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Victimization of indigenous women workers in informal sectors: A study in Tangail District, Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study explores the victimization of indigenous women workers across various employment sectors. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from a randomly selected sample of 60 indigenous women workers from two upazilas in Tangail District. A structured questionnaire, titled- "Victimization of Indigenous Women Workers in Informal Sectors: A Study in Tangail District, Bangladesh" was utilized alongside interviews to gather in-depth insights into their experiences. Data analysis was conducted using multiple cross-tabulations and chi-square statistics. The findings revealed a significant relationship between age and types of victimization (physical, psychological, sexual, and economic) as well as between offender type and the nature of victimization in the workplace. Furthermore, the study identified a statistically significant association between occupation and physical victimization ($\chi^2 = 12.539$, df = 5, $p < 0.05$) and between monthly income and working hours ($\chi^2 = 10.945$, df = 8, $p < 0.05$). Based on these findings, the study recommends several interventions to mitigate the victimization of indigenous women workers, including ensuring workplace safety, challenging patriarchal attitudes, reducing power imbalances, strengthening labor laws, implementing gender sensitivity training, and establishing comprehensive workplace policies. These measures can contribute to a safer, more equitable, and inclusive work environment for indigenous women.

1. Introduction

In Bangladesh, discrimination, harassment, and other forms of victimization are among the major obstacles faced by indigenous women workers. Socioeconomic disparities, cultural exclusion, gender-based violence, and inadequate labor laws are the causes of these issues (Al-Mamun & Sultana, 2024). Their victimization is frequently made worse by the confluence of gender and ethnic identity, which puts them at a disadvantage with regard to legal rights, fair salaries, and job stability (George, Lee-Koo, & Shepherd, 2018). Workplace victimization takes various forms, including physical abuse, psychological harassment, sexual exploitation, and economic discrimination. These injustices not only violate an individual's safety and dignity but also hinder their economic growth and professional advancement (Al-Mamun & Sultana, 2024).

Indigenous people have long experienced socioeconomic marginalization, displacement, and prejudice, especially in the years following independence. They faced forced migration, militarization, and land confiscation after the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) conflict (1970s–1997), which had a significantly negative impact on their economic prospects (Jamil & Panday, 2008). Numerous indigenous women were forced to work in low-paying jobs in both urban and rural settings, making them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (Barua, 2010). Indigenous women working in tea gardens, textile industries, and domestic service during the 1980s and 1990s faced various forms of sexual and economic abuse, yet labor laws did not offer them adequate protection (Roy, 2021). Their vulnerability was further heightened by the absence of gender-sensitive labor laws and the lack of legal recognition of indigenous rights.

Approximately 54 indigenous communities reside in Bangladesh, with the majority located in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Sylhet, Mymensingh, and parts of North Bengal (Aktar & Dahre, 2024). Many indigenous women work in low-paying, long-hour jobs with little to no job security in informal labor sectors such as small-scale enterprises, household services, handicrafts, and agriculture (Al Mamun & Hoque, 2022). Workplace abuse of indigenous women is often underreported due to limited access to justice, social stigma, and fear of job loss (George et al., 2018).

Current scenario, indigenous women workers often endure physical abuse, coercion, and workplace violence, particularly in the household, agricultural, and garment industries (Ntuli & Kwenda, 2019). Cases of worker abuse, hazardous working conditions, and limited access to healthcare remain significant obstacles. Indigenous women face emotional stress and job insecurity due to workplace harassment, bullying, and exclusion from decision-making processes. Studies show that verbal abuse and intimidation are prevalent, particularly in industries where management is predominantly male (Sami, 2024). Many indigenous women experience sexual harassment and assault at work. Due to societal stigma, lack of legal protection, and fear of losing their jobs, many incidents go unreported (George et al., 2018). It is challenging for victims of workplace harassment to seek justice when no complaint procedures are in place. Indigenous women workers are often denied paid leave, paid less than their non-indigenous counterparts, and subjected to hazardous and exploitative working conditions (Fariha, Shifa, Akter, & Talukder, 2023). Wage theft and unpaid labor are also common in the fields of domestic work and tea plantations (Barua, 2010).

The Labor Act of 2006 and its 2013 revisions were implemented in Bangladesh to protect workers' rights by regulating pay, working conditions, and workplace safety (Khatun & Afroze, 2019). However, the informal labor sectors, where indigenous women predominate, often do not benefit from these safeguards. Power imbalances in the workplace deter many of these individuals from reporting abuse or seeking legal protection, and many remain unaware of their rights (Saifuddin, Chhina, & Zaman, 2022). This contributes to the systemic oppression of indigenous women by allowing workplace victimization to continue unnoticed. Despite international efforts to advance labor rights and gender equality, little is known about workplace abuse specifically targeting Bangladeshi indigenous women (Datta, 2023). The experiences of marginalized indigenous women in rural and informal labor settings have not received much attention, while studies on gender-based violence in the workplace have largely focused on urban women in the formal sector (Al-Mamun & Sultana, 2024). In addition to assessing the prevalence of victimization based on age, religion, and educational attainment, this study sheds light on the nature, causes, and effects of workplace violence against indigenous women workers. Another benefit of this study is the identification of appropriate policies and recommendations based on the research findings. The study also helps to understand the current circumstances and the perceptions of indigenous women regarding their workplace.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the current state of victimization experienced by indigenous female workers in their daily lives.

