

Causes and effects of injury and death at rmg sector in bangladesh.

[Health & Medicine](#), [Mental Health](#)



The toll of death and injuries sustained by the RMG workers are on a steady rise. There are instances which goes reported while there other traumatic events which barely comes into the limelight of public attention. RMG is the one notable industry in Bangladesh which have had tremendous growth in the past and still it continues to grow at a robust scale. The RMG sector in Bangladesh has been able to maintain a sturdy reputation in the foreign market single handedly outweighing all other industries which are into exporting goods. The reputation of Bangladeshi garments and clothing has declined ever since series of unfortunate events pertaining to collapse of garment factories. Major buyers and big clients have started to impose strict measurements concerning the well-being of the RMG workers while other buyers have taken a step back and resorted to import readymade garments from China and India. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has been closely monitoring the measurements at garment factory/establishment, thereby mitigating the death and injury rate of the garment factory workers to some extent.

The causes and effects of several accidents can be closely scrutinized, if theories could be related into practices. A better understanding of the theory will enable the factory owners to identify the abject problems which the workers obtained while he was involved with handling machineries, tools, equipment in the factory set-up. There are stern theoretical backings advocated by many different scholars. Accidents can be prevented once the root-cause is identified, a much more linear and deterministic approach can curtail the rate of accidents, and it can help reduce as much as 80% of the accidents. The legal system should be able to perform in its power to

safeguard the interests of the factory workers assigning blame and punishment, ensuring comprehensive preventive measures are well placed and have scopes of reform. (Patrick Hudson). Discussed below are following theories which are best related to accidents and prevention of accidents in the RMG set-up in Bangladesh. Acts of Gods- out of our control.

Accidents are deemed as inevitable repercussion rendering the person involved with the accident at a vulnerable state. People during the primitive days widely held the notion that accidents are mere unfortunate events caused by Gods and other spirits, a much mythological belief prevalent in those times. The only way to relinquish the omen was by performing an appeasing ritual or sacrifice (Bernstein 1995). People need to come out from the belief of resorting to old practices derived from age-old folklores and they should concentrate on taking measurements and actions so that these accidents can be prevented. The practice is prevalent in most rural parts of Bangladesh where people are hard-stricken by rich folklores which have been promulgating since ancient times. They would seldom adhere to logical explanations which would dictate the plausible reasoning as to the hindsight of an accident and would rather perceive the calamity as acts of Gods (Bernstein 1995). If the age old folklores still dictate the lives of the people, then the people are heading towards a more precarious lifestyle endangering their lives. The essence of this theory is that, people should come out from their typical understandings which are driven by mythological believe and should rather jump into conclusion which contains logical explanation of an

accident. Once a rational explanation is established the next step is to identify the root cause.

The Chain of Events- Linear and Deterministic. An accident can be seen as the end of a sequence of multiple events. For there to be an accident, the end outcome. The repercussion is attached to series of events which ultimately leads to accident. One may either set the chain in motion or they worsen the condition along the way or they fail at the last moment while attempting to stop a potential accident. The theory is better amplified with Heinrich Domino theory, each of the bricks bringing down the next one until the final brick fell as an accident. Heinrich identified 5 levels of analysis in which he focused on the faults of human, as his data suggests that 88% of the accidents were caused by unsafe acts, with 10% by unsafe conditions and 2% by unavoidable circumstances. The levels are as follows.

Each one of the levels are like dominos aligned in order. Taking cues from Bangladeshi context, most accident occurs due to lack of literacy. Lack of knowledge and education as to how sophisticated machines should be operated, unable to operate can sometime render an accident. The social setting in factory set-up in Bangladesh should be in such a manner so that the worker does not feel threatened by the hazardous elements. The equipment and machineries need to be properly maintained and regular service is required in order to avert the accident. All of these factors contribute to major accidents and injuries. Using of simple message and such as, “ Be safe” or “ Look out” can help evading the accident or injury.

Human Factor Theory. This theory stretches great deal of importance, a module designed carefully addressing the cause of an accident. It is the human who are at fault whenever any accident or fault is identified. This theory broadly consists of three branches.

- Overload
- Inappropriate response
- Inappropriate activities.

Each of the three branches are sub categorized into several other factors. An accident is likely to occur if the incumbent is surrounded by peer pressure such as noise and distraction in the workplace. Personal problem and emotional stress the incumbent receives from his family and close ones. Vague instruction from the supervisor can also create insurmountable problem and this might potentially lead to an accident. Like overload, inappropriate response too contains different factors which attributes to accident or injuries. Inappropriate response entails the factors, when the workers are being careless and ignorant as to the environment setting of the factory. For instance, a fault or defect is identified but not enough contemplation and care is put into rectifying the fault. Another example could be, worker showing sheer carelessness while dealing with sophisticated tools and machineries, which is malicious and fatal for the worker.

Lastly inappropriate activities deals with when the worker carries out tasks without proper training and eventually misunderstanding the magnitude of risks involved in a given task. Ferrell's human factor theory can be seen as

an exemplary theory relevant in Bangladeshi context whenever there is any occurrence of accidents and injuries in a garment factory. Workers are often victim to malicious accidents to excessive overload from work and family. Inappropriate response is another vital factors which is backed by lack of education and lack of training in order to carry out a particular task.

Attribution Error. This theory entails about how an accident is perceived from the vantage point of the people who witnessed the accident and the person involved in the accident. The person who was involved in an accident will describe the situation and will generally blame it onto external influences which caused the accident. However, other observers who were present in that time and place will generally blame it onto the person who was involved in the accident. For instance, an individual, while involved with handling a sophisticated machinery in a factory sustains an injury while carrying out that particular work, the person will blame it to the noise and distractions from other workers which transpired the accident. The supervisor and manager will blame it on the incompetence of the worker, the fact that he could not handle the machinery with enough care ultimately resulted in causing the accident.

This is one of the critical theories where the root-cause of the accident is blurred due to the high blame game involved. Blaming others for personal failure is a typical issue which widely hovers around the workplace in most of the factories in Bangladesh. Supervisors and managers will try to avert the situation as much as possible by not blaming it on the external influences as these external influences are pretty much under their own control. This

theory can be looked as self-serving bias. When describing a failure of an event, individual will try to evade from responsibility for the repercussion of their actions in order to protect and maintain a high-task related self-esteem (Campbell and Sidikides, 1999).

There are several other theories which attributes to causes and effects of malicious injury and death of workers in a factory. It is dully important to recognize the causes of these accidents. The responsibility is on the bilateral parties, workers and their supervisors. A harmonious employer relationship (ER) can help to build a safer and friendlier working environment. A worker should relinquish himself from every other overload which obstructs his work, he should have the requisite education and training in order to get the task completed, report fault within the premises to the management etc., all of these factors are essential and must be taken into account when ensuring hazardous free working environment.