showed their sympathy towards the workers, but you cannot expect a meaningful change from a sympathetic arrangement. This arrangement will not able to ensure the desired benefits until it formally establishes the rights of the garment workers. As a result, the current CSR arrangement has failed to ensure the expected benefits as it has excluded the voices of the workers”* (Ahmed, 25082016).

According to Opu, *“This business has kept a certain distance from ethics. Business is business and morality is morality. Presently, due to heavy competition, I am sourcing a contract for a plant where the cost is USD 5.00/piece, which I sourced in the past at USD 6.50. Other buying houses will take this order if I do not support my importers. As a result, morality does not matter in this battlefield. However, I think the suppliers’ factories cannot*

*maintain the CSR guidelines by working at such a low piece-rate. There must be compromises somewhere to minimize their costs. As such, you cannot expect this arrangement to meet the expected results at this rate” (Opu, 25082016).*

Mishu argued, *“After the tragic incidents of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza, many of us thought we were going to lose our business. However, this did not happen and the Western buyers are doing business with us as we are still considered the cheapest source for them. In the West, without ensuring the rights of the workers no one can run a business, which we have not achieved in 35 years in the garment industry. Their recent attempt of ensuring the safety of the garment workers is not due to their humanitarian instincts but is driven by their business model. They knew the morality of the Western customers would not permit them to source their products from Bangladesh until they had established a minimum safety arrangement at the suppliers’ factories. As a result, their code of conduct and the compliance arrangements could be interpreted as a long-term profit-making initiative. As such, it would not be wise to expect many benefits from these profit-seeking arrangements” (Mishu, 30082016).*

Chowdhury said it is necessary to keep in mind there is a significant difference between our country’s business perspective and the Western buyers’ business perspective. In my view, while preparing the code of conduct and compliance guidelines, Western buyers have prioritized their own socio-economic conditions and reality. Therefore, there is no reason to believe these initiatives will bring the expected outcome in the context of the suppliers’ setting in Bangladesh. In addition, this industry has not yet established the constitutional rights of its workers and has restricted them from joining the trade union. Accordingly, their voices have remained silent in this current system. By examining the current arrangement, the current system essentially has been installed to secure the joint interests of the buyers and the factory owners. Though the government has recently increased the minimum wage, it has not contributed much to increasing the standard of life of these garments workers. Consequently, though the current arrangement has brought some positive changes in the suppliers’ factories, it has failed to add the expected benefits to growing revenue or increasing efficiency (Chowdhury, 05092016).

### ***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Ahmed, 25082016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *“The current CSR arrangement has failed to ensure the expected bottom line benefits as it has excluded the voices of the workers”*

(AND/OR)

*“In this current CSR arrangement, the workers are not getting a chance to raise their voices.”*

(AND/OR)

(OR/AND)

“It is not desirable for workers’ to not get a chance to raise their voices.”

(AND/OR)

“There are some limitations hindering the expected output from this CSR arrangement.”

(AND/OR)

“Workers should have a chance to raise their voices in their workplaces”.

(OR/AND)

“As the worker is a major stakeholder of this CSR arrangement, they should have a voice in setting this arrangement”.

**Table 11: Validity Horizon of Ahmed (25082016) on the Current CSR initiatives and the Bottom-Line Benefits**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“The garment workers do not have the right to join trade union.”	“I think the current CSR arrangement has some limitations”.	“As the worker is a major stakeholder of this CSR arrangement, they should have a voice in setting this arrangement”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“The workers are not getting a chance to raise their voices”.	“I think the oppression and domination cannot achieve a positive outcome”.	“The current arrangement should include all stakeholders’ voices”.
<b>Background</b>	“As the voices of the workers were not included in the current arrangement, it has failed to produce the expected bottom line benefits”.	“I think before setting any CSR arrangement, we must consider the workers’ voice”.	“Oppression and domination are not good practices and these should be avoided”.

## 6.11 Summary

The current compliance-based CSR arrangement has succeeded in creating many bottom line benefits. The workers’ pay has increased to a satisfactory level. Moreover, due to the implementation of the buyers’ code of conduct in the suppliers’ factories, workers have started receiving many benefits that they did not enjoy in the past. The industry has made considerable progress on issues such as forced labour, fair payment of overtime, safety and security of the workers, maternity benefits, medical facilities, childcare facilities, and sexual harassment and gender discrimination. In addition, due to pressure to do more to protect the environment, the suppliers’ factories are forced to comply with the environmental protection

arrangement and many of the factory owners have started establishing excellent green factories in Bangladesh. Consequently, both the workers and the environment as the bottom lines have started benefiting from this current arrangement.

However, critics say while formulating their code of conduct, many of the Western buyers have not incorporated the Bangladeshi socio-economic conditions and reality. Therefore, there is no reason to believe these initiatives would achieve the expected outcomes in a developing country context. In addition, this industry has not yet established the constitutional rights of its workers and has restricted their joining the trade union. Consequently, their voices have remained silent in this current system. By examining the current arrangement, it can be said the current system essentially has been installed to secure the joint interests of the buyers and the factory owners. Though the government has increased wages more recently, it has not contributed much to increasing the standard of living of these garments workers, and many of them have had to sacrifice a traditional family lifestyle for their job. Accordingly, though the current arrangement has brought some positive changes to the suppliers' factories, it has failed to add the expected benefits to the bottom line.

Moreover, the current compliance-based CSR arrangement has raised the issue that this business has not completely embraced ethical practices in the workplace. Presently, due to competition from other garment factories, factory managers are forced to produce clothing at very cheap prices for their Western buyers; otherwise, they would lose business to other suppliers. Thus, morality does not play a significant role in this business model. As a result, to minimize their costs, many of the suppliers' factories have been forced to compromise with many of the social and environmental issues. Thus, this arrangement has failed to bring the expected results.

## **6.12 Accord and Alliance and its Criticism**

### ***6.12.1 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

When I asked what Accord and Alliance are doing in the garment factories Farida said, "Basically, these two organisations are working to improve fire safety, electrical safety, and building safety. In addition, Alliance is providing us with fire related safety training" (Farida, 08082016). She also mentioned the incidents of Tazreen Fashion, and Rana Plaza, put the garment industry under pressure. Therefore, Accord and Alliance started working as two different platforms where Accord is now working on behalf of the European buyers and Alliance is working on behalf of the North American buyers. The Western buyers have

empowered these two organizations to oversee whether the garment factories are meeting the safety requirements relating to fire safety, electrical safety, and building safety. If a factory fails to comply with the requirements set by these organisations, the buyer would immediately refuse to place any future orders with this factory, and would probably result in the closure of the factory (Farida, 08082016).

### ***6.12.2 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

Rahman mentioned Accord and Alliance are the buyers' representatives' who are working on two different platforms and they are working here to ensure building safety, fire safety and electrical safety in all the garment factories. In doing so, to ensure the structural safety, they are asking factories to strictly follow the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC). To ensure fire safety, they are asking factories to follow the fire rules and are guiding them to install fire doors, fire detection systems, hydrant systems and sprinkler systems. In addition, they are offering guidelines on how to ensure electrical safety in the garment factories (Rahman, 08082016).

Reaz stated, *“Accord and Alliance are working for a noble cause. However, they often impose many unnecessary directives on our suppliers' factories. For instance, factories are forced to install fire doors but you will not find this many fire doors in any developed countries factories. These good motives have resulted in extra burdens for many factories as in many cases the staff did not have any prior experience in performing these tasks. As a result, many of their suggestions increased the remediation costs at the suppliers' factories. Some factories are facing the threat of being shut down and the workers of those factories are on the verge of losing their job as well”* (Reaz, 18082016).

The introduction of the Accord and Alliance has brought many positive changes to this industry. Many good factories like ours implemented most of their measures long before they started offering their services. The Accord and Alliance came into force as many factories were established without observing the many rules and regulations which were required to ensure the safety of the people working there. The Western buyers have regained the local industry's trusts in our factories because of this and it will bring good to the garment industry in our country (Alim, 21082016).

### ***6.12.3 Voice of the Top-Level Management***

Rouf said, *“It is our common perception the CSR directives of the Western buyers have created new business opportunities for the Western companies, and many of us still believe Accord and Alliance are a new form of the East India companies that serve to benefit the*

*Western companies who are in safety related businesses. To be practical, I do not believe this. We all know Accord and Alliance have come to Bangladesh due to a need. I can bet on this, Accord and Alliance would never be here without the accidents that occurred at Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashion. We have created the means for the entry of Accord and Alliance in the garment industry. If we had followed our own laws properly, the Western buyers would not have put any pressure on us. Accord and Alliance are working on building safety, fire safety, and electrical safety, and in doing so they are monitoring whether in establishing the factories, we have observed the Bangladesh Nation Building Code (BNBC). If any factory had done this then the Accord and Alliance would not have any comments on their building safety. In the same way, we have set up our factories without following the rules and regulations of our fire department, as a result, now we have to make many changes to ensure fire safety in our factories. The situation is similar when it comes to the question of electrical safety” (Rouf, 22082016).*

Rouf also said we have a bad reputation for doing things at the lowest cost; as a result, often the results lacked durability and sustainability. Therefore, there is no alternative but to procure standardized products and services to ensure the sustainability of these projects. As such, Accord and Alliance have asked us to use materials certified by UL which is an American safety consulting and certification company. The UL certificate is applicable not only in the garment industry of Bangladesh, all large-scale factories and establishments all over the world have chosen UL certification with the confidence this certified product is of good quality. However, many people are raising questions why only the UL certified products are accepted. Perhaps Accord and Alliance are not accepting any other certification as they might lack confidence in their quality and reliability. I do not consider this thing negatively because I think there is a necessity for using high-quality doors and equipment in our garment industry to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives (Rouf, 22082016).

#### ***6.12.4 Voices of the Stakeholders***

A safety engineer for Alliance said a tripartite agreement had been signed between the Government of Bangladesh, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance), and the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (Accord) in 2013. In light of that agreement, Alliance has been conducting remediation and training programs on behalf of the twenty-seven North American buyers while the Accord conducts remediation and training programs on behalf of more than two hundred European buyers. Around 800 factories are working with the Alliance while slightly more than 1500 factories are working with the Accord. The government has taken responsibility for conducting remediation and training programs in the remaining factories where the International Labour Organisation (ILO) will

be supervising the progress. Our remediation team supervises the ongoing work for standardized building structure or the civil safety, electrical safety and fire safety in their affiliated garment factories. In addition, our training department conducts safety related training for the workers and the management (Sourav, 30082016).

Based on this tripartite agreement Accord and Alliance will work until 2018 and will ensure all of their affiliated factories have succeeded in complying with their safety requirements. As such, they have appointed a few third party firms who are inspecting and preparing the corrective actions plans (CAP) for the affiliated factories. Currently, audit firms specifically, the Bureau Veritas, BD technology, and MK Enterprise are working to identify any problems at the affiliated factories. Thereafter, our remediation teams are preparing a separate CAP on building safety, fire safety and electrical safety for these factories. Afterward, we arrange a meeting with the factory agents and the Western buyers' agents to discuss any problems at a factory and the best way to solve those problems. After this meeting, the factory management signs an agreement with us that they will take corrective measures according to the CAP. To ensure safety at the factories, we usually follow the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) 2006. However, when it fails to explain adequately something we will follow other international standards. In addition, we follow the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for fire safety (Sourav, 30082016).

Accord and Alliance are working with factories where reputable brands conduct business. There are already effective arrangements for safety where reputable brands conduct their business. They are not moving toward the bottom line. The most important thing is they are not moving to the bottom of the supply chain. In addition, they have shown little concern for the thousands of workers who have lost their jobs at the factories that have failed to fulfil their demands. After some time Alliance has agreed to bear half of the compensation money calculated by the government for these redundant workers, though Accord has not yet agreed to a similar arrangement. Accord claimed they would recommend that the owners compensate their laid-off workers. There is no need for their recommendations while the affected workers are to be compensated under the policies of our country. However, the owners are arguing they are not liable to compensate these workers, as they did not close any factories themselves. Failure to meet the safety measures in the factory means the owners are conducting a business that violates state laws. Therefore, the owners should be punished first but this is not happening here. Rather the law-breaking owners are given a remediation plan and bank loans to implement these plans. This implies we are supporting those owners who had violated the laws in establishing their businesses. This is not an agreement to protect the

interests of the workers. However, the safety of the factories has improved from what had been standard practice (Ahmed, 25082016).

Opu claimed the Western buyers had introduced the social compliance audit long ago. However, they were not serious about the audit until the accidents occurred at Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza, which forced them to think differently. As a result, they had to introduce the Accord and Alliance to ensure the safety of the garment workers. We need to remember that men learn from their mistakes. The past accidents occurred due to some mistakes and even the smallest factory has taken security measures against this type of problem. A factory can minimize the risks of accidents even without the help of Accord and Alliance I think. As the rules of sub-contracting have also changed, now, you cannot sub-contract to any factory you want. The larger factories cannot help the smaller ones if they cannot take them to a certain level of safe operation. As a result, naturally, everyone has become concerned about taking factory safety issues to a certain level. The smaller factories also want to improve their safety conditions. No one wants workers to die. Everyone is managing their factories by learning lessons from the past incidents. Therefore, I do not see any chance of repeating history (Opu, 25082016).

Shamima believes the Accord and Alliance are doing a good job. The initiatives of the Accord and Alliance are ensuring the safety of our workers. Their impartial efforts are helping to increase the workers' safety in their workplaces (Shamima, 31082016). Chowdhury said if we want to see the continuous development of our economy, we must keep the garment industry healthy. Our government is working towards this goal. As a result, when the industry experienced a calamity, the government came forward and signed the Sustainable Compact for Bangladesh in 2013, and started working with the Accord and Alliance. Under this arrangement, the mentality of our owners has also changed. At least now, they understand if they fail to make the needed improvements, the buyers will not maintain a relationship with them. They also realize they cannot engage a sub-contractor factory if it does not comply with the buyers' safety requirements. That is why I believe the government will be able to reform the factories where they are responsible. Now time has come to assign different tasks to the different stakeholders, and the government has to assign specific duties to the BGMEA, BKMEA, and the worker's representatives (Chowdhury, 05092016).

### ***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Reaz, 18082016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *“Many of their inexperienced and faulty suggestions increased the remediation costs of the suppliers' factories”.*

(AND/OR)

“Accord and Alliance do not have the needed expertise to perform their duties”.

(AND/OR)

“The suppliers’ factories have some reservations regarding the work of the Accord and Alliance”.

(OR/AND)

“The Accord and Alliance often recommend imperfect suggestions to their affiliated factories.”

(AND/OR)

“Accord and Alliance are working on a trial and error basis which is increasing the cost of the remediation work.”

**Table 12: Validity Horizon of Reaz (18082016) on the Accord and Alliance and its Criticism**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“The suppliers’ factories are investing large amounts of money to comply with the safety requirements.”	“I think the Accord and Alliance are working on a trial and error basis which is increasing the costs of the remediation work”.	“The Accord and Alliance should not impose any unnecessary suggestions on their affiliated factories”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“The Accord and Alliance are helping their affiliated factories in doing the remediation work”.	“I think the Accord and Alliance do not have the needed expertise to make recommendations for remediation work”.	“The Accord and Alliance should work towards changing the mindset of their affiliated suppliers’ factories”.
<b>Background</b>	“The failure by management of ensuring the workers’ safety in the suppliers’ factories forced the Western buyers to bring the Accord and Alliance into this arrangement”.	“I think the Accord and Alliance need to be more careful in making their recommendations for their affiliated factories”.	“The Accord and Alliance should help the suppliers’ factories in minimising the costs of their remediation recommendations”.

### **6.13 Summary**

After the incidents of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza, facing significant local and international pressure, the government of Bangladesh signed the Sustainable Compact for Bangladesh in 2013. Since then, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance), and the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (Accord) have been working on safety issues in the garment industries in Bangladesh. Based on this agreement, these two organisations will be working until 2018 on the building safety, electrical safety and the fire

safety in their affiliated garment factories. Currently, the Alliance is conducting remediation and training programs on behalf of the twenty-seven North American buyers while the Accord is doing the same job on behalf of more than two hundred European buyers. Nowadays, around 800 factories are working under the Alliance while slightly more than 1500 factories are working under the Accord. In addition, along with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the government of Bangladesh has taken the responsibility to conduct the same remediation and training programs in the remaining garment factories in the country.

It is a common workers' perception that the Accord and Alliance are doing a good job. The initiatives of the Accord and Alliance are ensuring the safety of garment workers. Their impartial efforts are helping to increase the workers' safety in their workplace. As a result, the suppliers' factories are forced to invest a significant amount of money to ensure safety compliance in their factories. However, it is often said Accord and Alliance are turning the good arrangements into better ones as they are working where their reputed brands conduct business and these factories already had good safety arrangements. Many of these good factories have implemented most of the recommended safety measures long before the Accord and Alliance became involved. The Accord and Alliance are not moving toward the bottom line where the safety issues are needed to be addressed first. Moreover, many garment industry people believe the Accord and Alliance are imposing many unnecessary directives on suppliers' factories that are not seen in developed countries factories. In addition, lacking prior experience, many of their inexperienced and faulty suggestions have increased the remediation costs to the suppliers' factories. Consequently, good motives behind these initiatives have resulted in an extra burden to many factories. Moreover, they show little concern for the thousands of workers who lose their jobs at the factories that fail to fulfil their demands. As a result, it has become a common perception in this industry that the Accord and Alliance are a new form of the old East India Company and have created new business opportunities for Western companies who are in safety related businesses.

## **6.14 Economic Emancipation and the Empowerment of the Female Workers**

### ***6.14.1 Voices of the Workers***

Rosy said when she first started her job in the garment industry her wages were only Taka 800 which rose to Taka 8150 per month in 2016. With her increased salary she can now fulfil many of hers dreams. However, the house rent, electricity bill, gas bill, and the price of essential commodities also increased to a level where many workers are finding difficulties

in supporting their families. As a result, many of them are not able to save anything for their future needs (Rosy, 08082016).

Rosy also said it is very common in our country that after marriage the woman cannot keep a close relationship with her parents and must develop and maintain a new relationship with her husband's family. In most cases, the wife had to live in an extended family where usually her in-laws make all the important decisions. She said, "When I started working here, my family, especially my in-laws were facing a severe financial crisis. Working in this garment industry, we have solved many of their problems. Seeing our prosperity, many people from our village came here and started working in the garment industry. In the past, I did not think I would be able to make many family decisions. Now my husband also gives priority to my opinions. Everyone gives priority to my opinions. Now my in-laws also support my decisions. As a result, I would like to say the voice of women is gaining importance in all levels of society" (Rosy, 08082016).

In contrast, Joly said, "I do not see this as an achievement that women will make the decisions for their families. I have my parents at my home and as they are my legal guardian, it is the prerogative of them to make any decisions on my behalf. As a result, I do what they ask me to do, and I hand over all my savings to them. As they are my custodians, they keep all my savings for my future" (Joly, 11082016). Similarly, Kulsum also does not want to make any decisions on her own. She believes her husband and her in-laws have greater ability to make all the decisions on her behalf (Kulsum, 16082016).

Morium said, "My salary is now Taka 7500, and including the payment for overtime I receive nearly Taka 10,000 a month. The working environment has also improved in this garment industry. In addition, this factory provides us with many other privileges. That is why I have been working here for so many years. Elderly workers are respected here a lot. Many of the managers have been working here for many years. Therefore, if we go to them with our problems, they solve it very quickly" (Morium, 11082016). According to Shahida, "Now I earn more than my husband. The ability to earn a salary brought many changes to my life. Previously I could not spend a single penny. Now I can spend money as I wish" (Shahida, 16082016)

Fatima said, "Along with my working life my family life is also going well. My husband has a better job, and he is earning a substantial amount. As a result, I can financially help my parents. Whatever we do for our family, we do together. However, my husband makes most of the decisions but I do not need to demand anything as I am given everything I need before asking for it" (Fatima, 14082016). Shahida said, "I do not know anything about my income.

It is true I earn money. However, after receiving my salary I give it to my husband. He knows how and where to spend our money wisely” (Shahida, 16082016). On the other hand, Khadiza said in her family her mother-in-law makes all the decisions, and she hands over all of her income to her. Khadiza strongly believes her mother-in-law is very competent and she makes decisions for the betterment of their family (Khadiza, 21082016).

#### ***6.14.2 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

The garment industry has brought a revolutionary change to the country by employing millions of female workers, and to some extent, this has helped to bring economic freedom to these female workers. However, when I asked the respondents regarding the growing empowerment of these female workers Farida said, “Until recently, unwritten restrictions were imposed on women, and it was not expected that a woman would ever travel from one city to another without being accompanied by a man. Over time, although this restriction has been largely removed, a woman’s power in society has not improved to a level as was predicted. As a result, we can see on pay day, husbands come to the factory gate to collect their wife’s income. In many cases, if the female worker refuses to hand over her wages to her husband, the result might include domestic abuse, and often results in breaking family ties. To date, the opinion of women in the family has been largely ignored.” However, she thinks this is not only a problem in the garment industry. Society as a whole is suffering from this problem. As such, the dominant class has to come forward to change this situation (Farida, 08082016).

In answering the same question, Mina said, “It is difficult to say how much empowerment has taken place. I want to give you an example. In our industry, salary is given in two ways. Many female workers have requested we give cash payments because, if we transfer their wages to their bank account, her father or husband will know how much she is earning. The workers claim every month they spend some money to meet some of their personal needs. If their guardian knows the actual amount earned, these workers would not be able to spend any of their salary on themselves, as their guardian will take all of the salary from them. This gives you a better picture of woman empowerment today” (Mina, 13082016).

#### ***6.14.3 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

Rahman said, “More recently, the issue of women empowerment has been widely discussed in this garment industry. However, personally, I do not believe we are even close to our desired target when it comes to the issue of women empowerment. To some extent, millions of female workers have improved their economic emancipation through their employment in

the garment industry. In my view, economic emancipation and empowerment are not dependent on each other, and the social construction of reality is not supportive enough to promote empowerment of female garment workers. In addition, female workers in this industry are not prepared to take the lead in their workplaces. As a result, women assuming a leadership role are rarely seen. However, the scenario has been changing gradually, and the numbers of female staffs are increasing. Consequently, it could be expected in the near future working women would be able to empower themselves” (Rahman, 08082016).

Rihan stated the inclusion of millions of female workers in the garment industry has triggered a revolutionary change in the country, and to some extent, it has helped to bring financial independence to these female workers. The financial independence of these female workers is helping to promote women empowerment in society (Rihan, 09082016). According to Rajiv, the financial independence of female workers has helped to increase their importance in society. Many of these female workers can now freely spend their earnings as they wish. As they have started earning a salary, they have become an important part of their family. They have more freedom now to do what they want to. As a result, their position in society has changed, and they have succeeded in establishing their voices in the current social system and this can be characterised as progress towards greater women empowerment (Rajiv, 11082016).

Dalia (15082016) mentioned, “I don’t think they have been empowered a lot. However, it has happened on a smaller scale. Now they can buy dresses of their choice. They can watch the movies they like; they can spend money at their will. Nevertheless, it should be stated most of the female workers are being forced to hand their salary over to their husbands. I see this as an obstacle to empowerment, and women will only be truly empowered when the dominant class of society removes all of its barriers for these people.” According to Ali, female workers have become more conscious than before. They have started making many important decisions about their lives. Their position in the family has changed a lot which is promoting their empowerment (Ali, 15082016).

Reaz argued the extent of empowerment is proportionate to the extent of financial freedom. However, a woman’s empowerment mainly depends on the willingness of the dominant male in the family allowing the power to the oppressed woman. However currently, our society has not allowed this necessary progress to accept women empowerment. As a result, female garment workers cannot continue their desire for progress for greater empowerment in society at large (Reaz, 18082016). On the contrary, Chandan argued, “*A great deal of empowerment has taken place, and the situation has changed not only because they have*

*started earning their own salary but also because of the broader changes happening in our social system” (Chandan, 22082016).*

*Nasim argued, “Though this new development has not achieved everything, the female workers who are working in the garment industry have made some progress in empowering themselves. As males are still considered the leader of the family, many of these female workers are handing over their salary to their male family leader as soon as they receive it. As a result, though these female workers have started to earn an income, they still cannot decide for themselves how to spend their income. As such, these social barriers need to be removed to ensure the true empowerment of these female garment workers” (Nasim, 27082016).*

#### **6.14.4 Voices of the Top-Level Management**

Rouf believes the garment industry has introduced revolutionary changes by employing millions of female workers. These workers had no other options to find employment and ensure their economic emancipation. However, he does not believe that only economic freedom will ensure women’s empowerment in society. He also believes society as a whole has to change its mindset regarding women to ensure continued empowerment of these female workers. It is evident that a female worker who has been performing her duties as an operator for more than 10 years but cannot advance any farther due to her lack of educational qualifications. As a result, he thinks the empowerment of female workers would only be attained if we could educate them properly (Rouf, 22082016).

Rizvi believes empowerment is a societal issue, and until society is ready to empower these working women, no progress can be made on this issue. Many women in our society have accepted their fate and feel comfortable being guided by male members of their family. At least seven in ten workers will say they want to live their life as per the command of their husbands. It has become a common trend, no matter how much she earns or what profession she holds. Whom do you blame when female workers are handing over their salary to their husbands? You will find the answer if you ask 10 working women; at the most, one or two of them might say they keep the money for themselves. We have seen cases where the husband claimed his wife gave him her money of her own free will, even though the worker accused her husband of taking the money after beating her. Actually, many female workers feel proud giving their husband their money and they feel satisfied by giving away the money. As a result, the male dominance in society has not yet been challenged (Rizvi, 16082016).

#### ***6.14.5 Voices of the Stakeholders***

Mishu argued the women dependency situation in the past has improved and working women have advanced a lot. This has already drawn the attention of most people, and this industry will continue to make an enormous contribution to women's empowerment in the future. Many women from around the country have already found employment in this industry. These women are mostly from underprivileged families who have had very little education and could not find employment in any other sector. We have seen their power to make decisions has increased, they have created a more decisive personality, which would not have been possible before due to dependency on others and they have found a voice of their own. In addition, their voice will contribute a lot to the democratizing process of the country and to the freedom of the working-class people (Mishu, 30082016).

Shamima believes that through this process of economic emancipation, the social security of the female garment workers has increased. "However, I do not think much progress has been made in their empowerment. Today, they can choose and buy their own clothes, they can buy their preferred food, they can spend money on their child's education, and they can send money to their parents. They have made this much progress. However, it is still very common for them to hand over their wages to their husbands, and in some cases, they are forced to do so. As a result, our desired goal of empowerment has not yet been achieved. In this regard, greater social awareness is needed, and NGOs, civil society, and other organizations who are working on this issue need to come forward to advance this issue" (Shamima, 31082016).

Chowdhury said, "In this industry, there are nearly three million female workers working. Coming from mostly rural areas, these women have found employment in the garment industry. If they do not find work in this industry, they might find employment in the informal sector, or will likely remain unemployed and will never have the opportunity to be independent. Now, they have the opportunity to earn a salary working in this industry and support their family members who live in the villages. As they have started earning a salary, they have also started making their own decisions on how to spend it. It is their greatest achievement that the present development of this industry, as well as the foreign earnings for the national economy, is heavily dependent on their labour. The women in this industry have succeeded in improving their position in society, and their position in society has improved. I believe women of this sector have made remarkable progress towards greater empowerment, which other women in our society have failed to achieve" (Chowdhury, 05092016).

***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Nasim, 27082016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *The social barriers need to be removed to ensure the true empowerment of these female garment workers”.*

(AND/OR)

“Some social barriers still remain for female workers and it is hindering the empowerment of the female garment workers.”

(AND/OR)

“The society has imposed barriers on these female garment workers.”

(OR/AND)

“The female garment workers are under the domination of a patriarchal society.”

(AND/OR)

“The society needs to come forward to empower these female garment workers.”

(AND/OR)

“We need to ensure the empowerment of the female workers.”

(OR/AND)

“The dominant class of the society is not ready to empowering women.”

***Table 13: Validity Horizon of Nasim (27082016) on the Economic Emancipation and the Empowerment of the Female Workers***

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b><i>Foreground</i></b>	“Though the female garment workers have achieved their economic emancipation, they have not made much progress empowering themselves.”	“I think the social construction of reality is not supportive enough to promote empowerment of these female garment workers”.	“The domination is bad”.
<b><i>Intermediate</i></b>	“The women are under the domination of the society”.	“I think the female garment workers are struggling to empower themselves”.	“The society should remove all of its barriers they have imposed on female workers”.
<b><i>Background</i></b>	“The society is not free from domination”.	“I think that the dominant male is not ready in authorising the power to these oppressed women”.	“We need to ensure the empowerment of the female workers”.

