

Working environment and living standards of urban transport workers in Chattogram city: A qualitative study

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ABSTRACT

The workers of Road Transport Sector (RTS) usually struggle with low wages, long working hours, poor working environment, occupational health hazards, and lack of social protections. This research provides an overview of the working environment and labor relations with owners in the RTS in Chattogram City, Bangladesh. This study examined the gaps that hinder attainment of Decent Work Condition (DWC) among the transport workers especially in the face of critical issues on work and life balance, increasing job insecurity, social protection, and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) of transport workers. In qualitative method through Focus Group Discussion (FGD), In-depth Interview (IDI) and Key Informant Interview (KII), all data was collected. Non-probability, purposive sampling was included for the primary data collection. Results showed that labors of this sector are deprived, exploited and under privileged. Labors are deprived from their employment opportunity and basic rights. They do not have employment letter and adequate earnings. Their working hour is longer than the hours fixed by the labor laws, and they must do overtime, but they are not paid for that. The existing workers' leave, rest and leisure time are not sufficient. Their stability and security of work is not enough. They have no social security and freedom of associations. They are bound in target trips. Therefore, government agencies and transport owners should take necessary steps to ensure employment and other relevant basic rights.

INTRODUCTION

The improved and safe road transport is crucial for sustainable economic development as it contributes to National Gross-domestic Product (GDP). It is the principal way to transport products and people in any region. The Road Transport Sector (RTS) is not compliance with labor legislation in Bangladesh. The workforce of RTS mainly comprises of male wage workers. Government enacted the labor law 2006 to protect all labor rights in Bangladesh and established the labor court to execute the formulated law and legislations (Abiona et al., 2006; Bhatia et al., 2013; Reshma, 2019). These rights include employment scope, working hour, minimum salary, age requirement, work security, Occupational and Health Safety (OHS), compensation, freedom of labor association and so

on. However, it is unclear whether the enacted laws are properly executed or not. (Gromadzinska and Wasowicz, 2019; ILO, 2015). Therefore, it is required to update the existing transport law and strengthened its execution.

Lately, the Cabinet Division approved the Road Transport Act 2018 with the maximum penalty of five years jail and fine BDT. 500,000 for fatal road accidents. Unlike the existing ordinance, the new law has fixed the minimum age and academic qualification for a driving license. Therefore, one must pass class 8 to be a driver and class 5 to be an assistant, and minimum 18 years for normal driving license and 21 years for professional driving license (Boudreau, 2020; Uddin et al., 2022). Transport workers struck against this act to escape from hanging. However, they did not demand for appointment letter, eight hours Labor

Day, and safe working environment. The misunderstanding of the workers about the law made them emotional or they were provoked (Faruk et al., 2022). If there is no guaranteed rights and dignity as a citizen, then a free humanitarian could not be expected (Ismail, 2019).

The Decent Working Condition (DWC) among transport workers is crucial for their health and life safety. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), decent work involves opportunities for work that are productive and deliver a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development (ILO, 1979; Rekhviashvili and Sgibnev, 2018). The global perspective DWC refers to the working environment and all existing circumstances affecting labor in the workplace, including job hours, physical aspects, legal rights, and responsibilities. DWC of transport worker indicate fair income, job security, equal opportunity, and OHS (Islam et al., 2020; Uddin, 2021).

Transport workers means who are employed in a motor vehicle undertaking directly or through an agency (Agbibo 2018; Rizzo, 2011). The drivers and helpers are considered as transport workers in the context of Bangladesh. Currently, around 6,000 buses and minibuses ply Dhaka and Chattogram cities, while around 70,000 buses ply different inter-district and long-haul routes. There are 127,000 truck and lorry, according to transport operators (Karim and Salam, 2019; Karmakar, 2016). According to the labor federation, around 4 million workers are directly or indirectly involved in the RTS (Hossain, 2021). The government revised the wages of road transport workers in 2005 with minimum wage for drivers BDT. 12,000; for contractors BDT. 8,000 and for helpers BDT. 6,000. However, the owners of transports do not follow it (Islam et al., 2020). Wages are supposed to be revised every five years. If any worker thinks he is being deprived, then he could lodge complaints with the labor court (Hasselwander et al., 2021).

