

**SUSTAINABLE MARKETING IN THE READY-MADE GARMENTS (RMG) SECTOR OF BANGLADESH****Mubina Khondkar<sup>1</sup>, Salma Honey<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>*University of Dhaka, Bangladesh*<sup>2</sup>*Department of Business Administration, Royal University of Dhaka, Bangladesh***Volume 4 Issue 2****(August 2022)**

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<https://doi.org/10.30997/ijsr.v4i2.183>**Corresponding Author:**

Mubina Khondkar

[mubinakhondkar@du.ac.bd](mailto:mubinakhondkar@du.ac.bd)**ABSTRACT**

Innovative managerial and social changes, such as sustainable marketing practices, considerably improve organizational performance. Although the ready-made garments (RMG) sector of Bangladesh is widely known to global consumers through the 'Made in Bangladesh' tagline, effective implementation of sustainable marketing in the country has been proven as a difficult task. This research examines the current state and implications of sustainable marketing in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. Primary data were collected from 20 RMG factories in Dhaka and Gazipur that were selected using convenience sampling techniques, and 120 officials were selected using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using the content analysis technique, where the theory informed the theoretical framework of planned behavior. The research shows that knowledge about sustainable marketing in most factories is limited, and often they are not interested in practicing it. It also evidences that RMG manufacturers have been late emphasizing and adopting sustainable marketing practices. They have not yet started showing concerns in this respect. The lack of supporting information systems often impedes the implementation of sustainable marketing practices. The main motivations are legal requirements and the mandatory rule for sharing information regarding sustainable marketing work. The RMG sector of Bangladesh can benefit from sustainable development not only at the national level but also from a global perspective by incorporating the revolutionary green strategy into their key corporate processes. As green businesses and competitiveness are intricately linked, we cannot avoid using these cutting-edge, innovative, and notable strategies to compete with the giants in this business area, such as China, Vietnam, and India.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social responsibility, ecology, green policy, and sustainability issues are frequently discussed in the academic and public spheres, media, and press. It is also emphasized that meeting our needs through preserving and improving natural resources with minimal harm to the environment, health, and wellbeing is imperative for ultimate sustainability. This enables future generations to meet their needs using the available natural resources and ecological products. Due to the rapid population expansion, technological innovations, and unparalleled economic growth of the last century, several concerns for this century and the coming ones have emerged, including population explosion, poverty, health inequality, poorly planned urbanization, environmental destruction, food and water shortage, and climate change (Martin & Schouten, 2011). Businesses have become exceedingly competitive because of increased economic development. Managers are forced to explore new competitive advantages as they compete for new and more sophisticated customers, retain existing customers, and grow their market share.

Companies that do not focus on listening, properly recognizing client demands, and effectively serving them are slowly losing their prominence in the market. Companies face increased challenges in achieving financial goals while satisfying customers, respecting the environment, and considering social factors as part of their overall business strategies. A considerable portion of these challenges can be overcome through sustainable marketing, which involves activities that provide organizations with a competitive edge. Sustainability means the development process that meets current generations' requirements without jeopardizing future generations' ability to satisfy their needs (Lučić, 2020). The concept of sustainable marketing could be understood as an approach that involves factors that influence the behavior of marketing managers, such as attitude and subjective norms that positively influence the intention to practice sustainable marketing (Ferdous, 2010). The theory of planned behavior is a frequently used theoretical framework suitable for understanding how beliefs connect to behavior and its core components of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control usually influence an individual's behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1985; Godin & Kok, 1996; Conner, 2020).

