Managing Mental Health Issues Across Apparel Workers From Bangladesh and India

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Abstract: The Apparel Industry is a major part of the world economy, involving the design, production, marketing, and distribution of clothing or apparel. It is one of the biggest and most labor-intensive industries, adding billions of dollars to the world economy and employing millions, especially in developing nations such as India and Bangladesh. As fashion trends and consumer demand change rapidly, the industry keeps evolving through supply chain changes, technological innovation, and sustainability efforts. Despite its economic importance, the Apparel Industry in both nations has some challenges. The Apparel Industry is an economic mainstay worldwide, but it is also one that is routinely characterized by systemic labor issues that compound mental health issues. The same trend can be seen across the supply chain, from apparel workers in low-income countries to retail workers in high-income ones. This paper focuses on these concerns, the responsible factors for these issues, and how more holistic as well as psychological interventions could help to alleviate the mental health issues among workers in the Bangladeshi and Indian Apparel Industry. Improving the mental health of workers in the apparel industry requires structural changes, including the integration of corporate responsibility, policy development, and community care, as prioritizing workers' mental health is both ethical and essential for sustainable industrial development.

Keywords. Apparel Industry, Mental Health, Workers, Bangladesh, India

Introduction

The Apparel Industry is one of the largest providers of jobs, sustaining about 430 million jobs globally. This industry is one of the key export sectors and job providers in many low-income and developing countries. India and Bangladesh are no exception: both countries earn more than USD 50 billion each through exporting apparel products and raw materials. In Bangladesh, the industry supports more than 5 million workers, while in India, around 45 million people work in the industry ("Indian Ministry of Textiles", 2024; "Women account for 55pc", 2024). The vast workforce that drives this sector often faces poor working conditions, low wages, exploitation, severe work pressure, neglect from society, and limited access to professional help for the workforce's mental health issues. Based on Bangladeshi and Indian Apparel Industry, the following section overviews: i) the structure and importance of the Apparel Industry ii) major mental health issues faced by the Apparel Industry workers iii) factors affecting mental health among apparel workers iv) strategies for improving the mental health of the workers in the industry v) role government can play in improving the mental health status of these workers.

Glimpse into the Bangladeshi and Indian Apparel Industry

The Apparel Industry comprises around 1.6% of the global GDP, with an aggregate value of 1.8 trillion dollars. It employs roughly 12% of the global workforce of 3.6 billion people and contributes significantly to the foreign revenue earnings and employment generations in the low-income countries in the world (Uniform market, 2025). Bangladesh is one of the top 3 apparel exporters of the world, with around USD 50 billion in annual exports. Bangladesh does not produce cotton and other raw materials, but has a large Apparel Industry that includes both textiles and garments (finished goods). The Apparel Industry accounts for more than 80% of the total export volume of Bangladesh (Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
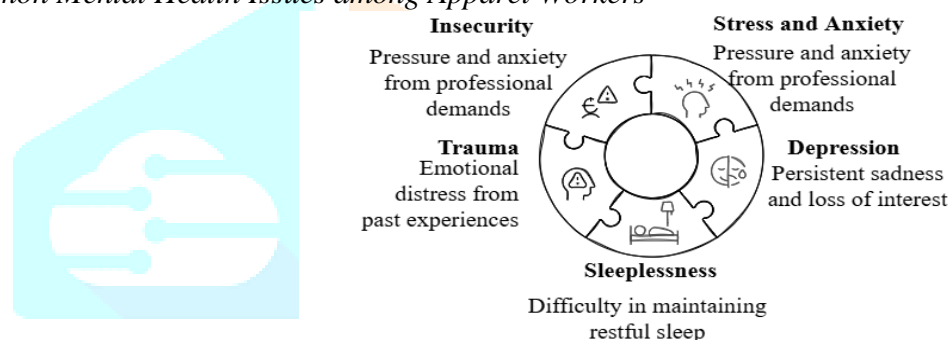
[BGMEA], n.d.). This sector sustains around five million jobs at various levels, of which over 55% are female ("Over 50.17 lakh", 2024). India is also one of the largest suppliers of cotton yarn in the world, supplying over 30% of the global industry, valued at USD 65 million ("Cotton yarn trends", 2024). This country is also becoming a major player in the global apparel or ready-made garments industry, with USD 35.9 billion in exports (textile and apparel) in 2024 (Minhas, 2025). The Apparel Industry is one of the largest job providers in India, supporting more than 45 million jobs (Lalbhai, 2025). Therefore, the Apparel Industry is an important sector for both Bangladesh and India, given the significant size of the workforce employed in the industry.

