Digital Media Proliferation and Recreation Pattern of the Blue-Collars: A Study on the RMG Workers in Bangladesh

Din M. Sumon Rahman[1]*, Kazi Mahmudur Rahman[2], Sazia Sharmin[3], and Nasrin Jabin[4]

[1] Center for Critical and Qualitative Studies, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh
[2] Department of Social Sciences & Humanities, Independent University, Bangladesh
[3] Save the Children, Bangladesh
[4] School of Politics, Philosophy and Public Affairs, Washington State University, USA
* Din M. Sumon Rahman, corresponding author. Email: sumon.rahman@ulab.edu.bd

Abstract

This study explores the concept of recreation among workers in the readymade garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh and documents how their patterns of recreational activities are determined by the extreme time poverty and lack of resources of RMG workers, both at their households and factory premises. This paper shows that digital media consumption has emerged as a significant leisure activity for RMG workers due to the Wi-Fi 'revolution,' rapid proliferation of social media, and widespread access to smartphone-based communication and entertainment applications. This paper explores the dynamics of recreation among RMG workers, focusing on their leisure activities during weekdays and weekends. The proliferation of digital media has introduced new dimensions to how these workers engage in leisure, reflecting diverse manifestations of recreational activities. The study employs a mixed-method research design to comprehensively understand these dynamics, integrating data collected through three distinct approaches: a small-scale cross-sectional survey, focused ethnography, and in-depth interviews. This paper argues that attitudes toward entertainment and media among RMG workers significantly depend upon gender, dwelling setup (whom they live with), and income level. The findings of this study depict that music, in both audio and video formats, is the most preferred content for entertainment among RMG workers because it is relaxing and affordable, while the theological content has a significant appeal to them both in digital and non-digital space. Understanding recreation and leisure experience patterns among RMG workers in Bangladeshi policymaking is essential because it sheds light on crucial components of their lives and worldviews.

Keywords

Introduction

This paper documents the dynamics of leisure activities and media consumption among Bangladesh's readymade garments (RMG) workers. Touted in the popular imagination as the blue-collar, breadwinner, nine-to-fiver, proletariat, valiant economic heroes, bread-and-butter slave, or victims in need of rescue, RMG workers are pushed to the margins of extreme time poverty and deprived of leisure activities, which is significantly associated with physical and mental well-being (Depp & Jeste, 2006; Paggi et al., 2016; Pressman et al., 2009). The often-heroic depiction of the RMG workers portrays the role of the RMG industry in Bangladesh as a prominent actor in the economic development of the nation through export earnings (approximately 80%), foreign exchange, women's employment and empowerment, and poverty minimization (Rahman & Chowdhury, 2020). Global literature on RMG workers is broadly focused on the following themes: human security status, social security (Rahman et al., 2024), socioeconomic status assessment (Frenkel et al., 2022; Rahman & Rahman, 2021), work-related musculoskeletal disorders and risk assessment (Darvishi et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2015), health vulnerabilities (Chumchai et al., 2015), problems surrounding wages, wealth and deprivations (Muhammad, 2011), and the impact of COVID-19 on their lives (Kabir et al., 2021). However, what has received little attention are the life of the RMG workers at and outside the workplace during leisure time and how they understand the meaning of leisure.

This paper aims to understand the dynamics of RMG workers' recreation during leisure by contextualizing their weekday and weekend avenues and activities. Due to digital media proliferation, the dimension of leisure among RMG workers has also been manifested in various ways. The paper argues that although these blue-collar workers are represented as an oppressed subjugated class in the era of this neoliberal economic growth, they are also well aware of the importance of recreational activities and, surprisingly, choose different activities despite the shortage of time and money. In this paper, we look beyond established constructs about RMG workers and shift our focus on the patterns of their leisure activities that express their agency despite having structural impediments such as time poverty and economic insolvency. The study solely intends to answer the critical research question– how does digital media proliferation among the resource-poor working-class people in Bangladesh redefine the space and content of leisure and recreation?

Leisure, recreational activities, and well-being

"We mean to make things over; we're tired of toil for naught but bare enough to live on: never an hour for thought. We want to feel the sunshine; we want to smell the flowers; We're sure that God has willed it, and we mean to have eight hours." (Blanchard & Jones, 1878). These lines are from the first stanza of the song *"Eight Hours,"* written and published as a form of protest against long working hours endured by the workers in the early days of industrialization in America in the 1870s. The song, however, is still pertinent in depicting the extreme poverty of RMG workers today in Bangladesh. In this instance, it cannot be denied that they are the oppressed organ of a systematically exploitative neoliberal economic growth system.

Although leisure is described as free time and a state of mind by several scholars, the analysis of the practice of free time always poses additional questions, such as what people think they want to do, as well as what they do when they consider themselves to be free (Gallistl & Nimrod, 2020; Rojek, 2005; Sintas et al., 2015). From the famous 'Theory of the Leisure Class'

by Thorsten Veblen in 1899, to Johann Huizinga (Homo Ludens in 1950), to Sebastian De Grazia's 'Of Time, Work and Leisure' in 1964, to Stella Margetson's theory of 'Leisure and Pleasure' in 1968, all the classical theorists of leisure studies—when leisure was not yet considered an individual discipline unlike today— discussed the emergence and importance of leisure and play in prehistory (Haworth & Veal, 2004). In the late 1970s and into the 1980s, however, historical research was abundant on work and leisure published by renowned theorists, for example, Helen Meller (1976), Peter Bailey (1978), James Walvin (1978), Gary Cross (1990), Hugh Cunningham (1980) and Roy Rosenzweig (1983) (Haworth & Lewis, 2005). Essentially, the overall theme of the literature was the struggle between the masses and burgeoning capital over the control of work and leisure time during industrialization and urbanization (Haworth & Veal, 2004). Therefore, with the rise of industrial society, the idea of leisure was generated by creating a new world of free laborers where workers were deprived of traditional non-work rights and age-old systems of community support; however, this change provided workers with mobility and leisure in a new shape (Rojek, 2005). It allowed working-class people to spend their free time in whichever fashion they selected and encouraged them to freely and fully develop their capacities.

Another dimension of spending leisure time comes with the emergence and diffusion of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which have overwhelmingly affected individuals' leisure activities, irrespective of gender, age, class, and profession (Kim, 2016). Leisure activities nowadays are mediated and form a part of an individual's media repertoire in digital environments. Media repertoires refer to the sets of available media offerings that individuals use regularly (or frequently) (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012; Kim, 2016). Traditional patterns of leisure have been disrupted by rapid technological advancement and innovation (Gallistl & Nimrod, 2020; Jenkins, 2006). Accordingly, many studies explore digital leisure activities offered by new media, describing individuals' and diverse social groups' digital leisure practices, spaces, and experiences (Schultz & McKeown, 2018). However, leisure researchers tend to exclude RMG workers from their studies to examine their involvement in digital leisure (Silk et al., 2016). As a result, relatively few studies in the leisure field explore the digital leisure activities and avenues of RMG workers compared to the research on common groups (Hebblethwaite, 2016; Shatil et al., 2019). Understanding and analyzing the leisure activities and recreation patterns of the RMG workers is the only way to reach them and provide a better understanding of their livelihoods and worldviews.