## **6.15 Summary**

The garment industry has brought revolutionary change to Bangladesh by employing millions of female workers, and to some extent, this has helped to bring economic freedom to these female workers. This economic freedom is helping to promote women empowerment in society. Many of these female workers can now freely spend their earnings on whatever they choose. As a result, their position in society has changed, and they have succeeded in establishing their voices in the current social system. This can be characterised as progress towards women empowerment. Many of the respondents believe working women of this industry have made remarkable progress towards their empowerment, which other women in our society have failed to achieve. However, they will be truly empowered when the dominant class of society removes all its barriers for these people.

Some critics say economic emancipation and empowerment do not go hand-in-hand, and the social construction of reality is not supportive enough to promote greater empowerment for these female garment workers. As the dominant male is unwilling to allow greater power to these oppressed women, many face difficulties in gaining empowerment in society. As a result, many female workers are forced to hand over their wages to their husbands or to their fathers. In many cases, if the female worker refuses to hand over the wages to these men, they are tortured badly, which often breaks any family ties. Currently, the opinions of women in the family, as well as the workplace, are mostly ignored. In addition, female workers in this industry are not prepared to take a leading role in their workplaces. As a result, a woman taking a leadership role is rarely seen. However, the scenario has started changing recently, as many educated female workers have started working in this industry which was not seen before. Therefore, these working women have started raising their voices in their families as well as in their workplaces which is helping to democratize society and to increase freedom for these working-class people. Hence, it could be expected that in the near future working women will be able to empower themselves.

## **6.16 The Paradigm Shifts in the Garment industry**

### ***6.16.1 Voices of the Workers***

*Rosy said, “Fifteen years ago when I started working in the garment industry, this work was considered disgraceful. As a result, I feared my religious-minded parents would not let me work in the garment industry, and initially, I did not disclose to them that I had been working in the garment industry. After working a year and a half I informed my parents and they did not take it easily, and later demanded I work only with my husband. However, my parents*

*became very happy when they saw my improvement afterward. When I joined the garment industry, things were different back then. The behaviour of the line chiefs and the supervisors were very abusive to the female workers. However, it does not happen anymore. At present, the government, factory owners and the buyers all want to ensure a good and safe work environment for the workers. As a result, many improvements have taken place in the garment industry” (Rosy, 08082016).*

Amina stated when she first started working in the garment industry, her salary was Taka 950, and it was very difficult for her to manage her expenses with this small amount of income. She refused to recall the memories of those days as it gives her pain. She also said that previously, the factories used to have many problems and they never tried to solve those problems. Workers during this period did not receive any overtime benefits and they were not paid their regular wages. Many of the female workers did not receive maternity leave and were forced to quit their jobs. Moreover, even in an emergency, it was nearly impossible to have any leave approved from the management. Today, things have changed a lot. The industry has established many new rules. As a result, the workers have started receiving many benefits like maternity leave, childcare facilities, and medical facilities. At present, workers’ salaries have also increased a great deal. However, by giving the increased wages, the factories have set higher production targets for their workers, and they have started demanding high-quality work from their workers (Amina, 09082016).

Joly argued the living standards of garment workers have improved over time. Previously, illiterate workers had the opportunity to find employment in the garment industry. However, recently, only workers who have a minimum level of education are recruited in this industry. As a result, some university graduates are now working in the garment industry, and it is a major change for the garment industry (Joly, 11082016).

Ibrahim said previously the quality of the product was not considered a serious issue, and buyers only demanded suppliers’ factories ship the product in a timely manner. During this time, buyers did not develop any system to monitor the quality of the product. However, the situation has changed dramatically, and now in every stage of the production process, management are ensuring the quality of the product. In addition, changes have been incorporated in the working conditions and working environment. The workers’ wages have increased several times, and as a result, the workers have managed to improve their lives (Ibrahim, 11082016).

Bina claimed she had seen many changes in this garment industry. Previously, a small number of workers were working in the factory. Now, due to the increased production, many

more workers have started working in garment factories. In addition, previously, workers were not offered medical facilities, childcare facilities, and maternity leave, however now factories have started offering these (Bina, 13082016).

*Bithi said, "I have been working in this industry for the last twelve years. However, my life did not change much during this time, and I am leading almost the same life I led in the past. Nevertheless, during this time, the factory has developed a great deal by the grace of God. When we started, the factory had only five machines and only a few workers. By the grace of God, the numbers of machines and employees have increased significantly. When the factory was small, virtually no facilities were available to its workers, and now management is offering many new facilities for its employees. This factory has made tremendous improvements in the last ten years, and we have worked hard to bring these changes to this factory"* (Bithi, 17082016).

Khushi argued many changes have occurred in this garment industry. The production has increased much more than before. As a result, workers are given higher production targets than before. The concern for quality has also changed more recently time. In the past, the factories were not concerned about the safety and security of the workers. Recently, factories have formed worker's participation committees and safety committees which were not seen in the past. The environment of the factory has also improved. Previously, there were no canteen facilities inside the factories, and people had to go outside to buy food and drinks. Today, all factories have established these facilities inside the factories, and on every floor, pure drinking water machines have been installed for the betterment of the workers. Moreover, in the past, the workers did not have any means to make complaints to the management. However, now complaint boxes have been installed in all restrooms so workers can make their complaints anonymously. More importantly, the wages of the workers and bonuses and incentives have also increased to a satisfactory level. In addition, there have been improvements in the healthcare system, maternity benefits, and childcare system. Moreover, a more congenial work environment is prevailing as the management has incorporated changes in their behaviour (Khushi, 21082016).

Helen argued the working conditions were becoming worse 10 years ago. Today, many issues have been improved, and now we are earning 3 times more than previously. In the past, the monthly salaries were not given properly and the workers were badly treated by their superiors. In addition, there were no rules for payment of overtime, workers were forced to work for extended hours and workers were not offered healthcare or maternity leave even in the case of emergency. However, currently, there have been improvement in these issues which has made the workers' life more comfortable (Helen, 27082016).

### ***6.16.2 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

When I asked the respondents whether they had observed any changes in this industry, Farida said many changes have taken places. Previously, workers were subject to forced labour however, currently, eight hours is the normal working day, but the factory can only require an additional two hours of labour. The majority of the buyers are showing zero tolerance for any abuse of this issue. In addition to eliminating forced labour, there have been many other changes taking place in this industry. However, these changes are not occurring in all factories, and only the larger factories have succeeded in creating some labour friendly arrangements. More recently, many factories have taken initiatives to educate their workers. As a result, the overall situation in the industry has changed, where workers know their rights which helps them in raising their voices when needed, which was not possible in the past (Farida, 08082016).

In answering the same question, Mina said obviously many changes have taken place in this industry. Factories are now strictly observing the new labour laws. In addition, in 2013, the government brought some positive changes to the labour code 2006. The Western buyers are also forcing us to implement many changes in worker safety issues (Mina, 13082016). Liza also believed many changes have been initiated in this industry. She said, “Previously the factories were reluctant to observe the local laws as well as the compliance issues of the Western buyers. However, nowadays, factories cannot operate without maintaining all rules that are set by Western buyers and the government. It helped to bring many positive changes in the lives of the garment workers. They can now lead a good life with their families. If you look at their dresses, and the quality of foods that they are consuming, you will see that their standard of living is also increased. Now, they are working in a better environment than before” (Liza, 27082016).

### ***6.16.3 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

Alam said that the garment industry of Bangladesh has experienced an enormous change in its lifetime. In recent time, the accidents of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza forced this industry to introduce a massive change programme in its life. As such, Western buyers have declined to work with hundreds of suppliers’ factories that failed to respond to their call. As a result, though different accidents caused thousands of lives, they also helped to ensure safety and security for the millions of garment workers who are working in this industry (Alam, 09082016).

Rihan argued that at the initial stage, the poverty of the rural people, and the huge unemployment rate of the country, and the helplessness of these rural people as a whole helped to develop the garment industry in Bangladesh. The uneducated workforce of that time considered this as an opportunity for their employment. As a result, the huge rural women came to garment industry with the hope of finding their employment, and during the initial period, these workers were paid with very small amount of wages. This condition continued for few years until it started receiving challenges from the workers' side. Since then, several times the minimum wages for the garment workers were revised in accordance with the market demand. Moreover, the accidents of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza could be considered as the big lessons for the garment industry of Bangladesh. These two incidents have brought revolutionary changes in the garment industry of Bangladesh. The death toll of these accidents forced to bring all stakeholders under a charter. Henceforth, according to the demand of the Western buyers, Accord and Alliance started to monitor and safety issues in the garment industry. As a result, suppliers' factories are being forced to work on the building safety, fire safety and electrical safety in line with the requirement of the Western buyers which brought drastic changes in this industry (Rihan, 09082016).

Reaz stated that due to the ignorance, and lack of monitoring system, there was a time when the suppliers' factories were reluctant to implement different local laws in their setting. At this stage, the workers were paid very poor wages and factories did not follow any rules relating to working hours. As a result, the issues of poor wages, forced labour, and poor working conditions were considered as the major problems at that time. However, things have started changing since 2004, and since then the Western buyers' started conducting their compliance audit on a regular basis. By this time, they developed a system of conducting social and technical audits for their purpose. As a result, this compliance based CSR arrangement forced the suppliers' factories to bring many changes in their setting (Reaz, 18082016).

Alim argued that initially, this industry started operating in different residential buildings in Dhaka city. At that period, literally, no rules were observed in those factories. As such, workers were forced to work in substandard conditions, and they had no dignity at their workplaces. Very often these workers were tortured in their workplaces and they were paid very small amount of wages which they did not receive on a regular basis. During this period, there was no system of calculation of overtime and there were no fixed working hours for these workers. However, this situation experienced gradual improvement when these factories started relocating at different industrial zones. In this developmental stage, the Western buyers also started imposing their code of conduct on the suppliers' factories. As a

result, the suppliers' factories were forced to incorporate many rules in their lives, and the workers started receiving many of their rights in this industry. However, due to some major accidents which cost many lives, the industry was brought under international pressure. Therefore, to ensure the safety of the workers, the Western buyers imposed rigid guidelines for their suppliers' factories. In addition, recently, the compliance of forming the workers' participation committee gave the workers the rights to raise their voices. Moreover, the environment issues also got importance in this industry and many of the green factories also started operating in the recent time (Alim, 21082016).

According to Chandan when he started working in the garment industry in 1993, this industry was like a tailor shop back then. The relatives of the workers used to question if their shop is closed when they are on vacation. The educated people are coming in this industry now which was rare in the past. The factories had no regulations before, the workers were paid with a very little wage, the work environment was not good and there was the lack of skilled workforce to look after the factory. The workers' rights were not installed back then. There was no fixed time of departure even though they had fixed time to arrive at the factory. Sometimes the workers had to work 24 hours at a stress. Though the law forbids employing the female workers in the night shifts, the female workers were forced to work on the night shift. The payment of overtime was not introduced at that period. There was no weekly holiday and the workers were not granted with leave if they needed. The maternity benefits were not introduced back then, and in this situation, the female workers had to quit their job. Things have changed a lot. Nowadays, all the benefits of the workers are enacted and their rights were also ensured in this current arrangement. The Western buyers, as well as the government and BKMEA and BGMEA, are now watchdogging to ensure that the suppliers' factories are maintaining all rules and regulations in their lives. Moreover, the fair wages and the safety of the workers have been ensured recently in this industry (Chandan, 22082016).

#### ***6.16.4 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

Rouf said that when he joined in the RMG industry in 1999, this industry was fully unorganised. It was then the prerogative of the owners to run the factories and decide what facilities would be offered to the people working for them. That time workers used to know when they were going to start their work at the factory, but they did not know how long they need to work in a day. To be honest, they were forced to work for all the seven days in a week. They were forced to work even on the public holidays. Those particular periods were too tough. Factory life was so difficult at that period. In the past, the literacy rate of the workers was nearly zero. The rights of the workers were ignored, and in most of the

factories, there was no system of payment for overtime. At that time, workers were controlled very gratingly. Many production managers used to walk on the production floor with a stick in their hand and they used to beat the workers frequently if any fault was found on the production floor. Workers at that particular period were so obedient, and they never tried to raise any question while working in the factory. Moreover, the work environment was too bad. It can be said that there were no such facilities for the labourer in the factories. At that period, for the sake of converting different residential buildings into factories, different owners established their garment factories at the Mirpur, Farmgate, Rampura and Shyamoli areas of Dhaka city. During that period the workers were forced to work in a congested workplace. In the workplaces, there was no canteen facility, leave facility, medical facility for the workers, and the safety issues of the workers had never been taken into consideration at that period (Rouf, 22082016).

Rouf also said that a tremendous change has occurred in this industry in the last 15 years. Today the factory owners know that if they want to remain in this business, they have to comply with the local rules and regulations, and with the code of conducts of the different Western buyers. As a result, factories are organised in a manner where the issues of minimum wages, payment of overtime, maternity leave, health and safety of the workers, working hours, child labour, harassment, discriminations, arrangement for leave of the workers, weekly holiday, medical facility of the workers, working conditions, and many more issues have been resolved. At present, a novice female worker also knows about her rights in the workplace. In addition, the education level of the workers has also increased. As a result, now they can take care of themselves (Rouf, 22082016).

Rizvi said that *“We cannot even compare the past with the present context”. There are so many things that did not exist in the past. When I established this factory, I did not have that much knowledge, and as a result, I did not observe many of the rules and regulations that are needed to establish a factory. As such, later, I had to bring many changes in my factory to comply with the current requirements. Now I can say that we have come to know what the different requirements of a factory are. As a result, you can see that all the new factories that are being established have to maintain all the requirements, and you will not find any non-compliance issue in those factories. Moreover, in recent times, the output of a factory has increased ten times compared to the production of the early period. We did not have industrial engineering department in the factory before. So, we had the tendency to do many things in an unprofessional way. Nowadays, we are following scientific methods in our operations”* (Rizvi, 16082016).

### ***6.16.5 Voices of the Stakeholders***

Many changes have taken place in this industry over time. The government has re-arranged the entire monitoring system after the loss of lives in the Rana Plaza and the Tazreen Fashion accidents. The auditing in the garment industry was not that hard before, as far as I know and we didn't have the ability to take action or prevent managerial abuses if a worker complained he was not getting paid regularly or was fired unfairly. I think government has yet to strengthen the facilities to ensure the enforcement of rules and regulation in the RMG industry. Recently, to monitor the garments factories, government has employed a good number of inspectors in its Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE). Besides, many educated investors have started investing in the industry and they are cooperating in managing changes. As a result, we are experiencing a great deal of change in this industry. (Roy, 20082016)

Azom who is a top executive of the BGMEA said we didn't have much of an idea of the compliance at the beginning, and as a result, when the industry advanced forward, we started facing many criticisms on the issues namely, working hours, child labour and working environment. Our garments industry was the first industry to implement the Child Labour Eliminating Bill Of 1994 that was passed in the US parliament. We started our journey with The Earn and Learn Project and the child labours working in this industry were rehabilitated as a part of this project. They were given employment in the industry again when they grew up. These programs were implemented by the BGMEA. BGMEA led those programs with the help of many development partners. We have been monitoring whether the factory is paying the workers or not since the mid-'90s. Moreover, we have been continuously working to increase awareness among the factory members. Things have changed a lot ever since the last two major accidents took places. We have no words to express the grief as a nation. We have nothing to do except expressing grief and taking preventive measures to avoid such accidents in future. This is a realization that comes after an extreme accident. But what happened before this? Didn't we have those feelings before? Of course, we had. We were quite aware of the compliance long before the Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashion accidents took place. We didn't have the preparations to confront tragedies like those. These events took place maybe because our whole system didn't function properly (Azom, 24082016).

Ahmed said that the age of the industry is not so old to differentiate its past and present period. But it can be differentiated in a way that the period before 2005, the period from 2005 to 2013 and the period after 2013 of this industry. In 2005, when the workers became agitated, they called in a great labour movement out on the roads. Before then they could

never be treated as industrial workers and that system as an industry in any way. The system was like that some particular people have built some factories where some girls from villages were employed. No union was developed, nor were they given any opportunity to develop as these girls were helpless. And the government has taken a strategic decision to give this industry an opportunity to develop and as for a result of the market economy, this industry has developed in exchange for everything from the workers. It can be called the generous and unlimited assistance of the state. So, the garment industry before 2005 could not be considered as humanitarian in any way. It is found that many workers died in different accidents in the factories like Spectrum, Saraka, and KTH during 1990 to 2005. Neither the investigation reports of these incidents were published, nor any penalty was set. There has been no discussion of these issues except some activities of the media. It was worse than the condition of the industrial workers of Britain as pictured by Engels (Ahmed, 25082016).

In 2005, when agitated workers came out on the streets, the factory owners came to realise that they need to shift their mindset of “I don’t care” to “let’s take care of some issues” which did not bring any visible qualitative changes in the garment industry. Due to the labour movement of 2005, the government has to declare a wage board for the garment workers. However, the wages declared by this wage board was considered as the lowest wage compared to the minimum wages paid to the workers in other countries. It is important to mention that during the period of 1984 to 1994, no initiative was taken to review the wages of the garment workers. As a result, exploiting the garment workers, the garment owners of that time accumulated the huge amount of profits. During the period of 2005 to 2013, the industry has started giving importance on some labour issues. But accidents continued to occur in the factories one after another. Everything started to shift after the accident in Tazreen Fashion and it became a burning issue internationally. Especially, when Rana Plaza collapsed in 2013, everyone came to realise that if this continues, it will kill the goose that laid the golden eggs for them. As a result, by addressing many labour issues, the industry has internalised a massive change programme for its survival (Ahmed, 25082016).

Opu said that he started his career in this industry in 1995, and that time he used to work as a low-level management staff. In that period, the factories used to get the high price for their products. However, the conditions of the workers were very poor. As a result, working in the garment industry was considered as the most disgraceful profession. At that period, long working hours, forced labour, harassment, irregular payment of wages, and unhealthy working conditions were very common issues to all garment factories. The work life in the garment industry at that time could be characterised as imprisonment as they were locked from outside while working in the factories, and they could not have survived if a fire broke

out in the factory. However, since 2001, things have started changing in the garment industry, and since then garment factories have started incorporating many rules in their lives. The huge death toll of Rana Plaza forced this industry to comply with the demands of their Western buyers. As a result, since 2013, in addition to the workers' safety, different garment factories have started initiating different initiatives by the pro-workers in their setting (Opu, 25082016).

Mishu argued that before 2006, the condition of the garment workers was very poor. As a result, twenty years before, she was in tears when she went to meet some garment workers at their residences. At that time, the workers used to be paid very little and they were often forced to work for long period of time. There was no weekend facility at that time. The people around the globe got to know how bad the situation was when the workers' movement broke out in 2006. During this labour movement, she was arrested from Gazipur. However, all of their attempts to control the situation were turned futile. As a result, for the first time, the issues of payment of fair wages and the trade union rights of the garment workers were brought into the discussion, and a tripartite agreement was signed among the government, the workers, and the owners. The tragic events of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza that cost a thousand lives of the garment workers brought another round of changes in the garment industry. However, in their thirty-five years of struggle, the garment workers have failed to establish their rights to join the trade union. As a result, either the workers are fired or being charged with phony cases of theft when they demand to establish their rights in the factories (Mishu, 30082016).

Shamima said, *“During the 1990s, when I was working in the factory, we usually had to enter into the factory at eight in the morning, and very often we had to spend the night working there. That means we did not have any work schedule, and there were no rules relating to working hours. We also did not have any facility and were offered with poor wages. In the factory, the workers were subject to torture and sexual harassment was common in the workplace. If anyone attempted to raise their voice in the factory, soon after the incident, she was tormented by the local miscreant outside of the factory. Any protest from the side of workers was considered as the institutional audacity, and they were fired immediately”* (Shamima, 31082016).

Shamima argued that a lot of changes have been introduced since the labour movement that took place in the year 2005. Since then many labour movements took places in the garment industry where a large number of female workers participated in. Due to these movements, the whole world, as well as the Western buyers, came to know that the garment factories in

Bangladesh have failed to live by the rules, and they were violating the rights of the workers by not giving them the rights to join the trade union. In addition, these factories have imposed many difficulties in the life of workers i.e., forced labour, unfair wages, poor working conditions, and so on. As a result, these different labour movements forced the owners to initiate some changes in their garment factories. Therefore, it is proved again that only the labour movement can emancipate these workers from the domination (Shamima, 31082016).

Babu said that he had started working with this industry since 2012. The period from when he had started working in this industry could be considered much better if compared to the previous conditions. By this period, this industry not only has experienced growth in its life but also succeeded in establishing as a formal industry. By studying the industry, it could be said that many of the entrepreneurs who started their business in the late 70's, now have several factories, luxury cars, and apartments. However, the workers' conditions have not improved in the course of time; and they are still living in the slums where they used to reside in the past. No basic development has been made in the life of these garment workers (Babu, 31082016).

According to Babu, although many changes have been introduced in the garment industry, the trade union rights of the garment workers have not been established yet. It is very common that the workers' movements are labelled as a political conspiracy. In the different workers' movements, very often different ministers get involved on behalf of the factory owners and try to dismantle the labour movements. However, when the leaders of the labour unions reject their proposal, they circulate that the opposition political party is sponsoring these movements along with BGMEA. This blame game is used by different political governments in handling the labour movement in the garment industry. Moreover, the police as a law enforcement agency often take actions against these movements by charging batons and tear shells upon these garments workers. In addition, very often the law enforcement agencies arrest the trade union leaders to gain control over the labour movements. In this way, the labour movements were hallmarked as the conspiracy of the opposition party and repressed accordingly by the use of the law enforcement agencies. As a result, it was evident that the rights of the workers had been suppressed by colouring it with politics and conspiracies. Whenever the attempts of the BGMEA and the Government failed to control the workers' movement, then they commonly said that it was part of the local and foreign conspiracy. Especially, BGMEA says that "*the foreign agents are trying to destroy our industry*". However, BGMEA has no justification for this complaint (Babu, 31082016).

***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Rosy, 08082016)***

**Original Speech Act:** “At present, the government, owners and the buyer want to ensure a good and safe work environment for the workers”

(AND/OR)

“In the past, the workers were working in a poor work environment”.

(AND/OR)

“Previously the workplaces for the garment workers were not safe”.

(OR/AND)

“Currently, the garment workers are working in good and safe workplaces”.

(AND/OR)

Currently, the work environments for the garment workers have been enriched”

(AND/OR)

“Currently, awareness has been developed in all level to ensure a safe workplace for the garment workers”.

(AND/OR)

“The facilities at the workplaces have improved for the garment workers”.

***Table 14: Validity Horizon of Rosy (08082016) on the Paradigm Shifts in the Garment Industry***

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b><i>Foreground</i></b>	“Currently, the garment workers are working in good and safe workplaces”.	“I think that the awareness has been developed in all level to ensure a safe workplace for the garment workers”.	“The workplaces should ensure the safety for the garment workers”.
<b><i>Intermediate</i></b>	“Currently, the work environment for the garment workers have been enriched”	“I think that the government, the suppliers’ factories and the Western buyers’ have started working together to reconstruct the facilities to ensure a good and safe workplace for their workers.”	“The workers should be offered with a good and safe workplace”.
<b><i>Background</i></b>	“Previously, the government, the owners and the buyers were all reluctant to ensure a good and safe work environment for the garment workers”.	“I think there are many issues which we need to concentrate on how to ensure better workplaces for the garment workers”.	“We need to ensure all the workers’ rights at the garment industry in Bangladesh”.

## 6.17 Summary

The garment industry of Bangladesh has started its journey in the late 70s, and it has experienced several paradigm shifts in its lifetime. The first paradigm could be termed as the extraction and exploitation paradigm in which the garment owners were given the license to maximise their profit at the expense of everything. Initially, this industry started operating in different residential buildings in Dhaka city, and working in the garment industry back then was considered as working in the tailor shop. In the initial stage, a huge number of the uneducated rural women came to garment industry with the hope of finding their employment. In this period, having generous and unlimited assistance from the state, the suppliers' factories literally observed no rules in their settings.

The condition of the garment workers back then was worse than the condition of the industrial workers of Britain as pictured by Engels. This condition continued for many years until it started receiving challenges from the workers' side. As a result, working in the garment industry was regarded as the most disgraceful profession. In that period, long working hours, forced labour, sexual harassment, irregular payment of wages, and unhealthy working conditions were very common issues in all the garment factories. Furthermore, during the period of 1984 to 1994, no initiative was taken to review the wages of the garment workers.

The First paradigm shift occurred in the beginning of the 21st century when some skilled and educated professionals had entered in this sector and the Western buyers started imposing code of conduct on the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh. This second paradigm could be termed as the expansion and recognition paradigm. In this new paradigm, different owners started handing over their businesses to the professional management, and the industry started being recognized as a formal sector and it started expanding as the production started moving from household operations to the factories. On the other hand, during this period, workers also started fighting for their rights and started recognising as the formal labour. In addition, from this point forward, the government had started regulating this industry. Thus, it could be said that the paradigm shift changed the "no rule situation" to the "implementation of some rules" in this industry.

In 2005, when the triggered workers came out on the streets to authenticate their rights for the first time, criticisms started beginning at home and abroad; and the factory owners then came to realise that they need to shift their mindset of "I don't care" to "let's take care of some issues". It is seen that the suppliers' factories and the different political governments tried to publicise all these labour movements as the conspiracy of the opposition party, and

they were repressing the voices of the workers accordingly by the use of the law enforcement agencies on several occasions. However, due to these movements, suppliers' factories were forced to bring many positive changes for their workers. Therefore, labour leaders claimed that only the unified voices can emancipate these oppressed workers from the domination.

After the catastrophes of the Tazreen Fashion and the Rana Plaza, the concurrent isomorphic pressures brought in a new paradigm which can be termed as the restructuring and awareness paradigm, in which, to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad, the industry started restructuring their facilities to ensure the safety of the workers, and the awareness of the workers started to build. These two accidents gave rise to an extensive discussion and criticisms at home and abroad. Therefore, different Western buyers also brought under criticisms in their home countries. As a result, these Western buyers took a rigid position regarding the safety issues of the garment workers, and all the reputed brands declared that if this situation continues, they will not purchase products from Bangladesh. Therefore, everyone came to realise that if this situation continues, it would kill the goose that laid the golden eggs for them. As a result, in order to protect this industry, the government came forward and tried to hold control over this situation.

However, in their thirty-five years of struggle, the garment workers have failed to establish their rights to join the trade union, and many of them were fired and were charged with phony cases of theft whenever they demanded for validating their rights in the factories. As a result, this time the discussions were not restricted to the issue of workers' safety or to the issues of fair wage, but the enforcement of local laws and regulations, the protection of the environment, the workers' rights to join trade union were also brought under the agenda. Consequently, the government, BGMEA, Western buyers and the suppliers' developed a framework together, and under this framework, all of them started working together to develop these issues at the factory level. Nevertheless, the forthcoming paradigm would be the partnership and fairness paradigm where the workers would be working in this industry free from domination and their quality of life would be ensured therein. However, it needs to go a long way to reach that level.

## **6.18 Production at the Expense of Environment**

### ***6.18.1 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

Rouf said, "*Currently, environment issue became a pivotal issue for the garment industry. In our garment dyeing and garment washing units, we are using many chemicals that could cause enormous harm to our environment. Previously, most of the garment dyeing and*

washing units used to dump their untreated industrial waste into the nearby canals and rivers. As result, all the canals and rivers adjacent to the garment industrial zones became highly polluted, and even an insect could not survive in that water let alone a fish. For instance, the Buriganga River has become polluted by the dumping of the untreated industrial waste by the Tannery and garment industries. Consequently, those areas are facing great environmental disaster. As a result, the cultivable land is decreasing gradually and agricultural production is being affected to a great extent in those areas. Much indigenous fish is going toward extinction and there is an adverse reaction in the fish production as well in the country. In response, the ministry of environment has taken a rigorous position and establishing ETP has been made mandatory for all the garment factories that have washing and garment dyeing operations. However, though many of the factories have established ETP in their setting, the majority of them are not keeping their ETPs full functioning to minimise the costs. As result, this noble initiative failed to produce the expected result which is keeping the environment under risk” (Rouf, 22082016).