The initiation of the RMG sector can be traced back to the late 1970s when Daewoo, a South Korean textile firm, planned to operate in Bangladesh, and it formed a collaboration to offer training on garment technology, factory management, and international marketing to 130 employees (Rhee, 1990; Rock, 2001; Mottaleb & Sonobe, 2011; Yunus & Yamagata, 2012; Ahmed et al., 2014; Sadique et al., 2018). These trained employees later started their RMG factories contributing to the significant gradual rise of the sector in Bangladesh (Sadique et al., 2018). This sector has been performing well, ensuring the country's largest source of foreign earnings, and has emerged as the most promising sector in the socio-economic context (Mahmud & Afrin, 2017). It might be considered the backbone of economic growth as the share in the global apparel market was 6.3% for Bangladesh in 2020 (M. Rahman et al., 2021). The gross domestic product (GDP) growth - 7.9% in 2017-2018 and 8.2% in 2018-2019 has mainly been driven by the RMG sector and has contributed to a decreased poverty level to 21.8% in 2018 along with improvements in various social indicators (World Trade Organization (WTO), 2019; Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2021; Statista, 2021). In a decade, RMG export increased from about 78.15% of the total exports in 2011 to 83% in 2020 (Statista, 2021). Except for 2020, Bangladesh has been the second largest RMG exporter since 2010 (WTO, 2020; Hall, 2021). According to the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), in 2020, growth in this sector slowed down to 18.12% (GoB, 2020), and as a result, Bangladesh lost the second position in 2021 to Vietnam and became third due to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Hall, 2021). This sector has continually contributed to employment generation and employed more than 4.5 million people (Khan & Ullah, 2017). It has been

drawing special attention compared to other sectors have been drawing in terms of growth, creation of physical infrastructure (demonstrated by 4222 RMG units), foreign exchange earnings, significant contribution to the national economy, creation of employment opportunities, and poverty reduction through socio-economic development (Islam et al., 2016). Though the RMG factories vary in size, location, business activities, and management style, they are mostly similar in terms of the shared goal to meet buyers' needs competitively, indicating that they are concerned about sustainable ways of doing business.

RMG industry in Bangladesh was born in 1977 through the export of USD 40,000 to France and Germany by Reaz and Jewel Garments (Rashid, 2006). Later, the South Korean firm Daewoo also played an essential role by providing training and equipment when it partnered with the Bangladeshi firm Desh Garments (Kabeer & Mahmud, 2004; Ahmed et al., 2014). Although the early success of the RMG sector is attributed to the initial technology transfer from South Korea, such a one-time infusion of knowledge alone is argued to be insufficient to explain the subsequent sustained growth of the sector. A study found that the high profitability of garment manufacturing due to the initial infusion of human capital attracted highly educated entrepreneurs to get involved and facilitated the expansion and stable enterprise growth through the continuous involvement of competent foreign-trained and skilled entrepreneurs and human resources (Mottaleb & Sonobe, 2011).

The 7th Five Year Plan 2016-2020 of the GoB identifies a critical dichotomy - sustaining the competitiveness of the RMG sector and strengthening its environmental sustainability (Nath, 2021). Complementarity and balance among export expansion and domestic demand and import substitution are emphasized for sustainable manufacturing development (ibid). The three spheres of sustainability - environmental, economic, and social along with their interlinked overlapping connections were considered while assessing sustainability issues (Emanuel et al., 2011). The RMG sector in Bangladesh is lagging in terms of sustainability when some recent tragic accidents and significant global attention on ethical standards are considered (Huq et al., 2014; Huq & Stevenson, 2020). A study reveals that some RMG factories often take mock compliance measures, such as maintaining two sets of timesheets and eliminating child labor from the RMG industry. However, this elimination often creates negative consequences as child labor is eventually diverted to riskier sectors (Huq et al., 2014).

There exists some lacking regarding the three areas of sustainability - environmental, social, and economical. Only the economic conditions may have reasonable and good achievement among the three perspectives of Bangladesh garment industry. The benefit of increased earnings usually flows mainly to the owners in this country, despite their claims that profits barely cover the workers' wages. There is a significant economic tie between garment exports and the country's economic growth rate. In 2020, garment exports were 83% of the country's total export earnings, and the GDP growth has been consistent since 2000 ranging from 6% to 8.2% (ADB, 2021; Statista, 2021).

This study focuses on the critical issues related to sustainable marketing, its applications in marketing strategies, business practices, and the necessity of further research. Assessing the applications of sustainable marketing in the RMG sector in Bangladesh is the broad objective of the study. The authors investigated the motives for using sustainable marketing in the RMG sector. This study attempts to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i. To understand how Bangladesh's RMG sector conceptualizes sustainable marketing.
- ii. To explore sustainable marketing practices in the RMG sector in Bangladesh.
- iii. To identify the implications of sustainable marketing practices in marketing strategy.

## 2. METHODS

This research-based study uses the theory of planned behavior as a conceptual framework as this social psychology theory has gained significant popularity in the context of association with the theoretical and practical constructs of the applications of sustainable marketing (Ajzen, 1985; Godin & Kok, 1996; Conner, 2020).