- To investigate the nature of victimization faced by indigenous female workers in various occupational sectors.
- To identify different types of victimization, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic exploitation.
- To examine the causes of victimization in the workplace, considering socioeconomic, cultural, and structural factors.
- To find out the impact of victimization on mental health, financial stability, job security, and overall well-being.
- To develop a set of recommendations to solve the identified problem.

2. Review of Related Literature

In Bangladesh, the mistreatment of indigenous women in the labor force is a serious yet under-researched issue. Indigenous women often face exploitation, harassment, wage discrimination, and a lack of legal protection, as they are primarily employed in household work, agriculture, the apparel industry, and tea plantations (Kumar, 2023). Indigenous women are among the most vulnerable groups in the nation's labor market, as they face multiple forms of discrimination due to their socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnic identity (Barua, 2010).

The majority of indigenous women work in low-paying, informal jobs with limited job security and few legal protections (Ntuli & Kwenda, 2019). Studies show that they often earn less than non-indigenous female workers, even when performing the same amount of work (Fariha et al., 2023). Despite working longer hours, indigenous women workers in Sylhet's tea estates receive much lower pay than their male counterparts, according to research (Ashraf & Prentice, 2019). According to research, more than 60% of indigenous women textile workers in Dhaka have experienced sexual harassment, verbal abuse, or threats of termination from male superiors (Kumar, 2023).

In the rice processing industry, indigenous women are particularly at risk. Sick leave, pensions, bonuses, holiday allowances, and trade unions are all unavailable to the mill workers. Instead, they are regularly subjected to verbal and physical abuse, in addition to the stress of improving their production. They are forced to work eight to ten hours a day for meager pay, without weekly vacation time, appointment letters, or job security (Sultana & Afrad, 2014). In Bangladesh, the majority of research does not use an intersectional lens to examine how the victimization of indigenous women in agriculture is influenced by their multiple identities. Rarely is it studied how economic marginalization, patriarchal systems, and cultural norms contribute to the continuation of exploitation. The issues faced by the unorganized sector were severe, and all of the working conditions were inadequate. They were forced to labor under unfair conditions and for lower pay. Their poverty, debt, and lack of literacy compelled them to do so (Akhter, Rutherford, & Chu, 2019).

Sexual harassment, physical assault, and verbal abuse are common experiences in the workplace for Indigenous women (Chowdhury & Uddin, 2021). According to a Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) study, indigenous women employed in the domestic and garment industries are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment from male coworkers and supervisors (Chakma, 2019). Furthermore, victims often remain silent due to fear of losing their jobs or a lack of access to legal support networks. According to some research, the state deprives Adivasi people of their ancestral lands in order to gain control over or use of land and natural resources. Conflicts between Adivasi groups, the government, and international corporations are common. This research examines the nature and causes of these conflicts. However, none of these studies explore how property conflicts affect Adivasi women (Kibria, Inoue, & Nath, 2015). Some studies focus on the inherent shortcomings of the 1997 CHT pact, signed by the state and Adivasi leaders. These studies also examine the causes behind the peace agreement's failure, the human rights violations that occurred after its signing, and the challenges and barriers faced during its implementation. However, this study does not address the exclusion of Adivasi women's rights in the peace accord (Panday & Jamil, 2009).

The Bangladesh Labor Act (2006) and the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy (2015) are examples of labor laws in place, although their enforcement remains lax, especially for indigenous workers (Ashraf & Prentice, 2019). Language barriers, ignorance, and institutionalized hostility in law enforcement often prevent indigenous women from obtaining justice (Kumar, 2023). The Prevention of Oppression against Women and Children Act of 2000 makes harassment and violence against women in the workplace illegal. While it governs land and administrative matters in indigenous areas, the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Regulation (1900) lacks a robust gender-based protection system. However, these regulations do not specifically address the unique vulnerabilities faced by indigenous women in the workplace, particularly in unorganized sectors such as domestic work, tea plantations, and agriculture (Jahan, Wahab, & Hafiz, 2016). The ongoing mistreatment of indigenous women in the labor market contributes to mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Amin et al., 2016). Due to social isolation and discrimination

from employers and co-workers, many indigenous women workers report having less influence in decision-making (Chowdhury & Uddin, 2021). The effectiveness of current labor regulations in protecting indigenous women workers has not been adequately evaluated.

