



International
Labour
Organization



Weaving Gender

Challenges and opportunities for the
Myanmar garment industry

Findings from a gender-equality assessment
in selected factories

ILO Country office for Myanmar
October 2018

Weaving Gender

Challenges and opportunities for the Myanmar garment industry

Findings from a gender-equality assessment
in selected factories

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2019
First published 2019

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Licensing), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: rights@ilo.org. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with a reproduction rights organization may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit www.ifrro.org to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

Available in English:

ISBN : 978-92-2-132153-8 (print)
978-92-2-132154-5 (web pdf)

Also available in Myanmar language:

ISBN: 978-92-2-132155-2 (print)
978-92-2-132156-9 (web pdf)

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

Information on ILO publications and digital products can be found at: www.ilo.org/publns.

Printed in Myanmar

Foreword

Myanmar – its people and its institutions - is currently in the midst of a dynamic and historic transition to a system based on the rule of law and democracy – including industrial democracy – with strengthened protection of human and labour rights. Over the past few years, impressive efforts have been made by the Government, as well as workers’ and employers’ organizations to develop a labour governance framework that will promote decent work for all women and men in the country, bring about sustainable and just economic and social development, and propel Myanmar into the XXI century.

The garment industry is an important engine for Myanmar’s sustainable development. Within a decade of the international community lifting its sanctions against Myanmar, the industry already represents the second biggest export sector and is an important driver of economic growth. The industry creates formal employment for almost half a million of people, the overwhelming majority of whom are young women. The industry has set the goal for Myanmar to be known increasingly as an ethical sourcing destination for the many local and international investors looking to source or set up production or in the country.

As the industry is powered by women, it is important to assess with a gender lens the working conditions of the workers whose daily efforts are making such a contribution to the country’s development. The current report is an attempt to take a methodologically sound look at the current gender-related practices in the industry, and make recommendations around which all the industry actors can come together. It is an invitation for the industry to adopt factory, sector and national level strategies and practices that will maximise its contribution to gender equality in Myanmar.

“Weaving Gender” is the result of many months of meticulous research and stakeholders forums where the preliminary findings of the gender assessment were discussed. The ILO *Improving labour relations for decent work and sustainable development in the Myanmar garment industry* (ILO-GIP), which receives funding support from the Swedish international development agency (Sida) and H&M, is pleased to share a picture of the industry which, despite the challenges, is encouraging. We invite all the industry stakeholders to join hands in the spirit of social dialogue to ensure that workers in the industry, especially women, can enjoy decent work.

The ILO believes that this report is a sound assessment of the experiences of the women working in the industry. It is an important contribution to the recently adopted Myanmar Decent Work Country Programme and the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan aimed at achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

I would like to thank the many workers, basic labour organization’s representatives, supervisors and managers that gave their time to answer our survey. I would like to also thank Dean Laplonge for his expertise in producing this compelling report. And finally, I would like to thank all those who will act on its recommendations to promote dialogue around gender equality in Myanmar.

Rory Mungoven
ILO Liaison Officer

Contents

Foreword.....	i
Contents.....	ii
Figures.....	v
Tables.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Executive summary.....	viii
Brief introduction to the assessment.....	viii
Key findings.....	viii
Summary of recommendations.....	x
About the author.....	xii
The ILO in Myanmar.....	xii
Disclaimer.....	xiii
Abbreviations.....	xiv
Glossary.....	xv
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Overview of the assessment.....	1
1.2 Objectives of the assessment.....	1
1.3 Timeline for the assessment.....	3
2. Background Information.....	4
2.1 Gender equality in the sector.....	5
2.2 Sexual and reproductive health for women in the sector.....	7
2.3 The business case for a gender-equality assessment.....	9
3. Methodology.....	10
3.1 Data collection.....	10
3.1.1 Selection of factories.....	11
3.1.2 Selection of participants.....	11
3.1.3 Completion of activities.....	12
3.1.4 Training of national researchers.....	12
3.2 Data analysis.....	13
3.3 Limitations and risks.....	15

4. Results	18
4.1 Demographics.....	18
4.2 Work status	24
4.3 Workplace gender-equality opportunities.....	28
4.3.1 Career advancement opportunities.....	32
4.3.2 Access to skills training.....	33
4.4 Workplace gender experiences.....	33
4.4.1 Discrimination.....	39
4.4.2 Sexual harassment	40
4.4.3 Verbal abuse	43
4.4.4 Physical abuse	43
4.4.5 Responses.....	44
4.4.6 Perceptions of safety	49
4.5 Workplace promotion of sexual and reproductive health.....	50
4.5.1 Pregnancy	53
4.5.2 Menstruation.....	55
4.5.3 Maternity leave	55
4.5.4 Childcare	56
4.5.5 Breastfeeding.....	57
4.5.6 Use of factory toilets	57
4.5.7 Sexual and reproductive health training.....	58
5. Analysis	60
5.1 Workplace gender-equality opportunities.....	60
5.1.1 Gender-based beliefs	61
5.1.2 Employment of women	64
5.1.3 Skills training	66
5.2 Workplace gender experiences.....	67
5.2.1 Understanding “sexual harassment”.....	68
5.2.2 The “problem” of teasing.....	69
5.2.3 Reporting and responding.....	71
5.3 Workplace sexual and reproductive health support.....	73
5.3.1 Employers’ attitudes to motherhood.....	73
5.3.2 Employees’ attitudes to motherhood	76
5.3.3 Expanding what is meant by sexual and reproductive health.....	78
5.4 Identifying differences	79
6. Recommendations	82
6.1 Workplace gender-equality opportunities.....	82
6.1.1 Immediate interventions.....	82
6.1.2 Long-term interventions	85
6.2 Workplace gender experiences.....	85
6.2.1 Immediate interventions.....	85
6.2.2 Long-term interventions	88
6.3 Workplace sexual and reproductive health.....	89
6.3.1 Immediate interventions.....	89
6.3.2 Long-term interventions	91

6.4	Additional overarching recommendations.....	93
6.4.1	Write the gender-equality business case for the Myanmar garment sector	93
6.4.2	Communicate the gender-equality business case to managers.....	93
6.4.3	Create gender-equality strategies in individual factories.....	94
6.4.4	Include gender considerations in negotiations and collective-bargaining efforts.....	94
6.4.5	Promote the ratification and implementation of ILO gender-relevant Conventions.....	95
	References	96
	Annex -Data collection tools.....	98

Figures

Figure 1	Education level of survey respondents.....	19
Figure 2	Marital status of survey respondents.....	20
Figure 3	Survey respondents with responsibility for children and their care arrangements.....	21
Figure 4	Survey respondents with responsibility for children who came to work in Yangon	22
Figure 5	Percentage amount of survey respondents' salary given to family.....	23
Figure 6	Employment status of survey respondents	24
Figure 7	Current job role of survey respondents	25
Figure 8	Years working in the garment sector and in the current factory.....	26
Figure 9	Spread of overtime hours	27
Figure 10	Number of respondents in a factory with a basic labour organization present.....	28
Figure 11	Weighted factory scores for barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities.....	29
Figure 12	Weighted factory scores for experiences of gender-based abuse	34
Figure 13	Comparative rates of sexual harassment and abuse.....	39
Figure 14	Reported incidence of sexual harassment per factory	40
Figure 15	Sexual harassment characteristics.....	41
Figure 16	Sexual harassment characteristics in the factories with a basic labour organization	42
Figure 17	Survey respondents' response to sexual harassment	44
Figure 18	Employers' response to sexual harassment.....	45
Figure 19	Survey respondents' response to sexual harassment in a factory with a basic labour organization.....	46
Figure 20	Employers' response to sexual harassment in a factory with a basic labour organization	47
Figure 21	Survey respondents' perceptions of safety at work.....	49
Figure 22	Weighted factory scores for positive sexual and reproductive health support	50
Figure 23	Survey respondents required to take a pregnancy test prior to employment.....	54
Figure 24	Survey respondents' awareness of maternity leave benefit per factory	55
Figure 25	Survey respondent works in a factory with a childcare facility.....	56
Figure 26	Cleanliness of factory toilet facilities.....	58
Figure 27	Respondents who received training on sexual and reproductive health in their workplace during the year prior to the survey	58

Tables

Table 1	Data-collection methods.....	10
Table 2	Descriptors and codes used in qualitative data analysis.....	13
Table 3	Scoring system.....	15
Table 4	Scoring system for barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities.....	30
Table 5	Scoring system for experiences of gender-based abuse.....	34
Table 6	High-level results for workplace gender experiences.....	38
Table 7	Examples of types of sexual harassment.....	42
Table 8	Actions taken to prevent or respond to sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse in the factories.....	48
Table 9	Scoring system for support of positive sexual and reproductive health.....	51
Table 10	Examples of practices that support positive sexual and reproductive health for female employees.....	52
Table 11	Maximum and minimum weighted scores, by informant interview group.....	80

Acknowledgements

This study could not have been completed without the input and expertise of the many individuals and organisations who gave their time to share and discuss experiences, and to provide advice and feedback.

The author extends a special thank you to the 320 female workers who completed the survey and the additional 56 female workers who participated in focus group discussions. Participating in discussions and sharing ideas about gender issues, especially sexual harassment and gender-based violence, can be especially confronting and challenging. These women were the core element of the research for this gender assessment. Their contributions are fundamental to the new knowledge attained regarding gender equality and gender-based experiences in Myanmar's garment sector.

Others included in the gratitude: The additional 38 human resources managers, supervisors and basic labour organization representatives who were willing to disclose and discuss information about the state of gender equality in their factories.

The ILO team in Myanmar and globally, especially those working on the Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment Sector Project (ILO-GIP):

Catherine Vaillancourt-Laflamme, Chief Technical Advisor and Project Manager, for trusting in the research methodology, organizing opportunities to discuss the findings and analysis with key stakeholders, and providing comprehensive feedback on the report.

Thit Thit Su Mon and Aye Thet Oo for their assistance with organizing workshops, translation and administrative tasks.

The team at Myanmar Marketing Research and Development who were responsible for collecting and managing the data, and especially Research Manager U Kyaw Lin for sending regular and concise reports on the status of the research.

Representatives from the participating factories and from a range of international and national organizations who attended the workshops to discuss the findings and to give advice on the analysis of the findings.

My partner Morgan Laplonge for his support in editing the report and providing input into the management and reporting of the data and for his constant encouragement.

Executive summary

This report provides detailed information on the results of a gender-equality assessment (GEA) carried out in 16 Yangon-based factories in Myanmar's garment sector. These 16 factories are producing for international garment brands, and are foreign-owned and/or foreign-managed factories. The report includes a description of the assessment methodology and data-collection methods as well as copies of the data-collection tools. It also includes analysis of the findings and recommendations to inform future work for the International Labour Organization (ILO) under its Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment Industry Project (ILO-GIP).

Brief introduction to the assessment

The GEA used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods with workers, supervisors, representatives of basic labour organizations (BLO) and human resources management to obtain fresh information on career advancement and skills training, workplace sexual harassment and abuse, and employees' sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues. The objective was to establish an accurate picture of gender equality in these factories. The assessment is by no means an authoritative description of the situation in all garment factories in Myanmar, nor is it intended to offer commentary on the sector as a whole. Nevertheless, it provides important insights into the issues for women working in the sector, which are of relevance to all industry stakeholders.

Key findings

Myanmar's garment sector is growing strongly and has become a major driver for the increased participation of women in the labour force. Recent statistics indicate that more than 400,000 people are employed in the garment sector in Myanmar. More than 90 per cent of them are women. Projections suggest that by 2020, more than one million people could be employed in the sector, presenting a major opportunity for women's empowerment and skill development.

The quantitative data from the GEA suggests that the typical woman who works in one of the 16 assessed garment factories came to Yangon from her natal state with the explicit purpose of working in a garment factory. She is a permanent employee in her factory and has been working in the garment sector for fewer than three years. She is young, on average 24 years old, unmarried and does not have children. She works about 60 hours each week.

The female employees tend to consider their employment to be short term – it is something they plan on doing while young, unmarried and without children. Many of the women give a significant percentage of their income to family members on a regular basis. Human resources managers who were interviewed support the view that female employees in their factories will cease working after they have had children.

Opportunities for the female employees to learn new skills or seek a promotion are limited. This is because the sector relies on most of its employees to complete relatively low-skill work tasks and because the organization of the labour force in the factories means there are few supervisory positions. Wages are linked to productivity targets. This encourages employees to master and repeat simple skills. It discourages them from investing time in acquiring new skills because this could result in a reduction in income during the learning period.

Nonetheless, the female employees believe men and women have equal opportunities for career advancement and skills training in their factories. The human resources managers admitted they prefer to employ women, not men. They draw on assumptions about innate gender characteristics and traits to justify their belief that women are more suitable employees for work in the garment sector. They see women, for example, as naturally more capable of completing work tasks that require attention to detail, such as sewing. There is also a view shared among the human resources managers and supervisors that women are less likely to “create trouble” in the workplace.

These assumptions and beliefs result in gender discrimination against both men and women. Men, who are seen to be less capable of completing intricate and repetitive work, less docile and more troublesome, are deemed to be unsuitable employees by those who control the recruitment. Women are denied opportunities to work in certain roles in the factories, especially roles that require the employee to display assertive skills (such as supervisory roles), work with machinery or carry heavy loads. Female employees, human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives across all the factories in the GEA seem to have internalized these assumptions and beliefs about women. They do not see their views and corresponding actions as causes or evidence of gender discrimination.

The female employees in the 16 factories overwhelmingly report feeling safe in their workplaces. In most of the factories, however, there is some evidence of sexual harassment, and in a few factories cases of verbal abuse and physical abuse reported. These forms of gender-based abuse also affect women while they are travelling to and from work. Of the three types of abuse discussed in the assessment, sexual harassment is cited as the most common. When it occurs, it is most often perpetrated by a female co-worker within normal work hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). There were, however, significant misunderstandings among all the participants in the GEA about what constitutes sexual harassment, and such misunderstandings are likely to have affected the results. The participants confused teasing between friends with sexual harassment. The distinction between what constitutes teasing and what constitutes sexual harassment is also not always clear; and there is no shared understanding among the participants of where the line between the two can be drawn. This makes authoritative conclusions difficult about the rates of sexual harassment in the 16 factories. Nonetheless, the factories lack formal policies and processes to help respond to real cases of workplace harassment and abuse if and when they occur.

All the participants in the assessment – female employees, human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives – expressed support for better SRH for female employees. This includes more SRH training for female employees in the factories. This verbalized support is, however, not matched with evidence of extensive practical support. Neither the human resources managers nor female employees consider childcare and breastfeeding rooms as high priorities. Employees who are responsible for children tend to leave them under the

care of another family member. They do not use a factory childcare facility even when one is available. The human resources managers and the female employees admitted they give little attention to thinking about how women who work in the garment sector can better manage motherhood and employment. The female employees are not especially supportive of women breastfeeding children in the workplace. Although there is no evidence of direct discrimination against women who have children and continue to work in a factory, there is clearly a preference for employing young, single women who do not have children, which sends a clear message from the factories to women (employed or seeking employment) that the care of young children should supersede a woman's need or desire to work.

Summary of recommendations

The report offers a number of recommendations (summarized in the following table) for interventions to support improvements towards gender equality in the 16 factories. The recommendations are organized in three categories, which link to the assessment's three research topics:

Topic A: Workplace gender-equality opportunities (linked to career advancement and skills training)

Topic B: Workplace gender experiences (linked to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse)

Topic C: Women's SRH support at work (linked to reproduction)

The recommendations apply to all 16 factories that participated in the assessment. Factories may have different immediate and long-term needs with respect to improving gender equality. They may also have different levels of skills and capacity in their management teams to implement and support work on sexual harassment and SRH issues. Further consideration of how to implement a recommendation in a factory may therefore be required. The recommendations are presented below:

Topic	Immediate	Long-term
Workplace gender-equality opportunities	Develop a model career pathway.	Research impacts of future mechanization/automation and changes in the production model on women's roles.
	Provide standardized gender-sensitization training.	
	Introduce an exit survey.	
	Create case studies of women in the garment sector	
	Introduce a sector-wide skills recognition programme.	

Topic	Immediate	Long-term
Workplace gender experiences	Develop workplace policies on sexual harassment and abuse.	Conduct regular factory-based assessments.
	Provide awareness training on sexual harassment.	Promote inclusive workplace policies and practices.
	Support capacity-building for responding to cases.	
	Research the experiences of new female workers.	
Workplace sexual and reproductive health support	Provide awareness training on sexual and reproductive health.	Advocate for better awareness of sexual and reproductive health as a workplace issue.
	Communicate useful information about sexual and reproductive health services.	Research sector support for working mothers and fathers
	Share success stories of working mothers and fathers.	Research nutrition issues for women in the garment sector.

Additional overarching recommendations

Write the gender-equality business case for the Myanmar garment sector.

Communicate the gender-equality business case to managers.

Create gender-equality strategies in individual factories.

Include gender considerations in negotiations and collective bargaining efforts.

Promote the ratification and implementation of the ILO gender relevant conventions.

About the author

Dean Laplonge, PhD, is the principal consultant for the global research company Factive (www.factiveconsulting.com). His academic and consultancy interests focus on safety and gender in workplaces, gender-based violence, masculinities and women's empowerment. His academic publications explore such topics as the sexual exploitation of children linked to extractive operations, masculinity and risk-taking, women's workplace safety and feminist approaches to mining. He has more than 15 years of experience conducting research, developing programmes and facilitating training for a wide range of government agencies, research institutions, industry bodies, private organizations as well as non-government and civil society organizations. This work has included developing an innovative workplace safety programme to improve safety for women working in remote locations in Papua New Guinea (International Finance Corporation); researching gender-based violence in Myanmar (UNFPA, Danish Refugee Council and International Rescue Committee); and providing capacity-building for gender-based violence actors working in Syria (UNFPA and Global Communities).

The ILO in Myanmar

The ILO is a specialized United Nations agency that aims to promote decent work. This includes 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 and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. With its unique tripartite composition, the ILO is well placed to assist governments, workers and employers to address challenges related to sustainable development through sound industrial relations at the enterprise, industry and national levels.

Through its global programmes, the ILO has learned the crucial lesson that the pursuit of social compliance through monitoring and remediation efforts is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for decent work in global supply chains. Social compliance initiatives need to be located within broader programmes designed to improve labour market governance, which, among other things, includes effective labour relations and wage policy at the national level and labour inspection, social dialogue and collective bargaining at the appropriate levels. The ILO experiences in other countries show that involving persons with decision-making authority within organizations of tripartite partners, including at the enterprise level, is a key to ensuring sustainable impacts.

The ILO has an ongoing engagement with its tripartite constituents in Myanmar on the basis of an agreed Decent Work Country Programme and has been working to build the capacity of workers' and employers' organizations in Myanmar. It has been implementing a cooperation project titled Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment Industry, which focuses on the delivery of training and capacity-building on sound industrial relations and social dialogue. Gender equality and empowerment form part of this overarching goal.

Disclaimer

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and H&M through their support for the ILO Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment Industry Project. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Dean Laplonge, consultant to the ILO, and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of Sida or H&M.

Abbreviations

BLO	Basic Labour Organization. The term used for a trade union organization in a factory in Myanmar's garment sector
CMP	The "cut, make and package" system of production. This is currently the dominant system of production in Myanmar's garment sector. It involves a foreign buyer paying contracting fees to a factory to cut the textile fabrics, sew the garments according to provided design specifications, and packaging the garments for export. It is also sometimes referred to as the "cut, make, trim" (CMT) system.
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
FGD	Focus group discussion
FOB	The "freight-on-board" system of production, sometimes also referred to as the "free-on-board" system. It involves retailers placing an order with a factory to produce and ship garments. Under this system of production, the factory is responsible for the entire production process, and the retailer is not as involved as in the CMP system. A shift to the FOB system is part of the MGMA's 10-year strategy for the Myanmar garment sector.
GBV	Gender based violence
GEA	Gender equality assessment
HR	Human resources
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO-GIP	The International Labour Organizations' "Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment sector" project
IWFM	Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar
KII	Key informant interview
MGMA	Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association
MICS	Myanmar Industries, Craft and Services
NGO	Non-government organization
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health

Gloassary

BLO	Basic Labour Organization. The term used for a trade union organization in a factory in Myanmar's garment sector
CMP	The "cut, make and package" system of production. This is currently the dominant system of production in Myanmar's garment sector. It involves a foreign buyer paying contracting fees to a factory to cut the textile fabrics, sew the garments according to provided design specifications, and packaging the garments for export. It is also sometimes referred to as the "cut, make, trim" (CMT) system.
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
FGD	Focus group discussion
FOB	The "freight-on-board" system of production, sometimes also referred to as the "free-on-board" system. It involves retailers placing an order with a factory to produce and ship garments. Under this system of production, the factory is responsible for the entire production process, and the retailer is not as involved as in the CMP system. A shift to the FOB system is part of the MGMA's 10-year strategy for the Myanmar garment sector.
GBV	Gender based violence
GEA	Gender equality assessment
HR	Human resources
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO-GIP	The International Labour Organizations' "Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment sector" project
IWFM	Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar
KII	Key informant interview
MGMA	Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association
MICS	Myanmar Industries, Craft and Services
NGO	Non-government organization
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health



1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the assessment

The gender-equality assessment (GEA) investigated the status of women working in 16 Yangon-based factories in Myanmar's garment industry. All the factories included in this assessment are producing for international garment brands and are foreign-owned and/or foreign-managed factories.

The GEA explored real and perceived barriers to career advancement and skills training for women; experiences of harassment and abuse at work and when travelling to and from work; and the support for sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of female employees. This assessment was conducted as part of the International Labour Organization's Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment Industry Project (ILO-GIP), which focuses on industrial relations and social dialogue training and capacity-building.

Within the ILO-GIP, there is recognition that although improvements in training and capacity-building can help strengthen the empowerment of women in the garment sector, these activities do not automatically or necessarily work to improve the access these women have to SRH information and services. Such access is a necessary part of women's empowerment at work, in their homes and in Myanmar society. Women who have limited knowledge of SRH issues are less likely to be able to make informed decisions about their personal lives, families, careers and the relationship between the three. Women who have limited or no access to SRH services may make decisions about their well-being based on these limitations. They can be disadvantaged in respect to careers and employment because of the limiting interpretations, within a patriarchal system, of the biological processes of menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. As in many other countries, a woman's capacity to reproduce has been used – and continues to be used – as a means of keeping women out of the workforce and thereby sustaining economic power for men. Social norms regarding sexual behaviours and attitudes in Myanmar also render it taboo for women to discuss SRH issues, including any problems and illnesses they may be experiencing. This can affect their ability to work and their productivity (and therefore pay) while at work. The ILO-GIP thus recognizes the need to promote improvements in women's SRH knowledge and access to SRH services.

1.2 Objectives of the assessment

The initial guiding objective of the GEA was to establish an accurate picture of gender equality in the 20 factories participating in a broader ILO-GIP training programme on, among other things, gender issues, with the goal to improve industrial relations in these factories and in the industry.¹ This picture would then provide information on the extent to which female

¹ The assessment was completed in only 16 factories. An explanation for why this occurred is provided later in the methodology section of this report.

employees in the factories are allowed or denied opportunities for career advancement and skills training; the extent to which these employees experience sexual harassment or abuse in their workplaces; and the extent to which these same employees have access to or are denied access to SRH information and services. Using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods, this information was collected from female employees, factory human resources managers, factory supervisors and basic labour organization (BLO) representatives to provide a comprehensive and multi-voice perspective.

More specifically, the GEA aimed to provide answers to six core research questions organized into three research topics:

Topic A: Workplace gender-equality opportunities

1. What are the perceived barriers to women taking on leadership roles in management and trade unions?
2. Are there any specific barriers to women workers taking advantage of opportunities for skills training and career advancement?

Topic B: Workplace gender experiences (linked to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse)

3. To what extent do women workers experience discrimination at work, and what are the mechanisms by which this discrimination takes effect?
4. To what extent are women workers subject to sexual harassment and/or gender-based violence at work?

Topic C: Women's SRH support at work

5. Are women garment workers adequately able to reconcile work, maternity and childcare, taking into account legal rights, employer-provided and other facilities and services and socio-cultural pressures?
6. How easy (or difficult) is it for female garment workers to enjoy empowered and safe sexual and reproductive health while at work?

The fresh information produced by the GEA informs recommendations to support the development of a gender strategy for the ILO-GIP. The results of the GEA will further enable the ILO to advise and advocate accurately on how challenging cultural attitudes on gender can help increase the empowerment of female employees in Myanmar's garment sector; and to promote empowerment for these women by supporting their ability to exercise voice regarding issues that affect them in their workplaces.

1.3 Timeline for the assessment

The assessment was completed over a period of 16 months. The development of the methodology commenced in February 2017. Data was collected between August and December 2017 in two phases (August and November–December). A stakeholder engagement workshop with ILO constituents (workers’ and employers’ organizations) took place in early December 2017 to present initial findings and seek input into the analysis. Attendees at this workshop were representatives from the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA), the International Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWFM) and the Myanmar Industries, Craft and Services (MISC) (both trade unions active in the garment industry), and other labour-oriented non-government organizations. On the basis of their initial comments, a draft of the report was completed in January 2018. Two additional stakeholder workshops were organized in early February 2018 – one for the wider community of organizations concerned with gender and garment factory issues in Myanmar and a second one for representatives of the factories that participated in the assessment. A final version of the report was submitted for an internal ILO review in mid-February 2018. Comments and feedback were responded to during a final editing phase, and this final version of the report was approved and launched in January 2019.

2. Background Information

Since the early 1990s, the garment sector in Myanmar has been making significant contribution to the national economy. Over the past three decades, the industry has experienced slow growth, rapid growth, stagnation, decline and recent recovery. Historically, the sector had serviced clients primarily from Japan and the Republic of Korea. There was previously little interest shown by retailers based in North America and Europe. The sector was also shut out from accessing those markets when sanctions were imposed on the country by the United States and Europe in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Since the lifting of these sanctions (in 2011 and 2013, respectively), companies such as GAP, H&M, C&A, Adidas are increasingly looking to Myanmar factories to source their products. The garment sector is now expected to experience rapid future growth.²

The majority of garment factories in Myanmar operate the “cut, make and package” system (CMP).³ This means they import all the materials they need to produce garments. They make the garments according to the specifications set out by a client and package them for delivery. The reason for the use of this system within the sector has been linked to a lack of quality materials produced within the country.⁴ There is, however, a push to shift the sector to a “freight-on-board” system – a move that is supported by the MGMA in its ten-year strategic plan.⁵ This new system of production will mean a retail client can place an order directly with a factory, which will be responsible for sourcing the materials, producing the garments and shipping them to the client. The freight-on-board (FOB) system has the potential to allow the garment sector to take more control over the management of production and to offer increased opportunities for profit and expansion.

Recent statistics indicate that close to 400,000⁶ people are employed in the garment sector in Myanmar. As many as 90 per cent of them are women.⁷ This number is still small in comparison to rates of employment in the garment sectors in nearby countries, such as Viet Nam, China and Bangladesh. It offers an opportunity for a still-manageable number of stakeholders to design sector-based strategies for the inclusive and sustainable development of a garment industry that provides fair opportunities for both men and women. The industry is poised to grow. Predictions suggest that by 2020, almost 10 per cent of the Myanmar population will rely on the garment sector for basic needs; more than one million people could be employed in the sector; and the sector could have an annual turnover in excess of US\$10 billion.⁸

² BSR, 2014.

³ The cut, make and package is the dominant system of production in Myanmar's garment sector and involves a foreign buyer paying contracting fees to a factory to cut the fabrics, sew the garments according to provided design specifications and packaging the garments for export.

⁴ BIF, 2016.

⁵ MGMA, 2014b. The freight on board (system of production, sometimes referred to as the “free-on-board” system) involves retailers placing an order with a factory to produce and ship garments and the factory is responsible for the entire production process, while the retailer is not as involved as in the cut, make and package system.

⁶ Government of Myanmar, 2017, p. 67.

⁷ Fair Wear Foundation, 2016, p. 4; ILO, 2016; Oxfam, 2015, p. 7.

⁸ BIF, 2016, pp. 9–10.

This is an optimistic outlook that not everybody shares. There is reportedly some lingering hesitancy on the part of international retailers to view Myanmar as an ideal country in which to locate their factories and/or from which to source their goods. There are concerns about political uncertainties, the skill level of employees, the reliability and quality of the country's infrastructure, the overly protective legislation, the environmental impacts of the sector and the treatment of workers.⁹ In discussions on the possibility of future growth in the garment sector, analysts have suggested that poor infrastructure and the lack of adequate facilities fail to provide the stability required to meet production demands. Buildings are said to be poorly equipped and to pose significant safety hazards to employees. The energy supply is also a major limitation for successful and sustainable production, with many factories relying on the use of expensive backup generators to ensure they can continue to operate during regularly occurring blackouts.¹⁰ Prior research has further shown that employees in the sector are already impacted by low wages, high rates of overtime, unpaid sick leave, denial of maternity leave, and workplace sexual harassment and abuse. There is high turnover of staff who regularly seek out new workplaces where they can get paid a few dollars – even sometimes a few cents – more for the same work. Management is also seen to lack the skills – and the political will – to oversee successful changes in the business structure and export processes as well as better adoption of international business practices.¹¹

A factor not yet taken into serious consideration in the predictions of growth for the employee base, including employment opportunities for women, is the possibility of mechanization within the sector. Many of the jobs that female employees currently carry out in the factories (cutting, packing) can easily be automated. Factory owners in Myanmar may decide that mechanization is a necessary part of any growth strategy because it offers them the ability to complete tasks quicker, with a lower rate of error and at a lower cost. It is female employees who are most vulnerable to any future mechanization in the garment sector. The number of women working in the sector could rapidly decline once mechanization is introduced into the production process.

2.1 Gender equality in the sector

There are signs of progress in the status of women in the workforce in Myanmar as a whole¹² and in the country's garment industry specifically.¹³ Women currently represent approximately 90 per cent of the workforce in the industry. They occupy roles throughout the manufacturing process, including at the supervisory level.¹⁴ Prior research found that 87 per cent of employees reported feeling safe at work (in terms of sexual harassment). This level of safety has been attributed to the fact that the majority of supervisors in the factories are female.¹⁵ The high percentage of female employees in the garment industry also, possibly, offers a good opportunity to support female empowerment and skill development.¹⁶

⁹ Action Labour Rights, 2016; ILO, 2015; Impactt, 2016.

¹⁰ BIF, 2016; Myint, 2014; Myint and Rasiyah, 2012.

¹¹ BIF, 2016; Impactt, 2016.

¹² Nathan Associates, 2016.

¹³ DFAT, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁴ Oxfam, 2015, p.7; BIF, 2016, p. 31.

¹⁵ Progressive Voice, 2016, p. 56.

¹⁶ BIF, 2016, p. 31.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

A high percentage of women to men in a workplace does not, however, automatically result in women occupying powerful or dominant roles; nor does it ensure that female employees can make decisions that affect their ability to work well, safely and with adequate compensation. A majority of the factory managers are men who are often employed more for their familial connection to the factory owner rather than because of their management or people skills.¹⁷ There are certainly some women leaders in the sector, including those who work as representatives of a factory's BLO and as leaders of industry organizations. Even though the garment sector has relied heavily on women to support its growth, the majority of women continue to be employed in low-skill and low-paid jobs. There are many women who work in supervisory roles in the garment factories. These women are responsible for supporting employees to meet production targets and quality,¹⁸ but their ability to control or influence changes in the workplace culture – including improvements in gender equality and expanded employment opportunities for women – is limited. They are often found to be reluctant to speak out against the injustices that women experience in their workplace.¹⁹

In Myanmar, like in other garment producing countries, the garment factory employers prefer to employ women. On the surface, this appears to suggest the practice of positive discrimination or affirmative action to provide women with opportunities for employment and economic security. Instead, however, it has been interpreted as wanting to make use of workers who, already constructed as “docile” and “manageable” within and through society,²⁰ are cheap to hire, deemed easier to control and perceived to be less likely to recognize or resist discrimination.²¹

The offer of economic opportunities for women is therefore dependent on the willingness of women to comply with the unspoken conditions. If she wants a job, a woman must play out the gender role that has been ascribed to all women in Myanmar. Unlike men who are conversely constructed to be aggressive and less controllable, a woman is expected to say nothing when bad things happen to her in the workplace. The “bad” woman is the woman who speaks out against discrimination and harassment and who thereby “causes trouble”. In contrast, the “good” woman is the woman who goes about her job quietly, without complaining and appreciative of the opportunity she has been given. This social construction of woman encourages women to believe – and to know from experience – that it is much safer for them (in terms of their economic status, job security and reputation) to keep quiet.

Gender discrimination in the Myanmar garment sector has been described as more of a concern for external stakeholders than for women who work in the sector.²² Female workers reportedly have internalized cultural norms relating to the roles of men and women in society, and do not recognize the discrimination they face. Such an assessment of the women who work in the garment factories further constructs these women – and perhaps all women in Myanmar – as docile and passive. It denies them any agency to understand and interpret what is happening to them as well as being able to respond to their experiences. Within the garment sector, discrimination and harassment are evident in the manner in which women are treated. But women have not remained silent about these issues. In fact, they have talked of

¹⁸ Myint and Rasiah, 2012, p. 163.

¹⁹ Oxfam et al., undated, pp. 20–22.

²⁰ GEN, 2015; GEN, 2016, pp. 18–20.

²¹ Tunderman, 2012.

²² Impactt, 2016, p. 43.

how they are subjected to intimidation and bullying tactics by their supervisors and managers, especially if their work is not completed on time or if they make mistakes.²³ At least 7 per cent of women working in the sector in a 2016 survey said they or somebody they knew had been subjected to sexual harassment; and 10 per cent reported being verbally abused at work.²⁴ Garment factory workers in Myanmar have also expressed concern about their safety after leaving work, especially when they must travel in the dark after extended shifts, and have reported that they are regularly denied worktime breaks and maternity leave.²⁵

Dominant social and cultural beliefs about what women can and should do in Myanmar society present barriers for women to advance into certain professions and industries, as well as into positions of leadership within the labour force. Such beliefs are delivered through the media, traditions, families, the education system, the law and social practices. They are indicative of a social and cultural system that prefers and practices heavy male dominance over women. Women can and often do internalize and support this system. From an early age, they learn and come to accept the representations of “normal femininity” that emphasize their primary role as mothers in a domestic setting. This is why the key to successful gender equality is seen to rest in the willingness and ability of women to reckon with “the social force-field around them”.²⁶

The specific topics of gender, sexual harassment and empowerment for women have been singled out as requiring more attention in the garment sector through applied research.²⁷ This requires moving beyond the knowledge of what is happening to women to developing effective policies and programmes at the factory, sector and national levels. It also means working with the women, not for the women, employed in the factories and who – even if they do not speak out as much as we, as external stakeholders might like – are active agents in how they respond to and interpret situations they face at work and in how they manage their work and career opportunities.