### 2.1. Data Collection

It uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected using a questionnaire. In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect primary data. On average, the duration of interview sessions was an hour and ten minutes. All the interviews were conducted at the respective respondents' workplaces per their preferences. Different high-quality information sources are used to develop the literature review that includes research reports of local and international organizations, published articles, and the existing green procurement policies of the RMG sector in Bangladesh.

### 2.2. Participants and Settings

In this study, 20 factories in Dhaka and Gazipur city have been used as the sample frame. Table 1 presents the names of these 20 factories. A sample of 120 respondents from these factories was selected for interview. A combination of convenience and snowball sampling techniques was used to select the samples.

Table 1 Information Sources

Number	Name of the factory	Number of respondents
1	Van Happen Fashion Manufacturing Limited	6
2	Avant Garments Limited	6
3	Vision Garments Limited	7
4	Al Tahsin Apparels	7
5	Vertex Wear Limited	7
6	Amber Apparels Limited	7
7	Y.K. Sweaters Limited	5
8	Wintex Apparels Limited	5
9	Wear & Style Limited	6
10	Amena Private Limited	6
11	Viyellatex Limited	4
12	TRZ Limited	5
13	Al-Yesrab Apparel (Private) Limited	7
14	Amen knitting Limited	6
15	Concept Knitting Limited	6
16	AG's Apparels Limited	5
17	AMC Sweaters Limited	6
18	Youth Fashion Limited	7
19	Zam Zam Knit Wears Limited	6
20	Ananta Casual Wear Limited	6
	Total	120

Source: Authors' construct

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. In the first step, different variables were identified based on the related literature, and then, in the second step, frequency distributions were performed to understand the relationships among those. In the third step, the content analysis technique was used where the theory informed the theoretical framework of planned behavior. This step facilitated the interpretation of the analyses.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. The Three Areas of Sustainability

Some are lacking in environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability. The economic aspects have some achievements in Bangladesh. Although the RMG sector is drawing particular attention, the prevailing environmental conditions of this sector are not good. Many companies have not yet set up an effluent treatment plant (ETP); they discharge the liquid effluent and solid wastes directly into the natural environment, causing massive pollution and contamination. A persisting practice of using chemicals and fertilizers when manufacturing raw materials is also concerned. However, it is recommended to use organic cotton, which can help avoid using it. Nonetheless, it is possible to improve the environment by reusing and recycling textile items and introducing an efficient waste management system.

Standard practices in many areas are often not maintained properly, and the practices around power and energy are some of those. The electricity supply is often insecure and unreliable. Alternate energy sources are often managed with the help of a fuel-based generator. Energy recovery from incineration is never applied as there is no incineration plant. These factors, along with the use of traditional technology, lack of modern equipment, and frequent power shortages, pull behind the pace of further development in this sector.

The social aspects of the RMG sector are the most alleged areas and are still in a highly vulnerable state. Most workers have an exceedingly low quality of living because they are paid the lowest wage. Gender equality in almost every aspect is not maintained correctly. The situation is even worse in terms of salary and job position. The socio-environmental aspects also remain highly challenging, full of workplace health and safety hazards, including fires, building collapses, absence of fire exit, etc. Every year, numerous people are killed or injured because of workplace incidents. For instance, the fire at Tazreen Fashion in 2012 and Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013 are two of the most pathetic incidents that caused a negative image of our country in the international market. After the Rana Plaza tragedy, the Sustainability Compact was launched in July 2013 by an initiative from the European Union (WTO, 2019). The compact focuses on continuous labor rights and factory safety improvements in Bangladesh's ready-made garment and knitwear industry. However, the safety standards of most of the factories are still disgraceful. None of the factory authorities considers the workers' health, and thus workers frequently become ill because of their poor working conditions and consequences.

### 3.2. Crisis management and workers' welfare

Crisis management is also found ineffective in most cases. Sometimes workers are compelled to go to the factories during strikes taking life risks due to picketing, violence, and clashes. Lack of practices of workers' rights, trade unions, fair trade, worker welfare, fair wages, suitable provident fund, and appropriate working hours are socio-economic conditions that have been harming the workers' wellbeing the most. Most workers are unaware of their rights, and hardly any initiative is taken to raise their awareness. While trade union federations

are still uncommon, labor unions are frequently associated with political parties. As a result, union leaders are preoccupied with party politics instead of raising voices for the workers, mostly for self-gain. A few manufacturers have established workers' welfare funds but at the cost of deductions from monthly wage, which is already allegedly low. As a result, workers' low wages lead to poor and unhealthy lifestyles for them and their families, and such welfare initiatives at the cost of their wages create a vicious cycle of miseries.

