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**Female Employment Under
Export-Propelled Industrialization:
Prospects for Internalizing Global Opportunities
in the Apparel Sector in Bangladesh**

Debapriya Bhattacharya and Mustafizur Rahman

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Summary

Women entering the industrial labour force in Bangladesh generally find themselves in low skill/low wage jobs. In fact, the success of the country's flagship export-oriented industry — the ready-made garments sector — is built on a large supply of cheap and flexible female labour.

Nevertheless, increasing liberalization of the global textiles market creates new challenges for countries and industries that rely on a low skill/low wage strategy. They eventually find it difficult to increase productivity, and thus to retain their place in increasingly competitive markets. A second incentive for change is provided by the phasing out of the Multi-Fiber Arrangement, which limited inputs of domestic origin in clothing production. In the current situation, Bangladesh has a unique opportunity to restructure its domestic apparel sector, introducing new technologies and fostering domestic production linkages.

Thus the paper argues for public sector allocations combined with private sector training of the female labour force, which can stimulate women's engagement in the apparel sector, raise their productivity and ultimately improve their livelihoods.

Debapriya Bhattacharya is a senior research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies; Mustafizur Rahman is a professor in the Department of Accounting, University of Dhaka.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATC	Agreement on Textiles and Clothing
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BSIC	Bangladesh Standard Industrial Code
CAD	computer-aided design
CMI	Census of Manufacturing Industries
DTA	Domestic Tariff Area
EC	European Community
EPB	Export Promotion Bureau
EPZ	export processing zone
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GSP	General System of Preferences
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISS	Industrial Surveys and Studies
L/C	letter of credit
LDC	least developed country
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MFA	Multi Fibre Arrangement
NGO	non-governmental organization
QR	quantitative restriction
RMG	readymade garments
ROO	Rules of Origin
SAARC	South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation
SAPTA	South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement
WTO	World Trade Organization

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