



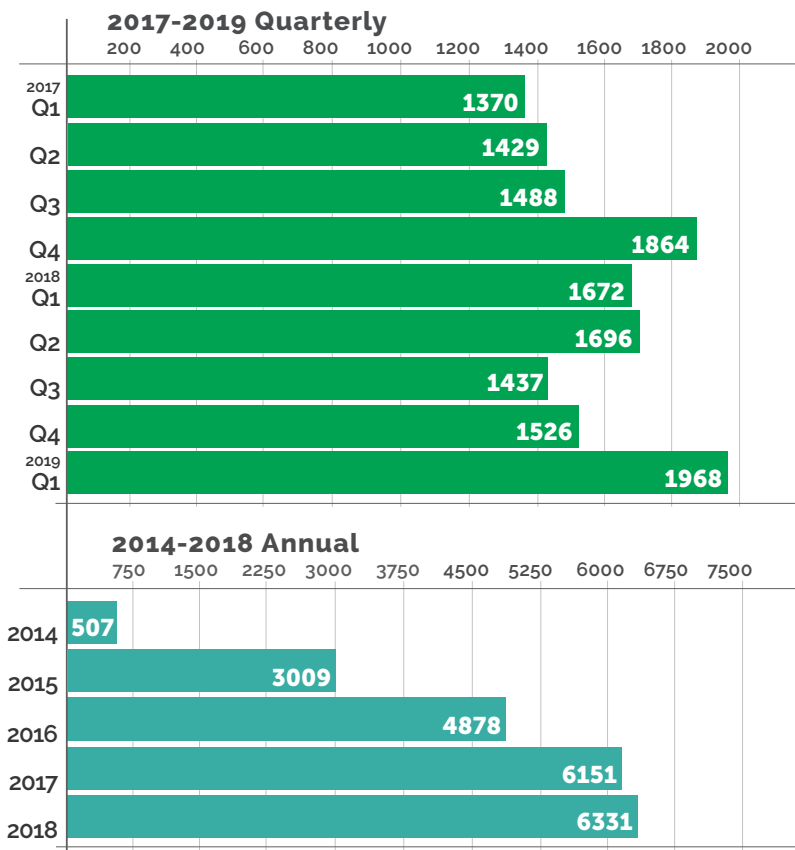
## Q1 2019 HELPLINE HEADLINES

The Amader Kotha Helpline was available to 1.5 million workers in 1,082 factories by the end of March 2019. In the first quarter of the year, 1,968 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers, of which 373 were related to safety.

Workers continue to have access to a toll-free number that is available nationwide, and worker satisfaction with the Helpline remains high according to Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and live surveys among Helpline callers.

The Amader Kotha Helpline Center opened operations on July 1, 2018 at renovated Phulki offices in Dhaka, marking a significant milestone in the evolution of the Helpline as an independent initiative serving Bangladesh's RMG sector.

### SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES REPORTED TO HELPLINE



## IN FOCUS: UNDERSTANDING IMPACT—THE KEY TO BUILDING SUCCESS

We are often asked how we measure the impact of the Amader Kotha Helpline. It's a good question. At a time when there is no shortage of effort to identify and resolve concerns of workers in supply chains, the truest measure of success is not the steps we take but the beneficial impact we have.

So how does the Helpline measure impact? We do it in two ways. The first is through the public dissemination of key performance indicators based on aggregated and anonymized data made available on our website and through periodic newsletters such as this edition of *Our Voice*. We capture essential demographic information of Helpline callers, the issues workers are calling about by category, how issues are resolved, and the rates of satisfaction of workers who engage in the process.

