

RESEARCH REPORT

UNDERSTANDING THE REASONS BEHIND BIDI WORKERS' PROTESTS IN BANGLADESH: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION



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With Support from:

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK)

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01. BIDI INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH

Bidi is a hand-rolled cheap tobacco product. Although the use of bidi was previously widespread, the number of bidi smokers is now in decline. As per the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2017, the prevalence of bidi use among adults stands at only 5 percent, which was 11.2 percent in 2009.¹ In a 2019 report² titled “The Revenue and Employment Outcome of Bidi Taxation in Bangladesh” by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), it was found that in 2012-13 FY, the total number of bidi sticks (tax-paid) sold stands at 51.19 billion, which decreased by 26.7 percent in 2016-17 and became 37.53 billion. The study also reveals that the total number of full-time equivalent bidi workers, including regular, part-time and contractual workers, stands at 46,916, only 0.074 percent of the country's 63.5 million workforce. The bidi industry is a hazardous industry with extremely low wages, average monthly income is only 1,927 BDT. It is impossible to provide for a family with a bidi worker's income. As a result, all the members of the family, children, women, have to get involved in bidi manufacturing. Bidi industry ranks fourth in the list of 38 hazardous sectors where Bangladesh government banned child labour.³

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02. STUDY CONTEXT

¹ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and National Tobacco Control Cell, Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Bangladesh 2017. Available at: https://ntcc.gov.bd/ntcc/uploads/editor/files/GATS%20Report%20Final-2017_20%20MB.PDF (accessed on 15 April 2021)

² The revenue and employment outcome of bidi taxation in Bangladesh. Dhaka: National Board of Revenue (NBR), Government of Bangladesh; 2019. Available at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/searo/bangladesh/pdf-reports/cat-2/biri-study-report-03-12-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=b8fea69_2 (accessed on 14 April 2021)

³ Bangladesh Government Order, 13 March 2013, 38 processes/activities hazardous for children. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms_486739.pdf (accessed on 15 April 2021)

Each year, months before the declaration of national budget, bidi workers start taking to the streets in a coordinated manner demanding tax reduction on bidi. Such movement of bidi workers continues even when the budget is passed. This is unprecedented in Bangladesh considering that no other industry in Bangladesh has shown such coordinated effort to reduce taxes.

In Bangladesh, bidi is very cheap and the taxes on bidi has remained unchanged for the last four FY years. Besides, it is the smoker who bears the total burden of taxes imposed on bidi. The workers' well-being is in no way related to such taxation. Bidi workers' protests remain fixated on tax and price reduction over the years while avoiding vital issues, such as better wages, better benefits and safe workplace environment. Therefore, the bidi workers' move against taxation has become controversial and questionable.

The main objectives of the present study are to investigate how the protests of the bidi workers are being staged across the country years after years, how spontaneous these movements are, and what the real purpose of the movement is.

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03. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several researches have been conducted on the bidi industry and bidi workers of Bangladesh. Roy in his "Tobacco consumption and the poor: An ethnographic analysis of hand-rolled cigarette (bidi) use in Bangladesh" (2011) has shown how bidi was being used by the poor of Netrokona as a remedy to hunger, indigestion and constipation.⁴ Another work, "Bidi in Bangladesh: myths and reality. The bidi producing

⁴ Roy A. Tobacco consumption and the poor: An ethnographic analysis of hand-rolled cigarette (bidi) use in Bangladesh. *Ethnography* 2011; 13:162–88. Available at:

sector in Bangladesh" (2012) by Rashid and Sinha has dealt with issues involving the number and geographical locations of bidi factories, the number of bidi industry workforce and financial and health conditions of bidi workers.⁵ A household survey, titled "Vulnerable Mapping of Workers in Bidi Factory (Tobacco Industries) through Household Survey" was conducted by Association for Community Development (ACD) in 2017 in Haragarch of Rangpur which presented the socio-economic conditions (literacy rate, education, child marriage, health consciousness, family income and tobacco use expenditure) and health risks of bidi workers.⁶ In a 2018 study, titled "Short-term (private) gains at the cost of long-term (public) benefits: child labour in bidi factories of Bangladesh", Rahman and ABM Zubair et al. showed how the bidi industry is largely dependent on cheap child labour of the northern districts. As per the study, 50 to 70 percent of bidi workers are children.⁷ The National Board of Revenue (NBR), the apex tax authority of Bangladesh, conducted a study titled "The revenue and employment outcome of biri taxation in Bangladesh" where it has shown the work conditions of bidi industry workers, wages, impact of taxation on the lives and livelihoods of bidi industry workers.⁸ The study "How the Bidi Tobacco Industry Harms Child-workers: Results from a Walk-through and Quantitative Survey" (2020) by Kim et al. has dealt with the harmful effects of bidi industry on its child workers.⁹