#### **6.18.2 Voices of the Stakeholders**

Wahid said that The Environment Protection Act was established in Bangladesh in 1995. Unfortunately, most of our public interest litigations found that many of our manufacturing units were established without the consideration of the environment or public interest. As such, unwillingness to set up and run the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) was identified as the biggest environmental challenge for the garment industry. Though many factories have set up ETP according to the law they do not run them accordingly. For this reason, they discharge untreated water along with their used chemical wastage into nearby rivers and canals. That is a matter of great anxiety. Due to the shortage of manpower, the department of environment is finding difficulties in managing this problem. It is also found that the factories run their ETP properly on the day of inspection and very often realize the report from the inspector otherwise (Wahid, 28082016).

Babu said that though it is said that we have nearly 4500 garment factories in Bangladesh, but I do believe that even the government and the BGMEA do not know the exact number of the garment factories in Bangladesh. Thus, the Western buyers, Accord, Alliance or the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) disclose different figures regarding the number of garment factories in Bangladesh. To the best of my knowledge, all the large garment factories have the arrangements to address the issue of the environment. In addition to these large factories, many mid-size factories already succeeded to comply with the requirement of the environment issue and have installed Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) in their factories. However, environment department has found that many of them are not

using their ETP properly, and are throwing their untreated industrial waste directly into the river. It is also found that some of the factories are keeping their ETP active just for display, but are not using the needed chemicals to treat their industrial waste. Especially, the factories where only the dyeing operation is being carried out need to be brought under special monitoring system, but we failed to bring most of these factories under any monitoring system. As a result, they are causing huge damage to the environment (Babu, 31082016).

***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Rouf, 22082016)***

**Original Speech Act:** “Previously, most of the garment dyeing and washing units used to dump their untreated industrial waste into the nearby canals and rivers”.

(AND/OR)

“Nowadays, these dyeing and washing units are not dumping their industrial waste into the nearby canals and rivers”.

(AND/OR)

“Nowadays, it is not easy for the garment factories to pollute environment”.

(AND/OR)

“The garment factories have realised that it is not good to pollute the environment”.

(OR/AND)

“Dumping untreated industrial waste has caused for huge environmental damage”.

(AND/OR)

“Awareness for the protection of environment has been increased in all levels”.

***Table 15: Validity Horizon of Rouf (22082016) on the Production at the Expense of Environment***

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b><i>Foreground</i></b>	“Garment industry caused huge environmental damage in Bangladesh”.	“I think that the awareness has been increased in all levels to address the environment issue in the garment industry”.	“It is not good to pollute the environment”.
<b><i>Intermediate</i></b>	“Nowadays, the issue of environmental pollution has received attention in the garment industry of Bangladesh.”	“I think that the government has to take strong measures to protect the environment in Bangladesh”.	“We should protect our environment”.
<b><i>Background</i></b>	“Dumping untreated industrial waste has caused for huge environmental damage in Bangladesh”.	“I think the weak enforcement of the environmental law caused huge environmental damage in Bangladesh”.	“We need to work together to protect our environment”.

## **6.19 Summary**

The Environment Protection Act was established in Bangladesh in 1995. Unfortunately, most public interest litigation has found many manufacturing units were established without the consideration of the environment conservation act and public interest. An unwillingness to set up and run an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) was identified as the biggest environmental challenge for the garment industry. Though many factories have installed an ETP, they do not run them accordingly. For this reason, they discharge untreated water along with their used chemical wastage into nearby rivers and canals. As result, all the canals and rivers adjacent to the garment industrial zones have become highly polluted, and the biotic have suffered. Consequently, those areas are facing great environmental disaster. Due to the shortage of trained manpower, the Department of Environment is facing difficulties in managing this problem. As result, this initiative failed to bring off the expected bottom line benefits.

## **6.20 Trade Unionism in the RMG Industry**

### ***6.20.1 Voice of Mid-Level Management***

Nasim has stated to ensure the representation of the workers, in line with the existing law, different garment factories have already formed a Workers' Participation Committee (WPC) in their factories. Moreover, a number of factories have also established trade unions in their factories and factories have started providing training to their workers regarding the labour laws. There is nothing to worry about if the workers are aware of their rights and duties. However, if the workers use this scope otherwise, it could bring disastrous outcome for this industry. As a result, without proper education and training, it would not be wise to give workers' the right to join the trade union, and if we would do so, it could destroy our industry (Nasim, 27082016).

### ***6.20.2 Voices of the Stakeholders***

Ahmed said that when the industry began its journey before 30 years back, there was a strong condition of trade unions in Bangladesh which could be characterised as the golden age for the trade unionism. At the factory level, there were some strong trade unions in some factories. Problems started to arise after the fire incident that took place in Saraka garments back in 1990. Like Rana Plaza, the accident of Saraka was also been discussed and criticised both nationally and internationally. As a result, the caretaker government at that time dismantled that workers' movement by means of extreme harassment, arrest, and outraging

by police. Consequently, the trade union movement had to step back from the garment industry for a while. After that, many garment workers' federations were developed outside of the factories, many leaders had also come out but could not spread their activities inside the factories. Since then some of them have a healthy relationship with BGMEA and some of them have reverse. After 2005, union activities started in this industry again as the workers got their confidence back by this time. Meanwhile, BGMEA arbitration committee was formed. A forum was set to sit along with the union leaders regularly. Recognition came but not at the factory level but outside. Till now, the workers' movements of the garment industry mean the movement outside of the factories (Ahmed, 25082016).

The majority of the garment's trade union leaders of current times have come through the labour movement of 2005. Out of these leaders, many of them have established a sound relationship with BGMEA, whereas some of them are maintaining a distant relationship with BGMEA. However, not a single organisation at the national level has been founded to protect workers who get involved in the labour movements. As a result, very often they become the target of the factory and are suffering from difficulties. If a group of workers is fired for participating in the trade union activities, no one will come forward to help them. The media are more interested in covering the news of industrial accidents than the news of these distressed workers. Hence, there is no place for them to go. We have to remember that without the patronization of national leaders, unions have not developed in any part of the world. Neither these workers are getting the support of the opposition party, nor are the ruling party leaders helping them to fight with their issues. All the actions of different political governments went against these garment workers. As a result, after struggling for days starving, facing the challenges from gangsters, industrial police and the owners they get tired and are forced to compromise. As a result, it will be not rational to identify them as socially abandoned without evaluating their contribution in the labour movement (Ahmed, 25082016).

Opu claimed that the trade union can be an obstacle to the growth of this industry. You should remember that the garment factories have to meet the stiff shipment deadline. Our experiences say that our union leaders work against the owners unlike the leaders of other countries who work with the owners. This enmity will never induce any good to the workers and this business as a whole. As a result, he did not believe it would be wise to go for establishing the workers' trade unions rights in the RMG industry (Opu, 25082016).

Mishu argued that the garments industry of Bangladesh has passed a long 35 years. Though, the constitution, all of the laws in this country including the factory law, ILO Convention and the labour law speak about the democratic rights of the workers to join the trade union.

But the sad reality is that the garment workers of Bangladesh do not actually have the rights to do so. As you know, the trade union for the workers came into the spotlight of the international media after the Tazreen Fashion at 2012 and the Rana Plaza accident of 2013. Many countries of the world criticized the government saying there are no rights for the workers to join the trade union and the work environment is too bad. As a result, the owners and the government have started to recognize the right for two years now. To support this government initiated, a new workers' alliance named Garments Sramik Somonnoy Parishad was formed under the stewardship of a powerful minister of the government, and only this organisation is getting the chance to form their trade unions inside the factories. But in reality, the owners are picking up the leaders in the participatory committee. The owners cut them out if they build any earnest rapport with the workers and take solidarity with the workers. This is, however, the ground reality (Mishu, 30082016).

Mishu said that all the trade union leaders who are known as anti-government forces find difficulties in working with the garment workers while fighting for their rights. I was imprisoned every time when the workers developed any strong movements against their deprivations. A number of cases have been filed against me in Dhaka and Gazipur, and even a murder and possession of weapon case was filed against me to stop me supporting these garment workers. Hence, I would say that the environment is very undemocratic and the production relation is also very dictatorial overall. The owners give the final verdicts here. The workers don't have the space to talk here. The workers' rights are recognized on very few occasions and the owners don't seem to grow the sentiment to recognize them. This industry is almost past 35 years and it's sad that the owners haven't grown the mentality to recognize the democratic rights of the workers yet. The government also doesn't have a commitment to solve workers' issues. Only the people who are pro-government and who are called "Pimps" in Bangladesh are allowed to talk about the labour issue. As a result, you cannot work inside the factory on workers' issues unless you are supported by the owners and identified as a pro-government (Mishu, 30082016).

Mishu argued that the leaders supported by the government and the owners are called puppet leaders. These leaders are operated by the government and the owners. There are very few leaders who speak for the workers. Many workers' organisations have been formed. But very few of them serve the workers' interests. We had to fight for the rights of the workers in factories where they had trade unions. However, these trade unions do not support their workers to fight for their rights; as a result, we needed to move forward to support them. These trade unions are formed under the supervision of the government and BGMEA to show the world. They don't work for the workers and it was actually formed to serve the

owners' interests. Recently, they have formed trade unions in 400 factories as a showcase for the Western buyers. All of these are puppet unions (Mishu, 30082016).

Shamima said that in the year 1990, for the first time she got involved in a protest and it succeeded to establish their demands in the factory. However, soon after the incident, the management succeeded to break their unity and fired them from the factory. Later, they found employment in another factory and again got involved in workers movement and came out from the factory. This time some of them were invited to join a meeting in the labour ministry. After that meeting, the labour ministry circulated a press release against their movement. The situation became worse for them and none of the factories was ready to offer the job to them. As a result, a group of workers decided to pay a monthly subscription to bear their monthly expenses. They rented an office in the Mirpur region, and this was the first step we took towards their journey. They have started a fight against all type of discriminations and unlawful arrangements and tried their best to establish the rights of the garment workers. In the beginning, they were treated as a militant force and wherever they saw unlawful act, they rushed there with their members and started the movement for the remedy. The factory owners were getting tired of them and tried to bring them under some bindings. As a result, the representative of the labour ministry came to them and suggested to make the registration. Thereafter, when a case was filed against few of members under the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act, they applied for the registration of their trade union federation (Shamima, 31082016).

Shamima said that on 8th August 2001, a factory fire caused 21 lives of the workers, and she got involved in movement on this issue. While delivering speech, a group of miscreant attacked her, and she was severely injured. The law enforcement agency rescued her from there and she was taken to a hospital where she had to take treatment for about 2 months. Before the incident took place, a journalist tried to inform her about this conspiracy, but she did not believe him as she thought that thousands of workers are with her, so no one can do harm to her. However, she was proved wrong and the police charged tear shells on them and in the meantime, some miscreants attacked her. After two months when she was released from the hospital, she got involved in a national trade union movement. She further said that a lot of changes have occurred in the garment industry, but workers' rights to join trade union had not been given yet. In every factory, the workers should have an office, from where they can operate their trade union activities. If we could establish this in the factory, the factory will have a healthy environment where further improvement will be assured, and outsiders will not be able to interfere in the factory issues. If we allow the workers to form their union, the workers will be the safeguard for the factory. As result, the factory owner

will not need to hire gangsters or Jhut Businessman to gain control over the factory (Shamima, 31082016).

Babu said that the workers will only be benefited from trade unionism only under a healthy political condition. Due to the current hostile political trend, the government and the BGMEA are showing their unwillingness to give the garment workers the rights to join the trade union. In order to satisfy the Western buyers, few factories have formed trade unions under the sponsorship of the government and BGMEA. At present, there are 7500 trade unions operating in different sectors. The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments has conducted a survey in December 2015, which covered 2058 garment factories of Bangladesh and has only found 63 trade unions in those factories, and in August 2016 this number rose to 478, and during the last nine months there were more than 400 trade unions formed in different garment factories (Babu, 31082016).

Babu said that to the best of his knowledge, this industry experienced the biggest workers' movement in 2005. That time the workers succeeded to demonstrate their strengths, and in demand of wages and other benefits, they came out from their factories. Thus, they able to develop the biggest garment workers' movement in the history of Bangladesh. During this period, considering the present status the facilities of the factories were very insufficient. In that time, the garment workers were paid with poor wages, there were no fixed working hours, workers were forced to work for long working hours, there was no overtime facility, and no maternity benefits were given to the female workers. Due to this labour movement, the government and the owners were forced to bring in some changes in this industry. In this labour movement, the workers' rights to join the trade union came to the discussion as the top agenda. However, due to the stiff position of the government and the factory owners, the rights of freedom of association were not established in this industry (Babu, 31082016).

Babu argued that in the declaration of the sustainability compact of 2013, the issue of the trade union received the highest importance. This issue is progressing, but still, we cannot see the satisfactory improvement. However, there is an issue to think whether the trade unionism would help or would hinder the development of this industry. Very often our garment owners give an example that in recent time Cambodian garment industry gave their workers the rights of the trade union under pressure from the Western buyers, and it brought disaster in their garment industry. Hence, we need to learn from their experience. It is very difficult to deny the claim of our garment owners as the low literacy rate gives the outsider opportunists the chance to get capitalised form this situation. These outsiders might lead our workers to the wrong direction. There is always a chance that the opposition political party may intervene in this situation and trap the government. However, we cannot suspend the

constitutional rights of the garment workers by only thinking about the negative externalities, and it is a kind of human rights violation that we are not permitting them to join the trade union. In this regard, I think that all we need is to come forward to resolve this issue, and if our political parties make a promise that they would not use garment workers for their political gain, then we must make the decision of giving the workers the rights to join the trade union. If we could do that I believe that the workers and this industry would be able to move further (Babu, 31082016).

Shamima believed that the government has to play the pivotal role, and need to establish a monitoring system. Costing 1135 workers' lives in the Rana Plaza incident, we came here. The development was made only for those lives. To date, nearly four hundred trade unions have been established in this industry, and it has happened at the cost of the sacrifice of the lives of the garment workers. Now, the MNCs and the Western buyers have to ensure that all the factories where they are placing their orders have trade unions. In addition, time has come to establish a framework where different stakeholders such as government, NGOs, civil society, Western buyers, factory owners, and the workers would work together on workers' related issues (Shamima, 31082016).

Chowdhury said that the time has come to take a tough decision. It is evident that our different political governments tried to use trade unionism for their purposes. As a result, in the past, trade unions acted as the representatives of the government and helped to establish the government's agenda. Therefore, trade unionism failed to serve the interest of the workers. As a result, all the state-owned enterprises turned out as the loss-making organisations. If we think that it would repeat in the garment industry and could destroy our industry and then the rest of our lives, we need to bow down to the West. If we could give the garment workers their trade union rights, it would not only give us mental peace but would also uphold the constitutional rights of the working class. Furthermore, he does not believe that the trade unionism would destroy our garment industry. Hence, it is the demand of the time and we should let the workers establish their rights to join trade unions (Chowdhury, 05092016).

### ***Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Babu, 31082016)***

**Original Speech Act:** *"In order to satisfy the Western buyers, few factories have formed trade unions under the sponsorship of the government and BGMEA".*

(AND/OR)

*"Workers in the garment industry of Bangladesh have started getting their rights to join trade union".* (AND/OR)

“Without having the sponsorship of government and BGMEA it is not possible to establish trade union in the garment factories”.

(AND/OR)

“The Western buyers have an influence on the establishment of trade union in garment factories of Bangladesh”.

(OR/AND)

“The buyers’ satisfactions have an influence on the garment industry”.

(AND/OR)

“The government and BGMEA are the two major stakeholders who decide what is to be done in the garment industry”.

**Table 16: Validity Horizon of Babu (31082016) on the Trade Unionism in the Readymade Garment Industry**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b><i>Foreground</i></b>	Some of the garment factories have given their workers the rights to join trade union.	“I think that without having the support of the political government and the BGMEA, no trade union can operate inside the garment factories”.	“It is not good that the workers in the garment industry could not enjoy their constitutional rights”.
<b><i>Intermediate</i></b>	The buyers are giving pressure to their suppliers’ factories to give their workers the trade union rights.	“I think it is very difficult for the trade union to operate inside the garment factories”.	“We should ensure the constitutional rights of these garment workers”.
<b><i>Background</i></b>	“The freedom of association is the constitutional rights of the garment workers which they could not enjoy in the garment industry”.	“In think that the trade union movement in the garment industry of Bangladesh is mostly operated from outside the factory premises”.	“The workers in the garment industry should have their rights to join trade union”.

## 6.21 Summary

In the late 1970’s, the garment industry began its journey and that period could be characterised as the golden age for the trade unionism in Bangladesh. At that time, at the factory level, there were some strong trade unions in some factories. Problems started to arise after the fire incident that took place in Saraka garments back in 1990. Like Rana Plaza, the accident of Saraka was also discussed and criticised both nationally and internationally. As a result, the caretaker government at that time dismantled that workers’ movement by means of extreme harassment, arrest, and outrages by the law enforcement agencies. As a

result, the trade union movement had to step back from the garment industry for a while. After that, many garment workers federations were developed outside of the factories, and many leaders had also come out but could not spread their activities inside the factories. After 2005, union activities started in this industry again as by this time, the workers got their confidence back. Meanwhile, BGMEA arbitration committee was formed. A forum was set to sit along with the union leaders regularly. Recognition came but not at the factory level but outside. Till now, the workers' movement of garment industry means the movement outside of the factories.

The garments industry of Bangladesh has passed a long 35 years. Though, the Constitution of Bangladesh has given the workers the rights to join the trade union, the workers in the garment industry cannot enjoy this right in their factories. This issue came into the spotlight in the international media after the accidents that took places in the Tazreen fashion and in Rana Plaza, and many countries criticized the government on this issue. As a result, in order to ensure the representation of the workers, the government made the new rule for the garment industry by asking them to form the Workers' Participation Committee (WPC) in their factories. But it is the ground reality that the owners are selecting their WPC members, and they cut them out if they try to build any earnest rapport with the workers. Moreover, a good number of factories also established trade unions in their factories. However, only a workers' alliance named Garments Sramik Somonnoy Parishad is getting the chance to form trade unions inside the factories that were formed under the stewardship of a powerful minister of the present government.

The majority of the garments' trade union leaders of current times have come through the labour movement of 2005. However, not a single organisation at the national level has been founded to protect workers who get involved in the labour movements. As a result, very often they become the target of the factory and are suffering from difficulties. If a group of workers is fired for participating in the trade union activities, no one will come forward to help them. The media are more interested in covering the news of industrial accidents than the news of these distressed workers. Hence, there is no place for them to go. Neither these workers are getting the support of the opposition party, nor are the ruling party leaders helping them to fight with their issues. All the actions of different political governments went against these garment workers. As a result, after struggling for days with starving, facing the challenges from gangsters, industrial police, and the owners, many of them got tired and were forced to compromise. As a result, some of the labour leaders have established a sound relationship with BGMEA, whereas others are maintaining a distant

relationship with BGMEA. However, it would not be rational to identify any of these leaders as puppet leaders without evaluating their contribution in the different labour movements.

## **6.22 The Postcolonial Conditions and its Implications on the Current CSR Arrangement**

### ***6.22.1 Voices of the Low-Level Management***

When I asked the respondents whether they can see any postcolonial conditions in the current buyers' and suppliers' relationship Farida said that *"I cannot directly answer your question but I can say that it is bringing some positive and some negative results. Recently, due to not having the financial and other capacities of incorporating the changes directed by the Western buyers, many of the small and medium size factories forced to shut down. As a result, it did not only put the owners in difficulty but also put many workers in misery. On the other hand, as they are forcing us to incorporate some positive changes in the factories, it is helping the workers to establish some of their rights in the factory. As a result, the industry has successfully overcome many problems namely, the issue of child labour, gender discrimination, harassment, forced labour, unfair payment for overtime, payment of low wages, and much more. In this regard, I would like to say that they are imposing huge pressure upon us, and it is costing a huge amount of funds to comply with their needs. However, if they would allow us to identify our problems based on our socio-economic needs, and if we would be able to spend the same amount of money on those problems, it could bring more bottom line benefits"* (Farida, 08082016).

Farida also said that *"in many cases, the Western buyers' are not considering our socio-economic conditions, and are implanting some alien issues in our lives"*. In recent time, the industry as a whole has invested billions of dollars in fire safety. She believes that ensuring fire safety is essential but we could do it otherwise by investing less amount of money, and the money that we have spent on installing fire door only could offer more benefits to the workers if we could spend it on other workers' issue. In this arrangement, we are helpless and are forced to obey their command. *"We are just moving our tail according to their choice; otherwise, we will lose our business"* (Farida, 08082016). However, Mina believes that Western buyers are working for our betterment (Mina, 13082016).

### ***6.22.2 Voices of the Mid-Level Management***

Alam said that in this compliance based CSR arrangement, the postcolonial issue is not a relevant concept as the Western buyers are not imposing any unrealistic or irrational

practices upon us. As we were reluctant to implement our own laws, they are now forcing us to implement these laws and the ILO convention in our setting. Moreover, considering the reality, some of the buyers are also giving us some flexibility in implementing these rules in our life. For instance, according to the existing law, a worker can be engaged in over time for the maximum period of two hours a day. If we strictly follow this rule, the workers will find difficulties in managing their household expenditure. Considering the reality, many buyers took a soft position on this matter, and as a result, workers are getting a chance to earn more from their extra working hours. However, there is an issue that we have not been able to decolonize our mind yet. As a result, we ourselves consider the Western buyers as superiors, and in the interaction, we hide our faces from them as it is our failure that we could not maintain our laws without their pressure (Alam, 09082016).

Rihan argued that the postcolonial issue might have some influences on the current arrangement. He also said that things have started changing gradually. As many of the second and third generation factory owners are graduated from different Western countries, they have developed their capacity to challenge the taken-for-granted nature of the current compliance based CSR arrangement. As a result, nowadays, the buyers cannot impose anything on suppliers that have no merit. Currently, the buyers have started considering their suppliers as their partner, and they are trying to help them as partners in development. This will help in minimizing the power gap between these two parties (Rihan, 09082016).

There is no postcolonial issue in this arrangement. The suppliers' factories show respect to their Western buyers, as they have come here to develop our business and economy. In doing so, very often they are inviting us to attend different seminars and training programmes. They appear as more experienced and skilled to us. As a result, it opens up the scope for them to work here as our development partner (Rajiv, 11082016).

Idris said that he does not see any postcolonial issue in this current arrangement. The suppliers' factories are giving preferences to their customers as it is the culture of our country which teaches us to show respect to our guests. He also depicted that both the suppliers and the buyers can enjoy same power while interacting with each other. In addition, while interacting with the Western buyers, the suppliers are always getting the chance to learn something from them (Idris, 11082016).

We called the Western buyers as our customers, and we respect them not as Westerners but as our valued customers. In this arrangement, they enjoy more power as both parties know that they are working under very competitive market arrangements. In this arrangement, if any suppliers' factory decline to work with buyers, other may take it as their opportunity. As

a result, to survive in this competitive market, suppliers' factories are forced to comply with all the directives of the Western buyers. This situation cannot be treated as the colonial arrangement rather it could be considered as the game of capitalism (Rahul, 13082016). We have a history of colonialism and the colonial power ruled us for about two hundred years. As a result, any oppression and domination remind us the colonial arrangement. As a result, Western buyers' pressure to the suppliers' factories in implementing their code of conduct can be identified as the Western domination which they undertake as a part of their civilising mission (Dalia, 15082016).

We are working under their huge pressure and at the same time, their product prices have been decreasing day by day. Nowadays, they are paying four dollars for the same product that we used to do for six dollars before and they are imposing many conditions as well which reminds me the previous colonial arrangement. Very often they say that they are our development partners. However, they do not participate in the costs that are born from our CSR arrangement. We make clothes for them and they cannot get rid of their responsibilities as the buyers. They are giving pressure on us to implement their code of conduct and at the same time they are reducing the price of the product, and if they are not playing this dual role, we could have been able to bring more bottom line benefits from our CSR arrangement (Ali, 15082016).

Apparently, it seems that ethics is driving the Western buyers to be humanitarian, and this is forcing them to put pressure on the Eastern suppliers to establish and maintain different worker friendly rules and norms in the factories. From the viewpoint of business, it was enough for them to consider only on the quality and the price of the products. But it seems that they have brought their humanity forward and want to make sure the safety, security and the fair wages of the workers working in their suppliers' factories. However, one may raise question on their moral behind this force when the same buyers are asking for reducing the price of the products. We have heard that they have started open bidding and giving the order to the factory that is offering the lowest price. In many cases, in order to offer them the low price, many factories are not maintaining different rules in their lives to reduce the costs of their product. As a result, this arrangement reminds us of the colonial arrangement which is essentially hindering the current CSR arrangements (Raton, 17082016).

Suza thinks that postcolonial conditions are still prevailing in the current arrangement. In the interaction, the suppliers' cannot enjoy the equal power and the buyers have started putting huge pressure on us to implement many issues at the factories. However, at the same time they are offering less price compared to their previous price. As a result, the existences of different factories are in question as they are finding difficulties in maintaining all the rules

and regulations at their factories with this low price. In this open market economy, if we do not agree, others will take the order offering poor price. As a result, the Western buyers are extracting the most of the benefits out of this situation (Suza, 20082016).

On the other hand, Reaz is neither ready to identify this arrangement as a postcolonial issue nor as a part of the civilising mission of the Western buyers. He believes that in open market economy, the core condition is competition. As a result, suppliers' factories have to stay in the competition by offering the competitive price. He does not think anyone is forcing here. In this current arrangement, the competitiveness of a country is going to determine how they will do business with their buyers. In recent time, both the backward and the forward linkages of our industry are getting stronger. The wages of the workers are lower than that of any of our competitors. The Western buyers will be with us as long we have this competitive advantage (Reaz, 18082016).

In the beginning, the Western buyers were only concerned about the quality and the shipment of the product. As a result, at the beginning, we did not pay attention to the implementation of labour law in the factories. In addition, while establishing garment factories, many of us did not consider the issues of building safety, fire safety and electrical safety. The Western buyers started imposing different conditions on us when different accidents started taking place in our garment factories. After the incidents of Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza that cost thousands of the workers' lives, the pressure of the Western buyers has changed dramatically. In this current compliance based CSR framework, it cannot be said that the suppliers and the buyers are enjoying equal power. However, their pressure could be identified as a part of their civilising mission and through this arrangement, they are trying to bring about a change in this industry which our suppliers' factories failed to bring by themselves (Alim, 21082016).

### ***6.22 3 Voices of the Top-Level Management***

Rouf also said, *“The Western buyers are forcing us to implement many CSR issues in our setting, whereas they are not bearing any financial liabilities. Moreover, in this competitive environment, they are offering the cheapest price for our products which is lower than their previous offer. As a result, it could be said the business interest is given more importance than ethics on these issues. Although some buyers are proposing the determination of a sustainable rate, they are trying to mention the survival of both the suppliers and buyers through this. Despite the discussion over this issue, no possible method has yet been developed to establish a win-win arrangement for the different parties”* (Rouf, 22082016).

Rizvi, an owner of a sweater factory who has started his business in 2000, said, *“It would be difficult to survive under these arrangements. Someone has to come forward to resolve this problem. We should reach a consensus that the factories who will observe all the directives of the Western buyers would be offered with the sustainable price of their products. However, the real situation is different; the buyers are forcing us to compete with each other for getting the lowest price. Very often the Western buyers are taking the undue advantages, and when they come to know that we do not have sufficient orders in our hand, they offer very low price as they know that for our survival we do not have any choice but accepting their offer. I have seen that many buyers are waiting for this specific situation to come for placing their order, and they do so to get the cheapest price from us”* (Rizvi, 16082016).

Rouf said that it can certainly be said that we would not be able to survive at the price presently given by many of the buyers. If they want us to comply with all the legal compliance, they have to offer us a fair price for our product. Otherwise, we have to run the factory by compromising so many things. As a result, many of the factories are under performing after accepting the job at a low rate. Our buyers do not think about these issues deeply and despite mentioning any detailed rate estimation, they are not approaching towards a sustainable rate, a fair rate, and a logical rate and at the end of the day, they move where the rate is lowest. The cost of production of the socially responsible factory and an irresponsible one has differences, and for the lowest price, if they buyer go the inferior factory, then how they can expect socially responsible behaviour from them. I don't think that the Western buyers are making the agreement without being aware of the facts. For this, I would say that business interest gets more importance than ethics to them (Rouf, 22082016).

