

Working Women's Economic Independence and Decision-making Role for Their Family: A

literature review

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Introduction

- ❖ In Bangladesh's garment industry, women constitute a significant majority, making up 80% of the 4 million-strong workforce. This sector is crucial to the country's economy, with Bangladesh being the world's second-largest garment exporter. Despite the challenges of low wages and poor working conditions, these women exhibit remarkable resilience and strength.
- ❖ Employment in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector has provided these women with financial independence, empowering them to actively participate in household decisions. This economic independence has given them confidence and a voice in making strategic choices regarding marriage, family planning, and the education and well-being of their children.
- ❖ Traditionally, men held primary decision-making roles within families. However, with the increasing participation of women in the workforce, there has been a shift. Women are now actively involved in decisions about their children's education and can allocate resources toward their children's educational expenses and healthcare needs, showcasing a significant change in family dynamics.

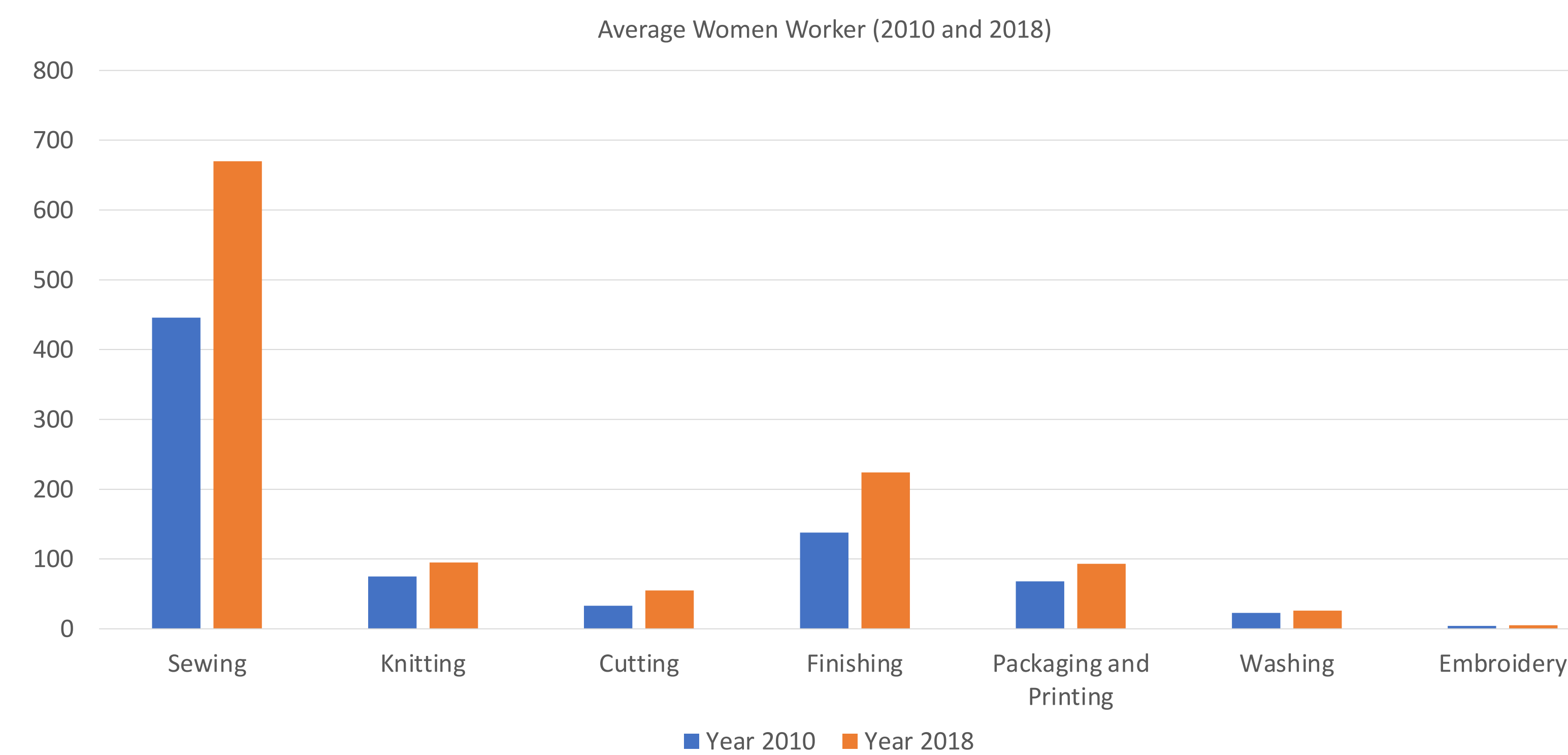
Objectives

- ❖ Financial independence from garment industry employment empowers women to participate in household decisions and make strategic family choices.
- ❖ Increased female workforce participation shifts family dynamics, enabling women to influence decisions about children's education and healthcare.
- ❖ Despite low wages and poor working conditions, women in Bangladesh's garment sector show remarkable resilience and strength.

Methods

As this is a review work. We have performed a comprehensive literature search through CBU library electronic databases and the World Wide Web (Internet). Some summary tables are prepared based on published articles.