An interactionist approach to the spending of leisure time contends that people experience media in complex conditions of everyday life. People are not simply passive recipients of entertainment but active agents who seek out or avoid certain content. Individual differences in preferences must be examined to develop a holistic understanding of entertainment's role in people's lives. We explored two interactionist approaches by Rentfrow et al. (2011) to guide our foray into the unchartered territory of media consumption by RMG workers. Interactionist theories assume that people prefer content that satisfies psychological needs and seek out specific media content that reinforces their attitudes and dispositions. For example, individuals seek out certain media content to manage their moods.

Regarding psychological needs, investigations of television viewing patterns suggest that young people watch TV for companionship, whereas adults watch TV for new information (Rentfrow et al., 2011). Another line of research investigates the links between personality traits and preferences within various media. For example, preferences for "reflective and complex" music, like classical, jazz, blues, and folk, are positively associated with openness to experience, verbal ability, and liberal political orientations. Preference for "upbeat and

conventional" music, like pop, country, and Christian, is positively related to extraversion, agreeableness, and political conservatism (Langmeyer et al., 2012).

Workers' recreation

Many organizations now acknowledge that leisure or recreation brings out the best in their workers. In Nigeria, it was observed that a more significant part of the respondent workers accepted that they spend their own money to go for recreation, and approximately 80.7% engage in leisure activities outside of their work duration. In comparison, 19.5% of workers do not participate in any recreation time (Kukoyi & Ijose, 2023). Approximately 38.0% of workers partake in leisure activities monthly, around 27.7% of workers do leisure activities weekly, while the rest participate in entertaining hobbies at convenient times. Among the endeavors of working-class people, games ranked the highest, with 54.8% of workers playing games and doing exercise in their free time, 34.3% responded that they sometimes play games, and 11.0% answered negatively about games. Next, the workers preferred listening to music as a leisure activity for refreshment.

On the contrary, the workers classify going to clubs as their least favorite leisure activity. The recreational activities near clubbing include picnics and cinemas (Kukoyi & Ijose, 2023). In Bangladesh, for instance, regardless of the lack of clubbing opportunities, going to the cinemas was the favorite leisure activity among garment workers, followed by going out with their friends and families and shopping before the Rana Plaza disaster (Bhuiyan, 2012). The workers involved in exercise and games could be because of the benefits exercise and games provide to both body and mind. They are easily achievable without fancy equipment and are inexpensive. Listening to music can also be done very quickly with the widespread use of the internet and smartphones (Kukoyi & Ijose, 2023). Traveling is also a favorite recreational activity for workers, but it is done by a niche of workers in high ranks as they are financially well off to travel. This diverse range of leisure activities eventually improves the socioeconomic wellness of the workers because they become both physically and psychologically sound, which positively correlates with their productivity (Obinwanne & Alozie, 2019). It is because the workers then have far greater control of their temper and can create feel-good memories, have positive relationships with co-workers and family members, become more understanding, and reduce their chances of getting sick since they engage in different kinds of physical activities as part of recreation, which helps to unwind the stress of being stuck in a rigid position in their organizations (Obinwanne & Alozie, 2019).

Culture is the information we learn from the people surrounding us. It is a system, a dynamic whole, that creates and is created by people, places, and practices (Causadias, 2020; Dong & Chick, 2005). Culture plays a crucial role in whether people participate or do not participate in leisure activities. In Japan, it is assumed that women should stay at home to care for their children; this makes many active women give up their leisure activities. Moreover, in China, grandparents must care for their grandchildren even if they are unwell (Dong & Chick, 2005). In contrast, participating in recreational activities is also determined by culture. As we can see in China, lighting firecrackers during the Spring Festival is a tradition and is believed to bring good luck. It is well-documented that playing with firecrackers is a dangerous recreational task. Pachinko, a type of gambling game, is used as a game of rejuvenation in Japan, while any kind of gambling is prohibited in many nations. As a result, it can be observed that culture, on the one hand, urges individuals to do some things and discourages them from doing others (Dong & Chick, 2005). The culture here is seen as a system that may substantially

improve leisure constraints theory, which may reduce or alleviate participation or satisfaction in leisure activities (Dong & Chick, 2005; Kim et al., 2019).

By taking an individual and a chronological period as the initial units of analysis, scholars examined the spontaneous reproduction of media discourse outside the immediate consumption contexts. They considered what types of media references were repeated during that time, what variations were discernible in different situations, and whether there was a narrative coherence in the references made. Participant observation and ethnographic field notes offer orienting descriptions and interpretations for the rest of the research team. Observations on the physical use of media hardware can also be made.

Methodology

Study design

The data was collected from five RMG factories in the northern, northwestern, and southeast areas of Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. The study has used a mixed-method research design. The study combines data from three methods: a small-scale cross-sectional survey, focused ethnography, and in-depth interviews. Research participants for this project were RMG workers, irrespective of gender, age, education, income, designations in the factory, and socio-political affiliation with the labor unions. Participants were chosen through a purposive sampling technique. Purposeful sampling aims to select information-rich cases so that answers to the study questions can be sought (Patton, 2001).

The small-scale cross-sectional survey collected 409 responses. Yamane (1967) suggested a standard and simplified formula for enumerating the sample size from a known population: $n = N/[1+(N×d^2)]$. Where n, N, and d denote the study's estimated sample size, the study area's population size, and the 5% tolerated standard error or level of precision at a 95% confidence interval.

For key informant interviews, participants were chosen through the snowball sampling technique. Twelve interviews were conducted, some lasting over 40 minutes and others as short as 15 to 20 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Bengali, the informants' native language. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. In addition, focused ethnography in the four sites was conducted for 30 days. The researchers made ethnographic observations as first-party and shadow observers by entering the habitats and local communities.

Ethical considerations were maintained: pseudonyms were used, and informed consent was collected. However, informants were not compensated for their time.

This research was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), Bangladesh, on March 23, 2020 (ERC 2020S-002).

Data collection and analysis

The quantitative data of this study was analyzed through the statistical software SPSS version 20.0. All the categorical variables were represented as percentages and frequencies. Chi-square (x 2*The)* was employed for determining associations; Phi & Cramer's V test was used

for measuring the strength of the associations; and Pearson's R & Spearman Correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables of the two sets. These tests have been widely used and accepted by scholars and statisticians worldwide because of their reliability and precision (Argyrous, 1997; Khamis, 2008; Liebetrau, 1983; Yamane, 1967).