Mental Health Issues Facing Bangladeshi and Indian Apparel Industry Workers

The Apparel Industry, particularly in low-income countries like India and Bangladesh, plays a significant role in the economy by employing millions. Nevertheless, the very nature of work in apparel manufacturing and retail has been linked to various mental health challenges in Bangladesh and India (Figure 1). The World Health Organization (2022) defines "Mental health as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community". The challenges in mental health originate from prolonged working hours, low wages, physical strain, lack of support, and, in some cases, labor exploitation. The mental health of apparel workers is often overlooked, yet the toll it takes can have profound effects on both individuals and the broader industry.

Figure 1

Common Mental Health Issues among Apparel Workers

Note. Prepared by the Authors

1. Stress and Anxiety

One of the most common mental health issues among apparel workers is stress, largely driven by the high-pressure environment in apparel factories and retail spaces. Workers are often required to meet strict production targets and deadlines, which can lead to chronic stress and anxiety. Studies have shown that workers in the Apparel Industry frequently report elevated levels of stress and anxiety (Dey et al., 2016; Shanbhag & Joseph, 2012). Additionally, the uncertainty of temporary contracts, as well as a lack of job security, further exacerbate these issues, leading to heightened anxiety among workers (Sundararajan, 2020).

2. Depression

Depression is an increasing health problem in both developing and developed countries. It is another prevalent mental health concern among Apparel Industry workers (Shanbhag & Joseph, 2012). Studies reported that the prevalence of moderate-to-severe depression (the prevalence of depression was 23.5%) in apparel women workers in Bangladesh (Fitch et al., 2017) and also in India (symptoms of depression are 6.8%) was very high. For instance, the combination of low wages, dull and repetitive work, unwholesome working conditions, and lack of social support contributes to a sense of hopelessness and emotional exhaustion. A study on garment workers in Bangladesh found that depression was significantly higher among employees who worked under harsh conditions (Shahid, 2019).

3. Sleeplessness or Sleep Disorders

Sleep disorders are a major mental health issue faced by apparel workers where irregular or long working hours and night shifts are common. A disruption in sleeping patterns negatively affects workers' mental health, resulting in irritability, fluctuating moods, and attention paucity at work. Studies carried out on Apparel Industry workers in India and Bangladesh have reported sleep disorders or insomnia as a serious health risk factor (Saha et al., 2010; Steinisch et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2015; Fitch et al., 2017). Irregular working hours are identified as a key factor for sleep disorders among workers, especially in industries involving long working hours, such as the apparel manufacturing industry (Suresh et al., 2022).

4. Trauma

Sometimes, workers in the apparel sector, particularly those who are exposed to dangerous working conditions or who experience factory accidents, become susceptible to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). One such example is the devastating Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh in 2013, one of the most fatal industrial disasters, which created serious mental health issues among survivors, including PTSD (Fitch et al., 2015). A study also revealed that approximately 52% of female garment factory workers in Bangladesh suffered trauma, resulting in health vulnerabilities (Ahmed & Raihan, 2014).

5. Feeling of Insecurity

Several apparel workers in Bangladesh and India face job insecurity. The women garment workers in Bangladesh feel insecure due to harassment, accidents and injuries, frequent outbreaks of fire, and health hazards (Islam, 2022). The apparel workers in India are hired on short-term contracts or informally, which makes them vulnerable to sudden layoffs without severance or legal recourse (SOMO, 2009).

Factors Affecting Mental Health Among Workers in the Bangladeshi and Indian Apparel Industry

The mental health of workers in the Apparel Industry in Bangladesh and India is influenced by numerous factors (Figure 2), ranging from environmental stressors to socioeconomic conditions. Understanding those factors is crucial for developing effective interventions to improve mental health among workers in the Apparel Industry.

1. Work environment

Several apparel factories are poorly maintained and overcrowded. Workers in those factories frequently work long hours in an insalubrious and unhygienic environment. These harmful conditions are responsible for higher levels of mental stress, fatigue, burnout, and damaging work experience, which ultimately diminish workers' productivity (Saha & Majumder, 2015). Workplace architecture and amenities (ergonomic workplace design, hygiene, basic conveniences) can provide a boost to worker morale.