2.2 Sexual and reproductive health for women in the sector

Where the health of employees is directly affected by the workplace environment (air quality, ergonomics), there is more recognition that it is the responsibility of the employer to redress; employers may be required to do so through legislation. However, not all employers are convinced of the need to pay attention to non-workplace specific health issues of their employees or the benefits of doing so. Employers may view SRH, in particular, as a private affair that is beyond their responsibility and/or is irrelevant to the workplace.

Globally, this attitude is shifting. Employers are starting to accept that the well-being and health of their employees are part of their corporate social responsibility. They are starting to pay attention to the research that shows that female employees have specific SRH needs that, if left unaddressed, can impact their ability to get to work and their performance while at work. They are also starting to understand the financial and cultural impacts on their businesses

²³ Progressive Voice, 2016.

²⁴ Action Labour Rights, 2016, p. 4.

²⁵ Fair Wear Foundation, 2016, p. 56.

²⁶ DFAT, 2016, p. 4.

²⁷ Impactt, 2016.

of such issues as gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and discrimination – all of which affect women differently than men and more so than men. Responding to these issues can and does increase the empowerment of female employees, resulting in reduced risks in the supply chain and cost benefits to a business.²⁸

Women's ability to gain information about their SRH and to have freedom of access to health services is directly linked to their ability to participate equally and fully in the economic system, including as employees in workplaces. Women who are denied such information and access are unable to make choices about if and when they have children and how often. They may have less control over their careers and can be vulnerable to periods of poverty, especially if they are denied the right to work while pregnant and/or denied access to maternity leave. Barriers to women attaining information about SRH and access to SRH services include gender-based violence, gender norms and the unequal burden of unpaid care.²⁹

Husbands may refuse to allow their wives to access or use contraception. Women who are abused by their husband may also be reluctant to visit a doctor to discuss contraception for fear the physical signs of the violence on their body will be exposed and that they, as a result, will be exposed to stigma and shame. Gender norms may promote the idea that men should make decisions about women's bodies, including how many children they have and the decisions they must take when they do. The care economy may further mean that a woman is unable to engage in formal employment because of the restrictions imposed by the employer on time off to look after sick members of the family (including young children).³⁰

There has been concern for some time about the SRH rights of women working in the garment sector.³¹ The most obvious and explicit form of gender discrimination that occurs in this space is the firing or non-renewal of contracts of pregnant women. Less visible forms of gender discrimination against women include such practices as the non-hiring of pregnant women and forced pregnancy tests for women prior to and during employment. Women who return to work after pregnancy are often paid at the starting salary,³² which can mean a reduction in income of around 16 per cent.³³ In Myanmar, the Social Security Law (2012) grants women paid maternity leave for a minimum of 14 weeks (six weeks before birth and eight weeks after), with additional leave for twins, and a minimum of six weeks leave in the event of a miscarriage. Research suggests, however, that this law is not followed in the garment sector, with 42 per cent of workers in the sector reporting they did not know (or are unsure of the information) that women are entitled to maternity leave under the law.³⁴ Suggestions for why this may be the case include both a lack of awareness of the law on the part of women and an equal lack of awareness of the complex legal labour law framework and/or unwillingness to comply with the law on the part of factory managers.³⁵

²⁸ Chichester et al., 2013; Universal Access Project, 2015.

²⁹ IPPF, 2015.

³⁰ Extensive discussions on how cultural and social norms place limitations on opportunities for women and on the potential for gender change in Myanmar can be found in a number of publications written by the Gender Equality Network, and are listed in the reference section in this report.

³¹ See, for example, Clean Clothes Campaign, 2005.

³² Action Labour Rights, 2016, pp.10–11.

³³ ILO, 2016.

³⁴ Progressive Voice, 2016, p. 55.

³⁵ Fair Wear Foundation, 2016, p. 41.

2.3 The business case for a gender-equality assessment

The sex ratio of the workforce in the garment sector provides an immediate compelling case for gender analyses of the working culture in the sector and the experiences of its workers in the factories. The MGMA *Myanmar Garment Sector 10-year Strategy 2015–2024* however offers no specific reference to the needs of women in its strategic objectives. The MGMA recently issued a code of conduct that includes only one reference to gender, in the clause confirming a company's responsibility to provide a discrimination-free environment for employees. Codes of conduct that do not make specific reference to the needs and situations of women, particularly when these codes apply to industries in which there is a high percentage of female employees (and especially in lower levels of employment), have been critiqued as gender blind – a state that “prevents them from being a more effective tool for the defence of women workers' rights”.³⁶ A vague mention to gender under strategic objective 2.5 of the MGMA's strategy or its reference to gender in the voluntary code of conduct represent hesitant commitment by the most important industry body to address gender-equality issues in the industry.

Given that the vast majority of the employees in the factories are women, this warrants attention to issues that affect women specifically. This includes physiological issues, such as menstruation, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, childbirth and breastfeeding; and social issues, such as child rearing as well as violence and harassment. If these issues are having negative impacts on female employees in the sector, it is fair to conclude that the sector is suffering as a result. The general conversation about women in the garment sector has, however, not yet included detailed attention to SRH issues. And there are no reliable data that can be used to help promote SRH as an important workplace issue in garment factories. We do not know what women working in the sector know about SRH, including their attitudes towards motherhood and work, breastfeeding in the workplace or childcare. There is no information on the extent to which female employees can or cannot access SRH services. This means there has been no documented thinking about how the sector can benefit from paying closer attention to the SRH needs of female employees and the benefits of doing so for employers, or even what such attention might look like in practice.

A gender-equality assessment of the garment sector is thus both necessary and urgent. Such an assessment can provide information that will allow an evidence-based approach to improving workplace experiences and opportunities for the majority of the employees. This ILO-GIP assessment – targeting 16 factories in the sector – will allow the ILO to work more closely with these factories and with other interested stakeholders to determine what can be done to empower the female workforce and to provide safer workplace environments for employees. It will provide the ILO with up-to-date data to help convince employers of the benefits to their businesses of doing this kind of work, while supporting them in their efforts. It will also allow an opportunity for the ILO to work more closely with the female employees (and their workplace representatives) to build on the knowledge these women have about SRH; to promote sustainable ways of reducing the risks of gender-based harassment and abuse in the workplace; and to develop a form of gender equality that is relevant to the garment sector, meaningful to the sector's male and female workforce, and is culturally specific.

³⁶ Clean Clothes Campaign, 2005, p. 75.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

The assessment used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods to gather information from female employees, human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives in the 16 factories about career advancement and skills training, experiences of workplace sexual harassment and abuse, and SRH (as it all relates to women in the workplaces). These methods encompassed:

- a face-to-face survey with a randomly selected sample of 20 female employees in 16 factories (total 320 respondents);
- a key informant interview with the human resources manager, one supervisor and (where available) a representative of the BLO in each factory; and
- a focus group discussion (FGD) with eight female employees in selected factories.

The target number of factories to be included in the assessment was 20 initially. The target number of activities was 400 surveys, three informant interviews in each factory and eight FGDs. The final assessment included a total of 320 surveys, 38 interviews and seven FGDs spread across the 16 factories (table 1).

Table 1 shows the total number of participants in the assessment. This information is disaggregated by sex and broken down according to the three data collection methods used. For each method, the table shows the average time it took to complete each session.

Table 1 Data-collection methods

Method	Participants	Average time to complete
Survey		26 mins.
Female workers	320	
Key informant interviews x 38		44 mins.
Female	31	
Male	7	
Supervisors	15	
BLO representatives	6	
Human resources managers	16	
Other*	1	
Focus group discussions x 7		79 mins.
Female workers	56	

Note: *=One of the participants identified as a “quality controller”. Quality controllers were not included in the target list of participants for informant interviews. For the purpose of the analysis, it is fair to assume this person was a supervisor working in the quality control department, and this is why they were selected for an interview

Four factories included in the original target group were unable to participate because the decision-maker in each factory was travelling overseas or because factory owners were otherwise busy (meeting production targets, preparing end-of-year activities). In ten of the factories, only two informant interviews were conducted – with the human resources manager and a supervisor. This was because there was no BLO in these factories.

The qualitative and quantitative data were collected by [Myanmar Marketing Research & Development \(MMRD\)](#), a locally based market research company.

3.1.1 Selection of factories

The ILO-GIP project manager in Myanmar managed the selection of factories. The original plan was to have the assessment cover ten foreign-owned factories and ten local factories. The ILO was unable to secure the participation of the local factories, and so the final targeted factories comprised 20 foreign-owned factories, all of whom of whom are included in the supply chain of international brands. The support of international brands was essential in initially contacting the factories. A total of 16 of the contacted 20 factories eventually participated in the GEA.

3.1.2 Selection of participants

In July 2017, the ILO introduced MMRD to ten selected factories via email. MMRD liaised with local staff in each factory to secure a date for the survey and to advise on how the survey would be conducted. Requisites for the survey included the employers sending MMRD a list of all female workers two or three days prior³⁷ and preparing rooms inside the factory where the survey could be conducted in private.

The list of female employees was to include women working in production sections but exclude women employed as ALL-supervisors,³⁸ supervisors, BLO representatives and women in administrative roles in the factory. MMRD used the lists to randomly select 20 employees from each factory to participate in the survey. MMRD randomly selected an additional 40 female employees in each factory to serve as reserves in case any of the originally selected employees were unable or unwilling to complete the survey.

Similarly, MMRD was provided with a list of ALL-supervisors and supervisors and a list of BLO representatives (where available) in each factory. For these lists, both male and female employees were included. MMRD randomly selected one person from each list to participate in an informant interview (one supervisor and one BLO representative in each factory). They selected three reserves from each list. In all factories, there was only one human resources manager, and this person was automatically selected to be invited for an informant interview.

The FGD participants were selected on the day when the survey was conducted in a factory. The selection of FGD participants was based on the following criteria: eight female workers from the production section, with different ages, some married and some single, with or without

³⁷ In some cases, this list was not provided until the day of the survey.

³⁸ The term “ALL-supervisor” is used to indicate a supervisor who is higher than a production line supervisor. These supervisors supervise supervisors.

children. Female workers who had completed the survey were excluded from participating in an FGD. Due to budget constraints, FGDs were planned for only eight factories.

For the selection of the factories in which an FGD was to be conducted, the initial target list of 20 factories was first divided into two categories, based on the number of workers. These categories were category A (between 500 and 1,000 workers) and category B (more than 1,000 workers). None of the factories in the target list had fewer than 500 workers, while 14 of the 20 factories were in category A, with the remaining six in category B. The target number of eight FGDs was assigned as six in category A and two in category B. One of the planned FGDs in category A, however, was not completed due to a failed appointment in the factory (hence, only seven discussions were conducted).

3.1.3 Completion of activities

On the morning of the survey, the MMRD team met with the person in charge (manager), provided further information on the data-collection activities, and issued a copy of the selected employees to invite to participate in the survey, informant interviews and FGDs.

The person in charge in the factory called the selected employees to complete the survey. The MMRD team comprised four enumerators. This meant that up to four survey sessions were completed at the same time, provided there were enough private rooms available in a factory. All surveys were completed face to face between one female employee (the interviewee) and one female enumerator (the interviewer) in the room. The interviewee was asked to provide verbal consent to participate before the start of the survey. Survey respondents were free to accept or refuse.

While the enumerators completed the survey sessions, the team supervisor conducted the informant interviews with the human resources manager, supervisor and BLO representative (where applicable) in a separate room. In some cases, an interpreter (employed directly by the factory) was also present if the interviewee did not speak Burmese (if they were a Chinese national).

The FGDs were mostly completed after lunchtime. A female facilitator from MMRD conducted the session with the assistance of one or two note-takers also from MMRD). Refreshments were served during the FGD, and small gifts were given to participants at the end.

The informant interviews and FGD sessions were recorded, and the recordings were transcribed and translated into English. All activities were completed on the factory premises and during normal working hours of the factory (between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.). In most cases, data-collection activities were completed in a single day. In a few factories, however, it took two days to complete all the activities due to a limited number of available rooms.

3.1.4 Training of national researchers

The MMRD field team received training to prepare them for the assessment. This comprised a one-day training session facilitated by the international researcher under the guidance of the project manager from the ILO and additional in-house training provided by MMRD. Topics covered included an introduction to the GEA, study and revision of the data collection

tools, ethics for carrying out gender research and interviewing skills. In addition, the ILO arranged for the MMRD field team to attend a two-day training workshop on Women's Empowerment and Understanding Gender Equality through Sexuality Dialogue offered by the Akhaya Women, which is a local initiative led by and for women that provides dedicated tools and support mechanisms to challenge gender stereotypes by bringing gender-equality expectations into family homes and communities. This training explored attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexuality and violence against women and children. The MMRD team was given information on how to contact women's rights groups to assist with cases of gender-based violence. This information meant the team was able to inform the GEA participants about referral pathways if required. After completing the training, the MMRD team piloted the assessment tools at one of the selected factories, followed by a debriefing session.³⁹

3.2 Data analysis

The results of the survey were entered into a single Excel file that served as the quantitative data set for analysis by the international researcher from the global company [Factive](#).

The qualitative information from the informant interviews and FGDs was uploaded and analysed using the online platform Dedoose. Descriptors and codes were applied to comments made by participants to assist with the analysis. The descriptors indicate the source of the data (disaggregated by type of participant, sex and factory) as well as the date the data were received and the duration of the data-collection session. The codes identify to which of the three research topics a particular comment made during an informant or FGD refers as well as to which sub-topic it links (table 2). These descriptors and codes link to the aims of the GEA, as described in section 1.2.

Table 2 Descriptors and codes used in the qualitative data analysis

Descriptors		Codes Parent	Sub-topics
Respondent type	Human resources manager Supervisor BLO representative	Barriers to gender equality	Management Leadership in trade unions Career advancement
Sex	Female Male		Skills training
Date	[date]	Experiences of gender discrimination	Gender-based violence
Duration	[minutes]		Discrimination Sexual harassment
Factory code	1-16	Positive SRH	Maternity Childcare

³⁹ For a detailed account of the pilot test and debrief session, refer to MMRD, 2017.

For the parent codes, a scoring system (table 3) was applied to identify when a specific comment reflected a positive or negative attitude or practice regarding the following three questions (which link to the three research topics of the GEA):

- A. Does the comment indicate barriers to gender equality?
- B. Does the comment indicate experiences of gender-based abuse?
- C. Does the comment indicate support for positive SRH?

If analysis of a comment led to the answer “yes”, the comment received a positive score. If an analysis of a comment led to the answer “no”, the comment received a negative score. This means that for question A (Does the comment indicate barriers to gender equality?), if the analysis of a comment led to the “yes” answer, the comment received a positive score. The allocation of a positive or negative was linked to the answer that resulted from analysis of the comment. It was not linked to interpretation of the analysis of the comment as indicating a positive or negative situation.

Each comment could receive one of five scores: -2, -1, 0, +1 or +2. The -2 and +2 scores indicate that the comment provides evidence linked to the topic of the question. For example, a score of +2 against a comment made about workplace gender quality would show that in their answer to question A (Does the comment indicate barriers to gender equality?), the participant made a comment indicating barriers to gender equality and provided evidence of barriers to gender equality in their factory. The -1 and +1 scores indicate that the comment provides an attitude linked to the topic question. For example, a score of -1 against a comment made about workplace gender experiences shows that, in their answer to question B (Does the comment indicate experiences of gender-based abuse?), the participant said something that suggests no experience of gender-based abuse in the factory but did not provide any specific evidence (or example) to support that comment. Allocation of a 0 to a comment means that the comment is neutral – it discusses the topic but does not offer a conclusive “Yes” or “No” answer to the relevant question. Table 3 shows the scoring system.

Table 3 Scoring system

Code	-2	-1	Score 0	1	2
Barriers to workplace gender equality opportunities	Evidence of support for workplace gender equality	Statement of support for workplace gender equality	General comment about workplace gender equality	Statement of opposition to workplace gender equality	Evidence of opposition to workplace gender equality
Experiences of workplace gender discrimination	Evidence of mitigation of the risk of workplace gender discrimination	Statement of mitigation of the risk of workplace gender discrimination	General comment about workplace gender discrimination	Statement of incident of workplace gender discrimination	Evidence of incident of workplace gender discrimination
Positive workplace SRH support	Evidence of opposition to positive workplace SRH support	Statement of opposition to positive workplace SRH support	General comment about workplace SRH support	Statement of support for positive workplace SRH support	Evidence of support for positive workplace SRH support

After the initial analysis completed by the international researcher, the findings were presented at a stakeholder engagement workshop with ILO constituents. Further analysis was then completed, and the results were presented in two subsequent workshops: one to a wider community of organizations concerned with gender and garment factory issues in Myanmar and one to representatives of the factories that participated in the assessment. In the latter workshop, the factory representatives were presented with both the overall results of the GEA and a one-page infographic showing some of the results specific to their individual factories. Comments and feedback from participants in all three workshops were incorporated into the final report, along with additional comments from the head of the ILO-GIP project in Myanmar and other global ILO staff.

3.3 Limitations and risks

The research contained limitations and risks that impacted on the data collection and analysis.

Gender bias. The GEA overwhelmingly prioritized the views and experiences of women working in the 16 garment factories. Only seven of the total 414 people who participated were men. The original methodology included conducting some FGDs with male employees. This component was later removed from the methodology because it was assessed as difficult to arrange for eight male workers to attend a session together in a single factory. Conducting FGDs with men also would have meant less time available to conduct FGDs with women, and this would have reduced the total number of female FGDs. Furthermore, the methodology used the dominant binary of gender (male and female), which assumes all participants identify

within this binary and which prevented the collection of data relating to people working in the factories who do not identify as a man or as woman.

Interference. There is a risk that some of the assessment participants, especially female employees who completed the workplace survey, may have received prior instructions on how to respond. We see in some factories the exact same answers to particular questions from all 20 respondents. This is especially noticeable in the responses to questions about sexual harassment and abuse. If there was some internal discussion with the respondents before they completed the survey, the result could be an underreporting of negative practices and experiences in their factories.

Interview rooms. The majority of the factories provided rooms as requested to ensure speed of completion of the survey and informant interviews and an assurance of confidentiality for all participants. If a factory could not provide enough private rooms for the assessment to be completed on time, the number of days designated for the GEA activities was extended. If the rooms were deemed insufficiently private and secure from outside disturbances, the rooms were rearranged (covering glass doors with cloth).

Quality of qualitative data from FGD and informant interviews. The data collected from the FGDs and informant interviews is not considered to be high quality. The translation and legibility of the data in English are adequate. However, there is a lack of in-depth additional information in this data that can accurately support the quantitative results. This may have been the result of the skills of the facilitators. It may also have been the result of the decision to record and transcribe everything that was said rather than to organize the data-collection methods in a way that would prioritize only key and relevant information from these activities. The initial methodology included a mapping activity for the FGDs to allow the facilitator to guide the participants to share and understand their attitudes and behaviours. This was changed to an interview format – using questions and answers – to match the format of the informant interviews.

Time frame. The original plan was for completion of the assessment within 11 weeks after commencing in February 2017. In hindsight, this was not realistic, given that the head of the project had not been hired at that time. The factories that would participate in the eventual ILO-GIP activities and in the GEA had also not been selected. The methodology was completed in March 2017, but data collection was delayed until August 2017. The reality of production targets and deadlines made it difficult for some managers to commit to a date for data collection. In other cases, delays were caused because the decision-makers were away or the factory needed agreement from their overseas headquarters to participate in the assessment. This meant the data had to be collected in two phases (during August for phase I and during November and December 2017 for phase II). There was some concern that the gap between the two data-collection phases might have affected the results, but a comparison of the two sets of data did not reveal any evidence of this.

Translation. There were some language barriers in the informant interviews, whereby the human resources managers only spoke Chinese. In these interviews, MMRD sought the assistance of the factory interpreter. The transcripts from these interviews provide limited information. The answers provided by the interviewees are not adequately focused on

the informant interview guidelines. It is likely there were some misunderstandings and/or intentional limiting of the translation on the part of the factory-employed interpreter.

Understanding sexual harassment. There is strong evidence that participants in the assessment did not understand the term “sexual harassment”. The findings show significant confusion between sexual harassment and teasing between workers. This is discussed in detail in the analysis section of this report. The decision to not use operational definitions in the survey was made during the development of the methodology to avoid making the assessment look like it was focusing more on sexual harassment than on other aspects equally important to the GEA (such as gender equality and SRH). Other researchers have adopted this focus, but the aim of the GEA was to expand the list of gender topics that should be explored to identify opportunities for improving gender equality in factories. This decision may have limited the accuracy of the findings in terms of understanding experiences of sexual harassment in these factories. However, it has allowed the assessment to avoid being read as a specific investigation into sexual harassment in the sector and instead as a more general gender analysis of the factories.

Selection of factories. All the factories in the GEA are foreign owned and are included in the supply chain of international brands. This means the results and analysis do not reflect the gender situation of locally owned factories or of factories supplying to other foreign buyers. This GEA constitutes an assessment of the gender situation in 16 garment factories that supply international brands and not an assessment of the gender situation throughout the garment sector in Myanmar. Many of these international brands are proactive brands and have elements in their code of conduct that promote gender equality by which factories must abide. This may have affected the findings of the survey.

4. Results

This section of the report provides a comprehensive set of results from the assessment. The results have been organized into five categories:

1. Demographics.
2. Work status (contract type, length of employment).
3. Workplace gender-equality opportunities.
4. Workplace gender experiences.
5. Workplace sexual and reproductive health.

The results in the first two categories – demographics and work status – provide information about the respondents to the survey. The results in the remaining three categories – workplace gender-equality opportunities, workplace gender experiences and workplace SRH support – provide information from the survey, the informant interviews and the FGDs linked to the assessment's three key research topics and the six core research questions, as introduced in section 1.2 of this report.

4.1 Demographics

The demographic information derives from the workplace survey, which was completed by 320 female employees – 20 in each of the participating 16 factories. The results provide a picture of the average woman who works on the shop floor in these factories: She came to Yangon to work in a garment factory and is currently a permanent employee with a working history in the sector of fewer than three years. She is young (on average 24 years old), unmarried and does not have children. She works approximately 60 hours each week, including overtime, and uses most of her salary to support her family.

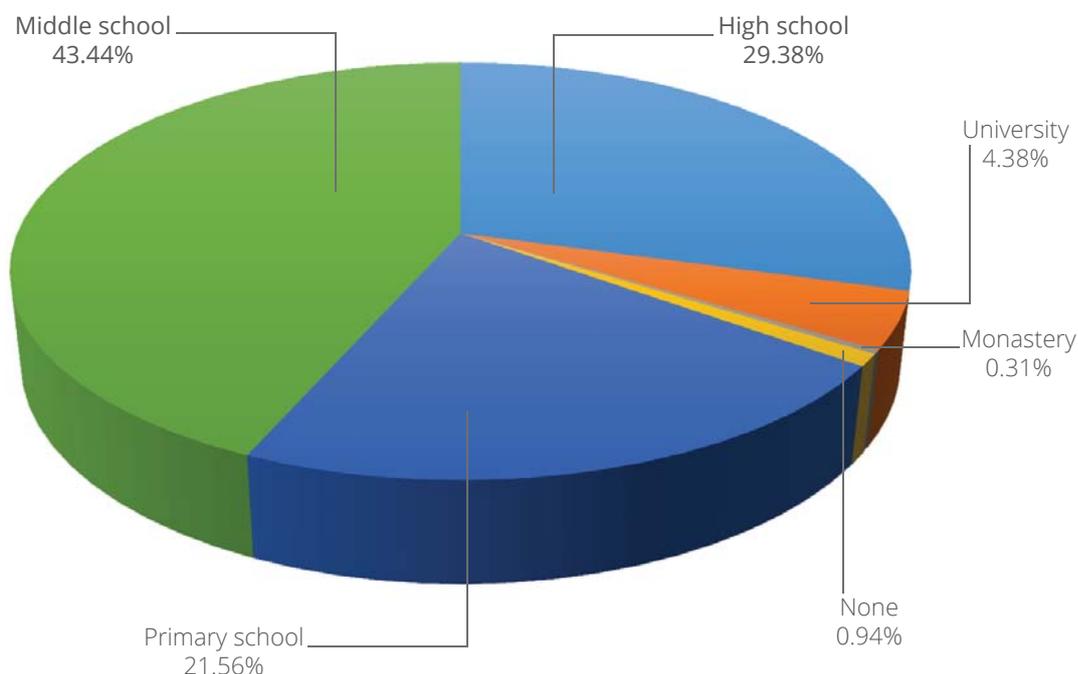
The survey indicates that the women who work in the factories are well educated (figure 1). Their level of education is higher than the national average for women in Myanmar.

⁴⁰ The data are from a United Nations Population Fund's thematic report on education, which draws from the 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census.

The results of the most recent census, carried out in 2014, indicate that the proportion of females who have completed primary school, middle school, high school and university are 22.5 per cent, 3.6 per cent, 4.4 per cent and 0.1 per cent, respectively.⁴⁰ These percentages correspond to the highest level of completed education for women aged 25 and older – the census data do not offer information on the education levels of women younger than 25 years. The women in the GEA survey sample are younger than the sample (at an average age of 24 years) in the census.

Given improvements in the availability of formal education in Myanmar, we would expect to see higher rates of completed education among young women. The differences between the census data and the results of the GEA survey with respect to completed levels of education, however, are large. Overall, 43.4 per cent (n=139) of the female employees who responded to the survey have completed middle school, compared with only 3.6 per cent of older women across the national population. Similarly, more than six times the number of women in the factories have completed high school than the average in the national female data. This indicates a highly educated workforce in the garment sector – a factor that, in addition to the low wages paid to employees – has been cited as giving Myanmar “some advantages over other regional garment producers”.⁴¹

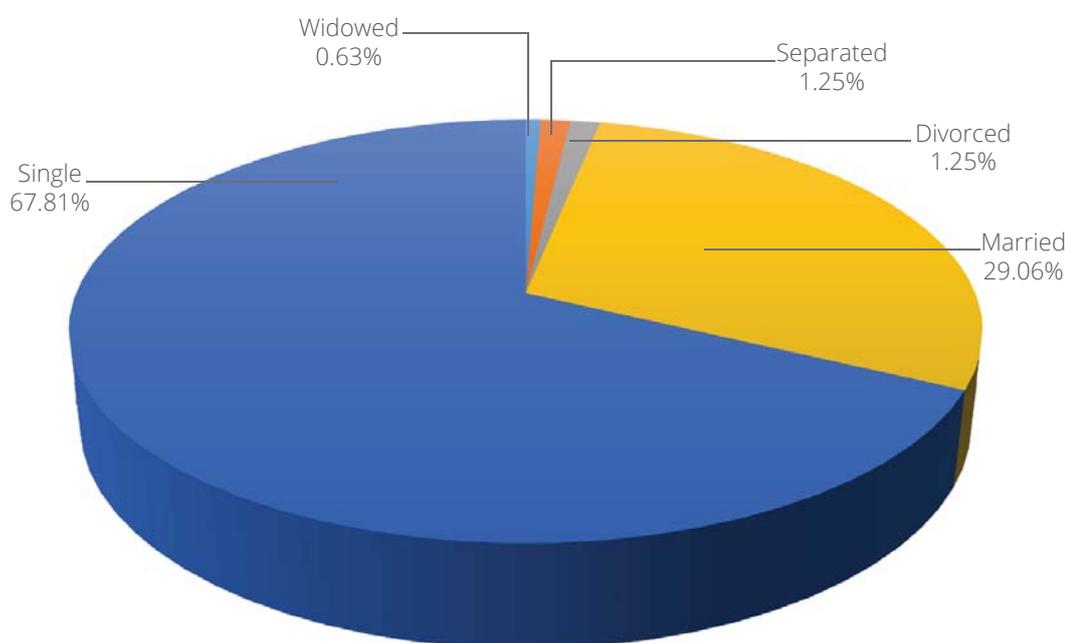
Figure 1 Education level of survey respondents



⁴¹ BIF, 2016, p. 7.

More than two-thirds of the 320 survey respondents (n=217) identify as single and having never married (figure 2). Just over half of them (51.6 per cent, n=140) are single women who moved to Yangon specifically to work in the garment sector. The other respondents break down as widowed (0.6 per cent, n=2), separated (1.3 per cent, n=4) and divorced (1.3 per cent, n=4). The percentage of women in the survey who identify as single is consistent with the national average, which is around 70 per cent for women between the ages of 20 and 24.⁴² It is also similar to the number of women aged 20–24 in Yangon who identified as single in the 2014 census.

Figure 2 Marital status of survey respondents



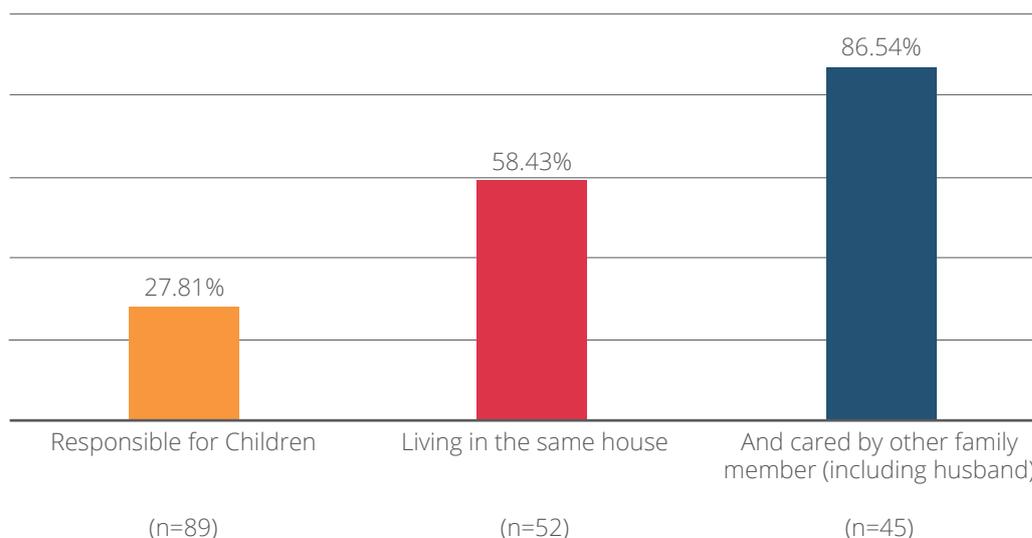
Only 27.8 per cent (n=89) of the survey respondents identify as being responsible for at least one child younger than 16 years (figure 3). The mean number of children cared for by the participants is therefore zero.

The term “responsible for children” instead of “have children” was used in the survey question due to feedback received from the national enumerators during the training session prior to data collection. The intent was to ensure that the idea of being a mother was not limited to women who had given birth to the children in their care but to include women who had adopted children or who are responsible for children born to somebody else in their family. The survey question, however, did not give a definition of “responsible”. Some of the survey respondents may have interpreted this to infer only being the biological mother of the children. The total number of women in the sample who are actually responsible for children in some way, including being expected to give some of their salary to support relatives’ children, could therefore have been larger than the results show.

⁴² DPMIP, 2015, p. 22-23.

Figure 3 also shows the percentage of women who live in the same house as the children for whom they are responsible (58.4 per cent, n=52). It further reflects the percentage of women whose children – for whom they are responsible and who live in the same house – are cared for by another family member (86.5 per cent, n=45).

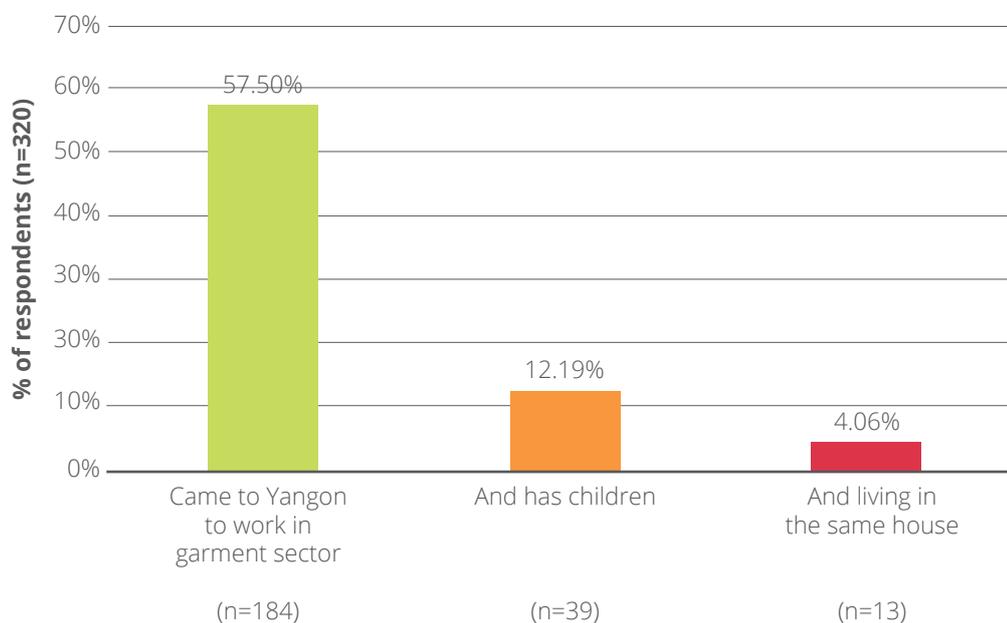
Figure 3 Survey respondents with responsibility for children and their care arrangements



The results of the GEA do not provide more detailed information about the care of children, including whether all the children of the women who completed the survey are cared for by a family member who lives close by or elsewhere (in their native province, for example). The results nevertheless indicate there is limited reliance by women who are responsible for children on using childcare facilities to care for their children while they are at work. Alternative options used by the respondents for childcare are a friend or neighbour. In the total sample of 320 respondents, only one woman reported using a private childcare facility. Not one woman who is responsible for children younger than 16 leaves the children in a childcare facility at her place of work (if such a facility is available). The reasons for this may include a lack of a suitable facility available in the factory or elsewhere, or that the women did not want to make use of any facility that was available. Attitudes towards childcare for female employees in the factories and in the wider sector are explored in more detail later in this report.

The survey results also do not give any information about the ages of the children. Only the category of “under 16” was used in the survey question when asking about being responsible for children. It is possible some of the children for whom the women are responsible are too old to be placed in childcare (they are attending school). Among those women who came to Yangon to work in the garment sector and who are responsible for children younger than 16, fewer than 5 per cent live with these children (figure 4).