Findings and analysis

Analysis of the quantitative findings

Demographic characteristics

This study's empirical findings have produced interesting and helpful insights into patterns of recreation and media usage among RMG workers in Dhaka city. Before delving into the major points of the data, a brief idea of the respondents' demographics seems necessary.

Table 1: Demographic Pattern of the Respondents

Variables (Demographic)	Options	Number (*N*)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	138	33.09
	Female	269	66.01
Age (years)	Less than 18	16	3.09
	18–25	201	49.04
	26–35	166	40.08
	36–45	24	5.09
Religion	Muslim	403	99.00
	Hindu	4	1.00
Academic attainment / Highest Education	None/Non-Formal	6	1.05
	Primary	145	35.6
	8th Grade	118	29.00
	SSC	67	16.05
	HSC	26	6.04
	Above HSC	5	1.02
	Didn't disclose	40	9.08
Marital Status	Unmarried	73	17.09
	Married	327	80.3
	Separated/Divorced/Widowed	7	1.7
Respondents Lives With	Alone/Colleague	31	7.9
	Matrimonial Family	289	73.05
	Paternal Family	73	18.06
Gross Monthly Income	Less than BDT 8000	22	6.01
	BDT 8,000–10,999	180	49.06
	BDT 11,000–12,999	123	33.09
	BDT 13,000–14,999	38	10.05
Type of Residence	Shack	9	2.04
	Mess	16	4.02
	Colony	64	17.04
	Building	91	24.01
	Tin-shade	197	52.03
Employment Status	Probationary	12	2.9

Variables (Demographic)	Options	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Length of Current Job	Permanent	395	97.01
	0–3 Years	198	48.06
	3–6 Years	127	31.02
	7–10 Years	56	13.08
	More than 10 Years	26	6.04
Department of Job	QC	23	5.08
	Operator	236	59.03
	Helper	71	17.08
	Supervisor	6	1.05
	Other	62	15.06
Working Hour/Day	5–8 Hours	301	75.1
	9–12 Hours	96	23.09
	More than 12 Hours	4	1.0

Note: 1 USD = 119.6 BDT

According to Table 1, the majority (66.01%) of the study participants were female, and the rest were male. Over 90% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 18–35 years (49.04% were aged between 18 to 25 years and 40.08% were aged between 26–35 years), the participants were largely Muslims (99%). Regarding educational background, 35.06% of the participants completed primary education, and merely 1.01% reached the higher secondary level (or equivalent to grade 12). In this study, the majority (80.03%) of the participants are married, and most female respondents (73.05%) live with their matrimonial family despite being married and divorced/widowed. According to our data, the nuclear family composition is the most dominant pattern in the RMG colonies. Half of the respondents have at least one child, and 39.06% of participants earn incomes from BDT 8,000 (USD 67) to 11,000 (USD 92) per month. Most of the respondents were found to be living in tin-shed houses (52.03%) since most are low-level workers (57.99% of our respondents are operators). Almost none of them have any other source of income, indicating their reliance on their jobs, even though they are ill-paid or remain unpaid for a few months. However, nearly half of the respondents were found to have been working in the RMG sector for three years (48.06%), and the least number of them (about 6.04%) had been working for more than ten years.

General observations of media preferences for recreation, based on frequency distribution findings

**Figure 1:** Respondents' Media Consumption Preference
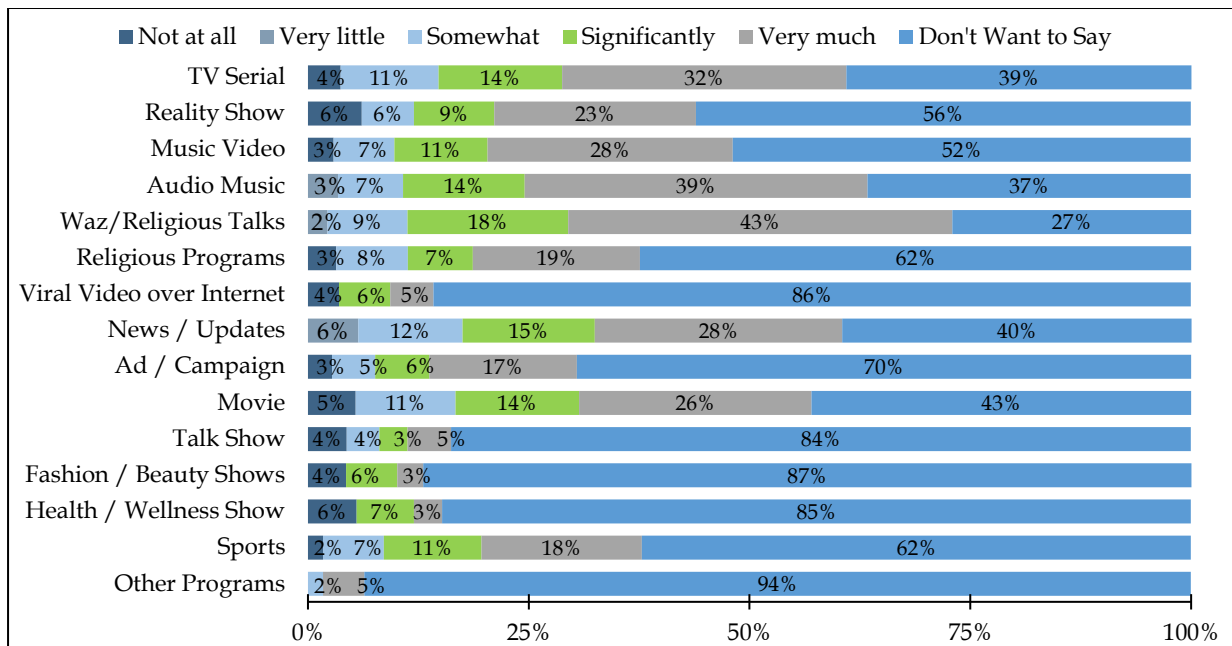
As shown in Figure 1, of these 409 respondents, 59.03% are sewing operators, 17.08% are helpers, and the rest are supervisors and others. By the nature of their jobs, music is among the most preferred form of media for recreation. This recreation is not just limited to listening to music; 38.33% of the participants prefer watching music videos, and 29.48% of respondents claim to engage in this recreational activity daily. More than half of the respondents prefer the pleasures of playing music loudly on speakers, and the three most common sources of loud music available to them are the speakers on their television sets, those on their smartphones, and the speakers available in their factories. Regarding entertainment options provided by the factories, music speakers are the only choice that has received significant responses, with 35.38% opting for this option.

