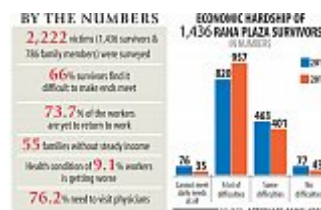


Bangladesh 2013 Industrial Disaster: Rana Plaza survivors left in desperate straits

Tuesday 22 April 2014, by [The Daily Star](#) (Date first published: 21 April 2014).

Most of the survivors, around 66 percent, of the Rana Plaza tragedy are leading an inhuman life in the face of difficulties to meet their daily needs, according to a survey.



Survey: most workers find it difficult to make ends meet.

A total of 2,222 victims were surveyed, including 1,436 survivors and 786 family members, by ActionAid Bangladesh. Of them, 2.4 percent cannot make ends meet at all, the survey found.

The objective of the survey was to portray the current socio-economic and physical vulnerability of the workers along with vulnerability of family members of the deceased, said Aamanur Rahman, deputy director of ActionAid Bangladesh, a nongovernmental organisation.

The survey also highlighted the dire need for compensation. Rahman shared the findings of the survey at a dialogue organised by ActionAid at Brac Centre Inn in the capital.

The top three priorities of the survivors are food and their outstanding house rents and loans, he said.

Although almost one year has passed since the building collapse, 73.7 percent of the survivors are yet to return to work, mainly due to physical ailment (63.74 percent), trauma (23.76 percent) and employers' unwillingness (7.54 percent).

The majority of the respondents have individual and family incomes between Tk 5,000 and Tk 10,000 a month.

"We have found that 55 families have failed to manage a consistent source of income in the past 12 months," said Rahman, also a team leader for conducting the survey. The much-expected compensation from 28 retailers is still an unresolved issue, he added.

No lesson was learnt from the industrial accidents in the past, said Shirin Akhter, a member of the

parliamentary standing committee on the labour and employment ministry.

As brands are an important part of the supply chain, they have some responsibilities towards the victims, she said.

“The government has a big fund for the victims. Some workers claimed they have not received any benefits from the fund. The government should look into the issue,” she said.

Accord and Alliance, the two platforms of foreign brands for conducting factory inspections in Bangladesh, are focusing on safety only, not compensation, Shirin said. “We should take a collective initiative to resolve the compensation issue.”

There has been a lack of coordination among various initiatives for giving compensation,” said Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, assistant executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies.

Though the government, buyers and owners have made a lot of pledges, most of them remain unmet, said Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh.

“We are working to give compensation to the workers,” said Mojtaba Kazazi, executive commissioner of Rana Plaza arrangement coordination committee.

A total of 3,639 workers will get Tk 50,000 each as primary compensation, he said. Of them, 580 workers already received compensation from Primark, a clothing brand, and the rest will get from the coordination committee.

Roy Ramesh Chandra, general secretary of IndustriALL Bangladesh Council, the Bangladesh chapter of IndustriALL Global Union, urged international brands, factory owners and the government to develop a trust fund to meet the immediate needs of the garment workers.

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P.S.

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