There are several legislations that associated with the transport sector: The Labor Act 2006 of Bangladesh defines fundamental rights, principles, terms and conditions of work guiding the

relationship between employers and workers. Some provisions include appointment, hours of work, leave days, and termination. The amended act (2013) provides compensation of workers for injuries sustained in the course of duty. The OHS Act (2013) also requires employers to have health and safety policies to protect workers against work-related injuries (Boudreau, 2020; Islam et al., 2020). The Road Transport Act (2018) has established institutions and agencies to set standard, supervise and regulate the conduct of transport industry players (Alam et al., 2015; Naim et al., 2022).

Transport workers deserve the increase of payment that would be good for the economy, business, jobs and workers. Attacks on transport workers' individual and dangerously long working hours (without rest time) should be stopped (Hoque, 2021; Naug et al., 2016). Unfair competition based on cost, not equality, and workers pushed onto short term and precarious contracts should be removed. The sustainable transport is needed that is accessible and affordable for everyone (Alam et al., 2014; Nobili et al., 2023). OHS concerns in the transport sector include risk of road accidents, physical hazards, violence, dangerous operational situations, and exposure to harmful substances. HIV/AIDS is also a challenge especially for long distance truck drivers (Chowdhury et al., 2016; Gromadzinska and Wasowicz, 2019).

The development and economy of the country depends on the wheels of transports. However, the transport workers do not get their deserved remuneration and dignity. So, their life is full of sufferings, deprivation, and depression (Abid et al., 2022; Karim and Salam, 2019). The published reports on the daily newspapers present the lifestyle of transport workers that included issues of extortion, workers strike, and denying the liabilities of accident by owners (Karmakar, 2016; Nobili et al., 2023). There are laws for transport workers and owners; however, no laws for those are frequently occurring road accidents. So, the blame always rests upon the worker's shoulder that is unfair (Reshma, 2019). Therefore, the effort from both sides is required to minimize the number of road accidents. Both transport workers and public should have knowledge about the traffic laws and rules. Unfortunately, transport

workers could not manage a minimum living standard for their family inspite of working for long time with huge pressure on their mind (Faruk et al., 2022).

Several studies were conducted on working environment of transport worker at national and international level. A report on European Union RTS found transport employees had more non-standard working patterns, compared with the national average. The RTS could be characterized by working unsocial hours (evening, night, morning, weekends and holidays) (Agbibo, 2018; Anderson, 2015). The most frequent disorders leading to invalidity pensions among blue-collar transport workers in Austria are 'disorders of skeleton, muscles and connective tissue'. Musculoskeletal disorders are especially typical for professional truck drivers who suffer from long periods of sitting in a monotonous position. In addition, as has been mentioned, professional truck drivers suffer from a lack of exercise and from irregular and unhealthy nutrition (Belova et al., 2022; Cunha et al., 2016).

According to Rizzo (2011), on average, a worker does not maintain his job with a particular bus owner for more than eight months. His average working day is about 15 hours/day and 6.7 days/week. Summala (2007) showed that transport workers show an over-representation of occupational diseases related to hearing impairment in Denmark. In Germany, the percentage of musculoskeletal and connective tissue illnesses is higher in the RTS (21.9%) compared with the national level (19.7%). Spain reports that back and knee problems increase as drivers grow older. Driving at night also causes eye strain, that might increase the risk of accidents. The longer working hours, the greater chances of suffering from sleeping and digestive disorders, irritability and swollen lower limbs (Cunha et al., 2016; Fine and Bartley, 2018). Joyce (2013) reported that long-haul road transport drivers and aviation workers also find it difficult to combine their work and family life because of irregular and split shifts involved in transport provision. Inadequate work life balance causes a big risk to workers wellbeing, their productivity as well the organizational performance.

Globally, several researches were conducted to understand the terms and conditions of work and employment of transport workers, nature of the employment, relationship between transport workers and their employers. However, such research is very limited in developing countries like Bangladesh. Therefore, this research was conducted to (i) assess the present condition of workers in terms of basic labor rights; (ii) review the extent of enforcement of labor rights; (iii) suggest remedial measures to improve working environment; and (iv) understand work and life balance conditions of transport workers.