#### **6.22.4 Voices of the Stakeholders**

Azom said the Western buyers are using this current compliance based CSR arrangement to save their faces from international criticism. In this arrangement, the Western buyers started preaching that they are selling this product at this price without any social exploitation. They are trying to catch the edge there. The buyers are advertising that, *“I'm selling this product at this price but I'm socially clean”*. These are actually their new business tactics. They are ensuring their business at the end of the day. They are not here for charity. They are increasing their brand value by spending millions on their code of conduct. They are thinking more about their brand value and less about the workers' condition. The Western buyers have kept them involved in this for their business motive. They are ultimately creating the price premium by being involved in this arrangement. The imposition of the code of conduct depends on how the buyers will ensure their supply chain, how they will protect their brand

image and value and to what extent they are planning to extend their market (Azom, 24082016).

According to Azom, *“It is the ground reality that we are poor. The buyers often forget the issue that it is not a developed country, and often they impose many issues that do not match with our social-economic and cultural context. It’s good for the Western buyers if their little investment brings changes to our country and it’s also good for them even if it doesn’t; as they will say that they have performed their duties. They know how to change the perceptions of the people. They know how much investment can save them from a great disaster. They didn’t take responsibility to save 4.4 million people. They have taken these steps to save their own faces. They have done what we couldn’t do in 35 years. They have ensured safety in our factories. They didn’t do it selflessly though. They have spent this large amount to protect their own position. Everyone is appreciating them. We have also helped them and we have been able to assure them that the factories in Bangladesh are good and they can use this source for another 15-20 years”* (Azom, 24082016).

Ahmed argued that the buyers' code of conduct could be considered as a part of their civilizing mission, as the OECD Guidelines and the UN guidelines on human rights and business have guided them in selecting these code of conduct for the suppliers' factories. In order to protect the capitalistic system, in different parts of the world, they have attempted to make some improvement for the working class to some extent. However, if you ask them to incorporate their CSR talk into their laws, they will step back. The capitalists are ready to acknowledge these issues to a certain limit but they themselves will break their code of conduct even in the Western world when the workers will try to cross their limits which the dominant class has set for them. As a result, in order to bring the bottom line benefits from the current CSR arrangement, the state has to change its role and needs to take the role of the market controller to bind this CSR arrangement with an ethical grounding (Ahmed, 25082016).

Opu said, *“I do not mind if it is a civilising mission of the Western buyer as we are benefiting from this CSR arrangement”*. They have imposed continuous pressure on us to maintain their code of conduct and compliance guidelines in our suppliers' factories which have helped to improve the conditions of the labourers. It is the pressure of the Western buyers that has helped to ensure a safe workplace for the garment workers (Opu, 25082016). According to Mishu, *“The Western buyers are using their code of conduct as a part of their civilising mission, and they are using a neo-colonial mode of control while working with these suppliers' factories in Bangladesh.”* (Mishu, 30082016).

**Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Mishu, 30082016)**

**Original Speech Act:** *The Western buyers are using their code of conduct as a part of their civilising mission (Mishu, 30082016).*

(AND/OR)

“The Western buyers think that they have a duty to civilise people.”

(AND/OR)

“The Western buyers think that it is their duties to help those who have failed to help themselves.” (OR/AND)

“The civilising mission is not considered as a good initiative.”

(OR/AND)

“The civilising mission is no longer accepted”.

**Table 17: Validity Horizon of Mishu (30082016) on Postcolonialism and the Current CSR Arrangements**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“As we failed to maintain rules by ourselves, the Western buyers’ are using their code of conduct to educate us”.	“I think the concept of civilising mission is no longer accepted”.	“The Western buyers should not use colonial mode of control while working with the Eastern suppliers”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“The Western buyers think that it is their duty to help those who have failed to help themselves.”	“I think the civilising mission is not considered as a good initiative.”	“The taken for granted nature of the current CSR arrangement should be challenged”.
<b>Background</b>	“The Western buyers have a responsibility to help the helpless, and also have a duty to civilize the savage”.	“I think we have failed to decolonise our mind, and always consider the Western buyers as superior”.	“The code of conduct should not be used as a means of Western civilising mission”.

**Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Azom, 24082016)**

**Original Speech Act:** *“It is the ground reality that we are poor. The buyers often forget the issue that it is not a developed country, and often they impose many issues that do not match with our social-economic and cultural context”.*

(AND/OR)

“Bangladesh is a poor country”.

(AND/OR)

“Buyers have the rights to impose many things in the suppliers setting”

(OR/AND)

“Buyers often ask the suppliers to implement many issues that do not match with the suppliers’ context.”

(OR/AND)

“As poor, the suppliers had no choice but implement the decisions of the Western buyers”.

**Table 18: Validity Horizon of Azom (24082016) on the Postcolonialism and the Current CSR Arrangements**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“As we failed to maintain rules by ourselves, the Western buyers’ are using their code of conduct to educate us”.	“I think the Western buyers have posted the liabilities of poorness on the suppliers’ factories in Bangladesh”.	“The poor should not be oppressed”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“The Western buyers think that it is their duty to help those who have failed to help themselves.”	“I think the liabilities of poorness produce the consent in the West that the uncivilised poor in the East had no means to control themselves”.	“The poor should make their own decisions”.
<b>Background</b>	“The Western buyers have a responsibility to help the helpless, and also have a duty to civilize the savage”.	“I think the Western buyers have taken it for granted that as the suppliers’ are poor, they are necessarily uncivilised , and it is the rights of the rich educated buyers’ to educate these uncivilised savages”.	“Western buyers should not use a colonial mode of control in their CSR arrangement.”

## 6.23 Summary

As the Western buyers have been guided by the OECD Guidelines and the UN guidelines on human rights and business in selecting their code of conduct for their suppliers’ factories, this CSR arrangement could be considered as a part of their civilizing mission. In order to protect the capitalistic system, they have attempted to make some improvement for the working class in different parts of the world, to some extent. However, if they are asked to incorporate their CSR talk into their laws, they would step back. The capitalist is ready to acknowledge these issues to a certain limit but they themselves will step back from their arrangement if the workers cross their limit that was set for them by the dominant class. As a result, in order to bring the bottom line benefits of the current CSR arrangement, the state

has to change its role and needs to take the role of the market controller to bind this CSR arrangement with an ethical grounding.

The Western buyers are using a neo-colonial mode of control while working with the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh. They are using their code of conduct as a part of their civilising mission. Apparently, it seems that the Western moral is driving the Western buyers to be humanitarians, and this is forcing them to put pressure on the Eastern suppliers to establish and maintain different worker friendly rules and norms in their factories which are eventually increasing the cost of production for the suppliers' factories. However, when the same buyers are asking for reducing the price of the product to these Eastern suppliers, the morality behind this arrangement is brought under scrutiny. The Western buyers have kept them involved in this CSR arrangement for their economic gain and they are using their code of conduct to protect their brand image. Moreover, sometimes the buyers' code of conducts contradict each other, and the current platform based audit and certification systems have created institutional complexity in the current CSR arrangement that are creating many problems in the implementation of CSR practices in the suppliers' garment factories of Bangladesh.

In many cases, in order to offer them a lower price, many factories are compromising with many rules of their lives. As a result, this arrangement reminds them the colonial mode of doing business. If the Western buyers do not play this role duality, this CSR arrangement could bring more bottom line benefits. As a result, many of them have identified this pressure as a part of their postcolonial arrangement. However, currently, many of the second and third generation factory owners have developed their capacity to challenge this taken-for-granted nature of this current compliance based CSR arrangement. As a result, many of the buyers have taken a new strategy and have started projecting them as development partners of this arrangement, which critics have identified as a part of their civilizing mission.

Bangladesh has freed herself from the colonial arrangement long before, however, the Eastern suppliers have not been able to decolonise their mind yet. As a result, in this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers have succeeded to establish their dominance over their Eastern suppliers; and for their economic gain, the Eastern suppliers have no choice but moving their tail according to the choices of their Western buyers. Many of them believe that the Western buyers are more experienced and skilled compared to them, and many of them believe that while interacting with the Western buyers, they are always getting the chance to learn something from them. As a result, in this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers have succeeded to establish their dominance over their suppliers. Moreover, as the suppliers'

factories have failed to maintain their own legal requirements by themselves while interacting with Western buyers, they could not raise their voices and often hide their faces from them. As a result, the suppliers are not enjoying equal power and the buyers have started putting immense pressure on them to implement many issues at the factories that do not support the socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh; and in order to subsist in the business, they are just moving their tail according to the choices of their Western buyers.

As a result, in this postcolonial arrangement, it is assumed that poor are necessarily uneducated, and as they are uneducated they are unavoidably uncivilised. Therefore, it is the rights of the educated civilised rich to educate these uncivilised savages. However, in order to gain control over these rights, they have successfully established their legitimacy. And, the legitimacy process has started from imposing liabilities on the poor which can be termed as liabilities of poorness. The liabilities of poorness are nothing but a legitimising process of imposition of the rules in the lives of the uncivilised poor. The liabilities of poorness produce the consent in the West that the uncivilised poor in the East had no means to control themselves. Consequently, the civilised rich gain their rights to make the decisions on their behalf. As a result, the liabilities of poorness offer the helplessness to the poor which forced them to implement the decision of others in their lives.

## **6.24 Giving Voice to the Voiceless**

*"There is freedom of speech, but I cannot guarantee freedom after speech" Idi Amin*

### **6.24.1 Giving Voices to the Voiceless Workers**

Bina said, *"I would like to continue working hard for few more years so that I could ensure a bright future for my son. I do not want my son to suffer like me and that is why I am working here. In this industry, male workers do not face many problems which a female worker has to face. Furthermore, our house rent could be considered as too expensive considering the wages paid to us. As a result, after paying the house rent, and utility bills, we have the insufficient amount of money in our hands that puts us difficulties in managing the other monthly expenses. In addition, the price hike is also considered as a problem for us. Hence, it would be appreciated if the factories could arrange our accommodation. Moreover, we cannot give our children enough time because of the laborious work schedule. It would be good if the factory helps us to educate our children. We want to work here with respect. We do not want to be abused by our superiors. If they abuse us while supervising our work, it hurts us. We respect all the staff a lot and it is expected that they should do the same. These things should be strictly monitored in the factories"* (Bina, 13082016).

Janema argued that at the beginning when I joined in the garment factory, the workplace seemed cruel to me as I had to work 12 hours a day. In addition, I had to maintain the same pace throughout the production period. As a result, during this initial period, I would consider myself as a captive. Recently, our house rent and other stuffs have become so expensive that a lot of money goes there. Moreover, I am concerned about my child's education. We, two people, work every day and get tired, and this is an everyday routine. So, I have a desire that after going home I will try to educate my child and take care of my family. In the past, we used to hear that factories did not give salaries on time. This does not happen now, and now our wages has been increased. Hence, it is clear that the government has put its eye on us. However, the increase rate of our wages is not consistent with the inflation. In addition, the increase in our wages is not consistent with the increase in our house rent. Therefore, considering the price hike, government should take necessary steps to increase our wages.(Janema, 14082016).

According to Kulsum *“I am working here, it is an irony of my fate, but I would not let my children work at such a poor salary. It is my dream that I would up bring my children in a manner so that they could lead a good life in future. I always pray to God that they would not lead a hard life like me and would not be forced to work in the garment industry. I wish they will lead a good life in the future”* (Kulsum, 16082016). Shopna said *“Garment workers do not have any financial security. If the factories arrange the provident funds for their workers, it would help us a lot while leaving the factory after working many years. Now, a worker does not get any financial benefits at her retirement. Hence, they try to save as much as possible for her future. As a result, very often they live a poor life while working in this industry. Previously, their factory had a system of provident funds. However, recently the factory has suspended this system and is no longer giving this benefit to its employees. For the betterment of the workers, the factory management should reinstall the provident fund's system”* (Shopna, 17082016).

Tithi said that her husband is suggesting her to resign. She has been working in this industry for a long period of time which is why her physical conditions do not support her anymore to work. She told her husband that she will continue her work for another two years then she will resign to take care of her children. She will shift to her village after leaving the job, and will stay with her children in the village. She has managed to save some money for her future. She does not have any other future plan. If the fate does not become worse, then she will not get back to work in the garment industry (Tithi, 23082016).

## **Special Social Problems**

Amina said, *“Some of the industrial areas are not safe for female workers. If I disclose this matter, then I might face problems. There are some outsiders who are causing trouble to some of the female workers. These kinds of things always happen here. It is happening regularly and it will continue to happen in the future. It is understood that this area is like that and there is no one here who will fight against it. All the culprits of this locality always work for the ruling party that is why no one is there to stop them. We cannot guarantee the safety of the workers on the road. We are not as safe on the road as we are inside the factory. The people of the locality should come forward. They can solve the problem easily. The law enforcement agencies know where these incidents are taking places and who are responsible for these incidents. But, they are not doing anything. Either the bribery or the corrupt political power hinders them from taking action against these crimes. There is no one to look after us. The victim can do nothing and in most of the cases, she moves to other places to save her face”* (Amina, 09082016).

### **6.24.2 Giving Voices to the Voiceless Low-Level Management**

When I asked what could be done to improve the conditions of the workers, Farida said that initiatives should be taken to reduce the working hours of the workers at first. In addition, the factories should take care of their basic needs. Especially, the factories need to ensure that their workers are not residing in substandard housings. We should help the workers in educating their children. Our factory is working on disability issue and has employed a number of physically disabled workers through CRP. Similarly, if other factories come forward by their own but not by the pressures from the buyers to contribute to the social development, we would be able to bring positive changes in the society (Farida, 08082016).

On the other hand, in answering the same question, Mina said that we should take some steps in regards to the female workers' health safely. I have observed that they always suffer from different feminine diseases. As a result, I think that we should take initiatives on this issue. Otherwise many female workers will be exposed to fatal health risk (Mina, 13082016). Liza, who had been working in this industry for the last seven years, said that we want to hear from the workers regarding their problems. We know that in many cases they cannot bring their problems to us. As a result, to know about their problems, we had installed complaint boxes in their toilets where they can drop their complaint by hiding their identities. However, we usually receive very simple types of complaint in those complaints boxes such as there is no soap in the toilet, no towel or the light is broken etc. (Liza, 27082016)

When I asked the respondents what initiatives are still needed to be taken for the betterment of the workers, Mina said that inside the factory, we have managed to ensure the safety of the female workers. However, they are not safe outside the factory premises. The society at large failed to ensure the safety of the female garment workers, and they are exposed to threats. If the factories would arrange the transport facilities for their workers or if they would arrange accommodation for the female workers, many of the problems could be solved. In addition, the factories could help the workers' to educate their children (Mina, 13082016).

She brought a new issue here and said, *“Everybody talks about the workers’ issue. The buyer, the government, and other stakeholders only talked about the workers’ issue, and nobody discusses the rights of the low-level management”*. In the garment factories, same levels of difficulties are imposed on the workers and the low-level management staffs. However, there are very little differences in the earnings between a worker and a low-level management staff. In addition, when workers are getting overtime for their extended working hours, we, the low-level management staffs are not getting anything. As such, while fixing the minimum wages for the garment workers, the government should consider and revise the salary structure of the low-level workers (Mina, 13082016).

#### ***6.24.3 Giving Voices to the Voiceless Mid-Level Management***

According to Rahman, the house rent is quite expensive for a worker and per month, a garments worker has to pay more than three thousand for a small room. As a result, if a worker works alone, it will be difficult for her to cover all the costs. Consequently, the couple of members of a family are working together in the garment factories. Therefore, the workers need some support from their owners, and if the owners could provide accommodation to these garment workers, it would help them to lead a good life. Moreover, we need to increase the skills of these garments workers. Currently, the majority of these garment workers are illiterate, and we need to take some steps to educate these workers. Otherwise, it would be difficult to increase the skills of these garment workers. In addition, we also need to help them to educate their children (Rahman, 08082016).

Alam stated that it is a common problem for the working class that they cannot spend quality time with their family members. It is very common in the garment industry that both the husband and wife work in the factory. As a result, they cannot take care of their children, and under this circumstance, they are forced to send their children to their villages. However, if they want to give their family enough time, then one of them has to quit their job which is financially not viable for these workers (Alam, 09082016). Rihan argued that the garment

workers are not consuming the balanced diet and are suffering from malnutrition. As they are working hard, they require taking the minimum intake of calories which they could not take due to the lack of time or money. Thus we have a lot of scopes to work on this special issue. Moreover, the living costs in the industrial areas are very high. As a result, a worker has to spend most of her income on house rent. As a result, if the government or the factories could take the responsibilities of their accommodation, this would help these garment workers to improve the conditions of their lives (Rihan, 09082016).

Dalia said that if the Western buyers' really want to ensure the bottom line benefits, they must increase the price of the product. Currently, they are reducing the price of the products and at the same time, are keeping the pressure on us to provide all the facilities to the workers. It should not continue like this. The goal cannot be achieved this way. This will only increase the pressure on the suppliers' factories. We can only ensure the all the facilities if they increase the price of the products. In my view, accommodation is the biggest challenge for the garment workers, and if the suppliers' factories could arrange the accommodation for their workers, it would be the best support for them. The low-level management staffs are the key driving force of the factory as they get the job done by the workers. The success of the institute depends greatly on them. However, I believe that they are being ignored in the whole process, and the conditions of these employees need to be improved (Dalia, 15082016)

Raton stated that the workers would have been highly benefitted if we could introduce the provident fund for them. It would also contribute to the sustainability of this industry as this could inspire the skilled workers to build a long career in a factory. In addition, if the factories could help their workers in providing accommodation facilities, and could offer subsidies in essential commodities, it would help them to lead a decent life. Moreover, it needs to extend the scope of medical facilities for the garment workers. In this industry, the government has taken many initiatives for the development of the workers. However, the low-level management staffs always remain outside the scope of the discussion which made their position vulnerable in the garment industry. As a result, the government has to come forward to declare a pay structure and a service rule for this low-level management staff which could offer security to these employees (Raton, 17082016).

Alim argued that in the current system, a suppliers' factory has to comply with the different code of conduct of different buyers, and they have to arrange different certifications and audits for different platforms which cost huge amount of money for the suppliers' factories. Therefore, to ensure more bottom line benefits, we need to bring changes in the current CSR arrangement. In doing so, first, we need to establish a unique code of conduct for all buyers.

In addition, we need to bring changes in the current monitoring system. In this regard, the government, the BGMEZ, BKMEA, and buyers from all different platforms need to sit together to come up with a unique code of conduct for all buyers. Henceforth, the government along with BGMEA and BKMEA has to take responsibility for the implementation of the buyers' code of conduct in the factories. Thereafter, all stakeholders have to develop a common platform for conducting the CSR audit in the suppliers' factories. If we could arrange this system, the CSR arrangement would offer more bottom line benefits (Alim, 21082016).

Anis said that minimum wages need to be reassessed as it is very hard to sustain with this money in the present market. In addition, the relationships between the workers and the employees in low-level management staff need to be developed. He argued that everyone thinks about the workers only, and no one thinks about the low-level management staffs. I believe, this low-level management staffs also suffer as like as the workers in maintaining a good life. Sometimes, they earn less than some of their skilled subordinate workers. In addition, though the workers are getting overtime for their extended work time, most of the time, these low-level management staffs are not getting any extra benefits if they work beyond their normal operating hours. For the sustainability of this industry, a separate need is to be declared for this low-level management staffs (Anis, 23082016).

#### ***6.24.4 Giving Voices of the Voiceless Top-Level Management***

Rouf said that at present, different buyers have imposed different code of conducts, different inspections, and different certification systems on the suppliers' factories. As a result, if they want to work with multiple buyers, they have to satisfy their varied demands and have to spend money for achieving several certifications, and they have to arrange various inspections by the buyers' nominated firms. As a result, despite having no special differences in the demand of different buyers, suppliers' factories have to bear many unnecessary expenses due to the differences of their inspections and certifications. In most of the cases, all these inspection costs and certification costs are to be borne by the suppliers' factories. All the parties would be benefited if the government, BGMEA, and BKMEA could initiate to bring all the buyers in a single platform and could introduce a single inspection and certification for all. If this system could be initiated, current so-called audit and certification business would come to an end. Moreover, suppliers' factories are in a continuous pressure for reducing the price, and in order to survive under this pressure, time has come to combat this issue unitedly (Rouf, 22082016).

The garment industry is fully an export oriented industry. Therefore, our buyers also have some responsibilities towards our CSR practices. In this current arrangement, only the suppliers' factories are incurring all the costs associated with these arrangements. The Western buyers only say that they are our partner, but they do not take part in the costs that are borne from the CSR arrangements. They do not even give us hope of joining in the future. We need a united effort to force the Western buyers in taking the financial liabilities of our CSR arrangements. We need a team which can lead this subject forward and we have not found the team yet. I cannot say why the factory owners are not taking this initiative. I think the factory owners should take initiatives and find a way to preserve the interest of both parties. I think BGMEA and BKMEA have to play their roles in solving this issue (Rizvi, 16082016)

#### ***6.24.5 Giving Voice to the Voiceless Stakeholders***

*According to Azom, "The moral value is zero in this current CSR arrangement. The ethical practice or moral value is only present in the paper. The business is established with the sole purpose of making profit and now the moral values are being included to protect their supply chain and their basic goal as well. They use this mask to polish their image and increase their brand value and they always want to stay ahead of their competitors. The morality is compromised in one place or another along the way. But, we should keep in mind that the main aim of the business is not to ensure the welfare of the human race, but to make profits for their owners" (Azom, 24082016).*

Azom said that CSR must not be restricted by the code of conduct. As the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh failed to do business responsibly, the Western buyers have imposed their code of conduct upon them. If a factory works for ten different buyers, it has to comply with the code of conduct of these ten different buyers. Sometimes these codes of conduct contradict with one another. One says that the height of the fire extinguisher should be 2 feet while other dictates that it should be 3 feet instead. As a result, a factory has to adjust the fire extinguisher prior to the audit of their buyers. Due to the huge pressure of code of conduct, the suppliers' factories never feel that they are doing something noble and this destroys the main spirit of the code of conduct. According to Azom, *"A work is unlikely to sustain if it is not done from self-will. But how can you protect the interest or intention within the man himself, when it is being imposed on him by the code of conduct. Thus, everyone does what is dictated in the code of conduct. They might be unmindful because of it and often leaves something important as it was not stated in the code of conduct. As such, thousands of people died in an accident in my factory because I failed to follow the needed load bearing strength of my factory building. But, how can you blame me? I followed your code of*

*conduct and it was not there. You tell me how a man can look after these when he is already overloaded” (Azom, 24082016).*

Ahmed argued that the Western buyers have established a myth in the garment industry that it is more important to follow the code of conduct than the local laws. As a result, along with the greedy buyers and suppliers, few social audit firms also have exploited this situation and have earned millions of dollars. These audit firms have always observed whether or not the dining table is clean but never thought of the food that is being served to the workers. If they had, wages for the workers wouldn't be same for 12 years. Under this arrangement, the suppliers' factories have been able to convince the government that the buyers' code of conduct has included all the rules that are required to run a factory. As a result, the government was reluctant to monitor these factories as the different social audit firms were conducting their periodic social compliance audits in these factories. However, nobody question why to follow the social compliance when legal compliance is not followed in our factories, and the international community was also satisfied until the accidents that took places in Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza. It was turned out as the greatest mistake when the building of Rana Plaza collapsed in 2013. It was found that a social audit was performed few days before the accident took place in Rana Plaza, and in that audit, everything was found to be satisfactory. However, the international community did not accuse the audit firm and the Western buyers for this mishap and imposed all the liabilities on the suppliers' factories” (Ahmed, 25082016).

Shamima said that the workers' movement can only help to make these workers free from domination. Many trade union leaders have sacrificed all of their lives in this struggle of ensuring the workers' rights in the garment industry. Many of them do not even have any family; they only live for the garment workers. For the betterment of the workers, the government should ensure that all factories are operating in line with local laws and rules. Beside this, a continued international pressure is needed to ensure the fair wages of the workers and they must help to establish the rights of these workers. In recent time, many factory owners are complaining that they are not getting the fair price for their product. Hence, the main contribution is expected from the Western buyers to protect the skilled hands of the garment workers (Shamima, 31082016).

Shamima also claimed that for the betterment of this industry, the government has to come forward to evacuate all the trade-related barriers of this industry. These barriers include the obstacles that our owners face in establishing their factories. For the owners, the government has to ensure the easy access to the term loan facilities and has to fix the low-interest rate for these term loans. In addition, all the barriers in handling LCs and the shipment should be

removed by the government. Our government is giving subsidy to the factories operating in the different EPZs; I would like to request our government to give this kind of subsidy to our garments owners. In return, the government has to ensure that the workers in the garment factories are getting direct benefits from these subsidies (Shamima, 31082016).

Shamima expressed with grief that it is our irony of fate that businessmen have started getting involved in politics which has started imposing many difficulties on the life of the working class. I believe that a businessman only needs to concentrate on her business, and must not get involved in politics. Why should a businessman get involve into politics? When a businessman gets involved in politics and sits in the parliament, the labour law and labour rules stopped functioning properly. If the businessmen become the lawmakers, in the formulation of the labour laws and the labour rules, they will definitely try to ensure their benefits first. In the current parliament, there are more than thirty members who are the owners of garments factories. Some of the ministers and the state ministers own several factories. As a result, they have succeeded in undermining different demand of the garment workers, and due to this reason, until today, we did not receive our rights to join the trade union. Thus, we failed to ensure our constitutional rights the freedom of association in the garment industry (Shamima, 31082016).

Babu argued that it is very common, that the corruption and the political power guide our people to evade different rules and regulations of the country. As a result, by avoiding the existing rules and regulations, the owners sporadically established their garment factories. It is either the money or the political power which hindered different monitoring authorities to establish the rule of law in the garment industry. There is a saying in our country that if you have political power, you are allowed to do everything. The local authorities seldom exercise their power over these people. That is why though we have different rules and regulations in our country, the ignorance of the people, the corruption, and the use of power hindered the implementation of these rules and regulations in our life (Babu, 31082016).

Babu stated that if we could keep this industry free from national politics, the trade unionism will develop here, which will serve only the purpose of the workers and the industry as a whole. Nowadays, all the factory owners have to spend a handsome amount for maintaining their affiliation with the political parties. If they are able to free themselves from this political sphere and can manage the business independently, then they will be able to save a big amount, which they can spend for the welfare of the workers. I believe that if we could make this industry free from national politics, the relationship between workers and owners will be improved. It will increase the productivity of the workers. In addition, I believe that we need to create a database of the garment workers. If we could do that, it would give us the

opportunity to gain control over the workers, and at the same time, this would help the workers to ensure their different benefits. In addition, we need to ensure that the workers are getting the benefit of the profit sharing scheme. Furthermore, it needs to ensure the yearly increments for the workers. Finally, the BGMEA should come forward to offer training for the new employees, and through this foundation training program, an attempt should be made to develop their skills, develop their knowledge regarding their rights, and develop their safety-related knowledge (Babu, 31082016).

Wahid argued that in this current arrangement we cannot come to know about environmental pollution unless the affected people or the media report on this issue. Moreover, many of these garment factories owners have become politically powerful. As a result, it has become difficult for the responsible government officials to perform their duties freely and in many cases, they are forced to compromise with the environment degradation caused by the factories. In addition, we have some problems in our existing environmental law. For instance, if a factory is penalized for an amount of BDT 5 million (USD 63056) by the mobile court for their environment pollution, the present law permit them to make an appeal to the ministry; and in most of these cases the secretary of ministry reassess the penalty from BDT 5 million (USD 63056) to BDT 0.5 million (USD 6305.6) as factory owners are politically powerful. As a result, in most of the cases, the current arrangement fails to bring the expected result (Wahid, 28082016).