2. Wages

Many apparel workers earn wages below the living wage, which exacerbates financial instability. The inability to meet basic needs, such as food, housing, and education, increases anxiety and stress, leading to negative mental health outcomes. Constant worry about job security and financial hardship can also adversely impact mental health (Dey et al., 2016). The wages among apparel workers in Bangladesh and India are lower than their living expenses. Such low wages tend to push workers to work overtime simply to meet basic needs. Apparel workers are also frequently required to work overtime to meet production quotas on insufficient overtime pay, leading to poor financial stability and mental health issues (Nokhiz et al., 2025; López, 2023).
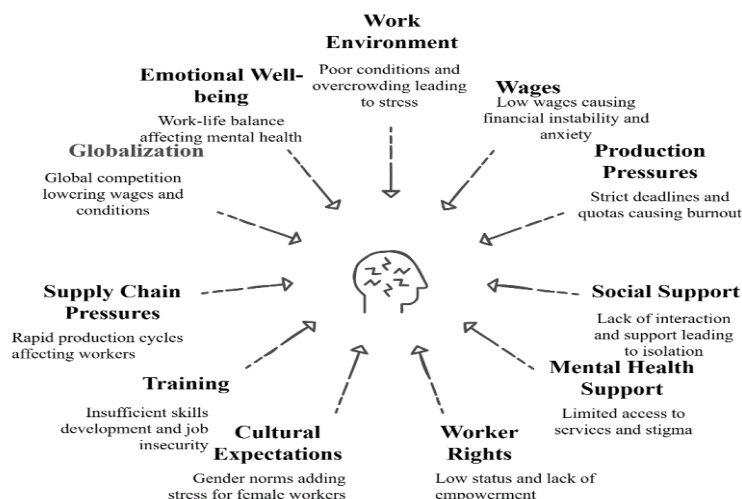
3. High Production Pressures

The Apparel Industry's emphasis on fast fashion creates a high-pressure environment. Workers are often required to meet strict production deadlines and quotas, leading to stress, burnout, and feelings of inadequacy. This constant pressure to perform can result in long-term mental health consequences (Munni, 2024).

4. Lack of Social Support and Isolation

Workers in the apparel sector may experience social isolation, especially in factories with few opportunities for interaction. A lack of support from colleagues or management can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and helplessness, which are key risk factors for poor mental health (Dreher et al., 2022). Mental health among apparel workers in both nations is further impacted by the prevalence of harassment, abuse, or discrimination in the workplace (ActionAid, 2019; Cernansky, 2022; Kabir et al., 2022). Fair Wear Foundation [FWF] (2013) found that at least 60 percent of Bangladeshi and Indian apparel workers report harassment at work.

5. Limited Access to Mental Health Support

Mental health is often stigmatized in many apparel-producing countries, leading workers to avoid seeking help. With limited access to counselling or mental health services, workers in both nations may not receive the care they need. This lack of support exacerbates mental health conditions and contributes to prolonged distress (Akhter et al., 2017; Kaveri, 2025).

Figure 2

Factors Affecting Apparel Workers' Mental Health

Note. *Prepared by the Authors*

6. Low Status and Rights

The Apparel Industry is characterized by low levels of worker rights, and many workers are not allowed to form unions or advocate for better conditions (Human Rights Watch, 2014). In Bangladesh, workers suffer from awful factory settings, earning low wages, receive poor benefits, suffer both physical and psychological harassment, do not get wages timely, due wages, non-payment of benefits such as maternity benefits, leave, and holidays, non-payment of overtime work, and also denial to form Association and membership Association (Rahaman, 2023). This lack of empowerment and voice in the workplace can lead to feelings of helplessness and resentment, negatively affecting mental health.

7. Cultural and Societal Expectations

In many apparel factories of Bangladesh and India, women make up a significant portion of the workforce. Cultural expectations and societal gender norms can add additional stress for female workers, particularly in terms of balancing work with family responsibilities. Gender discrimination in the Bangladeshi and Indian garment industry is a universal issue. Although most of the apparel workers in both countries are women, women workers experience unequal treatment (e.g., in terms of wages, opportunities, and working conditions) in the workforce (Haque et al., 2020). Gender discrimination and unequal treatment contribute to anxiety and depression among women in the apparel sector.