Indigenous women are often victimized in the job market for various reasons. Female workers, especially those of indigenous origin, are frequently subjected to abuse of power by their employers and male coworkers (Chakma, 2019). A significant number of indigenous women workers lack access to legal assistance and are unaware of their labor rights (Ashraf & Prentice, 2019). Indigenous groups are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, as they often live in remote areas with limited access to employment and education (Amin et al., 2016).

Indigenous women in South Asia face widespread victimization across various labor sectors due to economic marginalization, social exclusion, gender-based violence, and a lack of legal protection. Despite international labor laws and human rights conventions, indigenous women in countries such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan continue to endure poor working conditions, wage discrimination, workplace harassment, and limited access to justice (Mani, 2020). In South Asia, indigenous women are disproportionately employed in unorganized labor sectors such as manufacturing, construction, domestic work, and agriculture. Compared to their non-indigenous counterparts, they often receive significantly lower pay. In Jharkhand and Odisha, indigenous women workers are frequently subjected to bonded labor and forced labor, with their pay being 30–50% less than that of non-indigenous women (Dubey, 2016). There is no comprehensive labor survey that specifically focuses on South Asian indigenous women workers. Although they lack the authority to demand workplace safety measures, indigenous women employed in Nepal's hospitality industry endure significant levels of harassment from both employers and patrons (Shrestha, Decosta, & Shrestha, 2023).

Research has revealed instances of sexual exploitation and forced marriages among indigenous women workers in Pakistan, particularly in the domestic and agricultural industries (Farah, Afzal, & Khan, 2022). Due to financial difficulties, indigenous families are forced to prioritize employment over education, perpetuating cycles of exploitation and illiteracy. Research from Nepal and India highlights the exploitation of indigenous women in construction, domestic work, and tea plantations (Xaxa, 2004). These women frequently experience systematic discrimination, which includes limited access to social services and the legal system. According to studies, indigenous women often face both gender and ethnic prejudice, making them vulnerable to exploitation in the job market (Smith, 1999).

On the contrary, indigenous women in Canada and the U.S. earn significantly less than both non-indigenous women and men. In Canada, the wage gap for indigenous women is 35% lower than that of non-indigenous women in similar roles (Sweet, 2014). Indigenous women working in seasonal agriculture, hospitality, and cleaning in North America experience job insecurity, wage discrimination, and limited access to social benefit (Deer, 2016). According to studies, indigenous women in Latin America working in textile industries, coffee farms, and domestic services—often without formal contracts—earn 30–50% less than non-indigenous women (Vargas-Callejas & Verdeja Muñiz, 2024). Indigenous Maasai and San women often work in informal labor markets, where they are exploited and paid little to nothing (Chanimbaga, Oguma, Moshi, & Kibusi, 2025). According to research conducted in the Asia-Pacific region (Australia and the Philippines), indigenous women working in the domestic and clothing industries endure workplace prejudice, long hours, and unpaid overtime. The way in which indigenous women's intersecting identities lead to compounded oppression has been examined using intersectional frameworks (Crenshaw, 2011). Research conducted in Latin America and Africa shows that indigenous women workers are often the targets of sexual harassment, wage theft, and hazardous working conditions (Deere & León de Leal, 2001). Male coworkers harass indigenous women in the mining and construction industries, where they also face racial and gender discrimination (Parmenter, Leroy-Dyer, & Holcombe, 2024).

Despite international conventions, indigenous women workers continue to face institutional discrimination and legal exclusion. Due to their limited proficiency in the mainstream language, many indigenous women are unable to access legal assistance and workplace protections (Deere & León de Leal, 2001). The majority of studies are nation-specific and do not compare regions to identify global victimization trends. Many indigenous women work in informal industries such as street vending and domestic work, yet many studies focus only on formal employment. Research on how local companies and global enterprises exploit indigenous workers is scarce. The way race, gender, and class interact to shape labor exploitation is often overlooked in research. In comparison, this study could be highly beneficial in understanding the reasons behind this type of victimization, examining the circumstances of affected workers, and identifying effective preventive measures to reduce violations against female indigenous workers.

2.1. Research Hypothesis

Based on the introduction to the study and review of the literature, the cross tabulation was achieved the study.

Relation between the age of the respondent and types of victimization. Relation between offender and types of victimization. Relationship between Victimization place and types of Victimization.

And the following hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance to achieve the study.

HO₁: There is significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and physical victimization.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between monthly income of the respondents and working hours.

3. Methodology

Any research project must have a methodology to ensure that it is conducted systematically, meticulously, and with a clear objective. This study focuses on the mistreatment of indigenous women working in rice mills, the garments industry, beauty parlors, and shop establishments in the Tangail district. The main objective is to examine the nature, causes, and effects of victimization experienced by indigenous women employed in various industries. To achieve this, relevant data has been collected using a quantitative approach and a well-structured questionnaire.

3.1. Research Design

The exploratory research design used in this study aims to uncover new insights into the victimization of indigenous women workers. This design helps identify patterns and trends that may have previously gone unnoticed. The study incorporates structured interviews, quantitative research methods, data collection strategies, and an awareness of its limitations.