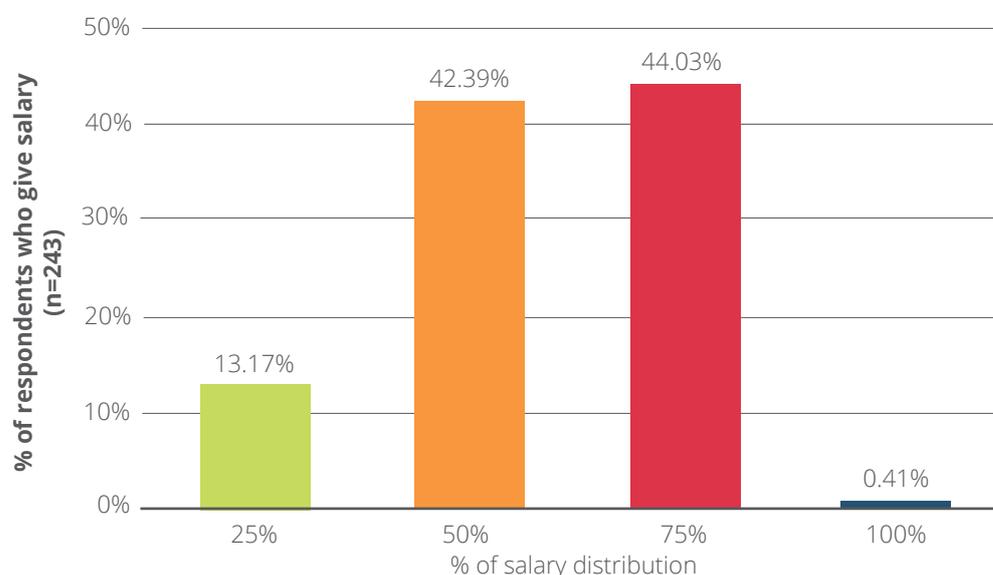
Figure 4 Survey respondents with responsibility for children who came to work in Yangon



In total, 57.5 per cent (n=184) of the survey respondents came to Yangon with the intention of working in the garment sector. Of them, 21.2 per cent (n=39) (or 12.2 per cent of the total sample) are responsible for children younger than 16. A third of those women (n=13) live in the same house as the children. This suggests that approximately 7 per cent (n=23) of the female workers who participated in the survey may have left children for whom they are responsible with family members back in their native province, while the other 13 workers may have (depending on the age of the children) a need to find somebody to care for the children while they are at work. Indeed, of them, 84.6 per cent (n=11) said they leave their children in the care of a family member (including the husband), and the remainder rely on a neighbour to take care of the children while at work.

Some of the questions in the survey aimed to find out the extent to which the female employees make decisions on how they spend their money. The answers provide a basic idea of the extent to which their participation in the workforce might contribute to their economic empowerment: 78.1 per cent (n=250) of the respondents said they are able to decide how they spend their salary, while 75.9 (n=243) per cent said they are expected to give some of their salary to their family (figure 5).

Figure 5 Percentage amount of survey respondents' salary given to family



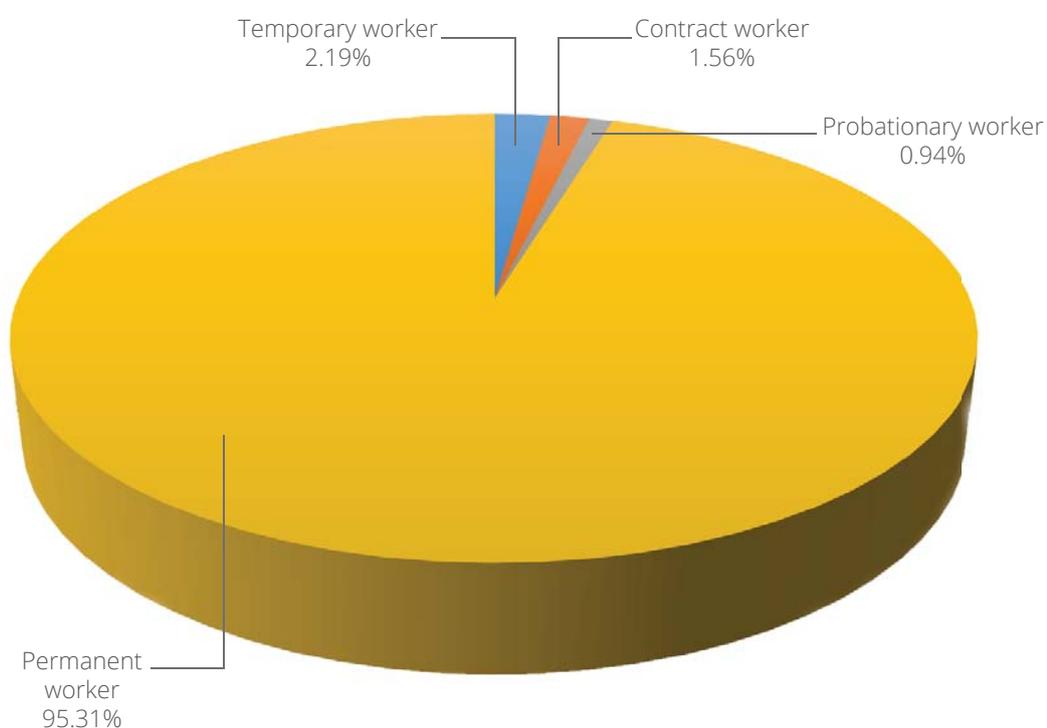
As many as 86 per cent (n=209) of the respondents said they are expected to give money to their family on a monthly basis, with 86.8 per cent (n=211) giving 50 per cent or more of their total salary. This breakdown of the rates and amounts of the distribution of the women's salaries does not reveal if the money is remitted to their family outside Yangon (to support other family members in their village) or handed over for use as part of the family income in their home in Yangon.

This finding appears to offer a contradiction: How can female employees in the factory have freedom to decide how to spend their money while at the same time are obligated to give a significant percentage of their salary to their family? The question on freedom of use of salary was intended to determine the extent to which female employees in the factories had economic independence. If we consider the response to this one question alone, it suggests that almost 80 per cent of respondents have such independence. When we also consider how often the women are expected to give some of their salary to family members and how much they are expected to give, the assurance of their economic independence linked to their employment in the factories is reduced. The fact that so many of the women give a large part of their salary to family members does not, however, necessarily negate their independence altogether. It may be that it is their choice – and not simply an obligation – to support family members in this way. It is possible that the giving of money to support their family is the women's expression of and creates for the women a sense of being economically independent. Recognizing this contribution may actually enhance women's agency and empowerment.

4.2 Work status

As many as 95.3 per cent (n=305) of the women work as permanent employees in their factory. Figure 6 illustrates the different employment status of the survey respondents. The non-permanent employees identify as temporary worker (2.2 per cent, n=7), contract worker (1.6 per cent, n=5) and probationary worker (0.9 per cent, n=3). The probationary period covers the fourth to sixth months of employment, following the first three months of training. During the training and probationary periods, an employer can pay the employee 50 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively, of the minimum wage (3,600 kyats (MMK)).⁴³

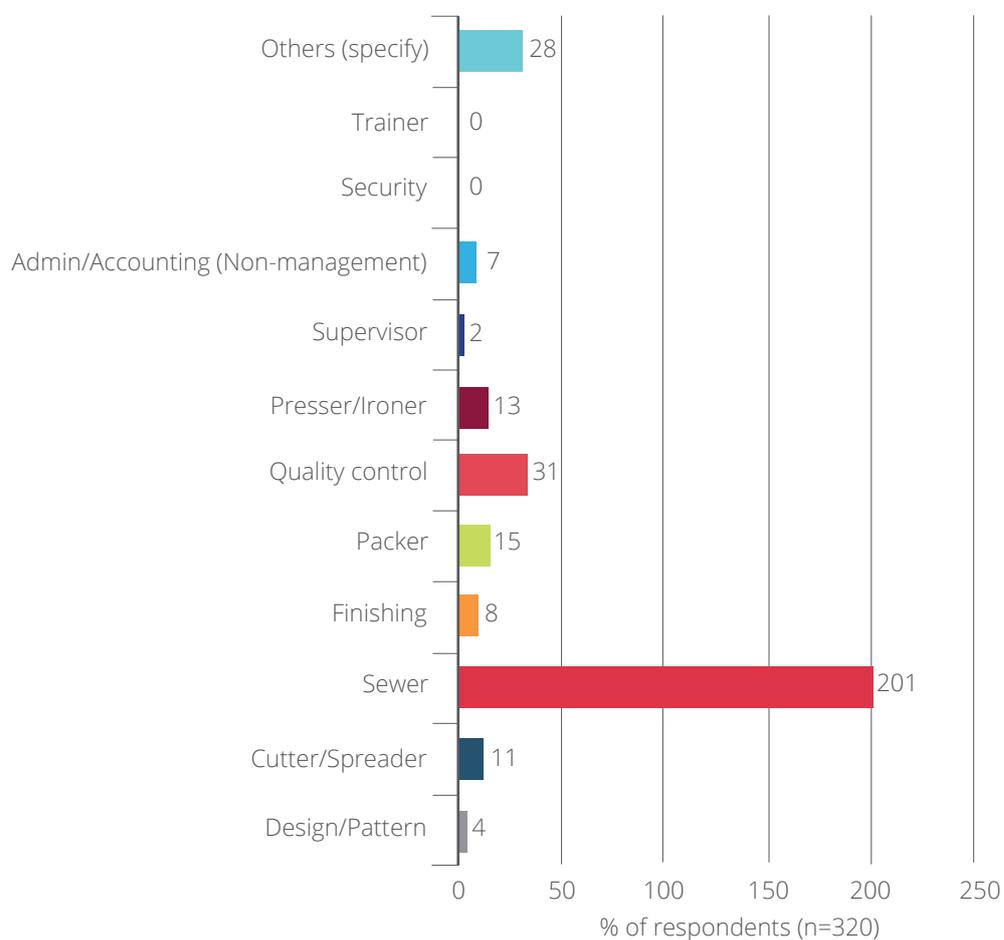
Figure 6 Employment status of survey respondents



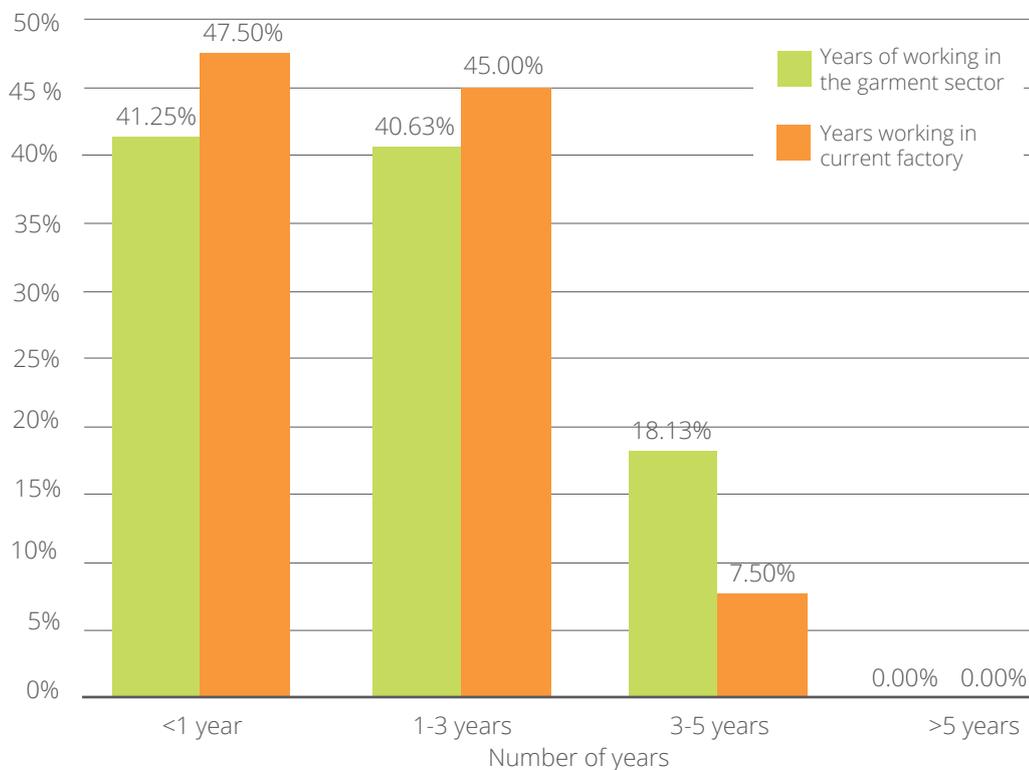
Some 62.8 per cent (n=201) of the respondents work as sewers (figure 7). Among the 28 respondents who cited “other” as their job role, 23 women work as hand sewers. The total proportion of respondents who work as sewers, including hand sewers, is therefore 70 per cent (n=224).

⁴³ Progressive Voice, 2016, pp. 39–40.

Figure 7 Current job role of survey respondents

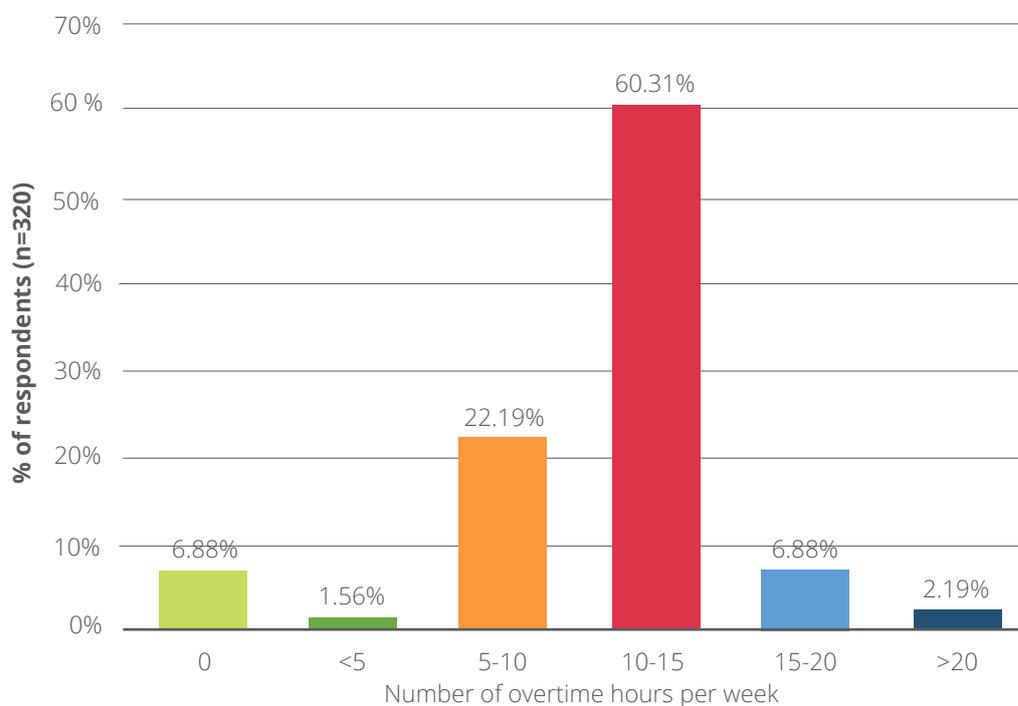


All respondents have been working in the garment sector for fewer than five years; and 92.5 per cent (n=296) have been working in their current factory for fewer than three years (figure 8).

Figure 8 Years working in the garment sector and in the current factory

The labour law states that working hours shall not exceed eight hours per day. The survey included a question on regular working hours and offered respondents the choice of fewer than eight hours. No respondent selected that answer. Almost all the women (99.4 per cent, n=318) reported that they work between eight and nine hours on average each work day. It is not clear if the choice of eight to nine hours indicates the women are working exactly eight hours in compliance with the law or if they are working slightly more than eight hours per day. The remaining two women in the sample said they were working between nine and ten hours per day.

Figure 9 shows the spread of overtime hours the women said they work each week. Around 82.5 per cent (n=264) work between five and 15 hours of overtime each week. And 6.9 per cent (n=22) said they work between 15 and 20 hours of overtime each week. The GEA did not investigate if this is paid or unpaid overtime. By law, overtime must be paid, and the rate of pay should be calculated at double the basic wage.

Figure 9 Spread of overtime hours

Some women may be exceeding the legal limit for overtime, which is set at 16 hours per week. This appears to be the case for 2.2 per cent (n=7) of the respondents, who indicated they work more than 20 hours of overtime in a week. Slightly fewer than 5 per cent (n=15) of the women also said they cannot refuse overtime.

In 14 of the 16 factories, the respondents reported they have an average of one and a half rest days each week. In the other two factories, the average is one day. This suggests all factories comply with the labour law, which stipulates that working days shall not exceed six days per week.

Some 89.7 per cent (n=287) of the respondents said they know what the minimum wage is, and 99.7 per cent (n=319) said they receive at least MMK3,600 per day.⁴⁴ At the time of conducting the research, the minimum wage in the garment sector for permanent employees who have completed both the training and probationary periods was MMK3,600 per day.

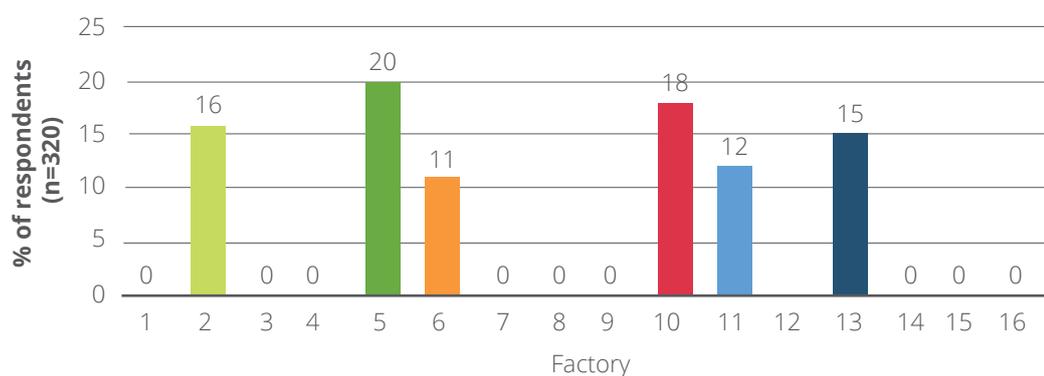
Some 97.8 per cent (n=313) of the respondents work under a supervisor who is a Myanmar national, and 88.1 per cent of the women (n=282) work under a female supervisor.

Only 4.7 per cent (n=15) of the 320 respondents is a member of a BLO in their workplace. But 28.8 per cent (n=92) of the respondents said they work in a factory in which there is a BLO (figure 10).

⁴⁴ This is equivalent to slightly less than US\$3.

We know from the methodology for collecting the qualitative data that there is a BLO in the six factories reflected in figure 10. The GEA included informant interviews with the BLO representative in all factories where such an organization exists. An informant interview was conducted with a BLO representative in the same six factories cited by survey respondents as having a BLO. Not all the women who work in five of the six factories that have a BLO know of its presence. This suggests some gaps in communication about the existence of a BLO in those factories.

Figure 10 Number of respondents in a factory with a basic labour organization present



The reference to a BLO in six of the 16 factories is used in this report to refine the findings and analysis on gender equality in those factories, and point out the differences between factories with and without a BLO in terms of workplace opportunities for women, workplace issues of sexual harassment and abuse and promoting positive SRH among female employees.

4.3 Workplace gender-equality opportunities

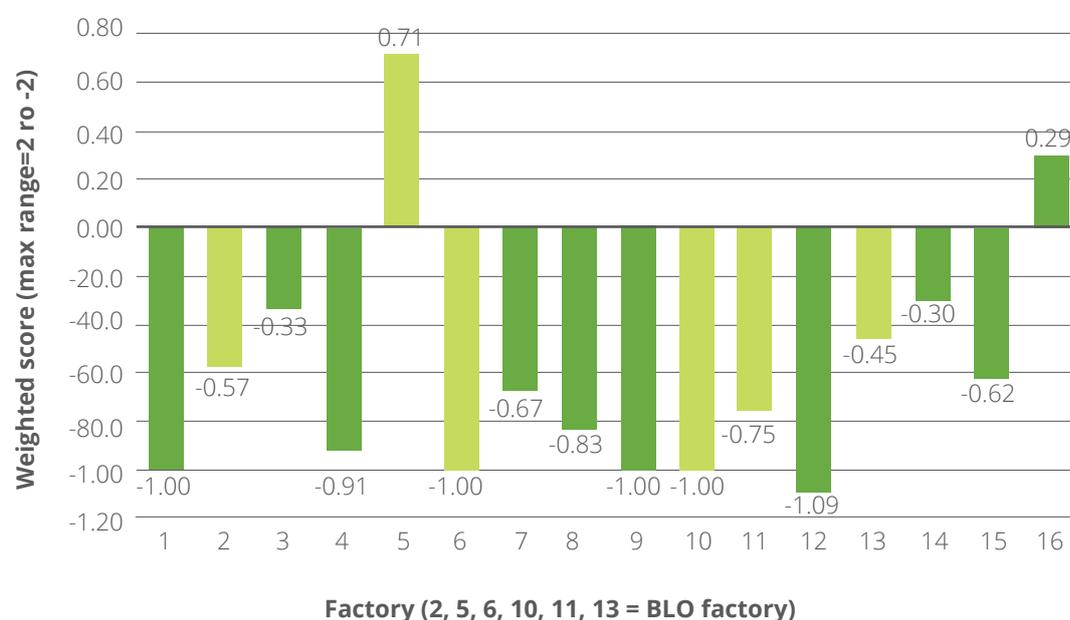
Comments made by the human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives in the informant interviews and by female workers in the FGDs provide insight into whether barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities exist in the 16 factories. In two of the 16 factories, this qualitative data reveal attitudes that may lead to barriers to career advancement and skills development for women. In the case of the other 14 factories, the comments made by the informant interviewees and FGD participants indicate support for workplace gender-equality opportunities. In none of the 16 factories do we find evidence of distinct practices (programmes, initiatives) that either support or impede workplace gender equality. Any barrier to women's access to skills training or career development opportunities is therefore more likely the result of an acceptance on the part of the majority of the GEA participants of the idea that women's participation in the labour market in Myanmar is temporary and not linked to any kind of professional career. It is something women have to do to earn income to help support their family and, ideally, only before they become mothers.

Barriers to gender-equality opportunities in the garment sector are also the result of the organizational structuring of the workforce, which provides a limited number of roles outside low-skill and low-paid tasks for any employee – male or female. Any support for women to access skills training or career-development opportunities in the 16 factories is also theoretical. Some of the interviewees and FGD participants believe that women should have

the same opportunities as men have. The survey results show that the vast majority of the women respondents believe this is already the case in their factory. However, there is no concrete evidence that indicates this support is being translated into action. We did not find, for example, evidence of women's leadership pathways or any formalized certification for acquired skills within the 16 factories.

Figure 11 reflects the score for each factory, based on an assessment of all comments made by the human resources managers, supervisors, BLO representatives and female FGD participants in that workplace in relation to gender-equality opportunities (career advancement and/or skills development).

Figure 11 Weighted factory scores for barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities



These scores were calculated using the weighted coding system explained in the data analysis methodology section earlier in the report. All interviewees' (human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives) and FGD participants' comments about career advancement or skills development for women were coded as "barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities" to help answer the two core research questions under research topic A (see section 1.2). These questions again are:

Topic A: Workplace gender-equality opportunities

1. What are the perceived barriers to women taking on leadership roles in management and trade unions?
2. Are there any specific barriers to women workers taking advantage of opportunities for skills training and career advancement?

Each comment was assigned a score based on the criteria shown in table 4.

Table 4 Scoring system for barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities

Code	Score				
	-2	-1	0	1	2
Barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities	Evidence of support for workplace gender-equality opportunities	Statement of support for workplace gender-equality opportunities	General comment	Statement of opposition to workplace gender-equality opportunities	Evidence of opposition to workplace gender-equality opportunities

The allocation of a score for each comment was based on the answer to the following question: Does the comment indicate barriers to gender equality? As explained in the methodology section, the assessment results in a positive or negative score, depending on whether the answer to the question is “yes” or “no”, respectively. Comments that result in a “yes” answer to this question received a positive score, and comments that resulted in a “no” answer received a negative score. As explained in section 3.2, the allocation of a positive or negative score links to the answer that results from analysis of the comment and is not linked to any interpretation of the result of this analysis as indicating either a positive or negative situation. The analysis results in a score of ± 1 or ± 2 , depending on whether the comment reveals an *attitude* for or against workplace gender equality (score = ± 1) or evidence of some action taken in support of or against workplace gender equality (score = ± 2).

For example, a comment by a human resources manager during the informant interview reveals an attitude about workplace gender equality:

“According to my opinion, it is not appropriate to divide the male and the female for becoming a good supervisor. It is because to become a good supervisor, a male must have good characters, voluntary spirit, truth and abilities of a good leader. So, I don't want to divide male from female. There is no nature of only male deserves for leader position. It will come out automatically. So, an outstanding female or an outstanding male can be a leader.”⁴⁵

Assessed against the question “Does the comment indicate barriers to gender equality?” the result is “no”, and thus the comment was assigned a score of -1.

In contrast, a comment from a supervisor in a factory with no BLO indicates evidence of opposition to workplace gender-equality opportunities:

“Some workers may be skilled but since they are married they will not be able to come to work on time. Since they are married, they have social issues. They may need to leave the workplace if the child is ill. So, I cannot recommend those workers even if they are skilled.”

⁴⁵ Where quotes are used in this report, the original text of the English translation of the quote has been retained. Only spelling errors in the transcripts provided have been corrected. While in some cases this may mean the quote is not grammatically accurate in English, the meaning of the quote is nevertheless understandable.

This comment provides explicit evidence of a practice on the part of that supervisor to not recommend married women for promotion to the supervisory level. A score of +2 was assigned to this comment because the answer to the question “Does the comment indicate barriers to gender equality?” is “yes”, and the comment also indicates a practice of discrimination against women.

The total score from all the coded comments for each factory was divided by the number of comments coded as “barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities” for that factory. This provides a weighted score of between -2 and +2 for each factory. A positive score indicates barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities in the factory because the answer to the question “Are there barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities” is “yes”. An ideal score for this part of the assessment – one that indicates no barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities in a factory – is a negative score. Figure 11 shows that 14 of the 16 factories achieved a negative score. This means that the human resources managers, supervisors, BLO representatives and female workers (in the FGDs) in 87.5 per cent of the factories hold attitudes that are supportive of workplace gender-equality opportunities for women.

The results of the factories with a BLO are also highlighted in figure 11. Five of these six factories have a negative score (there is evidence of support for workplace gender-equality opportunities). The scores for those five factories are between 0 and -1. This means the support is based on the attitudes of the interviewees and FGD participants in those factories. The factory with the highest positive score – which is the one covered by the assessment that shows the least level of support for workplace gender-equality issues – is also a factory with a BLO present. This factory's score of +0.71 reflects that some of the attitudes expressed by the interviewees and/or FGD participants indicate there would be barriers to gender equality in that workplace. For example, the BLO representative in that factory made the following remark:

“The inexperienced worker can be a helper. A helper has to cut the loose threads. If she is free, she can sew the machine. She has to learn by herself in her free time. Based on her work, the supervisor will arrange her to do overtime work if there is a need to do overtime. When a helper does overtime, she has to sew label. A helper has to sew with machine or has to press button. They have to work those activities. There is no special training for them.”

This comment was assigned a score of +2 because it provides evidence of a practice of not extending formal training to support women in the factory to develop essential work skills. That this comment was made by the BLO representative does not, however, indicate that this person supports such a practice. Here, the presence of a BLO representative in the factory may have helped to ensure greater visibility of practices that create barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities.

When the comments about workplace gender-equality opportunities made by human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives are assessed separately, all three informant interview groups receive a negative score in the weighted scoring system. The weighted scores per interview group are -0.67 for the supervisors, -0.65 for the human resources managers and -0.59 for the BLO representatives. This means the three groups produce a “no” answer to

the question “Are there barriers to workplace gender-equality opportunities?” It shows that, overall, the three groups have expressed attitudes that are supportive of gender equality in their factories. Supervisors have the lowest score, and are therefore more supportive (albeit only marginally) than human resources managers or BLO representatives.⁴⁶

4.3.1 Career advancement opportunities

As many as 90.9 per cent (n=291) of the survey sample believe that men and women have equal opportunities for developing new work skills in their factory. Only three of the 320 respondents believe women face barriers to promotion. These three women cited gender, education and their relationship with their supervisor as specific barriers to promotion. The results of the interviews and FGDs indicate that human resources managers, supervisors, BLO representatives and female workers also do not believe gender is a barrier to career-advancement opportunities in their factory. Instead, they all agree that promotion within their factory, especially to the supervisory level, is based on individual skills and characteristics, specifically communications skills, their relationship with other workers and likeability of that person among the workforce. A comment from a human resources manager in a factory with a BLO representative exemplifies this position:

“If I have to say openly, if a worker has qualifications, abilities and capacity of managing 30 persons, I don’t deny her to give promotion. If a worker is not good totally and she does not have good relationship with nearby four to five persons as well as her social relation is not smooth, I will reject her to give promotion. It is because if she becomes leader or supervisor, she will be problematic with 30 persons. I foresee the case. So, I reject her. Every female has chance. I give them chances.”

Despite the belief that women generally do not face barriers to career-advancement opportunities in their factory, only seven of the 320 survey respondents said they had asked to do a different job in their factory. And only two women said they had asked to do a higher-paid job. This suggests that there are some barriers to requesting different or higher-paid work in the factories. Of the seven women who asked to do a different job, six were successful. Of the two women who asked to do a higher-paid job, one was successful. These advancements, in terms of work task or pay, occurred across five factories. This suggests female employees in these factories have opportunity to advance their career if they ask and when they are aware of existing opportunities and muster the confidence to ask for change.

⁴⁶ In all cases in which the results of the human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives are compared in this report, consideration needs to be given to the fact that the GEA included only six interviews with BLO representatives but 16 interviews with both human resources managers and supervisors across the participating factories. The weighted scores for the BLO representatives may well have changed had the number of informant interviews for this group been larger. A more accurate comparison of the three groups with respect to their views on gender equality would also have been achieved had there been 16 informant interviews with BLO representatives.

Women can work as supervisors and ALL-supervisors in the factories; and two of the survey respondents (less than 1 per cent) are working in a supervisory role. This small number cannot be interpreted as evidence of gender barriers to female employees becoming supervisors. The selection method for the survey participants relied on lists of employees that excluded supervisors and ALL-supervisors, and the results should therefore have shown that zero per cent of the survey respondents were supervisors. Opportunities to advance to a supervisory position in the factories and in the garment sector, however, are limited due to the organizational structure of the workforce.

4.3.2 Access to skills training

Around 78.1 per cent (n=250) of the respondents said they had received skills training during the 12 months prior to the survey. This training covered how to complete new job operations, working with new machinery and workplace safety awareness. The GEA did not confirm what formats the skills training in the factories take. The results of the informant interviews and FGDs strongly indicate that most of the skills training is informal. Employees are expected to learn from others how to acquire the skills necessary to complete their assigned work tasks; there is no evidence of any formal recognition of acquired skills in any of the factories. The FGD participants reported that English language classes and personality development training (such as emotional awareness and communication skills) were provided in their factory in the past but are no longer available.

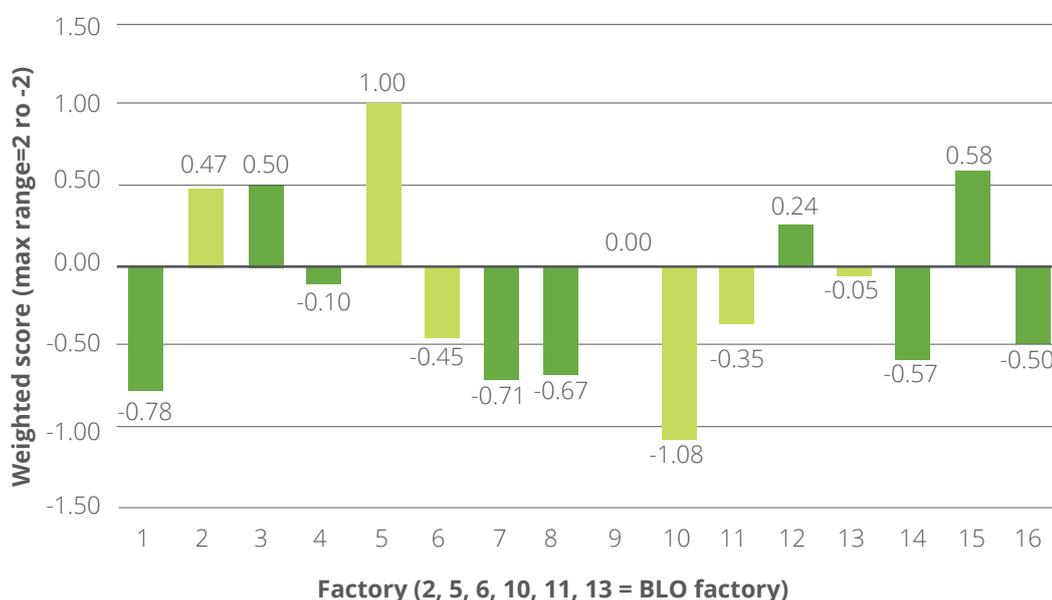
4.4 Workplace gender experiences

Comments made by the human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives in the informant interviews and by female workers in the FGDs provide insight into whether employees are at risk of or are experiencing sexual harassment, physical abuse and/or verbal abuse in the factories. In five of the 16 factories, the comments reflect attitudes that might support these kinds of behaviours. This does not mean the interviewees and FGD participants encourage such behaviours; rather, they hold particular views about gender roles that lead them to view sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse of women as normal and/or unavoidable. In ten of the factories, the comments indicate attitudes of disapproval of such behaviours. In only one factory is there evidence of practices aimed at responding to or preventing sexual harassment or abuse of employees, as one human resources manager explained:

"We have already issued rules to directly dismiss a person if he/she hurt another person or to give warning. I have told them about threatening on sexual harassment. I don't accept it. If a case of sexually threatening happens, the convict will be dismissed at once. If he commits an abuse, he will be effectively taken into action according to law."

Figure 12 shows the score for each factory based on the assessment of all comments made by the human resources managers, supervisors, BLO representatives and female FGD participants in that factory in relation to workplace experiences of sexual harassment, physical abuse or verbal abuse.

Figure 12 Weighted factory scores for experiences of gender-based abuse



These scores were calculated using the weighted coding system described in the data analysis methodology section earlier in this report. Whenever an interviewee (human resources manager, supervisor or BLO representative) or FGD participant made a comment about sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse of employees, the comment was coded as “experiences of gender-based abuse” to help answer the two core research questions under research topic B.