Although the sample is dominated by female workers, not much appreciation is shown for fashion and beauty shows; around one-third of the sample has shown interest in reality shows, and even less enthusiasm is found for talk shows and discussions. However, the second most popular media consumption is the respondents' appeal for *waz mehfil* [Islamic religious sermons], where 43.49% of the sample preferred this particular kind of religious program, and 39.31% of the respondents listened to or watched mehfils daily.

Figure 2 shows that media consumption for recreational purposes is primarily divided among respondents' TVs at home and smartphones. News/updates, TV serials, movies, sports, and reality shows are mainly watched on TV, whereas waz mehfil is enjoyed chiefly on smartphones. However, listening to music and watching music videos are practiced almost equally on both TVs and smartphones. Unfortunately, as seen in previous data, very few respondents have the privilege of enjoying their favorite forms of entertainment, like waz mehfil and music, via their factories' sound systems.

Figure 2: Workers' Avenue for Media Consumption
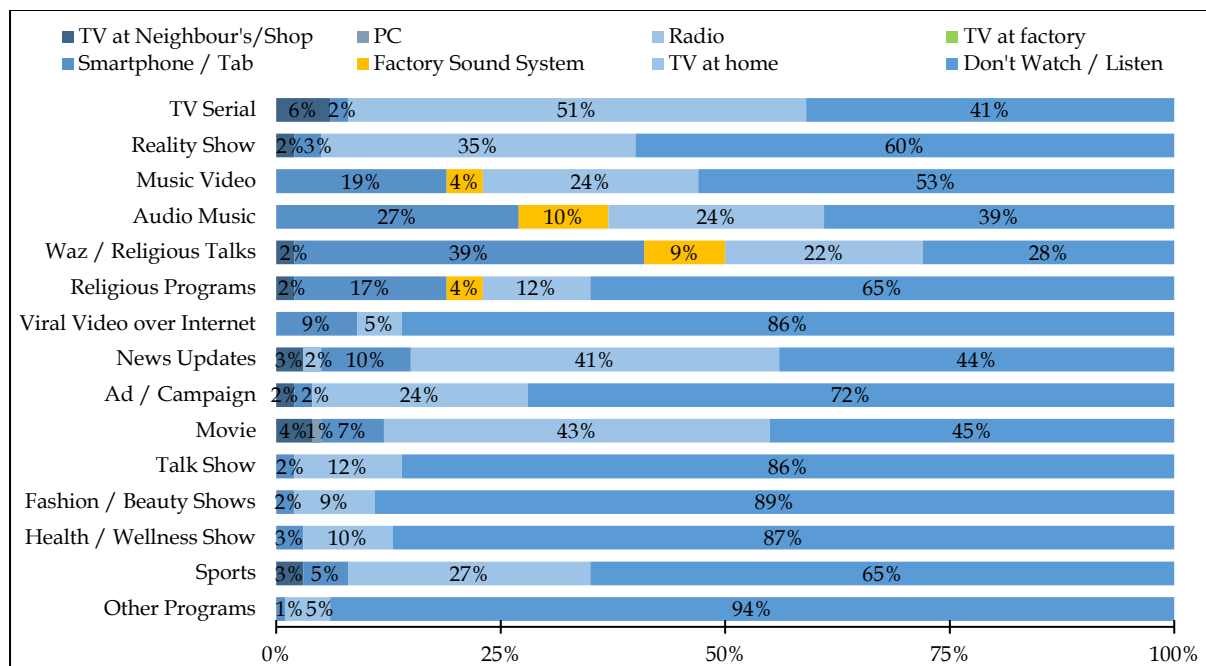
Furthermore, regarding social media platforms, Facebook is the most popular among the respondents, compared with Instagram or other similar outlets. However, interestingly, the respondents do not practice the basic features of Facebook, such as posting content, photos, or videos or liking and sharing memes. When it comes to chatting, they prefer Imo/Viber over Messenger. However, they do enjoy scrolling through Facebook and following media celebrities, which could lead to the conclusion that their usage is highly dependent on visual pleasure. Regarding media celebrities, religious personnel again rank as the most popular choice, with 26.04% of respondents claiming so, followed closely by actors/actresses who received 24.32% of the workers' votes. Another intriguing pattern among the respondents regarding the consumption and sharing of Facebook content is that more than half of respondents do not see news on social media platforms as trustworthy—furthermore, 37.84% of the sample shared content only after validating authenticity. Besides Facebook, TikTok and YouTube have similar popularity among the respondents, serving them with similar content.

Another form of recreation chosen highly by the respondents is cinema/movies, with 17.94% of the sample having the privilege of watching one movie daily. Most of them watch movies on TVs in their homes, and only a few prefer smartphones. Although smartphones have been prevalent for quite some time, few regular users are found among the respondents. Only 19.66% of the sample have used smartphones for the past 1 to 3 years, and even fewer, a mere 11.30%, have had such privileges for the past 3 to 5 years. Moreover, in this regard, half of the respondents have confirmed that their factories allow them to use cell phones during work, but free Wi-Fi availability is found in the responses of only 29.73% of workers.

Time mapping

The term 'time poverty' is the phenomenon that occurs: (a) when an individual is forced to work for long hours; (b) when an individual is not only working long hours but is also financially poor; or (c) when an individual would fall into financial poverty if they were to reduce their working hours below a given time poverty line. Thus, being time-poor results

from the combination of two conditions. Firstly, time poverty results when the individual worker does not have enough time for rest and leisure accounted for during working hours (whether these hours are spent in the labor market or doing household chores such as cooking). Secondly, the individual cannot reduce their working time without either increasing the level of poverty of their household (if the household is already poor) or leading their household to fall into further monetary poverty due to the loss in income or consumption associated with the reduction of working hours (if the household is already poor). Time mapping for workers appeared to be essential for two reasons: to identify their time-poverty dimensions, their practices, and the extent of entertainment/leisure in everyday life. The following tables indicate the time mapping parameter.