8. Training and Skills Development

Many workers in the Apparel Industry receive little formal training. This can lead to lower productivity, job insecurity, and poor working conditions, and negatively impact workers' mental health (Seidu, 2024). Evidence reported that workers with higher skills and education often earn better wages and have access to improved working conditions. This creates a disparity in the industry, where unskilled workers are left vulnerable to exploitation. The lack of skills in the Indian Apparel Industry is reported to be a significant issue, with on average 7 out of every 10 workers in the sector having basic education (or being illiterate) – and thus, unable to expand their skills or grow the sector beyond a certain level (Fogla, 2013).

9. Supply Chain Pressures

The rapid production cycles of the Apparel Industry significantly affect the workers' mental health. To meet tight deadlines, workers may face long hours and unrealistic quotas. The rush for speed often compromises product quality and workers' mental health (Fair Wear, n.d.; Kabir et al., 2022; SOMO, 2009).

10. Globalization

Globalization, particularly through fast-fashion supply chains, has substantially influenced the psychosocial environment of apparel workers: increasing workloads, creating job insecurity (Williams, 2024), and causing social isolation (Islam et al., 2025) which negatively impact mental health.

11. Emotional Well-being

Work-life balance is vital for maintaining emotional well-being. In industries like apparel manufacturing, workers sometimes stay long hours, which affects personal time, family relationships, and mental health (Anusha & Kumar, 2025; Chowdhury et al., 2015).

Strategies for Improving Mental Health Among Bangladeshi and Indian Apparel Workers

The Apparel Industry has been linked to higher rates of mental health issues. Thus, the mitigation tools or strategies are needed to improve the mental health issues among apparel workers (Figure 3). Improving mental health literacy is part of such techniques. In addition, certain interventions for specific individuals with high-risk tasks could be particularly applied, as general strategies might not catch the unique challenges and requirements faced by specific groups of the workforce. Creating a mental health program can also improve both the well-being of workers as well as collective productivity.

1. Promote a Positive Work Culture

- *Supportive Environment.* Encouraging a working atmosphere and respect may help to lower levels of stress levels of individuals and increase well-being (Chellappa, 2022; Herrity, 2025).

- *Employee Recognition.* Positive reinforcement and the recognition of accomplishments promote motivation and lower stress in the workplace (Suri, 2025).
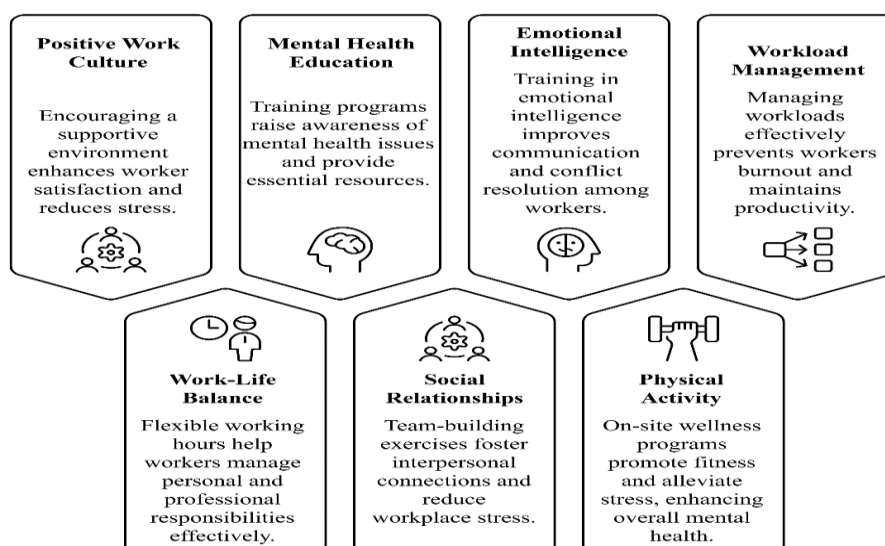
2. Encourage Work-Life Balance

- *Flexible Working Hours.* Offering flexible working hours can allow workers to better balance their work and personal lives, reducing stress and improving mental health (Allen et al., 2013).