Topic B: Workplace gender experiences (linked to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse)

3. To what extent do women workers experience discrimination at work, and what are the mechanisms by which this discrimination takes effect?
4. To what extent are women workers subject to sexual harassment and/or gender-based violence at work?

Each comment was assigned a score based on the criteria shown in table 5.

Table 5 Scoring system for experiences of gender-based violence, sexual harassment and discrimination

Code	-2	-1	Score 0	1	2
Experiences of workplace gender discrimination	Evidence of mitigation of workplace gender discrimination	Statement of mitigation of the risk of workplace gender discrimination	General comment about workplace gender discrimination	Statement of incident of workplace gender discrimination	Evidence of incident of workplace gender discrimination

The method used for the allocation of scores is the same as that used for scoring comments made in the informant interviews and FGDs about workplace gender-equality opportunities (see section 3.3). In this case, each score was assigned to a comment based on the answer to the question “Does the comment indicate experiences of gender-based abuse?” The comment received a positive or negative score, depending on whether the answer was “yes” or “no”, respectively. For comments that result in a “yes” answer to this question, this comment receives a positive score; and for comments that result in a “no” answer to the question, this comment receives a negative score. Again therefore, for scoring of comment about gender experiences in the workplace, the allocation of a positive or negative is linked to the answer that results from analysis of the comment, and is not linked to any interpretation of the result of this analysis as indicating either a positive or negative situation. The analysis of a comment results in a score of ± 1 or ± 2 depending on whether the comment reveals an attitude for or against sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse (score = ± 1), or evidence of some action take in support of or against these types of behaviours in the factories (score = ± 2).

For example, a supervisor described an incident of sexual harassment in their factory:

“I have heard of a case from other production line. It was between a female worker and male worker. The male employee is a mechanic. There are three mechanics. They told the female worker that she is pretty and they like her. The female worker has recently joined the factory. When she heard about that, she gets mad that the mechanics are already married. And the mechanics talks back rudely. The words became inflated. The female worker cried because she was shy at his words and it led to a quarrel between them. There are such cases in other production lines.”

This comment was assigned a score of +2 because it indicates a practice of sexual harassment that has occurred in that factory.

The total score for each factory was divided by the number of comments coded as “experiences of gender-based abuse” for that factory to provide a weighted score of between -2 and +2. A positive score indicates either attitudes within the factory that appear to support sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse of female employees and/or evidence of such practices in that factory. An ideal score is a negative score, which indicates that the GEA participants do not support harassment or abuse of female employees in their workplace and/or that risk-mitigation or response activities have been implemented in that factory.

The results of the six factories with a BLO are also highlighted in figure 12. One of them scored the lowest negative score, at -1.08. Of the total 16 factories, this is the only one that scored below -1, indicating it is the only factory for which there is strong evidence of effort to prevent or respond to sexual harassment and abuse of female employees. However, the highest positive score is also a factory with a BLO. This factory's score of +1 suggests evidence of attitudes among the informant interviewees and FGD participants that are supportive of workplace sexual harassment or abuse. The factory supervisor's comment indicates that such behaviour is not regarded as abusive:

“At first, if someone is fat and black, we will use ‘Wa Tote’ or ‘Mae Mae’ (Fatty Blacky) as nicknames. It doesn't mean to offend her. It is just for fun. We use such nicknames.”

The female employees who participated in the FGD in this same factory cited examples of abuse, including being shouted at by the human resources manager for being sick or by the supervisor for not working quickly enough. They suggested the situation in their factory could be worse. As one participant explained:

“I am not sure how they [supervisors] will treat us if there is no BLO.”

In total, five of the 16 factories have a score of +1 or less. This indicates that women's experiences of sexual harassment or abuse in those factories are not taken seriously. There is no comment in the database that suggests any person is promoting sexual harassment or abuse of women in the workplace. However, there are many comments, like the following examples, that reflect the extent to which such behaviours are accepted as normal:

“Gossiping is common in everywhere. I do not say I do not gossip. I cannot say for sure that I do not criticize others. I may criticize others publicly or not publicly. I usually criticize secretly with my workers in the production line. It is often. It is a norm. It can be found in other factories or in the community, too.” (BLO representative)

“It is hard to give opinion. The major point is that Myanmar people maintain their culture. Myanmar women have been wearing longyi and long blouse for many centuries. Today, this tradition has been changed wearing short skirt. I think women are teased for wearing these clothes. If they wear longyi and long blouses, no male dare to tease them. Onlookers dare not say any more words because they are elegantly dressed. If they wear short and baggy styles or one-string bra, any male will tease them.” (human resources manager)

“Some workers may say that the butt is very slim before patting it. When I bend the body on something during working, they may pat on it. We do not get angry at them for doing like that. It is just for fun.” (FGD participant)

Such comments that express a normalization of sexual harassment and abuse of women in the workplace are more common throughout the qualitative data results than explicit examples of such behaviours having occurred.

Ten of the 16 factories have a score between zero and -1. This suggests there is some refusal on the part of the informant interviewees and FGD participants to accept sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace as normal. The lowest score (-1.08) indicates that some (albeit minor) action was taken in that factory to prevent or respond to sexual harassment or abuse. The human resources manager for that factory explained that action:

“We issue rules to prevent such incidences because the factory will be peaceful and beautiful if it has good rules. I just control them not to do too much teasing and not to do physical attacks.”

Based on the assessment of the comments made by the human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives as separate groups, all three produce a “no” answer to the question “Are there experiences of gender-based abuse?” This means that, overall, all three groups of participants expressed attitudes that indicate they are not supportive of gender-based abuse occurring in their factory, as the following representative comments indicate:

“I have told them to work unitedly not affecting anything to others. Then, I also tell to discuss each other when they want to get an opportunity and then, after negotiation they should talk to the office as well as to meet the Boss if he allows meeting them. If a problem is cleaned up like this there will be no more disagreement. (BLO representative)”

“For example, since we are working, we have to socialize with each other. We have to remind them to have less social dealing as possible. If a worker does violence, we will take action on her according to the company policy. We have to regulate their actions strictly since there are deadly equipment in the factory. Nothing can go wrong. I have to walk around and inspect them most of the time. I have to work closely with them to prevent such actions and violence.” (human resources manager)

“Since I have to supervise the female workers’ section, I tell them not to talk nonsense and not to be talkative in the morning meetings. I tell them to live in unity like a family.” (supervisor)

The weighted scores per interviewee group are -0.12 for supervisors, -0.16 for human resources managers and -0.16 for BLO representatives. This means that the attitudes of supervisors are slightly better than in the other two groups. However, all three scores are close to zero, which suggests that, overall, human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives all maintain fairly neutral positions regarding sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse of employees in their factories. They may not be aware that harassment or abuse is occurring. They may not have wanted to report examples that had occurred, while the FGD participants were more willingly to disclose. It is likely they have normalized sexual harassment against women in particular, which is a consistent finding in the data set.

The results of the survey give a much stronger indication that sexual harassment and, in some cases, verbal abuse and physical abuse occur in all 16 factories. A percentage of the survey respondents have been subjected to all these forms of gender-based abuse in their current workplaces and/or when travelling to or from work. Table 6 shows the percentage of the survey respondents who said that gender-based abuse occurs in their factory; that they have been subjected to gender-based abuse in their factory; and/or that they have been subjected to gender-based abuse while travelling to or from work. The data are broken down per type of gender-based abuse – sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse. The table also shows the total number of factories in which at least one female employee answered “yes” to the relevant questions.

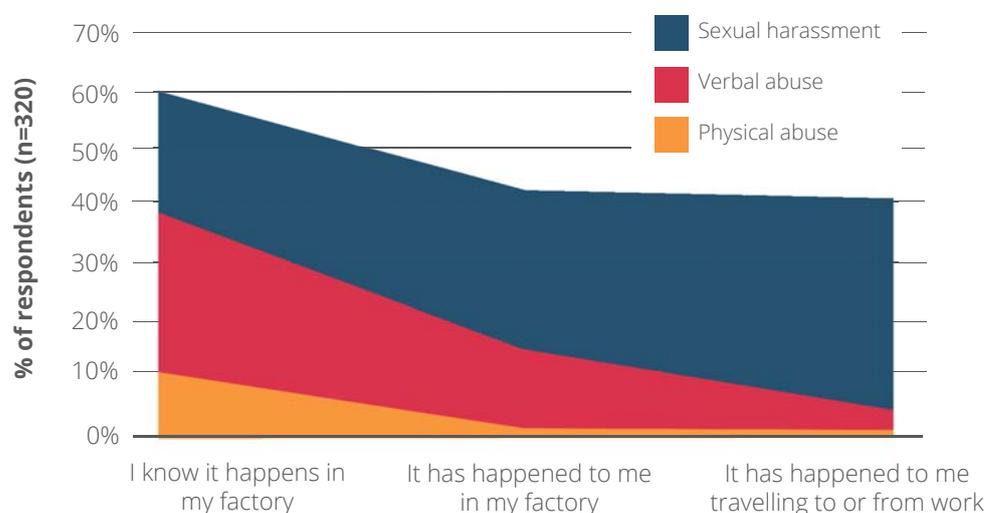
Table 6 High-level results for workplace gender experiences

Type	%	Evident in number of factories
Sexual harassment		
Identify sexual harassment occurring in factory	58.8	15
Been subjected to sexual harassment in factory	42.5	14
Been subjected to sexual harassment travelling to or from work	40.3	14
Verbal abuse		
Identify verbal abuse occurring in factory	39.4	16
Been subjected to verbal abuse in factory	15.6	14
Been subjected to verbal abuse travelling to or from work	5.3	10
Physical abuse		
Identify physical abuse occurring in factory	10.9	14
Been subjected to physical abuse in factory	1.3	3
Been subjected to physical abuse travelling to or from work	0.3	15

For all three types of gender-based abuse, more women said they are aware that it happens in their factory than women who said it has happened to them. This means there are higher rates of awareness of the problems than rates of having experienced the problems. For example, as table 6 shows, 58.8 per cent (n=188) of the women reported that sexual harassment occurs in their factory, and 42.5 per cent (n=136) said they had been subjected to sexual harassment. For all three types, the rate of personal experience within the workplace is higher than the rate of personal experience when travelling to and from work. This means the women are likely more at risk of harassment and abuse when at work than when travelling to or from work.

For example, 5.3 per cent (n=17) of the women had been verbally abused while travelling to or from their factory, but 15.6 per cent (n=50) had been verbally abused inside their factory. Figure 13 provides a visual comparison of the percentages of the survey respondents who had witnessed each type of gender-based abuse in their factory and those who had experienced each type of gender-based abuse in their factory or while travelling to or from work.

Figure 13 Comparative rates of sexual harassment and abuse



4.4.1 Discrimination

For the purpose of the GEA, discrimination was defined as any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of a particular characteristic (such as race, sex, religion) and that impairs equality of opportunity and treatment (in employment or occupation) – but referring primarily to any distinction made on the basis of sex and that results in women being denied equal opportunities with men in the garment sector. However, comments made by all three types of interviewees and by the FGD participants indicate that the term “discrimination” was most often interpreted as referring to ethnicity and not gender. For example:

“I believe that there is an equal employment opportunity in here. We are going to promote anyone if she is qualified, regardless of being Myanmar, Chinese and Muslim, male or female.” (human resources manager)

“It is impossible. I don't like discrimination. I hate being discriminated. So, personally, I don't discriminate others. In our factory, there are Buddhists, Christians and Muslims. But there is no discrimination between them. They live in unity. We can't even differentiate between Muslims and Buddhists. So, there is no discrimination here.” (supervisor)

It is likely this was the result of a misunderstanding of the term “discrimination” when used in Burmese. Many of the FGD participants, in particular, did not make the connection between discrimination and gender when asked if discrimination occurred in their factory. In answering, they immediately referenced people of different ethnicities and religions. In some of the interviews and FGDs, the interviewer or facilitator also led the participants to respond to questions that linked discrimination to ethnicity, or they did not direct the discussion about discrimination towards gender. For example, one interviewer introduced the questions about discrimination by asking, “Is there any discrimination in your workplace? Let me explain about the discrimination. It concerns with race, religion, gender and education background. Are

there any discriminations concerning with that topic?" This means the data set is unable to provide accurate information on attitudes towards or experiences of gender discrimination more broadly in the factories.

4.4.2 Sexual harassment

Several informant interviewees claimed that sexual harassment did not occur in their factory:

"I haven't heard of such cases in the factory." (BLO representative)

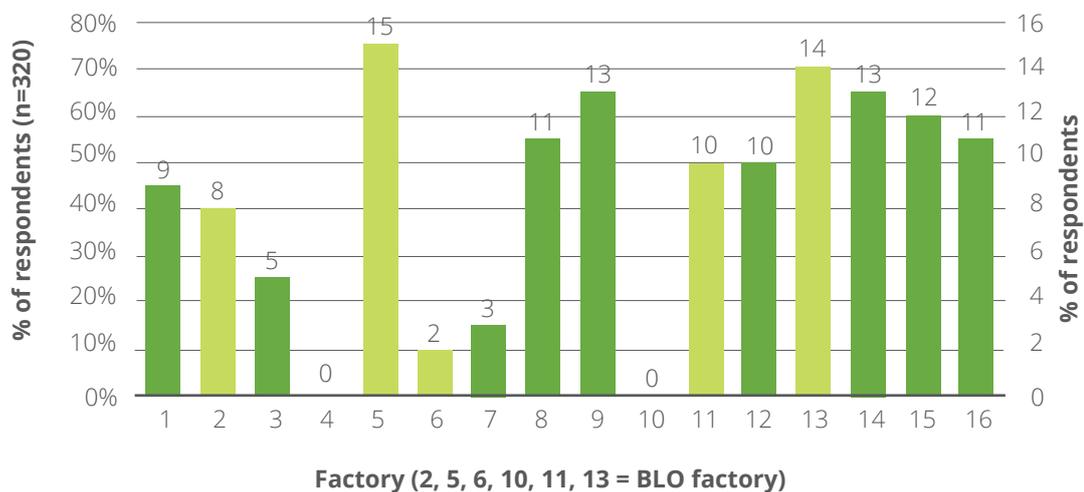
"Sexual harassment is not severe. And I haven't heard of using vulgar language, mockery, verbal abuse." (BLO representative)

"Since any such misconduct is restricted by company policy, they don't dare to behave in that way." (human resources manager)

"Since there is no such social problem in our factory. We are like a real family. We don't need policy concerning with discrimination here." (supervisor)

However, figure 14 shows that sexual harassment occurs in 14 of the 16 factories, based on the information from the 320 women who answered the survey question "Have you been subjected to sexual harassment in your factory?"

Figure 14 Reported incidence of sexual harassment per factory



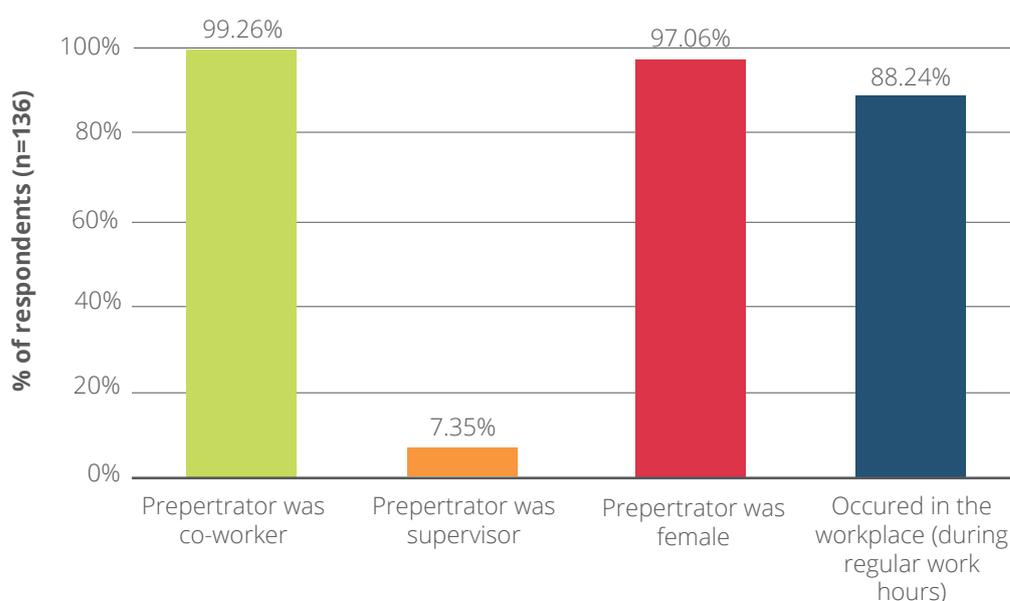
The spread of the "yes" answers across the majority of the factories suggests that sexual harassment is not isolated to any particular factory and that there is a high risk of it happening in at least 14 of the factories. It is not clear why there is no reporting of sexual harassment in two of the factories. One limitation of the research is the possibility that employees may have been directed beforehand to answer questions in a particular way. In these same two factories, the survey respondents also reported no experiences of verbal abuse or physical abuse in their workplace. In the factory with a BLO where the female survey respondents indicated no

experiences of harassment and abuse (No. 10), the responses by the BLO representative to questions about harassment and abuse are curt, including “no”, “no such kind” and “nothing here”. The human resources manager in that factory agreed such experiences occur in the garment sector but not in their particular workplace. And the supervisor’s responses are also short and direct:

“No. I have been working here only four months but I have never seen.”

The survey findings provide more detailed information about the women’s experiences of sexual harassment in the factories, including the relationship between a respondent and the perpetrator, the sex of the perpetrator and the time and location of the harassment. Figure 15 shows this information based on answers to subsequent questions about the incident, when a respondent reported having experienced sexual harassment in her factory.

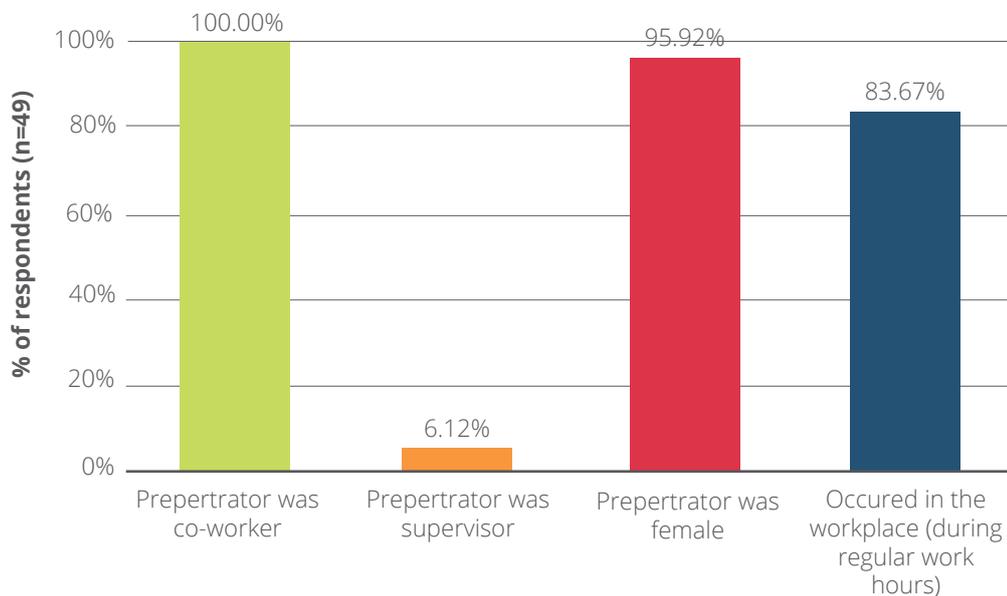
Figure 15 Sexual harassment characteristics



The most common incident involved a female employee being sexually harassed by a female co-worker during regular work hours.⁴⁷ This is a significant finding because it challenges the assumption that sexual harassment is mostly perpetrated by men against women. It also shows that the harassment is not carried out at times when there may be few people around. It is perpetrated during the normal working day and therefore most likely not viewed as unacceptable or abnormal behaviour in the factories. Figure 16 breaks that information down to the six factories that have a BLO.

⁴⁷ The reason for the total adding up to more than 100 per cent is because some women said two perpetrators were involved in the incident.

Figure 16 Sexual harassment characteristics in the factories with a basic labour organization



While there is some indication that having a BLO in a factory may ensure that issues that affect women can be more easily disclosed and responded to and that having a BLO representative in a factory may help reduce the risk of sexual harassment and abuse for women (especially abuse from a supervisor), there is no difference in the experiences of sexual harassment for all women in the sample and for those who work in a factory where this is a BLO. The perpetrator is always a co-worker and sometimes also a supervisor; they are most often female; and the incident occurs during the day at work.

Table 7 shows some of the specific types of sexual harassment that the GEA identified occur in the factories.

Table 7 Examples of types of sexual harassment

Teasing (about body)	Calling out (harassing) when in toilets
Insults	Vulgar words
Gossip	Touching of body parts
Accusations of sexual activity	Staring at body parts
Comments on clothing	Unwanted propositions
Comments on body and appearance	

The informant interviewees and FGD participants provided more details on what these incidents involve:

"I think it is not concerned with the work. It is related with partners. What I mean by partner is that one of the female workers might get a boyfriend. For example, there were two friends. One of them is married and the husband likes the wife's friend. So, it leads to a conflict between them. It is just my imagination. They were friends at first. But they have changed. The conflicts are mostly reacted with social activities not work related. Another example is that the ex-boyfriend of one worker is in relation with my friend. There are many such cases. (BLO representative)

"Some workers may say that the butt is very slim before patting it. When I bend the body on something during working, they may pat on it. (FGD participant)

"They used words like 'bitch' and 'asshole.'" (supervisor)

"The case is between a female from QC Department and a man from Ironing Department. The man from the Ironing Department visited to get the clothes from a female from QC Department. The female is 18 or 19 years old. The man asked the female if she is a virgin. What the man meant was if she is old enough to have interest on aesthetics. What the female thought was she is cited that she is not a virgin. And she started crying without telling the reason. The supervisor informed about it to the human resources. At first, she denied to answer us. We thought of some kind of sexual harassment had been happened to her. But later on, she told us that she was asked if she is a virgin or not. We have to solve it then. This is a kind of sexual harassment we have experienced." (human resources manager)

4.4.3 Verbal abuse

According to the survey findings, the most common experience of being verbally abused among the women who had been subjected to verbal abuse in the factory was by a female co-worker and/or supervisor during regular work hours. As many as 98 per cent (n=49) of the cases of verbal abuse involved a female perpetrator, while 98 per cent (n=49) of cases occurred in the factory during normal work hours. The majority of cases were perpetrated by a co-worker (56 per cent, n=28), followed by a supervisor (52 per cent, n=26). In 4 per cent (n=2) of the cases, the verbal abuse came from a manager. The assessment did not provide any specific examples of what this verbal abuse might include.

4.4.4 Physical abuse

Four of the female survey respondents reported they had experienced physical abuse in their factory and that it was perpetrated by another woman during regular work hours. The perpetrator was either a co-worker (75 per cent, n=3) or a supervisor (50 per cent, n=2). This result suggests that some female employees are subjected to physical abuse while they are at work in at least three of the 16 factories. However, it is not sufficient to draw any conclusions about all incidents of physical abuse in the factories.

4.4.5 Responses

The GEA included a question about action taken by both the employee (figure 17) and the employer (figure 18) when an incident of sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse had occurred in the workplace. When sexual harassment occurred inside a factory, the action most often taken by both the employee and the employer was to do nothing. In fact, the results show this to be the default response, with a few exceptions. The “other” actions taken by an employee were, in all cases, described as verbal rebuttals to the harassment.

Figure 17 Survey respondents’ response to sexual harassment

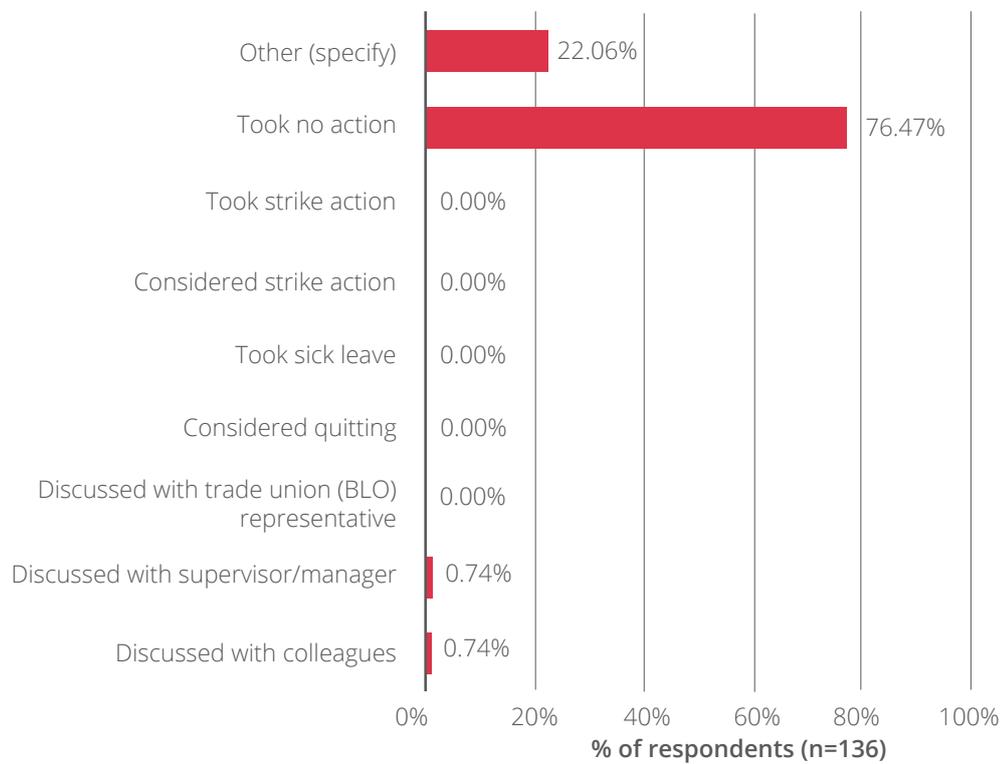
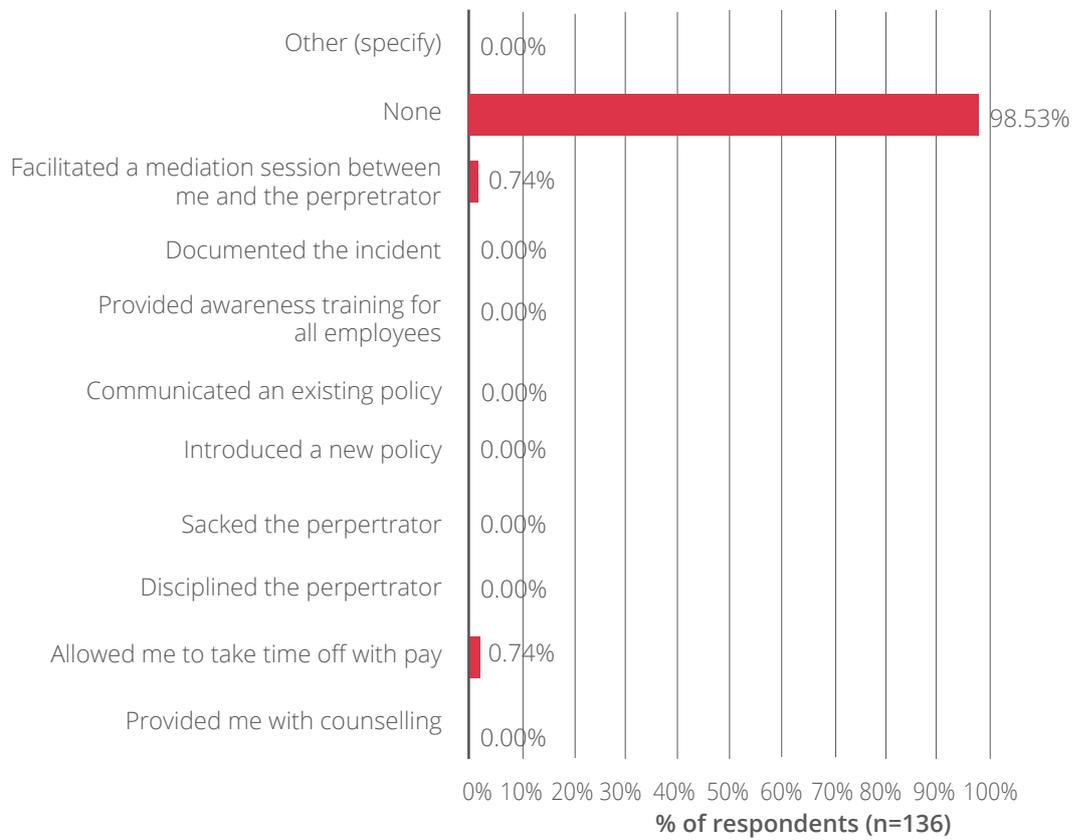


Figure 18 Employers' response to sexual harassment



Figures 19 and 20 break that information down to actions taken by employees and employers in factories where there is a BLO.

Figure 19 Survey respondents' response to sexual harassment in a factory with a basic labour organization

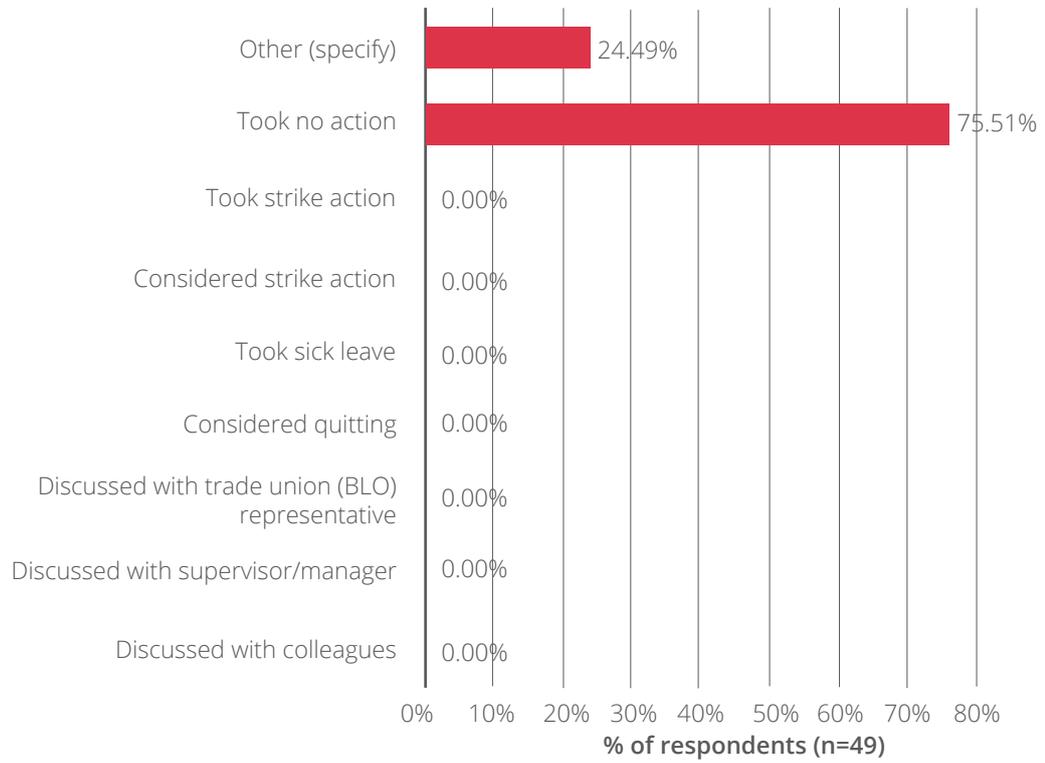
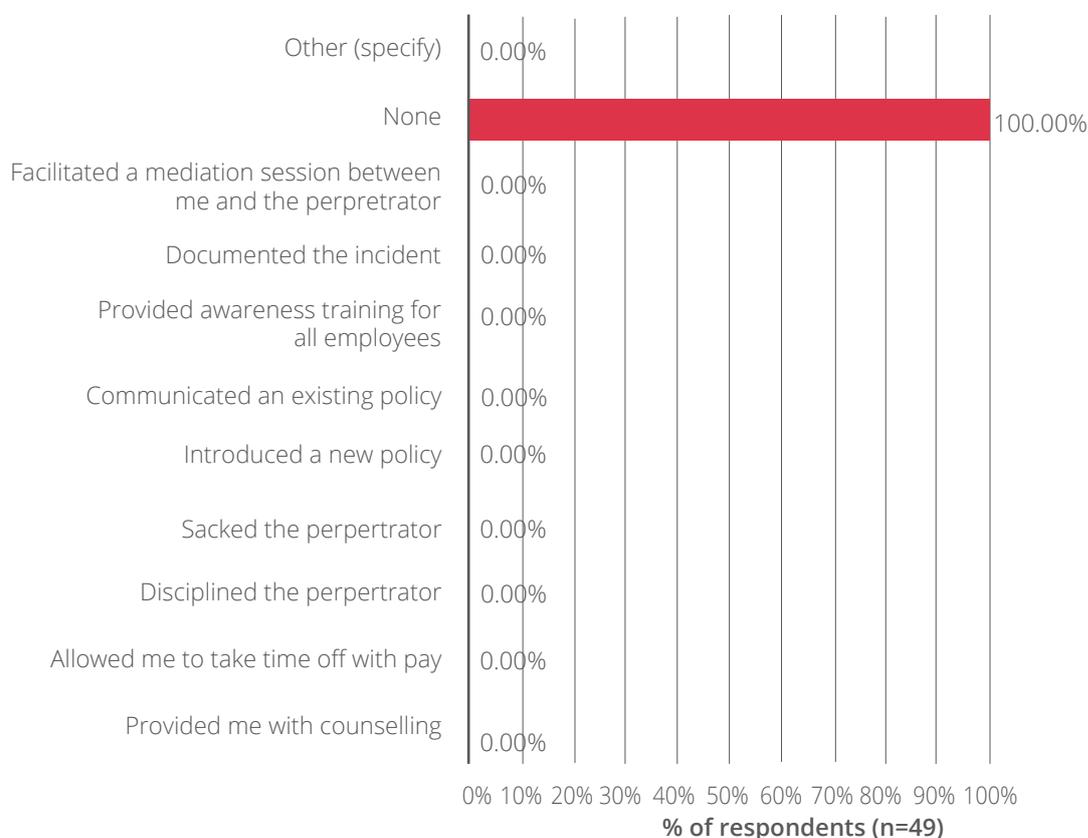


Figure 20 Employers' response to sexual harassment in a factory with a basic labour organization



Again, these results suggest there is no difference between factories with or without a BLO. Having a BLO in a factory appears not to result in improvements towards responding to these behaviours. For all cases of sexual harassment cited by the survey respondents, not one woman said she discussed the incident with the BLO representative in her factory.