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43496443.pdf?refregid=excelsior%3A12dad13f4b4e4ce687c3c4e2f8639caf4> (accessed on 14 April 2021)

⁵ Rasheed A, Sinha S. Bidi in Bangladesh: myths and reality. The bidi producing sector in Bangladesh. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids; 2012. Available at: <http://www.tobaccoindustrywatchbd.org/contents/uploaded/Bidi.pdf> (accessed on 14 April 2021)

⁶ Association for Community Development (ACD). 2017. Vulnerable Mapping of Workers in Bidi Factory (Tobacco Industries) through Household Survey.

⁷ Rahman, S.M., Hossein, M., Alam, M.S., Shahriar, M.H., Rasul, I. and A.B.M. Zubair (2018) 'Short-term (private) gains at the cost of long-term (public) benefits: child labour in bidi factories of Bangladesh', *Int. J. Behavioural and Healthcare Research*. 2018 Vol.6 No.3/4

⁸ The revenue and employment outcome of biri taxation in Bangladesh. Dhaka: National Board of Revenue (NBR), Government of Bangladesh; 2019. Available at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/searo/bangladesh/pdf-reports/cat-2/biri-study-report-03-12-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=b8fea69_2 (accessed on 14 April 2021)

⁹ How the Bidi Tobacco Industry Harms Child-workers: Results From a Walk-through and Quantitative Survey. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7303532/#> (accessed on 14 April 2021)

04. RATIONALE

The aforementioned research works, published between 2011 and 2020, do not address or investigate bidi industry workers' protests to reduce taxes on bidi, spontaneity of the protests, financial backing of such movement and identifying the actual beneficiaries of the protests of bidi industry workers.

05. OBJECTIVES

- To explore how the protests of the bidi workers are being staged years after years
- To find out the extent of spontaneity of the protests and where the financial and other backing come from.
- To explore who are the actual beneficiaries of such protests.

06. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using qualitative research methods. This is the first research of its kind in Bangladesh. Primarily, the existing data and other resources (secondary data/literature), particularly the media pieces on the topic were analysed. To facilitate field-level investigation, a check list, with guiding questions, was prepared based on the secondary information. The field research was done mainly through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII). Four study areas (Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Pabna and Kushtia) were selected purposively considering the concentration of bidi factories and the frequency as well as the intensity of bidi workers' protests. A total of 11 FGDs and 4 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted. A total of 92 participants comprising bidi workers, labour

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leaders, representatives of local civil society organizations, i.e. journalists, development activists, teachers, service holders, writers, and cultural activists were involved in interviews and group discussions. Participants were selected purposively with the help of local research collaborators.

07. RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION

PROGGA (Knowledge for Progress), an anti-tobacco and advocacy organization, provided technical assistance, field work, analysis of data and information and preparing research reports. The research was conducted under the supervision and with the assistance of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK).

08. DURATION

The research work was conducted between December 2020 and March 2021.

09. LIMITATIONS

The study was conducted in only 04 (four) districts of Bangladesh. As a result, it should be considered as an Indicative Study.

10. PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

A total of 92 participants, comprising bidi workers/leaders from 14 factories (located in Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kushtia and Pabna) and local civil society participated in focus group discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Among the participants, 62 are bidi industry workers/leaders (67.39%) and 30 are civil society representatives (32.61%).

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The age of participants ranges from 15 to 65 years old. However, most of the bidi workers and civil society representatives belong to 25-44 and 35-54 age range respectively. Among 62 bidi workers, 34 of them are female (54.84%) and 28 are male (45.16%). 37.10 Percent of workers (23 in number) have experience of working 11-15 years in bidi factory. 17.74 percent (11 in number) have 4-10 years of experience and only 9 bidi workers have over 30 years of working experience in bidi factory.