### 3.3. Sustainable marketing practices

Sustainable marketing is the prime need for the RMG sector because our exports are fundamentally dependent on it. However, this study reveals that only 29.17% of the organizations are highly aware of the sustainable marketing concept, indicating a low awareness rate. Figure 1 shows the extent of sustainable marketing knowledge in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. According to this study, 69.17% of the organizations are moderately aware of this issue and are not adequately pursuing sustainable marketing practices. Only 1.67% of the organizations are somewhat aware of the sustainable marketing concept, which reveals the reasons behind the vulnerable status of the preparation for sustainable marketing practices. Most organizations claim to be producing green products and practicing green manufacturing procedures. While this bit of green marketing in support of sustainable marketing practices can be found at the manufacturers' end, the concept of sustainability and its seriousness is rarely conveyed to the consumers in any embodiment. Particularly the roles played by the retailers in this respect are not evident. Therefore, the theoretical knowledge and practices regarding sustainable marketing in the RMG sector are unsatisfactory.

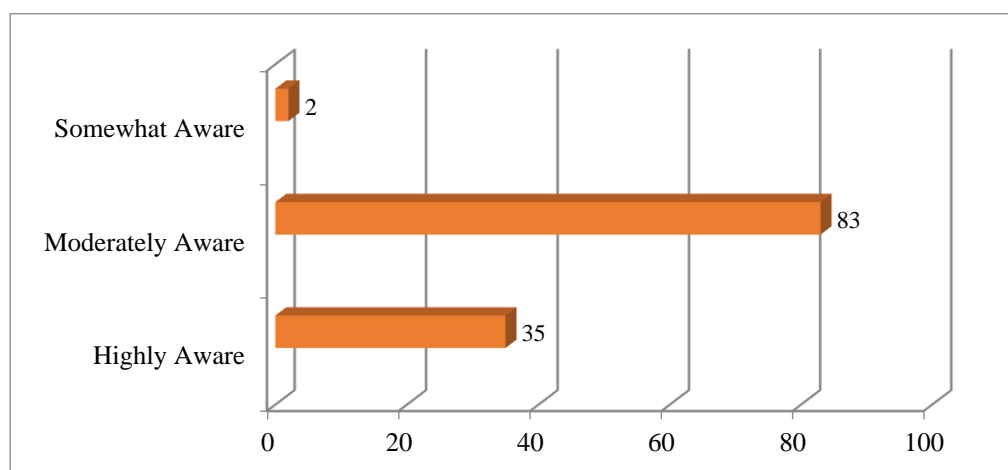


Figure 1 Sustainable Marketing Knowledge in the RMG Sector in Bangladesh

Source: Authors' construct

This study reveals that the organizations are highly and moderately aware of the sustainability concept. The undertaking different marketing activities such as an initiative to reduce energy consumption, implementing the waste management system, and increasing the use of renewable energy. Initiative to reduce water usage, use of sustainable raw materials, use of recyclable materials, reduction of the use of harmful chemicals, and reduction of the use of harmful packaging. The practitioners believe that the short-term costs of developing a green strategy may be met in the long run by increasing resource efficiency and lowering costs. Therefore, the factories must invest without expecting a quick return and wait for a long-term impact. However, as this approach incurs an additional cost item, some factories might find it challenging and a difficult aspect of this approach. Nonetheless, it can be successfully maintained if the organizations can negotiate with the high-end buyers for certain incentives

to adhere to the green business strategy. Adopting the green strategy provides an opportunity for industry leaders to demonstrate their commitment to environmental protection, which can reinforce the positive appeal of the country among global RMG product consumers and the global watchdogs.