There are similar results for responses to verbal abuse, with no action being taken by employees in 66 per cent (n=33) and no action being taken by employers in 78 per cent (n=39) of the total 50 incidents. When employees did respond to verbal abuse, they discussed with colleagues and supervisors, made a verbal rebuttal or, on one occasion, took strike action. The strike action occurred in a factory with a BLO. In those reported cases, employers mostly responded by facilitating a mediation session between the perpetrator and the survivor or, on one occasion, disciplining and firing the perpetrator. In the case of verbal abuse occurring in factories with a BLO, no response was made by the employee in 11 of the 19 reported cases, and no action was taken by the employer in 15 of the cases.

Human resources managers and supervisors provided specific examples of actions taken in their factories to prevent or respond to sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse (table 8).

Table 8 Actions taken to prevent or respond to sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse in the factories

Fostering “family” relationships among workers	Advice on appropriate clothing for women
Rules and regulations	Communications (pamphlets, posters, art)
Discipline	Requiring written or verbal promises from perpetrators not to repeat the action
Bonus incentives to focus on work	Specific instructions to male employees at start of employment
Informal advice and education, including discussions in meetings	Instructions on non-appropriate behaviours
Dismissal	Reporting process
Consultation and mediation	Advising female workers to keep silent in front of male workers
Managerial skills training for supervisors	
Specific clause in contract	

The informant interviewees also provided some descriptions of what these responses involved

“The relationship between us is just like teacher and students or family type. I am not managing them with disciplines but just like a teacher is managing her students. So, I have to do prevention measures in advance rather than solving the problem. Therefore, there is no large problem but very few minor incidences.”
(human resources manager)

“The main reason is that since I have to supervise the female section, I often tell them to be careful about the outfits. If the foreigners are going to visit the factory, I tell them not to wear short skirts. I don’t let them wear overexposed clothes. I teach them to live with our own dignity.” (supervisor)

“It is included in our employee manual and employment contract. All workers have to sign employment contract with us.” (human resources manager)

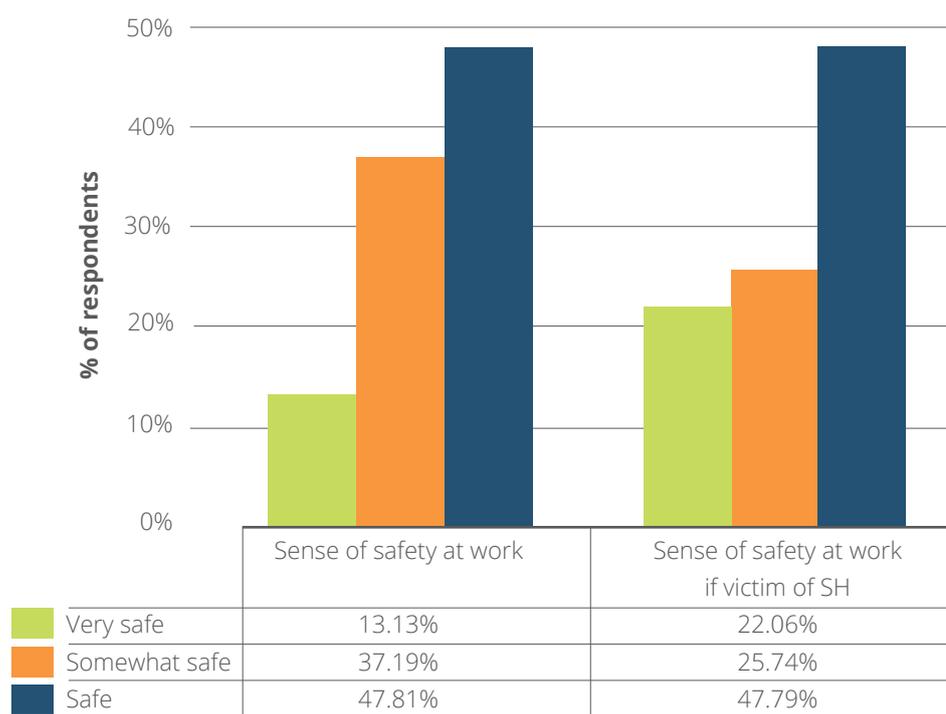
This information does not clarify if these actions were taken because of concern on the part of an individual (the human resources manager, for instance) or as part of a factory’s formalized response to unacceptable workplace behaviours. Some factories appear to have a system in place to prevent and respond to cases of sexual harassment and abuse, as evidenced by the use of rules and reporting process. In some cases, such as discipline and dismissal, factories appear to punish the perpetrators. In other cases, attempts are made to rectify or correct the behaviour or to build a better working relationship between employees (through consultation and mediation). Training and communication are also used to educate the workforce about what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

The inclusion of advice to female employees about what to wear or say (or rather not say) suggests that the human resources managers and supervisors in some factories place the onus for preventing sexual harassment and abuse on the female employees. This further indicates that any incident of harassment or abuse inside a factory might be interpreted as having occurred because of something a woman has done “wrong” or because of her failure to perform physically and verbally as a “good” woman.

4.4.6 Perceptions of safety

The survey respondents were asked to assess how safe they feel at work: very safe, somewhat safe, safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe. Figure 21 shows the distribution of answers for both the entire sample and for the women who reported experiencing sexual harassment in her factory.

Figure 21 Survey respondents' perceptions of safety at work



The majority of the survey respondents said they feel somewhat safe or safe when working in their factory. A similar sense of safety is shared by the women who reported experiencing sexual harassment in their current factory. This would appear paradoxical and therefore requires some further consideration to answer the question: Why would women who have been subjected to sexual harassment in their workplace feel safe in that workplace? The question is answered in detail in the analysis section of this report, in the discussion on the definition of “sexual harassment” that emerged during the assessment. How the participants in the GEA understood “sexual harassment” is an important part of the analysis and affects how the results described in this section should be interpreted and responded to.

4.5 Workplace promotion of sexual and reproductive health

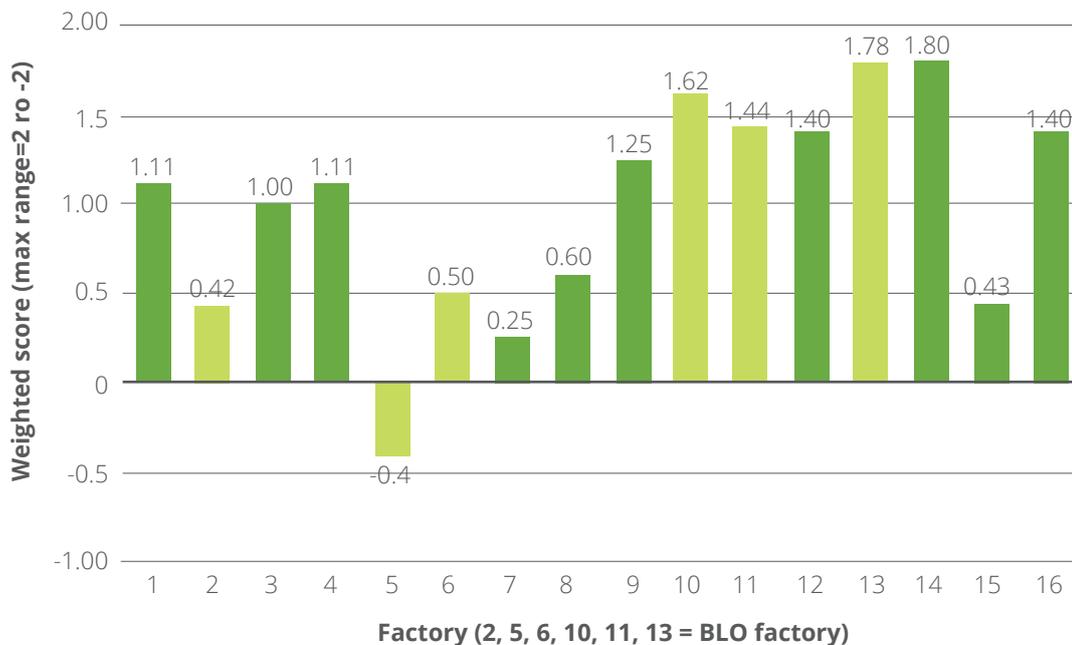
Comments by the human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives in the informant interviews and by female workers in the FGDs provide insight into whether there is SRH support for female workers in the 16 factories. In 15 of the factories, support is evident. In nine of those 15 factories, the human resources managers provided evidence of specific actions already taken to promote positive SRH support in their workplace:

“We called the meeting for the whole factory and informed them for medical leave, one month per year, maternity leave before and after the child birth; they can take leave under the Social Security Programme. If they would like to get their payment after childbirth, we deliver if the child birth certificate is present. We told all the workers through the meeting.”

“Pregnant women are explained in detail about maternity leaves. When they are pregnant, they are not allowed to work overtime. If she wants to work overtime, she is located at light duty place. She is placed at the portion that does not need to sit all the time so she can walk. We take care of her a little more than that of other ordinary workers.”

Figure 22 shows the score for each factory based on an assessment of all comments made by the human resources managers, supervisors, BLO representatives and female FGD participants in that factory regarding SRH.

Figure 22 Weighted factory scores for positive sexual and reproductive health support



These scores were calculated using the weighted coding system introduced in the data analysis methodology section earlier in this report; and using the same methodology as that used to assign scores to the comments on workplace gender equality and workplace gender experiences. Whenever an interviewee (HR manager, supervisor or BLO representative) or FGD participant has made a comment about SRH, this comment has been coded as “support for positive sexual health” to help answer the two core research questions under the key research topic C:

Topic C: Women’s SRH support at work

5. Are women garment workers adequately able to reconcile work, maternity and childcare, taking into account legal rights, employer-provided and other facilities and services, and socio-cultural pressures?
6. How easy (or difficult) is it for female garment workers to enjoy empowered and safe sexual and reproductive health alongside their work?

Each comment was assigned a score based on the criteria in table 9.

Table 9 Scoring system for support of positive sexual and reproductive health

Code	-2	-1	Score 0	1	2
Positive workplace SRH support	Evidence of opposition to positive workplace SRH support	Statement of opposition to positive workplace SRH support	General comment about workplace SRH support	Statement of support for positive workplace SRH support	Evidence of support for positive workplace SRH support

When analysing each coded comment, the assignment of a score was based on the answer to the question “Does the comment indicate support for positive SRH?” If the answer was “yes”, the comment was assigned a score of +1 or +2. If the answer was “no”, the comment was assigned a score of -1 or -2. The score of ± 1 or ± 2 depended on whether the comment indicated a general attitude towards positive SRH support (score= ± 1) or evidence of supporting positive SRH in the factory (score= ± 2).

The following comments by human resources managers received a score of +2 because they give evidence of positive SRH support in a factory:

“We have a nurse. She gives lectures to only females. The topic title is HIV/AIDS. In this training, female workers can ask [questions] openly. The nurse also teaches how not to have pregnancy, such as using condoms. Those lessons are taught to both males and females at the other side. It is because there are many diseases of gonorrhoea and hepatitis B and C virus.

“We issue a policy that we reduce 5 minutes from working hours for pregnant workers.”

However, in the case of the following comment also by a human resources manager, a score of -1 was applied because it expresses an attitude that would indicate a barrier to positive SRH support in a factory, although it does not inform of a specific policy, programme or rule that might function as that barrier:

“The workers do not want to let us know that they are pregnant since they will not get extra bonus as much as other employees can get.”

The total score for each factory was divided by the number of comments coded as “positive SRH” for that factory. This provides a weighted score of between -2 and +2 for each factory. A positive score indicates support for positive SRH in the factory because the answer to the question “Is there support for positive SRH?” is “yes”. An ideal score is a positive score.

Figure 22 shows that 15 of the 16 factories have comments that indicate support for positive SRH. In nine of the 15 factories, the weighted score is more than +1. This indicates the interviewees and FGD participants gave examples of practices that support positive SRH for female employees in their factory. Table 10 shows some of these practices based on information provided by participants in the GEA.

Table 10 Examples of practices that support positive sexual and reproductive health for female employees

Maternity leave	Altering work tasks for pregnant women
Meetings for pregnant women and males	Handing out information sheets
Nurse assistance for menstrual pains	Information included in the employee manual
Doctor’s visits to the factory for presentations	Provision of documents and designation letters with company letterhead to see the doctor at the government Social Security clinic
Breastfeeding rooms (separate rooms and inside clinics)	Medicines for pains
Training and lectures on birth control, condoms, HIV	Allow rest time without cutting salary
Training from the government Social Security Department	

Only one of the 16 factories has a negative score resulting from the coding of comments made by the human resources manager, BLO, supervisor and female employees regarding SRH. Figure 22 also shows which of the factories have a BLO. The factory with the negative score – indicating a lack of support for positive SRH in that factory – is a factory with a BLO. The score for this factory (No. 5) is between zero and -1. This means the interviewees and FGD participants made comments that suggest an attitude within that factory that might not be conducive to positive SRH support for the female employees, but it does not indicate there are any distinct practices that might prevent positive SRH support (job termination after pregnancy or refusing to provide medication for pains, for instance).

Comments by the women in the FGD in this factory indicate some negative experiences in their workplace linked to a lack of attention to the importance of SRH for employees:

“Sometimes, if there are many orders, we can't go to the toilet. And when those kinds of situations happen for many days consecutively, we have to suffer from painful passing of water.”

“But my womb could not hold the child since I had to sit in the factory most of the time.”

“There is a pregnant worker in our production line that gave birth to a child. Since she had to deliver a child, she was hospitalized. Since she is a mother now, she has to come back to work since she needs money. But the supervisor doesn't like her to join the work again. The supervisor said there is no place for her and you can resign if you want to.”

Based on an assessment of the comments by the human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives during the informant interviews, two of those three groups produce a “yes” answer to the question “Is there support for positive SRH?” The human resources managers and BLO representatives in this case made comments that indicate they are supportive of positive SRH for female employees in their factory. The weighted scores per interviewee group are -2 for the supervisors, +1.01 for the human resources managers and +0.88 for the BLO representatives. This suggests that human resources managers are more likely than the other two interviewee types to provide statements and evidence of positive SRH support in their factories. These results do not, however, accurately indicate that supervisors are not supportive of positive SRH for female employees in their factory. The questionnaire for the informant interviews with supervisors did not include any question on SRH issues; there was only one comment made by a supervisor about SRH issues:

“Some workers may be skilled but since they are married they will not be able to come to work on time. Since they are married, they have social issues. They may need to leave the workplace if the child is ill. So, I cannot recommend those workers even if they are skilled.”

While this quote provides evidence of opposition to positive SRH support in the supervisor's factory, it is not indicative of the attitudes of all supervisors in the GEA. The weighted score for supervisors cannot be considered an accurate score for comparing against the scores of human resources managers and BLO representatives.

4.5.1 Pregnancy

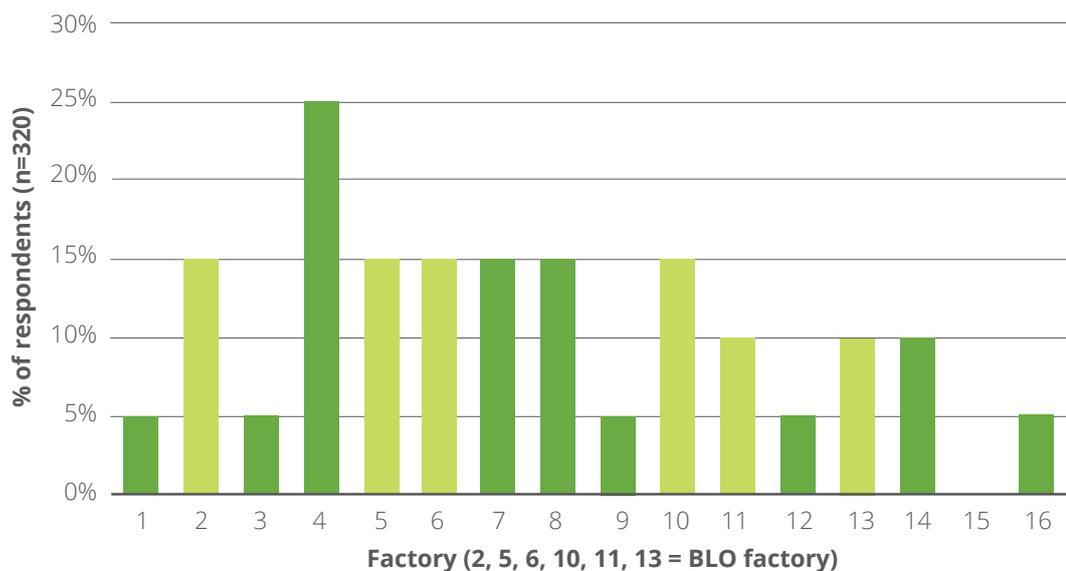
The qualitative results indicate some common practices in the factories that help pregnant workers continue their work safely. These include altering work tasks and providing additional rest time. As one human resources manager explained:

“We held a meeting. Pregnant women, married women and males attended the meeting. In the meeting, I told males in detail to understand about pregnancy for their pregnant wives in one day. I know the signs of pregnancy, such as vomiting

and sudden falling down because of dizziness. When the nurse reports about the pregnancy of a female worker, I tell her to work carefully, and a place with good ventilation is arranged for her. Then, I inform her about leaves and other related affairs. I also tell her about coming back to the work after childbirth and breastfeeding at the factory. As I explain those facts, all workers are satisfied and happy in working here. In the past, they dared not take pregnancy. After I explained in the meeting, many women bear babies.”

In some factories, pregnancy testing is said to be available in the clinics. Slightly less than 11 per cent (n=34) of the survey respondents said they were required to take a pregnancy test prior to employment in their current factory. This is not an isolated issue. Figure 23 shows that it is practised in 15 of the 16 factories, according to at least 5 per cent of the female employees. And there appears to be no impact on reducing this practice in factories in which there is a BLO. In one factory, a quarter of the survey respondents said they were required to take a pregnancy test prior to employment.

Figure 23 Survey respondents required to take a pregnancy test prior to employment



A key finding of the GEA is that there is a strong preference in the factories for employing women who do not have children. While it is generally accepted among the participants that women may have to work to earn money to support their family, this is widely viewed as something that happens out of economic necessity. There is a shared belief among all the assessment participants that, ideally, women should not return to work after giving birth. Support for pregnant women may therefore be seen as seeking to normalize the participation of mothers in the labour force and to challenge what many people refer to as part of Myanmar culture: a gender role for women as exclusively mothers.

4.5.2 Menstruation

Less than 1 per cent (n=2) of the survey respondents said they take time off from work while they are menstruating. Those who do cited pain, shame and/or uncleanliness as their reason. Some human resources managers and supervisors say medication for menstrual pain is available in their factory clinic.

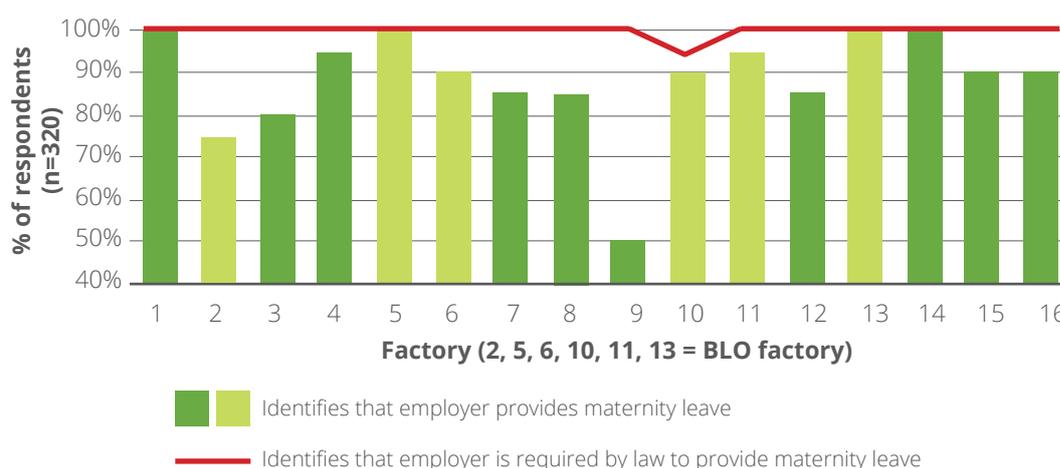
4.5.3 Maternity leave

Almost all the survey respondents (99.7 per cent, n=319) said they know about their legal right to maternity leave. Under the law, female employees who are pregnant are allowed six weeks of prenatal leave and eight weeks of postnatal leave, for a total of 14 weeks of maternity leave. They may take maternity leave and medical leave continuously as long as the requirements for medical leave are met. Fathers are entitled to 15 days of paternity leave.

In the informant interviews, all the human resources managers said maternity leave is provided in their factory and that all employees are made aware of this through training and communications. There are, however, differences in how maternity leave is defined. In one factory, it is for a period of two months – one month prior and one month after birth. In another factory, it is a total of six months (which the human resources manager claimed is three months more than required by law).

Figure 24 shows a factory-by-factory comparison between the survey respondents' knowledge of the legal right to maternity leave and the actual provision of maternity leave.

Figure 24 Respondents' awareness of maternity leave benefit, by factory

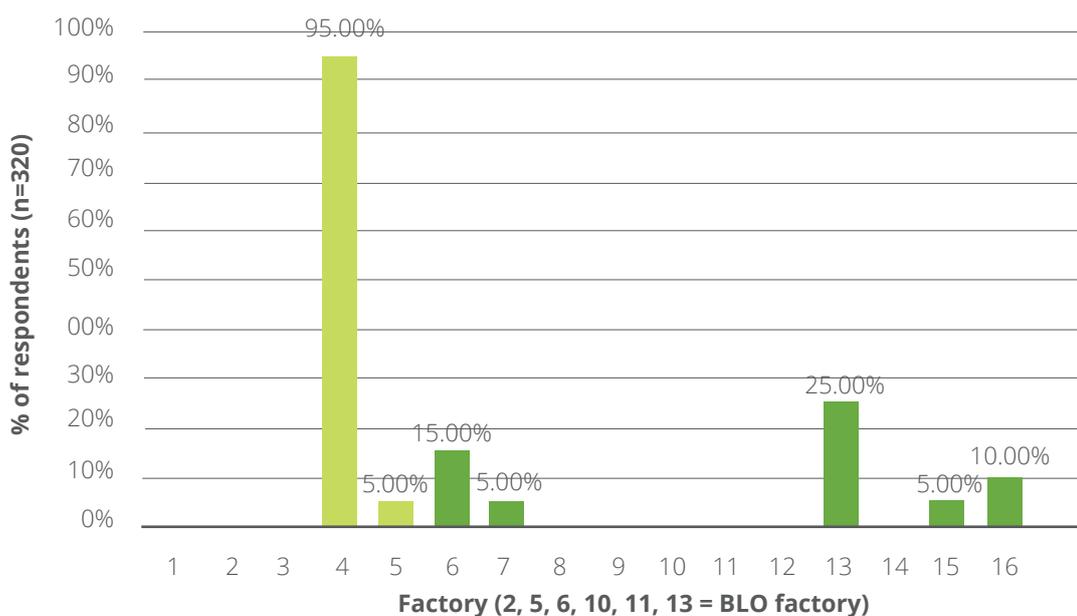


Approximately 12 per cent (n=38) of the survey respondents across all 16 factories said they are not offered maternity leave in their workplace. In one factory (No. 9), there is strong evidence to suggest that maternity leave may not be provided as prescribed by the law. In 11 of the factories (excluding No. 9 and the four factories that scored 100 per cent), there is evidence to suggest that maternity leave may not be provided according to the law or that individual female employees are not aware of the provision.

4.5.4 Childcare

Only 10 per cent (n=32) of the survey respondents said they work in a factory that offers a childcare facility. This is spread across eight factories (figure 25).

Figure 25 Survey respondent works in a factory with a childcare facility



In one factory, 95 per cent (n=19) of the women said there is a childcare facility. This provides strong evidence that this factory (No. 4) does indeed offer such a facility. In the other seven factories, the percentage of women who said there is a childcare facility in their factory is no higher than 25 per cent (n=5). This could mean there is actually no childcare facility in the factory and the respondents misunderstood what such a facility is⁴⁸ or that not all women are aware of this facility in their factory.

As previously noted, around 72.2 per cent (n=231) of the respondents said they are not responsible for children younger than 16. Only seven of the 320 women in the sample who are responsible for children also said there is a childcare facility in their factory. This means that, at most, the proportion of respondents who can make use of a childcare facility provided by their employer is around 2 per cent. However, of all the women who are responsible for children younger than 16 and who live in the same house as these children, none use a factory-provided childcare facility. As one human resources manager explained:

“There is a spacious room called as Children Care room. No worker brings her child there. There is no worker who brings her child.”

⁴⁸ For example, they may interpret a breastfeeding room as a childcare facility.

This may be because their children are not of childcare age. It may also be because they rely on other members of their family to look after their younger children while they are at work, which is the most common arrangement for childcare among women with children in the GEA. There is no obvious push to create or to improve the use of childcare facilities in the factories. This may be connected to the belief that mothers, especially those with young children, ideally should be at home looking after those children. Any overt attention to the childcare needs of female employees might be seen as legitimizing the participation of mothers in the workforce and thereby taking a stand against a gender norm that, because it is defined as a “cultural norm”, is difficult to challenge without significant dissent.

4.5.5 Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding spaces are available in some factories. These are either distinct rooms or in the factory health clinic. There is a general view among the female workers who participated in the FGDs that women would not use breastfeeding spaces because they would generally not return to work after giving birth:

“I have seen those workers who bring the child to the factory. The husband brought the kid to the factory and the female worker went out and breastfed her child.”

“I think because they don't want to leave the kid alone at home. Since they are going to work for the whole day, if they choose to work here, they don't want to re-join work after delivery. Even if we allow them to do breastfeeding, they can't stay close to the kid. So, most of the workers do not work after childbirth. If they would come back to work, we have to arrange a room where they can keep their kids.”

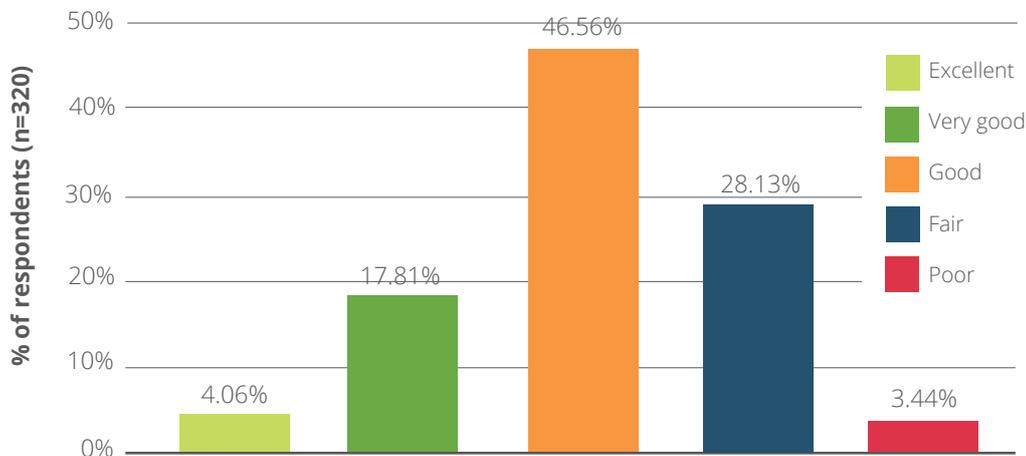
In one factory, the human resources manager indicated that the workers had been asked if they wanted a breastfeeding room to be provided and they said no.

4.5.6 Use of factory toilets

Almost 95 per cent (n=303) of the survey respondents said they can access the toilet facility at will while at work. And 97.8 per cent (n=313) said they feel safe doing so, while 99.1 per cent (n=317) said they feel they have adequate privacy inside the toilets. There were, however, some comments by FGD participants about how women are sometimes sexually harassed in the toilet facility, especially when there are contractors on site carrying out maintenance or construction work.

The survey respondents were asked to comment on the state of the cleanliness of the toilet facility in their factory, ranging from excellent to poor (figure 26). Almost a third of the women (31.5 per cent, n=101) believe the cleanliness of the facilities is less than good.

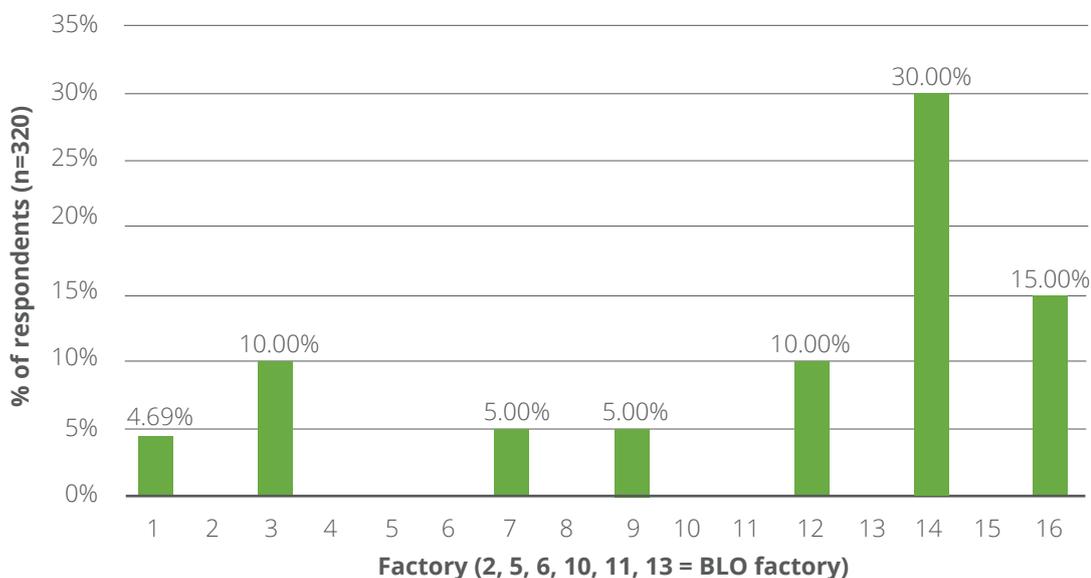
Figure 26 Cleanliness of factory toilet facilities



4.5.7 Sexual and reproductive health training

In total, just under 5 per cent (n=15) of the survey respondents had received training on SRH in their factory during the year prior to the survey (figure 27). This training occurred in seven of the 16 factories. Respondents who work in any of the six factories where there is a BLO said they had received no SRH training during this same period. When it was available, the SRH training was provided by doctors and nurses, by human resources managers, by external non-government organizations and by the government Social Security Department. Topics covered in the training included menstrual hygiene, family planning and sexually transmitted illnesses.

Figure 27 Respondents who received training on sexual and reproductive health in their workplace during the year prior to the survey



Overwhelmingly, there is strong support among human resources managers for additional SRH training:

“It would be my pleasure to get trainings here. I can learn more. In our factory, I don’t know very much. Even about sexual harassment, I only know about it briefly. If you are going to give training on this, I can get knowledge on that.”

“Yes, they are important. Since we are in garment industry, we have to deal with many female workers. They should know that they can do family planning by using contraceptive pills. Good health is necessary.”

As one human resources manager argued, there are compelling and urgent reasons for SRH training for the young population of female employees in the factories:

“The main thing is that they [young female employees] don’t follow the instructions. [...] The main problem here is that most of young workers get married. In their mind, they don’t bear a child. I don’t have rights to say that they should not take pregnancy or should take pregnancy. But, sometimes they are in serious condition. They did abortion outside. Though they did it outside, they just bring the problem to the factory thinking the factory as their mother. If the child is not healthy, the child must be sent to the right place. If a pregnancy is aborted, serious danger will affect to both mother and child. But, they did it because they are young.”

The GEA did not cover the issue of abortion. None of the participants was asked to provide their view on abortion or to indicate if abortion had impacted on their work. In Myanmar, abortions are illegal. However, the same human resources manager who mentioned abortions also spoke of the risks that abortions pose to the young female workforce:

“The belly is not big when a lady is pregnant for three months. After she works for three more months, her pregnancy is six months old. We have to inquire about her pregnancy. She denies that she is pregnant because she will be outed [fired], like other factory does. I have to explain about my question, telling that though she is not entitled to get leave, human resources can request to transfer her to a comfortable workplace. Having pregnancy is her right. But we have responsibility if she gets abortion in the workplace because of bending body and lifting heavy things.”

Although SRH training is required and desired, as another human resources manager explained, its provision will not be easy:

“But the Myanmar people are too conservative, and they think unmarried females don’t have to know about sexual-related things. The unmarried females are often shy to talk about it. [They] think those kinds of knowledge are essential for me since I am married. In foreign countries, the sex education is part of the academic curriculum. So, I think that kind of trainings should be provided.”

5. Analysis

This section of the report provides an analysis of the findings of the GEA. The aim of the assessment was to explore the situation for workplace gender equality opportunities, workplace experiences of harassment and abuse, and workplace SRH for female employees in the 16 target factories. As such, the analysis focuses on information from the results relevant to these three key research topics. The analysis refers specifically to the status of workplace gender equality opportunities in the 16 factories that participated in the assessment. It is by no means an authoritative description of the situation in all garment factories in Myanmar, nor is it intended to offer commentary on the sector as a whole. Nevertheless, the analysis provides important insights into issues for women working in the sector that are of relevance to all industry stakeholders. The analysis informs the recommendations that follow, to assist with ensuring that gender is an integral component of the ILO-GIP.

5.1 Workplace gender-equality opportunities

At first glance, the findings of the GEA suggest there is a perception among workers of gender equality opportunities in their factory. This is especially evident when considering in isolation the weighted scores of the comments by informant interviewees and FGD participants, or when looking at the findings of the survey on workers' perceptions of fairness and equality between men and women with respect to career advancement and skills training. Figure 11 shows the weighted scores of barriers to gender-equality opportunities for the 16 factories. Only two of the factories have positive scores, indicating there are barriers to gender-equality opportunities in them. More than 90 per cent (n=291) of the survey respondents believe there are equitable opportunities for skills training for men and women in their factories; and less than 1 per cent (n=3) believe women face barriers to career advancement in their factory. The factories should be commended for fostering an environment in which, in general, the employees feel they have little to complain about when it comes to gender-equal opportunities.

A closer analysis of the findings nevertheless reveals that workplace gender-based inequality does exist and that it affects both men and women who work in the factories. Practices of inequality have been normalized because they reaffirm dominant views about women (and men) in both the sector and in the wider national culture. They are therefore often hidden from both employees and employers, and hidden from any analysis unless that analysis digs deep into the findings. The causes of the workplace gender-based inequality in the 16 factories are specifically internalized beliefs about gender (including gender norms and expectations), a perception that employment for women is only short term (before childbirth) and a lack of formalized skills training programmes for employees. The following sections discuss these issues in detail.