3. Mental Health Education and Training

- *Mental Health Awareness Programs.* Conducting training sessions that focus on raising awareness of mental health issues can make the workplace more empathetic. Workers can learn how to recognize mental health conditions in themselves by attending the training. It also helps to reduce stigma around mental health ("7 Benefits of Mental Health", 2023).

- *Skills Development.* Providing training facilities gives workers the sense of being more capable at their jobs and assists in increasing mental health (Rehman et al., 2023).

- *Counselling Service or Employee Assistance Program (EAP).* Supporting employee mental health through access to counselling services and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) is crucial for fostering a healthy work environment. EAPs offer additional resources to address mental health concerns, promoting a supportive workplace culture (Policy Market For Business, n.d.).

Figure 3

Strategies for Improving Mental Health among Apparel Workers

Note. Prepared by the Authors

4. Encourage Social Relationships

- *Team Building Exercises.* Creating social and team-building exercises allows workers to mingle with their fellow workers outside of work settings, thereby promoting interpersonal relationships and increasing mental health (Corporate Compass, 2024).

- *Supportive Leadership.* Leaders who are actively involved with the teams and are empathetic can create a communicative environment, thereby decreasing stress levels to a large degree (Talkspace, 2025).

5. Development of Emotional Intelligence and Social Support

- *Developing Emotional Intelligence (EQ).* Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize and manage one's own emotional states and to be aware of others' emotional states. EQ training can help employees manage interpersonal conflict, enhance communication, and build positive workplace relationships, thereby increasing mental health (Lansley, 2024).

- *Peer Support Groups.* The development of peer support groups at the workplace will encourage workers to share experiences and coping mechanisms. Social support serves as a buffer for stress. It is significant to mental health and will make the workers feel less isolated, particularly in stressful situations (Reid, n.d.).

6. Promote Physical Activity

- *On-Site Wellness Programs.* Offering fitness programs, gym memberships, or on-site wellness programs can alleviate pressure and stress, as well as enhance overall mental health. Physical activity is proven to reduce depression and anxiety, leading to better overall well-being (Swasthyam, 2023).

7. Provide Adequate Workload Management

- *Minimise Workloads.* Ensure that workers are not overloaded with tasks and that expectations help in reducing stress and burnout (EURopean Employment Services, 2023).
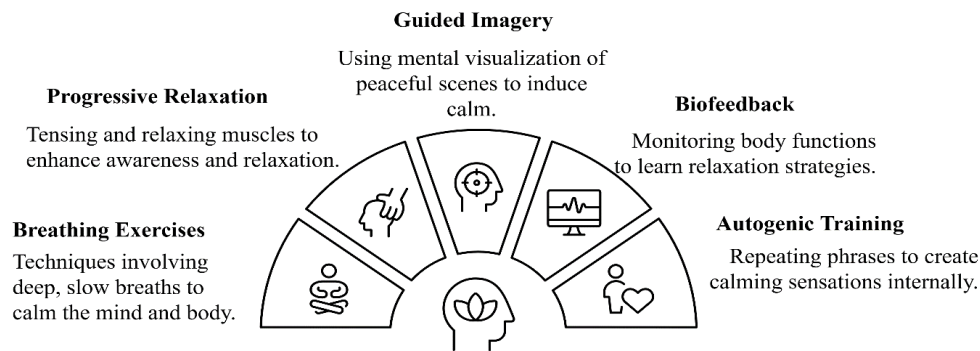
Psychological Strategies or Interventions

To enhance mental health among apparel workers, several psychological strategies or interventions can be applied to minimize stress and boost resilience and positive mood. The interventions generally focus on cognition, emotion, and behavior and can have a significant positive effect on workers' mental health and performance. Cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation techniques like progressive muscle relaxation techniques, and breathing exercises can be applied to deal with stress. During short leisure time or breaks, workers can utilize breathing exercises or mindfulness techniques to become relaxed, which ultimately improves well-being. Workers who can deal with stress properly are more productive and concentrated. Some of these interventions or strategies are as follows:

1. Stress Management Training

Stress management strategies can increase workers' mental health by enabling them to manage the stress of work and minimize the adverse effects of work-related stress. Workers with sound stress management competencies are better placed to regulate their emotions, perform efficiently, and sustain a healthy work-life balance. Stress is considered a key factor in poor mental health among apparel workers. Training in stress management can teach workers to identify the early warning signs of stress and utilize coping mechanisms effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This can include time management skills, goal setting, regular exercise, deep breathing, mindfulness, seeking support, eating a healthy diet, relaxation techniques, and healthy working habits that can help workers prioritize the work more effectively and avoid feelings of exhaustion (Helmick, n.d.).

2. Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation techniques are practices that an individual does to produce the body's natural relaxation response. This slows down the breathing, lowers the blood pressure, and reduces muscle tension, stress, and frustration (Relaxation Techniques, 2024). There are numerous techniques for relaxation used to enhance mental health, including deep breathing, meditation, rhythmic exercise, yoga, or tai chi. The American Psychiatric Association (2024) mentioned some relaxation techniques (Figure 4), which are as follows:

Figure 4
Common Relaxation Techniques

Note. Prepared by the Authors

- **Breathing exercises.** Several relaxation exercises involve breathing or deep breathing. Deep breathing, belly breathing, or diaphragmatic breathing is slow, deep breathing that fills the lungs and causes the lower belly to rise. There are several different breathing exercises, such as 4-7-8 breathing, belly breathing, and box breathing. Breathing exercises can be especially helpful in the fight against sleeping problems.

- **Progressive relaxation (or progressive muscle relaxation).** This involves tensing different muscles of the body and then relaxing them. For example, the individual can contract and relax the muscles of the toes and then proceed up to the neck and head. Progressive relaxation can help one to become more aware of the difference between muscle tension and relaxation and more sensitive to tension.

- **Guided imagery or "visualization."** Through guided imagery, the individual uses mental picture objects or scenes that are relaxing and soothing. The other senses are accessed through imagining soothing sounds, for example, or the sensation of a gentle breeze or warm sun.

- **Biofeedback relaxation.** Biofeedback is a mind-body therapy, given by a trained healthcare provider, with feedback based on monitoring body functions such as heart rate, breathing, and muscle tension. The individual is taught skills for altering the body's reactions, such as relaxation, through the sessions.

- **Autogenic training.** Autogenic training is a relaxation technique based on mental exercises that relax the individual. (Autogenic is 'coming from within.') During autogenic training, the individuals close their eyes and slowly repeat some sentences designed to create relaxing sensations in different parts of the body. It lasts 15 to 20 minutes, and it can be done alone or in a group.

3. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Techniques

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) has been implemented to enhance mental health in many different sectors. The Apparel Industry is one where workers face high stress, high physical effort, and ever-increasing mental health challenges. CBT techniques can be implemented with apparel workers to overcome these challenges and promote better mental well-being. CBT can be tailored for workplace mental health by guiding workers on recognizing and disputing negative thought processes. One key aspect of CBT is Cognitive restructuring, which is a therapeutic concept that can positively change the perception of reality (Beck, 2011). If the worker feels overwhelmed by their workload, cognitive restructuring can help reframe the situation, making it more manageable and less stressful. Negative thought patterns (perfectionism, self-doubt, or catastrophic thinking) can be detrimental to workers' mental health. CBT encourages workers to recognize, challenge, and replace irrational or unhelpful thoughts with more balanced and constructive thoughts, thereby increasing mental health of the individual (MindDay, n.d.).

4. Mindfulness Techniques

Mindfulness meditation practice makes workers more mindful of their emotions and thoughts in a non-judgmental manner. This may enhance concentration and decrease anxiety, resulting in enhanced decision-making and emotional control in challenging situations such as apparel production. Basic breathing exercises (e.g., deep belly breathing) may also be applied to control stress in the moment. Mindfulness-based CBT can assist workers in enhancing concentration and decreasing anxiety by teaching them to remain present and embrace difficult emotions or circumstances without judgment (Hoffman, 2010). For instance, training the workforce to pay attention to their breathing or their sensory input (such as the texture of the fabric or the beat of machinery) can assist them in grounding and stress reduction. In addition, Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is a structured program that combines mindfulness meditation and yoga to reduce stress, improve emotional regulation, and enhance well-being. Studies have demonstrated that MBSR can lead to significant reductions in job-related stress and improve psychological well-being among employees (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).
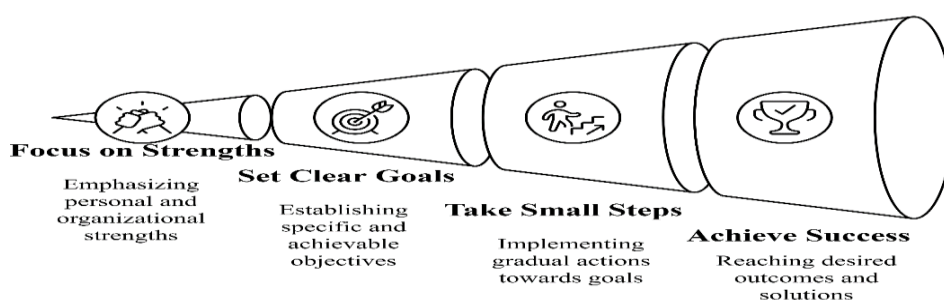
5. Resilience Training