The study reveals respondents' sustainable marketing practices in various areas, including eco-label use, product focus on customer satisfaction, continuous improvements, and production of socially and environmentally friendly products. Also, waste management practice, reduction of energy use, an increase in renewable energy use, reduction of water use, sustainable raw materials use, reduction of harmful chemicals, and the appropriate configuration of marketing mix components. About 60% of the RMG factories not only have a fair idea regarding eco-labeling but also are not concerned about it. They only aim to fulfill the buyers' requirements which they receive with their orders. Only 40% of the RMG factories claim that they use eco-labels. However, 100% of the RMG factories give attention to customer satisfaction. At the same time, the satisfaction of the sophisticated western RMG consumers depends considerably on sustainable and green marketing practices (Ara et al., 2020). only 45% of the RMG factories claim that they are fully implementing the waste management system; 50% are taking initiatives to reduce energy consumption and using renewable energy, and 45% are taking some initiatives to reduce water usage. Table 2 presents the statistics about marketing practices of the factories focusing on continuous improvement in producing products, following fair pricing, promotional strategies, and distribution strategies.

Table 2 Marketing Practices in the RMG Sector (Statistics)

Items		Continuous Improvement in Producing Products	Following Fair Pricing	Following Fair Promotional Strategies	Following Fair Distribution Strategies
N	Valid	120	120	120	120
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.55	2.00	2.50	2.00
Std. Error of Mean		.114	0.000	.115	0.000
Median		2.00	2.00	2.50	2.00
Mode		2	2	2 <sup>a</sup>	2
Std. Deviation		.510	0.000	.513	0.000
Variance		.261	0.000	.263	0.000
Range		1	0	1	0
Minimum		1	2	2	2
Maximum		2	2	3	2
Sum		31	40	50	40

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Source: Authors' construct

Sustainability has become a key determinant of company strategies and business practices and has been bringing changes in value creation processes (Mancuso et al., 2021). When companies practice marketing concepts to attain profitability, the major goal becomes survival to attain sustainability and acquire enough funds to continue performing effectively. Therefore, the focus is to make a profit and achieve it as a by-product of doing a good job (Khondkar, 1999). Along with companies, consumers also contribute to environmental and

social problems through their buying behavior and consumption of goods and services that might have unfavorable side effects along the value chain (Schrader & Thøgersen, 2011). The interest of scholars in sustainable marketing has been growing, but there is still a lack of consensus about the applications of sustainable marketing in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. A better understanding of the research problem, the discussion is arranged around the concept of sustainable marketing and its applications.

### **3.4. Sustainable Marketing and Sustainable Development Nexus**

The concept of sustainable development has long been debated. According to United Nations (UN), it is the process of development where current needs are met without jeopardizing future generations' ability to meet their needs. Thus it is conceptualized as – the future now (UN, 2019). The notion of sustainable development emphasizes the importance of creating a long-lasting improvement in the current customers' quality of life and meeting future generations' requirements (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2018). Implementing sustainable development principles on a micro-scale implies assisting a company's long-term success through performing economic, ecological, and social activities. Sustainable development must be adopted at all levels of the economy and businesses. The widespread acceptance of this concept has resulted in a shift in how various economies and enterprises operate. Enterprises now realize the significance of adopting the concept of sustainable development in all spheres of functions, policies, and practices (Mottaeva et al., 2021). They have taken it to cope with the cut-throat competition sustainably and rethink their strategies, particularly their marketing strategies. Successful implementation of sustainable development has some implications for unique marketing strategies that support sustainable growth and development, for instance, through green marketing (Saxena & Khandelwal, 2010). The concept of sustainable marketing is not an entirely new one. The growing interest in environmental issues led to the creation of quasi-new marketing concepts which emphasize a social system that focuses on environmental and social factors encompassing macro marketing, ecological marketing, green marketing, and social marketing (Rudawska, 2017). Gradually, a new approach to sustainable marketing has evolved, focusing on the 1970s societal marketing approach with contemporary green marketing and relationship marketing ethos, which is strongly tied to the notion of sustainable development (Van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). This approach provides a solid foundation for a better life for the current and future generations through which company offerings are created, delivered, and communicated. It works as a set of rules governing supplier-consumer cooperation, the implementation process of marketing functions, and the analysis and extenuation of negative impacts of related activities on social and ecological environments. United Nations suggests that all the stakeholders need to be encouraged to take initiatives for organizing changes in the patterns of demand and consumption through rules and regulations to support the promotion of sustainable advertising, marketing practices, and consumer education to reduce adverse environmental impacts (UN, 2019).