5.1.1 Gender-based beliefs

As in many other garment producing countries, women are the preferred choice of employee in the factories.

The majority of the interviewees and FGD participants characterized women as better suited to garment sector work. Many of their comments indicate a strong belief that women have a “natural” capacity to carry out detailed and repetitive work. Work tasks, such as sewing, are specifically cited by the GEA participants as requiring a level of dexterity and attention to detail that, according to their beliefs, only women can manage. They also think that women are more willing to listen to instructions, less prone to anger and violence, and more dedicated to completing work quickly. Women are also seen as less likely to organize and to demand their rights. This is what makes women more “agreeable” employees from the perspective of employers. Women are also described as naturally better communicators – a reason used to justify why they are preferred over men for supervisory roles in the factories. Such views are not universal. There are a few opposing views. For example, in the opinion of one human resources manager:

“[...] male workers are more outstanding than female workers. They may know shortcuts in sewing. They are faster than female workers in accomplishing the tasks. The female workers are also talkative. So, they cannot perform as efficient as male workers. The female workers may get delayed because they talk much. The male workers also do not normally daydream. Most of the female workers may do daydreaming while working. So, male workers are more efficient.”

However, the dominant perception of all women as naturally more suited to the work tasks that need to be completed on the shop floor in the factories ensures the majority of jobs are offered to women. It also defines the kinds of skills and behaviours that construct the “good” woman in the factories. She has, according to one supervisor, the following qualities:

“Style of sewing, obedience, reliability in sewing, finding another task in her free time and having family spirit.”

These beliefs indicate a strong reliance on essentialism as a means of explaining gender differences between men and women. Gender essentialism is the belief in innate and universal traits and characteristics for men and women, and the prerequisite and resulting “knowledge” that men and women are fundamentally different. This particular understanding of gender ignores cross-cultural and cross-historical differences between men and women. It ignores the reality that expected and actual roles for men and women in their respective cultural environments differ substantially across the world. It ignores differences in traits and characteristics among men and among women. It also relies on an acceptance of the idea that all humans can be accurately divided into the two gender categories of male and female, and that there are no bodies outside these categories. Such a position ignores – and results in the marginalization and the social, medical or legal punishment of – those bodies that do not comply, including transgender, gender queer and intersex persons.

A reliance on the truth of essentialist understandings of gender provides justification for the preference for employing women in the factories. This preference is linked to the requirements of the work tasks necessary for the factories to function. It is not viewed by the GEA participants as evidence of gender-based inequality against men. It is seen to be simply the truth – how the situation is in the “natural” world. The outcome is that men are discriminated against when it comes to employment in the factories because they are already deemed, by virtue of their gender, to lack the required skills that are otherwise seen as innate to women. This makes them ineligible candidates for sewing jobs, which are the majority of roles in the sector, as one of the supervisors explained:

“Yes, there are only female workers. But there is no official rule. If a male can do hand sewing, he can work in the department. To be able to work as a supervisor, he has to be able to work the task. Then he can be a supervisor. Hand sewing is hard for males, so, there are usually neither male workers nor supervisors in the department. There are other departments which are suitable for the male workers.”

The GEA did not explore discrimination against men. The aim of the assessment was to consider workplace gender-based inequality in terms of how it impacts female workers. As the previous comment from a supervisor indicates, there is no formalized gender discrimination. None of the factories appears to have a policy or a rule about only employing women. Overwhelmingly, however, the comments by the human resources managers and supervisors reveal that overt gender discrimination against men is widely practised at the recruitment stage. This finding should encourage additional and separate research into what needs to be done to tackle essentialist myths about men and women to establish true workplace gender equality in Myanmar’s garment sector.

The outcome of a reliance on essentialist notions of gender is not just gender discrimination that affects men. These same gender norms and expectations, which help create opportunities for women, somewhat ironically produce workplace gender inequality for women. For a woman to be seen as a good employee, she must work diligently and competently in roles believed to be naturally suited to her gender. The most common female role among the survey respondents is sewing. This is a low-skill repetitive role. There are already few supervisory positions available in the factories, primarily because of the way the workforce is organized to provide one supervisor for approximately 20 employees. In some factories, there is concern about promoting a woman into a supervisory position if it means she would have to supervise men. Some of the FGD participants said they would feel uncomfortable having to give instructions to men, especially older men. Some of the human resources managers and supervisors also acknowledged that men generally did not like to receive instructions or orders from women. These views about women being meek and less assertive, matched with the actual practices of men refusing to work under the supervision of women because it goes against what they believe to be the natural ordering of the two genders, present barriers for women to access supervisory jobs easily, even when they become available.

Women are further denied opportunities to work in roles other than sewing, especially if the job task involves using machinery or carrying loads. Comments by female workers in the FGDs indicate an acceptance of this:

“In our factory, machines are used in most heavy works. In those places, we use males.”

“Males are sent to the location where heavy things have to be lifted, and females are sent to suitable locations.”

Gender essentialism is again used to justify the belief that there are jobs suitable for women and jobs suitable for men. In this case, physical strength and mechanical knowledge are ascribed as natural to (and only to) men, and so women are deemed incapable of lifting loads or working with machinery. The gendering of machinery as masculine – and therefore the assumption that work with heavy machinery is suitable for only men – is particularly concerning for the future of women’s employment in the garment sector. If this masculinization of machinery is not challenged and changed, women may find they have less access to emerging jobs in factories that introduce more mechanization. Women’s roles in the sector may be further limited if, or when, the Myanmar garment sector switches its system of production from the CMP system to the FOB system.

It appears that the majority of the GEA participants have internalized essentialist ideas about men and women to such an extent that they do not view these ideas as having the potential to create or sustain gender inequalities with respect to career advancement opportunities. Until women and men begin to break out of their traditional gender roles and until women begin applying for and obtaining jobs currently regarded almost exclusively as men’s work in the factories, women are unlikely to start bumping up against the “glass ceiling” that evidently exists but is currently hidden through recourse to natural gender capacities. Such a change does not signify foreign interference in the Myanmar culture; nor does it signify an attempt to alter fundamental cultural norms relating to the roles of men and women in Myanmar. Instead, it is about shifting social attitudes and behaviours so that socially normalized inequalities can be challenged and so that women – who are deemed to be weak and meek through this gender socialization – can enjoy a fair share of economic opportunities and resources. There are signs things are changing in this direction in Myanmar and in its garment sector. Some of the important figures in the Government, in the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association and in the various trade union organizations representing the sector are women; and a few of the most progressive factories in the country have strong women in senior leadership and management positions. Some are employing women to work with machinery. Yet, inside the factories and particularly in terms of the work tasks on the shop floor, there is much gender-equalizing work to be done.

5.1.2 *Employment of women*

The findings of the survey offer a description of the typical female employee in the factory. She is young, single and without children. While we must be careful not to extrapolate too much from this one assessment of only 320 female employees from an estimated 400,000 female garment workers across the sector (representing only 0.1 per cent of the Myanmar population), it nevertheless provides an insight into the kind of woman who is typically deemed a suitable employee for garment factory work in Myanmar.

There is evidence from the GEA to suggest that employers prefer to employ women who do not have children and who are unlikely to have children during their term of employment. The assessment did not include an analysis of job advertisements for work in the 16 factories or in the garment sector more widely. This kind of analysis could be beneficial to help determine if there is any overt practice of discrimination in recruitment, based on gender, age and/or marital status. Mothers who work, however, are represented as incapable of functioning properly or as pitiful within the context of the workplace, as one of the respondents characterized:

“A few days ago, I encountered a mother; I am not sure about which production line she is working in. Her milk is flowing out profusely since she delivered a child only 45 days ago. She had not squeezed out her milk. I asked her if that milk can be fed to the baby or not. She said, ‘No’. I feel sorry for that kind of working mothers.”

The employment of mostly single, young women in the 16 factories could be linked to the legal requirement for the employers to pay maternity leave. The human resources managers gave no evidence of any direct discrimination against women based on the number of children or pregnancy. However, in 15 of the 16 factories, a number of the female employees who responded to the survey said they had been asked to take a pregnancy test prior to employment. The highest rate in any one factory was 25 per cent (n=5), and the overall rate (of 320 women) was 10.6 per cent (n=34). During a workshop with representatives of some of the factories to discuss the GEA findings, these figures were rejected outright. They suggested that the survey respondents may not have understood the question (about pregnancy testing prior to employment) or that they may have confused pregnancy testing with general questions about their health (including about their menstrual cycles) asked prior to recruitment. The requirement for some women in the GEA to have to prove they are not pregnant is, however, consistent with previous research that found this to be one of the practices used to ensure the employment of non-pregnant women in the garment sector.⁴⁹

The Myanmar law is silent as to whether employers can ask a woman to take a pregnancy test prior to employment or deny employment to a pregnant woman. Based on the reaction to this finding from representatives of the factories who attended the workshop to discuss the overall GEA findings and some of the results at the factory level, it is clear there is major concern among human resources managers about any suggestion they participate in the practice of requiring women to undergo a pregnancy test prior to employment. This may be because all 16 factories included in the GEA are part of international brands’ supply chain, and that these brands have communicated to their suppliers that this would not be an acceptable practice.

⁴⁹ Action Labor Rights, 2016, p. 10.

The claim by women in 15 of the 16 factories cannot be ignored or dismissed outright. It suggests strongly there may be discriminatory practices occurring within the employment processes. At a minimum, this requires further investigation to confirm if pregnancy testing is occurring in some factories, to find out why and to strengthen opposition to the practice.

Comments made by the FGD participants give weight to the view that the factories prefer not to employ women who have children. Their comments reveal their belief that women should not continue to work after having children. They justify this stance by saying it is “inconvenient” for women who have children to continue to work, and that a mother would “worry about the kids” if she had to leave them at home and go to work. This view is not accepted by all women who work in the factories. After all, 27.8 per cent (n=89) of the survey respondents are responsible for children younger than 16, and these women continue to work in the factories.

Slightly more than 40 per cent (n=37) of the women who are responsible for children do not live in the same house as the children. This means they do not have to manage work and childcare on a daily basis. Social norms regarding motherhood in Myanmar may be responsible for an internalized acceptance among female employees in the factories that women should not work if they have children and particularly so if they are responsible for the children’s primary care. Some exceptions are made when it is acknowledged that women, including pregnant women, have to work “because of their family situation. They need money for food, clothes and shelter.” However, this is not always the case, especially if someone has also internalized these same social norms, as one female worker said of her supervisor:

“There is a pregnant worker in our production line that gave birth to a child. Since she had to deliver a child, she was hospitalized. Since she is a mother now, she has to come back to work since she needs money. But the supervisor doesn’t like her to join the work again. The supervisor said there is no place for her and you can resign if you want to.”

Overall, there appears to be little support offered by employers to help women manage work and childcare if required. Equally, there appears to be little demand on the part of female employees for this support (this issue is discussed in more detail in the analysis section on workplace SRH).

What is apparent from the GEA is that the employment of women tends to be viewed as short term. None of the survey respondents has worked in the sector for more than five years. This could be explained by the relatively new growth in the sector. However, 92.5 per cent (n=296) of the survey respondents have worked in their current factory for fewer than three years. While this too could be the result of new growth and the expansion of these specific factories, it is also possibly attributable to the fact that it is easy for women to move to another factory due to a high demand for skilled workers. The women are incentivized to do so if they can earn more money for doing the same job in another factory. There is significant pressure on many of the women to earn money to support their family, something that appears to be the primary motivator for why women come to work in the factory, above and beyond any notion of “career” or skills development.

Around 76 per cent (n=243) of the survey respondents said they are expected to give some of their salary to their family. And 86 per cent of them said they are expected to do so on a monthly basis, with 86.8 per cent (n=211) giving 50 per cent or more. It is possible that some of the women give so much of their salary so regularly because they are living with a partner who also earns money. This would not apply, however, to the 70 per cent (n=227) of the survey respondents who do not have a partner. For respondents without an earning partner who have to give a significant percentage of their salary to their family on a regular basis, this leaves them little to spend as they choose. We might interpret this as evidence these women are not economically empowered by working in the factories. Yet, the women may feel economically empowered because they are able to give money to their family. In fact, 78.1 per cent (n=250) of the survey respondents said they decide how to spend their salary. That so many of them give such a large amount of their salary to their family on a regular basis does not necessarily contradict this claim. It does, however, suggest that for women, a primary incentive for working in the factory is to earn money to support a family. Career advancement and skills training may be “luxuries” they cannot afford.⁵⁰

5.1.3 Skills training

The GEA shows that little attention is given to skills training for employees in the factories. From the perspective of the employers, this can be explained by looking at what is required of workers. From the perspective of the female workers, this is linked to the dominant view of their employment as a short-term means of earning money.

The majority of the roles available in the garment sector require a low level of skill (hand sewer, sewer, design or pattern maker, cutter or spreader, finisher, packer, quality control, presser or ironer). Women are able to work as supervisors: Two of the survey respondents do, and the supervisors for 88.1 per cent (n=282) of the respondents are women. However, there are limited opportunities for women to become a supervisor (only when a supervisor leaves), and women are typically not allowed or are not willing to fill supervisory roles if the work of men must be supervised, for reasons discussed earlier.

Workplace training for the women appears to be informal. It is, for example, conducted on the job and is carried out by peers and supervisors. There appears to be a gap in employers providing formal training programmes that articulate what skills are required for what job tasks, how to acquire those skills or why such training might benefit both employer and employee. There is more of an emphasis on employees taking responsibility for ensuring they gain the skills they need to complete their work tasks. Employees are motivated to learn the skills they need quickly because they are paid based on how much work they can complete (how many garments they finish). The current pay structure – based on reaching production targets – does not incentivize women to take time out for learning new skills (including becoming a supervisor) because this would mean a reduction in the amount they can produce and, therefore, a reduction in their salary (over the short term at least).

⁵⁰ The GEA did not investigate the spending patterns of the female employees. The limited income many of the women have for personal use after distributing to their family might have an impact on their overall health and nutrition. They may not be able to afford quality food or health care for themselves. This could be a concern, given that most women in the garment industry are young and might soon decide – in accordance with social expectations – to enter motherhood.

Attempts to formalize skills recognition could benefit women in the garment sector. A formalized skills recognition scheme across the sector might allow women to have their previous experience and skills recognized and adequately compensated in their current place of work. Such a system might also benefit employers because it could result in a reduction of women moving continuously from one factory to another in search of an extra few kyats.

Employees may also have no spare time to participate in training. Nearly all (99.4 per cent, n=318) of the survey respondents said they work between eight and nine hours each day. However, 91.6 per cent (n=293) work more than five hours overtime per week, with 69.4 per cent (n=222) working more than 10 hours. And 5 per cent (n=16) also work an extra job. Realistically, a majority of the women are probably working 11 or 12 hours each day, with only 1.5 days off per week. Given the high level of expectation for a woman to send a large percentage of her salary to her family on a regular basis, this may encourage women to prefer continuing with their work tasks using existing skills instead of taking time out to learn new skills, even if this training would result in increased earning potential at a later date. FGD participants indicated they would be interested in attending skills training if the training was offered during work hours. They recognized this would most likely not be agreeable to employers because of the employers' focus on meeting production targets and deadlines.

5.2 Workplace gender experiences

The GEA findings indicate that sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse occur in most of the factories. Respondents to the survey said they have been subjected to harassment and abuse in their workplace.

When presented with the overall results of the survey and more detailed results from their individual factories, representatives of some of the factories questioned the validity of the data on harassment and abuse. They are understandably concerned about the reputation of their workplace, especially in light of recent reports that have explored the issue of sexual harassment in the sector. Research into sexual harassment and abuse in workplaces is important. Equally, it is important to ensure accurate interpretation of the results and to not use limited data from a small number of employees to justify blanket claims about an entire industry. Some recent research methodologies may not have been adequately robust, and inferences may have been drawn about the entire sector from small sample sizes.

The findings of this GEA in terms of harassment and abuse in the factories certainly cannot be ignored. However, there is some room for caution in reading the results as an accurate account of the extent to which female employees are at risk of or subjected to gender-based harassment or abuse in their workplace. It also needs to be emphasized that any discussion about harassment or abuse in this report relates to what might be happening in the 16 factories that participated in the GEA and not throughout the garment sector. Furthermore, the results need to be interpreted in a way that can help both employers and employees build more positive, inclusive and safe workplaces for all.

5.2.1 Understanding “sexual harassment”

There appears to be an anomaly in the results, whereby even women who said they had been subjected to sexual harassment in their current factory also said they feel safe at work, at 95.6 per cent (n=130). How can a person characterize a space in which they know they are at risk of being subjected to sexual harassment as safe? One possible conclusion is that when they say they have been sexually harassed in their factory, the women are referring to isolated incidents as opposed to general trends. The survey did not ask how often the sexual harassment occurred. Another possible conclusion is that the perpetrator had left the factory, either as a result of disciplinary action or for another reason (new employment elsewhere). The women might feel safe because this person is no longer working near them. The fact that the perpetrators of the harassment are primarily other women may also give the impression that the harassment is not threatening. One important explanation is that there was a misunderstanding on the part of the respondents about what is meant by the term “sexual harassment”.

The GEA did not use operational definitions for sexual harassment. It did not, for example, ask participants to say if they had received unwanted sexually suggestive comments about their appearance or body, or if they had received unwanted requests for sex or sexual favours. Operational definitions for sexual violence and harassment are commonly used in the research exploring violence against women.⁵¹ They can help strengthen the results by providing more nuanced information about what is being discussed when the term sexual harassment is used. The decision to not use operational definitions for sexual harassment in this assessment was intentional. The GEA needed to include the collection of data on women’s experiences of harassment and abuse in the factories, but it did not intend to highlight these experiences as the most important part of the assessment. As explained in the limitations section earlier in this report, the decision to not use operational definitions has most likely impacted the results. It means we cannot be certain the survey respondents understood what was meant by sexual harassment when they were asked if it had happened to them in their factory.

The interview and FGD transcripts provide strong evidence to suggest that most of the informant interviewees and FGD participants did not know what was meant by sexual harassment when the term was introduced. In many cases, the interviewer explained the term by stating that it can also refer to teasing between women about body parts and sexual behaviours or even touching of body parts between female co-workers. This explanation was sometimes given after an interviewee or group participants had said that sexual harassment does not occur in their factory. It was also used to guide the discussion, as in the following example:

Interviewer: *“Yes, the next thing is touching the breast of the unmarried workers without consent. Do they tease each other in this way? (It is a form of teasing by the married workers to the unmarried workers by touching or holding their breasts without consent.)”*

Respondents (all): *“Yes, there is.”*

⁵¹ See, for example, Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005.

Interviewer: *“Since all of us are female, you don’t need to be shy. For example, if a worker sits at the production line and does her work, other workers will touch her breast without consent. Since they kept doing that way to her, I told her that you should revenge others by doing the same to them. She replied to me that she also does the same if possible. I ask her why. She said because she is married. Do the workers in the factory tease each other like that?”*

Respondents (all): *Yes, they do.”*

This gives a strong indication that the qualitative data on sexual harassment in the factories has been influenced by a definition of sexual harassment that includes what might otherwise be referred to as “teasing” between co-workers.

From the survey findings, we know that when sexual harassment is said to have occurred, it is most often carried out by a female co-worker. Such teasing – banter or joking around – might be a means through which female-to-female relationships are built and sustained in the factories. It may also be a coping mechanism to provide some amusement to the workers while they complete what are otherwise highly repetitive and most likely boring tasks. It is not always the same as sexual harassment.

We do not have transcripts of the survey interviews and therefore cannot know for sure what conversations went on between interviewers and respondents to explain sexual harassment for this part of the GEA. Given the content of the transcripts from the qualitative data-collection methods and given that the data collectors also acknowledged “limited understanding of the questions by the workers” during the survey interviews,⁵² it would be fair to assume that, in many cases, the respondent said she had experienced sexual harassment in her factory when she was instead referring to having been teased by a co-worker.

5.2.2 The “problem” of teasing

From the list of examples of specific types of sexual harassment provided by interviewees and FGD participants (table 7), many could constitute teasing. In the FGDs, participants discussed how women in the factories regularly make fun of another woman’s dress or body. This is often directed at women who wear non-traditional dress (such as short skirts) and women who are identified as being fat or old. The use of nicknames can coincide with staring at a woman’s body or touching her body parts (including breasts and buttocks). They interpret this name-calling as “teasing”. They consider it a normal part of a relationship between women in the factories.

Interviewer: *“Is there among women, you hold each other bust as teasing?”*

Respondents (al): *“Yes.”* (all laughing)

Interviewer: *“Then, are you annoyed?”*

Respondent 7: *“No. They do the same thing to me.”*

⁵² Presentation on the methodology for the data collection by MMRD to stakeholders at an ILO workshop at the Rose Garden Hotel in Yangon on 2 Feb. 2018.

It is possible that, in some cases, what is perceived by one person to be harmless teasing could be interpreted by another person as abuse. Comments or behaviours could be the same but interpreted differently by different people. The FGD participants acknowledged that sometimes the name-calling or touching of the body does evoke shouting and anger. Determining factors include who is making the comment or carrying out the behaviour, the relationship between the persons involved, and the genders of the persons involved.

Consent is also key in determining whether a particular comment or behaviour is teasing or sexual harassment. If the woman who is being spoken about or touched does not consent to what is being said or done, it constitutes sexual harassment. If she consents, it does not. This is an important distinction, and yet one that the GEA findings show has not been made on the part of both interviewers and participants. The issue of consent was absent in all discussions about sexual harassment in the informant interviews and FGDs; and we can assume it was also not discussed with the survey respondents to help them differentiate between their experiences of having been teased (with consent) or having been sexually harassed (without consent).

The distinction between what constitutes teasing and what constitutes sexual harassment is further blurred because of how women might be disempowered from speaking out about comments and behaviours they find unacceptable. Teasing behaviours can be viewed as culturally sophisticated ways of disciplining women's bodies and sexual behaviours. Masked by humour, such behaviours may be normalized practices that deny the right of women to control their bodies and impose on women normative standards of sexuality that do not apply to men. This is certainly the case in Myanmar, where women's body parts are regularly the focus of verbal and physical jokes by men and between women.⁵³

For women who are new to a factory, there may be pressure to agree to the teasing that already constitutes part of the workplace culture and the social relationships between female co-workers. They may not have the courage, power or skills to challenge their new female co-workers even if they find certain comments or behaviours unwanted or unacceptable. To be accepted as part of the team, they may feel compelled to accept the teasing and even to replicate it. We see similar kinds of gender disciplining in male-dominated contexts, including among college students and defence personnel (hazing rituals). Such a situation would not be unusual in women-dominated contexts, like the 16 factories in the GEA. Further research would be required to determine if this is the case for women who come to work in these factories.

There may also be a correlation between age and teasing and/or sexual harassment. The overall age range of the survey respondents is 18–43. The data set shows that the average age of a woman who has experienced sexual harassment in her current place of work is only slightly younger than the average age of all the survey respondents (23.8 and 24, respectively). Additional research would be required to determine if there are any correlations between age, risk of being subjected to teasing and/or sexual harassment at work, and responses to these experiences. This additional research could also explore differences in ages in terms of female perpetration of teasing and/or sexual harassment, which is something the GEA did not cover.

⁵³ See the Ted Talk from Htar at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr9BEsZjnVM> (8 Oct. 2018).

5.2.3 Reporting and responding

Not all the cited experiences of sexual harassment can be dismissed as consensual teasing. One human resources manager reported what is clearly an example of sexual harassment in their factory. The manager explained that when the factory is undergoing some construction work, contract workers have been known to call out or spy on female employees who are using the toilet facility. The risk of harassment to women while using the toilet in the factories was cited in previous research in which workers said that a male security guard made them feel uncomfortable because he was monitoring their visits to the toilet.⁵⁴ We need to recognize that some of the responses of the 42.5 per cent (n=136) of the GEA survey respondents who said they had experienced sexual harassment in their workplace do not refer to teasing but to real cases of sexual harassment, and that some of the female employees who participated in the GEA have been subjected to unwanted sexually suggestive comments and/or behaviours. The survey respondents reported that verbal abuse and physical abuse also occur in the majority of the factories. There is less likelihood these terms were misunderstood. This means that, in at least some of the 16 factories, there are concerning issues regarding the treatment of women based on their gender.

It is possible some women did not feel comfortable reporting that harassment or abuse occurs in their factory or that they had suffered directly. In five of the factories, the percentage of survey respondents who said sexual harassment occurred in their factory is significantly lower than in the other 11 factories. In two of the factories, all the survey respondents answered “no” to every question relating to sexual harassment, and almost all the respondents answered “no” to every question relating to verbal abuse and physical abuse. It is possible the survey respondents in those two factories were directed beforehand on how to respond to questions about in-factory harassment and abuse. FGDs were not conducted in these two factories. The GEA thus does not include qualitative data from female workers in those factories, which might have helped corroborate or challenge the findings.

What is clear is that when harassment or abuse occurs, responses to the incidents are rare. For instance, 76.5 per cent (n=104) of the survey respondents who had experienced sexual harassment in their factory took no action. In 98.5 per cent (n=134) of cases, the employer took no action. For the employee, this may be because she was afraid or because she did not want to make others aware of what had happened in case she was blamed or shamed. For the employer, the reason for taking no action may be because there is no formal system in place for responding to such incidents in the factory.

In the workshop to discuss the GEA findings, a few representatives said they had a workplace policy on harassment and abuse. In some cases, the human resources managers also referenced a policy that exists in their factory to respond to workplace harassment. Employers, however, may not be fully implementing their policy, and/or employees may not be aware it exists. The policy may also not provide response mechanisms that can adequately and appropriately address employees’ concerns about the risk of being shamed after disclosure, especially around confidentiality. The GEA did not include analysis of any existing policies relating to sexual harassment and abuse.

⁵⁴ Oxfam, 2015, p.14.

In many of the factories, mitigation and response practices appear to rely on the ad hoc fostering of positive workplace environments and informal discussions with employees, as one interview transcript reveals:

Interviewer: *"Is there any policy to prevent verbal, physical abuse or sexual harassment behaviours like insults and mockery?"*

Supervisor: *"Since those cases never happened before, there is no policy regulating those behaviours."*

Interviewer: *"Are there any preventive regulations?"*

Supervisor: *"No, there aren't, since the relationship between the workers is quite good."*

Interviewer: *"Is there any policy to eliminate discrimination against female workers?"*

Supervisor: *"There is nothing at the moment."*

Where there is evidence of disciplining or attempts to prevent the behaviours, these responses address harassment or abuse perpetrated by a man against a woman. A discussion between female workers in one FGD revealed the severity with which the women believe a man should be treated if he is found to have sexually harassed a woman:

Respondent 2: *"What I want is to punish them seriously, like fired from the work."*

Respondent 8: *"Not only fired, but imprisoned. If they quit from a factory, they will commit again in the next factory. Imprison them, to change their behaviour."*

Respondent 6: *"It is not with love, it is to abuse someone. If a man loves someone, he never behave like that way. If there is such kind of people, the factory should punish him harshly."*

According to the GEA findings, a man harassing a woman is not a common makeup of the persons involved in the incidents in the 16 factories. The idea that women can sexually harass or abuse other women is, however, absent in the discourse about these incidents. While it is acknowledged that women do engage in harassing behaviours against their female colleagues in the factories, these incidents are either classified as harmless "teasing" or they are silenced by focusing on the otherwise dominant prospect of a man sexually harassing a woman, as expressed in the following comments from two human resources managers:

"What we have is, many are women, and men are minority. Once they [men] apply in the factory, we inform them about not to disturb those women workers. It [sexual harassment] mostly occurs between men and women, rarely between women. As men are very few, once they fill the form, we have told them everything."

“We have no such regulation as you are not allowed to say or behave so. But when we employ a man, there are certain rules included. They all give verbal promise not to behave improper, impolite or abusive way, because majority is women [in the factory].”

This means cases of female-to-female sexual harassment and abuse are not being discussed or addressed.

5.3 Workplace sexual and reproductive health support

The GEA findings indicate that the respondents in the 16 factories feel confident they can manage their SRH needs adequately while at work. This includes arranging for childcare for those who have children, accessing their right to maternity leave and having regular and private access to a toilet facility in their factory. The human resources managers recognize the importance of promoting good SRH for their female employees; supervisors are equally supportive; and even the BLO representatives expressed a strong interest in receiving training on SRH issues. As one BLO representative acknowledged:

“It would be my pleasure to get trainings here. I can learn more. In our factory, I don't know very much. Even about sexual harassment, I only know about it briefly. If you are going to give training on this, I can get knowledge on that.”

There are certainly opportunities for improvements to SRH support for female employees in the factories. An acceptance of the dominant gender norms and an internalized agreement to comply with these norms, especially those that relate to acceptable attitudes and behaviours of women in Myanmar, may limit the extent to which employers are willing to offer practical support. There does not appear to be a focus within any of the factories on improving the provision of childcare facilities or supporting female employees to better manage motherhood and work, both of which have the potential to extend the length of time women remain employed in the factories and to help challenge existing limitations on economic opportunities and independence for women. The same gender norms have been internalized by the female employees and are influencing their attitudes towards combining work with motherhood.

5.3.1 Employers' attitudes to motherhood

Some 27.8 per cent (n=89) of the survey respondents are responsible for children younger than 16, and slightly more than 88 per cent (n=282) of them reported that their employer provides maternity leave. This suggests the employers do not outright refuse to employ women who have children. But it is also true that around 12 per cent (n=38) of the women believe maternity leave is not offered in their workplaces. Some of the female employees in the sample may not be aware that maternity leave is available. This is likely the case in the two factories (and possibly an additional four) in which only one respondent (or two in the case of the additional four factories) answered “no” to the question about their employer's provision of maternity leave. Others reasons might be because the women have never been pregnant so they have never been offered maternity leave. It is also possible that some of the respondents interpreted the question to mean “Have you been offered maternity leave by your employer”

rather than “Does your employer provide paid maternity leave?” There is concern that in one factory, 50 per cent (n=10) of the survey respondents said maternity leave is not offered. If this is true, it would constitute an illegal practice on the part of that one factory.

In one factory, the BLO representative said there was no support for pregnant women. In another, the BLO representative complained that pregnant women work as usual and there is no SRH support in their factory for female workers. In yet another factory, the BLO representative indicated there was “no special allowance for a pregnant worker”. But the representative’s subsequent comments indicate that pregnant workers are allowed to take rests, sit down while working or reduce the number of hours they work. The human resources managers confirmed these types of arrangements in other factories, as exemplified in the following comment:

“The pregnant workers are not asked to perform heavy tasks. They do not need to stand in the production for a long time. Some pregnant workers may leave the workplace. Some keep working in the factory. Even if they kept working while they are pregnant, they are not asked to do much workload.”

One human resources manager explained the extent to which she goes to ensure that pregnant women are supported and encouraged to continue to work and how this support has resulted in changes in attitudes towards being pregnant while in the workforce:

“We held a meeting. Pregnant women, married women and males attended the meeting. In the meeting, I told males in detail to understand about pregnancy for their pregnant wives in one day. I know the signs of pregnancy, such as vomiting and sudden falling down because of dizziness. When the nurse reports about the pregnancy of a female worker, I tell her to work carefully and a place with good ventilation is arranged for her. Then, I inform her about leave and other related affairs. I also tell her about coming back to work after childbirth and breastfeeding at the factory. As I explain those facts, all workers are satisfied and happy in working here. In the past, they dared not take pregnancy. After I explained in the meeting, many women bear babies.”

A BLO representative in another factory acknowledged support for pregnant workers:

“If the female worker is pregnant, she will not be asked to do much workload. Even if she wants to keep working the same task, her own task will be replaced by two new recruits. She doesn’t need to do that much.”

However, some BLO representatives also made comments that indicate they do not share this positive view of employers’ attitudes to pregnant workers. The comment from one BLO representative suggests that the management in their factory may only begrudgingly offer the support they are legally required to do:

“Every pregnant worker is not in good condition. It is not easy for them to keep working while being pregnant. They are allowed to take maternity leave. The [BLO] organization has to tell the managers to allow them.”

There is no difference between factories where the BLO representative claims there is support for pregnant women and where this same representative claims there is no or reluctant support. In fact, the previous two comments were made by the same BLO representative who was talking about the situation for pregnant employees in the same factory. There is therefore some uncertainty about the extent to which the factories support employees during pregnancy. At best, we can conclude that the support pregnant women receive in the factories relates to their ability to carry out their daily work tasks and may well be informal practices of support implemented by other women (including human resources managers, supervisors and co-workers) who understand or sympathize with the experience of pregnancy. The support does not appear to extend to more formalized arrangements other than the provision of maternity leave, which factories are legally obliged to offer. It does not include, for example, having a return-to-work programme in place or allowing women with young children to work flexible hours. As one BLO representative confirmed, there is no support in their factory for women to re-join the workforce after giving birth, and they had never heard of a case of this happening. The GEA did not include any interviews with senior managers in the factories other than the human resources manager. It may be that the decision to extend support for pregnant women can only be made by more senior management, many of whom we can assume are men.

It appears that breastfeeding spaces are available in a few factories, either as a separate room or in the factory health clinic. There is no information on the state of these spaces, including availability or cleanliness. One human resources manager expressed joy about the birth of the first “factory son” and linked this to the provision of a breastfeeding room in the factory, although it is not clear from their comments if the mother of the baby actually uses this facility. In one factory, the human resources manager confirmed they have plans to introduce a breastfeeding room at a later date. This factory is only one year old and, according to the human resources manager, has few pregnant female employees in its workforce at the time of the survey. Additional available support for breastfeeding includes allowing women to come to work an hour later than usual.

In most of the factories, the human resources manager indicated there is no breastfeeding facility, with some also informing they have no plans to introduce such a facility. One human resources manager suggested it would not be necessary because women do not return to work after giving birth. This raises an important question for the purpose of the GEA: Does the lack of a breastfeeding facility in a factory influence a woman’s decision not to return to work after giving birth, or does the lack of interest on the part of a woman to return to work after giving birth influence the factory’s decision not to provide a breastfeeding facility? The attitudes of female employees towards motherhood and work are discussed in the next section of this report and allow for an interesting analysis of how social gender norms work to limit women’s ability to enjoy lifetime careers in Myanmar.

What is evident from the GEA findings is that the decision-makers in the 16 factories are not actively supporting the ability of female employees to manage work and motherhood. From the total survey sample of 320 women, only seven of them have children and said they have access to a childcare facility in their place of work. This means that, at most, only 2.1 per cent (n=7) of the sample can reconcile motherhood with work by making use of available services in their factory (assuming their children are of childcare age). The GEA did not explore how employers might pressure or make it difficult for women to return to work after having a child.

Similarly, it did not explore if employers are investigating ways to offer return-to-work support for mothers, including working with other factories or at the township level to increase the availability of childcare facilities that cater for working women with young children. Many of the comments made by the human resources managers and supervisors indicate an expectation that a woman will not return to work after having a child.