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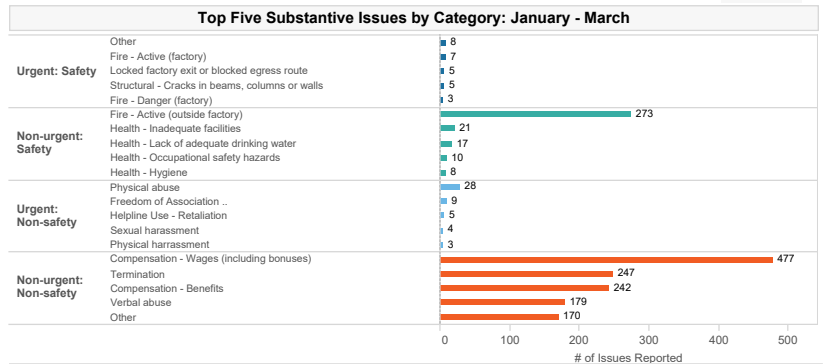
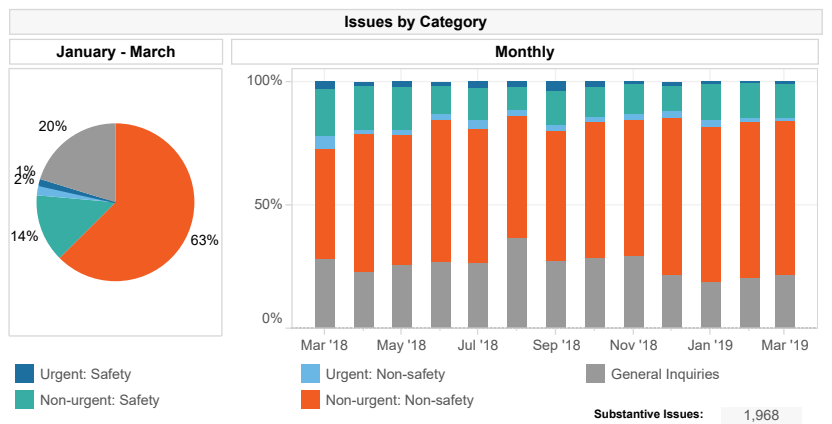
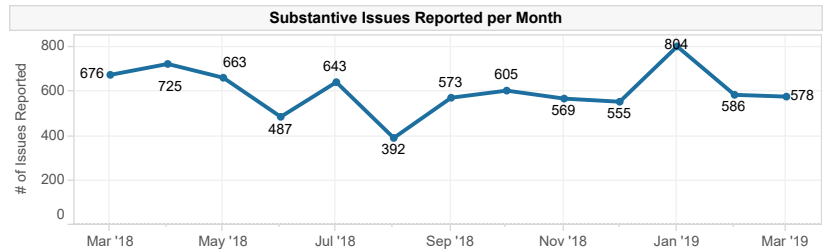
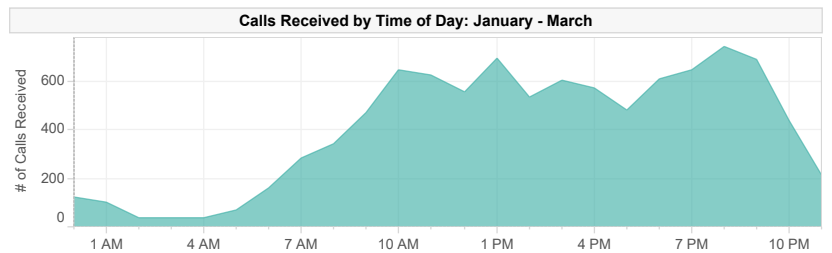
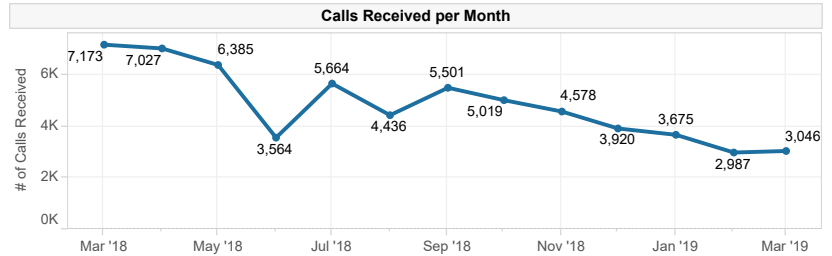
*One way we measure impact is by providing periodic case studies of workers who have called and the outcome of the process.*

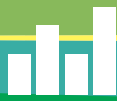


# FIRST QUARTER 2019 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- **9,708 calls were placed to Amader Kotha this quarter from January through March**, for a total of 266,218 calls received to date. Fewer workers are calling about General Inquiry issues than previous quarters.
- **The peak call times this quarter were around 10am and 9pm**, suggesting workers are more comfortable calling throughout the day now.
- **373 safety issues were reported to Amader Kotha this quarter**, of which 31 were urgent and 342 were non-urgent. Among safety issues reported by workers, those most frequently mentioned were fires outside factories, inadequate facilities, and lack of adequate drinking water.
- **General inquiries comprised 20% of issues this quarter**, disregarding missed or test calls. The majority of these inquiries pertained to Helpline support capabilities and labor laws.
- **1,968 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline** from workers at Brand factories this quarter. The most commonly-reported issues were related to compensation, termination, and fires outside of factories.