Table 1: Age of Participants

Age (years)	Bidi workers (number)	Percentage	Civil Society Representatives	Percentage
15-24	5	5.43	2	2.17
25-34	22	23.91	3	3.26
35-44	16	17.39	5	5.43
45-54	9	9.78	15	16.30
55-64	8	8.70	4	4.35
65+	2	2.17	1	1.09
Total	62	67.39	30	32.61

Table 2: Participants (by Gender)

Bidi workers	Number	Percentage
Male	28	45.16
Female	34	54.84

Total	62	100.00
Civil Society Representatives	Number	Percentage
Male	30	100.00
Female		
Total	30	100.00

Table 3: Length of Experience in Bidi Industry

Experience in Bidi Industry (years)	Number	Percentage
4-10	11	17.74
11-15	23	37.10
16-20	8	12.90
21-25	4	6.45
26-30	7	11.29
31-35	5	8.06
36-40	2	3.23
41-45	2	3.23
Total	62	100.00

11. RESULTS

11.1 PROTESTS OF BIDI WORKERS: EXPLORING THE TRUTH

The bidi workers' movements each year demanding reduction of bidi price and tax in the national budget is not a spontaneous one, but one that is staged by factory owners. All the participants of Focus Group Discussions unanimously agreed on this. When asked about the reasons for participation, bidi workers said, "Factory owners took us there. Factory owners often try to scare us. They say if the prices of bidi are raised, then the whole industry will collapse; there will be no work in bidi factories. They also say the government wants to shut down bidi industry. This is how they manipulate us into protesting." The workers also informed that factory owners often threaten to revoke the workers' cards or to shut down factories if the workers do not participate in protests. As a result, bidi workers are forced into participating in the protests. However, bidi labour leaders present a different picture. They claim, "When taxes are increased, the price of bidi as well as tax evasion increase with it. Small scale factories can easily evade tax. It is becoming harder for large companies to compete with these tax-evading small factories. To safeguard these large companies and also to keep this line of profession alive, they are cooperating with the factory owners. They also acknowledged that factory owners support them in organizing the protests."

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During the Focus Group Discussions, the workers said they are often given assurances that once the taxes are reduced, both the factory owners and workers will be the beneficiaries. The owners often tend to argue that if the government reduces taxes on bidi, they will raise the wages of workers from the surplus money. The reality

is different. According to the workers, in the last three years, between 2019 and 2021, the factory owners raised their wages only once.

Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Income Raise of Bidi Factory Owners and Workers*

Years	Retail Prices of Bidi (BDT) (1000 sticks)	Govt. Tax Share(BDT) and Total Tax Incidence (%) ** (1000 sticks)	Factory Owner's Share (BDT) (1000 sticks)	Wages for Preparing 1,000 sticks of bidi (BDT)
2018-19	500	230 (46%)	270	36
2019-20	560	257.60 (46%)	302.40	42
2020-21	720	331.20 (46%)	388.8	42

* Based on SROs of NBR and field data

** Supplementary Duty (30%) + VAT (15%)+Health Development Surcharge (1%)

Secondary data shows that the government increases prices of bidi by increasing price level or retail prices instead of increasing supplementary duty. The companies are the ultimate beneficiaries in such arrangements. In the last three years, bidi factory owners saw a BDT 118.8 increase in the sale of per 1,000 sticks. However, in this period, bidi workers only saw a BDT 6 increase in their wages. On the other hand, in the finalized budget of FY 2019-20, the supplementary duty on non-filtered bidi was raised to 35 percent from 30 percent. However, due to protests from bidi factory owners and workers, on 13 October 2019, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) issued an SRO to reinstate the 30 percent duty on non-filtered bidi. As a result of this SRO, bidi factory owners got a BDT 28 increase in profit per 1,000 sticks. This is how bidi factory owners are cashing profits years after years by making the workers do their bidding.