Mishu argued that in order to ensure the bottom line benefits the role of the government needs to be changed first. However, the current role of government is highly doubted as the factory owners have become politically powerful and many of them are sitting in the current parliament. The government needs to offer a democratic labour law. In this current arrangement, only 2-3 percent workers have learnt to raise their voices while the rest 97 percent have not and the scenario will not change unless they get their rights to join the trade union. No development is possible if the government does not come forward to solve the workers' issues. Moreover, the BGMEA and BKMEA should have to change their mindset to support the bottom line benefits. They must understand that it is inhumane and undemocratic not to let the workers join the trade union. They should keep the national interest in their mind which they're not doing. In addition, the role of our civil society and NGOs are missing here which can also contribute to this process. However, it is the ground reality that our civil society is also politically biased. As a result, it is hard to expect neutral judgment from them. (Mishu, 30082016)

Babu said that we have not suddenly started respecting our rules and regulations. We are respecting our rules and regulation, due to the fact that our Western buyers have clearly

declared that the failure will discard the relationship. In addition, in order to verify whether or not we are maintaining these rules in our lives and to give support in implementing these rules in our lives, they have installed a consultation, monitoring, and evaluation system. As a result, under a huge pressure, our factories are implementing different directives of their Western buyers, and our factories, as well as the industry, are making the enormous improvement. Though the government of Bangladesh has established these rules for many years and also has created the monitoring authority, we have failed to establish these rules in our lives by our own. We have all the laws that are needed to support the state, but the enforcement of these laws is very weak. The government has established institutions to oversee the implementation of these laws, but they have not succeeded to operate properly. In the past, different factories were established in different residential buildings, and people did not know that we have a building code name BNBC which needs to be followed in constructing the building. As a result, building owners never paid their attention to BNBC code while constructing their building; that resulted in the biggest accident of the modern time, which cost a thousand lives in Rana Plaza accident (Babu, 31082016).

Chowdhury said that there are almost 5 million workers are working in this industry, and there is no doubt that they are harassed in their workplaces. It is also true that current wages are not enough to lead a decent life. The substandard accommodation and the low calories intake are causing mental and physical pressure upon these workers. Besides, they cannot perform their family role properly due to the long working hours. They cannot even properly take care of their children. In addition, the society and its different instruments are not giving them the needed attention. Despite these anomalies, they are working day and night which is contributing to the development of this industry. As a result, now I think that the time has come to look at them. By establishing their rights to form the trade union, we should give them the opportunity to raise their voice in the workplace. Healthy habitats have to be arranged for them. It is needed to arrange the education of their children. In addition, a welfare fund should be formed for these garment workers. If we really want to make improvement of the life of these garment workers, we need to arrange a tripartite framework of government, employers, and worker, and this tripartite body should work together for the betterment of the industry as a whole. In this regard, we need to identify the different anomalies between the garment workers and workers from different sectors and need to take action for the equalization of their benefits. If we could ensure the above-mentioned issue, I believe the condition of the garment workers will improve gradually (Chowdhury, 05092016).

**Meaning Reconstruction of the Speech Act (Azom, 24082016)**

**Original Speech Act:** “Thousands of people died in an accident in my factory because I failed to follow the needed load bearing strength of my factory building. But, how can you blame me? I followed your code of conduct and it was not there”.

(AND/OR)

“Thousands of people died in an accident that took place in a supplier’s factory”.

(AND/OR)

“The suppliers’ factories are strictly following the buyers’ code of conduct”.

(AND/OR)

“The building safety issue was not included in the buyers’ code of conduct”.

(OR/AND)

“The suppliers’ factories only follow the buyers’ code of conduct”.

(AND/OR)

“The code of conduct is an important tool which guides the suppliers’ factories to run their businesses”.

**Table 19: Validity Horizon of Azom (24082016) on the Giving Voice to the Voiceless**

	<b>Possible objective claims</b>	<b>Possible subjective claims</b>	<b>Possible normative-evaluative claims</b>
<b>Foreground</b>	“Accident in garment industry caused thousand lives in Bangladesh”.	“I think that the suppliers’ factories are reluctant to observe the issues that are not stated in their buyers’ code of conduct”.	“Accidents in the garment factories are not desirable”.
<b>Intermediate</b>	“The code of conduct is an important tool which guides the suppliers’ factories to run their businesses”.	“I think that the government has a strong role to play when it comes to the issue of ensuring workers’ safety at the garment factories”.	“We should ensure the safety of the garment workers”.
<b>Background</b>	“The building safety issue was not included in the buyers’ code of conduct”.	“In think that the government has left the garment industry into the hand of Western buyers”.	“Workers safety should be addressed in the buyer’s code of conduct”.

**6.25 Summary**

Most of the respondents from the workers were found to be voiceless. Almost all of them said that they do not have any problem in their work life, and are very happy with the current arrangements. Some of them argued that in some cases the arrangement has exceeded their expectations. However, when they were asked whether they would let their children work in

this industry, they said that they do not want their children to suffer like them. To ensure a better life for their children, they were ready to suffer all the hardship. As they are not getting the chance to offer proper guidance to their children, it would be good for them if the factory could help them in educating their children. Moreover, they demanded their respect in the workplaces, and they do not want to be abused by their superiors at their workplaces.

There are almost 5 million workers working in this garment industry, and there is no doubt that many difficulties are still imposed on them. The current wages are not enough to lead a decent life. The substandard accommodation and the low calories intake are causing mental and physical pressure upon these garment workers. Besides, they cannot perform their family role properly due to the long working hours. They cannot even properly take care of their children. Despite these anomalies, they are working day and night which is contributing to the development of this industry. As a result, time has come to look at them. By establishing their rights to join the trade union, they should be given the opportunity to raise their voice in their workplaces. Healthy habitat, provident funds, and healthcare facilities needed to be arranged for them. In this regard, the role of our civil society and NGOs are missing which can also contribute to this process. However, it is the ground reality that the civil society is also politically biased. As a result, it is hard to expect a neutral judgment from them.

As the suppliers' factories have failed to do business responsively, the Western buyers have imposed their code of conduct upon them. Moreover, it is the ground reality that Bangladesh is a developing country, and the buyers often impose many inconsistent issues that do not match the suppliers' social-economic and cultural context. If a factory works for ten different buyers, it has to comply with the code of conduct of these ten different buyers. Sometimes these codes of conduct contradict with one another. One says that the height of the fire extinguisher should be 2 feet while other dictates that it should be 3 feet instead. As a result, a factory has to adjust the fire extinguisher prior to the audit of their buyers. Due to the huge pressure of code of conduct, the suppliers' factories never feel that they are doing something noble and this destroys the main spirit of the code of conduct.

An initiative is unlikely to sustain if it is not done from self-will. But how can the suppliers' factories protect the interest or intention within themselves, when it is being imposed on them by the code of conduct. Thus, everyone does what is dictated in the code of conduct. They might be unmindful because of it and often missed something important as it was not stated in the code of conduct. As such, thousands of people died in an accident in the suppliers' factories because they failed to follow the needed load bearing strength of their factory building. But, how can they be blamed? They followed all the code of conduct of

their Western buyers and it was not stated there. How could the suppliers look after these issues when they were already overloaded with the code of conduct?

The Western buyers have established a myth in the garment industry that it is more important to follow the code of conduct than the local laws. As a result, along with the greedy buyers and suppliers, few social audit firms also have exploited this situation and have managed to earn millions of dollars. These audit firms have always observed whether the dining table was clean but never thought of the food that were being served to the workers. If they had, wages for the workers wouldn't be same for 12 years. Under this arrangement, the suppliers' factories have been able to convince the government that the buyers' code of conduct has included all the rules that are required to run a factory. As a result, the government was reluctant to monitor these factories as the different social audit firms were conducting their periodic social compliance audits in these factories.

However, nobody questions about why to follow the social compliance when legal compliance is not followed in the suppliers' factories, and the international community was also satisfied until the accidents that took places in Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza. It turned out as the greatest mistake when the building of Rana Plaza collapsed in 2013. It was found that a social audit was performed a few days before the accident took place in Rana Plaza, and in that audit, everything was found to be satisfactory. However, the international community did not accuse the audit firm and the Western buyers for this mishap and imposed all the liabilities on the suppliers' factories.

Moreover, it is the irony of fate that many of the garment owners have started getting involved in politics which started imposing many difficulties on the life of the working class. When a businessman gets involved in politics and sits in the parliament, the labour law and labour rules stop functioning properly. If the businessmen become the lawmakers, in the formulation of the labour laws and the labour rules, they would definitely try to ensure their benefits first. In the current parliament, there are more than thirty members who are the owners of garments factories. Some of the ministers and the state ministers own several factories. As a result, they have succeeded in undermining different demand of the garment workers, and due to this reason, until today, they did not receive their constitutional rights to join the trade union. Nowadays, all the factory owners are spending a handsome amount for maintaining their affiliation with the political parties. If they are able to free themselves from this political sphere and can manage the business independently, then they would be able to save a big amount, which they could spend for the welfare of their workers.

In the current system, a suppliers' factory has to comply with the different code of conduct of different buyers, and they have to arrange different certifications and audits for different platforms which cost a huge amount of money for the suppliers' factories. Therefore, to ensure more bottom line benefits, we need to bring changes in the current CSR arrangement. In doing so, first, we need to establish a unique code of conduct for all buyers. In addition, we need to bring changes in the current monitoring system. In this regard, the government, the BGMEZ, BKMEA, and buyers from all different platforms need to sit together to come up with a unique code of conduct for all buyers. Henceforth, the government along with BGMEA and BKMEA has to take responsibility for the implementation of the buyers' code of conduct in the factories. Thereafter, all stakeholders have to develop a common platform for conducting the CSR audit in the suppliers' factories. If we could arrange this system, the CSR arrangement would offer more bottom line benefits.

## **Chapter Seven: Discussion and Implications**

**Chapter Summary:** This chapter will present the discussions of the findings and the last two stages of analysis. The chapter is organized by starting with a discussion of the research findings followed thereafter with an attempt to discover system relations and social systems respectively.

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I first present the discussion, and thereafter will present the stages four and five of my analysis. In the discussion section, with the aim of emancipating the oppressed, the discussion of the findings will be made in light of the existing body of knowledge. Thereafter, in stage four, I will examine system relations between specific sites and thereafter, in stage five, an attempt will be made to examine the significance of the study in terms of a macro-sociological theory (Carspecken 1996, 206). In order to determine the system relations, I will be searching for routine activities and will be examining the communicative interactions of the participants across multiple contexts. Finally, using theoretical concepts, an attempt will be made to alter, challenge, and refine the macro-sociological theories (Carspecken 1996, 172).

### **7.2 Discussion**

The focus of this study was on how local suppliers understand and cope with the demands from their multinational contractors to implement localised CSR policies. In this study, as a critical ethnographer, I invoked a call for action in addition to the presentation of knowledge, and thus invited social change (Thomas 1993, 4). In doing so, I have accepted the basic assumptions that all thoughts are socially and historically constructed and these thoughts are fundamentally mediated by power relations. Furthermore, as a criticalist, I also believe that certain groups in any society have greater privileges than others have and the subordinate groups usually accept their social status as inevitable and natural. However, society forcefully enforces oppression, when they receive challenges from the oppressed group (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005, 304). In addition, following the suggestions of Madison (2005) and (Willis 2008), I went beyond the general process of identifying the unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain and made an attempt to move from "what is" to "what could be" (Thomas 1993; Carspecken 1996). As a result, in the following section, with the aim of emancipating the oppressed, the discussion of the findings will be made in the context of the present body of knowledge.

### ***7.2.1 The Paradigm Shifts***

The garment industry of Bangladesh began in the late 1970s, and the CSR as an institution brought multiple paradigm shifts to the garment industry of Bangladesh. The first paradigm, in which the CSR institution was missing, could be termed the ‘extraction and exploitation’ paradigm in which the garment industry owners were given license to maximise their short-term profits at the expense of everything else. During this period, while receiving generous and unlimited assistance from the state, the suppliers’ literally observed no rules in their settings (Rahman and Langford 2014). Moreover, the corruption and the weak institutional arrangements have helped these suppliers’ factories in Bangladesh evade any of the legal requirements (TIB 2013; Belal and Roberts 2010). The first paradigm shift occurred at the beginning of the 21st century when some skilled and educated professionals entered this sector and Western buyers started imposing their code of conduct in the suppliers’ garments factories in Bangladesh.

The second paradigm could be termed the ‘expansion and recognition’ paradigm. In this paradigm, the RMG industry started to expand as the production methods moved from household operations to large factories, and at the same time garment workers received recognition in the formal labourer sector. After the Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza tragedies, the current isomorphic pressures brought a new paradigm shift, which can be termed the ‘restructuring and awareness’ paradigm. In this case, to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad, the industry started restructuring their facilities to ensure the safety of the workers, and consequently, the awareness of the workers has started to build. However, in Bangladesh, the government has yet to strengthen the expertise to assess the CSR arrangements in the garment industry (Belal and Roberts 2010; Rahman and Langford 2014; Rahim 2016). A forthcoming paradigm could be the ‘partnership and fairness’ paradigm where the workers in this industry are free from domination and their quality of life would improve therein. However, many things will need to change to reach that level.

### ***7.2.2 Workers’ Rights in the Garment Industry***

This study has found that in the late 1970s, when the garment industry became established that period could be characterised as the golden age for trade unionism in Bangladesh. During this period, at the factory level, there were some strong trade unions in some of the garment factories. Problems started to arise after the fire incident that took place in the Saraka garment factory back in 1990. Like at Rana Plaza, the accident at Saraka was also discussed and criticised both nationally and internationally. As a result, the caretaker government at that time dismantled the workers’ movement by means of extreme

harassment, arrests, and other outrages by law enforcement agencies. As a result, the trade union movement retreated from organizing workers within the garment industry for a while. As a result, many garment workers federations were developed outside of the factories and many trade union leaders also had to leave and could not spread their activities inside the factories. After 2005, union activities returned to this industry, as by this time, the workers confidence was restored. Meanwhile, a BGMEA arbitration committee was formed and a forum was established to sit along with the union leaders regularly. Recognition for the trade union came not at the factory level but outside and even now, the workers' movement of the garment industry means the movement outside of the factories.

The garment industry of Bangladesh has now existed for 35 years. Though, the constitution of Bangladesh has given the workers the right to join the trade union, the workers in the garment industry cannot enjoy these rights inside their factories (Sharma 2015). This issue was raised by the international media after the accidents that took places at Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza, and many countries criticized the Bangladesh government on this issue. As a result, in order to ensure the representation of garment workers, the government made a new rule for the garment industry instructing them to form a Workers' Participation Committee (WPC) in each of their factories. However, the reality is the owners select their factory's WPC members, and they remove any members if they try to build a close relationship with the workers. Moreover, more recently, a number of factories also have established trade unions in their factories. However, only a trade union federation is able to form trade unions inside the factories, which are backed by a powerful minister of the present government.

The majority of the current trade union leaders have come up through the labour movement of 2005. However, not a single organisation exists at the national level to protect workers who become involved in the labour movement. As a result, very often workers involved in the labour movement become targets of factory management and suffer retribution. If a group of workers are fired for participating in trade union activities, no one will come forward to help them. The media are more interested in covering the news of industrial accidents than reporting on distressed workers. Hence, there is no place for them to go. Neither are these workers getting support from opposition parties, nor are the ruling party leaders helping them to fight for their issues. All the actions of the political parties and governments have refused to support these garment workers. There have been a number of reports claiming the workers' leaders in the garment industry are tortured, abused and a few of the leaders were even murdered in Bangladesh (Rahman and Langford 2014). As a result, today, workers in this industry avoid union activities (Meenakshi Ramesh 2014).

This study has found that in their thirty-five years of struggle, the garment workers have failed to establish their right to join a trade union. There have been reports that the workers are either fired or charged with phony cases of theft when they demand to establish their rights in the factories. As a result, after struggling for days starving, facing gangsters, industrial police, and the owners themselves, many labour leaders grew weary and were forced to compromise. However, it would not be rational to claim any of these trade union leaders as a ‘puppet’ leader without evaluating their contribution to the different labour movements.

### ***7.2.3 Bottom Line Benefits***

This study shows that the current compliance based CSR arrangement has succeeded in establishing many bottom line benefits. The workers’ pay has increased. Moreover, due to the implementation of the buyers’ code of conduct in the suppliers’ factories, workers have started receiving many more benefits, which they did not enjoy in the past. The industry has made considerable progress on issues like forced labour, fair payment for overtime, safety and security of the workers, maternity benefits, medical facilities, childcare facilities, protection from sexual harassment and gender discrimination. In addition, due to pressure to do more to protect the environment, the suppliers’ factories were forced to comply with the new environmental protection arrangement, and many of the factory owners have established world-class ‘green’ factories in Bangladesh. Consequently, both the workers and the environment have started benefiting from this current arrangement.

However, this study has also found that while formulating their code of conduct, the Western buyers have considered their own socio-economic conditions and reality (Islam and Deegan 2008; Belal and Roberts 2010; Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014). Therefore, there is no reason to believe these initiatives will bring the desired bottom line benefits in the developing country context. In addition, this industry has not yet established the constitutional rights of its workers and has restricted trade union membership (Sharma 2015). As a result, their voices remain silent in this current arrangement. By examining the current arrangement, it can be concluded the current system essentially was installed to secure the joint interests of the buyers and the factory owners but, which have undermined the basic standards of CSR (Visser 2008; Rahim 2016). Though the government has increased wages recently, this increase has not contributed much to increasing the standard of living of these garments workers (Hensler 2013; Meenakshi Ramesh 2014), and many workers have had to sacrifice having a family life in exchange for making a living working for the industry. As a result, though the current arrangement has brought some positive

changes within the suppliers' factories, it has failed to add the expected benefits to the bottom line.

Western buyers have compelled the suppliers' factories to compete with each other in order to achieve the lowest production costs. Very often, the Western buyers have taken advantage of this situation and when they realize the suppliers' factories do not have sufficient orders to maintain their current production schedule, they negotiate very low prices as the Western MNCs know in order to survive, the suppliers have no other choice but to accept any offer. Many buyers even wait for this specific situation to occur before placing their orders, and they do so, to negotiate the cheapest prices from the suppliers' factories. As a result, in many cases, in order to offer the MNCs the lowest price, many garment factories have compromised many of the rules agreed to earlier. Additionally it is well documented this particular business strategy of low cost production has resulted in many adverse social, ethical, and environmental impacts in developing countries (Cairns and Roberts 2007; Visser 2008; Tobin 2013; Taplin 2014; Rahim 2016). If the Western buyers would adopt a more worker-centered approach, this CSR arrangement could create more triple-bottom line benefits. More recently, many of the second and third generation factory owners have developed their capacity to challenge this taken-for-granted attitude of this current compliance-based CSR arrangement. However, in this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers are not ready to compromise their policy of lowest cost sourcing, which has functioned as a competitive advantage for these firms and some of these Western firms have remained silent and continue to exploit these questionable local conditions (Arrigo 2013).

This study has found the garment industry has caused significant environmental damage in Bangladesh (Belal, Khan and Alam 1998). Though the Environment Protection Act was established in Bangladesh in 1995, much of the public interest litigation has determined many of the manufacturing units in Bangladesh were established without consideration for the environmental Act or public interest. This study has found the unwillingness by the garment industry to operate an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) is perhaps the biggest environmental challenge for the garment industry. Though many factories have constructed ETPs according to the law, they do not manage them accordingly (Sarker 2011). For this reason, the sweatshops have discharged untreated water along with their used chemical wastage into nearby rivers and canals which is a serious community health matter. Moreover, due to a shortage of resources, the Department of Environment has been unable to manage this problem. the factories are generally aware when inspections will be scheduled and run their ETP properly on the day of inspection and very often they exercise corrupt practices to collect an acceptable testimony from the authorities (Sarker 2011; Rahim 2016).

#### ***7.2.4 Economic Emancipation and Empowerment***

This study has found the garment industry has brought a revolutionary change to the country by employing millions of female workers, and to some extent, it has helped to bring economic freedom to these female workers. Consequently, this new economic freedom for female workers has helped to promote women's empowerment in Bangladeshi society. Many of these female workers can now freely spend their earnings on whatever they choose. As a result, their position in society has changed and they have succeeded in establishing their voices in the current social system and this can be characterised as progress towards women empowerment. Many of the women working in this industry have made remarkable progress towards greater empowerment, which other women in Bangladesh society have failed to achieve. However, they will be truly empowered when the dominant class of society has removed all of the barriers for these people.

This study has found economic emancipation and empowerment do not go hand in hand, and the social construction of reality is not supportive enough to promote greater empowerment for these female garment workers. Males have been generally unwilling to share power with these oppressed women and empowering themselves in society has been difficult. As a result, many of these female workers are forced to hand over their wages to their husbands or to another male principal. In many cases, if a female worker refuses to hand over their wages to the male figure, they have been brutally attacked which has often led to the woman leaving the family. To date, the opinions of the women in the home, as well as in the workplaces, have been mostly ignored. In addition, the female workers in this industry have not been trained to take a leadership position in their workplaces. As a result, women assuming a leadership position rarely happen. However, this situation has started to change gradually as more educated female workers have joined this industry, which was not seen before. Therefore, these working women have started raising their voices in their homes as well as in their workplaces which would likely help democratize society and improve the freedom of these working-class people. Hence, it could be expected that in the near future working women would be able to empower themselves.

This study has shown though the garment industry has made a significant contribution to the national economy, it has contributed very little to various international development indexes of the marginalized communities in the country. By working in this industry, millions of unfortunate workers have managed to gain some economic freedom. They have been able to support their families and to some extent, they have managed to improve their living standard and purchasing power. However, this financial achievement came with great sacrifices. Long working hours have sucked the marrow out of their lives, given them

loneliness, the pain of sexual harassment or the fear of being sexually harassed and many other social discriminations (Akhter et al. 2010; Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014).

These garment workers are delighted to receive their salaries at the end of the month but there is also the fear of an uncertain future. They search for a more secure future, which often remains elusive. They continue working to bring some happiness to their families. They keep working for their old parents or for their offspring who are being raised in the village. No work seems too difficult for them. No obstacles will stop them on their journey. No colourful dresses they made can bring colour in their lives. Their lives remain trapped in a black and white frame, and no pain can stop them as they have many 'promises to keep'.

### ***7.2.5 Emancipating the Oppressed: Giving Voice to the Voiceless***

This study has found that there are almost 5 million workers working in the garment industry, and there is no doubt that many difficulties are still imposed on them (Akhter et al. 2010; Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014; Meenakshi Ramesh 2014). The current workers' wages are not enough to lead a decent life (Hensler 2013; Meenakshi Ramesh 2014; Ullah 2015). The cheap substandard accommodation combined with a low cost, low calorie diet has caused significant mental and physical stress for these garment workers. Moreover, they cannot perform their family role at home properly due to the long working hours (Sharma 2015), for example the workers cannot even properly take care of their children. Despite these difficulties, they work day and night, which has contributed to the development of this industry. By establishing their rights to join a trade union, the workers should be given the opportunity to raise their voices in their workplaces. Safe working conditions, provident funds, and healthcare facilities need to be arranged for them. In this regard, the normal role of civil society and NGOs are missing, which has also contributed to the problematic working environment. However, the reality is the civil society in Bangladesh is also politically biased. As a result, it is hard to expect a neutral judgment from them.

This study has determined many changes have occurred in the garment industry of Bangladesh. The facilities and safety at the factories have improved significantly and now, the workers are at ease in the factories compared to the past. Moreover, workers' wages have increased recently however, the lives of the workers have become more difficult as the suppliers' factories are now demanding higher productivity from their employees. The newly established industrial management department has begun treating the workers like machines and forcing workers to meet higher production targets. As a result, the Taylorism like production system, which was accused for its inhumanity in the Western world, has been reborn in the garment industry of Bangladesh, and no one appears able to effectively

challenge this system. In the current context, it would be very difficult to separate the machine from the lives of these garment workers. As a result, the workers are forced to work longer hours to meet their higher production target (Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014).

This study has established that in the garment industry, a worker's dignity, and quality of life had a dialectical relationship with the wages paid to these garment workers. Workers in some factories have to surrender their dignity and a moderate quality of life in exchange for toiling for a longer working day. The lives of these workers who have been employed in these factories have become more stressful. However, workers in other factories have been able to maintain their social life, as the factories do not force them to work for an extended period. Nevertheless, the first group of workers will earn twice as much the second group of workers. In so doing, the second group's extended working hours have imposed many difficulties in their lives. As a result, most of the workers from this group are planning to return to their village after working for 8 to 10 years and are dreaming of making a brand new start with the money they have saved from their hard work in the factory. On the other hand, the second group of workers who have enjoyed some flexibility in their work lives are planning to establish a longer career in this industry.

This study has established it is a matter of debate whether workers choose to work longer working hours for an increase in salary or they prefer to enjoy more social and family life by choosing not to engage in excessive overtime. This study has identified many workers who tried to escape from long working hours and has also identified workers who are very eagerly waiting to work for extended hours. However, workers may not have any work scheduling options to choose, if someone is happy with less income and fewer working hours, they might not find a job in any of the factories that fulfil their needs. This may also be true for workers who need to work more overtime by sacrificing their comfort. In the present system, capitalists have the liberty to choose where to invest; however, the labourers have no option to choose. As a result, it is the prerogative of the employers to decide what type of life they will offer to their workers.

This study has realized that as the suppliers' factories have failed to do business responsively, the Western buyers have imposed their codes of conduct upon them. Moreover, the buyers often impose many inconsistent programs that do not harmonize with the suppliers' socio-economic and cultural context (Islam and Deegan 2008; Belal and Roberts 2010; Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014). If a factory needs to work with ten different buyers, it has to comply separately with each of the codes of conduct of these ten different buyers. Moreover, sometimes the buyers' code of conduct contradicts each other, and the current platform-based audit and certification system has created institutional complexity,

which has created many problems in the implementation of CSR policies in the suppliers' garments factories in Bangladesh. As a result, occasionally, a factory has to adjust their arrangements prior to audit by their buyers. Due to the significant pressure to comply with the code of conduct, the suppliers' factories never feel they are doing something principled and this destroys the moral spirit of the code of conduct.

This study has discovered that an initiative is unlikely to be self-sustaining if it is not done from self-interest. However, how can the suppliers' factories protect the interests or intentions within themselves, when it is being externally imposed on them as a mandatory code of conduct? Thus, everyone follows what has been dictated in the code of conduct. They might be unmindful and miss something equally important, as it was not stated in the code of conduct. As such, thousands of people died in an accident in a suppliers' factory because the management failed to follow the required load bearing strength of their factory building. However, how can you blame them? They followed their buyers' code of conduct and it was not stated there. It was found that a social audit was performed a few days before the accident took place in Rana Plaza, and in that audit, everything was determined to be satisfactory. However, the international community did not accuse the audit firm or the Western buyers for this mishap and imposed all the liabilities on the suppliers' factory managers and owners.

Furthermore, this study has determined the Western buyers have established a myth in the garment industry that it is more important to follow the code of conduct than the local laws. As a result, some social audit firms and certification agencies have exploited this situation and have managed to earn millions of dollars. These audit firms always observe whether the workers' dining table was clean but have never thought of the food served to these workers. If they had, the life of the workers would be improved after implementing the code of conduct in the suppliers' factories. Under this arrangement, the suppliers' factories have been able to convince the government the buyers' code of conduct has included all the rules that are required to run a factory. As a result, until recently, the government was reluctant to monitor these factories as the social audit firms had been conducting their periodic social compliance audits in these factories.

This study has determined that many of the garment owners have become involved in local politics (Taplin 2014) which has led to many difficulties in the lives of the working class (Muhammad 2011; Rahim 2016). This study has discovered that in a developing country context, when a businessman becomes involved in politics and sits in the parliament, labour laws and rules quickly begin to favour business interests over labour interests. When businessmen become lawmakers, the formulation of labour laws and rules are usually written

to ensure capitalists benefits first. In the current Bangladesh parliament, more than 30 members are owners of garment factories (Taplin 2014). Some of the ministers and state ministers own several factories. As a result, these politician-businessmen have succeeded in undermining the demands of the garment workers (Muhammad 2011), who consequently, have yet to receive their constitutional right to join a trade union (Sharma 2015). This study has found that now, most factory owners spend a significant amount of resources maintaining their affiliation with the political parties. If these business owners would free themselves from this political influence-buying and instead manage their businesses more independently, then they would be able to use the money to improve the welfare of their workers.

Moreover, this study has found a number of garment owners have become very powerful. Some of these capitalists have controlling interests in print and electronic media, which has expanded their influence in society (Rahim 2016). Moreover, this study has found when the sweatshop owners introduced their CSR activities in the media, which they had controlling shares in; they did not hesitate to arrange a ‘disability parade’, instructing disabled workers to display their helplessness in front of the cameras. In doing so, the sweatshop owners never sought the disabled workers’ permission before videotaping their helplessness. Asking physically disabled workers to go on parade and videotape the event without receiving their consent is not only inhuman, but also should be considered as a punishable offense. This taken-for-granted attitude of the dominant class often undermines the principal spirit of their CSR initiatives and is often counter-productive.