3.2. Selection of the Study Area

The study examines various job sectors in the Tangail district, with a particular focus on beauty parlors, shops, and rice mills. Although the textile industry in Dhaka and Chittagong serves as a major employment hub, Tangail was chosen for this study because it employs a significant number of indigenous female workers. Previous research indicates that these workers have faced victimization in their respective industries, yet no comprehensive investigation has been conducted on this specific issue. Therefore, by focusing on indigenous female workers in Tangail, this study aims to bridge that gap.

3.3. Sources of Data

The study's primary data came from first-hand sources. Structured interviews were conducted to gather information from indigenous female employees with direct experiences of victimization. These respondents were selected from various employment sectors in Tangail District, including shops, beauty parlors, garments, and rice mills. Additionally, secondary data from both domestic and international sources—such as scholarly publications, journals, and newspapers—was analyzed to contextualize and strengthen the findings.

3.4. Population

The study's target population consists of indigenous female employees in Tangail who have been victims of workplace abuse. However, since there is no official registry of indigenous female laborers in the district, the actual population estimate remains unknown. Although an official record was sought, no comprehensive database exists. Therefore, the population size is considered unknown in this study.

3.5. Sampling and Sample Size

Given the unknown population size, this study employs a purposive sampling technique, a form of non-probability sampling, to select a representative sample. A total of 60 respondents were selected, distributed as follows:

- 50 respondents from the Garo Adivasi community.
- 8 respondents from the Mahato community.
- 2 respondents from the Chakma community.

Additionally, the rationale for using purposive sampling is to ensure the inclusion of relevant participants who can provide valuable insights into the victimization of indigenous female workers.

3.6. Sample Size Calculation for an Unknown Population

Cochran's formula is used to determine the sample size:

Cochran's formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2(pq)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size.

z = Standard Error associated with the chosen level of confidence 95% (0.95).

p = Variability / Standard deviation, (0.5).

q = 1-p.

= 1- 0.5.

= 0.5.

e = Sampling error, 0.05.

$$n = \frac{(0.95)^2 (0.5 \times 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9025 \times 0.25}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.225}{0.0025}$$

n = 90

Thus, the calculated sample size for this study is 90 respondents.

3.7. Data Collection Process

The questionnaire was decorated separately through the help and support of the indigenous women workers in the study areas. Out of the 90 surveys distributed, 60 were returned and properly completed, resulting in a response rate of 66.67%, which is considered sufficient. Data was collected directly from respondents working in beauty parlors, shops, and other industries such as garments and rice mills.

3.8. Data Analysis

Before being entered into the SPSS software, the selected data was carefully edited, verified, and cross-checked. It was then accurately coded using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software, which assigns numerical values to various variables based on responses, facilitating systematic analysis. Additionally, the data was analyzed using multiple cross-tabulations and Chi-Square (χ^2) statistics.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were strictly followed. Respondents were informed of their rights, including the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Prior to conducting interviews, informed consent was obtained to ensure that participants fully understood the study's objectives and the intended use of their data. To protect their privacy and prevent any potential harm, strict confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were maintained. All collected information was securely stored and used solely for research purposes. The study adhered to the ethical standards set by academic and research institutions, ensuring that participants did not experience any adverse consequences as a result of their involvement.

4. Results

The results of the study obtained for analyzing psychological effects (Table 1), analyzing there are three cross tabulation (Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4) and there are two hypotheses were presented in Table 5 and 6.

Table 1. Psychological effect.

Domain	Very high	High	Neutral	Low	Very low	No	Mean	St. deviation
Fear	5.00%	11.70%	5.00%	5.00%	15.00%	58.30%	4.88	1.648
Shock	0.00%	3.30%	6.70%	15.00%	25.00%	50.00%	5.12	1.106
Depression	1.70%	16.70%	8.30%	3.30%	21.70%	48.30%	4.72	1.606
Anger	0.00%	8.30%	5.00%	6.70%	18.30%	61.70%	5.2	1.273
Shame	1.70%	10.00%	11.70%	5.00%	10.00%	61.70%	4.97	1.529
Disbelief	6.70%	6.70%	0.00%	5.00%	8.30%	73.30%	5.22	1.563
Frustration	0.00%	6.70%	6.70%	13.30%	31.70%	41.70%	4.95	1.199
Confusion	0.00%	3.30%	10.00%	5.00%	25.00%	56.70%	5.22	1.136
Self- Blame	3.30%	11.70%	5.00%	1.70%	5.00%	73.30%	5.13	1.599
Hopelessness	3.30%	3.30%	8.30%	5.00%	6.70%	73.30%	5.28	1.379

Participants' psychological effects across various categories were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The table presents the mean and standard deviation for each emotion, along with the percentage distribution of responses. Anger (M = 5.20, SD = 1.273), perplexity (M = 5.22, SD = 1.136), disbelief (M = 5.22, SD = 1.563), and hopelessness (M = 5.28, SD = 1.379) had the highest mean scores, indicating that these emotions were reported with greater intensity. In contrast, the mean scores for fear (M = 4.88, SD = 1.648), depression (M = 4.72, SD = 1.606), and frustration (M = 4.95, SD = 1.199) were comparatively lower, suggesting that these emotions were experienced with less intensity. The majority of participants reported "No" or "Very Low" levels for all emotions, with significant percentages of "No" responses for feelings such as anger (61.7%), disbelief (73.3%), hopelessness (73.3%), and self-blame (73.3%).