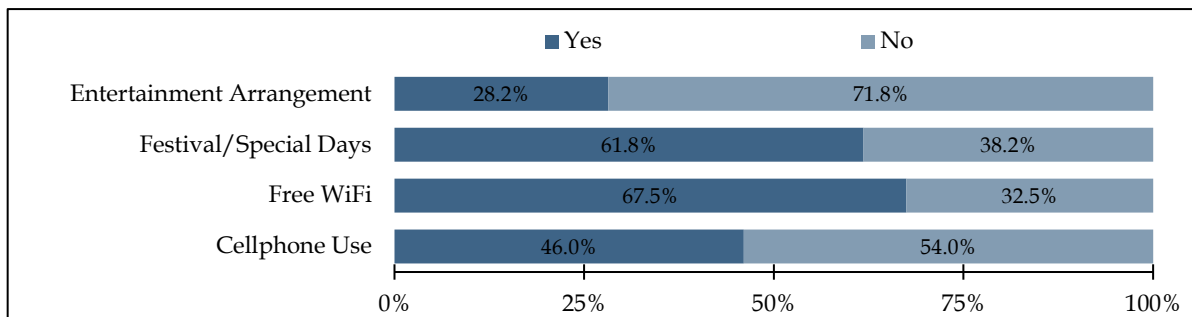**Figure 3:** Entertainment During Factory Setting and Workdays

Figure 3 demonstrates that most RMG workers (71.8%) have no entertainment options available at their workplaces. However, votes from 61.8% of the responders show that most of the factories seem to celebrate festivals and special days. In addition, 67.5% of respondents have access to free wireless internet (Wi-Fi) in their factories, but only 46.0% of the workers can use a cell phone at work. The discrepancy between these two values of data means that it is very likely that workers who have access to Wi-Fi cannot use it on their cell phones, and those who can use cell phones have no access to Wi-Fi.

Workers' recreation options (both on weekdays and weekends): Activities

Public outdoor spaces like parks and the residences of friends or relatives are the two zones most cited by the respondents for entertainment activities. Figure 4 shows that more than half of the respondents have picked 'nature spots,' 22.6% of whom visited these places once a week, while 14.5% of the respondents reported that they visit these sites once a month, 16.5% do so 'occasionally,' and 2.2% enjoy the outdoors daily. This affinity towards 'nature spots' does not come as a surprise because the respondents' physical environments and working conditions are highly congested and suffocating. For the same reason, almost half of the respondents, 44.2%, have not opted for indoor games. However, outdoor games are not quite popular either, which could be because of the fatigue in their jobs. Hanging out at a friend's or relative's place is the second most favorite pastime for respondents, as 46.7% of the respondents engage in this activity once a week; this entertainment activity seems more relaxing and comforting to the respondents. This may be so because it does not involve much physical labor and is more prevalent culturally and socially.

Figure 4: Workers' Recreations Options on the Weekdays and Weekend
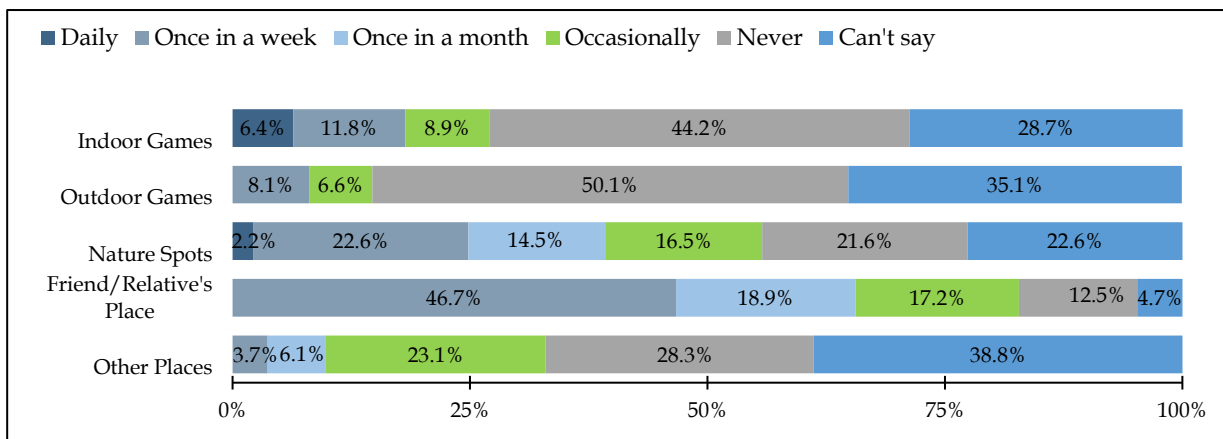
Inferential analyses between demographic variables and media preferences

For the test of association, two sets of variables were measured per the test's requirements. Variables were measured categorically, for example, using ordinal scales, and each variable consisted of two or more independent categorical groups. The first group of variables (independent) includes the demographic variables (representing the respondents' gender, age, marital status, dwelling setup, educational qualification, location of residence, type of housing, employment status, length of service, and monthly household income). The second group of variables (dependent) represents the respondents' media consumption and preference behavior, namely, the number of entertainment options available, hours spent per week on device-based entertainment, overall exposure to entertainment options, topmost choice of media personality type, and overall attitude towards entertainment. It must be noted that not every independent variable has a strong association with the group of dependent variables. Only a few variables from the former group (demographic) found to have a sound and strong association with the one or two variables belonging to the latter group (respondents' media consumption and preference) have been brought to Tables 2 and 3 to analyze. In contrast, the rest were not brought to the text for discussion.

Table 2: TEST Output of the Association and Correlation Among Gender, Dwelling Setup, and Monthly Income

		Gender					Dwelling Setup					Monthly Household Income				
		No. of entertainment options available	Hours spent / week on device-based entertainment	Overall exposure to entertainment options	Topmost choice of media personality type	Overall attitude towards entertainment	No. of entertainment options available	Hours spent / week on device-based entertainment	Overall exposure to entertainment options	Topmost choice of media personality type	Overall attitude towards entertainment	No. of entertainment options available	Hours spent / week on device-based entertainment	Overall exposure to entertainment options	Topmost choice of media personality type	Overall attitude towards entertainment
Responses	Count (n)	407	407	407	257	406	391	391	391	245	390	407	407	407	257	406
	Percent	100	100	100	63.1	99.8	96.1	96.1	96.1	60.2	95.8	100	100	100	63.1	99.8
Pearson Chi-Square		1.007	1.007	4.193	26.597	24.925	12.646	34.258	204.86	20.678	48.636	7.653	34.124	16.029	14.247	13.09
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)		0.909	0.909	0.381	0.000	0.000	0.698	0.080	0.000	0.658	0.000	0.812	0.005	0.451	0.580	0.666
Phi	Value	0.050	0.102	0.256	0.311	0.101	0.241	0.185	0.225	0.446	0.257	0.290	0.198	0.187	0.226	0.243
	Approx. Sig.	0.909	0.381	0.000	0.000	0.388	0.305	0.863	0.476	0.000	0.175	0.005	0.451	0.580	0.666	0.090
Cramer's V	Value	0.050	0.102	0.256	0.311	0.101	0.121	0.092	0.112	0.223	0.129	0.145	0.099	0.094	0.113	0.122
	Approx. Sig.	0.909	0.381	0.000	0.000	0.388	0.305	0.863	0.476	0.000	0.175	0.005	0.451	0.580	0.666	0.090
Pearson's R		0.014	0.014	0.020	0.247	0.173	-0.022	0.111	-0.061	0.083	-0.219	-0.006	0.213	0.073	0.088	-0.035
Approx. Sig.		0.780	0.780	0.690	0.000	0.005	0.653	0.028	0.229	0.100	0.001	0.899	0.000	0.141	0.076	0.575
Spearman Correlation		0.018	0.018	0.006	0.252	0.168	-0.015	0.102	-0.036	0.031	-0.118	-0.022	0.210	0.095	0.073	-0.016
Approx. Sig.		0.723	0.723	0.902	0.000	0.007	0.758	0.043	0.478	0.539	0.066	0.664	0.000	0.056	0.140	0.798