It was revealed in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) that while some protests are organized locally, in most cases, to draw the attention of the government, factory owners bring workers to Dhaka from different parts of the country. During such trips, factory owners pay conveyance, food and other expenses. Besides, each worker is also given BDT 300-500 as allowances. According to Civil Society representatives, poor bidi workers are unable to bear the costs of such protests. At different Focus

Group Discussions (FGDs), participants informed that some associates of factory owners, some marketing officers and agents of the companies work as organizers of such protests. These organizers keep liaison with labour leaders and they even at the protests. Most of the bidi industry workers who participated in FGDs said that they are utterly unaware about the purpose of the protests and how it would benefit them. Participant workers also said they are unaware about what demands to raise and do not get any chance to speak during the protests. It was also revealed that there is currently no welfare association for bidi industry workers. Some organizations may bear such name but, in reality, those organizations deal with interests of factory owners and do not even have any worker as member.

In the 04 districts where FGDs were conducted, it was revealed that Akiz Bidi Company is the de facto leader of such protests. The intensity of the protests is particularly high in places where there are Akiz bidi factories. There were Akiz bidi factories in all the 04 districts where this study was conducted. Besides, the owners of Aziz Bidi and Maya bidi in Rangpur and Bangla Bidi in Pabna took the workers to the movement. Workers have also informed that small bidi factory owners and their agents also feel pressurized to take part in such protests in order to protect their business.

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11.1.1 WORKERS' PROTESTS: CASE STUDY 1

Sumon (pseudonym) from Lalmonirhat, Age 35, bidi factory worker in profession. Sumon has been working as a bidi factory worker for more than 22 years. Sumon is currently working in Akiz bidi factory and also holds the company card. Sumon has vast experience of participating in the bidi tax reduction movement. For protests, he has visited Dhaka multiple times. He said, the company arranges everything for the protest. The company staff always say, if we can even reduce Taka 2 in taxes, it will be beneficial for you and us, both. Then we go to Dhaka and appeal to the government to reduce taxes so that we can save our jobs. We do not have any organization; we do not have any leader. We go and stand by the streets in Dhaka and the company people manage and provide for everything else. Sumon said, the company bears all expenses for our stay in Dhaka and we also get BDT 500 as allowance. Before the pandemic, factory owners brought 400 several workers to Dhaka for protests. Sumon was also a participant of this team and formed several human chains with them in front of Press Club, Shaheed Minar and NBR. During those protests, the workers did not have to voice their demands. Sumon said, "we were only kept standing. The company people do the talking. Those who get to speak during these protests are the marketing officers of the company, some are agents, salesperson and distributors. We stand there only for display, nothing else." Sumon also informed that in the last three years, they only saw a raise of Taka 6 per 1,000 sticks. However, he is not sure whether the protests did contribute to such increase. According to Sumon, if the workers do not participate voluntarily, the company threatens to shut down the factories. If any worker refuses to comply or raises voice against such protests, his card is then confiscated and he gets dismissed from his work. Sumon said, "This protest does not serve us in any way. But still, we have no way but to participate. Sumon also said, bidi workers do not have any association to work for their welfare. The companies prevent us from forming such associations. Akiz company itself laid off many workers for trying to form a workers'

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welfare association. All the bidi workers' associations that are currently active, are in fact front groups formed by factory owners. Officials of different companies run these organizations. Not a single worker of bidi factories is member of these organizations. Sumon vented his frustration saying, "We are trapped in a cage. We know that our line of work is a hazardous one. Yet we have no option but to continue."

11.1.2 WORKERS' PROTESTS: CASE STUDY 2

Rahima Begum (pseudonym) from Haragach, Rangpur. Age 55 years. She has been working in bidi factory since 10 years old. Her last place of work was Minhaz Bidi Company. However, when the novel coronavirus started spreading, she stopped working in bidi factory. During her career, Rahima Begum took part in protests with labour leaders and even participated in demonstrations surrounding Rangpur Deputy Commissioner (DC) Office three times. She visited Dhaka once for taking part in protests. She said, labour leaders took 3-4 trucks full of female workers to Rangpur DC Office. They then told us to stand encircling the whole office. I do not know what the leaders do when they get inside. After the protests, they hand us a piece of bread, a cup of tea and taka 50 and then we return home. When she visited Dhaka to take part in protests, factory owners managed three buses for their transport. They also rented a building for the female workers to stay. She informed that she made a good profit visiting Dhaka. Factory owners provided good food and gave Taka 500 cash as allowance. When asked what she did in Dhaka, Rahima Begum said, they did not have to do anything in particular, apart from taking part in meetings, repeating slogans in demonstrations. Labour leaders and company people are the ones who speak in the gatherings. Bidi workers do not say anything in such protests. The protests do not bring anything in return for the workers except for some cash. Rahima Begum also added that, companies bring workers to protests to get tax cuts. But when workers voice demands to raise wages, they shut down the factories. When the factories remain closed for 5-7 days straight, hunger compels workers to give up demands and start working on management's terms. Thus demands for better wages never get realized.

