UN & Global Governance

HUMAN RIGHTS IN BANGLADESH

BACKGROUND

This project investigates the challenges and opportunities for global governance in Bangladesh. It specifically focuses on human rights in the ready-made garment (RMG) industry.

Global governance is a concept with a wide range of definitions (Finkelestein 1995; UNDP 1997; World Bank 1993). For this project, it is referred to as the interactions between different political institutions and practices which affect the way in which decisions are made. In society there are many other actors that have a decision-making role in the ways in which countries are governed. These actors can be found both inside the country in question and around the world, usually with vested interests in a particular outcome.

Bangladesh was selected as a case study because it is a democratic country that faces a wide range of issues: high levels of political corruption, a rapidly growing economy, and climate change. In particular, the rise of the RMG industry has allowed it to enter and become competitive in the global economy. Therefore, this project aims to delve into the RMG industry and examine the role that global governance may play in making Bangladesh a safer, more stable country.

THE THREE FORCES OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

1. The International Financial System

The global model interacts with most countries in the world and as such, changes to the global economy are not confined within national borders. Economic shocks, positive or negative, impact others on a global level. The RMG industry constitutes 77% of Bangladesh’s exports, and attracts a significant level of foreign investment; (IFD 2008).

2. The United Nations Development Agenda

The Sustainable Development Goals endeavor to utilize development to create a more sustainable planet in many areas, including but not limited to health, poverty, education, and freedom. The RMG industry gives Bangladesh citizens an opportunity to upgrade in the global market and improve their standard of living by supplying a wage. However, their working conditions are less than favorable.

3. International Non-Government Organisations/Civil Society Organisations

Advocacy is highly significant because large parts of the world lack individual agency. These organizations assist in the plight of the vulnerable and marginalized. Human rights for workers within the RMG industry are advocated by international charitable organizations.

RESEARCH AIMS

- To understand the dynamics of global governance through a case study – the ready-made garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh.
- To explore the role of nation-states, international and transnational institutions and civil society in world order on the three dynamics of global governance: the international financial system, the United Nations Development Agenda and international non-government organisations/civil society organisations.

METHODS

1. Desktop Analysis

This project consists mostly of qualitative materials, such as published pieces of academic work.

2. Purposive sampling

The RMG industry in Bangladesh has been chosen as a case study, owing to its interaction with all three dynamics of global governance.

3. Thematic approach

The literature sources that have been chosen have been categorised according to the various factors that contribute to their approaches to human rights of the garment industry based on thematic coding.

4. Interviews

Two interviews were conducted based on interviewees’ first-hand experiences of Bangladesh and their opinion on human rights.

FUTURE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Whether this could take place through a formalised Global governance institution, or if global institutions need to work to shape the attitudes and priorities of governments at a state level.

REFERENCES

Available online.


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