



# The Violation of Labour Rights in Plastic Sector: A Study on Plastic Factory Workers in Bogura Sadar Upazila



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## Abstract

A large number of workers work in plastic sector. The Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 provides legislation to ensure the rights of workers. But this act does not followed accordingly in plastic sector. For this reason, the rights of the plastic factory workers are violated in many ways. This paper mainly analyzes the nature, patterns and cause of labour rights violation of plastic factory workers. This is a descriptive study and data have been collected from the workers of plastic factories in Bogura sadar, Bogura. The findings of the study shows that, plastic factory workers faced the following rights violation such as low wage, long working hour, low overtime payment, gender discrimination, inhuman behavior, unhealthy and unhygienic condition of workplace, lack of safety and security etc. Finally the study suggests that, the proper enforcement of existing labour act can reduce the violation of labour rights in this sector.

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## 1 Introduction

During the last few decades, plastic sector has become an important industrial manufacturing sector in Bangladesh. Plastic industry is relatively new in Bangladesh. In 1960 plastic industry start its journey. But during the last two decades, significant growth took place in this sector. According to the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA), there are about 3000 plastic manufacturing unit established in Bangladesh. Most of the plastic factories (98%) are small medium enterprises (SMEs). Domestic market size of Bangladesh is Tk 7000 crore. Total export earnings from direct and deem exports are about US 337 million dollar. Bangladesh earns 1.0 percent of GDP by plastic sector and half a million people directly or indirectly depends on

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plastic sector (Islam, 2011). So a large number of workers work in plastic sector. Like other sectors, the violation of labour rights in plastic sector is also a problem in Bangladesh. Most of the workers of these plastic factories are victimized and their labor rights are violated in many ways. They are being victimized in this sector in terms of low wage, long working hour, low overtime payment, gender discrimination, inhuman behavior, unhealthy and unhygienic condition of workplace, lack of safety and security etc.

The Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 provides legislation to ensure the rights of workers. But this act does not followed accordingly in plastic sector. For this reason the rights of the plastic factory workers are violated in many ways. According to a report given by labour rights group International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in global ranking, Bangladesh is 10 worst countries for workers. According to the ITUC Global Rights Index 2017 report, Bangladesh scored rating of 5. This means that, there has no guarantee of rights for workers in Bangladesh (Khaled, 2018). The National Occupational Safety and Health Profile's found that, in Bangladesh, 2.96 lakh violations of labour laws in workplaces were recorded from 2016 to 2018. The violations are under 13 major categories and the highest number of violations occurs over recruitment and job conditions, where violation of labour law in terms of working hours and holidays, occupational health and occupational safety are the major areas of labour law violation (Khan, 2019). Labour rights experts and activists pointed out that, lack of enforcement of the laws and lack of strict and regular monitoring by law enforcement authorities are liable for this current situation. Lack of awareness of the workers and employers about labour rights and laws is also liable for this situation. Annette Berhardt, Michael W Spiller and Diana polson, (2013) conduct survey on labour rights violation in USA. They found, large numbers of the workers are deprived from their labour rights. The most severe rights violations are- low wage, low overtime payment, long working hour, lake of compensation of injury, gender discrimination etc. China labour watch conduct two study in china.

They studied about labour rights violation of different plastic toy factories in china during 2015 and 2018. The report (2018) revealed 23 rights violations and the most severe rights violations are- poor wage, countless hours of overtime, low overtime payment, long working hour, unhygienic environment, mistreat with workers, lack of safety training, insufficient protective equipment, contact with dangerous chemicals etc. They found 3 major causes of these labour rights violation. Though the labour rights of plastic factory workers are violated in many ways in Bangladesh, but there have no direct study on labour rights violation of plastic factory workers in Bangladesh. So, this present study focused the specific nature, patterns and causes of labour rights violation. This study has been conducted underlying two particular research questions: what are the nature and patterns of labour rights violation in plastic sector? And what are the major causes of labour rights violation in plastic sector?

## **2 Methodology**

The study has used survey method in order to collect the sample and research approach of this study is descriptive in nature. This is a primary study. The area of this study was Bogurasadar, Bogura. So data were collected from seventeen plastic factories of Bogura sadar. All workers of plastic factory were the population of the study. The exact number of the workers in Bogura was unknown. So non probability sampling method has been used to conduct this study and purposive sampling has been used to select the sample from the population. To conduct this study, a total of 95 respondents have been selected purposively as sample size for this study. Data have been collected from the respondents directly through face to face interview. Semi structured questionnaire has been used to collect primary data from the respondents. Both closed ended and open ended question has been used for data collection. The data was collected at January to February in 2020 from different plastic factories in Bogura sadar. After collecting the data, the data were analyzed by using SPSS software and Microsoft excel.

