

be blamed. Economists, social experts and the general people grappled for answers, wondering how on earth the industry, which made light work of quota-free concern in the post MFA-era with a robust growth of 35 percent in 2004-05 and withstood the global economic meltdown with consummate ease, could be so ill in 2010.

However, neither the owners nor the government were sincere enough to find out what actually went wrong. Ironically though, the major wrongs were in their policy, if any, and course of action.

Having gone through news reports, analyses, expert views, findings of investigations, it is safe to reach the conclusion that garment owners and all the governments are to be blamed for the crisis.

Although the garment manufacturers deserve to be hailed for the country's economic revival, they are found equally guilty at neglecting labour management. They made a series of blunders in the run-up to their zenith.

The readymade garment manufacturers first sowed the seeds of today's crisis by grossly neglecting labour welfare and management issues. Riding on waves of success in the world market, they forgot to look after their source of strength at home, the workforce and workplace. The fortunes they made, made them even greedier. When they needed to institutionalise the industry, by investing more in the workforce and machinery to ready them for bigger challenges -- the medium to high-quality products where competition is less and profit margin high -- they chose the wrong route.

They continued to fight over low-cost product orders in cheap apparel markets and spent whatever they could earn on extravagant lifestyles. After all, a garment owner has to have Pajeros in the garage, houses in the city's elite areas and vacations in Europe. Soon after getting letter of credit from buyers, many manufacturers started to list what more they should buy, ignoring the fact that the credit was to be spent