11.2 BIDI WORKERS ORGANIZATIONS: A DIFFERENT REALITY

According to FDGs, in Lalmonirhat and Kushtia, there is no organization for bidi workers at all. However, there are currently two associations named Haragach Bidi Workers Union and Haragach Bidi Majdur Union in Rangpur. These organizations operate locally on a limited scale and mainly rely on financial backing of bidi factory owners. Any involvement of actual bidi industry workers in these organizations could not be found. No participant could answer how and to what extent did any benefit for the workers. In reality, in bidi industry, workers do not have any option to do anything other than what the factory owners say. The owners' grip on workers is so strong that it is impossible to even protest demanding raise in wages. Factories also do not allow formation of any worker's union or association. Such attempts resulted in mass layoffs in different factories.

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11.3 BIDI INDUSTRY WAGES: SUBHUMAN LIVES

Analyzing the result of the research, it was found that there are several stages of bidi making: 1) Tobacco leaf processing, 2) Making the shells and labelling, 3) Filling the shell with tobacco powder, 4) close the openings of the sticks and 5) Putting the sticks in a packet. According to FGDs, 70 percent work of bidi making is completed in outside factories, in households by women and child labour. For making 1,000 sticks of bidi, workers get paid BDT 42 as wages. But those who only do the rolling or filling get paid between Taka 27-30. Making 1,000 shells of bidis pays only BDT 14. The factories remain open for 4 to 6 days a week. Bidi workers have to work on average 10 to 11 hours a day. A male worker can earn up to BDT 280-300 a day. The average earnings of female workers range from BDT 150-180. However, the work of bidi factory is not a

regular one. Some factories operate only 4 days a week and some factories operate in alternate weeks (six days a week). Apart from wages, workers get an attendance bonus of Taka 200, if they are present 6 days a week. Some factories provide workers with Taka 500-600 as Eid festival bonuses and some give new dresses instead of monetary bonus.

Bidi industry workers do not want to continue this line of work. It is quite difficult, if not impossible, to make a living with this income. During group discussions, they said they would leave bidi industry if they get an alternative option. Bidi factory workers also do not want their children to follow the track of their parents. In their exact words, "We may be a lost cause, but our children should, in no way, be in this industry." To make this happen, they want alternative employment locally. If that can be achieved, children of bidi workers can themselves educated and find a new line of work.

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12. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has not found any relation between the protests and increase of wages in bidi industry or any interests of bidi industry workers. The study also reveals that the bidi factory owners create fabricated protests each year before budget to pressurize the government to get more benefits. Considering the detrimental effect of bidi on public health, economy and environment, the study puts forth the following policy recommendation to discourage bidi as an industry:

The study also reveals that the bidi factory owners create fabricated protests each year before budget to pressurize the government to get more benefits.

1. In order to discourage consumption of bidis by the most vulnerable populations, the Govt. should impose higher taxes on bidis to reduce the adverse health burden of bidi use.
2. Bidi industry is the one opposing higher taxes on bidis and not the bidi workers themselves. Revenues realized from increasing bidi taxes should be used for the rehabilitation bidi workers and to support alternative livelihoods for them.
3. Bidi industry should be more rigorously monitored for compliance with tax and labor laws especially related to use of child labor.
4. Government should support bidi factory owners to switch to other businesses and this can be incentivized through loans or other assistance.

