lent negotiations. If the latter were to be diluted or sidelined, then taking up the law into one's hand is not a far-fetched idea.

Spreading ownership among the masses is one of the main ancillary benefits of a stock market in a capitalist society. Converting the mass savings into investible and tradable units of ownership among a large and diverse group provides both parties with returns. Owners of capital can embark on growth and expansion with flexible returns to be paid as long as the earnings cash flow remains with an approximate band of projections. However, the key point is the creation of a local stakeholder group who are willing to fund the company with increased investments and earn a portion of the company's long-term earnings.

The Bangladesh capital market has surprisingly very little exposure to the huge investments in the textile sector. As ownership is entirely concentrated in the hands of the sponsors, there is a general lack of sympathy of the general public regarding the genuine plight of the owners. And as the workers are simply benefiting from immediate wages, and completely left out of any long-term appreciation in value of the companies, there is little long-term interest in the company. The means of interactions between the company with the middle class and the worker community is severely limited.

Of course, this is not a panacea to the crisis, but surely is a symptom of concentrated capital and creation of distinct and uneven stakeholders with little overlapping interests. Also, there is no set game plan to increase the listing of textile companies with the stock exchanges. In fact, it should entirely be at the prerogative of the owners of the company. As the major risk takers, they should be in control of any such ownership dilution decision. However, the steps, whenever taken, will be very welcome.

The BD RMG Industry

The garments industry in Bangladesh has been at the centre of the "export" led growth of increase in local earnings and demand at the centre of urban Dhaka, carrying much of the rest of the country along with itself. Rising global demand, rising land prices, easy credit, low taxes and general demographics have undoubtedly assisted the sector. Logistics, infrastructure, utilities, and lack of police and security services have worked against the industry. The development of the knitwear industry, spinning mills, dyeing plants, has created a stronger foundation for the long-term survival of the industry in Bangladesh.

Currently, about 3.5 million Bangladeshis work in the garment industry, which accounts for 80 percent of the country's exports. International companies like Wal-Mart, JC Penney, H&M, Zara, Tesco, Carrefour, Gap, Metro, Marks & Spencer, Kohl's, Levi Strauss and Tommy Hilfiger all import in bulk from Bangladesh. The total export from the sector has doubled from $6.4 billion in FY05 to $12.5 billion in FY10.[1]

Several times in the past, especially during the end of the quotas, the end of the MFA and during the partial floating of the taka, the entire industry was written off by global experts. However, the industry has continued to grow amid tremendous odds. Make no mistake, the continued growth of the garments industry in Bangladesh is nothing short of a miracle. The challenges facing the Bangladesh garment industry entrepreneurs are formidable. The international buyers are primarily interested in price, lead-time and quality. The manufacturers complain of still being squeezed by a slump in world market prices because of the existing fragile recovery from the global economic crisis. They also point to higher production costs due to energy crisis and poor infrastructure. One industry leader observed that the wage increase would be especially hard on smaller factories. There is truth in all of these.[2]

However, the long-term growth of the industry becomes speculative when discussion of the wage rate comes full centre. The wage rate in Bangladesh is the lowest in the world. is known, the Wage Board nearly doubled mate mum wage on July 29, 2010. The minin off wage at the entry level will be raised to Tk gain, a month from Tk 1,662.50. The new pay on to ture, proposed to be effective from Nov mains 1, maintains the existing seven grades f these highest pay fixed at Tk 9,300 per mont regional that the extent of the average real wage exceeds the 19.8 percent growth in per capita since the last wage adj 2006.[4] Thus, the proposed increa Living Wage average garment worker ahead of y", http:// Bangladeshi in terms of income gr uthasia/finan 2%80%99s-

However, surprisingly, there that a fairly widespread undercur tent, whether justified or n orate advisor for amongst the workers. There i from the sudden spurts of vio'