METHODOLOGY

Study area and population

The selected study area for this study is Chattogram City, and its suburbs focusing some important area like Karnaphuli Bridge (Chaktai Notun Bridge), 8 No. Shulokbohor (Panchlaish), Kaptai Bus terminals (Bahaddarhat), Kalurghat, Oxygen, Pahartali, Patenga, Haliashar and BRTC bus stand (Figure 1). The study population was specially drivers and helpers of train, bus, truck, auto-tempo, CNG/ auto-rickshaw, Car and rickshaw. The study was conducted between January 2022 and June, 2022.

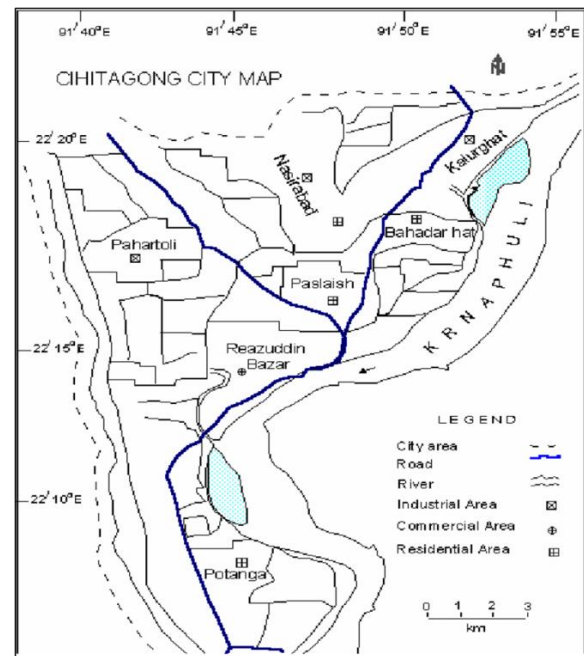


Figure 1: Location map of the study area (Chattogram City) (Sattar and Uddin, 2005).

Sampling techniques

This is qualitative research in nature at the same time descriptive explanatory research. Non-probability sampling, especially purposive sampling technique was applied to draw better data from the relevant respondents. Both primary and secondary data are investigated to meet the research objectives better. The labors in RTS are the unit of analysis here including senior management persons in relevant government departments/ agencies and associations.

Data collection

This research guide presents three methods of data collection that are proposed for qualitative research namely, In-depth Interviews (IDI), Key-

informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) for primary data (see Table 1). Then the secondary data was collected by reviewing newspapers articles, books and scientific journal articles and conference papers.

KII are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who deeply know about ongoing activities in the community. It is used to collect information from a wide range of people including transport labor union leader, transport owners' association leader, and local and national government relevant authorities' senior management who have first hand knowledge about the urban transport workers. In this study, 5 KIIs were conducted with relevant management departments and authorities (Figure 2).

Table 1: Used data collection methods and respective survey population.

Data collection method	Respondent designation	Number of respondents	Data collection location/ type of transport
KII	Senior officer/ leader	5	BRTC, RHD, Engineering Department (City), Owners Association, labor union,
IDI	Driver	7	Train, bus, truck, auto-tempo, CNG/ auto-rickshaw, Car, rickshaw
	Helper	4	Train, bus, truck, auto-tempo
FGD	Driver	5	Karnaphuli bridge, Kalurgate, Oxygen, Pahartali, Patenga,
	Helper	5	Bahaddarhat, Panclaiish/ Sholokbohor, Halishahar, BRTC bus stand

BRTC = Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation; RHD = Roads and Highway Department; CNG = Compressed Natural Gas/auto-rickshaws.



Figure 2: Some photos of KII with urban transport regulatory authorities in Chattogram City.

An individual interview allows for in-depth focus and detailed investigation on the individual experience and thoughts. Individual IDIs are optimal for collecting information about everyone's experiences and conditions. By collecting information from several or more individuals, could be analyzed to identify common patterns and to compare patterns between different sub-groups. In this study, 7IDI were conducted with drivers and helpers in different locations of Chattogram City (Figure 3).

(much like a “group interview”). By facilitating the group participants to discuss issues and situations that are not about them personally, they are more likely to express their opinions and beliefs spontaneously. Individual opinions may be influenced by others, but a well facilitated small FGD should be able to draw active participation and elicit the main threads of views. In this study, 10 FGDs were conducted with drivers and helpers of urban transports that were comprised of 8–10 respondents (Figure 4).