13. ANNEXURE

ANNEX 01: LIST OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

A. Bidi Worker/Leader

Sl. No.	Participant name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Bidi Factory	Bidi work experience	Research Area
1.	Tariqul Haque Tapan	35	Male	Bidi Worker	Akiz bidi	22	Lalmonirhat
2.	Salam	34	Male	Bidi Worker	Akiz bidi	20	Lalmonirhat
3.	Arshad	34	Male	Bidi Worker	Akiz bidi	20	Lalmonirhat
4.	Pocha	34	Male	Bidi Worker	Akiz bidi	15	Lalmonirhat
5.	Sujon	25	Male	Bidi Worker	Akiz bidi	14	Lalmonirhat
6.	Jalil	30	Male	Bidi Worker	Akiz bidi	10	Lalmonirhat
7.	Moksedul	25	Male	Bidi Worker	Akiz bidi	12	Lalmonirhat
8.	Obaidul Islam	26	Male	Bidi Worker	Abul bidi	08	Lalmonirhat
9.	Md. Ikramul	28	Male	Bidi Worker	Abul bidi	14	Lalmonirhat
10.	Mitu Miah	16	Male	Bidi Worker	Abul bidi	04	Lalmonirhat
11.	Md. Tariqul Islam	21	Male	Bidi Worker	Abul bidi	09	Lalmonirhat
12.	Abu Talib	20	Male	Bidi Worker	Abul bidi	13	Lalmonirhat
13.	Rafiqul	28	Male	Bidi Worker	Aziz bidi	10	Rangpur
14.	Azizul	26	Male	Bidi Worker	Minhaz bidi	11	Rangpur
15.	Rozina Begum	55	Female	Bidi Worker	Minhaz bidi	45	Rangpur
16.	Shahnaz	22	Female	Bidi Worker	Minhaz bidi	12	Rangpur
17.	Kuddus	30	Male	Bidi Worker	Minhaz bidi	15	Rangpur
18.	Mozaffar Hossain	38	Male	Bidi Worker	Aziz bidi	32	Rangpur
19.	Masum	40	Male	Bidi Worker	Maya bidi	20	Rangpur
20.	Md. Golap Miah	40	Male	Bidi Worker	Maya bidi	25	Rangpur
21.	Samsul Haque	55	Male	Bidi Worker	Horin bidi	45	Rangpur

22.	Anisul	25	Male	Bidi Worker	Moti bidi	20	Rangpur
23.	Erandul Islam	28	Male	Bidi Worker	Maya bidi	18	Rangpur
24.	Rohimon	60	Female	Bidi Worker	Mohabbat bidi	11	Pabna
25.	Razia	50	Female	Bidi Worker	Montu bidi	08	Pabna
26.	Sufia	50	Female	Bidi Worker	Chasi bidi	12	Pabna
27.	Saheta	45	Female	Bidi Worker	Mohabbat bidi	12	Pabna
28.	Morziya	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Chasi bidi	18	Pabna
29.	Anzu	50	Female	Bidi Worker	Chasi bidi	16	Pabna
30.	Raba	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Chasi bidi	14	Pabna
31.	Rita	30	Female	Bidi Worker	Montu bidi	13	Pabna
32.	Shilpi	35	Female	Bidi Worker	Montu bidi	11	Pabna
33.	Farida	30	Female	Bidi Worker	Montu bidi	10	Pabna
34.	Anjirah	35	Female	Bidi Worker	Masud bidi	08	Pabna
35.	Jomela	55	Female	Bidi Worker	Masud bidi	09	Pabna
36.	Kolpona	30	Female	Bidi Worker	Masud bidi	11	Pabna
37.	Hafsi	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Montu bidi	12	Pabna
38.	Jhumur	28	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	14	Pabna
39.	Rumina	28	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	15	Pabna
40.	Aziron	30	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	15	Pabna
41.	MoMalca	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	30	Pabna
42.	Asa	25	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	15	Pabna
43.	Bina	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	30	Pabna
44.	Shafhi	17	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	10	Pabna
45.	Safia	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	30	Pabna
46.	Shilpi	45	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	35	Pabna
47.	Sabiha Khatun	45	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	32	Pabna
48.	Molina	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	30	Pabna
49.	Parvin	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	30	Pabna