Training programs in resilience help workers handle challenges and stress at work. In high-stress sectors like clothing manufacturing, resilience training teaches optimism, adaptability, and emotional regulation, which can improve mental health outcomes (Gupta, 2023).

6. Solution-Focused Therapy

This therapy stresses solving rather than living with issues. Solution-focused therapy (SFT), also known as solution-focused brief therapy, can enable workers to concentrate on their strengths and what is going well in the workplace, therefore boosting their motivation and lowering their stress (Berg & De Jong, 2002). This therapy focuses on building solutions rather than solving problems (Figure 5). Lee (2013) noted that "Instead of focusing and exploring clients' problems and deficiencies, the focus is on the successes and accomplishments when clients are able to satisfactorily address their problems of living" (Lee, 2013, p. 3). By encouraging individuals to create particular, reasonable objectives and follow little actions toward them, SFT helps to build success and lessen emotions of helplessness. SFT is a goal-oriented treatment that stresses finding practical answers to challenges rather than previous troubles.

Figure 5

Solution-focused Therapy Process
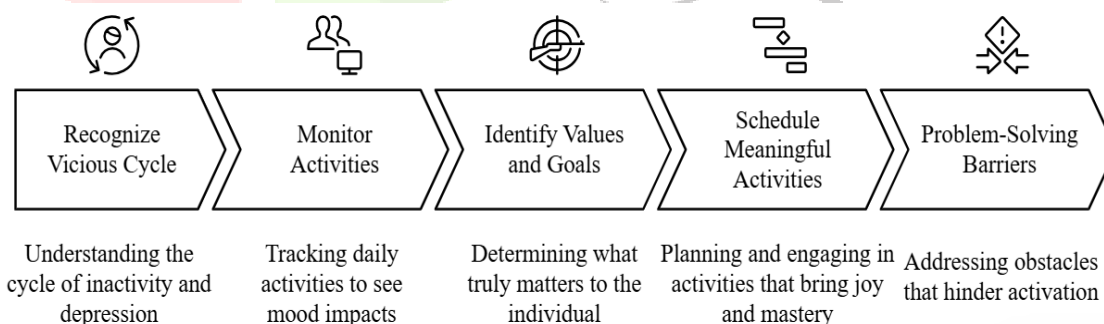

Note. Prepared by the Authors

7. Behavioral Activation

Behavioural activation (BA) is an approach to mental health that involves using behaviors to influence one's emotional state. It is often a part of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), but it can also be a standalone treatment. Most research into behavioral activation has focused on its effect on depression (Villines, 2021). It shows how behaviour affects feelings and helps to alter the feelings by altering behaviours.

Behavioral activation involves the following (Figure 6) steps:

Figure 6

Behavioral Activation Process

Note. Prepared by the Authors

8. Gratitude Practices

Asking workers to maintain gratitude journals may redirect attention away from job stress and promote positive states. Gratitude has been associated with a more positive mood, less stress, and better overall well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Government Intervention Towards Building Mentally Sound Workforce in the Bangladeshi and Indian Apparel Industry

The government in both nations can execute a significant role in ensuring that the Apparel Industry workers' mental health is taken care of through a combination of policy/regulatory, enforcement, and collaboration measures. The following (Table 1) are the key dimensions of the Governmental interventions that ensure the mental health of the workers is taken seriously on account.