Table 2. Relation between age of the respondent and types of victimization.

Domain			Age				Total
			20-Nov	21-30	31-40	41-50	
Types of victimization	Physical victimization	*f*	1	15	2	0	18
		% within types	5.60%	83.30%	11.10%	0.00%	
		% within age	50.00%	34.90%	14.30%	0.00%	
	Psychological victimization	*f*	2	42	14	1	59
		% within types	3.40%	71.20%	23.70%	1.70%	
		% within age	100.00%	97.70%	100.00%	100.00%	
	Sexual victimization	*f*	2	26	9	1	38
		% within types	5.30%	68.40%	23.70%	2.60%	
		% within age	100.00%	60.50%	64.30%	100.00%	
	Economical victimization	*f*	2	39	12	1	54
		% within types	3.70%	72.20%	22.20%	1.90%	
		% within age	100.00%	90.70%	85.70%	100.00%	
Total		*f*	2	43	14	1	60

However, notable percentages of participants reported "Very High" or "High" levels of fear (16.7%), shame (11.7%), and depression (18.4%), indicating that these emotions were present at significant levels for some individuals. The results suggest that, although most participants did not report experiencing severe emotional distress, certain emotions—such as perplexity, anger, hopelessness, and disbelief—had relatively higher mean values, indicating that they were more common among participants. The standard deviations suggest that responses varied, with experiences showing more dispersion for emotions like fear, depression, and self-blame.

To investigate how different forms of victimization were distributed among different age groups, a descriptive analysis was conducted. The frequency (f) and percentage distribution of victimization types for each category and age group are presented in the table. In total, 18 individuals reported experiencing physical victimization, with the age group of 21–30 years old accounting for the largest percentage (83.3%), followed by the age group of 31–40 years old (11.1%) and the age group of 11–20 years old (5.6%). No cases were documented in the 41–50 age range. In each age group, 14.3% of people aged 31–40 and 34.9% of those aged 21–30 reported having been physically victimized. Psychological victimization, with 59 victims, was the most commonly reported form of victimization. The age group of 21–30 years old had the largest percentage (71.2%), followed by 31–40 years old (23.7%), 11–20 years old (3.4%), and 41–50 years old (1.7%). Interestingly, all participants in every age group acknowledged psychological victimization in some capacity. In total, 38 people reported having been sexually victimized. The age group of 21–30 years old accounted for 68.4% of all cases, followed by 31–40 years old (23.7%), 11–20 years old (5.3%), and 41–50 years old (2.6%). Additionally, 60.5% of individuals in the 21–30 age group and 64.3% of individuals in the 31–40 age group reported having been sexually victimized. Fifty-four people reported experiencing economic victimization, which is the second most prevalent form after psychological victimization. The majority of cases were in the 21–30 age group (72.2%), followed by the 31–40 age group (22.2%), 11–20 age group (3.7%), and 41–50 age group (1.9%). Within each age group, economic victimization was experienced by 90.7% of those aged 21–30, 85.7% of those aged 31–40, and 100% of those aged 11–20 and 41–50. The results show that while physical and sexual victimization were less common, they remained prevalent in some categories. Psychological and economic victimization were the most commonly reported types across all age groups.

Table 3. Relation between offender and types of victimization.

Domain			Types of offender				Total
			Co-worker	Owner	Manager	Others	
Types of victimization	Physical victimization	f	7	3	1	7	18
		Victimization %	38.9%	16.7%	5.6%	38.9%	
		Offender %	35.0%	27.3%	12.5%	33.3%	
	Psychological victimization	f	20	10	8	21	59
		Victimization %	33.9%	16.9%	13.6%	35.6%	
		Offender %	100.0%	90.9%	100.0%	100.0%	
	Sexual victimization	f	12	5	5	16	38
		Victimization%	31.6%	13.2%	13.2%	42.1%	
		Offender %	60.0%	45.5%	62.5%	76.2%	
	Economical victimization	f	18	11	5	20	54
		Victimization %	33.3%	20.4%	9.3%	37.0%	
		Offender %	90.0%	100.0%	62.5%	95.2%	
Total		f	20	11	8	21	60

Among all victimization categories, the age group of 21 to 30 had the highest rates, indicating that individuals in this age range might be especially at risk. Additionally, with the exception of psychological and economic victimization, which persisted across all age groups, the 41–50 age group reported the lowest overall victimization rates.

