

When Factories Adapt: A Resilient Stitch in Bangladesh's Garment Story

Kohinoor's gentle smile wasn't just for the camera; it was a reflection of twelve years spent growing, working, and belonging. **"It has been twelve years for me, but you will also find many people who have been working in this factory for 16 – 17 years."** Over the past year and a half, ICCCAD's "Capacitating the garment industry workers for a greener transition in Bangladesh" project team has interviewed more than 30 ready-made garment (RMG) sector workers regarding the impact climate change has had in their living and working conditions. Among all the individuals interviewed, these two were the first to report that their lives and work had remained largely unaffected by climatic events—an outcome attributed to a series of deliberate and well-executed measures implemented by their factory.



"It has been twelve years for me, but you will also find many people who have been working in this factory for 16 – 17 years." - Kohinoor

Photo: Kohinoor at her workstation



Photo: Kohinoor and Asadul during the interview

For both 27-year-old **Kohinoor** and 25-year-old **Asadul**, work life in the RMG sector began in this factory. While they acknowledged the noticeable changes in temperatures like the others we have interviewed, but, they have also mentioned that the factory's effective exhaust system has played a significant role in mitigating the heat and maintaining a relatively cooler work environment. Availability of oral saline (electrolyte drinks) and lemonade during periods of extreme heat for all those who need has also contributed to keeping the factory workers hydrated and healthy.



Photo: Kohinoor and Asadul at the factory

The life in the settlements where Kohinoor and Asadul resides are also not so different from that of many garment workers living in Dhaka's peri – urban areas. Like others, they too endure frequent power outages on summer nights and struggle with waterlogging during the monsoon.



Photo: Factory workstation and dining area (*top*), workers' residences next to the factory (*bottom*)

Yet, when asked whether sleep deprivation affects their productivity, both responded similarly, **“The work shifts are balanced so we can manage, for most days, work shifts are over by 5 PM. For those who must navigate waterlogged streets during the monsoon, the factory has installed a water tap just outside its premises a simple yet thoughtful provision that allows workers to rinse off mud and contaminated water, helping to prevent skin diseases which according to our studies was listed as one of the key climate impacts faced by RMG sector workers.**

While such small measures contribute significantly to safeguarding workers' health, the most impactful initiative remains the provision of medical benefits. Factory employees receive discounted treatment at a nearby hospital, not only for themselves but also for their family members. As **Kohinoor** shared -

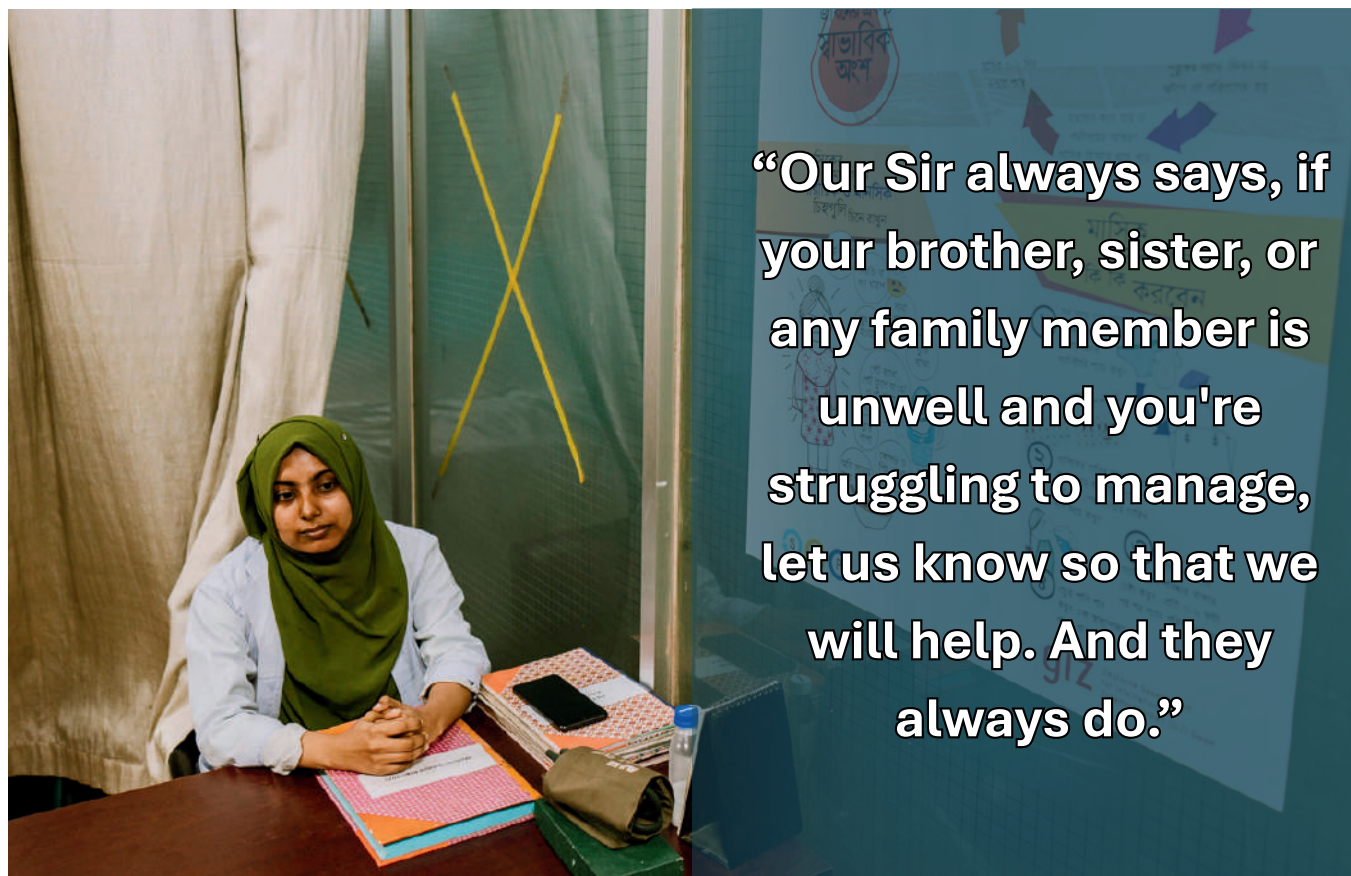


Photo: Doctor on duty at the factory's medical centre

These medical benefits play a crucial role in minimising the effects of climate change on the workforce. As, physical health challenges were among the most frequently cited climate-related concerns. By addressing them proactively, the factory ensures that workers remain resilient. Moreover, by alleviating the financial burden of healthcare not just for the workers but for their families, this initiative helps reduce mental stress and prevent income depletion, both of which can negatively impact productivity.

In taking this thoughtful step, the factory not only supports the well-being of its employees but also effectively mitigates the broader consequences of climate change on their lives.

Glimpse from the Garments factory



Note: All the photos are captured with the consent of workers and the factory management