Interpretation and implication of Table 2

Gender

Respondents' gender is significantly associated with two variables, 'Topmost choice of media personality type' and 'Overall attitude towards entertainment,' which have *p* values of .000 for Phi. Furthermore, Cramer's V for 'Gender' vs. 'Topmost choice of media personality type' shows a value of 0.311 for both. For the correlation test, Pearson's R and Spearman Correlation values for this pair of variables, where Gender is the independent variable and the Topmost choice of media personality type is the dependent one, are 0.247 and 0.252, respectively, which indicates a weak correlation between the two, because roughly 25% of the changes in the dependent variable can be attributed to the changes in an independent variable where the rest remained unattributed.

The inferences of the test results are as follows:

a) Preference towards media personality type among RMG workers significantly depends on gender, indicating a gendered choice of media personality types.

b) The overall attitude towards entertainment among RMG workers significantly depends on gender. Therefore, RMG workers of different genders will show varying interests in entertainment as a part of their daily lives.

Dwelling setup

With *p* values of .000 for both, respondents' dwelling setup (whom they live with) has shown a significant association with two variables: 'Overall exposure to entertainment options' and 'Overall attitude towards entertainment.' Phi and Cramer's V for 'Dwelling setup' vs. 'Overall exposure to entertainment options' and 'Overall attitude towards entertainment' show values of 0.225, 0.112, 0.257, and 0.129, respectively, indicating mentionable strength for the associations.

The test outcome implies that RMG workers' overall attitudes towards entertainment significantly vary and are affected by who they live with. The analysis shows that RMG workers living with parents, siblings, and spouses have more positive attitudes toward entertainment. RMG workers living in different dwelling setups will show a varied interest in entertainment as a part of their daily lives.

Monthly household income

Respondents' monthly family income has shown a significant association with the 'Hours spent on device-based (smartphone, feature phone, tab, music system, etc.) entertainment/week,' which has a *p* value of .005. Phi and Cramer's V for the same shows values of 0.198 and 0.099, indicating mentionable strength for the association. For the correlation test, Pearson's R and Spearman Correlation values for this pair of variables, where 'Monthly household income' is the independent variable and 'Hours spent on device-based entertainment/week' is the dependent one, are 0.213 and 0.210, respectively, which indicates a strong positive correlation between them.

The test results imply that RMG workers with different household income levels show significantly different patterns for the weekly hours spent on device-based entertainment. The

time spent on device-based entertainment among RMG workers substantially depends on their family income level. Therefore, workers with different income levels can access messages/communications delivered through such devices.

Table 3: Summary Outputs of the Test of Association and Correlation

		Number of Children					Location of Residence				
		No. of entertainment options available	Hours spent / week on device-based entertainment	Overall exposure to entertainment options	Topmost choice of media personality type	Overall attitude towards entertainment	No. of entertainment options available	Hours spent / week on device-based entertainment	Overall exposure to entertainment options	Topmost choice of media personality type	Overall attitude towards entertainment
Responses	Count (n)	406	406	406	257	406	407	407	407	257	406
	Percent	99.8	99.8	99.8	63.1	99.5	100	100	100	63.1	99.8
Pearson Chi-Square		5.975	15.012	25.249	38.581	17.422	5.975	22.456	12.868	16.045	21.622
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)		0.988	0.776	0.192	0.008	0.294	0.988	0.129	0.682	0.450	0.156
Phi	Value	0.212	0.275	0.340	0.287	0.189	0.235	0.178	0.199	0.290	0.209
	Approx. Sig.	0.776	0.192	0.008	0.294	0.921	0.129	0.682	0.450	0.156	0.342
Cramer's V	Value	0.106	0.138	0.170	0.166	0.094	0.117	0.089	0.099	0.145	0.104
	Approx. Sig.	0.776	0.192	0.008	0.294	0.921	0.129	0.682	0.450	0.156	0.342
Pearson's R		-0.096	-0.025	-0.147	-0.187	-0.077	-0.096	-0.113	-0.078	-0.045	-0.099
Approx. Sig.		0.053	0.646	0.007	0.001	0.262	0.053	0.023	0.114	0.370	0.113
Spearman Correlation		-0.084	-0.005	-0.124	-0.192	-0.075	-0.084	-0.121	-0.076	-0.045	-0.133
Approx. Sig.		0.092	0.923	0.024	0.000	0.280	0.092	0.014	0.126	0.368	0.033

Interpretation and implication of Table 3

Number of children

The number of respondents' children is significantly associated with their 'Topmost choice of media personality type,' with a *p* value of .008. Phi and Cramer's V for the two variables show values of 0.287 and 0.166, respectively, indicating a mentionable strength for the association. The tests' results show that respondents' choice of media personality types differs with the number of children. Parents with fewer children have more time to engage in entertainment than those with more children. Parents are also significantly influenced by their children's choices and preferences in the family setup.

Location of residence

Phi and Cramer's V for 'Location of residence' vs 'Topmost choice of media personality type' show values of 0.301 and 0.151, indicating mentionable strength for the association.

Interestingly, for the correlation test, neither Pearson's R and Spearman Correlation nor the *p* value has found any sound association between the pair, where 'Location of residence' is the independent variable and 'Topmost choice of media personality type' is the dependent one. The test outcome shows that RMG workers living in different locations have significantly different patterns in their choice and preference of media personality types. Preference for a particular media personality type depends considerably on location. Therefore, the reach and effectiveness of messages/communications to RMG workers living in any area will vary based on the type of media personality endorsement. A rational explanation for this outcome could be the influence of the cohort of colleagues and neighbors they have around them.

Analysis of the qualitative findings

As it was understood from the structured interviews, recreation, for various reasons, is often not an inspirational topic for our respondents to reflect upon and discuss. This population lives in extreme time poverty, and the idea of a discussion on their patterns of recreation is not usual for them to discuss. So, the research team needed to resort to a "shadow observation/ethnography" methodology, wherein a few local guides were employed as ethnographers to note the required observations.

