

May Day Observation

Date: 1st May 2024



Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity (BCWS)

Introduction:

May day is celebrated on 1st May of each year since its first inception. It has become global phenomenon for workers to come altogether and demand better working conditions, fair wages and other worker's rights in front of large gathering areas. BCWS ordinarily makes arrangement to observe this day each year to honor fighting worker's rights and esteem all over the world. This year, BCWS celebrated this day by joining shoulders with RMG workers at Rampura, Ashulia, Gazipur, Chittagong and Naryanganj.

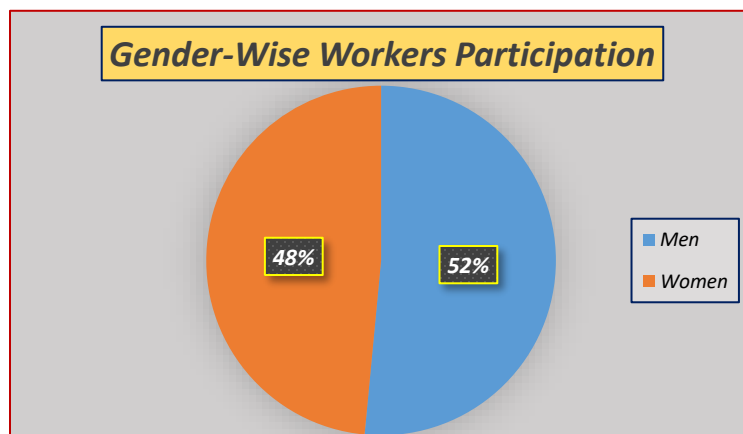
This day reflects the history of the labor movement and pledges to build a fairer a just society. In keeping with the original spirit of May Day, having the right to form trade unions is undoubtedly a vital aspect of labor rights for workers in Bangladesh and around the world to organize and voice their support for the empowerment of the working class. Workers around the world are historically marginalized. Workers continue to face multiple forms of exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and denial of fundamental rights and other ancillary benefits. The traditional May Day labor awakening paves the way for workers to be given the dignity and due respect they deserve by ensuring that issues are resolved.

This year, May Day theme of BCWS was –

“Improving Workers Livelihood in a Changing Climate: Ensuring Health and Safety, Decent Workplace, Justice and Social Protection”

Participants:

About **1959 (M-1009, F-950)** RMG workers, worker leaders and trade union representatives joined altogether with BCWS to observe the day (center-wise). The event was led by 285 worker leaders where men were 159 and female were 126.



Description of the event:

The event was schemed in two steps to do rally and human chain demonstration. The speech were given following the rally part. Due to avoid excess heatwaves on this monsoon (summer), we planned to do the program as early morning as possible. Ashulia, Gazipur, Naryanganj,

Chittagong and Rampura arranged the occasion severally. Various colorful festoons were arrayed with impactful slogans indicating workers inner voice to come out to establish their rights. Some slogans included –

“Ensure Gender Sensitive Workplace”
“We need effective laws to stop GBV at workplace”
“Need Effective Complaining Committee; not by just pen and paper only”
“Ensure Workers Safety First – Sign the Accord”
“Withdraw all false accusations against RMG Workers”
“Brands Should Sign The International Accord”
“Give Living Wage towards Workers”
“Ensure Accountability of DIFE”
“Ensure Adaptation Fund for Just Transition”
“Ensure Workers Voice in the Center of Climate Discussion” etc.

Workers were marched altogether during the rally saying these slogans in the top of their lungs to show what needs to be done for them in and outside of the factory. Speeches were provided by worker leaders in the demonstration and clears **demands** were stated from them included –

- ✓ Need amendments in grading system
- ✓ We (workers) want fair wage
- ✓ Eliminate false charges against RMG workers during minimum wage crackdown
- ✓ Want GBV free workplace
- ✓ Functional day care facilities in the garment factories
- ✓ Ensure effective anti-harassment committee not just in pen & paper
- ✓ Assure workers safety in the workplace
- ✓ Free exercise of freedom of association
- ✓ Ensure women & child’s safety and rights in a changing climate
- ✓ Ensure reproductive rights to empower women workers
- ✓ Bring workers under social protection and social safety net

(Besides, industrial police, SB, DGFI, NSI, local media and local police administration were present so that the vehicles, passers-by and others work could not get hampered by the day observation.)

Voices of Workers:

“Women are still being harassed inside and outside of the factories. Some can protest it, while some cannot. Need to take effective actions to stop the harassment and violence against women”

~ By Shahanu (Garment worker)

“Workers are suffering since the beginning of the industrialization. The country is getting economically solvent day by day from our (workers) hardships but we do not get our fair wages”
~ By Sadek (Garment worker)

“We want our safety in the workplace, without ensuring that it is not idle to work there”
~ By Mamun (Garment worker)

Snap Shots of the Event