Table 1

Governmental Intervention Improving a Mentally Healthy Apparel Workforce

Intervention Group	Specific Intervention	Actions
Policy and Enforcement	National-level guidelines	• Develop a comprehensive and inclusive framework to tackle the mental health issues among workers. This may comprise of codes and principles on sexual misconduct, discrimination, labor regulations, and compensation especially all. • Develop a comprehensive and inclusive framework to tackle the mental health issues among workers. This may comprise of codes and principles on sexual harassment, discrimination, labour laws/wage standards to ensure workers get sufficient weekly holidays, paid time-off, sick leave, and other amenities, labour/ human rights, and enforcement actions (Chamara, 2024). • Form policies to ensure the availability of mental health support or services to workers on the job (Chamara, 2024). • Actively monitor laws related overtime pay and hours to aid workers avoid burnout and receive just payment for overtime work.
	Policy enforcement	• From a department of enforcement to ensure proper implementation of labour laws in an institutional and concerted manner. Proper enforcement of labor laws and ensuring their rights require seamless coordination among various government departments and authorities, that includes local and central government institutions. For an instance: US Department of Labor (DOL), which is a federal government authority, may collaborate with interstate labor departments to investigate an infraction related to violation of labor safety or withholding proper wage payment (Lee, 2025). • Support and promote the establishment of labor rights organizations and collective bargaining bodies, as freedom of association and collective bargaining are essential rights for all workers, including migrant workers, irrespective of their immigration status. By enabling workers to create and participate in organizations of their choice, they become instrumental in ensuring decent employment through proper working conditions, equitable pay, access to social protection, and safeguards against labor exploitation and workplace abuses. The government, as the primary entity responsible for the development and enforcement of labor laws in the workforce, has a significant duty in guaranteeing that migrant workers can exercise these rights. (International Labor Organization, 2023).
	Training and awareness	• Provide training on upcoming labor standards applicable to the industry because raising awareness about labor standards can educate employers and workers about their rights and responsibilities (Lee, 2025). • Provide training on emerging mental health and well-being issues and implement anti-stigma interventions to challenge negative attitudes towards mental health issues and promote open conversations (Hough, 2024). • Work with the industry on labor issues and grievances addressed to various government bodies

Industry Collaboration	Advocacy	Engage with the industry to modernize and co-develop labor laws and regulations concerning mental health and well-being (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2024).
	Enforcement	The government can provide enforcement support if the employers' grievance redressal team fails to respond appropriately. For Instance, the Ministry of Labor and Employment undertakes the responsibility of enforcing labor laws and has the authority to conduct investigations on allegations related to a lack of compliance with such laws. They can also take punitive measures for confirmed infractions, such as levying fines on employers who are in violation of labor laws. The apex legal body that prosecutes labor-related disputes is the labor court. It has the authority to issue legally binding stipulations and orders. In India, the Ministry oversees labor-related public grievances and operates a dedicated Public Grievance Cell to manage the intake, processing, and coordination of complaints. Several Indian states maintain their own grievance redressal mechanisms, including the Government of Tamil Nadu's official portal and Karnataka's Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS).
	Welfare	It's the obligation of the government to ensure that employers take labor welfare seriously. To that end, the government should mandate the creation of worker welfare fund and provision of insurance coverage to ensure better livelihood and security. Affordable housing, universal healthcare, affordable and quality education, clean water and sanitation, as well as proper recreational facilities should be provided to the workers. (Labour Welfare Fund, n.d.).
External Stakeholder Engagement	Outreach	• Government bodies should work with multilateral labor organizations such as the ILO (BGMEA, n.d.). • Government departments should work with buyers/brands on labor working standards (Kaveri, 2025).
	Coordination	The government should coordinate with various industry stakeholders on labor issues and concerns (Mukherjee & Narayanan, 2020).

Conclusion

Mental health issues in the workplace, particularly in the apparel manufacturing sector, are becoming an important concern. Workers in the apparel sector in India and Bangladesh tend to suffer from severe mental health problems caused by long working hours, unsatisfactory working conditions, low incomes, and limited mental health services etc. By improving the workplace, by providing a suitable environment, and by utilizing psychological techniques, apparel companies can significantly enhance the mental health of their workers. When workers are mentally healthy, they will be more engaged, productive, and will be capable of handling the demands of their roles, ultimately benefiting both their well-being and the company's success. The government can also play a key role in improving mental health among apparel workers since they formulate policies, laws, and access to resources. To effectively tackle these concerns, governments need to formulate appropriate policies and enact legislation aiming at the improvement of working conditions and providing mental health support services.

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