FGD is expected to prompt participants to articulate and reveal more insights and views



Fig. 3.Some photos of IDI with drivers and helpers of urban transports in Chattogram City.



Figure 4: Some photos of FGD with transport workers in Chattogram City.

Data processing and analysis

All the collected data was processed and analyzed categorizing and arranging them into themes and sub-themes following research objectives.

Responses were presented in line to describe the situations schematically. Acquired data is presented in a descriptive manner. All the information received from the samples was recorded and made in usable format for further

inspection. After collection of data, they were compiled and thereafter checked and verified again for consistency and completeness. Finally, all data were analyzed by applying qualitative process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic rights of transport workers

Decent work and economic development

It is very common in developing countries that the workers who put their physical labor for maintaining subsistence for them have always been deprived from their potential needs. Similarly, the transport workers also face almost similar challenges. They have no fixed salaries and no minimum wages gazette for the RTS now. The daily income of drivers is not more than BDT. 500–700 and for helpers about BDT.200–300. Apparently, it is enough for living a minimum standard of time. Sometimes, they may earn only BDT.500 per day and some days it may not then it becomes big challenge for them. They cannot earn totally when the wheels of the vehicles are stopped. They have pressure to provide BDT.2,200 to owners daily (for minibus) and it does not matter whether they have earned that money or not. Besides, the cost of fuel, police toll, and helper resides on the shoulder of driver. They must meet those challenges to ensure minimum earning. The city bus workers must provide the owner a certain amount of money regardless of what they earn, but the worker and the owner tie themselves in a very different fashion in external route. The total income of the worker is distributed to labors and the owner at certain ratio. The worker does not have to pay a mandatory fee to the owner. There is no specific wage limit, and the wages are got at daily basis and vary all the time. However, the average income stays within BDT.200–300 for the helper. Most of the workers do not receive any extra amount from the owner. Almost similar scenarios were observed in other developing countries (Belova et al., 2022; Cunha et al., 2016).

The condition of truck drivers is worse than bus drivers as they are paid on commission for trips. For example, a person or company hires a truck for BDT.30,000 to carry goods to Chattogram from Dhaka. The workers usually get 10 percent of it, that is BDT.3,000. This money is divided between driver and helper. In many cases, owners do not even want to pay 10 percent commission. They often bargain for 8 percent. If there is a gridlock on highways, it takes around two or three days to reach the destination. However, the wage remains the same. This finding is disagreed with Gromadzinska and Wasowicz (2019).

There is no fixed wage for a CNG (Taxi), auto-tempo and rickshaw driver like others. There are two types of owners in this sector. One is an individual owner and the other is company owner. These people give CNG and auto-tempo to driver for BDT. 900–1200 per day while BDT.350 for rickshaw. And one has to pay this amount to the owner eve in his absence, otherwise, he will lose his job. After maintaining fueling costs and other tolls, they hardly earn BDT.300–500 per day and sometimes even lesser. According to them, police cases even when there are no faults. Similarly, no fixed wage for transport workers was found in other developing countries (Faruk et al., 2022).

The driver and helper of train are appointed by government authorities and therefore, they enjoy standards salary and other facilities according to government policy. For car, the driver is appointed privately and has fixed salary, while if it is commission basis for carrying passengers then there is no fixed salary and other facilities that almost like other transports (bus, taxi and auto-tempo).

Transport workers' wages have been fixed by the Bangladesh Labour Law. However, the rules are not followed as there is negligence on the part of transport owners and a lack of monitoring by the concerned authorities. Therefore, it is required to strengthened relevant regulations and strictly implement them to protect basic labor rights.



Figure 5: Different types of urban transports that ply in Chattogram City.

Age requirement for employment

According to government regulations, there is age requirements for driver 18 years old while that is slightly relax for helper. In bus, minibus and auto-tempo have child labors that are of 8–12 years old working in this sector which is agreed with Anderson (2015). Very few are in driving (sometimes), maximum of them are helpers. The workers think that they work because if they do not, they will die out of hunger. There is neither any inspection on the issue nor any “fitness certificate” for the child labors. Most of the workers are unaware about the legal consequences of child and adolescent labor. In CNG and rickshaw sectors, there doesnot have any child driver in city side. Similarly, there is no child labor in train and car sectors.

