

Book Review

Nazrul Islam. *Global Technological Change Impact on Textile and Garment Workers: A Comparative Study of Bangladesh and Thailand*, Dhaka: Ahmed Publishing House, 2006. 281 pages.

The book entitled *Global Technological Change Impact on Textile and Garment Workers: A Comparative Study of Bangladesh and Thailand* has been written by Nazrul Islam, Associate Professor, School of Business, North South University, Bangladesh. The book has been published by Ahmed Publishing House, Dhaka in August 2006. It entails an overall comprehension of the present status of workers of textile and garments industries in Bangladesh and Thailand, and how they are coping with various technological changes occurring on a global scale.

The book describes the study of how job security, job satisfaction and work relations of the workers are being affected as a consequence. The socio-economic impact on the workers of Bangladesh and Thailand was analyzed discretely with view over income, benefits, and social concerns. Issues related to familiarizing both managers and workers with the technological advancements were investigated. The sample size included 610 workers and 229 managers from various textile and garment industries in Bangladesh and Thailand.

The book comprises of nine chapters including the introduction and methodology followed by an overview of the textile and garment industries in South and Southeast Asian countries, impact of technological change on textile and garments workers in Bangladesh and Thailand, a comparison of the impacts in Bangladesh and Thailand, managers perspective of technological change on workers; and finally a concluding chapter summing up the whole issue including further recommendations.

In the introductory chapter, the author points out a basic conceptual framework for analyzing the impact of technological change on textile and garments workers. It has been stated that major changes occurred in the manufacturing functions that created a significant impact on workers and their involvement in the various changing activities.

The next chapter titled 'Methodology' comprises of the impact analysis and sample design of the data sources. The study is based on mainly primary data. The sample was selected purposively among only large and medium companies. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were undertaken to analyze the socio-economic impact with respect to job security, job satisfaction and work relations. Regression and factor analysis were done to identify the impact.

In the chapter on textile and garment industry in South and Southeast Asian countries the writer dealt more with the overall performance, the associated labor cost, international exports and projected annual changes of the sector. A brief background of the textile and garments industry in Bangladesh and Thailand was also stated here. The present status of the industry with respect to a few market indicators has been investigated and the overall result obtained depicted the significant contribution of the industries in the region in worldwide exports. In spite of that, the industries in this region are still lagging behind as they depend mostly on the labor-intensive technologies. The need for superior technologies hence needs to be emphasized.

Once the background of the industry has been described the book moves on to highlight the impacts in Bangladesh and Thailand separately. Among the workers in Bangladesh, the relationship of the technological change and demographic variables with the job security, job satisfaction and work relations and hence the overall socio-economic impact has been analyzed. An investigation was also conducted on the influence this change is having on the women workers in Bangladesh. Workers tend to become frustrated with meeting the increasing demands and qualifications as a result of these changes, and hence job security gets hampered. Job satisfaction has been both positively and negatively affected. Work relations are positively influenced. In Thailand, the influence relationship and impact analysis had been done in a similar way. The results show that the negative effect of job security is increased skill demand, while the positive effect on job satisfaction is mainly due to increased fair pay. Work relations have also been positively influenced and thus providing scope for training and skill development.

An overall impact difference between the workers of Bangladesh and Thailand with respect to job security, job satisfaction and work relations were also elaborated. The results obtained were not statistically significant. The writer states at a point "Bangladeshi workers

significantly differ in their views about job security impact of technological change than the Thai workers. Bangladeshi workers are comparatively more negative to work pressure than their Thai counterparts". Considerable differences have been observed between the attitude towards job satisfaction among the Bangladeshi and Thai workers. Bangladeshi workers find the pay scale and remuneration inappropriate, while the Thai counterparts find it to their satisfaction. Work relation outlook has been found to be significantly different among the two groups of workers. "Bangladeshi workers are more positive to the increase of training and skill development and decrease of conflict, and fewer downsizing compared to Thai workers" – this is how the writer puts forward the attitude towards the change. Job security of Bangladeshi women is negatively affected. The other viewpoints of the women workers have been found to be more or less same as the other workers.

Last of all the perspective of the managers had been studied. The Human Resource Management (HRM) and its relationship with the overall change and its impact among the Bangladeshi and Thai Managers had been dealt with. The managers think this change is positively related to work relations. They believe that motivation and skill development can aid toward proper utilization of the changed situation.

Hence, in this study it has been found that sophistication and shifting to the capital-intensive production in order to meet the demands of the international competitor market and the consumers, has created a negative impact on the job security, job satisfaction and work relations of the workers in the textile and garment industries in Bangladesh and Thailand. At the same time the results show a 'slightly positive overall impact' on the workers of labor-intensive companies. HRM puts forward the need for performance appraisal and strong monitoring and control of work. This book thus gives an overview of the socio-economic impact but there still remains scope for social, economic, political and legal aspects analysis of the situation.

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