This study shows that in the current system, a suppliers’ factory has to comply with each of the various codes of conduct from the buyers, and the factory owners have to arrange different certifications and social audits for different platforms, which is a considerable expense for these suppliers’ factories. Therefore, to ensure greater benefits, the MNC buyers need to change the current CSR arrangement. In doing so, first, the Western buyers need to establish a culturally specific code of conduct for their suppliers’ factories in Bangladesh. In addition, there needs to be a change in the current monitoring system. In this regard, the government, the BGMEA, BKMEA, different stakeholders and buyers from all the platforms need to sit together to come up with a culturally specific code of conduct for the suppliers’ factories. Moreover, the government, along with BGMEA and BKMEA must take responsibility for the implementation of the buyers’ code of conduct in the suppliers’ factories. Thereafter, including all stakeholders, a common platform needs to be developed for conducting the CSR audit in the suppliers’ factories. If possible, the CSR arrangement would necessarily offer more bottom line benefits.

### **7.3 Stage Four: System Relations**

In stage four, I looked for the relationships between social sites. As a result, in this stage, the sites and cultural groups were my primary focus of analysis. Stages one and two are discussed comprehensively in chapter five, where I made the preliminary reconstructive analysis of the primary record I generated by engaging with several ethnographic sites. Moreover, in stage three, which was presented in chapter six, the reconstructive analysis and the horizon analysis were made for the dialogical data generation. In this chapter, to analyse routine activities, which are needed to develop system relations, I examined my earlier cultural reconstructions I made in stages one through three. Consequently, I tried to provide evidence to support my claim I had found system relationships at the social sites (Carspecken 1996, 197-198).

In this investigation, I was engaged in participant observation in 17 garment factories located in industrial zones. In addition, in my interviews I tried to include all the key informants, and interviewed workers, representatives of workers participation committee, welfare officers, CSR managers, chief executive officers, owners, BGMEA representatives, owners of the buying house, safety engineers of Alliance, inspectors of department of inspection for factories and establishments, trade union leaders, NGO representatives, political leaders, journalists, and educators. In this regard, I had to visit locations such as factories, corporate offices, the BGMEA office, NGO offices, trade union offices, and residences of the respondents. These field procedures helped me to discover the unmonitored system loops at the research sites (Carspecken 1996, 198).

#### ***7.3.1 System Relations in the CSR Arrangements***

In order to determine the system relations in the CSR arrangements, first, one needs to identify the various actors of the system. From the communicative acts observed and the subsequent reconstructive analysis in stages one through three, the current CSR arrangement in the garment industry of Bangladesh could be characterised as a code of conduct based or compliance-based CSR arrangement (Khan and Lund-Thomsen 2011), and in this institutional arrangement, the buyers' code of conduct governs the CSR practices of the suppliers' factories. The term compliance is used to represent whether or not the buyers' code of conduct is observed in the suppliers' factories (Sharma 2015). In this institutional arrangement, it is presumed that factories in compliance are upholding the buyers' code of conduct in their settings. In this compliance-based CSR arrangement, in order to maintain relationships with Western buyers, the suppliers' factories have to comply with the buyers'

code of conduct, and failure to do so will essentially lead to losing global market shares (Sharma 2015).

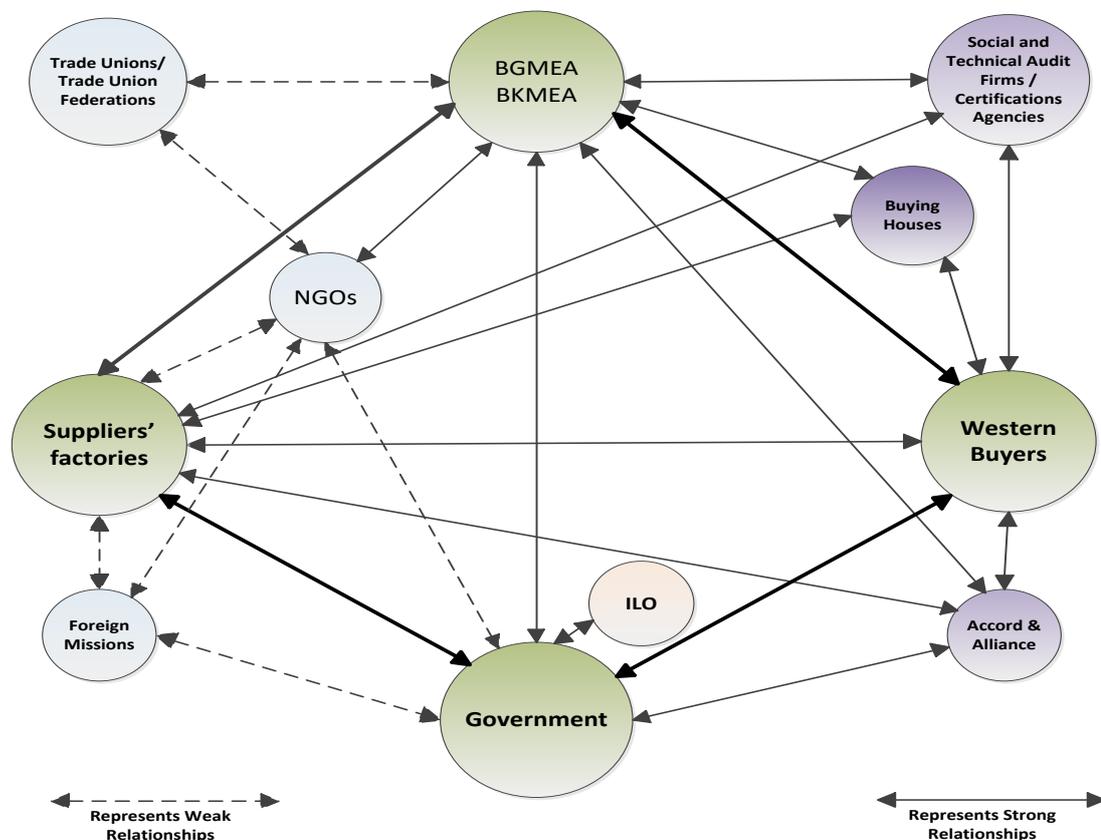
In this compliance-based CSR arrangement, the Western buyers continuously pressure suppliers' factories to comply with their code of conduct. Moreover, Western buyers have developed a mechanism to oversee the implementation of their code of conduct in the context of their suppliers' factories. In doing so, sometimes the Western buyers themselves have personally verified their suppliers' factories. However, in most cases, the buyers' have nominated audit firms to do the tasks on behalf of the Western buyers. In addition, the Western buyers also demand a certification from their suppliers' factories. As a result, this situation has forced suppliers' factories to observe the buyers' code of conduct and if the suppliers' factories wish to continue working for these Western buyers, they have no choice but to comply with the buyers' code of conduct.

All Western buyers in this study appear to have their own codes of conduct. However, Western buyers have developed individual platforms for their specific purposes, and they are grouped under these unique platforms. Based on these platforms, Western buyers have nominated audit firms and certification authorities for their suppliers' factories. Therefore, these platforms represent the grouping of the Western buyers in using third party audit firms and certification authorities for their suppliers' factories in Bangladesh. As a result, if a suppliers' factory wants to work for multiple buyers with different platforms, it has to be audited and certified by audit firms and certification agencies nominated by their buyers. As implementation based on the laws of the land is one of the major components of the code of conduct, the government has a role to play. As a result, the government has also tried to ensure whether the suppliers' factories are adhering to local laws. Along with the ILO, other government agencies have worked on this issue (Rajiv, 11082016). However, the employers' associations BGMEA and BKMEA have also played a major role in the CSR arrangement. Among these two apex organisations, the BGMEA is considered the most powerful body, and has not only acted as a watchdog to the CSR arrangement but has also established relationships with Western buyers, the government, suppliers' and other stakeholders.

The Western buyers are the main stakeholders of this CSR arrangement as they deliver the code of conduct to the suppliers' factories. As the buying houses have helped Western buyers source the cheapest products, the majority of the Western buyers' have preferred to source through these buying houses (Opu, 25082016). As these buying houses have performed many duties on behalf of the Western buyers, they are often treated similar to that of a Western buyer by the suppliers' factories. Hence, these buying houses are also a stakeholder of this current CSR arrangement. In this CSR arrangement, some NGOs and

foreign missions have also worked with their CSR initiatives (Rouf, 22082016). However, their roles in this arrangement have been very insignificant.

The right of the garment workers to join a trade union has not been recognised in the garment industry yet (Shamima, 31082016). In a recent study, Meenakshi Ramesh (2014) has also claimed trade union activities have been regulated strictly in the garment industry of Bangladesh. As a result, the trade union activity in the garment industry has meant trade unions conducted activities outside the garment factories. Nevertheless, trade unions and the trade union federations can raise their voices in the arbitration committee meetings, which are organised by BGMEA. Hence, the role of the trade union has been marginalised in the current CSR arrangement. However, recently, Garments Sramik Somonnoy Parishad was formed under the stewardship of a powerful minister of the government, and only this organisation has established trade unions inside the factories. The expected role of civil society has been missing in this current arrangement, as the so-called civil society of Bangladesh has lost its neutrality for their political biasness (Mishu, 30082016). Muthuri and Gilbert (2010) also did not find any evidence of civil society organisations in the institutional arrangement of CSR in Kenya. The following figure shows the system relations of CSR arrangements in the garment industry in Bangladesh.



*Figure 3: System Relations of CSR Arrangements*

### ***7.3.2 The System Relations of Isomorphisms***

In this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers', the suppliers' factories, the government, and the BGMEA and BKMEA are the main stakeholders. The garment industry of Bangladesh has experienced a number of paradigm shifts in its lifetime and has undergone many changes. In the beginning, there were few rules to follow in this industry, and workers and the environment had to face the consequences (Salequzzaman and Stocker 2001; Rahim 2016). During this period, the main concerns for Western buyers were to ensure the quality and the timely shipment of their products. The government played a silent role and let the industry flourish. This hands-off approach has been verified by the claims of Rahman and Langford (2014) that all political governments overlooked many adverse outcomes caused by this industry, which contributed to the rapid growth of this industry. The role of employers' associations was not prominent during this early period, and the BGMEA became involved in the institutional arrangement of CSR only when the Western buyers took a strong position on social compliance issues (Islam and Deegan 2010). However, the industry experienced the first paradigm shift at the beginning of this century and pressured from Western buyers, was forced to implement new rules and regulations in their business practices. During this period, suppliers' factories started implementing CSR issues of the buyers' code of conduct. Since then, the government and BGMEA started working on CSR issues in this industry. However, during this period, the BGMEA succeeded in convincing the government it was only necessary for the suppliers' factories to observe the buyers' code of conduct. As a result, the government did not play much of a role in forcing this industry to implement any local laws in their business practices.

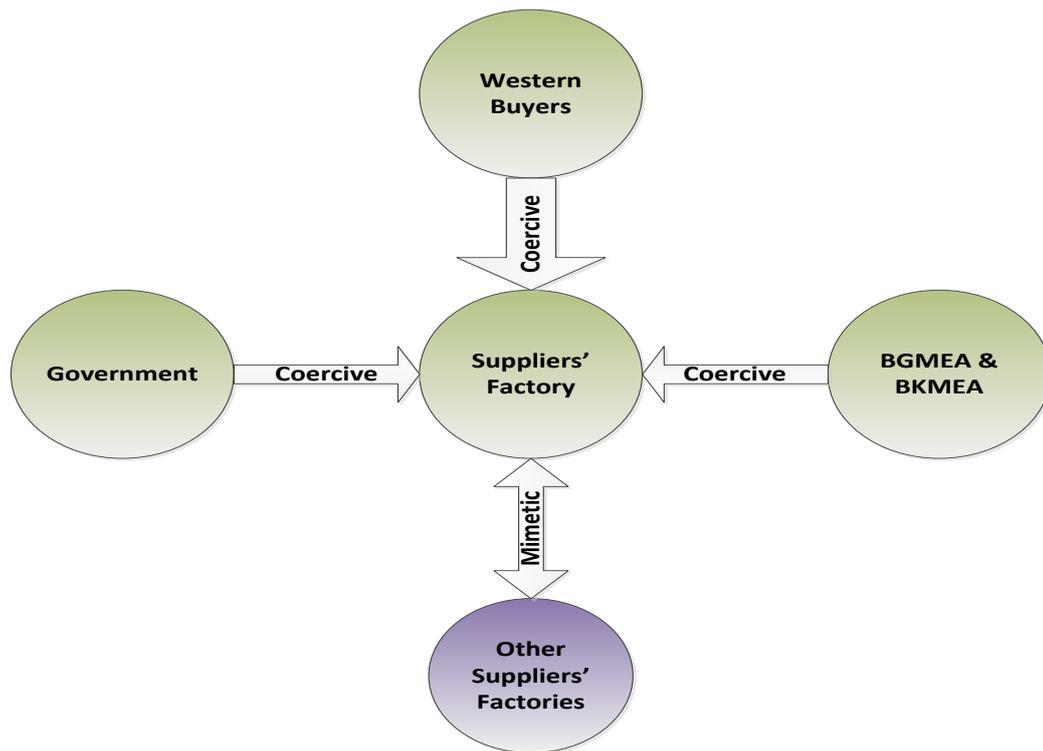
By this time, the Western buyers' had nominated different audit firms and certification agencies to act as a watchdog to oversee whether or not suppliers' factories were upholding their code of conduct in their setting. At the same time, many of the Western buyers had started setting up their liaison offices in Bangladesh (Greenhouse 2013; Rojas 2013; Rahim 2016), and one of the main aims of these liaison offices were to establish Western morals in the business practices of suppliers' factories in Bangladesh (Kolk and Van Tulder 2002). Hence, the suppliers' factories were forced to arrange the technical, social and security audits by these nominated audit firms. In addition, the factory owners were forced to achieve the standard set by the buyers' nominated certification agencies. Ever since, the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh have practiced a compliance-based CSR arrangement in their setting. However, the codes of conduct could not ensure the safety of the garment workers. As such, shortly after conducting third party audits which found everything satisfactory (Azom, 24082016; Ahmed, 25082016), the Rana Plaza collapsed in 2013 resulting in a thousand

lives lost (Ullah 2014). Just before the Rana Plaza accident, another fire accident at Tazreen Fashion also cost many lives (Manik and Barry 2014). These two accidents resulted in another paradigm shift in the garment industry of Bangladesh. The government was forced to sign the Sustainability Compact 2013. Under this arrangement, Accord and Alliance started monitoring sweatshops in Bangladesh on behalf of the Western buyers' to ensure the structural, fire, and electrical safety in the suppliers' factories. In addition, along with the ILO, the government of Bangladesh started working on similar issues at other suppliers' factories. As this new arrangement required a significant investment, the BGMEA had to take the lead to influence suppliers' factories to accept the needed changes. In addition, BGMEA started monitoring the progress in implementing these safety initiatives at the suppliers' factories.

As a result, the Western buyers, the government and the BGMEA and BKMEA have generated a coercive isomorphism for the suppliers' factories to adhere to the laws of the land and the buyers' code of conduct in their setting (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Liu et al. 2010; Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman 2016). In this arrangement, the Western buyers have generated the greatest coercive isomorphism for the suppliers' factories. The buyers' pressure has been responsible for the changes in the garment industry. The Western buyers' helped to change from the "no rules" situation to the "implementation of some rules situation" which may lead to "the rule of laws" situation. However, the voices of the workers are still missing in the current CSR arrangement, as they have yet to receive their trade union rights in the garment industry. As Sharma (2015) has also claimed garment workers in Bangladesh cannot join a union in their factories. In addition, the existing law does not allow forming new trade unions, which has violated the principle of association and collective bargaining.

Moreover, a mimetic isomorphism is also present in this current CSR arrangement, and suppliers' factories usually follow each other when it comes to the question of implementing any CSR practices in their setting (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Jamali 2010; Muthuri and Gilbert 2010; Zsidisin, Melnyk and Ragatz 2005). In order to gain social legitimacy and the acceptance of the workers, suppliers' factories copy and adopt good corporate practices of the other suppliers' factories. However, no normative isomorphism was identified in the current CSR arrangement, and this finding is in line with the claim of Jamali and Neville (2011) that the absence of normative isomorphism in a Lebanese context is hindering the standardisation process of CSR practices in a developing country context.

The following figure illustrates the system relations of isomorphism in the garment industry of Bangladesh.



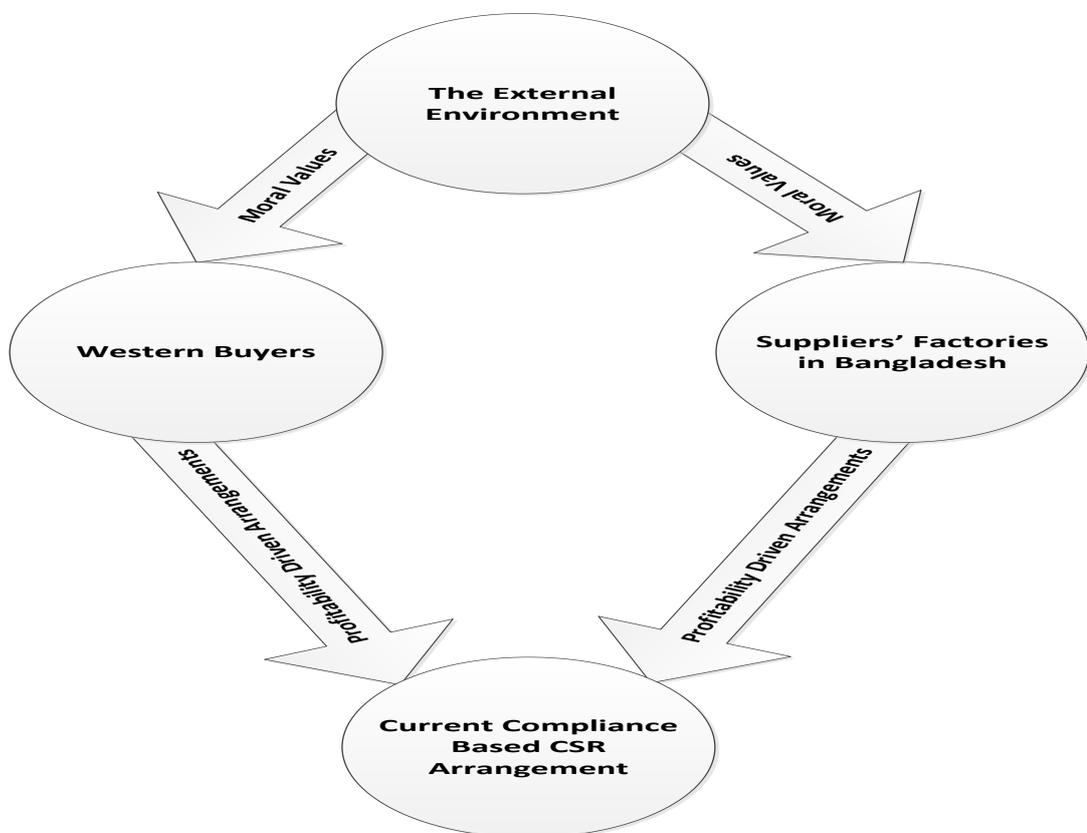
*Figure 4: System Relations of Isomorphisms*

### ***7.3.3 System Relations of Morality and Business Motives in the CSR Arrangement***

The reality is Bangladesh is a poor country (Azom, 24082016). In this reality, when suppliers' factories failed to do business responsively, Western buyers felt compelled to impose their code of conduct upon them. Apparently, it seems ethics is driving Western buyers to be humanitarian, and this ethical imperative is forcing them to pressure Eastern suppliers to establish and maintain new 'ethical' rules in their operations. However, one may raise questions with respect to an ethical stance when the same buyers are at the same time, seeking the lowest production costs for their products (Raton, 17082016). In many cases, the suppliers' factories are forced to compromise with many issues of the buyers' code of conduct to minimize costs (Wahid, 28082016). This supports the claims of Cairns and Roberts (2007); Arrigo (2013); Tobin (2013); Taplin (2014) that this particular business strategy of low cost production has brought many adverse social, ethical, and environmental impacts to the developing countries.

In this compliance based CSR arrangement, the suppliers' factories always consider their CSR activities as an imposed burden from the Western buyers. As a result, it is not moral concerns but the profit motive, which has guided the suppliers' factories, as well as the Western buyers promoting this current CSR arrangement. Therefore, this study shows that in this current CSR arrangement, morality has been compromised in one aspect or another, and

in order to minimize costs, many social and environmental issues have been compromised. This conclusion has been supported by the work of (Banerjee 2008) that the strategy based CSR studies have helped corporations to create a smoke screen for concealing their real agenda, and allowing them to continue their damaging activities towards the society and environment. Furthermore, this study has shown this business was established with the sole purpose of making share-holders very wealth (Friedman 1958) and now some moral values have been adopted to protect their supply chain. Western buyers have used this mask to polish their image which Boje and Khan (2009) have identified as ‘story-branding’ a means of gaining legitimacy on the part of corporations and they have used this strategy to increase their brand value and competitiveness.



**Figure 5: System Relations of Morality and Profitability in the CSR Arrangement**

#### **7.4 Stage Five: The Social System**

According to (Carspecken 1996, 203), “the principal inference involved in stage five is that of a “fit” or a match between the highly specific reconstructions built up over stages one through four and an existing social theory. But matching alone is not quite enough to produce a convincing argument. As indicated above, you must build abstractions off of your empirical data to the point where a fit can be recognized. You must strive for a fusion of cultural horizons between the group studied and the culture of the research community”. In

this stage, to explore the social theory, I used institutional theory, both from an organisational and critical postcolonial perspective. Accordingly, in stage five, using theoretical concepts, I have attempted to establish a link between reconstructive analysis and system theory and have also attempted to challenge, alter, and refine the macro-sociological theories.

#### ***7.4.1 The New Institutionalism to Organisations and the Current CSR Arrangements***

This research study shows Western buyers are maintaining an isomorphic pressure on the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh to implement their code of conduct in their setting (Matten and Moon 2008; Yin and Zhang 2012). Similarly by using the codes of conduct as a means of CSR, the Western buyers are practicing an explicit form of CSR practices in the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh (Matten and Moon 2008).

Based on the current study and in the context of the sample studied, the present CSR arrangements in the garment industry of Bangladesh can be characterised as largely dominated by Western buyers, who have focused on issues like wages, , working conditions, the environment and worker safety at factories. However, in this CSR arrangement the freedom of association and collective bargaining have been ignored deliberately (Plank, Rossi and Staritz 2012). As a result, the voices of the workers have been missing in this current arrangement. Moreover, the role of civil society was overlooked in this process (Muthuri and Gilbert 2010).

In this institutional arrangement of CSR practices, the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh have internalised coercive isomorphisms that have come from their Western buyers and governments. Moreover, the BGMEA and BKMEA have also generated coercive isomorphism to the suppliers' factories (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Liu et al. 2010; Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman 2016). Though the mimetic isomorphism is visible in this current CSR arrangement (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Jamali 2010; Muthuri and Gilbert 2010; Zsidisin, Melnyk and Ragatz 2005), the normative isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) does not appear to be present in the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in this study (Bondy, Moon and Matten 2012). As a result, this study offers the following addition to a new institutional theory of organisation:

*When the normative isomorphism is not present in the institutional arrangement of CSR, the stakeholders' framework of CSR could be used as an alternative arrangement to solve many issues, and this framework could be achieved by ensuring the involvement of the local stakeholders in the formulation of CRS guidelines.*

However, when the irresponsible arrangements caused legitimacy problems for the organisations, in order to obtain greater legitimacy, they internalised many rules in their CSR guidelines, and started perceiving all sources of isomorphism as powerful agencies and tried to internalise the pressures coming from these agencies. As a result, all isomorphisms appeared as coercive isomorphisms. Likewise, the garment industry in Bangladesh, which was accused of its irresponsible CSR arrangements has internalised the mimetic isomorphism as a coercive isomorphism. They are not internalising other factories CSR practices to combat uncertainty, rather they are doing so to avoid the possible labour unrest that could arise for not internalising those CSR practices in their setting. As a result, this study offers the following addition to a new institutional theory of organisation:

*When obtaining legitimacy becomes the pivotal issue for organisations, all isomorphisms start generating coercive pressure for them, and in this institutional arrangement, the mimetic and normative isomorphisms lose some of their features and start generating coercive pressures for the organisations.*

This study shows CSR practices of the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh are not deeply rooted in an ethical and discretionary context which Yin and Zhang (2012) also found in the context of China. Moreover, this study demonstrates that normative isomorphism is missing in the context of current CSR arrangements, which contradict the work of Muthuri and Gilbert (2010) who showed the normative philanthropic considerations have played a pivotal role in the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in the context of a developing country. This study shows that though the Western led CSR initiatives in the suppliers' factories have increased the cost of production; the Western buyers have pressured suppliers' factories to reduce the price of their product. As a result, the normative isomorphism has not driven the Western buyers to maintain pressure on the Eastern suppliers to continue CSR activities. Thus, the morality behind this arrangement appears contradictory and deserves greater scrutiny. It also appears in many cases, to minimize the cost of production, many suppliers' factories are compromising with many of the social and environmental guidelines (Bondy, Moon and Matten 2012). As a result, this study offers the following addition to a new institutional theory of organisation:

*Developing countries are embedded with peculiarities, which demand a unique institutionalisation process of CSR practices, and where organisations need to respond to the issue of cost effectiveness, this economic motive as an institution, guides organisations to undermine their legal, ethical, and discretionary obligations of CSR.*

This study shows that in order to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh have internalised Western buyers' CSR ideals in their

setting (Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen 2013). Moreover, Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen (2013) have argued for the replacement of the compliance paradigm of CSR with the cooperative paradigm of CSR. This study demonstrates that CSR as an institution has created the following paradigm shifts in the garment industry in Bangladesh:

*The current isomorphic pressures have brought a new paradigm of CSR, which is the 'restructuring and awareness' paradigm, in which, to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad, organisations have restructured their facilities to ensure the safety of their workers, and as a result, the awareness of the workers has expanded. Nevertheless, a future paradigm could be the 'partnership and fairness' paradigm where the workers would be working in this industry free from domination and their quality of life would be ensured under a stakeholders' partnership arrangement.*

This study has found many of the garment owners have become involved in politics (Taplin 2014) which has inflicted many difficulties in the lives of the working class (Muhammad 2011; Rahim 2016). This study has shown in a developing country context, when a businessman becomes involved in politics and sits in the parliament, the labour laws and rules have become compromised. If businessmen become lawmakers, in the formulation of labour laws and rules, they would definitely try to ensure their interests are given first priority. In the current Bangladesh parliament, more than 30 members are owners of garment factories (Taplin 2014). Some ministers own several factories. As a result, they have succeeded in undermining the demands from the garment workers (Muhammad 2011), and as a result, the workers have not received their constitutional rights to join the trade union (Sharma 2015). This study has found all the factory owners have expended significant resources to maintain their relationship with the political parties. If they freed themselves from this political influence-buying they could instead spend this money for the welfare of their workers. As a result, this study offers the following addition to a new institutional theory of organisation:

*In a developing country context, when businessmen maintain deep political linkages and sit in the parliament, many of the state laws will stop functioning properly and in this situation, the workers and the environment will suffer.*

#### **7.4.2 Postcolonialism and the Current CSR Arrangements**

This study demonstrates that though Bangladesh has freed itself from the colonial arrangement long ago, the Eastern suppliers have not been able to decolonise their mind (Thiong'o 1987). As a result, in this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers have succeeded in establishing their dominance over their Eastern suppliers (Drebes 2016), which Said (1979, 3) has identified as the textual and material domination of the West over the

East. Moreover, for their economic survival Eastern suppliers' had no choice but to respond according to the demands of their Western buyers. This is supported by the work of (Prasad 2003, 6) where it is ironically the fate of the ex-colonies that after decolonization, having obtained political independence they found themselves helpless and economically bonded to their ex-colonial masters. This study further shows Western buyer have coerced the sweatshops to remain involved in this CSR arrangement for their own economic gain (Mohammed Ziaul and Fara 2015; Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman 2016) and are using their codes of conduct to protect their brand image. This is confirmed by the research of Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini (2014) who have shown some buyers are not serious about their social sustainability initiatives, and some of them are using this concept to maintain their brand image, which (Munshi and Kurian 2005) have identified as the colonial strategy of image building.