50.	Hajera Khatun	42	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	33	Pabna
51.	Nasima	40	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	30	Pabna
52.	Sumi	25	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	15	Pabna
53.	Shila	27	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	20	Pabna
54.	Khaleda	55	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	40	Pabna
55.	Farida	55	Female	Bidi Worker	Bangla bidi	40	Pabna
56.	Abdus Samad	45	Male	Manager	Salam bidi	25	Pabna
57.	Moyez Uddin	50	Male	Bidi Worker	Sonali bidi	12	Kushtia
58.	Md. Dukhu Mia	58	Male	Bidi Worker	Sonali bidi	13	Kushtia
59.	Md. Aroz Ali	50	Male	Bidi Worker	Sonali bidi	30	Kushtia
60.	Shahidul Islam	68	Male	Bidi Worker	Sonali bidi	07	Kushtia
61.	Md. Jalal Uddin	65	Male	Bidi Worker	Sonali bidi	35	Kushtia
62.	Taher Uddin Sarker	60	Male	Bidi Worker	Sonali bidi	25	Kushtia

B. Civil Society Groups

Serial No.	Participant name	Age	Occupation	Designation & organization	Research Area
1.	Nazmul Islam Nishat	40	Journalist	Bureau Chief, Dbc News	Rangpur
2.	S M Piya	40	Journalist	Rangpur Correspondent, Dainik Banikbarta	Rangpur
3.	Mahbub Islam	55	Journalist	Rangpur Correspondent, Atn Bangla	Rangpur
4.	Jakir Ahmad	45	Cultural activist	Director, Boi Bari	Rangpur
5.	Abdul Kuddus	55	Political Activist	District Convener, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Basad)	Rangpur
6.	Principal Abdur Rauf	55	Teacher	Principal, Nalkuthi High School and College	Rangpur
7.	Sharifuzzaman Bulu	50	Teacher	Academician	Rangpur
8.	SM Saiful Islam	35	Social Development Workers	Executive Director, Pratik Mahila & Shishu Sangha	Pabna

9.	Professor Golam Mostafa	52	Social Development Workers	Prasash Manobik Sangsta	Pabna
10.	Rimon	48	Journalist	Pabna Correspondent, Banglavisio	Pabna
11.	Kamal	50	Journalist & Development Workers	Media Centre	Pabna
12.	G K Sadik	30	Journalis	Pabna Correspondent, Desh Tv	Pabna
13.	Dulal	52	Service	Faridpur Municipality	Pabna
14.	Abdur Rob	50	Social Development Workers	Executive Director, Bactha chai	Pabna
15.	Md. Lutfar Rahman	52	Social Development Workers	Program Head, Bactha chai	Pabna
16.	Abul Kalam Azad	49	Teacher & Journalist	Professor & Pabna correspondent, RTV	Pabna
17.	Md. Rafiqul Islam	52	Teacher	Former teacher, Taher Secondary School, Bheramara	Kushtia
18.	Ajay Maitra	48	Teacher	Associate Professor (English), Kushtia Government Women's College	Kushtia
19.	Dr. Amanur Rahman	47	Writer, Researcher & Journalist	District Correspondent, Daily Star	Kushtia
20.	Md. Khalil Ullah	50	Teacher	Principal (Acting), Bheramara Degree College	Kushtia
21.	Asman Ali	51	Physician, Poet & Writer	President, Kushtia Sahitya Parishad	Kushtia
22.	MA Jihad	48	Journalist	Publisher & Editor, Daily Matir Prithibi, Kushtia	Kushtia
23.	Md. Rezaul Karim	26	Journalist	Bheramara Correspondent, Daily Jugantor	Kushtia
24.	Masud Rana	24	Journalist	Bheramara correspondent, Daily Matir Prithibi, Kushtia	Kushtia
25.	Shafiqul Islam	65	Journalist	Editor, Saptahik Lalmonirhat Barta	Lalmonirhat
26.	Abdur Rashid	62	Retired Government officer	OC, Bangladesh Police	Lalmonirhat
27.	Md. Helal Mia	24	Journalist	Local correspondent, Asian TV	Lalmonirhat
28.	Milon Patwari	42	Journalist	Local correspondent, Channel 24	Lalmonirhat
29.	Hasan	32	Businessman	Business	Lalmonirhat
30.	Dilip Roy	43	Journalist	Local correspondent, Daily Star	Lalmonirhat