A descriptive analysis was conducted by the types of offenders and the types of victimization. The frequency (f), percentage of victimization within each category, and percentage of offenses committed by each type of offender are shown in the table. Physical victimization was reported by 18 individuals, with the most commonly identified offenders being co-workers (38.9%) and others (38.9%) followed by owners (16.7%) and managers (5.6%). Among the offender categories, the most commonly reported type of victimization was psychological, which affected 59 individuals. According to the distribution of offenders, the most frequent offenders were co-workers (33.9%) and others (35.6%), followed by owners (16.9%) and managers (13.6%). Notably, psychological victimization was experienced by all types of offenders (100% co-workers, 90.9% owners, 100% managers, and 100% others), suggesting that it was a common problem across all offender categories. A total of 38 individuals reported having been sexually victimized. The largest proportion of incidents (42.1%) were attributed to others, followed by co-workers (31.6%), owners (13.2%), and managers (13.2%). Among the offender groups, 60.0% of co-workers, 45.5% of owners, 62.5% of managers, and 76.2% of others were accountable for sexual victimization. 54 people reported experiencing economic victimization. The most commonly reported perpetrators were co-workers (33.3%) and others (37.0%), followed by owners (20.4%) and managers (9.3%). Economic victimization was particularly prevalent among owners and others, as 90.0% of co-workers, 100.0% of owners, 62.5% of managers, and 95.2% of others were accountable for it within their respective offender groups. The results indicate that, among all offender groups, psychological and economic victimization were the most frequently reported forms of victimization. In all forms of victimization, particularly sexual and economic victimization, others and co-workers were frequently mentioned as offenders. Additionally, in every category except sexual victimization, managers were the least likely to be reported as offenders. These results suggest that victimization in social or professional settings is a widespread issue that affects various types of offenders and requires tailored solutions depending on the offender group and type of victimization.

Table 4. Relationship between victimization place and types of victimization.

Domain			victimized workplace			Total
			Inside	Outside	On the way	
Types of victimization	Physical victimization	f	11	3	4	18
		% within types	61.10%	16.70%	22.20%	
		% within workplace	23.90%	75.00%	40.00%	
	Psychological victimization	f	45	4	10	59
		% within types	76.30%	6.80%	16.90%	
		% within workplace	97.80%	100.00%	100.00%	
	Sexual victimization	f	26	3	9	38
		% within types	68.40%	7.90%	23.70%	
		% within workplace	56.50%	75.00%	90.00%	
	Economical victimization	f	40	4	10	54
		% within types	74.10%	7.40%	18.50%	
		% within workplace	87.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Total		Count	46	4	10	60

A descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of different types of victimization based on the most victimized workplace locations. The frequency (f), percentage of victimization in each category, and the percentage of victimization in each employment location are displayed in the table. Eighteen individuals reported experiencing physical victimization, with the majority of these incidents occurring within the workplace (61.1%), followed by on the route to work (22.2%) and outside the workplace (16.7%). In each location, 40.0% of those inside, 75.0% of those outside, and 23.9% of those inside the workplace reported being physically victimized. Psychological victimization, with 59 victims, was the most commonly reported type. The largest percentage of cases occurred inside the workplace (76.3%), followed by on the road (16.9%) and outside (6.8%). Interestingly, almost all individuals inside (97.8%), on the way (100.0%), and outside (100.0%) reported being psychologically victimized. Thirty-eight individuals in total claimed to have been sexually victimized. The workplace accounted for 68.4% of incidents, followed by on the way (23.7%) and outside (7.9%). In the workplace, 90.0% of those enroot, 75.0% of those outside, and 56.5% of those inside reported having been sexually victimized. Fifty-four individuals reported experiencing economic victimization, which is the second most prevalent type after psychological victimization. The majority of incidents (74.1%) occurred at work, followed by those that happened on the road (18.5%) and outside (7.4%). There was widespread financial exploitation in every location, as evidenced by the fact that 87.0% of people inside, 100.0% of people outdoors, and 100.0% of people traveling experienced economic victimization. The results show that the most frequently reported forms of victimization across all workplace locations were psychological and economic, with the workplace being the most common location for all forms of victimization. However, there were also notable levels of victimization for those who were outside and traveling to work, particularly for psychological and economic victimization, which affected all individuals in these areas. The prevalence of sexual victimization was higher among those traveling to work, indicating heightened susceptibility during travel. These findings highlight the necessity of public safety and workplace initiatives to combat victimization in various contexts.

Table 5. Chi- Square analysis of Occupation of the respondents and physical victimization.

Domain	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	12.539	5	0.028
Likelihood ratio	14.215	5	0.014
Linear-by-linear association	0.164	1	0.685
N of valid cases	60		
Symmetric measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by nominal	Phi	0.457	0.028
	Cramer's V	0.457	0.028
N of valid cases		60	

HO_1: There is significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and physical victimization.

