

Women & the Garment Industry in 2015

A Snapshot from Better Work

BETTER WORK

Women make up the vast majority of the world's garment workers. These jobs are an important source of income for young women with low education levels in developing countries, yet the industry is also challenged by many issues related to working conditions, some of which impact adversely upon women. Better Work's research finds that creating better conditions for women can bring business benefits including greater resilience, profitability and better recruitment and retention. This data represents the latest findings from Better Work factories across Cambodia, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Vietnam, Lesotho, Haiti and Jordan.

Promising Developments

Vietnam
Jordan
Indonesia
Nicaragua
Haiti
Lesotho

83%

of factories provided breast feeding breaks at work for nursing mothers

95%

of factories paid workers correctly for maternity leave



Lesotho

Garment workers are now entitled **six weeks** to paid maternity leave, an additional four weeks more than the paid leave given in 2013.



Indonesia

More than 95% of employers provided transport for female workers who work at night to enable them to get home safely.



Cambodia

Equal pay for equal work was provided to men and women in **99%** of recorded factories.

Pay Work



Nicaragua

More than 80% of employers addressed safety and health risks to pregnant or nursing workers.



Haiti

100% of factories in Haiti paid workers correctly during breastfeeding breaks, a **30% increase**.



Vietnam

The number of employers who allowed women workers paid rests increased from **30% to 92%**.



Jordan

Night time regulations in the dormitories for migrant workers are now the same for men and women in **62.5%** of factories. When Better Work Jordan began operations in 2008, all factories gave different times for men and women.

Remaining Challenges

Sexual harassment of workers remains an issue in the industry. Surveys of workers indicate that it is a significant concern of theirs. Power differences, misaligned pay incentives, and the high pressure nature of garment work, have been identified as contributing factors. Women are most often, but not exclusively, the target of sexual harassment. The damaging effects of sexual harassment can extend from victims to factory productivity.

Wage Gap: In many countries, women's wages are typically lower than men's within the garment industry. The extent of the gap varies in individual countries. Baseline data from Vietnam shows that although women workers send home 24% more money than men, their hourly wages are, on average, about **85% of men's wages**.

Discrimination: Data shows that men are three times more likely than women to be supervisors. Women are less likely to be promoted, receive training or become a union leader.

Quality of Life: Better Work research has found that a larger number of men workers were in good health. Women workers reported having less free time than men worker and women are more likely to 'double work' by bearing the burden of the work at home in addition to their factory job.