This study has demonstrated Western buyers' have pressured suppliers' factories in implementing their code of conduct and this could be considered a form of Western domination (Banerjee 2000; Drebes 2016) which is undertaken as a part of their civilising mission. Additionally Western buyers are using a neo-colonial mode of control (Young 2001) in their relationship with the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh. In addition, this CSR arrangement has not established the constitutional rights of its workers and has restricted the garment workers in joining the trade union. As a result, their voices have remained silent in this current system. This is supported by the research of Banerjee (2000) who has shown the dominant groups have continued using the colonial mode of control for economic gain, and the major stakeholders are often excluded and their voices have been marginalized in this process.

This study shows that in absence of any normative values (Bondy, Moon and Matten 2012), the profit motive of business (Friedman 1958) has guided the current CSR arrangement (Mohammed Ziaul and Fara 2015; Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman 2016), and the Western buyers have used this CSR arrangement to polish their image (Boje and Khan 2009). Furthermore, this study has shown in this postcolonial CSR arrangement, the buyers' codes of conduct sometimes contradict each other. Moreover, current platform based audit and certification systems have created institutional complexity in the current CSR arrangement. Thus, postcolonial conditions are hindering the implementation of CSR practices in the context of Bangladesh, and in order to solve this problem, the voices of the local stakeholders, which have been marginalized in this current arrangement, should be included in the formulation of CSR guidelines for themselves. This supports the claim of Khan, Westwood, and Boje (2010) that colonial conditions are hindering the implementation of CSR practices in the local setting and in order to solve this issue, a bottom-up approach is

needed. This study offers the following addition to the postcolonial perspective of institutional theory:

*When the normative environment of CSR is not present in a postcolonial institutional arrangement, giving voices to the oppressed stakeholders in the formulation of CSR practices could help to ensure greater benefits.*

This study shows that the buyers' code of conduct is a civilizing mission by the Western buyers, as OECD Guidelines and the UN guidelines on human rights and business have guided them in selecting these codes of conduct for the suppliers' factories. Furthermore, in constructing their codes of conduct, the Western buyers did not consider the socio-economic context of Bangladesh (Islam and Deegan 2008; Belal and Roberts 2010; Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014; Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman 2016). As a result, often the guidelines failed to bring the desired benefits which confirms the research of Khan and Lund-Thomsen (2011) that Western led initiatives of CSR failed to consider Eastern cultural realities, and the local suppliers were treating these initiatives as a type of Western imperialism. Moreover, Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini (2014) have also claimed buyers codes of conduct are not compatible with the cultural and socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh, where the inconsistent codes of conduct have led to mock compliance.

This study shows that in this current CSR arrangement, both the former Western coloniser (Western buyers) and the former colony (suppliers' factories of Bangladesh) are maintaining postcolonial relationships. After the colonial era, a decolonisation process was needed at the political, economic, and cultural level, which Bangladesh has failed to initiate. As a result, the failure in decolonising the mindset (Thiong'o 1987) of the former colonies has encouraged Western buyers to embrace the colonial mode of control in this CSR arrangement. However, in this neo-colonial arrangement, the newly developed elites of the former colonies have internalised many features of their former imperialist master and succeeded in undermining efforts to improve labour conditions and the environment. Therefore, the differences between the powerful and the powerless have been exacerbated which have marginalised the voices of the powerless in the context of Bangladesh. As a result, under this postcolonial arrangement, it is assumed that a new colonialism has returned with a new face (Spivak 1999a; Young 2001; Mir and Mir 2012). Moreover, in this neo-colonial arrangement, the ex-colonies have found themselves helpless and economically bonded to their ex-colonial masters (Prasad 2003, 6), and exploiting this situation of poor economic conditions in the ex-colonies, the West has imposed the liabilities of poorness (LOP) upon these former colonies. Therefore, this study offers the following addition to the postcolonial theory and its criticism:

*In the neo-colonial arrangement, in order to maintain the colonial mode of control, the West has imposed the liabilities of poorness (LOP) on the developing world. The liabilities of poorness are nothing but a legitimising process of the imposition of rules in the lives of the uncivilised poor. The liabilities of poorness produce the consent in the West that the uncivilised developing world had no means to control themselves. Consequently, the civilised rich gain their rights to make the decisions on their behalf. As a result, the liabilities of poorness offer helplessness to the developing world, which forced them to implement the decisions of others in their lives.*

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

**Chapter Summary:** In this chapter, an attempt will be made to answer the research questions. Thereafter, the implications, limitations and the directions of future research will be presented respectively.

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this study, I have investigated how the local garment suppliers' factories in Bangladesh understand, cope with, and respond to their Western buyers' pressures to implement CSR practices and policies. In doing so, this study compared and contrasted the assumptions and actual experiences of local suppliers in coping with institutional pressures for, and translating Western ideals to, the implementation of CSR practices and policies. In this critical investigation, I have used the institutional theory both from the organisational and postcolonial perspective, which has provided the opportunity to use reconstructive analysis to locate system relations and social systems of this institutional arrangement. In the beginning of the conclusion, I will attempt to answer each research question separately. Thereafter, I will present the implications of this study, limitations of the study, and the scope for future research.

### **8.2 Summary of Research Questions and Findings**

In this section, I will be reviewing the research questions that I set out in chapter one. The narratives and themes that I presented in chapter five and chapter six, and the deeper analysis that I made in chapter seven, helped me to support my statements.

***RQ1) How are Western MNCs engaging their RMG suppliers in Bangladesh to implement CSR practices and policies?***

The current institutional arrangement of CSR in the garment industry of Bangladesh could be characterised as the compliance based CSR arrangement. In this arrangement, in order to obtain legitimacy, the suppliers' factories have to comply with the Western buyers' code of conduct, and if the suppliers' factories want to work for these Western buyers, they have no choice but to comply with the buyers' code of conduct. Moreover, the Western buyers have developed a mechanism to oversee whether or not their suppliers' factories are complying with their given code of conduct. In doing so, sometimes they themselves make the in-person verifications at the suppliers' factories. However, in most cases, the buyers' have nominated

audit firms do the task on behalf of the Western buyers. In addition, the Western buyers also demand certification of standards from their suppliers' factories.

***RQ2) Does a gap exist between the CSR ideals set by the MNCs and the practices of their local RMG suppliers in Bangladesh and, if so, why?***

The suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh have realized and accepted the fact that without complying with the buyers' guidelines they cannot survive in this business. As a result, all the suppliers' factories have made considerable progress in the implementation of the buyers' CSR requirements in their setting. Nowadays, the majority of the factories uphold all the rules except the freedom of association of their workers. All the large and medium-sized factories follow the safety rules, and some of them have made tremendous progress in this regard. Recently, a few 'green' garment factories have started operating in Bangladesh. As a result, the current institutional arrangement of CSR has brought many changes to the suppliers' factories, and when it comes to the question of complying with the buyers' code of conduct, factories have succeeded in fulfilling 80 percent of the demands from their buyers and the remaining 20 percent is under developmental stage, which will be fulfilled soon.

***RQ3) To what extent does the interaction of cultural differences, institutional pressures, and postcolonial perspectives help or hinder the implementation of CSR practices and policies with RMG suppliers of MNCs in Bangladesh?***

As the suppliers' factories had failed to do business responsibly, the Western buyers have imposed their codes of conduct upon them. Moreover, the reality is Bangladesh is a developing country, and the buyers often impose many inconsistent guidelines that do not match with the suppliers' social-economic and cultural context. If a factory works for ten different buyers, it has to comply with the inconsistent codes of conduct of these ten different buyers. Due to the significant pressure of the code of conduct, the suppliers' factories never feel they are doing something noble and this undermines the normative spirit of the code of conduct.

Furthermore, this study has shown in this institutional arrangement of CSR, the Western buyers are still using the colonial mode of control (Banerjee 2000), and have established their domination over the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh (Banerjee 2000; Prasad 2003), and this postcolonial condition is hindering the implementation of CSR practices in the context of Bangladesh (Khan, Westwood and Boje 2010). In this postcolonial CSR arrangement, the buyers' codes of conduct are sometimes contradictory i.e., one says that the

height of the fire extinguisher should be 2 feet while other dictates that it should be 3 feet instead. As a result, a factory has to adjust the fire extinguisher prior to the audit of their buyers. Moreover, current platform based audit and certification systems have created institutional complexity in the current CSR arrangement. In order to solve this problem, the voices of the local stakeholders, which have been marginalized in this current arrangement, should be included in the formulation of CSR guidelines.

***RQ4) Do isomorphisms exist that lead to the institutionalisation of CSR practices in MNCs' RMG suppliers in Bangladesh?***

In this institutional arrangement of CSR practices, the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh are internalising coercive isomorphisms that are coming from their Western buyers and governments. Moreover, the BGMEA and BKMEA are also generating coercive isomorphisms to the suppliers' factories (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Liu et al. 2010). Though the mimetic isomorphism is visible in this current CSR arrangement (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Zsidisin, Melnyk and Ragatz 2005), the normative isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) does not appear to be present in the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in this study (Bondy, Moon and Matten 2012).

***RQ5) What are the most prominent isomorphisms impacting the institutionalisation of CSR practices in MNCs' RMG suppliers in Bangladesh and why are they effective?***

The garment industry of Bangladesh started its journey in the late 1970s, and at the beginning, received generous and unlimited assistance from the state and the suppliers' factories literally observed no rules in their settings. Things started changing at the beginning of the 21st century when some skilled and educated professionals entered this sector and the Western buyers started imposing codes of conduct on the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh. However, by this time, many of the garment owners became involved in politics, and a number of garment factory owners became members of parliament. As a result, it became difficult for the government to generate coercive isomorphic pressure to this garment industry.

After the Tazreen Fashion and Rana Plaza accidents, CSR as an institution brought significant isomorphic pressure, and to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad, the suppliers' garment factories of Bangladesh had initiated a massive programme to facilitate the CSR arrangements. In this transition, the coercive isomorphism has proven to be the most effective mechanism, which has provided the most changes in the CSR arrangement in

Bangladesh. As a result, in the absence of the normative environment of CSR, the coercive isomorphism is guiding the present CSR arrangements in the garment industry of Bangladesh where the Western buyers are generating the greatest pressure to the suppliers' factories. In addition, to protect the industry, currently, the government and the BGMEA have started generating coercive isomorphism for the suppliers' factories.

***RQ6) Do any insight emerges that would inform strategies for local RMG suppliers of MNCs to implement more effectively CSR policies and practices?***

In the current system, a suppliers' factory has to comply with the codes of conduct of the buyers, and sometimes these codes of conduct contradict each other. In addition, the Western buyers have installed a platform based certification and audit system in Bangladesh, and if the suppliers' factories want to work for buyers from different platforms, they have to arrange certifications and audits for different platforms, which are very expensive. Moreover, this system has brought institutional complexity to this current CSR arrangement.

Therefore, to solve this problem, there needs to be changes made in the current CSR arrangement. to accomplish this, first, there needs to be a uniform code of conduct for all buyers. In this regard, to formulate a uniform code of conduct, the government, the BGMEZ, BKMEA, different stakeholders and the buyers from all different platforms need to sit together. Moreover, the government along with BGMEA and BKMEA should take responsibility for the implementation of the buyers' code of conduct in the factories. Thereafter, all stakeholders should develop a common platform for conducting the CSR audit in the suppliers' factories. If this system could be arranged, the CSR arrangement would offer more bottom line benefits.

## **8.3 Implications**

### ***8.3.1 Theoretical Implications***

By relying on institutional theory both from organisational and postcolonial perspectives this study has advanced an understanding of the translation process of Western CSR ideals to Eastern practices, which could provide fruitful avenues for future research. Furthermore, this study has made the following theoretical contributions by adding new insights to both organisational and postcolonial perspectives of institutional theory:

## **Institutional Theory from Organisational Perspectives**

This research study has argued Western buyers have maintained an isomorphic pressure on the suppliers' garments factories in Bangladesh to implement their code of conduct in their setting (Matten and Moon 2008; Yin and Zhang 2012). Furthermore, by using the code of conduct as a means of CSR, the Western buyers are practicing an explicit form of CSR practices in the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh (Matten and Moon 2008). Based on the current study and in the context of the sample studied, the present CSR arrangement in the garment industry in Bangladesh can be characterised as largely dominated by Western buyers, who focus on issues like wages, working conditions, the environment and worker safety at factories. However, in this CSR arrangement the freedom of association and collective bargaining have been ignored deliberately (Plank, Rossi and Staritz 2012). As a result, the voices of the workers are missing in this current arrangement. Moreover, the role of civil society is also missing in this process (Muthuri and Gilbert 2010).

This study has shown in this institutional arrangement of CSR practices, the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh have internalised coercive isomorphisms that originate from their Western buyers and governments. Moreover, the BGMEA and BKMEA are also generating coercive isomorphism to the suppliers' factories (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Liu et al. 2010). Though the mimetic isomorphism is visible in this current CSR arrangement (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Jamali 2010; Muthuri and Gilbert 2010; Zsidisin, Melnyk and Ragatz 2005), the normative isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) does not appear to be present in the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in this study (Bondy, Moon and Matten 2012). As a result, this study offers the following addition to the new institutional theory of organisation:

*When the normative isomorphism is not present in the institutional arrangement of CSR, the stakeholders' framework of CSR could be used as an alternative arrangement to solve many issues, and this framework could be achieved by ensuring the involvement of the local stakeholders in the formulation of CRS guidelines.*

This study has found when the garment factories irresponsibility caused legitimacy problems for the organisations, to obtain legitimacy, the organisations internalise many rules in their operations, and they start perceiving all sources of isomorphism as powerful agencies and have tried to internalise the pressures that are coming from these agencies. As a result, all isomorphisms turned-out to be coercive isomorphisms for them. Likewise, the garment industry of Bangladesh was accused for its irresponsible CSR arrangements is internalising the mimetic isomorphism as coercive isomorphism. They are not internalising other factories

CSR practices to combat with uncertainty, rather they are doing so to avoid the possible labour unrest that could arise for not internalising those CSR practices into their business practices. As a result, this study offers the following addition to the new institutional theory of organisation:

*When obtaining legitimacy becomes the pivotal issue for organisations, all isomorphisms start generating coercive pressure for them, and in this institutional arrangement, the mimetic and normative isomorphisms lose some of their features and start generating coercive pressures for the organisations.*

This study has shown CSR practices in the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh are not deeply rooted in their ethical and discretionary context, which Yin and Zhang (2012) has found in the context of China. Moreover, this study has demonstrated normative isomorphism is missing in the context of the current CSR arrangement which contradicts the research of Muthuri and Gilbert (2010) that normative philanthropic considerations play a pivotal role in the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in the context of a developing country. This study has shown the normative isomorphism is not driving the Western buyers to maintain pressure on the Eastern suppliers to engage in this CSR arrangement, as the same buyers are demanded the suppliers' factories reduce the price of their product when the Western led CSR initiatives of the suppliers' factories have increased the cost of production. Thus, the morality behind this arrangement could be brought under scrutiny. In many cases, to minimize the cost of production, many suppliers' factories have compromised many of social and environmental issues (Cairns and Roberts 2007; Visser 2008; Bondy, Moon and Matten 2012; Arrigo 2013; Tobin 2013; Taplin 2014; Rahim 2016). As a result, this study offers the following addition to the new institutional theory of organisation:

*Developing countries are embedded with peculiarities, which demand a unique institutionalisation process of CSR practices, and where organisations need to respond to the issue of cost effectiveness, the economic motive as an institution guides organisations to undermine their legal, ethical, and discretionary obligations of CSR.*

This study has shown in order to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad the suppliers' garment factories in Bangladesh have internalized the Western buyers CSR ideals into their setting (Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen 2013). Moreover, Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen (2013) have argued for the replacement of the compliance paradigm of CSR with the cooperative paradigm of CSR. This study maintains CSR as an institution brought the following paradigm shifts to the garment industry of Bangladesh:

*The current isomorphic pressures have brought a new paradigm of CSR, which is the 'restructuring and awareness' paradigm, in which, to obtain legitimacy at home and abroad, organisations have restructured their facilities to ensure the safety of their workers, and as a result, the awareness of the workers has expanded. Nevertheless, a future paradigm could be the 'partnership and fairness' paradigm where the workers would be working in this industry free from domination and their quality of life would be ensured under a stakeholders' partnership arrangement.*

This study has found many of the garment owners have become involved in politics (Taplin 2014) which has created many difficulties for the lives of the working class (Muhammad 2011; Rahim 2016). This study has found that in a developing country context, when a businessman becomes involved in politics and sits in the parliament, the labour laws and rules stop functioning properly. If businessmen become lawmakers, in the formulation of labour laws and rules, they would definitely try to ensure their interests first. In the current parliament, more than 30 members are owners of garment factories (Taplin 2014). Some of the ministers own several factories. As a result, they have succeeded in undermining the demands of the garment workers (Muhammad 2011), and as a result, they have not received their constitutional rights to join the trade unions (Sharma 2015). This study has found factory owners are spending significant resources to maintain their affiliation with the political parties. If they would free themselves from this political influence-buying they could spend this money for the welfare of their workers. As a result, this study offers the following addition to the new institutional theory of organisation:

*In the developing country context, when businessmen maintain deep political linkages and sit in the parliament, many of the state laws stop functioning properly and in this situation, the workers and the environment start to suffer.*

### **Institutional Theory from Postcolonial Perspectives**

This study demonstrates that though Bangladesh has freed itself from the colonial arrangement long ago, the Eastern suppliers have not been able to decolonise their mind (Thiong'o 1987). As a result, in this current CSR arrangement, the Western buyers have succeeded in establishing their dominance over their Eastern suppliers which, Said (1979, 3) has identified as the textual and material domination of the West over the East. Moreover, to remain in business Eastern suppliers' had no choice but accept the choices of their Western buyers, which supports the research of (Prasad 2003, 6) who has shown it is ironically the fate of the ex-colonies after decolonization, and obtaining political independence they found themselves helpless and economically bonded to their ex-colonial masters. This study

further shows the Western buyers have kept the suppliers involved in this CSR arrangement for their own economic gain and they have used their codes of conduct to protect their brand image. Additionally this is supported the research of Huq, Stevenson, and Zorzini (2014) who have shown some buyers are not serious enough in their social sustainability initiatives, and some of them are using this concept to maintain their brand image, which (Munshi and Kurian 2005) have identified as the colonial strategy of image building.

This study claims the Western buyers' pressure suppliers' factories in implementing their code of conduct and could be considered a type of Western domination (Banerjee 2000) which they undertake as a part of their civilising mission, and the Western buyers are using a neo-colonial mode of control (Young 2001) while working with the suppliers' factories in Bangladesh. In addition, this CSR arrangement has not established the constitutional rights of its workers and has restricted the garment workers from joining the trade union. As a result, their voices have remained silent in this current system which has been supported by the research of Banerjee (2000) who has shown the dominant groups are still using the colonial mode of control for their purposes, and the major stakeholders are often excluded and their voices are being marginalized in this process.

This study shows that in the absence of normative values (Bondy, Moon and Matten 2012), the profit motive of business (Friedman 1958) is guiding the current CSR arrangement, and the Western buyers are using this CSR improve their image (Boje and Khan 2009). Furthermore, this study shows that in this postcolonial CSR arrangement, the buyers' code of conducts sometimes contradicts each other. Moreover, current platform based audit and certification systems have created institutional complexity in the current CSR arrangement. Thus, the postcolonial conditions are hindering the implementation of CSR practices in the context of Bangladesh, and in order to solve this problem, the voices of the local stakeholders, which have been marginalized in this current arrangement, should be included in the formulation of CSR guidelines for themselves. This supports the research of Khan, Westwood, and Boje (2010) who have shown colonial conditions are hindering the implementation of CSR practices in the local setting and in order to solve this issue, a bottom-up approach is needed. This study offers the following addition to the postcolonial perspective of institutional theory:

*When the normative environment of CSR is not present in the postcolonial institutional arrangement, giving voices of the oppressed stakeholders in the formulation of CSR practices could help to ensure greater bottom-line benefits.*

This study shows that in this current CSR arrangement, both the former Western coloniser (Western buyers) and the former colony (suppliers' factories of Bangladesh) are maintaining postcolonial relationships. After the colonial era, a decolonisation process was needed at the political, economic, and cultural levels, which Bangladesh has failed to initiate. As a result, the failure in decolonising the mindset (Thiong'o 1987) of the former colonies has encouraged Western buyers to embrace the colonial mode of control in this CSR arrangement.

This study demonstrates in this neo-colonial arrangement, the newly developed elites of the former colonies have internalised many features of their former imperialist masters and succeeded in undermining the labour conditions and the environment. Therefore, the differences between the powerful and the powerless have been exacerbated, which has marginalised the voices of the powerless in the context of Bangladesh. As a result, under this postcolonial arrangement, it is assumed that the colonialism has returned with a new 'face' (Spivak 1999a; Young 2001; Mir and Mir 2012). Moreover, this study shows that in this neo-colonial arrangement, the ex-colonies have found themselves helpless and economically bonded to their ex-colonial masters (Prasad 2003, 6), and exploiting this situation of poor economic conditions of the ex-colonies, the West has imposed the liabilities of poorness (LOP) upon these former colonies. Therefore, this study offers the following addition to the postcolonial theory and its criticism:

*In the neo-colonial arrangement, in order to maintain the colonial mode of control, the West has imposed the liabilities of poorness (LOP) on the developing world. The liabilities of poorness are nothing but a legitimising process of the imposition of rules in the lives of the uncivilised poor. The liabilities of poorness produce the consent in the West that the uncivilised developing world had no means to control themselves. Consequently, the civilised rich gained those rights to make the decisions on their behalf. As a result, the liabilities of poorness offer the helplessness to the developing world, which forced them to implement the decisions of others in their lives.*

### **8.3.2 Managerial Implications**

This study uncovered the following insights that could help the Eastern suppliers and the Western MNCs to more readily and actively adopt effective CSR practices:

This study has found that while constructing their code of conduct, the Western buyers did not consider the socio-economic context of Bangladesh (Islam and Deegan 2008; Belal and Roberts 2010; Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014), and these inconsistent codes of conduct

led to mock compliance (Huq, Stevenson and Zorzini 2014). As the Western led initiatives of CSR failed to be rooted in Eastern realities it has often failed to bring the desired benefits (Khan and Lund-Thomsen 2011). As a result, the local suppliers are treating these initiatives as a part of Western imperialism, and the current compliance based approach to CSR is only producing false images of the Western led ideals (Khan and Lund-Thomsen 2011). As a result, to ensure the proper implementation of these CSR ideals and to bring the desired bottom-line benefits, the buyers' code of conduct should be constructed based on the socio-economic contexts of the suppliers' factories.

This study has shown that in the current system, a suppliers' factory has to separately comply with the different codes of conduct from different buyers, and they have to arrange different certifications and social audits for different platforms, which is a financial burden for these suppliers' factories. Therefore, to ensure more bottom-line benefits, there needs to be changes made in the current CSR arrangement. First, the Western buyers should establish a unique code of conduct for their suppliers' factories. In addition, there needs to be changes made in the current monitoring system. In this regard, the government, the BGMEA, BKMEA, different stakeholders and buyers from all different platforms need to sit together to come up with a unique code of conduct for the suppliers' factories. Moreover, the government along with BGMEA and BKMEA should take responsibility for the implementation of the buyers' code of conduct in the suppliers' factories. Thereafter, including all stakeholders, a common platform needs to be developed for conducting the CSR audit in the suppliers' factories. If it could be arranged, the new CSR arrangement would offer more benefits to the bottom-line.

### ***8.3.3 Methodological Implications***

By examining a relatively small number of cultural sites, this study has made a modest methodological contribution in theorising unexplored phenomena and has shown how a small-scale research project could contribute to macrosociological theories. Moreover, by managers, workers and other actors, each from their perspective could use the normative suggestions drawn from the descriptive questions for emancipatory purposes.

### ***8.3.4 Sociological Implications: Giving Voice to the Voiceless***

Millions of workers have been working in RMG industry in Bangladesh, and especially the female workers working here have broken the stereotype custom and established them as the breadwinner for their families. Although these RMG workers achieved a kind of economic freedom, they are yet to establish many of their rights in this industry, and their voices are

remained silent. Moreover, many of these garment factory owners have become politically powerful, and many of these garment owners are sitting in the different legislative bodies. This study shows that in the context at a developing country like Bangladesh, where businessmen maintain deep political linkages and sit in the parliament, many of the state laws stop functioning properly, and in such situation, the workers and the environment as the bottom-line start to suffer. Consequently, different RMG factories have been practicing different unfair practices like, forced labour, unfair wages, poor working conditions, and so on. Hence, it has become difficult for the garment workers to establish their rights in this industry, and factories owners succeeded to dismantle many of RMG workers movements by means of extreme harassment, arrests, and other outrages by law enforcement agencies. Very often workers involved in the labour movement became targets of factory management and suffered retribution. Hence, there are no places for them to seek help from. Neither are these workers getting support from opposition parties, nor are the ruling party leaders helping them to fight for their issues. All the actions of the political parties and governments have refused to support these garment workers. Even the media are more interested in covering the news of industrial accidents than reporting on these distressed workers. In this regard, the normal role of civil society and NGOs were missing, which had also contributed to the problematic working environment. However, the reality is that the civil society in Bangladesh is also politically biased. As a result, it is hard to expect a neutral judgment from them.

Time has come to think about these labour issues in RMG industry of Bangladesh. The RMG workers should be given the opportunity to raise their voices in their workplaces. Safe working conditions, provident funds, and healthcare facilities need to be arranged for them. A tripartite framework of government, employers, and workers is needed to resolve these issues in Bangladesh, and the representation of true RMG workers need to be ensured in this tripartite body. Thereafter, the RMG workers' rights to join trade union need to be addressed first by this tripartite body. Secondly, different anomalies between the garment workers and workers from other sectors need to be identified, and actions should be taken for the equalization of their benefits. If above-mentioned issues are resolved, the conditions of the garment workers would improve gradually, and these voiceless workers would find a way to be freed them from this domination.

#### **8.4 Limitations**

In this thesis, I did not present the large dataset I had collected during the period of my study. As critical ethnography demands the analysis of only the rich and complex data set, in this thesis, I reconstructed the meaning of the critical and complex acts that took places in

the inter-subjective spaces of the communicative actions. Moreover, in this investigation, I have covered only the compliance suppliers' factories that maintain direct relationships with the Western buyers who have code of conduct issues. Neither any newly constructed green factories nor any non-compliance factories were covered in this study, which could be considered a limitation of this investigation.

I found that prior to my visit, in most cases, the top management had informed the floor management and the workers regarding my visit to the factory, and this information might have affected the behaviours of the participants, which could be a limitation of my study. However, I noticed that the participants regarded the visit by an outsider as a routine event. During my observations, I found that every day outsiders i.e. students, buyers' representatives, inspections teams were visiting the floor, and their presence had little impact on the behaviour of these participants.

The purpose of the participant observations was to generate the monological data required for my study. However, it is important to mention that in the garment factories, it is nearly impossible to generate purely monological data and the masses did not allow me to do so, and they forced me to become involved in a dialogue with them. Furthermore, the noise in the workplace did not permit me to overhear clearly the participants' every verbal communication. As a result, in writing the voices from the communicative acts in my field notes, on several occasions, I had to depend on their facial expression and body language, which could be considered as a limitation of this investigation.

The data collection process was challenging to me as in their communicative acts different actors brought their power, role, and expectations with them, and I had to handle this diversity in understanding the real meaning of each action in constructing their narratives. In addition, in the workplace, the corporate culture established the domination of some voices over others. As a result, in some cases, my data from observations and interviews were leading me to a particular direction. Moreover, in this critical ethnography, my role was limited as a human instrument, and from the communicative action, I chose the acts for meaning reconstruction, which appeared as most salient and representative of all the narratives I had constructed in this thesis. In chapters five and six, I have presented the dominant themes I have developed from multiple sources of data. In this process, some of the voices and narratives likely to be unrepresented could be considered as the human error of this study.

## **8.5 Future Research**

In this investigation, I have tried to explore how Western CSR ideals are translated into Eastern context. Furthermore, an attempt was made to investigate the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in the garment industry of Bangladesh. Further research is needed to ensure the bottom line benefits from this CSR arrangement. The current arrangement has failed to include many stakeholders specifically, the local community, civil society, and trade unions. Further, investigations are needed to create an inclusive stakeholders' framework where they will be given a chance to raise their voices to ensure greater bottom line benefits in these future CSR arrangements. Moreover, research should be conducted on how to ensure the quality of life for these garment workers.