To investigate the relationship between two categorical variables, a Chi-Square test of independence was used. A statistically significant connection was found, with $\chi^2(5, N = 60) = 12.539$ and $p = 0.028$. This result was further corroborated by the Likelihood Ratio test, which showed $G^2(5, N = 60) = 14.215$, $p = 0.014$. However, no significant linear relationship was found by the Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2(1, N = 60) = 0.164$, $p = 0.685$). To evaluate the strength of the association, Cramer's V (V) and Phi (Φ) were computed. Cramer's V was $V = 0.457$, $p = 0.028$, and the Phi coefficient was $\Phi = 0.457$, $p = .028$, both indicating a moderate and statistically significant relationship between the variables. The results suggest that the factors have a moderate but substantial association. The statistically significant Chi-Square and Cramer's V values indicate a meaningful association, while the non-significant Linear-by-Linear Association test suggests that the relationship is not necessarily linear.

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between monthly income of the respondents and working hours.

Table 6. Chi-Square analysis of Monthly income and working hour of the respondents.

Domain	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	10.945	8	0.205
Likelihood ratio	12.561	8	0.128
Linear-by-linear association	0.425	1	0.515
N of valid cases	60		
Symmetric measures			
	Value	Approx. Sig.	
Nominal by nominal	Phi	0.427	0.205
	Cramer's V	0.302	0.205
N of Valid Cases	60		

A Chi-Square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between two categorical variables. Likewise, no significant correlation was found by the Likelihood Ratio test, with $G^2(8, N = 60) = 12.561$, $p = 0.128$. Furthermore, the Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2(1, N = 60) = 0.425$, $p = 0.515$) revealed no significant linear connection. To evaluate the association's strength, Cramer's V (V) and Phi (Φ) were computed. Cramer's V was $V = 0.302$, $p = 0.205$, and the Phi coefficient was $\Phi = 0.427$, $p = 0.205$, both showing a weak and non-significant correlation between the variables. The findings suggest that there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables under study. The effect size measures (Phi and Cramer's V) indicate a weak association, reinforcing the lack of statistical significance.

5. Discussion

The analysis of victimization across different variables, including offender type, workplace location, and victim demographics, provides important insights into the prevalence and patterns of victimization. The findings reveal several key trends that highlight the nature and severity of workplace-related victimization. Psychological and economic victimization emerged as the most frequently reported types of victimization across all analyses. A significant proportion of victims reported experiencing these forms of abuse, suggesting that mental and financial exploitation are pervasive issues in workplace environments. Physical and sexual victimization, while less frequent, still accounted for a notable percentage of cases, indicating the need for targeted interventions to prevent these forms of abuse.

Victimization is not confined to a single group of offenders, but rather occurs across coworkers, owners, managers, and other individuals, as revealed by the analysis of offender categories. The most frequent perpetrators of psychological, sexual, and financial victimization were coworkers and "others" (which could include clients, customers, or other external parties). This suggests that, in addition to hierarchical power dynamics, peer relationships and external threats may also contribute to workplace violence and harassment. Owners and others were found to have a disproportionately high rate of economic victimization, indicating that workers may be vulnerable to financial exploitation through unequal pay, payment withholding, or financial coercion. The high rates of sexual victimization by "others" (42.1%) and co-workers (31.6%) highlight the urgent need for stronger workplace policies against harassment and abuse.

According to the statistics, over 74% of economic victimization, 76% of psychological victimization, and 68% of sexual victimization occur inside the workplace, making it the most common setting for all types of victimization. This suggests that the actual working environment may not always be safe for employees and could facilitate various forms of abuse. However, there are also significant risks of victimization while traveling to and from work. The prevalence of sexual victimization during commuting was particularly high (23.7%), indicating an increased likelihood of harassment or assault during transit. Additionally, reports of physical victimization were higher outside the workplace (75.0%) than inside (23.9%), suggesting that some workers may be more vulnerable to violence in non-workplace environments. These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive safety measures that extend beyond the physical workplace, including secure commuting options and protections against external threats. The data on emotional responses to victimization reveal high levels of distress among victims, with many experiencing fear, shock, depression, anger, shame, and hopelessness. The mean scores indicate that hopelessness (M = 5.28), disbelief (M = 5.22), and confusion (M = 5.22) were among the most common emotional responses, suggesting that victimization significantly impacts mental health and overall well-being.

The results also show a significant level of anxiety (M = 4.88), frustration (M = 4.95), and self-blame (M = 5.13), underscoring the psychological toll that victims bear. The fear of loneliness and the hesitancy to trust people indicate that victimization has a lasting impact on one's personal security and interpersonal connections. The results of the chi-square test indicate that some variables have statistically significant correlations with one another. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 12.539 (df = 5, p = 0.028), for instance, shows that victimization differs considerably depending on the type of offender. However, the second chi-square test (Pearson Chi-Square = 10.945, df = 8, p = 0.205) did not show statistical significance, suggesting that there may not be a substantial correlation between workplace characteristics and certain victimization patterns. This

implies that victimization experiences may be influenced by other factors, including personal experiences, work environment, and socioeconomic background.