A. Checklist/guidelines for conducting FGD and KII among Bidi Workers/ Leaders

- What are the major sources of employment/income in your area (make a list) and why have chosen bidi industry instead of working in any other sector/job (*advantages and disadvantages*)?
- How many bidi factories are currently in operation in your district (make a list and verify the list with the one collected from secondary sources)?
- People of which age group and of which gender constitute the majority of the workforce of bidi industry (*For example, around what percent of bidi industry workforce are above 18 y/o and what percentage below 18 y/o*), Please discuss/provide your opinions based on your experience.
- Describe the nature of work, wages and income in bidi factories. (*How many hours do you need to work; on average how many days in a week do you need to work; on average how much can you earn in a month working in a bidi factory; difference/discrimination in wages among children, women and elderly (if any);*
 - *if there are any benefits apart from regular salary such as medical allowances, festival or other bonuses, holidays etc.*)
- Apart from bidi-making, what else/ other types of work do you need to do for bidi factories or companies? In the mass media, every year we see the news of bidi industry workers' movement (*DO/Memorandum letter, Press conference, Rally, Human Chain, demonstration etc.*) both before and after declaration of national budget. Please describe/discuss this issue
- Is this a self-motivated movement or are you forced by the factory owners or do you have to attend such movement to save your job? What type of programs are usually taken? Where do you go with these demands? whether your association/organization arranges such programs? What are the main demands behind such movement? Why are you raising such demands? Do you think you will be benefitted if these demands are materialized? Have you been benefitted before after the success of such previous movement? Is there any other participant from different professions who attend such programs? Is there any participant who has actually been hired by owners to attend such program?
- Do you know the outcomes of your movements? The recent experience of the last couple of years suggests that the government tends to impose taxes on bidi in the proposed budget and later withdraw it due to your movement. Have you ever been benefitted by such moves of the government? (*i.e. increase in wages, income etc.*)
- Do you have any association or organization? If any, please describe such entity (*Name, registered or not, number of members, rules of becoming a member, facilities get from such association or organization, types of activities it conducts throughout the year, information about any other bidi workers related organization in the district (if any).* How many of you are members of the association? [List/names of such

organizations/associations will be verified from relevant govt. offices/departments or other sources to see if such associations are registered or not.]

- Is the money you earn from this profession enough to bear the expenses of you and your family? Is this profession satisfactory to you? (*Are you satisfied with this job; do you see yourself working in this profession in future; are you satisfied with work environment; do you want your children to get into this trade or do you want them to leave such profession; why?*)

B. Checklist/Guidelines for Group Discussion (GD) and KII
(Mixed Group- civil society leaders, Journalists, local leaders, Educationists)

- What are the major sources of employment/income in your area? As a source of employment/income generation, how much important is the bidi factory in your locality? (Solution to unemployment problem, employment opportunity, poverty alleviation, daily wages, other facilities, etc.)
- How do you see/evaluate the profession of bidi laborers, and also kindly describe your observations about the socio-economic status of those working in bidi factory. [(*Work environment, health risk, financial solvency, education of the offspring, leadership or community participation such as local development, engagement in community activities, local litigation or dispute resolution system, etc.*); *whether alternative employment needed and if so, then what can be done in this regard, etc.*)]
- In the mass media, every year we see the news of bidi industry workers' movement (*DO/Memorandum letter, Press conference, Rally, Human Chain, demonstration etc.*) both before and after declaration of national budget. Please describe/discuss this issue.
- (*Is this a self-motivated movement or are they forced by the factory owners or do they have to attend such movement to save their job? What type of programs are usually taken? Where do they go with these demands? whether they belong to any association/organization? whether their association/organization arranges such programs? What are the main demands behind such movement? Why are they raising such demands? Do you think they will be benefitted if these demands are materialized? Is there any other participant from different professions who attend such programs? Is there any participant who has actually been hired by owners to attend such program, etc.*)?

ANNEX 03: PHOTOGRAPHS

A. FGD with Bidi Worker/Leaders



Lalmonirhat-1



Lalmonirhat- 2



Haragach, Rangpur- 1



Haragach, Rangpur- 2



Pabna- 1



Pabna- 2



Veramara, Kushtia

B. FGD with Civil Society Groups



Lalmonirhat



Rangpur



Pabna



Kushtia