



How Garment, Footwear and Textile Businesses Can Improve Women Workers' Career Advancement



Based on engagement with
100+ workers in Bangladesh and
India
80+ industry stakeholders globally

THE CURRENT REALITY

9%

Women supervisors/managers
in Bangladesh

10 -
25%

Women operating advanced
machinery in North India

WHAT'S HOLDING WOMEN BACK



Narrow Career Ladders

Only vertical advancement to supervisory roles - but women want diverse pathways including technical roles



Unclear Promotion Process

Unstructured systems with unclear criteria and lack of transparency create barriers



Workplace Bias

Manager doubts about women's abilities and leadership potential shape workplace dynamics



Unpaid Care Work

Unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities limits women's advancement opportunities

A THREE-PRONG SOLUTION

1

Expand Career Pathways

Create horizontal advancement into quality control, production management, cutting, sampling, and green jobs. Design targeted training programs with transparent, fair assessment systems.

2

Design Equal Opportunity Practices

Incorporate gender equity into supplier scorecards. Improve forecasting systems to make leadership roles more predictable and appealing.

3

Address Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

Close childcare gaps through public-private partnerships. Engage men in caregiving responsibilities. Shift social norms to rebalance care work and create advancement conditions. Assess parental leave and childcare support.