The Narratives of Weekend Recreation

The lazy morning

Most RMG workers wake up at nine o'clock on the weekends. The sound of music is a standard part of their routine. A closer observation shows they use their mobile phones as multimedia devices with Bluetooth speakers for entertainment and leisure on lazy Friday mornings. Most songs are downloaded from YouTube using Vidmate software. The songs are either trendy Hindi chart-toppers or all-time favorite Bangla pop songs.

The afternoon tea with television

Watching television at tea stalls in the afternoon is another recreational activity for RMG workers on weekends. Most televisions have flat monitors, some are smart/android TVs, and some are just PC monitors, while some are old CRT ones connected to TV boxes to transform them into functional Smart TVs. However, the TV at a tea stall also invites many customers who stay long to watch even though they do not purchase more than a cup of tea, which harms business. Sometimes, the TV is turned off to avoid conflicts that arise from channel surfing, using the excuse that the TV has been running for too long and requires rest. While at the tea stall, some turn on the mobile data on their Android phones and start scrolling through social media while sitting on the same stall bench, while others remain engaged in serious discussions on topics such as politics, the COVID-19 pandemic, or other contemporary and controversial issues.

Loading the memory card

Electronic shops are located in the northern part of Dhaka city and the sub-district to the southeast. They are dedicated to selling cheap phones, SIM cards, and accessories. These shops also provide memory cards that contain specific contents. Though various kinds of content are found in possession of the shopkeeper so that they can serve the needs of the customers, three significant categories of content are found popular among the RMG workers:

(1) religious content, (2) adult content, and (3) music (Hindi and Bangla pop songs) videos. Workers can enjoy these contents after these have been loaded onto their mobiles, whenever and wherever they want. This counts as a significant medium of recreation for them. Seemingly and interestingly, 'Waz Mehfil audio' comes after 'Pornographic videos' as the most popular content. Two price packages are available for the customers: BDT 50 for random loading, where the customer can only choose the genre, and BDT 100 for selective loading, where the customer will choose every individual item from the hard disk of the shopkeeper. Button or semi-button phones are more prevalent in content-loading shops, as they cannot download content online. These phones are usually used for voice content; therefore, Waz Mehfil audio is their popular choice, followed by audio songs. Pornographic videos are prevalent among Android phone users. However, content loading has lost momentum with Wi-Fi's increasing popularity and availability.

The Wi-Fi "Revolution"

With the phenomenal increase in Wi-Fi penetration, the pattern of media use by RMG workers has changed radically. Quantitative data shows how popular the connection has been in the neighborhoods of northwestern Dhaka city. In contrast, it is less frequent in northern Dhaka and the southeastern sub-district (locations covered in this study). Since Wi-Fi spreads horizontally by following a cooperative model, pursuing this facility is cheaper. Many households dropped dish connections and sold their televisions. Eventually, they became more dependent on social media– Facebook, TikTok, IMO, and YouTube. So, a Wi-Fi connection worth BDT 100 (USD 0.84) could save expenses incurred in the past for a dish connection of BDT 300 (USD 2.52). Now, household members can enjoy watching and browsing on their devices per their preferences. Previously, TV was the only device in the house, usually dominated by one person's preferences. So, shifting to a Wi-Fi system has given them the freedom to choose from various entertaining content. They can now browse their preferred content on social media without bothering others, as all the members in the house have earphones (Jenkins, 2006).

Recreational activities in the hybrid space

The Waz Mehfil (Religious Sermons)

RMG workers regularly participate in religious preaching programs for Muslims (Waz Mehfil). Usually, Waz Mehfil is organized on Thursday and Friday evenings, which continue till early dawn. RMG neighborhood is a frequent site for Waz Mehfil events, and the preacher is hired with the funds generated by spontaneous contributions from RMG workers and local inhabitants. In the vicinity of the RMG factories, Waz Mehfil is a gendered space with an impressive number of female audiences, contrary to the popular perception of any Waz Mehfil audience in Bangladesh. On the Waz Mehfil days, the tea-stall televisions remain turned off, and no crowd can be seen at the carrom board (a tabletop game where players flick discs) playing areas, usually jam-packed until 11:00 p.m. While a considerable gathering is observed in the physical space of Waz Mehfil, the recorded ones uploaded on YouTube are no less consumed. Many are seen to have recorded the sermons during the event and then uploaded them to their social media pages. Traditionally, the 'waz' has constituted a fundamental component of rural Muslim social life (Naher, 2005). In the community of Jiri, institutions such as Madrasas, various clubs, and the 'Samaj,' as well as individual organizers, regularly arrange these gatherings throughout the year, focusing on women actively involved in NGO activities. Historically, the 'waz' has served as a mechanism to undermine women's empowerment, precisely their control over assets, which has been predominantly maintained

by men (Naher, 2005). In contemporary times, faith, informal learning, local collaboration, creativity, humor, and care have assumed critical roles in producing Islamic sermon videos (Rifat et al., 2022). Therefore, women inclined towards waz have been linked to both historical perspectives and the contemporary transformation of waz and their proliferation online

Day out

Weekends often present an opportunity for leisure outings among many RMG workers, though financial constraints frequently prevent them from indulging in such activities regularly. Despite the availability of recreational sites such as parks (in northern and northwestern Dhaka), shopping malls (across all locations), cinema halls (in the north, northwest Dhaka, and the southeastern sub-district), amusement facilities (in northwest Dhaka and the southeastern sub-district), zoos, and botanical gardens (in northeast and northwest Dhaka), regular visits to these venues are often financially prohibitive for these workers. Many RMG workers reported only being able to visit these locations once or twice a year. However, some areas offer local amenities for recreation. For instance, residents of northwestern Dhaka have access to a serene spot known as "nama," a small piece of land surrounded by vast water bodies, located just a 10-minute walk from nearby RMG households. This location provides a tranquil view, offering a distant glimpse of northwestern Dhaka across the marshland. Many workers noted that this place evokes memories of their villages. As Nandy (2002) suggested, *nama* serves as a "remembered village" within the "poisoned city."

Following celebrities

The findings of the in-depth interviews are consistent with that of the survey on celebrity following, especially the names. The religious preachers appear to be more popular than film actors and other celebrities. Mizanur Rahman Azhari is the most mentioned name among the *Waz Mehfil* speakers. The second most popular celebrity mentioned in the survey is the Bengali film superstar Shakib Khan. The most surprising fact is that cricket superstars were never mentioned, even for once, in the interviews, despite the passion for cricket among RMG workers that was strongly registered during the ethnography. When asked for her favorite celebrity, one female respondent hastily mentioned, "Write Shabnur or Purnima [actors from Bangladesh] whatever." The follow-up question was: Are you following them? She laughed loudly and said, "How could I? I did not even see them through my real eyes!" Most follow Azhari and other religious preachers on social media, but none of the film stars are being followed.