### 3 Results and discussion

Table-1: Socio-demographic information of the respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	under 18	1	1.1
	18-30	60	63.2
	31-45	22	23.2
	46-60	11	11.6
	Above 60	1	1.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Sex	Male	77	81.1
	Female	18	18.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Religion	Muslim	88	92.6
	Hindu	7	7.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Education	Illiterate	16	16.8
	Primary	51	53.7
	Secondary	22	23.2
	Higher secondary	6	6.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital status	Married	50	52.6
	Unmarried	32	33.7
	Widow / widower	13	13.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Living area	Rural	35	36.8
	Semi urban	27	28.4
	Urban	33	34.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

This table shows that, 1.1% of the respondents are under the age of 18. According to the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, No child who has not completed 14 years of age is permitted to work in any occupation or establishment. An adolescent who attained 14 years shall permitted to work. But there have some conditions, he allowed to work if he has a 'Certificate of Fitness' as per section 34. But child worker and adolescent worker can be found in many plastic factories. According to the table, 63.2% of the respondents belongs to 18-30 years of age, 23.2% workers belongs to 31-45 years of age, 11.6% workers belongs to the 46-60 years of age and 1.1 % workers are above the age of 60. This study shows that, the largest numbers of the respondents belongs to the age of 18-30 years old. The table shows that, 81.1% of the respondents are male and 18.9% of the respondents are female. So the table indicate that, male are highest in number. This study also reveals that, among all respondents 92.6% workers are Muslim and 7.4% respondents are Hindu. So the study findings indicate that, Muslims are highest in number. This study demonstrates that, on the basis of educational background, 16.8% respondents are illiterate, 53.7% respondents received primary education, 23.2% respondents received secondary education and 6.3% of the respondents received higher secondary education. So, the study shows that, most of the workers are illiterate or received primary education. This study reveals that, 52.6% of the respondents are married, 33.7% of the respondents are unmarried and 13.7% of the respondents are widow or widower. So, married respondents are highest in number. On the basis of living area, the table shows that, 36.8% respondents living in rural area, 28.4% respondents living in semi urban area and 34.7% respondents living in urban area. So, it means that, most of the respondents live in rural area.

Table-2: Socio-economic condition of the respondents

Socio-economic condition	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly income	4000-6000	33	34.7
	6100-8000	40	42.1
	8100-10000	15	15.8
	10100-12000	6	6.3
	Above 12000	1	1.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Family member	1-2	9	9.5
	3-4	68	71.6
	5-6	16	16.8
	7-8	2	2.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Economic condition	Low	38	40
	Lower medium	38	40
	Upper medium	19	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Family dependency On respondent	Low	5	5.3
	Medium	41	43.2
	high	49	51.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

The table represents that, monthly income of 34.7% respondents belongs to 4000-6000 taka, 42.1% respondents' income belongs to 6100-8000 taka, 15.8% respondents' monthly income belongs to 8100-10000 taka, 6.3% respondents' monthly income belongs to 10100- 12000 taka and monthly income of 1.1% respondents are above 12000 taka. Though the income is calculated in monthly basis, the workers get their payment in weekly basis. Bangladesh labour act, 2006 told that, the lower minimum wage of workers is 5000 taka. After amendment of this act in 2013, minimum wage for the workers is set to 8000 taka instead of 5000 taka. But according to the study, most of the factory owner does not follow this act. So, many workers get less than 5000 taka in a month. Not only that, 76.8% respondents' monthly income is less than 8100 taka in a month. The table also demonstrates that, only 9.5 % respondents have 1-2 family members, 71.6% respondents have 3-4 family members, 16.8% respondents have 5-6 family member and 2.1% respondents have 7-8 family members. Which represent that, most of the respondents lives in a nuclear family. The table reveals that, a 40% respondent belongs to low economic condition, 40% respondents belongs to the lower medium economic condition and 20% respondents belongs to the upper medium economic condition. So we find that, most of the workers are poor. This analysis support Marxist exploitation theory. According to this theory, working class people are exploited. This proletariat class works hard but do not get equal exchange of values. They work more but get less. The surplus values are gained by the owner. The study reveals that, 5.3% of the respondents have low level of responsibility or liability to contribute their family, 43.2% respondents have medium level of liability to contribute their family and 51.6% of the respondents have the higher level of responsibility to contribute their family.