Equal employment opportunity

There are no female workers in RTS though some women are driving personal bikes and cars now. Transport workers have no discrimination on the ground of religion. However, they feel deprived, depressed and discriminated. Many of the respondents said that they were not paid enough money rather than they must pay the owners a

certain amount. In their families, there have wants of food, cloth, and money but they cannot afford to fill up the family demand. They take food from roadside restaurants and uses public toilets. The similar scenarios were found by Abid et al. (2022). They have mental stress for this reason they committed with competition, load extra passengers, and sometimes fall in accident. There has brokerage about labors issues. Owners and labors union do extortion and there have syndicates. So, labors are always discriminated about their issues. They have mental stresses for life struggle, installment debt etc.

Maximum of them have no formal education. They have no academic knowledge and training about driving (except train). They have no academic knowledge about accessories loading, transport speed. They learn driving from the fellow workers. In contrast, transport workers must have academic knowledge and training in developed countries (Fine and Bartley, 2018). They say that they take license through commission agents, and they must give BDT.14000 to 20000 instead of BDT.1300 though theirs training is not accurate. From FGD, it was found that only one of them takes training from BRTA training school.

External route bus drivers say that though they have license but if they want to renew it after 5 years, then they must pay BDT.5000 instead of BDT.250. They also must face commissioned agent. They further say that they saved daily BDT.400–500 income after buying oil, Mobil, other expenditures and giving money to owner. They face fuel crisis.

Occupational health and safety

There has dust in the workplace of transport workers. They load extra passenger for this reason their workplace remains too crowded. There are not enough safety arrangements like seat belt and first aid appliances. One of the key informers gave importance on first aid appliances that should keep in transport. He said with grievance that the owners do not know about the laws at all, and they do not know what should keep in their transport. Maximum of them take cigarette and some of them are narcotics addicted. Similar bad practices were noticed among transport workers in other developing countries (Abiona et al., 2006; Cunha et al., 2016).

There have so much competition in city bus or other buses between companies for earning much money. Such situation is highly noticed among taxi and auto-tempo. So, they overtake frequently, and the drivers often have stressed that's why they committed road accident. Traffic congestion, dust, and ill behavior of passengers make their surrounding uncomfortable. They are unaware about the primary treatment, and they think if anyone is in danger, one must look for a hospital or pharmacy. Owners also force them to drive with defective vehicles which later traumatize them in working periods. The most astonishing fact this study found out that, every worker is inflicted with abusive language even they do not know whether there are laws to preserve their rights.

Social protection

In common with most other informal workers in other industries, informal transport workers have little or no access to social protection – health insurance, pensions etc. which is agreed with Islam et al. (2020). Only government employed transport workers in railway sector get social

protection. Some transport owners sometimes provide financial support to their drivers and helpers when they fall in financial crisis like accident, fatal disease and marriage.

In the absence of access to state-supported social protection programmes, there are numerous self-help groups, informal associations and cooperatives established to provide a minimal level of mutual support through contributions to welfare funds, covering funeral costs for members' families, for example.

Freedom of association

Some of the transport workers are the members of labor Union. The workers of establishment cannot freely join the trade union. Some of them know about the functions of trade union; however, others do not know clearly about it. Labor Union has extortion and owners also extort to the labors. There have lot of Syndicate in RTS. Though they are the members of trade union, but the leaders do not properly think about the labors interest. Ultimately labors are deprived from all their rights which agree with Karmakar (2016).

External bus and minibus have freedom of association from long ago for 40 years. Their associations' name is "kaptai bus-minibus union". It has legal registration, and the no. is 102. Every member gives BDT.20 per month in this organization fund. As owners do not see the labors tragedy, so that the union come forward for the labor's misery.

CNG/ taxi and auto-tempo drivers have their laborunion, but they did not join there. Some of them donot know clearly about the labor's union work. They said that there has different category in trade union. Though some of them took registration but they have not seen proper remedies for theirs right. The train and car workers have also labor union.

Extent of labor rights enforcements

Working duration

The usual eight-hour working time a day is not applicable for the transport workers. They must

work for 10 hours on average in a day. For sometimes it may rise to even 14–18 hours. One of the respondents who is the helper of a local bus, wakes up at 5:30am and toils at least until 11:00pm. He starts his day by sweeping and cleaning the bus, checking tires and the engines of the vehicle that will run on the city streets all day. After the bus hits the road, he has not a single moment to relax. Till midnight he hollers on the top of his voice, calling passengers and helping the driver. Rain or shine, he is on the bus doing his job. Similarly, Häkkänen and Summala (2000) found long working hours with no rest among the transport workers.