In western literature, sustainable marketing first appeared during the end of the 1990s as a natural progression in the growth of marketing (Rudawska, 2017). It is a broader notion of management that embraces the concept of sustainable development and entails the need for all value chain actors. The emphasizing producers and consumers to change their behavior and the need to reconcile marketing's relentless focus on increasing consumption with a more balanced use of natural and tangible resources (Zinkin, 2006). The importance of marketing in sustainable growth varies depending on the firm's size, the industry it operates in, and its organizational culture. It can be argued that some corporations will be confined to designing more sustainable products or services under the pressure of customers. Marketers can integrate the notion of sustainable marketing by modifying and rethinking the marketing strategy and culture of the company. However, it is claimed that marketing is often shown to have an



inherent drive towards unsustainability because of the assumptions and limitations of economic and cognitive approaches to marketing. The dilemmas between micro-marketing objectives and macro-marketing goals; thus, sustainable marketing necessitates rules and regulations for controlling marketing activities within an environment (Van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996).

Sustainable business activities have become major driving forces for sustainable development worldwide and in Bangladesh. In 2015, Bangladesh reached the lower-middle-income status and was on the right track to graduate from the UN's list of the least developed countries by 2026 (World Bank, 2021). At the same time, the poverty level declined to 15% in 2016 from 44% in 1991 (World Bank, 2021). Like other businesses, RMGs are under considerable pressure to become more viable and secure a vital position in this highly competitive market (Sarkar et al., 2020). To attain these goals, contextualizing the growth of green business strategy and environmental degradations associated with the RMG sector in Bangladesh is proposed to gain competitive advantages (Sarkar et al., 2020). Sustainable marketing is a quickly expanding phenomenon that stems from the concept of long-term development. Notions of sustainable development play a unique role in the applications of sustainable marketing, and respective societies need to undergo some changes to embrace the concept of sustainable development (Emery, 2011). Endorsement of the notion of sustainable development through sustainable marketing is vital as a holistic approach. To adopt sustainable marketing strategies and tactics that are appropriate to ensure a socially equitable, ecologically friendly, economically fair, and feasible business for benefiting current and future generations of customers, employees, and society at large (Emery, 2011). It is often believed that marketing is incompatible with long-term development as it is typical to think that marketing and sustainable development have a conflict of interest because marketing promotes an increase in sales.

In contrast, sustainable development reduces unnecessary consumption (Trojanowski, 2014). Environmental degradation is argued to result from production activities as respective industries often cause significant negative impacts on the natural and social environments. Thus it is imperative to introduce an environmentally friendly, balanced organization management system (Trojanowski, 2014). Therefore, sustainable marketing needs to encounter inherent challenges throughout developing, delivering, and offering customer value while preserving and enhancing natural and human resources (Schouten et al., 2012).

It has been claimed that the RMG sector has contributed to empowering women as almost 90% of workers are female, which is the highest rate of involvement of the female labor force in any single sector in South-East Asia (Islam et al., 2016). However, this impressive participation of the female labor force in the RMG sector could not effectively increase the living standard of the workers (Rahman, 2007). Despite the female labor force being predominant in this sector, women often face physical and mental challenges in their workplace, and gender discrimination also prevails severely (Mahmud & Afrin, 2017). It is also found that the gender pay gap increases with skill levels, and male managers are paid 21% higher than their female counterparts (ibid). Women constitute most of the consumers of the output of RMG factories, be it a fashion wearable or one that carries religious values (Almila & Inglis, 2017; Khondkar, 2021). Islamic garments started becoming a trend and fashion symbol in the 1990s, which can also be traced to the proliferation of Islamic culture (Khondkar, 2021). Considerable shifts in the notions of how wearables have also been perceived contributed to the increased and more sophisticated production of RMG. In the beginning, clothing symbolized style and personality, which later became a craft and a strong economic contributor (Muzareba & Rahman, 2007). Despite being a significant contributor to the economic prosperity of the country and given that most of the garment factories earn sufficiently, employees are often deprived of their rights, work safety, and medical facilities,

and sometimes women workers face wage discrimination and incidents of sexual harassment (Islam et al., 2016).