Discussion

As evident in the demographic profile of the respondents, the RMG population is predominantly young, Muslim, and has elementary levels of education. Over 90% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 18–35 years, and the responses regarding education are quite intriguing. For instance, nobody mentioned that they had "no education," and half of the respondents noted that they had completed their education till the eighth grade. However, while cross-validating their claim with other intervention tools, it has been found that the phrase "Eighth Grade" has a particular connotation: it is an "anti-thesis" of illiteracy to them. They did attend schools, spent a few years, and can somewhat read and write, which constitutes the "Eighth Grade" narrative among them, irrespective of the extent to which they

received an education. It must be noted that an eighth-grade education is required to enter a garments job; however, one does not need to produce a certificate for this qualification, as the first official certificate for education in Bangladesh is the Secondary School Certificate (SSC, acquired from the equivalent of a tenth-grade board-certified examination) which is achieved two years later after the tenth grade.

Regarding family structure, the nuclear family composition is the most dominant pattern in the RMG colonies. Almost 80% of the respondents are married, and 50% have at least one child, with an income range of BDT 8,000 (USD 67) to 11,000 (USD 92) per month. Among our samples, the most prominent places of origin of RMG workers are the northern and northwestern divisions of Bangladesh– a finding consistent with the perceived poverty level across different areas of the nation. Most respondents are low-level workers (57.99% of our respondents were operators), and almost none of them have any other source of income, indicating how indissoluble the job is for them. The gender pattern in the sample size is also consistent with the RMG demography (66% female and 34% male).

The data from the survey strongly support the idea that music (in both audio and video formats) is the most preferred form of entertainment among RMG workers since it is relaxing and affordable. Also, the music's length fits perfectly with any RMG worker's tight schedule. The preference for music videos is also understandable since a music video can tell a complete narrative within a couple of minutes, which is very affordable for RMG workers who are otherwise in extreme poverty. This observation aligns with Mohammad (2013) regarding the dominant mode of recreation among slum dwellers of Dhaka city. Music has been consumed via the three most common channels by them: (i) television, (ii) button phone/smartphone, and (iii) factory sound systems. According to Hall (1978) and others, listening to music or any other cultural consumption is also a meaning-making process (Hall, 1978). Besides, from a cultural studies point of view, relaxation cannot be the only outcome of listening to music; the practice must have other dimensions, such as social and interpersonal bonding, which is why it tops the list. Waz Mehfil came as the second most popular content for RMG workers, with 43.49% of the sample preferring this particular type of recreation, even though they do not call this a form of entertainment. Waz, particularly of Mizanur Rahman Azhari, is popular in audio and video forms since the audience/consumers among the RMG workers find it meaningful and recreational.

Although digital content is the most convenient option for RMG workers' recreation, non-digital options (going to parks, cinema halls, visiting places, etc.) are also strongly preferred. However, given their time poverty and lack of financial means, digital content is the only feasible solution for their everyday mode of entertainment. Though circumstantial, such choices have several highly effective virtues for this class—price, reproducibility, careers, and multidimensional content. Digitization, after all, is a silent revolution in the poorest levels of society. Television and cell phones are the two most popular devices RMG workers use. However, Android phones with Wi-Fi connections also threaten the preference for televisions, allowing them to access a vast range of content.

The social media choice among the respondents is entirely predictable; Facebook, YouTube, and Messenger dominate the list, while TikTok and IMO show a clear pattern of rising popularity. Of all the activities on Facebook, the most commonly preferred activity of the RMG respondents is silently browsing the shared content. They rarely share their photos and information and instead share religious sermons, music videos, memorable hadith (add a description of this maybe?), miracles or rumors about miracles, and some very local and

valuable information, which gives an impression of a voyeuristic and silently watchful population.

Both the questionnaire survey and qualitative interventions opted to discover perceptions regarding the credibility of different media platforms among the respondents. This was a tricky issue, and most of the respondents were brief and critical in this regard, for they were trying to read the interviewer's mind rather than to reflect. However, some insights can still be drawn from their responses. Social media, especially Facebook, has not been perceived as "credible" by most respondents, although they all have Facebook accounts. Workers trust the factory notice board and the sound system the most, not Facebook, television, or newspapers. Any information, if endorsed by the floor supervisor, is considered to be trusted and credible. Indeed, there is no "one-size-fits-all" policy for reaching out to RMG workers. However, there is a difference in the pattern of recreation between the researched locales, meaning that location is a crucial component. In the southeastern district (sample area covered in this study), phone content-loading is more popular than in northern and northwestern Dhaka or the city itself. Local dish channels are more prevalent in north Dhaka and the southeastern sub-district than in northwestern Dhaka and the city. In addition, the dwelling and living conditions of the workers have shaped their pattern of entertainment to a considerable level. In addition, workers' family composition (single/joint family), number of children, employment status (permanent/contractual), and sources or provisions of additional household income can influence their entertainment and media usage significantly.

Since this study is about the recreational patterns and facilities of the RMG workers, they were asked a crucial question to understand their perspectives about the importance of recreation in their lives: Is recreation a luxury for them? While responding to this question, most of them nodded positively at first. They then gradually shifted their stance, and that too in such a manner that it was challenging for a researcher to understand the shift. When they were cross-checked, they nodded to responses: recreation is both a luxury and also not. It is a luxury for them because it is expensive in terms of time and money.

Nevertheless, it is also not a luxury because one cannot live long or continue without it. Therefore, when RMG workers are back home, cooking or doing other household chores, they allow themselves to watch television simultaneously, browse their social media for a while, or listen to something on YouTube before falling asleep. However, it is also evident that most respondents are deprived of celebrating festivals/special days arranged by their factories. According to their responses, almost all of them truly understand the significance of recreation. The contribution of recreation to work is unanimously regarded as beneficial by most workers. Similarly, they consider entertainment an indispensable aspect of life in general.

Conclusion

The RMG worker's community is a new community in urban and peri-urban areas with distinctive features that require new means of exploration. The study used a strategy to look at their patterns of recreation and use of leisure time and media so that any 'Behavior Change Communication' (BCC) intervention could be effectively designed. For a few decades, leisure and recreation have been crucial to understanding human lives. In this context of garment workers (neo-liberal work industries and infrastructures), we found it even more important to do so, as the people we addressed here have been largely invisible during all social hours.

So, it makes any social intervention difficult. We have also found that the RMG residential neighborhoods are bare establishments with only grocery shops, pharmacies, and tea stalls. Even bigger colonies do not have NGO offices or development activities, which differs significantly from villages and slums. So, this study intended to explore workers' media use in this precarious setting where people live with the bare minimum of resources.

As we have explored, RMG workers have a media use and recreation pattern that can be effectively used to design a BCC program. A questionnaire survey and other qualitative interventions indicate their preferences, perceptions about the credibility of media and content, endorsement, and time mapping.

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