As per Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1983, drivers are supposed to drive for a maximum of eight hours a day with 30 minutes break every five hours. As they work daily so it is something like every day is holiday or there is no holiday. That means, it is completely up to the worker's will. As there is no fixed working hour, therefore there is no formal overtime. They take an interval at 8:00 am for their breakfast and another is between 2:00–4:00 pm for lunch. Usually all their meals are taken from hotels and their food habit is not at all healthy. They have no definite time for rest and meal. In other developing countries, similar unhealthy food habits and restless working hours observed by Reshma (2019).

In external route bus sometimes working time may even reach to 16–18 hours in a single day. CNG/ taxi and auto-tempo drivers usually drive for 6–7 hours a day. There are two working shifts for CNG drivers. The morning shift is from 5:00 am to 5:00 pm and the night shift is 5:00 pm to 5:00 am. One must drive either in the morning or the day shift and may even drive for both shifts. Therefore, there is no availability of overtime for the CNG drivers. However, the working duration for train and car workers is comparatively lower than others.

Forced labor

The owners only want their demanded money per day. Now, it is of no interest to the owners if the labors do overtime or not. The owners forced only for their demanded money. Usually, labors must give the transport back to the owner within 4:00

am. There is no force in city bus is used by the employer to make the labors do overtime. Instead, there are some cases where the labors are restricted from doing overtimes. Overtime working tendency was also found among urban transport workers, especially long-distance transport by previous studies (Karim and Salam, 2019; Naug et al., 2016).

In external bus and truck route there is not any forced labor for overtime either. However, sometimes workers must work against their will. For instance, someone who is feeling sick still must continue the work, otherwise, he will lose the job.

Police harassment and extortion

Informal transport workers are vulnerable to extortion and corruption from traffic police. Police incomes are supplemented with bribery. Many example that police are tracked payment of bribes by truck drivers on the route. The problem is similar for passenger and transport operators. Many informal workers include police bribes in their daily calculations of costs, alongside vehicle rental, fuel, licenses etc. Minibus, taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers explain that there are few and unclear stopping points to pick up passengers, which causes constant police harassment and demands for payment by the police. This is a common problem throughout the country according to Naim et al. (2022).

Struggle for survival

The fee that bus and truck workers' pay to bus/truck owners is non-negotiable. The workers could increase their daily income only by increasing the number of bus trips or the number of passengers. So, buses are both chronically overloaded and invariably speeding. In contrast, trucks speed up to quickly reach to destination and pickup another load that make road accidents (Nobili et al., 2023).

Balancing between work and family life

Work and family life

The works in RTS do not get any type of leisure and rest. They also do not obtain any casual leave

and leave for sickness. In terms of getting leave for sickness, there is a higher possibility of losing one's job. That refers to that fact that, if someone want a leave, then he will get it, but will have to remain unpaid for that. And the transport workers have literally no idea that they are entitled to get different paid leaves under the labor laws. As a result, transport workers must continue working with uneasiness. They do not always fulfill their family demand. They have many stresses in their life that is agreed with previous studies in other developing countries (Rekhviashvii and Sgibnev, 2018; Uddin, 2021).

Employment opportunities

The workers of RTS usually start the job at a very young age and sticks with the job like forever. Some of them have recently joined in the job and some of them are here about ≥ 26 years. It is good to know that almost all of them have an identity (ID) card in city bus section. However, at the same time it is disappointing that they donot have any appointment letter and service book. There is no formal contract between transport owners and labors. As they have no documents of their employment, owners could exclude them anytime and they could not take any legal action against the owners through law enforcement agencies or court. They didnot ever check whether their full information of service being recorded in any register.

The data was found from the External Route Bus section that no workers have the letter of appointment. All the drivers have their identity cards; however, it takes about 1–2 years for a helper to get the identity card. A helper could be promoted to a driver after working at least 6 years with the bus. The drivers collect their license from BRTA through a very vague procedure. There are workers who are at the job for more than 30 years. No one really knows about the service book. So, there is no written document of their occupational designation and age that was also found by Karim and Salam (2019).