Bangladesh could earn a prestigious position in the global RMG sector, mainly utilizing the availability of a cheap labor force and the resulting low manufacturing cost (Rahman, 2007). However, it suffers from dependence on imported raw materials as it is not self-sufficient in producing cotton and other raw materials. This dependency sometimes puts the country facing unstable market prices and conditions (Ahmed, 2009). A study claims that despite newly introduced increased flexibility in foreign direct investment (FDI) policies to attract new FDI, Bangladesh is in a relatively less advantageous position compared to its close competitor Vietnam (Sadique et al., 2018). However, the revised and newly introduced policies have helped facilitate the transfer of technologies and knowledge through FDI (Sadique et al., 2018). Therefore, it might be inferred that industrial policies are essential for a country's development, and there are multiple means to operationalize those policies to become sustainable. Despite the stereotyped recommendation from the World Bank in favor of letting the market determine a country's development strategy, market intervention by the GoB has shown to be successful (Sadique et al., 2018). It must be noted that formulating new policies is essential but not the only issue that needs to be addressed; suitable governing structures and proper implementations also need to be in place to harvest the benefits of the policy upgrades. However, growing concern for sustainable practices in a consistent manner is the biggest challenge Bangladesh encounters in this respect.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In Bangladesh, many young people are becoming more sensitive and serious about social and environmental compliances. Moreover, retailers' growing mistrust around the price, supply chain, and job policies, which may require radical openness, has been driving this need for compliance further. Increased environmental concerns pressure RMG businesses to align their business strategies with environmental governance. Businesses can effectively address environmental concerns and gain a competitive advantage. A sustainable approach to segmenting, targeting, and positioning the market sensitive to environmental issues is critical to implementing sustainable marketing practices. In this respect, long-term market segmentation in the RMG sector is challenging because of the ever-changing degree of sensitivity of the market towards environmental issues. Therefore, segmentation often considers the appropriate predetermined parameters. However, RMG factories aligned with green and sustainable marketing strategies find it imperative to acquire latent prospects, cost minimization, optimal use of natural resources, and creation of value for potential customers. Environmental issues are getting much attention as the RMG sector is rapidly expanding. Some industry pioneers are paying more attention to the country's economic situation, sustainable growth strategy, and security status. They are certified by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), an internationally recognized green building certification program developed by the US. Green Building Council. LEED offers a framework for healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving green buildings, and the LEED certification is a globally accepted indication of achievement of sustainability and leadership. Effective environmental protection measures enhance a company's competitive advantage and assist it in providing a low-cost product. Also, maintain its corporate image, gain political goodwill, obtain tax rebates, and, most importantly, meet the requirements of modern customers. As a result, to ensure a better future and mitigate the terrible effects of climate change, ozone depletion, and garbage disposal, the corporate world must become more conscientious and responsible by implementing green policies. Suppose the plan of a green company can be implemented effectively. In that case, it can serve as a powerhouse for environmental protection, competitive advantages, long-term development objectives, and sustainable development

through sustainable marketing. Support from the GoB and robust environmental control procedures might help this powerhouse grow at national and global levels.

The following recommendations are suggested for Bangladesh to incorporate sustainable marketing practices effectively in the RMG sector.

- With all its negative dimensions, the RMG sector might not appear to have a brighter future. Therefore, the entire RMG industry framework must be reconsidered and reformatted through meaningful steps. It involves all concerned parties and stakeholders to attain long-term sustainability because this sector, directly and indirectly, affects the economy of the country and the three million workers and their family members.
- In the RMG sector of Bangladesh, most employees are female, which precludes women empowerment. However, it is a pity that the gender pay gap and other forms of gender-based discrimination are still prevailing. Therefore, strict measures must be taken to address these significant concerns to ensure gender equality.
- With the tagline 'Made in Bangladesh,' the RMG sector communicates with international consumers to accomplish the marketing objectives and positively affect the country's positioning and branding. Therefore, country branding initiatives need to incorporate the RMG realities and vice versa for both to create a consistent positive appeal among global consumers.
- Long-term efforts and investments are required to plan, outline rigorous legislations, set out specific procedures for stricter implementation of those, and ensure abiding by the LEED certification. These responsible ways of doing business can lead to the growth of the greener RMG sector.
- It is the best time for the RMG sector to invest more resources in green initiatives that can help achieve development goals while conforming to the commitment to reduce carbon emissions. An agreement towards adopting green business practices based on a transition to a flexible combination of opportunities depending on the country's social, political, and economic adaptability would have been the most excellent solution to overcome Bangladesh's unsustainable productivity expansion path.

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