

22pc RMG workers face sexual harassment: MJF

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An estimated 22.4 per cent female readymade garment (RMG) workers face sexual harassment at factories, a study by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) finds, reports UNB.

MJF executive director Shaheen Anam said the study was conducted at 22 factories in Dhaka and Chattogram between March and May last year.

Speaking as the chief guest at the event held at the National Press Club, Shirin Akther, MP said girls are victims of sexual harassment at education institutions, too. She urged the authorities concerned to be more conscious in this regard.

President of Karmajibi Nari Pratima Paul Majumder said awareness is the most important tool to curb sexual violence at education institutions and the workplace. "The rate of sexual harassment will go down when there'll be a good relationship between the workers and factory owners," she said.

The study identified a culture of impunity, inaction and nonchalant attitude of authorities towards sexual harassment as some of the key reasons for this workplace menace.

The majority of male and female respondents said women fall victims to sexual harassment as they are weak and do not protest.

But 21 per cent male and seven percent female respondents were of the opinion that women become victims to sexual harassment because of their dresses. Ylva Sahlstrand, second secretary of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, said the female workers need to be conscious at workplaces. "Education can create the awareness," she said. "Anti-sexual committees must support female workers. Factories owners, management and trade unions should come forward in this regard. Besides, social dialogue is also needed here," Sahlstrand added.