According to FGD, most of the CNG/ taxi and auto-tempo drivers are very young and just started their job as a CNG driver. Among the respondents, only 1 person was found who has been driving

CNG for about 17 years and his age is 45. Others were in the job for about 1–5 years. Although all of them have their identity card and driving license but the problem is, not all of them hold the ID card. Some of them used to drive a four-wheeler and now driving a three-wheeler with that same license and must face the law when checked by the police.

From this study, it is evidence that no transport workers are found with the appointed letter. They are appointed informally without having any ID card, and contract document or service book. However, according to the Labor Act, 2006, the issuance of appointment letter, identity card and service book for a worker has been made mandatory.

Job security and stability

Transport workers have many experiences in removal from service such lay off and dismissal. One of the respondents said that he was dismissed because he did not fill up the demanded money of owners. Sometimes they laid off in several reasons and they did not get any remedy against such removal. They have faced many times verbal harassment. It is very simple matter to them. Similar scenarios were observed by previous studies (Hasselwander et al., 2021; Hoque, 2021). They donot know that they have legal protection against the harassment, and they donot think about that anymore. They must face public wrath, and even physical assaults from passengers over fare, slow movement of the bus and additional passengers. Many of them complain that people do not use footpath, foot overbridge but fall in accident and the drivers is hanged. CNG/ taxi and auto-tempo drivers complain that, though they have everything okay, but they must fall in lawsuits. One of the respondents said that he must send a major portion of his earnings to home. So, he could neither take proper food nor afford accommodation.

Social security benefits

There is no provident fund for transport workers. They do not get any festival bonus. They do not receive any compensation for injury. One of the respondents said with grievance that they

organized fund if any labors fall in injury, but the owners did not give any compensation. They pressurized the owner, but the owner gave little compensation. They do not get any medical treatment services from the employer. There is no medicine store at transport throughout the country that is agreed with Dragu et al. (2013). They are not member in any insurance policy.

Remedies to urban transport challenges

Violation of labor rights could not be cured ever if the labors are not conscious about their basic rights. However, the scenario is different. The labors donot even know what are their rights. They have the little knowledge about labor law. Very few of them know that they have something to do against the violation of the rights. The labors are not trained about their rights except one or two.

There is no readymade universally acceptable solution to the urban transport workers problem. Policy makers of government relevant authorities and leaders transport owners associations each have their own views, which when combined, invariably produced a workable and beneficial strategy. Whatever policy evolved should be considered firstly, in the light of time it takes to implement them and secondly, all policies need to be appraised in terms of their cost.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reflects the working environment of urban RTS. The present shortage of qualified personnel, particularly drivers, is a real challenge. The driving profession remains associated with poor working environment, low wages, and a problematic work-life balance. Measures could also be taken to boost women's participation in the driver profession. The result found from RTS is not satisfactory in the issues of rights of the workers. Labors of RTS are deprived, exploited and under privileged. Labors are deprived from their employment opportunity. They do not have employment letter, adequate earnings. Their working hour is longer than the hours fixed by the labor laws, and they must do overtime, but they are not paid for that. Workers' leave, rest and leisure time are not sufficient. Their stability and security of work is not enough. They have no social security and freedom of associations. They

are bound in target trip. Labor laws are kept only in books rather than in execution. There is visual distance between trade unions and labors. With a view to gaining more profit, owners are very much willing to deprive the workers from their rights.

The following steps are suggested to improve the existing conditions: (i) trade unions and relevant policy makers should take positive steps to solve challenges, (ii) the workers should raise their voices against all repressions, oppressions and deprivations being united, (iii) they should be conscious about their rights, and (iv) the RTS needs to tackle the variable levels of training and qualifications in an effort to ensure greater mobility and employment.

There are some unavoidable limitations conducting this research. Amidst, the main challenge is the shortage of time. It was tough to manage time to talk with transport workers due to their busy schedule. As the study covered the entire Chattogram city, so it should have included more samples to represent the targeted populations. That's why enough time could not be invested for them to opine deeply about the issues presented to them. Besides, all of them did not provide the right information due to lack of enough knowledge. Most of them are totally unaware about the labor laws. Therefore, it was very hard in some cases for understanding between interviewers and respondent.

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