There is also the somewhat contentious indication that a majority of employers ask women to take a pregnancy test prior to employment. This is, as discussed earlier, a practice that has been denied by representatives of the factories. It is indeed a GEA finding that requires further investigation. It is not clear what criteria might be used to determine if a potential employee should be asked to take this kind of test or how an employer might respond to a positive result. It may be seen as a way of ensuring support for pregnant employees by assigning them lighter work duties. The practice of asking a woman to undergo a pregnancy test prior to employment is not against the law in Myanmar. Yet, it could be a practice that places a woman at risk of discrimination in terms of employment, social harm if information about her pregnancy is shared with others (especially in the case of a single woman) or physical harm if the outcome is an unsafe abortion.

A few of the informant interviewees and FGD participants said they knew of younger female employees who had had abortions and that they became aware of this only after the women had returned to work sick. Further details of why the women chose to have an abortion (which is illegal in Myanmar) are not available from the GEA findings. It is possible that some of the women chose to do so to keep their job in a sector that has been recognized (both in this GEA and in other research⁵⁵) as preferring to employ non-pregnant, single young women.

5.3.2 *Employees' attitudes to motherhood*

The fact that more than a quarter (27 per cent, n=89) of the survey respondents are responsible for children shows it is possible for women who have children to (continue to) work in the sector. However, only 16.3 per cent (n=52) of the women are responsible for children who live in the same house; and none of these women uses a factory-provided childcare facility to help them care for these children when they are at work. The majority leave their children with other family members, including their husband, while they are at work. Some of the women who have children do not live with their children. These children may still be living in the mother's place of origin (in another province). Also, some of these children may not require childcare because they are older children.

The reasons for why women do not make use of a factory childcare facility (where available) remain unclear. In the workshop with factory representatives to discuss the GEA findings, there appeared to be some confusion about what constitutes a childcare facility. Initially, some representatives said there was such a facility in their factory. They later clarified that this was not a place in which employees could leave their children in the care of professional childcare staff. Rather, there were rooms in which mothers could spend time with their children (for breastfeeding). According to the Factories Act, all the factories in the GEA should provide a childcare facility for children younger than 6 years because they have more than 500 employees.

⁵⁵ See Action Labor Rights, 2016; Fair Wear Foundation, 2016.

If there is a childcare facility in a factory, employees may choose not to use it because they are not satisfied with the facility, the cleanliness, the level of professional care offered to their child or other practical reasons. Further research is needed to determine why women who have children and who work in a factory with a childcare facility do not use this facility. One indicator of why female workers who have children do not use factory-provided childcare facilities is found in the attitudes towards motherhood and work among the employees. Comments made by FGD participants show that women who work in the factories do not want a factory-based childcare facility. Overwhelmingly, they believe it is better for a mother to leave her children with somebody she knows and not with a stranger, even if this stranger is a professional childminder. This reflects the social attitude towards motherhood and childcare in Myanmar and presents a challenge to the assumption that women would be better able to manage motherhood and work if employers provided childcare facilities.

Even if childcare facilities are available in the factories and even if women working in the factories have young children who require childcare while they are at work, the social expectation that children should be cared for (first) by the mother and (second) by other family members is likely to result in low use of such a facility. In one factory, the human resources manager said the employer had actually asked employees if they wanted a childcare facility to be built, and they had said no.

It is also not clear if an increase in the availability of breastfeeding spaces in factories would encourage more women to bring their infants to work. Certainly, there are additional barriers to this happening, including safe transportation of the infant to and from the place of work. If, as the GEA findings suggest, women with young infants do not breastfeed during work hours, there could however be a negative impact on the health of the baby. Further consideration should therefore be given as to how employers and employees can change attitudes and practices regarding working women who have infants they are breastfeeding.

Like the employers, the employees who participated in the GEA – both the survey respondents and the FGD participants – also cannot be said to be actively supporting the ability of women to manage motherhood and work. The employees who participated in the survey represent a young cohort of the labour market in Myanmar. Many have come to Yangon specifically to work in the garment sector. They can be considered the first generation of working women in the sector. As more women have similar work experiences and as the women undergo changes in attitudes towards motherhood linked to wider cultural changes regarding gender roles, there may be an increased demand by the labour force for better support for women (and men) who have children and who want to continue to work. The current situation for women working in the factories, especially with respect to motherhood, may rapidly change.

The current situation is not good though. The women who work in the factories may be at risk because of their responses – and the responses they anticipate from others – to social attitudes towards women who are pregnant or have children and work. In one factory, though, the human resources manager expressed support for single mothers:

“Some singles involved in sexual relationship, supervisors may know better about them, and they discussed with us. One of my clerks has such commitment [a single relationship], and I told her that there is organization accepting [a woman] as

'single mother'; we have such connection. I told her not to make abortion and I will refer her to such organization if she requires."

Other human resources managers are concerned that women are under pressure to hide or terminate their pregnancy. This can, as one human resources manager explained, result in loss of the baby if the woman does not disclose her pregnancy and continues with her regular work tasks. Even though the human resources managers insist they do not terminate pregnant workers, they also say women workers fear they will lose their bonus or their job if they become pregnant. Younger, single women in particular are described as afraid they will be stigmatized if they disclose their pregnancy. One human resources manager confirmed that this demographic of women in her factory is having abortions and that this affects the workplace because the women often return to work distressed and requiring medical assistance. The attitudes of female employees help sustain this risky situation. In one FGD, two women were adamant it is not possible for women to come back to work after giving birth and that leaving the child at home would be "troublesome". Such attitudes are contributing to potentially dangerous situations, as one human resources manager described, like the female employee who was five months pregnant – and visibly so – but who continued to deny she was.

5.3.3 Expanding what is meant by sexual and reproductive health

The GEA findings indicate there is widespread support in the 16 factories for additional training for female workers on issues related to SRH. However, only 4.7 per cent (n=15) of the respondents had received any SRH training during the 12 months prior to the survey. The human resources managers, supervisors, BLO representatives and FGD participants all expressed interest for more training. In one factory, the human resources manager pointed out that training had previously been provided by the government Social Security Department and international agencies. This training had included information on contraception for married women and advice on sexually transmitted infections, but is no longer available.

The definition of SRH used in the GEA included issues directly linked to reproduction (family planning, contraception, menstruation, pregnancy, breastfeeding and childcare). A broader definition of SRH is inclusive of sexual well-being, freedom from disease, the ability to engage in consensual sexual thoughts and behaviours freely and without discrimination and violence, and the right to enjoy control over one's body and sexual practices throughout one's life. It would be worth considering such a broader definition when thinking about the content of SRH training for female employees in the factories to help explore and challenge some of the taboos and practices of harassment that prevent the creation of respectful workplaces for all employees.

The human resources managers said that young female workers may be embarrassed to discuss sexual behaviours and sex. They also acknowledged that there is a lack of specialized training available to help address cultural taboos related to sexual practices, especially for women. An expansion of the definition of SRH to include sexual practices and pleasures would help respond to this situation and encourage women to discuss and address sexual health issues that may be affecting their well-being, their health and business productivity. If, for example, a female employee has a sexually transmitted infection but is scared to discuss this

and seek assistance because of the risk of shame, this may result in physical and/or emotional harm to the woman, which may then result in unsafe work practices or taking time off from work. If, as the discussion in the previous section shows, young, single women are sexually active but are unable to discuss this without fear of shame, this may place the health of the women and the babies of pregnant women at risk.

Some of the “teasing” that occurs in the factories also relates to a belief that women should avoid participating in or being seen to participate in sex. Also, in five of the six FGDs, participants admitted that it was common to tease women who appeared or acted masculine. They termed such women as “tomboys” and distinguished them from “normal female and male workers”. When such teasing occurs between women, this reveals the extent to which the women have internalized and practice the social disciplining of how women should behave, what their bodies should look like and how their bodies should be used. This restricts the ability of women to enjoy positive SRH that is free from discrimination and judgement and that is supportive of women’s diverse sexual and gender expressions, behaviours and identities. It affects the workplace culture by normalizing some of the teasing among female employees that may lead to emotional stress and an unsafe workplace. It further impacts on business performance because time and resources may need to be spent to deal with incidents of teasing and working to create harmonious teams of employees.

5.4 Identifying differences

This report, including the analysis section, focuses on the overall GEA findings. It does not provide extensive details of the breakdown of the results per factory, nor does the analysis offer comments about the status of gender-equality opportunities in individual factories. The data set allows for more individualized reporting and analysis to be completed, and it is expected this will be an outcome of the GEA as part of the continuing ILO work with some of the factories that participated in the assessment. Some of the recommendations in the following section speak to this future work. It is useful, however, to finish this analysis section with some exploration of the general differences between the factories.

Differences certainly do exist, and many of them have been highlighted in both the results section and the analysis section of this report. Comments made by informant interviewees reveal considerable differences between the factories in terms of the attitudes of human resources managers, supervisors and BLO representatives regarding gender-equal opportunities, experiences of sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse, and SRH support for female employees. As part of the analysis, all comments linked to these three research topics were coded and given a score (from -2 to +2), as described in detail in the methodology and results sections of this report. In the results section, the scores are given per factory. Table 11 shows the maximum and minimum scores per informant interview group.

Table 11 Maximum and minimum weighted scores, by informant interview group

	Human resources managers	Supervisors	BLO representatives
Workplace gender-equality opportunities (max)	0.20	0.50	1.50
Workplace gender-equality opportunities (min)	-1.50	-1.33	-2.00
Workplace gender experiences (max)	2.00	0.88	1.25
Workplace gender experiences (min)	-1.29	-1.00	-1.33
Workplace SRH (max)	1.80	N/A ⁵⁶	2.00
Workplace SRH (min)	0.00	N/A	-0.70

This table shows that, in one factory, comments made by the human resources manager reveal strong evidence of practices of sexual harassment and abuse occurring (a score of +2), whereas in another factory the human resources manager's comments reflect evidence of practices for how sexual harassment and abuse are prevented (a score of -1.29). The difference between the highest and lowest score is large and is indicative of broad differences between factories with respect to the attitudes of human resources managers towards sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse.

There are similar considerable differences between the weighted scores for the factories when considering only the comments made by female employees who participated in the FGDs. For example, one factory has a score of 1.20, which indicates the employees in this group were able to provide some examples of evidence of harassment and sexual abuse. This is the highest score for the FGD component of the GEA among the 16 factories. The lowest score for a factory in this same category is -1.50, which indicates their employees provided specific examples of how workplace harassment and abuse are positively responded to and/or prevented.

Such differences show that the garment sector does not have a homogenous culture and that not all factory managers and employees hold the same attitudes towards workplace gender-equality opportunities, harassment and abuse, or SRH support. Recognizing these differences in the results of the GEA at the factory level is important for two reasons. First, it shows there is greater potential for successful improvements in gender equality in the garment sector in Myanmar by working at the individual factory level. Instead of using the data from the GEA to make claims or assumptions about broad trends across the entire sector, the findings can be better used to target interventions and support for individual factories. Second, paying attention to the differences between the factories provides an opportunity to identify individual factories that are already showing strong support for gender equality and to learn from their practices to support gender-equality work in other factories.

⁵⁶ The informant interview questions for supervisors did not inquire about SRH issues.

There is also the potential for factories to work together to address some of the gender issues covered by the GEA. For example, a human resources manager in one factory who provided evidence of work that was done to address sexual harassment in their workplace could help human resources managers in other factories to understand the benefits and replicate the work.

The information available at the factory level in the existing data set could also be used to develop minimum standards and targets regarding gender equality in the factories, taking average scores for workplace gender-equal opportunities, workplace experiences of sexual harassment or abuse, and SRH support as baselines, for example. This would help ensure future work is closely aligned with current capacities and practices. It would offer factories better opportunities to show success in any work they do to improve gender equality rather than ask them to reach minimum standards or targets that are already far beyond the average.

6. Recommendations

This section articulates the recommendations that emerged from the analysis of the GEA findings. They are organized into three categories (linking to the three research topics): workplace gender-equal opportunities, workplace experiences and workplace SRH support. There are in addition five overarching recommendations to support improvements in gender equality within the garment sector and at the factory and manager levels.

Both immediate and long-term recommendations are provided in each category. Immediate recommendations promote interventions that the ILO can carry out or support as part of its ongoing work, in direct partnership with the factories included in the ILO-GIP. The long-term recommendations provide ideas for future research and collaborations with other external agencies and across the sector.

6.1 Workplace gender-equality opportunities

6.1.1 Immediate interventions

Develop a model career pathway

There is currently no clarity on what a career pathway looks like (or could look like) for employees in the factories. While there may be a limited number of supervisory roles available for employees, a model career pathway may help explain the different types of positions and job roles employees can occupy. This may motivate women to view their work in the factories as linked to professional development and empowerment, and as long term. It would show that employers view the professional development of their employees as important. It could help employers retain skilled labour. In the short term, a model career pathway would also help employers understand and communicate the range of job opportunities available in their factories to market them to motivated and talented persons.

In addition, deploying transparent and professional recruitment practices based on merit could provide an avenue for more women to gain managerial positions in the industry.

A model career pathway could be explained to employees during the induction training and should:

- specify a required set of skills for each job task (sewing, packing, supervising);
- specify an adequate time frame to become competent in that job task;
- specify salary systems and scales against each job task (factory-specific); and
- give clear guidance on how an employee can access a different job or apply for promotion (to supervisory level), including information on linked training programmes.

Career pathways may differ in each factory, but it is possible there would be similarities between factories. This provides an opportunity for inter-factory collaboration to develop a model career pathway template for the sector.

Provide standardized gender-sensitization training

Gender-sensitization training offers an opportunity to challenge and change dominant assumptions about gender, which currently lead to gender-based discrimination in the factories. The role of men in this sensitization should be advocated as that of a “partner” to avoid the emergence of a backlash against women. One outcome of the learning could be the opening up of more opportunities for women to complete work tasks currently deemed suitable only for men. The training could also help promote better access to employment in the factories for men. Overtime, changes in assumptions about who men and women are, and how they “naturally” behave, may also bring about changes in the gender culture of the workplaces, which are currently affected by what appears to be gender-related bullying among women as well as sexual harassment and abuse. Key targets for gender-sensitization training include, first, human resources managers and supervisors, followed by BLO representatives and representatives of sector organizations. The human resources managers and supervisors should be responsible for rolling out linked training in their factories, and a train-the-trainer approach is required.

Introduce an exit survey

Employers would benefit from knowing why employees are leaving their factory. Currently, there is an assumption that many employees leave because they are able to earn more money for doing the same job in a different factory, and this may be the case for some employees. Asking employees to complete a short exit interview would allow employers to determine and respond to other issues that may be impacting on their retention rates. Issues to consider when developing the exit survey include an employee’s thoughts on:

- human resources practices;
- workplace culture;
- gender inequality;
- opportunities for career development and skills training;
- experiences of harassment and abuse; and
- personal SRH support (such as management of childcare, pregnancy).

The development of an exit survey template could be facilitated by an organization interested in conducting research into why women leave their place of employment or the garment sector. This would allow for a sector-wide analysis of the issues that emerged in the GEA, as well as opportunities to work closely with garment sector organizations to respond to any issues that may be negatively affecting business productivity and equal opportunities for employees.

Create case studies of women in the garment sector

There is some evidence to suggest women have opportunities to develop successful careers in the garment sector, and there are many women already working in supervisory positions and as representatives of BLOs. A default position tends to be to talk about limitations imposed on women regarding career advancement and job opportunities in the sector. The GEA findings certainly point to the need to address these limitations. But it is also important to hear about successful women. Such stories help provide templates for other women who may want to advance their career in the sector. They also showcase the positive work being done to support opportunities for women to move beyond their roles as low-skilled sewers in the sector.

Information on successful women working in factories and in the sector should be collected and transcribed into appealing stories. The information could include details of the women's backgrounds, a summary of their career pathway, information on how they have managed to navigate successfully their professional and private lives, challenges they have faced, successes they have had and their future goals. Consideration should be given to how to share these success stories. Methods of communication could include presentations to employees, videos, podcasts and print media.

There is the potential through this work to develop a more formalized network of professional women working in the garment sector in Myanmar and internationally, similar to the professional networks already established in other industries.

Introduce a sector-wide skills recognition programme

Employees would benefit from formal recognition of their skills in the sector. This would allow them to move between factories without losing benefits and ensure that they can be employed at the level (and pay rate) most appropriate to their skills. This would help eliminate the current practice of employing women, in particular, at the lowest level when they first start working in a factory, regardless of the skills and experience they have previously acquired. A sector-wide skills recognition programme could complement the recommended model career pathway.

Piloting a factory-level scheme to rotate relevant jobs would allow workers to gain additional skills, break redundancy and acquire experience that can be recognized formally. It may also translate into increased retention of the workforce by breaking up occupational segregation and increasing workers' overall satisfaction.

6.1.2 Long-term interventions

Research the impacts of future mechanization/automatization and changes in the production model on women's roles.

This research is an important means of mitigating future discrimination against women that could result from mechanization and/or the transition from the CMP system to the FOB system in the garment sector. There is already an entrenched belief that men are more suited to working with machinery in this sector. This means men are more likely to benefit from future mechanization in the sector. This research should include:

- expected time frames for sector mechanization;
- likely impacts of sector mechanization on women;
- recommendations for how sector organizations and employers can promote skills training and recognition for women to work with machinery;
- case studies of women working with machinery in the sector; and
- global research on how women have contributed to business productivity through skills training in using machinery.

The research should conclude with recommendations on how to ensure women have equal access to future roles, including ways to promote fair skills training for women to overcome gender resistance to women working with machinery.

6.2 Workplace gender experiences

6.2.1 Immediate interventions

Develop workplace policies on harassment and abuse

Policies on harassment and abuse will help both employers and employees understand:

- definitions of terms;
- differences between harassment, bullying, abuse and teasing;
- what constitutes unacceptable behaviour in the workplace;
- proper and fair processes for reporting and responding;
- proper support mechanisms for survivors of workplace harassment and abuse;
- potential disciplinary action for perpetrators; and
- mitigation strategies.

Generic policies could be developed that draw on existing workplace and sector policies. Factories should tap into the communication abilities of representatives from trade unions and workers' organizations to assist them with developing their policies. Factories could also tap into global resources on best practices for developing policies on respectful workplaces.

Individual factories should be encouraged to adapt and adopt the policies to suit their workplaces. This should be done through discussions with workers and their representatives in the Workplace Coordination Committee (or other suitable organization) in a factory.

Policies should be communicated and explained to all employees verbally. Additional training in how to implement the policies may be required in factories.

Provide awareness training on sexual harassment

Supervisors and employees will benefit from a better understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment. This training should cover:

- definitions of sexual harassment;
- discussions on consent versus non-consent and an awareness of the differences linked to the same behaviours using different techniques, such as role play, videos and case studies;
- sexual harassment under the law;
- impacts of sexual harassment on individuals and workplaces;
- developing agreed responses to help tackle sexual awareness in the factory;
- establishing codes of conduct for workplace relationships;
- exploring the boundaries between sexual harassment and teasing; and
- awareness on how women and men can be supportive of one another in the workplace.

Part of this training could be included in the induction training to ensure, at a minimum, that new employees understand what sexual harassment is and what the available reporting and response mechanisms are in the factory. Further training on more complex issues and to develop a shared, more detailed understanding of sexual harassment in the workplace will also be required. Targeted training on sexual harassment should be offered to factory managers and union representatives, and extended to include contractors (especially drivers, construction workers, security personnel and owners of businesses in the vicinity of the factory that are used by female employees).

Factory health clinic staff, who are mandated by law to offer basic services to workers, could take a constructive role in these awareness-raising efforts. Thus, a train-the-trainer approach for this staff should be considered.

Support capacity-building for responding to cases

In addition to developing and implementing policies on harassment and abuse, human resources managers and supervisors would benefit from developing skills to help respond to cases of sexual harassment and abuse. Approved responses should be aligned with the factory's adopted policy on sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse. Additional skills to be included as part of the capacity-building are:

- maintaining confidentiality;
- understanding a survivor-centred approach in responding to incidents;
- understanding consent and non-consent;
- differentiating between harassment and teasing; and
- creating a positive workplace culture.

Additional training on best practices for responding to claims and cases of harassment and abuse should be provided to representatives of BLOs and clinic staff, both of whom could have a role in managing cases within their workplace.

The provision of this training should not indicate that internal personnel are always the best or only options for employees to report cases of workplace harassment and abuse. In some cases, and particularly in large factories, the management should consider working with external service providers to ensure an unbiased and timely response to accusations and adequate support services for survivors.

Deep exploration into experiences of new female workers

Young female workers are vulnerable because they may not have the skills or confidence to carry out their job successfully. They may be more inclined to tolerate harassment and abuse to maintain their employment status; and they may be encouraged by their co-workers to view such behaviours as harmless teasing and/or as a necessary part of being able to integrate successfully into a team. While training is currently provided to help them learn the technical skills they need to complete their work tasks, this tends to be informal training and does not include any consideration of workplace culture issues. The safety and well-being of young female workers, especially those who are new to a workplace, are very much dependent on the person they are working alongside and the individual personality of the supporting co-worker, who is unlikely to be a qualified trainer.

This research should help determine if there is any evidence of harassment or abuse of new female workers that is affecting their ability to feel safe in their factory. It should include:

- investigations of their experiences as new workers;
- assessments of how comfortable new workers feel with the training and support they receive;
- their attitudes towards and experiences of teasing by co-workers; and
- investigations into whether there are any established damaging initiation practices for new employees in workplaces.

Possible outcomes of this research that will benefit employers include:

- recommendations for more formal training methods for new employees;
- improved strategies and practices for developing an inclusive workplace culture;
- additional mitigation of workplace harassment and abuse; and
- higher rates of retention of new employees.

6.2.2 Long-term interventions

Conduct regular factory-based assessments

Factory-based assessments should be encouraged at regular intervals to measure changes and improvements in preventing and responding to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse. Simple assessment tools (for collection and analysis of data) should be developed, and suitable employees in the factories (human resources manager, BLO representatives) should be trained on how to use these tools so they can manage their factory assessments and data.

The first use of the tools would provide baseline data. This data would help build on the GEA data and would allow for a deeper exploration of gender issues at the factory level. The second assessment should be carried out after six months to determine quick wins. After that, assessments should be carried out at regular intervals (such as every 12 months) to ensure consistent measurement and attention to improvements.

Ideally, this is a recommendation that should be implemented across the sector under the guidance of the MGMA, in partnership with a relevant organization with gender experience and knowledge. This will allow for the data to be examined at the sector level and to inform future work to improve gender equality in all garment factories. The assessment tools and process could also be supported through a centralized database of the results, whereby individual factories enter the findings from each assessment against a sector-

wide set of measures and performance indicators. This will allow employers to compare the results of their assessments over time in an efficient manner. It will also allow them to compare their results against sector averages. Such a database would need to ensure confidentiality by not allowing an individual factory to see the names of individual factories linked to specific results.

Promote inclusive workplace policies and practices

The GEA focused on exploring experiences and views of female employees in the factories. Some of the issues they face are also relevant to other demographics in the labour market, including workers with disabilities, workers from different ethnic backgrounds, and lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer and intersex workers. Consideration should be given to how the work to improve gender equality in the factories could be used to promote broader inclusive workplace-equality policies and practices.

This is specialized work and will need input from organizations that have expertise in working with the different demographic groups. The work also provides an opportunity to educate human resources managers about the needs of these different groups and how to ensure equitable recruitment practices to avoid unconscious bias. Indirectly and over time, this work may also help challenge some of the gender norms that continue to dictate acceptable behaviours for men and women and thus impact on workplace opportunities, workplace behaviours and SRH.

6.3 Workplace sexual and reproductive health

6.3.1 Immediate interventions

Provide awareness training on sexual and reproductive health

This recommendation responds directly to requests made by many of the participants in the assessment for more information about issues related to SRH. Specific issues to be covered in the training should include:

- sexual reproductive health;
- sexual behaviours and sexualities;
- contraception and family planning; and
- pregnancy and work.

The training should initially be targeted at practitioners working in the factory health clinics to help build their capacity to respond to the needs of female workers. It should then be extended to human resources managers and supervisors. For managers, it should include an additional module on why SRH is an important workplace issue, linking this to the business case for promoting and supporting positive sexual health for employees.

Shop-floor employees – both men and women – should receive SRH awareness training. For this demographic, the focus of the training should be on self-management of SRH to maintain a positive work experience and on tackling issues of bullying that constitute discrimination against non-dominant sexual practices and identities.

Communicate useful information about sexual and reproductive health services

It is not possible for every factory to provide every SRH service. Employers can, however, easily provide employees with clear and useful information about services available in the factory health clinic and outside the workplace (by NGOs, government agencies, women's support groups).

Before communicating the services, it will be necessary to conduct a mapping of the available services in the areas where a factory is located. This mapping will provide the information needed for the development of the communication materials to share with employees. It will also help identify gaps in services, which may inform future programming for external providers and/or help with advocacy with government departments. This mapping should be undertaken by a sector organization to avoid duplication and to ensure consistency in information about SRH services for all employees and employers in the sector.

Share success stories of working mothers and fathers

There is a lack of stories showing how women who have children successfully manage motherhood while working in the garment sector in Myanmar. The absence of these stories signifies that combining the two is impossible and/or not practised. The fact is, many women do manage to continue to work after they have given birth and while they continue to be responsible for caring for young children who live in the same house. Stories of how they do this are important to help create awareness for other women on how it is possible for a woman to continue to participate in the workforce after she has had children. Of equal importance is the lack of visibility for positive stories showcasing how men and working fathers are contributing to the successful handling of work and family responsibilities.

Success stories should be shared by researching and writing case studies to depict positive role models of working mothers and fathers in the sector. The case studies should show:

- what they do when they are with their children;
- how they make use of available resources to care for their children when they are at work (including using workplace childcare facilities);
- how they manage the timing and logistics for breastfeeding infants while they are at work;
- how they negotiate with their employer to ensure flexible work arrangements (to look after sick children, to attend medical appointments); and

- how they negotiate with their family members, including their husband, to ensure the care of children (and other domestic duties) is shared.

Some success stories should highlight the situation for women in leadership positions (in the factories and as representatives of workers' organizations). Other stories should focus on the experiences of women whose job is the same as the majority of the female workers in the sector (such as sewing). The case studies should be complemented by sharing good practices from the side of the employer (recruitment and retention of working mothers, for instance).

Over the long term, these stories may help challenge the perception that women should leave the sector after giving birth.

6.3.2 Long-term interventions

Advocate for better awareness of sexual and reproductive health as a workplace issue

Participants in the GEA assessment overwhelmingly agree that SRH is an important issue in the workplace. Drawing on global research on the links between SRH and work, consideration should be given on how to develop a business case for better employee SRH in the Myanmar context. This could be used to further convince employers to invest resources in promoting better sexual health for their employees. This business case should include information about the business costs (of maintaining poor employee SRH) and the business advantages (better retention rates and higher productivity rates).

Research sector support for working mothers and fathers

Changes in cultural attitudes towards motherhood and an expanding number of women in the workforce may increase the demand for workplaces to provide better support for women who want to be mothers and continue working. The garment sector in Myanmar is well placed to lead the way in this because of the high percentage of female employees and because of the expected growth of the sector.

In consultation with employers, employees and trade union organizations in the sector, the ILO should conduct research to explore how the sector and individual factories can support women with children to remain in the workforce. This research should include:

- identifying the most suitable approach to childcare provision for factory workers (equipment, staffing, hours);
- exploring options for safe transportation for infants to workplaces for breastfeeding;
- exploring flexible work arrangements (shift work, part-time jobs, job sharing);
- exploring how some services could be collectivized (at the township level or between participating factories); and

- identifying what services are offered by the government Social Security board and opportunities for improved awareness-raising about these services.

The results of this research should inform the writing of guidelines for individual factories to help them implement best practice support for employees with children.

Research nutrition issues for women in the garment sector

Nutrition for women working in the garment sector is an important issue for the women, employers and society. Poor nutrition places the health of women at risk. It may result in women being less productive when at work. It may also result in them having weak concentration while completing work tasks, which poses safety risks to themselves and their colleagues. Poor nutrition for young women may also affect the health of their babies, which has many other negative impacts for the mother, her family and the workplace.

Research into improving nutrition for women in the sector should not be confined to seeking a definition of “good nutrition” and what employers and sector organizations can do to promote this for female employees. The research should be more extensive, recognizing some of the interconnected issues, including:

- the impacts of the women’s nutrition on their current children;
- the impacts of the women’s nutrition on future pregnancies;
- barriers to linking good nutrition for women with good nutrition for their children (including safety of transportation of infants to the workplace for breastfeeding and/or safety of transportation or women to return to their homes to breastfeed); and
- adequacy and importance of functioning breastfeeding and childcare facilities in factories that are used.

This research could be carried out in a collaborative manner, involving BLO representatives, representatives from some of the factory health clinics and external expertise from NGOs and consultants.

6.4 Additional overarching recommendations

There are five overarching recommendations to support improvements in gender equality within the garment sector. The first three recommendations are based on the findings and analysis of the GEA as described in this report. The latter two recommendations have been identified by the ILO as opportunities to link the results of the GEA to the ILO's broader work in Myanmar.

6.4.1 Write the gender-equality business case for the Myanmar garment sector

Employers have no clear statistical data or information to help them understand, from a business perspective, why it makes sense to invest in improving gender equality in their workplace. The business case for supporting skills training for women, for making efforts to reduce discrimination and harassment in the workplace or for improving the SRH of female employees in the garment sector has not been researched and written. This means there is a significant gap in accurate data (such as costs and potential economic returns) and information (such as the reputation of the workplace linked to contracts, social license to operate), which can encourage employers to invest resources towards improving gender equality in their workplace.

The business case for improving gender equality in the garment sector should provide clear and credible information to show both the economic and cultural benefits to a factory when it improves opportunities for skills training, rigorously identifies and responds to workplace sexual harassment and abuse, and supports positive SRH for its employees. This may require building case studies of garment factories (in Myanmar and/or in the region) to show best practice. It should also include consideration of how the consistent and fair provision of maternity leave and the availability of a functioning breastfeeding room and childcare facility can help create a happier, more productive and more loyal workforce.

6.4.2 Communicate the gender-equality business case to managers

The business case will provide comprehensive information to explain how garment factories can benefit economically and culturally from investing in gender equality in their workplaces. This information will need to be shared with managers to educate them on the findings and to convince them of the benefits of committing to gender equality in their factory. The business case could result in a number of policy briefs linked to relevant topics (sexual harassment and SRH, for instance), which would inform the method of communicating the overall business case with managers.

6.4.3 Create gender-equality strategies in individual factories

Human resources managers who respond positively to the business case will require additional assistance to help develop clear strategies for improving gender equality in their workplace. This work will require more focused work at the factory level and should include:

- conducting a workplace gender-equality opportunities assessment;
- working with management to develop a comprehensive gender-equality strategy (aims, approach, etc.);
- determining how the strategy will be implemented (programmes, initiatives, training);
- identifying who is responsible for the gender-equality strategy; and
- selecting key performance indicators and useful measures.

6.4.4 Include gender considerations in negotiations and collective-bargaining efforts

Greater gender equality can be achieved through various means, including tripartite dialogue at the national level and legislation, workplace cooperation and, importantly, collective bargaining at the factory, sector and national levels.

Collective bargaining is a particularly effective mechanism for addressing various gender issues, including skills recognition and closing the pay gap between men and women. Provisions in collective agreements aiming at equality at work for men and women generally include recruitment practices and contractual arrangements, company-specific research on equal opportunities, pay increases for workers to close the gender pay gap and gender-neutral job evaluations. In addition, collective bargaining can suggest ways to overcome the challenges for workers with family responsibilities, including enhancing men's access to parental leave.

Given the cost of gender-based violence for both workers and employers, collective bargaining is increasingly seen as a tool to prevent and redress sexual harassment at work and promote respectful workplaces.

A number of factors can facilitate collective negotiations on gender equality: inclusion of women in union leadership and collective bargaining teams, and enabling legislation that establishes a framework for collective bargaining and for gender-equality bargaining more specifically. As such, raising women's voice in workers' organizations and facilitating the development of women's leadership in industrial relations institutions and at various levels of social dialogue are essential strategies to put in place.

6.4.5 Promote the ratification and implementation of ILO gender-relevant Conventions

The ILO has four key gender equality-relevant Conventions: Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); Discrimination Convention (Employment and Occupation), 1958 (No. 111); Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); and Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). Conventions No. 100 and No. 111 are among the eight ILO core Conventions, which are an ensemble covering fundamental, universal and indivisible human rights; and are among the most widely used international legal instruments.

The ratification of these Conventions, which establishes the minimum standards that ratifying countries then must weave into national labour laws and regulations, is an important means of implementing decent work for men and women, including gender equality. These standards aim at making sure economic growth and development go along with the creation of decent work for all. In so far as the ILO gender-related standards represent international tripartite consensus to promote equality in the world of work, their ratification may provide support to the Government of Myanmar in its efforts to modernize its labour legislation framework.

Gender equality is an important aim in terms of achieving equal opportunities for men and women. A growing body of research indicates that compliance with international labour standards often accompanies improvements in overall productivity and economic performance, which would also benefit the garment industry. In addition, the beneficial effects of labour standards, including gender-related instruments, do not go unnoticed by foreign investors. Studies have shown that, in their criteria for choosing countries in which to invest, foreign investors rank workforce quality and political and social stability above low labour costs.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Kucera, 2002.

References

- Action Aid. 2017. *Safety audit on women garment factory workers in Yangon* (unpublished).
- Action Labour Rights. 2016. *Under pressure: An assessment of labour conditions in garment factories in Myanmar which are wholly Korean owned or in a joint venture with Korean companies (Yangon)*.
- Business for Social Responsibility (BSR). 2014. *Shaping a sustainable garment sector in Myanmar: Key opportunities built on local context*
- Business Innovation Facility (BIF). 2016. *BIF Burma (Myanmar): Garments market analysis and strategy* (Yangon).
- Chichester, O.; Koosed, T.; Meiers, R.; Potts, K. 2013. *Incorporating women's health into workplace assessments: A research collaboration between UL's responsible sourcing group and BSR – Working Paper* (London, University of London and Business for Social Responsibility).
- Clean Clothes Campaign. 2005. *Made by women: Gender, the global garment sector and the movement for women workers' rights* (Amsterdam).
- Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population (DPMIP). 2015. *The 2014 Myanmar population and housing census: The Union report* (Naypyidaw, Government of Myanmar).
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). 2016. *Women and the economy in Myanmar: An assessment of DFAT's private sector development programs* (Naypyidaw, Government of Myanmar).
- Fair Wear Foundation. 2016. *Myanmar country assessment 2016*.
- Gender Equality Network (GEN). 2015. *Raising the curtain: Cultural norms, social practices and gender equality in Myanmar* (Yangon).
- . 2016. *Report on obstacles to gender equality in Myanmar*. (Yangon, Global Justice Center).
- Garcia-Moreno, C.; Jansen, H.; Ellsberg, M.; Heise, L.; Watts, C. 2005. *WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses* (Geneva, World Health Organization).
- Government of Myanmar. 2017. *The 2014 Myanmar population and housing census: Thematic report on labour force* (Naypyidaw, Government of Myanmar).
- Impactt. 2016. *From boycott to boom? A socio-environmental map of Myanmar's garment sector in 2016* (London C&A Foundation).

