

May Day also acquainted as International Labor Day, is being celebrated on 1st May of each year since its inception. This day has a great insinuation of why it is celebrated all over the world. The history goes back to late 19th century where a large group of workers demanded for fair wage and shorten the prolonged work hour to eight-hour shift in 1886 in United States. That day, 3 lacs workers walked off their jobs to stood up against unfairness through labor strike. On 4th May 1886, the labor movement got heighten up with 10 workers being killed when police opened fire on a demonstration in the US city of Chicago near Hay Market organized to press their demand for limiting the daily working shift to eight hours from 12 hours. The unrest got so massive, eventually workers demand of eight-hour shift a day got acknowledged. Since then May first day declared as an international workers day to show solidarity commemorating their sacrifices for imbedding labor privileges.

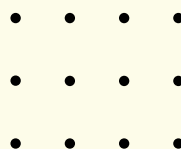
Different countries observe this day with their individual culture, demonstrations and events. Bangladesh mostly observe this day by holding human chain, mass rallies in streets, demonstrating placards with worker's demands and, various campaigns through social media. These different initiatives adopt by the government, trade union federation, labor rights organizations & general factory workers. Bangladesh is the second largest RMG goods export country having over 4.2 million workers worldwide. Still, the sector encompasses with lots of scrutiny and criticisms. Low wage, availing of gender-based harassment, poor safety & health hazards, excess heat inside the factory due to less air ventilation & cooling system, mass workers termination & blacklisting, union busting – these are the existing obstacles in our garment sector. Recently, labor reform & women reform commissions have highlighted major reforms urging the interim government to embed living standard wage by reviewing after every 3 years; ensuring safe working environments; compensating for employee's workplace injury; functionalizing anti-harassment cells & day care facilities. May day reminds us that the labor workforce of a country holds the key to drive the country's economic growth to high standards and so, we all need to stand in solidarity to recognize workers' struggles and enforce their legal rights in the society.



BCWS Theme for the International Labor Day:



Automation Era! Embed Social & Climate Justice, Living Wage, Equality and Decent Work by Fostering Unity Among Workers & Employers





BCWS Initiative – Hardening Workers’ Voice:

BCWS is a rights-based labor educator organization battling for a job with dignity since 2000 in Bangladesh. Its purpose is to empower and support garment workers who are seeking decent working conditions and to advocate domestically and internationally for greater respect for labor rights. Major BCWS initiatives highlight-

- ➔ **Know your Rights Program** – BCWS is providing trainings to garment workers to enrich their knowledge regarding labor laws & labor rules. These trainings acquaint workers about their legal privileges.
- ➔ **Efficacious Leadership Program:** BCWS capacitates factory workers on leadership skills so they can understand about the unfairness and raise their voices against any discrimination to protect their dignities.
- ➔ **Climate-Justice Program:** Educating workers on adverse climate impact and addressing mitigation techniques.
- ➔ **SRHR Training Program:** BCWS is educating RMG and community level women on the concept of SRHR to aware them about the reproductive health, family planning, safe motherhood.
- ➔ **GBVH Program:** Raising workers’ cognizance on standing against violence at all levels.
- ➔ **Dialogues Program:** Engaging relevant stakeholders to have discussion on ameliorating labor rights.
- ➔ **Policy Advocacy & Campaign:** Working with pertinent stakeholders to reform relevant laws & policies. Demonstrating campaigns both inter-intranational platforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BCWS:

- ➔ Embed living standard wage for all garment factory workers.
- ➔ Amend Bangladesh Labor Law enforcing employment injury scheme, repel workplace harassment in accordance with ILO Convention 121, 189 & 190.
- ➔ Accelerate labor court works through establishing alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
- ➔ Brands must be hold accountable to ensure labor rights, climate justice, living wage, FoA.
- ➔ Functionalize anti-harassment cells and day care facilities.
- ➔ Ensure 6 months maternity leave & 2 weeks fatherly leave.
- ➔ Safeguard Rights to worker organizing; stop union busting & workers’ blacklisting.
- ➔ Strengthen workers’ voice on just transition.
- ➔ Ensure equal participation of women in decision-making process.



Strengthen Women Workers’ Voice