According to the overall research, workplace victimization is a complex, multifaceted problem that requires targeted responses. The most common forms of victimization are psychological and financial, with major offenders including owners, coworkers, and outsiders. Victimization occurs not only within the workplace but also during commutes, suggesting that broader societal risks are involved. The findings emphasize the need for organizational, legal, and psychological support networks to prevent and reduce victimization. Future studies should explore the long-term coping strategies employed by victims, as well as other socioeconomic and cultural factors that influence workplace victimization. Addressing these issues effectively will lead to a safer, healthier, and more equitable workplace for all workers.

6. Implications of Findings

The conclusions of the analysis have several significant implications for organizational management, labor regulations, mental health services, and broader social interventions. A comprehensive strategy that incorporates security enhancements, regulatory reforms, and psychological support systems is necessary to address workplace victimization. The high frequency of economic and psychological victimization underscores the need for stricter workplace regulations to protect workers from abuse. Establishing anonymous reporting channels, enforcing fair wage standards, and implementing clear anti-harassment policies are all crucial measures. The findings highlight the need for stronger legislative frameworks to combat workplace victimization, particularly concerning economic and sexual exploitation. To expand victims' legal options and strengthen workplace safety regulations, governments and labor unions should collaborate.

Organizations must focus on developing a culture of respect and accountability, as victimization occurs most frequently in the workplace. Instances of victimization can be reduced by implementing zero-tolerance policies against abuse and educating employees on ethical workplace conduct. Employees often fear reprisals when reporting victimization at work. Whistleblower protections and confidential reporting mechanisms can encourage victims to come forward without the fear of losing their jobs. Since coworkers, owners, and managers all play a role in victimization, organizations should ensure that executives and supervisors are held accountable for preventing abuse in the workplace. Training in ethical decision-making, harassment prevention, and conflict resolution should be provided to leaders.

There is a need for easily accessible mental health support in the workplace, as evidenced by the high levels of anxiety, self-blame, sadness, and hopelessness among victims. Employers should provide mental health awareness training, employee assistance programs (EAPs), and counselling services. Victims of workplace victimization often struggle with trust and loneliness. To help victims cope with their experiences and rebuild trust in professional relationships, peer support groups or mentorship programs could be established. Given the prevalence of psychological victimization, some victims may experience long-term mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). To support affected employees, organizations should collaborate with mental health professionals to offer trauma-informed care. Businesses must invest in improved security infrastructure, such as CCTV cameras, security guards, and emergency response teams, as victimization occurs both within and outside the workplace. The results show that victimization happens not only at work but also during commutes and in external settings. Employers should consider offering transportation to their employees, particularly those working late nights or in high-risk areas. Staff members should receive training on recognizing, preventing, and managing workplace violence. This should include awareness campaigns, emergency response drills, and self-defense classes to help individuals protect themselves in potentially dangerous situations.

The results show that comprehensive legislation, mental health treatments, and security measures are desperately needed to address workplace victimization. By enacting stricter laws, implementing workplace safeguards, and providing psychological support programs, organizations and governments can significantly reduce workplace violence and make the workplace safer and more welcoming for all workers. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to determine the long-term effects of victimization and the effectiveness of workplace remedies.

7. Conclusion

It can be inferred from the study's results and their logical interpretation that a significant percentage of the respondents were middle-aged, married, and residing in the cities of Tangail district. Most of these respondents were required to work more than eight hours a day and had considerable experience in various employment sectors within the district. Despite their long workdays, only a small portion of employees received bonuses or other incentives. According to the report, the majority of respondents frequently experienced victimization at work. During their jobs, they were subjected to various forms of victimization, including economic, sexual, psychological, and physical assault. The most startling finding was the widespread discontent among employees regarding their pay. Due to wage discrimination, female employees, in particular, were paid less for doing the same work as their male colleagues. In addition to perpetuating gender inequality, this salary gap made it more difficult for female employees to make ends meet. The study's conclusions

emphasize the urgent need for structural changes in the workplace to prevent victimization and improve working conditions. Fostering a safe, equitable, and supportive work environment requires addressing patriarchal attitudes, ensuring equal pay, improving security measures, and implementing anti-harassment policies. Employers, legislators, and other relevant parties must collaborate to implement these policies in order to protect employees especially women from abuse at work and promote an egalitarian and respectful work environment.

7.1. Limitations of the Study

It is important to recognize the limitations of this study despite its noteworthy findings.

i.   The study was restricted to the Tangail district, its conclusions might not apply to other areas or countries with distinct socioeconomic and cultural contexts.
ii. The study relied on respondents' self-reported data, which could be influenced by social desirability or recall bias.
iii. The study focused primarily on female employees and overlooked the experiences of male and non-binary individuals who may also be victimized at work. To develop more comprehensive policies and solutions, future research should adopt a more inclusive approach and consider the experiences of all gender groups.
iv. The long-term psychological and financial effects of workplace victimization were not explored in the study.

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