International Labour Organization (ILO). 2012. *Practical challenges for maternity protection in the Cambodian garment industry* (Bangkok).

—. 2015. *Myanmar garment sub-sector value chain analysis* (Yangon).

—. 2016. *Employment and wages in Myanmar's nascent garment sector* (Bangkok).

—. 2017. *Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men* (Geneva, Gallup Inc).

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). 2015. *Sexual and reproductive health and rights: The key to gender equality and women's empowerment* (London).

Kucera, D. 2002. "Core labour standards and foreign direct investment", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 141, No. 1-2 (2002), pp. 31-70.

Myanmar Garment Manufacturers' Association (MGMA). 2014a. *Code of conduct* (Yangon).

—. 2014b. *Myanmar garment sector 10-year strategy 2015–2024* (Yangon).

Myanmar Marketing Research & Development (MMRD). 2017. *Report on pilot testing for gender equality assessment survey* (ILO-GIP) (Yangon).

Myint, M. 2014. *Feasibility Assessment of the Garment Sector Transparency Initiative (GITI): Case of Myanmar. Edited for Garment Sector Transparency Initiative* (Yangon) .

Myint, M.; Rasiah, R. 2012. "Foreign capital and garment export from Myanmar: Implications for the labour process", in *Institutions and Economics*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 151–172.

Nathan Associates. 2016. *The ecosystem for women's entrepreneurship in Myanmar: Networks, associations, organizations and other services that support women entrepreneurs* (Washington, DC, United States Agency for International Development).

Oxfam. 2015. *Made in Myanmar: Entrenched poverty or decent jobs for garment workers?* (Oxford).

Progressive Voice. 2016. *Raising the bottom: A report on the garment sector in Myanmar* (Yangon).

Tunderman, S. 2012. "Gendered employment in the Burmese garments industry: A gender critique of neoliberal development prescriptions for Myanmar". Master Thesis (Roskilde, Denmark, Roskilde University).

Universal Access Project. 2015. *Briefing cards: Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and the Post-2015 development agenda* (New York, International Women's Health Coalition).

Annex -Data collection tools



Survey

Interviewer Instructions

Before you start the survey, read out the following information, and secure the participant's verbal consent to participate.

My name is _____. I'm conducting a gender equality assessment on behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO). We are interviewing women who work in this sector to find out about their opportunities for skills training and promotion in their workplaces, as well as their experiences as women in the garment sector. The data we collect will help the ILO develop programs which are intended to improve women's experiences of working in the garment sector, with respect to their health and jobs.

Your answers are confidential. I will not ask for your name. I will not disclose to anybody the answers you give me. You do not have to answer all questions. However, the more questions you are able to answer, the more information we will have to inform our programming and future work.

The survey will take about 30 minutes. Are you willing to participate?

Survey Number: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Workplace Code: _____

DATE: Day / Month / 2017 Start Time: _____ End time: _____

Section 1: Socio-Demographic Data

“The first set of questions asks you about you. I would like some details about your home life and education. I am not recording the answers against your name, so your answers are confidential.”

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q101	What is your marital status?	Married	1	
		Single	2	
		Divorced	3	
		Separated	4	
		Widowed	5	
Q102	How old are you?	[Enter full years]		
		Don't know	88	
Q103	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Primary	1	
		Middle	2	
		High	3	
		University	4	
		Monastery	5	
None	6			
Q104	How many children under 16 are you responsible for?	[Enter number]		If 0, skip to Q107
Q105	How many of these children are living with you in the same house in Yangon? Who mostly takes care of these children while you are at work?	[Enter number]		If 0, skip to Q107
Q106		Factory childcare facility	1	
		Private childcare facility	2	
		Husband	3	
		Other family member	4	
		Friend / neighbour	5	
		Nobody	6	
Other (specify)	77			

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q107	Did you come to Yangon specifically to work in the garment sector?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q110
Q108	Who arranged your first job in the garment sector for you?	Me	1	
		A relative	2	
		A friend	3	
		An agency	4	
		A factory owner	5	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q109	How many times each year do you go back to your home village?	Never	1	
		Once	2	
		Twice	3	
		Three times	4	
		More than three times	5	
Q110	Do you live in a factory dormitory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q112
Q111	How satisfied are you with the conditions of this dormitory?	Very satisfied	1	
		Satisfied	2	
		Neutral	3	
		Dissatisfied	4	
		Very dissatisfied	5	
Q112	Who mostly looks after the domestic duties in the place where you live?	Me	1	Skip to Q201
		Husband	2	
		Other family member	3	
		Shared	4	
		Housemaid	5	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q113	Do you have to pay this person to look after the domestic duties in your house?	Yes	1	
		No	2	

Section 2: Employment Status and Salary

“The next set of questions asks you about your employment, such as hours of work and salary.”

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q201	What is your employment status?	Permanent worker	1	
		Temporary worker	2	
		Contract worker	3	
		Casual worker	4	
		Probationary worker	5	
		Apprentice / Trainee	6	
		Other (specify)	77	
		Don't know	88	
Q202	What is your current job?	Design / Pattern	1	
		Cutter / Spreader	2	
		Sewer	3	
		Finishing	4	
		Packer	5	
		Quality control	6	
		Presser / Ironer	7	
		Supervisor	8	
		Admin/Accounting (non-management)	9	
		Security	10	
		Trainer	11	
		Other (specify)	77	
		Q203	How long have you been working in the garment sector?	< 1 year
1 – 3 years	2			
3 – 5 years	3			
> 5 years	4			
Q204	How long have you been working in this factory?	< 1 year	1	
		1 – 3 years	2	
		3 – 5 years	3	
		> 5 years	4	
Q205	Did you work in a different garment factory before this one?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q208
Q206	Why did you leave your previous job?	The salary was low	1	Multiple answers allowed
		It was an unsafe workplace	2	
		It was an unpleasant work culture	3	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
		I faced discrimination	4	
		I had an argument with my supervisor / manager	5	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q207	Did you start your new job at the same salary level as your previous job?	Yes	1	
		No, at a lower level	2	
		No, at a higher level	3	
Q208	Did you pay a fee to get your current job in the garment sector?	Yes		Skip to Q211
		No		
Q209	To whom?	A relative	1	Multiple answers allowed
		A friend	2	
		An agency	3	
		A factory owner	4	
		The HR manager	5	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q210	How much in total?	[Enter amount]		
Q211	How are you paid in your current job?	Don't know	88	
		Piece rate	1	
		Hourly rate	2	
		Daily wage	3	
		Weekly wage	4	
		Every 2 weeks	5	
		Monthly wage	6	
		No wage	7	
		Don't know	88	
Q212	Do you receive a payslip showing how your salary has been calculated?	Yes	1	Skip to Q215
		No	2	
Q213	In what language is your payslip written?	Burmese	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Chinese	2	
		Korean	3	
		Japanese	4	
		Other (specify)	77	
		Don't know	88	
Q214	Can you read and understand your payslip?	Yes	1	
		No	2	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q215	Do you know what the minimum wage is?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q216	Do you receive at least 3,600 kyat per day (excluding overtime pay)?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q217	Do you have another job in addition to your factory job?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q218	Do you get to decide what your salary is spent on?	Yes	1	Skip to Q220
		No	2	
Q219	Who makes decisions about how you spend your salary?	My husband	1	
		Another family member	2	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q220	Does your family expect to receive some of the money from your salary?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q223
Q221	How often do you give money to family members?	Once a week	1	
		Once a month	2	
		Several times each year	3	
		Every time I get paid	4	
		Every time my family request	5	
Q222	Last month approximately what percentage of your total factory salary did your family take?	25%	1	
		50%	2	
		75%	3	
		100%	4	
Q223	How many hours do you usually work in the factory each day (not including overtime)?	< 8	1	
		8 - 9	2	
		9 - 10	3	
		10 - 11	4	
		11 - 12	5	
		> 12	6	
Q224	How many overtime hours do you usually work each week?	0	1	
		< 5	2	
		5 - 10	3	
		10 - 15	4	
		15 - 20	5	
		> 20	6	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q225	Can you refuse overtime without consequences?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q226	How many rest days are you allowed each week?	[Enter number]		
Q227	Have you signed an employment contract with your current employer?	Yes	1	Skip to Q231
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q228	In what language was the contract written?	Burmese	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Chinese	2	
		Korean	3	
		Japanese	4	
		Other (specify)	77	
		Don't know	88	
Q229	Were you able to read and understand the contract by yourself?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q230	Was the contract explained to you by a representative of your employer?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q231	Is there a trade union (BLO) in your factory?	Yes	1	Skip to Q233
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q232	Are you a member of this trade union (BLO)?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q233	Is there a workplace cooperation committee in your factory?	Yes	1	Skip to Q301
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q234	Did you vote to elect the representative?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	

Section 3: Experiences at Work: Opportunities and Discrimination

“The next set of questions asks you about your experiences as a woman working in your factory. The questions relate to job opportunities and training in your factory. We also have some questions about discrimination and harassment in your factory. Your answers are confidential. And you can refuse to answer any question if you do not feel comfortable providing an answer.”

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q301	Have you ever asked to do a different job in your factory?	Yes	1	Skip to Q303
		No	2	
Q302	Was your request successful?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q303	Have you ever asked to do a better paid job in your factory?	Yes	1	Skip to Q305
		No	2	
Q304	Was your request successful?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q305	In your view, do women and men have equal opportunities for developing new work skills in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No, men have more opportunities	2	
		No, women have more opportunities	3	
		Don't know	88	
Q306	In your view, do women and men have equal opportunities for doing higher paid jobs in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No, men have more opportunities	2	
		No, women have more opportunities	3	
		Don't know	88	
Q307	Do you think women experience barriers to developing new work skills or promotion in your factory?	Yes	1	Skip to Q309
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q308	What are these barriers?	Gender	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Age	2	
		Education	3	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
		Religion	4	
		Ethnicity	5	
		Family and household chores	6	
		Skills	7	
		Relationship with supervisor/ manager	8	
		Other (specify)	77	
		Don't know	88	
Q309	In the past year, have you taken part in any skills training in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q311
Q310	Why not?	It was not offered	1	Multiple answers allowed Skip to Q312
		I am too busy with work	2	
		I am too busy with childcare	3	
		I am too busy with household chores	4	
		I could not afford it	5	
		My supervisor would not let me	6	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q311	What was this training for?	Learning new skills	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Learning new machinery	2	
		Learning new operations	3	
		Workers' rights	4	
		Workplace grievance policy	5	
		Workplace health issues	6	
		Workplace safety issues	7	
		Anti-harassment training	8	
		Literacy or life skills training	9	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q312	Does sexual harassment occur in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q313	Have you been subjected to sexual harassment in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q321
		Don't know	88	
Q314	The most recent time this happened, who by?	Co-worker	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Supervisor	2	
		Manager	3	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
		Owner	4	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q315	What was the gender of the person who harassed you?	Male	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Female	2	
Q316	Where did this happen?	In factory accommodation	1	Multiple answers allowed
		In the workplace (during regular work hours)	2	
		In the workplace (during overtime work hours)	3	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q317	When did this happen?	Between 6am and 8 am	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Between 8am and 5pm	2	
		Between 5pm and 7pm	3	
		Between 7pm and 6am	4	
Q318	Did this happen on pay day?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q319	What was your response?	Discussed with colleagues	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Discussed with supervisor / manager	2	
		Discussed with trade union (BLO) representative	3	
		Considered quitting	4	
		Took sick leave	5	
		Considered strike action	6	
		Took strike action	7	
		Took no action	8	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q320	What positive response, if any, did your employer take?	Provided me with counselling	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Allowed me to take time off with pay	2	
		Disciplined the perpetrator	3	
		Sacked the perpetrator	4	
		Introduced a new policy	5	
		Communicated an existing policy	6	
		Provided awareness raising for all employees	7	
		Documented the incident	8	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
		Facilitated a mediation session between me and the perpetrator	9	
		None	10	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q321	Have you been subjected to sexual harassment when travelling to or from work?	Yes	1	Skip to Q323
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q322	The most recent time this happened, who by?	Co-worker	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Supervisor	2	
		Manager	3	
		Owner	4	
		Food stall owner	5	
		Private taxi/bus driver or conductor	6	
		Factory vehicle driver	7	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q323	Does verbal abuse occur in your factory?	Yes	1	Skip to Q331
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q324	Have you ever been subjected to verbal abuse in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q325	The most recent time this happened, who by?	Co-worker	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Supervisor	2	
		Manager	3	
		Owner	4	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q326	What was the gender of the person who abused you?	Male	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Female	2	
Q327	Where did this happen?	In factory accommodation	1	Multiple answers allowed
		In the workplace (during regular work hours)	2	
		In the workplace (during overtime work hours)	3	
		Other (specify)	77	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q328	When did this happen?	Between 6am and 8 am	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Between 8am and 5pm	2	
		Between 5pm and 7pm	3	
		Between 7pm and 6am	4	
Q329	What was your response?	Discussed with colleagues	1	Multiple answers allowed)
		Discussed with supervisor / manager	2	
		Discussed with trade union (BLO) representative	3	
		Considered quitting	4	
		Took sick leave	5	
		Considered strike action	6	
		Took strike action	7	
		Took no action	8	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q330	What positive response, if any, did your employer take?	Provided me with counselling	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Allowed me to take time off with pay	2	
		Disciplined the perpetrator	3	
		Sacked the perpetrator	4	
		Introduced a new policy	5	
		Communicated an existing policy	6	
		Provided awareness raising for all employees	7	
		Documented the incident	8	
		Facilitated a mediation session between me and the perpetrator	9	
		None	10	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q331	Have you been subjected to verbal abuse when travelling to or from work?	Yes	1	Skip to Q333
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q332	The most recent time this happened, who by?	Co-worker	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Supervisor	2	
		Manager	3	
		Owner	4	
		Food stall owner	5	
		Private taxi/bus driver or conductor	6	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
		Factory vehicle driver	7	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q333	Does physical abuse occur in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q334	Have you ever been subjected to physical abuse in your factory?	Yes	1	Skip to Q341
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q335	The most recent time this happened, who by?	Co-worker	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Supervisor	2	
		Manager	3	
		Owner	4	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q336	What was the gender of the person who abused you?	Male	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Female	2	
Q337	Where did this happen?	In factory accommodation	1	Multiple answers allowed
		In the workplace (during regular work hours)	2	
		In the workplace (during overtime work hours)	3	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q338	When did this happen?	Between 6am and 8 am	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Between 8am and 5pm	2	
		Between 5pm and 7pm	3	
		Between 7pm and 6am	4	
Q339	What was your response?	Discussed with colleagues	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Discussed with supervisor / manager	2	
		Discussed with trade union (BLO) representative	3	
		Considered quitting	4	
		Took sick leave	5	
		Considered strike action	6	
		Took strike action	7	
		Took no action	8	
		Other (specify)	77	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q340	What positive response, if any, did your employer take?	Provided me with counselling	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Allowed me to take time off with pay	2	
		Disciplined the perpetrator	3	
		Sacked the perpetrator	4	
		Introduced a new policy	5	
		Communicated an existing policy	6	
		Provided awareness raising for all employees	7	
		Documented the incident	8	
		Facilitated a mediation session between me and the perpetrator	9	
		None	10	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q341	Have you been subjected to physical abuse when travelling to or from work?	Yes	1	Skip to Q343
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q342	Who by?	Co-worker	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Supervisor	2	
		Manager	3	
		Owner	4	
		Food stall owner	5	
		Private taxi/bus driver or conductor	6	
		Factory vehicle driver	7	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q343	In general, how safe do you feel in your workplace?	Very safe	1	
		Somewhat safe	2	
		Safe	3	
		Somewhat unsafe	4	
		Very unsafe	5	
Q344	What is the gender of your current supervisor?	Male	1	
		Female	2	
Q345	What is the nationality of your current supervisor?	Myanmar	1	
		Chinese	2	
		Other(specify)	77	
		Don't know	88	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q346	When your supervisor corrects your work, how often do they do so with respect?	All the time	1	
		Most of the time	2	
		Sometimes	3	
		Rarely	4	
		Never	5	
Q347	Are you ever punished at work in this factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q401
Q348	What common forms of punishment do you receive at work?	Shouting	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Verbal insults	2	
		Physical (e.g., hitting)	3	
		Deduction of wages	4	
		Forced to work longer	5	
		Forced to work during breaks	6	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q349	Why are you punished?	Making a mistake	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Talking at work	2	
		Being late for work	3	
		Refusing overtime	4	
		Missing work	5	
		Missing a production target	6	
		Participation in union (BLO) activities	7	
		Other (specify)	77	

Section 4: Services at Work: Sexual and Reproductive Health

“The next set of questions asks you about sexual and reproductive health. Don’t worry if you do not know an answer, or if you do not feel comfortable providing an answer. Again, anything you say is confidential, and nobody will be able to see the answers you have given. The answers you give us will help the ILO to identify what education programs might better support women working in the garment sector in Myanmar.”

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q401	Does your employer provide paid maternity leave?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q402	As far as you know, are employers required by law to pay maternity leave?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q403	Did your current employer require you to take a pregnancy test before employing you?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q404	Is there a childcare facility in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q405	Is there a first aid room or health clinic in your factory?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Q410
		Don't know	88	
Q406	Is this clinic run by a medical officer or nursing staff/aid?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q407	Are the services provided at the clinic confidential?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q408	Does the clinic offer free medication?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q409	Do you receive any form of punishment if you use this clinic?	Yes	1	
		No	2	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q410	How would you rate the cleanliness of the female toilet facilities in your factory?	Excellent	1	
		Very good	2	
		Good	3	
		Fair	4	
		Poor	5	
Q411	Can you use the toilet whenever you need to go?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q412	Do you feel you have enough privacy in the toilets?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q413	Do you feel safe in the toilets?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
Q414	When you are or were menstruating, would you usually take time off work?	Yes	1	Skip to Q418
		No	2	
		Not applicable	66	
Q415	For how many days each time?	1	1	
		2	2	
		3	3	
		> 3	4	
Q416	Why?	I think menstruation is unclean	1	Multiple answers allowed
		I am embarrassed	2	
		I worry about infecting other people	3	
		I don't like to use the factory toilets	4	
		It's difficult to manage while working	5	
		My supervisor tells me to	6	
		Religious reasons	7	
		I experience pain	8	
		Other (specify)	77	
Q417	Is money deducted from your salary if you take time off due to menstruation?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	

Number	Question	Answer	Code	Notes
Q418	In the past year, have you received any training on sexual and reproductive health in your workplace?	Yes	1	Finish
		No	2	
		Don't know	88	
Q419	What did this training cover?	Family planning	1	Multiple answers allowed
		Sexually transmitted infections	2	
		HIV/AIDS	3	
		Pregnancy and/or childbirth	4	
		Childcare and/or breastfeeding	5	
		Menstruation	6	
		Sexual behaviours	7	
		Other (specify)	77	

Key Informant Interview #1: Human Resources Managers

Interviewer Instructions

Before you start the interview, read out the following information, and secure the participant's verbal consent to participate.

My name is _____. I'm conducting a gender equality assessment on behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO). We are interviewing human resources managers of garment factories to find out about some of the issues that impact on women in the garment sector. The data we collect will help the ILO to develop programs which are intended to improve women's experiences of working in the garment sector, with respect to their health and jobs.

I would like to ask you some questions about your factory. The questions will focus on women's sexual health, discrimination, and access to training opportunities for women. Your answers are confidential. I will not ask for your name. I will not record the name of your factory against the answers you give. I will not disclose to anybody the answers you give me. You do not have to answer a question. However, the more questions you are able to answer, the more information we will have to inform our programming and future work.

The interview will take about 30 minutes. I would like to record the interview so we can review our discussion in full afterwards. Are you willing to participate?

Survey Number: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Workplace Code: _____

DATE: Day / Month / 2017 Start Time: _____ End time: _____

Section 1: Socio-Demographic Data

“The first set of questions asks you about you. I would like some basic details about your position. I am not recording the answers against your name, so your answers are confidential.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q101	What is your position or title?	
Q102	How long have you worked in the garment sector in Myanmar?	
Q103	How long have you worked in your current position?	
Q104	What is your nationality?	

Section 2: Workplace Culture

“The next set of questions asks you to talk about the workplace culture of your factory.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q201	How many workers are employed in your factory? Please provide the total number of men and women; and a breakdown by ethnicity if possible.	
Q202	How many supervisors are employed in your factory? Please provide the total number of men and women; and a breakdown by ethnicity if possible.	

Number	Question	Answer
Q203	How would you describe the relationship between managers and workers in your factory?	
Q204	How would you describe the relationship between supervisors and workers in your factory?	
Q205	In your experience, is there a different kind of relationship between supervisors and female employees than between supervisors and male employees?	
Q206	In your view, what are the differences for women and men in terms of their experiences as employees in your factory?	
Q207	In your view, do women or men make better supervisors; and why?	

Section 3: Workplace Training

"The next set of questions asks you to discuss training and career development opportunities in your factory."

Number	Question	Answer
Q301	What kinds of skills training and career development programs are available for employees in your factory?	
Q302	Are there any training programs which are specifically targeted at women? What are these?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q303	What is the process for selecting someone for promotion, including how you evaluate someone for promotion?	
Q304	What leadership roles are available for female workers in your factory?	
Q305	Do you believe opportunities for promotion are equally available to all employees? Please provide evidence to support your view.	
Q306	Are there any specific reasons why you would not recommend the promotion of a woman into a leadership position?	
Q307	What could your factory do more of to support opportunities for promotion for women?	

Section 4: Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health

"The next set of questions asks you to provide information about the sexual and reproductive health of female workers in your factory."

Number	Question	Answer
Q401	Is there a health clinic in your factory? If yes, what services are provided? If no, why not?	
Q402	Does the clinic provide sexual and reproductive health services for women (e.g., pregnancy testing, family planning)? If yes, what services?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q403	Do you offer training or other services to improve women's knowledge of sexual and reproductive health? If yes, describe this training. If no, do you think this is important training to offer; and why?	
Q404	What is the factory's policy on maternity leave? How is this policy communicated?	
Q405	What is the factory's policy on breastfeeding? How is this policy communicated?	
Q406	What is the factory's policy on pregnancy? How is this policy communicated?	
Q407	Do you think women's sexual and reproductive health is an important issue for employers to consider? Why or why not?	

Section 5: Discrimination and Harassment

"The final set of questions is about harassment and discrimination in your factory. You are not required to provide any specific details of cases, and I would ask you not to mention any employee by name when giving your answers. Your answers are confidential. And you can refuse to answer any question if you do not feel comfortable providing an answer."

Number	Question	Answer
Q501	Do you see evidence of sexual harassment, verbal abuse or physical abuse in your factory? Please explain where this happens, how often, and between which groups of people?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q502	In the past year, how many complaints have you received about harassment and abuse?	
Q503	How have these complaints been handled?	
Q504	What are the main causes of harassment or abuse against women in your factory?	
Q505	How do these incidents impact the factory?	
Q506	What are your factory's policies on sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse? How are these policies communicated?	
Q507	What does your factory do well to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse?	
Q508	What more could your factory do to prevent harassment and abuse?	
Q509	What external support would help your factory prevent harassment and abuse?	

“Thank you very much for taking part in this interview.”

Key Informant Interview #2: Supervisors

Interviewer Instructions

Before you start the interview, read out the following information, and secure the participant's verbal consent to participate.

My name is _____. I'm conducting a gender equality assessment on behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO). We are interviewing supervisors of garment factories to find out about some of the issues that impact on women in the garment sector. The data we collect will help the ILO to develop programs which are intended to improve women's experiences of working in the garment sector, with respect to their health and jobs.

I would like to ask you some questions about your factory and the experiences of the women you supervise. The questions will focus on training opportunities for women and gender quality. Your answers are confidential. I will not ask for your name. I will not record the name of your factory against the answers you give. I will not disclose to anybody the answers you give me. You do not have to answer a question. However, the more questions you are able to answer, the more information we will have to inform our programming and future work.

The interview will take about 30 minutes. I would like to record the interview so we can review our discussion in full afterwards. Are you willing to participate?

Survey Number: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Workplace Code: _____

DATE: Day / Month / 2017 Start Time: _____ End time: _____

Section 1: Socio-Demographic Data

“The first set of questions asks you about you. I would like some basic details about your position. I am not recording the answers against your name, so your answers are confidential.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q101	What is your position or title?	
Q102	How long have you worked in the garment sector in Myanmar?	
Q103	How long have you worked in your current position?	
Q104	What is your nationality?	

Section 2: Workplace Culture

“The next set of questions asks you to talk about the workplace culture of your factory.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q201	How many workers do you supervise? Please provide the total number of men and women; and a breakdown by ethnicity if possible.	
Q202	How would you describe the relationship between supervisors and workers?	
Q203	How would you describe the relationship between managers and workers?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q204	In your experience, is there a different kind of relationship between supervisors and female employees than between supervisors and male employees?	
Q205	In your view, what are the differences for women and men in terms of their experiences as employees in your factory?	

Section 3: Workplace Training

“The next set of questions asks you to discuss training and opportunities for promotion in your factory.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q301	What kinds of skills training and career development programs are available for employees?	
Q302	Are there any programs which are specifically targeted at women? If yes, what are these?	
Q303	What leadership roles are available for female workers?	
Q304	Do you believe opportunities for promotion into leadership roles are equally available to all employees? Please provide evidence to support your view.	
Q305	Are there any specific reasons why you would not recommend the promotion of a female employee into a leadership position?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q306	What more could your factory do to support opportunities for promotion of women into leadership roles?	

Section 4: Discrimination and Harassment

"The final set of questions is about harassment and discrimination in your factory. You are not required to provide any specific details of cases, and I would ask you not to mention any employee by name when giving your answers. I am only looking for general answers. Your answers are confidential. And you can refuse to answer any question if you do not feel comfortable providing an answer."

Number	Question	Answer
Q401	Does verbal or physical occur in the workplace? Please explain where this happens, how often, and between which groups of people?	
Q402	How do you respond when you receive a complaint of verbal or physical abuse? Has this ever led to a dismissal, for example?	
Q403	What are the causes of verbal and physical abuse against women?	
Q404	What could your factory do better to prevent verbal and physical abuse against women?	
Q405	Does sexual harassment occur in the workplace? Please explain where this happens, how often, and between which groups of people?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q406	How do you respond when you receive a complaint of sexual harassment?	
Q407	What are the causes of sexual harassment against women?	
Q408	What could your factory do better to prevent sexual harassment against women?	
Q409	Does discrimination occur in the workplace? Please explain where this happens, how often, and between which groups of people?	
Q410	How do you respond when you receive a complaint of discrimination?	
Q411	What are the causes of discrimination against women?	
Q412	What could your factory do better to prevent discrimination against women?	
Q413	What does your factory do well to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse?	
Q414	What does your factory do well to prevent and respond to discrimination against women?	

“Thank you very much for taking part in this interview.”

Key Informant Interview #3: Trade Union Representatives

Interviewer Instructions

Before you start the interview, read out the following information, and secure the participant's verbal consent to participate.

My name is _____. I'm conducting a gender equality assessment on behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO). We are interviewing trade union representatives of the garment sector to find out about some of the issues that impact on female employees. The data we collect will help the ILO to develop programs which are intended to improve women's experiences of working in the garment sector, with respect to their health and jobs.

I would like to ask you some questions about experiences of gender issues in the sector. The questions will focus on discrimination, sexual health issues, and training opportunities for women. Your answers are confidential. I will not ask for your name. I will not record the name of your organisation against the answers you give. I will not disclose to anybody the answers you give me. You do not have to answer a question. However, the more questions you are able to answer, the more information we will have to inform our programming and future work.

The interview will take about 30 minutes. I would like to record the interview so we can review our discussion in full afterwards. Are you willing to participate?

Survey Number: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Workplace Code: _____

DATE: Day / Month / 2017 Start Time: _____ End time: _____

Section 2: Workplace Culture

“The first set of questions asks you about you. I would like some basic details about your position. I am not recording the answers against your name, so your answers are confidential.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q201	How would you describe the relationship between supervisors and workers?	
Q202	How would you describe the relationship between managers and workers?	
Q203	In your experience, is there a different kind of relationship between supervisors and female employees than between supervisors and male employees?	
Q204	In your view, what are the differences for women and men in terms of their experiences as employees?	

Section 3: Workplace Training

“The next set of questions asks you to discuss training and career development opportunities in the sector, especially for women.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q301	What kinds of skills training and career development programs are available for employees?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q302	Are there any programs which are specifically targeted at women? If yes, what are these?	
Q303	What leadership roles are available for female workers?	
Q304	Do you believe opportunities for promotion into leadership roles are equally available to all employees? Please provide evidence to support your view.	
Q305	What could BLOs do more of to support opportunities for promotion for women?	

Section 4: Discrimination and Harassment

“The next set of questions is about harassment and discrimination in the sector. You are not required to provide any specific details of cases, and I would ask you not to mention any employee or factory by name when giving your answers. Your answers are confidential. And you can refuse to answer any question if you do not feel comfortable providing an answer.”

Number	Question	Answer
Q401	Does verbal or physical occur in the workplace? Please explain where this happens, how often, and between which groups of people?	
Q402	What are the causes of verbal and physical abuse against women?	
Q403	Does sexual harassment occur in the workplace? Please explain where this happens, how often, and between which groups of people?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q404	What are the causes of sexual harassment against women?	
Q405	Does discrimination occur in the workplace? Please explain where this happens, how often, and between which groups of people?	
Q406	What are the causes of discrimination against women?	
Q407	How do these incidents impact the sector?	
Q408	What does the sector do well to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical abuse?	
Q409	What more could the sector do to prevent harassment and abuse?	

Section 5: Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health

"The final set of questions asks you to provide information about health services which are offered to female employees in the sector."

Number	Question	Answer
Q501	What sexual and reproductive health services are provided for female employees?	
Q502	What is the level of knowledge among managers about what they are legally required to provide to support women's sexual and reproductive health?	

Number	Question	Answer
Q503	Do you think factory managers recognise the importance of sexual and reproductive health as a workplace issue? Why or why not?	
Q504	Do you think BLOs recognise the importance of sexual and reproductive health as a workplace issue? Why or why not?	
Q505	In what ways are female workers in the sector disempowered because of factory practices which might not support their sexual and reproductive health?	
Q506	What could be done to help respond to these practices?	

“Thank you very much for taking part in this interview.”

Focus Group Discussion

Facilitator Instructions

Before you start the interview, read out the following information, and secure the participant's verbal consent to participate.

My name is _____. I'm conducting a gender equality assessment on behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO). We are holding some group discussions with female employees in this sector, to discuss their views on issues that impact on women at work. We want to hear your ideas. The information we collect will help the ILO to develop programs which are intended to improve women's experiences of working in the garment sector, with respect to their health and jobs.

The questions and discussion will focus on women's sexual health, discrimination, and access to training opportunities for women. Your answers are confidential. I will not ask for your names. I will not disclose to anybody the answers you give me. I also ask that you do not discuss anything that is said inside this room with any other person. You do not have to answer a question. However, the more questions you are able to answer, the more information we have to inform our programming and future work.

The discussion will take about 1 hour. I would like to record the discussions so we can review it in full afterwards. Are you willing to participate?

Survey Number: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Workplace Code: _____

DATE: Day / Month / 2017 **Start Time:** _____ **End time:** _____

Section 1: Socio-Demographic Data

“The first set of questions asks you about women’s experiences in your factory.”

Number	Question
Q101	What is the relationship like between women and men in your factory?
Q102	What is the relationship like between women and supervisors in your factory?
Q103	Is verbal or physical abuse a concern for women in your factory? Explain why. How does it affect women? Who is the instigator of the abuse? What does it involve?
Q104	Is sexual harassment a concern for women in your factory? Explain why. How does it affect women? Who is the instigator of the harassment? What does it involve?
Q105	Is discrimination a concern for women in your factory? Explain why. How does it affect women? Who is the instigator of the discrimination? What does it involve?
Q106	What do women do when issues like this occur at work?
Q107	Does your workplace have a formal complaints procedure to respond to these issues? If yes, explain how this works and if it is effective. If no, what response is taken?
Q108	What does your factory do well to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, physical abuse and verbal abuse in the workplace?
Q109	What could your employer do better to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, physical abuse and verbal abuse in the workplace?

Section 2: Gender Equality

“The next set of questions ask you opportunities for skills training and career development for women in your factory.”

Number	Question
Q201	What do you think about women taking on leadership positions at work (including in BLOs)? Do you support this? Why or why not?
Q202	Do you think men are supportive of women becoming supervisors in your factory?
Q203	Are there any examples of women who have become managers in your factory? If yes, why were they chosen? If no, why do you think this is the case?
Q204	Do you have a desire to do more skills training or to develop your career? Why or why not?
Q205	What prevents you from doing this?
Q206	What would help you do this?
Q207	In your view, what are the most difficult aspects of balancing your work life and your family responsibilities?

Section 3: Sexual and Reproductive Health

"The next set of questions asks you about sexual and reproductive health for women in your factory.

Number	Question
Q301	What sexual health issues impact on women's ability to work? Identify the specific issues and explain the impacts.
Q302	What concerns do women in your factory have when working while pregnant?
Q303	Do you think women who are pregnant or who have infant children should be allowed to continue to work in your factory? Why or why not?
Q304	What concerns do women in your factory have when working after giving birth?
Q305	Is there a suitable area for breastfeeding in your factory?
Q306	What concerns do women in your factory have when working while menstruating?
Q307	What concerns do women in your factory have for their children while they are at work?
Q308	Does your employer allow women to take time off to attend a health clinic if they or their children are ill?
Q309	Does your employer provide maternity leave? Do you think your employer is legally required to provide maternity leave?
Q310	Have you ever received any training from your employer about sexual health issues? If yes, which specific issues were covered in the training? If no, do you think your employer should provide this kind of training?

The International Labour Organization
Liason Office in Myanmar
No. 1 [A] Kanbae (Thitsar) Road, Yankin Township,
Yangon, Myanmar
email: yangon@ilo.org
Website: www.ilo.org/myanmar

ISBN : 978-92-2-132153-8



The H&M logo is rendered in a bold, red, stylized font. The letters 'H' and 'M' are connected by an ampersand '&'. The font has a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance.