Objectives

Major objectives of the study were:

- To assess the labor force and their nature of work engaged across the shrimp supply chain.
- To assess compliance level of labor laws across the formal sector of shrimp industry.
- To evaluate the economic relations of labor laws compliance benefitting the female workforce towards empowerment and poverty reduction.

Methods

- The study utilized data on over 530 workers randomly chosen and interviewed from 40 shrimp processing factories across the six coastal divisions of the country.
- In-depth interviews of Owners, Managers, Compliance Officer, Labor Contractors.
- Key Informant Interviews across the supply chain.
- FGIS at different stakeholder level.

Results

- Workers are better aware of their basic rights and entitlements and accepting the employment offers knowing the inherent shortfalls (Surplus labor market).
- Most factories have trained Labor Compliance Officer capable to run ‘Labor Law Training’ for their own.
- Better labor compliance including Appointment Letter, ID Cards, Minimum wages and benefits, Attendance and overtime systems and other welfare benefits.
- Leaves and overtime allowances generally under-paid.
- “Shrimp factories are safe from ‘building’ & fire’ safety.
- Most females are reported chances of scars on hand skin and other occupational diseases from salts, moist condition and bad posture.
- Workers under Labor Contractors constitute over 60-70% of workforce from poor families, occupational safety and health risks.

Conclusions

Bangladesh needs higher ratio of female participation in the labor force to realize its vision of reaching middle income status by 2021. Development of labor market is vital for economic growth for a ‘labor surplus’ country like Bangladesh. Employment is one of the major indicators for measuring women empowerment and poverty reduction. Women empowerment across the workforce engaged in shrimp sector needs better compliance of labor laws, employment opportunity, better wage and improved health care and workplace safety.