In the suppliers' garment factories, it is very common that in their mid-thirties most of the female workers try to leave the job. Generally, the workers at this age are considered old in this industry. In this industry, a female worker works very hard until she reaches her mid-thirties while trying to save as much money as possible for her future. As a result, the majority of the female workers have short careers in this industry. Further research is needed on the postretirement life of these female workers, as well as whether they are facing any physical and social challenges in their lives after working in the garment factories.

Currently, the Alliance is conducting remediation and training programs on behalf of the twenty-seven North American buyers while the Accord is doing the same task on behalf of more than two hundred European buyers. Currently, around 800 factories are working under the Alliance while slightly more than 1500 factories are working under the Accord. On the other hand, along with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the government of Bangladesh (GOB) has taken the responsibility to conduct the same remediation and training programs in the remaining factories. Further research is needed to determine how these suppliers' factories, where the GOB has taken the responsibility, are coping with institutional pressures for and translating Western ideals to, the implementation of CSR practices and policies in their operations.

It is evident that currently the Western buyers' have reduced the price of the products and at the same time; they have maintained a continued pressure on the suppliers' factories to work on different CSR issues. This has increased the cost burden on the suppliers' factories. As a result, in this compliance based CSR arrangement, suppliers had to compromise with many CSR issues, and enforced to present false compliance arrangements to their buyers. Hence, if the Western buyers really want to ensure the bottom line benefits of their CSR ideals, they need to increase the price of their product. Future research is needed to show how this price-cut is enforcing the suppliers' factories to compromise with the CSR issues.

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## Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

**Title of Project:** “Translation of Western Ideals in a Developing Country: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Bangladesh”.

**Research Team:** I am Syed Muhammod Ali Reza, pursuing my PhD at Curtin University. My research supervisors are Associate Professor Dr. Jeremy Galbreath, Curtin Graduate School of Business, Perth, Australia and Dr. Joseph Sia Kee Ming, School of Business, Curtin Sarawak, Malaysia.

**Purpose of Research:** In this study, we are trying to find out how the corporate social responsibility (CSR) ideals of the Western companies are being translated into the local suppliers’ setting at garment industry in Bangladesh. Moreover, we will try to find out the institutionalisation process of CSR practices in the local suppliers setting. In this qualitative investigation, we will use both observation and interview methods for data collection. Initially, it is expected that we will conduct a total number of 50 interviews. In doing so, this study will cover CSR managers, workers, and factory owners of the garment industry. Additionally, we will include garment manufacturers and exporters association representatives, trade union representatives, NGOs, community people, educators, and representatives of political and social organisations.

**Consent to Participate:** I am inviting you to participate in the interview. It needs your written consent to start the interview session. In addition, after having your consent we will record the interview session.

**Confidentiality:** This study does not need you to give personal details. In addition, during the interview, you do not need to provide any confidential data or information about your organisation. We will safely keep the interview records for years and will make sure that it remains unidentifiable.

**Further Information:** This study has been approved under Curtin University’s process for lower-risk Studies (Approved Number CSEA 300115). This process complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Chapter 5.1.7 and Chapters 5.1.18-5.1.21). For further information on this study contact the researchers named below or the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth 6845 or by telephoning +618 92669223 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

- Syed Muhammod Ali Reza, PhD Candidate  
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- Prof. Clem Kuek, Dean, Research and Development  
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## Appendix B: Consent Form for Observation

**Title of project:** “Translation of Western Ideals in a Developing Country: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Bangladesh”.

**Principal Investigator and/or Research Coordinator:** Syed Muhammod Ali Reza, PhD Candidate, School of Business, Curtin University, Associate Professor Dr. Jeremy Galbreath, Main Supervisor, Curtin Graduate School of Business, Perth, Australia and Dr. Joseph Sia Kee Ming, Co-supervisor, School of Business, Curtin Sarawak, Malaysia.

<b>Statements of Confirmation:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
I have been informed of and understand the purposes of the study		
I have been given an opportunity to ask questions		
I understand I can withdraw at any time without prejudice		
Any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material		
I agree to participate in the study as outlined to me		
I have given consent for the observation		
I have given consent for collecting the artifacts/documents for the study given that the artifacts/documents must not be used to bring negative externalities for the stakeholders associated with these artifacts/documents.		

Name of participant	Signature	Date

## Appendix C: Consent Form for Interview

**Title of project:** “Translation of Western Ideals in a Developing Country: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Bangladesh”.

**Principal Investigator and/or Research Coordinator:** Syed Muhammod Ali Reza, PhD Candidate, School of Business, Curtin University, Associate Professor Dr. Jeremy Galbreath, Main Supervisor, Curtin Graduate School of Business, Perth, Australia and Dr. Joseph Sia Kee Ming, Co-supervisor, School of Business, Curtin Sarawak, Malaysia.

<b>Statements of Confirmation:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
I have been informed of and understand the purposes of the study		
I have been given an opportunity to ask questions		
I understand I can withdraw at any time without prejudice		
Any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material		
I agree to participate in the study as outlined to me		
I have given consent to record the interview session		

Name of participant	Signature	Date

## Appendix D: Acknowledgement of Fair and Accurate Translation



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Sarawak, Malaysia

Telephone: +60 85 443 939  
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Website: [www.curtin.edu.my](http://www.curtin.edu.my)

Date: October 12, 2015

To whom it may concern

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FAIR AND ACCURATE TRANSLATION

I, Dr Md. Shibley Sadique, the Chair of the Thesis Committee for Syed Muhammad Ali Reza, hereby confirm that the translated version of the (i) participant information sheet; (ii) consent form for interview and; (iii) consent form for observation by the said student from its original English version to Bengali is to the best of my knowledge fair and accurate.

Should you require further clarification on the same, kindly contact me at [Shibley@curtin.edu.my](mailto:Shibley@curtin.edu.my) or [Sadique@ru.ac.bd](mailto:Sadique@ru.ac.bd)

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sadique".

Md. Shibley Sadique  
Senior Lecturer  
School of Business

## Appendix E: Participant Observation Log

<b>ID</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>A.1.1</b>	19.01.2016	Dyeing, Printing, Washing, Cutting	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	3:00:00
<b>A.1.2</b>	19.01.2016	Sewing, finishing, Packaging	2.00 AM	5.30 PM	Tuesday	3:30:00
<b>A.2.1</b>	20.01.2016	Sewing Section	9.45 AM	11.45 AM	Wednesday	2:00:00
<b>A.2.2</b>	20.01.2016	Sewing Section	2.45 PM	5.00 PM	Wednesday	2:15:00
<b>A.3.1</b>	21.01.2016	Sewing Section	10.30 AM	1.00 PM	Thursday	2:30:00
<b>A.3.2</b>	21.01.2016	Sewing Section	3.00 PM	5.30 PM	Thursday	2:30:00
<b>B.1.1</b>	23.01.2016	Batch, Dyeing, Printing, Cutting, Sewing, Finishing, Packaging, ETP, Medical Center, Chemical Store	10.00 AM	12.00 PM	Saturday	3:00:00
<b>B.1.2</b>	23.01.2016	Sewing Section	3.00 PM	5.00 PM	Saturday	2:00:00
<b>B.2.1</b>	24.01.2016	CSR Manager Room	9.00 AM	10.00 AM	Sunday	1:00:00
<b>B.2.2</b>	24.01.2016	Welfare Officer Room	10.00 AM	12.00 PM	Sunday	2:00:00
<b>B.2.3</b>	24.01.2016	Sewing Section	2.45 PM	4.45 PM	Sunday	2:00:00
<b>B.3.1</b>	25.01.2016	Sewing Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Monday	3:00:00
<b>B.3.2</b>	25.01.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.30 PM	Monday	3:00:00
<b>C.1.1</b>	06.02.2016	Cutting, Sewing, Finishing, Packaging	10.00 AM	2.00 PM	Saturday	2:00:00
<b>C.1.2</b>	06.02.2016	Sewing Section	12.00 PM	1.00 PM	Saturday	1:00:00
<b>C.1.3</b>	06.02.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.30 PM	Saturday	3:00:00
<b>C.2.1</b>	07.02.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Sunday	2:00:00
<b>C.2.2</b>	07.02.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.45 PM	Sunday	3:15:00
<b>C.3.1</b>	08.02.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Monday	2:00:00
<b>C.3.2</b>	08.02.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.30 PM	Monday	3:00:00
<b>D.1.1</b>	16.02.2016	Knitting, Linking, Trimming, Mending, Finishing	10.00 AM	11.00 AM	Tuesday	1:00:00
<b>D.1.2</b>	16.02.2016	Makeup Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	2:00:00
<b>D.1.3</b>	16.02.2016	Makeup Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Tuesday	3:00:00
<b>D.2.1</b>	17.02.2016	Makeup Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Wednesday	2:00:00
<b>D.2.2</b>	17.02.2016	Makeup Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Wednesday	3:00:00
<b>E.1.1</b>	22.02.2016	Knitting, Linking, Trimming, Mending, Finishing, ETP, Childcare Center, Canteen, Prayer Room	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Monday	2:00:00
<b>E.1.2</b>	22.02.2016	Makeup Section	2.00 AM	5.00 PM	Monday	3:00:00
<b>E.2.1</b>	23.02.2016	Makeup Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	2:00:00
<b>E.2.2</b>	23.02.2016	Makeup Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Tuesday	3:00:00
<b>F.1.1</b>	25.02.2016	Cutting, Sewing, Finishing	10.00 AM	12.00 PM	Thursday	2:00:00
<b>E.3.1</b>	27.02.2016	Makeup Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Saturday	2:00:00
<b>E.3.2</b>	27.02.2016	Makeup Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Saturday	3:00:00
<b>G.1.1</b>	28.02.2016	Cutting, Sewing, Finishing, Packaging, Child Care Center, Canteen, Prayer Room	12.00 PM	1.00 PM	Sunday	1:00:00
<b>G.1.2</b>	28.02.2016	Snap Button Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
<b>G.2.1</b>	29.02.2016	Snap Button Section	10.30 AM	1.00 pm	Monday	2:30:00
<b>G.2.2</b>	29.02.2016	Snap Button Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Monday	3:00:00
<b>G.3.1</b>	01.03.2016	Snap Button Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	2:00:00
<b>G.3.2</b>	01.03.2016	Snap Button Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Tuesday	3:00:00
<b>H.1.1</b>	02.03.2016	Cutting, Sewing, Finishing, Packaging	2.00 PM	4.00 PM	Wednesday	2:00:00
<b>H.2.1</b>	03.03.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Thursday	2:00:00
<b>H.2.2</b>	03.03.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.40 PM	Thursday	3:10:00
<b>H.3.1</b>	05.03.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Saturday	2:00:00

<b>ID</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Duration</b>
H.3.2	05.03.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Saturday	3:00:00
H.4.1	06.03.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
I.1.1	05.04.2016	Sewing Section	12.00 PM	1.30 PM	Tuesday	1:30:00
I.1.2	05.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.20 PM	5.30 PM	Tuesday	3:10:00
I.2.1	06.04.2016	Sewing Section	10.30 AM	1.30 PM	Wednesday	3:00:00
I.2.2	06.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	4.30 PM	Wednesday	2:00:00
I.3.1	07.04.2016	Sewing Section	11.15 AM	1.30 PM	Thursday	2:15:00
I.3.2	07.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.30 PM	Thursday	3:00:00
J.1.1	10.04.2016	Sewing Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
J.1.2	10.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	4.00 PM	Sunday	2:00:00
J.2.1	11.04.2016	Sewing Section	9.15 AM	1.00 PM	Monday	3:45:00
J.2.2	11.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.15 AM	3.45 PM	Monday	1:30:00
J.3.1	12.04.2016	Sewing Section	9.30 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	3:30:00
J.3.2	12.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	4.00 PM	Tuesday	2:00:00
K.1.1	24.04.2016	Sewing Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Sunday	2:00:00
K.1.2	24.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
K.2.1	25.04.2016	Sewing Section	9.30 PM	1.00 PM	Monday	3:30:00
K.2.2	25.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	4.00 PM	Monday	2:00:00
K.3.1	26.04.2016	Sewing Section	9.00 PM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	4:00:00
K.3.2	26.04.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	3.30 PM	Tuesday	1:00:00
L.1.1	04.05.2016	GM Office	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Wednesday	3:00:00
L.2.1	05.05.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	12.30 PM	Thursday	1:30:00
L.2.2	05.05.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	5.30 PM	Thursday	3:30:00
L.3.1	07.05.2016	Sewing Section	10.30 AM	1.30 PM	Saturday	3:00:00
L.3.2	07.05.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	4.30 PM	Saturday	2:00:00
L.4.1	08.05.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.30 PM	Sunday	2:30:00
L.4.2	08.05.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	4.30 PM	Sunday	2:00:00
M.1.1	25.05.2016	CSR Manager Office	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Wednesday	3:00:00
M.2.1	26.05.2016	Sewing Section	10.30 AM	1.30 PM	Thursday	3:00:00
M.2.2	26.05.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.30 PM	Thursday	3:00:00
M.3.1	28.05.2016	Sewing Section	10.20 AM	1.20 PM	Saturday	3:00:00
M.3.2	28.05.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.30 PM	Saturday	3:00:00
M.4.1	29.05.2016	Sewing Section	10.30 AM	1.30 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
M.4.2	29.05.2016	Sewing Section	2.30 PM	5.30 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
N.1.1	31.05.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	2:00:00
N.1.2	31.05.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Tuesday	3:00:00
N.2.1	01.06.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Wednesday	2:00:00
N.2.2	01.06.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	6.00 PM	Wednesday	4:00:00
N.3.1	02.06.2016	Sewing Section	11.00 AM	1.00 PM	Thursday	2:00:00
N.3.2	02.06.2016	Sewing Section	2.00 PM	5.00 PM	Thursday	3:00:00
O.1.1	12.06. 2016	Linking Section	10.30 AM	1.00 PM	Sunday	2:30:00
O.1.2	12.06. 2016	Linking Section	1.30 PM	4.30 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
O.2.1	13.06. 2016	Linking Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Monday	3:00:00
O.2.2	13.06. 2016	Linking Section	1.30 PM	3.30 PM	Monday	2:00:00
O.3.1	14.06. 2016	Linking Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	3:00:00
O.3.2	14.06. 2016	Linking Section	??		Tuesday	3:00:00
P.1.1	19.06. 2016	Sewing Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
P.1.2	19.06. 2016	Sewing Section	1.30 PM	3.30 PM	Sunday	3:00:00
P.2.1	20.06. 2016	Sewing Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Monday	3:00:00
P.2.2	20.06. 2016	Sewing Section	1.30 PM	3.30 PM	Monday	2:00:00
P.3.1	21.06. 2016	Sewing Section	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Tuesday	3:00:00
P.3.2	21.06. 2016	Sewing Section	1.30 PM	3.30 PM	Tuesday	2:00:00
Q.1.1	23.06. 2016	Hand Room	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	Thursday	3:00:00
Q.1.2	23.06. 2016	Hand Room	1.30 PM	3.30 PM	Thursday	2:00:00
Q.2.1	25.06. 2016	Hand Room	9.00 AM	1.00 PM	Saturday	4:00:00
Q.2.2	25.06. 2016	Hand Room	1.30 PM	3.30 PM	Saturday	2:00:00
Q.3.1	26.06. 2016	Hand Room	9.00 AM	1.00 PM	Sunday	4:00:00
<b>Total</b>						<b>253:50:00</b>

## **Appendix F: Interview Protocol (For Garment Workers)**

**Title of project:** “Translation of Western Ideals in a Developing Country: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Bangladesh”.

### **Introductory Questions:**

In order to start, please let me know-

-Your name

-Year(s) of experience at your present service

-Your present position, duties and responsibilities in the organisation

### **Topic domains: Ensuring bottom line benefit and giving voice to the voiceless**

#### **Lead-off questions**

Please let me know how you have started your work life in the garment industry?

Please describe how your life has been changed after joining as a garment worker?

What are the difficulties that you faced during the initial period of your work life?

Please describe your typical day at work?

Do you think that the work lives of garments workers are developing gradually over the years?

How long you want to work as a garments worker?

What is your future plan (s)?

What is your expectation form the current employer?

#### **Follow-up questions**

Do you feel secured at your current workplace?

What are the major changes you have experienced in recent time?

How do you balance your work life with family life?

Are the men and women getting equal chance for their advancement in the workplace?

What kind of difficulties are garment workers still experiencing at work?

What can be done to upgrade the work life of the garment workers?

#### **Covert categories**

Compliance based CSR arrangements and its effects on the life of employees

Recognition as a breadwinner

Work life and private life

Housing

Transport

Child care and their education

Labour law

Human rights

Work environment and working conditions

Gender equality

Sexual harassment

Emancipation of human being

Paradigm shifts

**Concluding Question:** Please suggest the name(s) of any other organisations or individuals who can contribute to this research?

## **Appendix G: Interview Protocol (For Management)**

**Title of project:** “Translation of Western Ideals in a Developing Country: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Bangladesh”.

### **Introductory Questions:**

In order to start, please let me know-

- Your name
- Year(s) of experience at your present service
- Your present position, duties and responsibilities in the organisation
- How do you define CSR?

### **1. Topic domains: Translation of Western CSR ideals into Eastern context**

#### ***Lead-off questions***

Do the Western buyers’ for whom you are working have any issues relating to CSR?

Please tell me about your present CSR activities?

What are the broad areas that you are covering in your current CSR arrangements?

To what extent are you successful in implementing the CSR policies of your Western buyers?

#### ***Follow-up questions***

Have the Western buyers developed any mechanism to monitor your CSR practices?

How they are monitoring your CSR initiatives?

Do you see any major changes in the garment industry of Bangladesh over the years?

Why are these changes taking place?

Are you finding difficulties in implementing these changes?

What can be done for furthering the improvement in CSR arrangements?

#### ***Covert categories***

Labour law

Environment

Health and safety

Human rights

Loopholes of compliance based CSR arrangements

The rigidity of the Western buyers’ in their CSR talk

The involvement of foreign or local institutions in this monitoring system

Gap existing between the CSR ideal and initiatives

The paradigm shifts in garment industry

### **2. Topic domains: The process of Institutionalising CSR practices in the Eastern setting**

#### ***Lead-off questions***

Please let me know about the key roles that the different stakeholders are playing in current CSR arrangement?

How the different stakeholders such as, the Western buyers, government, owners, employees, employers' union, trade unions, NGOs, international and local organisations are involved in the current CSR arrangements?

***Follow-up questions***

How do you evaluate the role of different stakeholders in the current context of CSR?

What types of pressures the different types of stakeholders are generating?

Have these stakeholders installed any monitoring system in the current CSR arrangements?

Are the efforts of these stakeholders contributing to the development of current situation or some of their initiatives are hindering the process?

***Covert categories***

The forces of the Western buyers' in current arrangements

The forces of the government

The forces of the employers' union

The forces of the trade union

The forces of the NGOs

The forces of the local community

Other forces

Different coercive, normative and mimetic forces

Leading forces that cannot be ignored

Ignorable forces

***3. Topic domains: The postcolonial perspective of context-specific encounters between the West and East***

***Lead-off questions***

Are the current compliance based CSR contributing to the bottom line benefits?

Do you think that it is not the Western buyers' but the local suppliers who should set their own CSR policies based on their own socio-cultural need?

How can the joint responsibility of the West and East be established to implement more successful CSR initiatives?

***Follow-up questions***

Who is benefiting from the current compliance based CSR arrangements?

Are the current compliance based CSR arrangements and their caretakers acting like former East India Company?

Do you think that the Western buyers are using their CSR ideals as a part of their civilizing mission which they previously used in this subcontinent in the colonial era?

Do you think that the buyers' current CSR arrangement is a part of their colonizing mission?

In your opinion, how can the current unequal power distribution between the West and the East be equalised and could give voice to this voiceless class?

### *Covert categories*

Ensuring bottom line benefits  
Joint ownership of CSR arrangements  
Partnership in bearing the costs relating to CSR activity  
Creating level playing field

#### **4. Topic domains: *Ensuring bottom line benefit and giving voice to the voiceless***

##### *Lead-off questions*

Please describe a garment worker's typical day at work?  
Do you think that the work lives of garments workers are developing gradually over the years?

##### **Follow-up questions**

What are the major changes you have experienced in the work life of a garment worker in the recent time?  
What can be done to ensure a balanced mix between worker's work and family life?  
Are the men and women getting equal chance for their advancement in the workplace?  
What kind of difficulties are garment workers still experiencing at work?  
What can be done to upgrade the work life of the garment workers?

### *Covert categories*

Compliance based CSR arrangements and its effects on the life of employees  
Work life and private life  
Housing  
Transport  
Child care and their Education  
Labour law  
Human rights  
Work environment and Working conditions  
Gender equality  
Sexual harassment  
Emancipation of human being  
Paradigm shifts

**Concluding Question:** Please suggest the name(s) of any other organisations or individuals who can contribute to this research?

## Appendix H: Interview Protocol (For Stakeholders)

**Title of project:** “Translation of Western Ideals in a Developing Country: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Bangladesh”.

### *Introductory Questions:*

In order to start, please let me know-

-Your name

-Year(s) of experience at your present service

-Your present position, duties and responsibilities in your organisation

- How do you define CSR?

### **1. Topic domains: *Translation of Western CSR ideals into Eastern context***

#### *Lead-off questions*

Do the Western buyers for whom the suppliers are working have any issues relating to CSR?

What role you are playing in implementing the CSR policies at the garment industry in Bangladesh?

Please tell me how your present role is helping the garment factories to implement their CSR policies?

#### **Follow-up questions**

Do the Western buyers or your organisation/institution have developed any mechanism to monitor the CSR practices of the suppliers’ factories?

Who is generating most amount of pressure to the garment factories in implementing different CSR related activities?

Do you find any major changes in the garment industry of Bangladesh over the years?

Why are these changes occurring?

What can be done for furthering the improvement of CSR arrangements?

#### *Covert categories*

Compliance based CSR arrangements

Gap existing between the CSR ideal and initiatives

The paradigm shifts in garment industry

### **2. Topic domains: The process of Institutionalising CSR practices in the Eastern setting**

#### **Lead-off questions**

Please let me know about the key roles that the different stakeholders are playing in current CSR arrangement?

How the different stakeholders such as, the Western buyers, government, owners, employees, employers’ union, trade unions, NGOs, international and local organisations are involved in the current CSR arrangements?

### ***Follow-up questions***

How do you evaluate the role of different stakeholders in the current context of CSR?  
What types of pressures the different types of stakeholders are generating?  
What is your contribution in this regard?

### **Covert categories**

The forces of the Western buyers' in current arrangements  
The forces of the government  
The forces of the employers' union  
The forces of the trade union  
The forces of the NGOs  
The forces of the local community  
Other forces  
Different coercive, normative and mimetic forces  
Leading forces that cannot be ignored  
Ignorable forces

### **3. Topic domains: The postcolonial perspective of context-specific encounters between the West and East**

#### ***Lead-off questions***

Are the current compliance based CSR contributing to the bottom line benefits?  
Do you think that it is not the Western buyers' but the local suppliers who should set their own CSR policies based on their own socio-cultural need?  
How can the joint responsibility of the West and East be established to implement more successful CSR initiatives?

#### ***Follow-up questions***

Who is benefiting from the current compliance based CSR arrangements?  
Are the current compliance based CSR arrangements and their caretakers acting like former East India Company?  
Do you think that the Western buyers are using their CSR ideals as a part of their civilizing mission which they previously used in this subcontinent in the colonial era?  
Do you think that the buyers' current CSR arrangement is a part of their colonizing mission?  
In your opinion, how can the current unequal power distribution between the West and the East be equalised and could give voice to this voiceless class?

### **Covert categories**

Ensuring bottom line benefits  
Joint ownership of CSR arrangements  
Partnership in bearing the costs relating to CSR activity  
Creating level playing field

#### **4. Topic domains: Ensuring bottom line benefit and giving voice to the voiceless**

##### **Lead-off questions**

Please describe a garment worker's typical day at work?

Do you think that the work lives of garments workers are developing gradually over the years?

##### ***Follow-up questions***

What are the major changes you have experienced in the work life of a garment worker in the recent time?

What can be done to ensure a balanced mix between worker's work and family life?

Do the men and women are getting equal chance for their advancement in workplace?

What kind of difficulties are garment workers still experiencing at work?

What can be done to upgrade the work life of the garment workers?

##### **Covert categories**

Compliance based CSR arrangements and its effects on the life of employees

Work life and private life

Housing

Transport

Child care and their education

Labour law

Human rights

Work environment and working conditions

Gender equality

Sexual harassment

Emancipation of human being

Paradigm shifts

**Concluding Question:** Please suggest the name(s) of any other organisations or individuals who can contribute to this research?

## Appendix I: Interview Log

SL	Date	Name	Classification
1	08.08.2016	Rosy	Worker
2	08.08.2016	Farida	Welfare Officer
3	08.08.2016	Rahman	CSR Manager
4	09.08.2016	Alam	CSR Executive
5	09.08.2016	Amina	Worker
6	09.08.2016	Rihan	CSR Manager
7	11.08.2016	Morium	Worker
8	11.08.2016	Rahela	Worker
9	11.08.2016	Joly	Worker
10	11.08.2016	Ibrahim	Worker
11	11.08.2016	Rajiv	CSR Manager
12	11.08.2016	Idris	CSR Manager
13	13.08.2016	Bina	Worker
14	13.08.2016	Mina	Welfare Officer
15	13.08.2016	Rahul	CSR Executive
16	13.08.2016	Raihan	CSR Manager
17	14.08.2016	Badsha	CSR Manager
18	14.08.2016	Fatima	Worker
19	14.08.2016	Janema	Worker
20	15.08.2016	Dalia	CSR Manager
21	15.08.2016	Ali	CSR Manager
22	16.08.2016	Kulsum	Worker
23	16.08.2016	Shahida	Worker
24	16.08.2016	Rizvi	Owner
25	17.08.2016	Raton	CSR Manager
26	17.08.2016	Bithi	Worker
27	17.08.2016	Shopna	Worker
28	18.08.2016	Reaz	CSR Manager
29	20.08.2016	Roy	Inspector, Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)

<b>SL</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Classification</b>
30	20.08.2016	Suza	CSR Manager
31	21.08.2016	Alim	CSR Manager
32	21.08.2016	Khadiza	Worker
33	21.08.2016	khushi	Worker
34	22.08.2016	Rouf	CEO
35	22.08.2016	Chandan	CSR Manager
36	23.08.2016	Tinni	Worker
37	23.08.2016	Tithi	Worker
38	23.08.2016	Anis	CSR Manager
39	24.08.2016	Azom	Top Executive, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)
40	25.08.2016	Ahmed	Top Executive, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)
41	25.08.2016	Opu	Owner, Buying House
42	27.08.2016	Nasim	CSR Manager
43	27.08.2016	Akhter	WPC Member
44	27.08.2016	Liza	Worker
45	27.08.2016	Helen	Worker
46	28.08.2016	Wahid	Lawyer, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
47	30.08.2016	Mishu	Politician and Trade Union Activists, President, Bangladesh Garment Workers Unity Forum (GWUF)
48	30.08.2016	Sourav	Safety Engineer, The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, also known as the "Alliance"
49	31.08.2016	Shamima	Trade Union Leader, President, Shadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation (SBGSKF)
50	31.08.2016	Babu	Journalist, Desh Television
51	05.09.2016	Chowdhury	Educator, Department of Management Studies, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh

*Note.* Participants are identified by a pseudonym chosen by the researcher

## Appendix J: Acknowledgement of Fair and Accurate Translation



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Date: December 28, 2016

To whom it may concern

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FAIR AND ACCURATE TRANSLATION

I, Dr. Md Atiqur Rahman Khan, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Faculty of Business, hereby confirm that the translated version of the (i) observation notes and; (ii) interview transcripts by **Syed Muhammad Ali Reza** from its original Bengali version to English is to the best of my knowledge fair and accurate.

Should you require further clarification on the same, kindly contact me at [atiqur@curtin.edu.my](mailto:atiqur@curtin.edu.my) or [atiq.ru@gmail.com](mailto:atiq.ru@gmail.com)

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Md Atiqur Rahman Khan  
Associate Dean  
Research and Development  
Faculty of Business