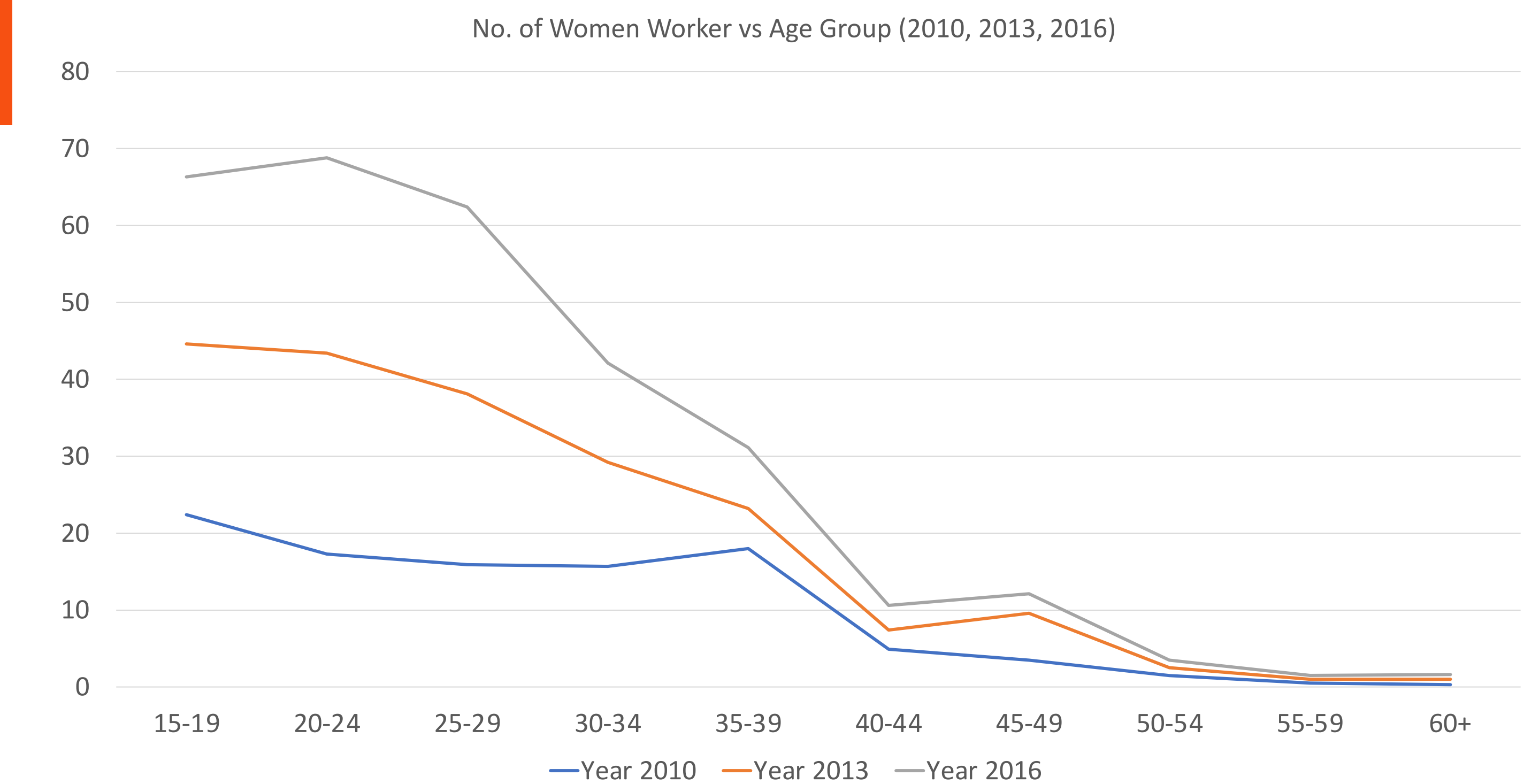
Results



According to ILO and UN Women's "Enterprise Level Survey," female employment in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector grew significantly from 2010 to 2018. The average number of women workers increased from 787 in 2010 to 1,168 in 2018, a rise of 381. The sewing section saw the largest growth, adding 224 workers, followed by finishing with 86. Modest increases in washing and embroidery also contributed to the overall upward trend. This data highlights a positive trajectory in female employment, reflecting advancements in job opportunities and increased participation of women in the RMG workforce over the eight-year period.

Production Section	Year 2010	Year 2018	Difference (2010-2018)
Sewing	446	670	224
Knitting	75	95	20
Cutting	33	55	22
Finishing	138	224	86
Packaging and Printing	68	93	25
Washing	23	26	3
Embroidery	4	5	1
Total	787	1168	381

Between 2013 and 2016, most female workers in Bangladesh were aged 20-24, while in 2010, the highest percentage was in the 15-19 age group. Increased encouragement for young women to join the Garments (RMG) sector led to participation rates of 26.1% and 25.4%. The accompanying line graph shows a growing trend of women entering the RMG sector, highlighting their drive for self-empowerment and belief in the transformative power of self-dependency.



Conclusions

The literature review underscores the significant role of women in Bangladesh's garment sector, highlighting their economic independence and increasing decision-making power within their families despite challenges like low wages and poor working conditions. There has been a notable increase in the number of women workers in the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector between 2010 and 2018, indicating expanding job opportunities and greater female participation in the workforce within this pivotal industry. Employment in the garment sector serves as a critical pathway to economic empowerment for women in Bangladesh, enabling them to assertively influence household decisions, including those related to marriage, family planning, and the education and well-being of their children.

References

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