Table-3: Rights violation on the basis of ID card, service book, register book, contract and appointment letter

Labour rights	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
<b>ID card</b>	No	95	100
	Yes	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Register book</b>	No	54	56.8
	Yes	41	43.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Service book</b>	No	95	100
	Yes	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Contract</b>	No	95	100
	Yes	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Appointment letter</b>	No	95	100
	Yes	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

The table demonstrates that, all the respondents told that, their factories do not provide ID card. Besides, according to this table, no factories provides appointment letter to their workers upon joining the establishment. But According to the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, the workers shall be provided with an appointment letter and an ID card upon joining the establishment. Section 5 of this act told that, no employer shall employ any worker without giving such worker an appointment letter and every such employed worker shall be provided with an identity card with his photograph. But the table shows that, plastic factory owner do not follow this law. The study reveals that, all the respondents told that, their factory do not provides service book. They do not maintain such kinds of book. But Section 6 and 7 of this act is about the service book. Section 6 states that, every employer shall, at his own cost, provide a service book for every worker employed by him. But the table shows that, the owner of plastic factories do not follow this section also. This study demonstrates that, 43.2% workers told that, their factories maintain register books. On the other hand 56.8% workers told that, their factories do not maintain register book. But Section 9 of Bangladesh labour act, 2006 told that, The employer shall maintain a register of workers of his establishment and make it available to the Inspector for inspection at all times during working hours. But this study shows that, most of the employers do not follow this section also.

Table-4: Working hours of the respondents

Working hours	Frequency	Percentage
6 hours	10	10.5
8 hours	0	0.0
10 hours	21	22.1
12 hours	62	65.3
No limit	2	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

The table represents that, 10.5% of the respondents (night shift male worker) always work for 6 hours in a day, 22.1% of the respondents (female workers) work for 10 hours in a day, 65.3% of the respondents (day shift male worker) always work for 12 hours in a day and 2.1% of the respondents (technical workers) work that has no limit. According to section 100 of the Bangladesh Labour act, 2006, No adult worker shall ordinarily work or be required to work in an establishment for more than 8 (eight) hours in a day. Any such worker may work in an establishment up to 10 (ten) hours also in a day, if the condition of article 108 are met.. Section 102 provides for a maximum of 48 working hours in a week for an adult worker which may be extended up to 60 hours when all of the condition of article 108 is met. But the study shows that, most of the workers work for more than 8 hours in a day.

Table-5: Monthly wage of the respondents and discrimination

Gender Wage scale	Male workers		Female workers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
4000-6000	15	19.5	18	100
6100-8000	40	51.9	0	0
8100-10000	15	19.5	0	0
10100-12000	6	7.8	0	0
Above 12000	1	1.3	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

The table pointed out that, 19.5% of male workers get 4000-6000 taka in a month, 51.9% male workers get 6100-8000 taka in a month, 19.5% male workers get 8100-10000 taka in a month, 7.8% male workers gets 10100-12000 taka in a month and 1.3% male workers get above 12000 in a month. So the study indicates that, most of the male workers about 51.9% are get 6100-8000 taka in a month. On the other hand the table shows that, all female workers get 4000-6000 taka in a month. So this study indicates that, there has gender discrimination in plastic sectors on the basis of wage. But according to the constitution of Bangladesh, we know that all should have equality before law and every person has rights to enjoy without any discrimination of age, sex, color, race etc. But the table shows that, the law is not followed by most of the owner of plastic factories in Bogura sadar. After amendment of labour Act in 2013, the minimum wage for the workers was set to 8000 taka instead of 5000 taka. But the study shows that, many workers get less than 5000 taka in a month. Not only that 76.8% respondents' monthly income is less than 8100 taka in a month and all female respondents get less than 6000 taka in a month.

Table-6: Delay payment

Delay payment	Frequency	Percentage
No	95	100
Yes	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

The table represents that, 100% respondents receive payment in time. They get their payment in weekly basis. In every Thursday they get their payment. Section 123 told that, The wages of a worker shall be paid before the expiry of the seventh working day following the last day of the wage period in respect of which the wages is payable. Though this section is monthly basis, it is also suitable for plastic sector. From the table we can see that, there is no violation of section 123.

