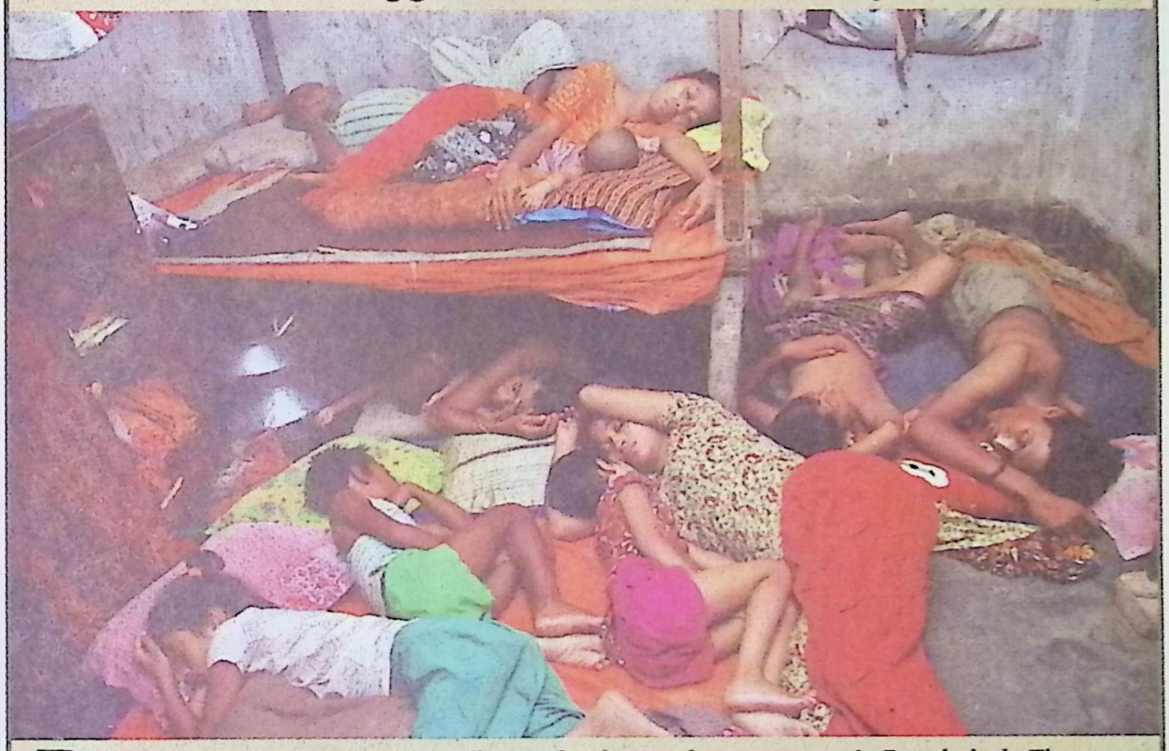
The Life and Struggle of Garment Workers (2008-2011)



Dreaming of living a better life, millions of villagers gather in workers' boarding houses in cities. Surrounding the garment industry a significant number of such boarding houses have come up in Bangladesh. The story portrays the contrast between the dream and reality of millions of workers especially the women in the garment industry.

a society, politics is a necessity and it is seriously not as bad as I had imagined." Maxim Gorky's book "Mother" influenced her politics. She became a member of the student organization in 1994, and later became the president of the Bangladesh student Federation of Dhaka University. She says, "While I was a student of photojournalism in Pathshala, every year I thought that I would quit photography because I believe activism, serving the society is my true calling. But at the end I could not quit just like that. Now I am involved with women and workers' associations. I believe photography is also a part of my activism and I also believe that there is no innocent and neutral position that any photographer or journalist or individual can take when they encounter injustice."

Akther devoted her photographic career investigating the life of workers who toil under dangerous conditions. Akhter had photographed four other fires in Bangladeshi garment factories in which scores of workers, mostly women, had died. She says, "I prefer that my photograph tap into the anthropological investigation rather than imagery confusion." Her inspiration has always been photography's ability to reduce social injustice and to



Akhter tells stories of deprived workers living in perilous conditions.

championing the rights of workers. With her camera she tells stories the uncomfortable life of an impoverished worker or the solitary grief of a father who lost his daughter, standing still among the dead bodies in morgue. In each face can be seen the universal struggle for human dignity. ■