Table-7: Duration of break during working hours

Duration of break	Frequency	Percentage
One hour	71	74.8
Less than one hour	14	14.7
No break	10	10.5
Total	95	100

This table represents that, 74.8% respondents told that, they get one hours of break during their 10 hours to 12 hours working hours, where 14.7% of the respondents do not get one hours break during their working hours. On the other hand, 10.5% respondents do not get any break. The night shift workers work for 6 hours and don't get any break during their working hours. According to the section 101(c) of Bangladesh labour Act, 2006, workers should get 2 break of half hours or one break of one hours during work period. But the table shows that, only 74.8% respondents get one hour break during their working hours.

Table-8: Overtime work

Overtime work	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
	Excessive overtime	0	0.0
	Limited overtime	70	73.7
	No overtime	25	26.3
	Total	95	100

The table represents that, no respondent face excessive overtime, 73.7% respondent face limited overtime and 26.3 % respondents do not work overtime hours.

Section 102 provides for a maximum of 48 working hours in a week for an adult worker which may be extended up to 60 hours when all of the conditions of article 108 are met. Section 100 of the Bangladesh labour Act told that, every workers should do the work in a day not exceeding 8 years and if any person do overtime must be give rest and leisure time. This table shows that, there has no excessive overtime in plastic sectors.

Table-9: Overtime payment

Overtime payment	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
	Double payment	44	46.3
	Same as normal hour	26	27.4
	No overtime	25	26.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that, 46.3% of the respondents get double payment for overtime, 27.4% respondents get same payment as normal hour for overtime. Section 108 of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 state that, owner should pay double of the usual wages for overtime work. According to this section, Where a worker works for more hours than the hours fixed under this Act in an establishment on any day or in a week he shall, for overtime work, be entitled to allowance at the rate of twice his ordinary rate of basic wage and dearness. But this table shows that, 27.4% respondents do not get double payment for overtime work.

Table-10: Holiday and bonus

Labour Rights	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Festival bonus	Equal of monthly wage	85	89.5
	Half of monthly wage	10	10.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Festival holiday in a year	4-5 days	24	25.3
	6-7 days	62	65.2
	8-9 days	9	9.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Weekly holiday	Yes	95	100
	No	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

This table shows that, 89.5% respondents get full wages of one month as festival bonus in a year, another 10.5 % respondents get wage of half month as festival bonus in a year. This table also represents that, 25.3% respondents get 4-5 day as a festival holiday in a year, 65.2% respondent get 6-7 days of festival holiday per year and 9.5 % respondent get 8-9 day of festival holiday in a year.

According to the section 118 of Bangladesh labour Act, 2006, every worker shall be allowed in a calendar year 11 (eleven) days of festival holiday with wages. But the table shows that, most of the respondent gets less than 8 days of festival holiday in a year.

This table also demonstrates that, all respondents of this study get one day holiday in a week. Friday is the weekly holiday of all factories. Section 103 of the Bangladesh labour Act, 2006 states that, every worker employed in an establishment shall be entitled to one day holiday in a week. So this study shows that, there have no violation of law on the basis of weekly holiday.

Table-11: Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Gender discrimination	Yes	62	65.3
	No	21	22.1
	No answer	12	12.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Field of discrimination	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Field of discrimination	Salary	55	57.9
	Promotion	7	7.4
	No answer	33	34.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

This study shows that, Women are discriminated in most of the factories. They are discriminated in many ways. This table demonstrates that, 65.3% respondents told that, there have discrimination based on gender in their factories and 22.1% respondent told that, there have no gender discrimination in their factories. But according to the constitution of Bangladesh, all should have equality before law and every person has rights to enjoy without any discrimination of age, sex, color, race etc. but the table shows that, the law wasnot followed by most of the owner of the plastic factories. This table also reveals that, 57.9% respondents told that, gender discrimination is mostly based on salary in their factories and another 7.4% respondents told that, gender discrimination is mostly based on promotion in their factories.

Table-12: Mistreat with workers

Violation of rights	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Inhuman behaviour	Yes	13	13.7
	No	82	86.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Physical violation	No	95	100
	Yes	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

This table shows that, 13.7% respondents face inhuman behavior by the factory owner or other senior workers and 86.3% respondents do not face inhuman behavior by the factory owner or other senior workers. But according to the UDHR article 4 and article 5, every person should give right to work on freedom and freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading punishments. But this table shows that, many factory owners mistreat with workers. But positive side is that, according to the study, no respondents of these studies face any physical violation.

Table-13: Health and Hygiene problems

Problems	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Ventilation problem	No	34	35.8
	Low	56	58.9
	High	5	5.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Temperature problem	No	19	20
	Low	66	69.5
	High	10	10.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Overcrowding	No	79	83.2
	Low	16	16.8
	High	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Lack of light	No	86	90.5
	Low	9	9.5
	High	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Sanitation problem	No	80	84.2
	Low	15	15.8
	High	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Lack of safe water	No	95	100
	Yes	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

This study represents that, the working condition of most of the factories is not good enough. There have many health and hygiene problem in most of these factories. Such as Ventilation problem, Temperature Problem, Overcrowding, Lack of light, Sanitation problem, Lack of safety water etc. This study highlights that, 5.3% respondents faced high ventilation problem, 58.9% respondents faced low ventilation problem. On the other hand, 69.5% respondents faced low temperature problem and 10.5% respondents faced high temperature problem. According to this study, 16.8 % respondents faced overcrowding problem and 9.5 % respondents faced lack of lighting problem. On the other hand 15.8% respondents faced sanitation problem in their workplace. So the study shows that, the working condition of these factories is not well enough. But in chapter five, section 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59 of the Bangladesh labor act, 2006 discussed about the standard of health and hygiene situation of the workers. These eight sections provide the standard of temperature, ventilation, crowding, sanitation and lighting of workplace environment. According to this act owner should ensure proper work environment and work safety.

Table-14: Safety and security measurement

Problem	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Safety problem of building & machinery	No	68	71.6
	Low	27	28.4
	High	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Safety problem from Fire	No	39	41.1
	Low	50	52.6
	High	6	6.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
Safety problem from chemical substance	No	41	43.2
	Low	54	56.8
	High	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
safety training	No	95	100
	Yes	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

This table reveals that, the safety and security of workers in many plastic factories are not well enough. There have many safety related problem. Such as Safety problem of building & machinery, Safety problem from Fire, Safety problem from chemical substance, Lack of safety training etc. according to this table, 28.4% respondent told that, the safety of their factory buildings and machinery are not in satisfactory level. On the other hand 52.6% respondent told that, their safety procedure from fire is not well enough. They told that, they have worried about low level risk of fire. On the other hand, according to this study, 56.8% respondent faces low level of safety problem from chemical substance. This study reveals that, all respondents told that they do not get any safety training from their company. The chapter six of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 discussed about safety measures of workers. Section 61 discussed about safety of the buildings and machinery. Section 62 discussed about protection as to fire. But the table shows that, most of the factories do not take proper safety measure.

Table-15: Major cause of labour rights violation

Cause	Frequency	Percentage
Profit maximization	13	13.7
Lack of strict and regular monitoring	11	11.6
Lack of implementation of law and punishment	19	20.0
Lack of awareness among workers	25	26.3
Price pressure of the market	9	9.5
Because of poor condition of workers	10	10.5
No comment	8	8.4
Total	95	100

This table shows that, 13.7% respondents told that maximization of profit is the main cause of labour rights violation, 11.6% respondents told that Lack of strict and regular monitoring is the main cause of labour rights violation, 20% respondents told that, lack of implementation of law and punishment is the main cause of labour rights violation, 26.3% respondents told that, lack of awareness among workers is the main cause of labour rights violation, 9.5% respondents told, Price pressure of the market is the main cause of labour rights violation, 10.5% respondents said that, because of poor condition of workers, they are being victimized and 8.4% respondents did not comment to this question.

### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that, the health and hygiene condition and safety measure taken by many factories are not good enough. Most of the workers suffer from unhygienic environment. There have many health and hygiene problem in most of these factories This study also shows that, the safety condition of many plastic factories are also not well enough. There have many safety related problem. From the study, we find that, the rights of plastic factory workers are violated in many ways. Beside this, their working environment and their safety and security are not good enough. So the government and the law enforcement authorities should take some necessary initiative to overcome this situation. Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 provides legislation to ensure the rights of workers. If this act is strictly followed, then there would have no violation of labour rights in Bangladesh. To our opinion, the study finds a new overview about the labour rights violation of plastic factory workers. It describe the socio demographic characteristics, socio economic condition, violation of labour rights, work environment and safety measure of plastic factories and causes of this violation. So the findings of the study can be helpful to understand the nature, patterns and causes of labor rights violation in plastic sector.

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