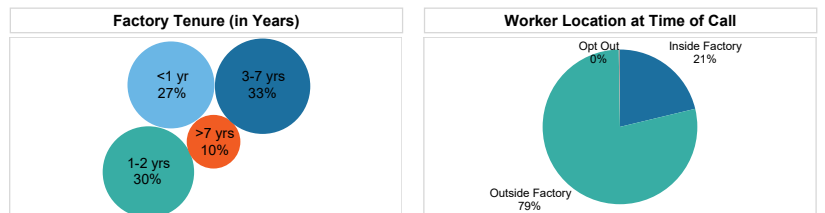
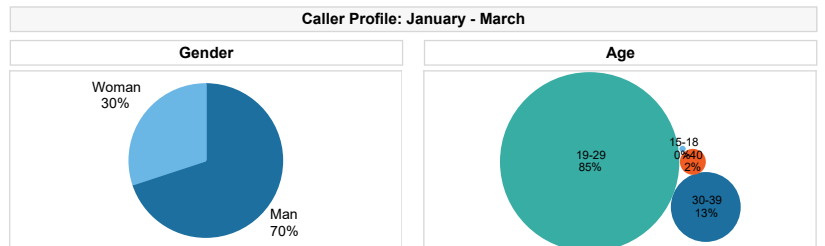
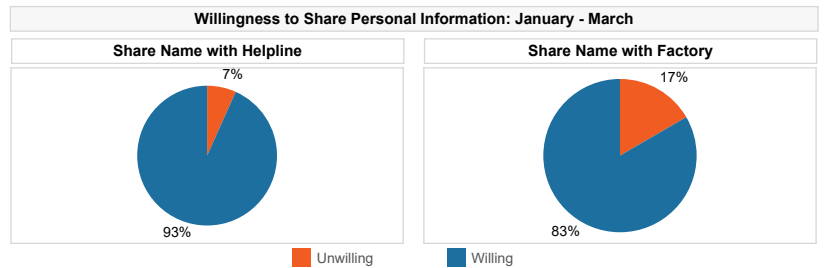
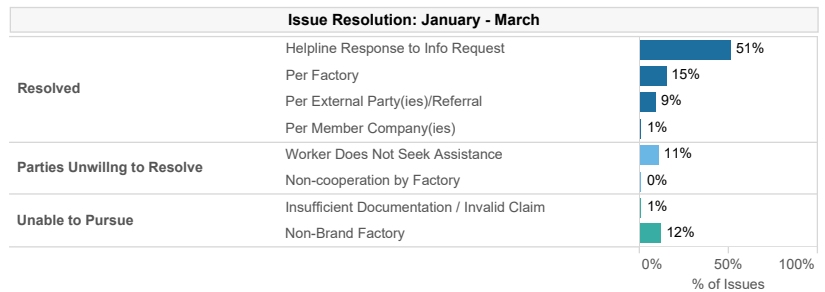
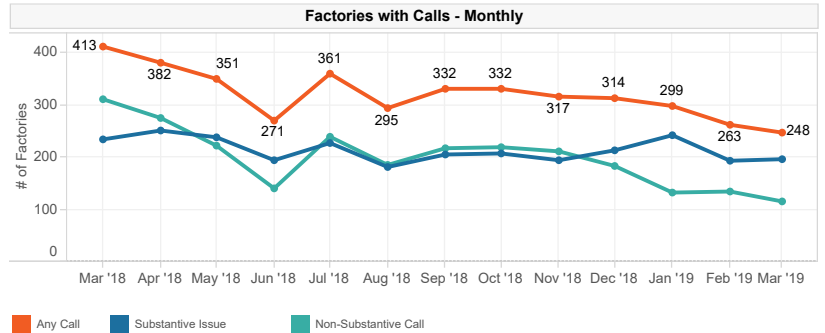
# FIRST QUARTER 2019 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED:

- Among the substantive issues reported by workers from any factory this quarter, 76% were resolved. The remainder were unable to be resolved due to workers not seeking resolution assistance or to the Helpline and/or Alliance not being able to pursue issues further.
- 93% of workers who called to report a substantive issue this quarter were comfortable sharing their name with the Helpline, but only 83% would allow their name to be shared with the factory.
- Of the more than one thousand factories that have received training on the Helpline, workers from 482 factories (45%) placed calls to the Helpline between January and March 2019. Workers from 407 Helpline-launched factories (38%) reported substantive issues this quarter.
- Workers from 2 non-Brand factories called the Helpline this quarter.
- 95% of the safety issues reported this quarter from workers at factories were resolved and closed by the end of March. All remaining open issues are in the process of being closed in accordance with Amader Kotha protocol.

### NOTE:

Detailed call data is provided to brands after factories have had the opportunity to verify and respond to information provided by workers.



### Progress to Date (from July 2014 onward)

	Total Calls	Substantive Issues	Helpline Launched Factories
Inbound	266,218	25,181	Factories: 1,082
Outbound	204,031		Workers: > 1.5 million

**Notes:**  
 • Graphs do not include calls from "General Inquiry", "False", or "No category" issue categories, except graphs on calls received and calls by time of day and where otherwise stated.  
 • Calls have been received from non-Brand factories. These calls are included in the call volume and call time and factories with calls graphs above, but not included in the issue or caller profile visualizations.  
 • Substantive issues per month graph may not match historical newsletters due to changes in issue categorization over time.  
 • # of workers and # of factories where the Helpline has been launched are based on information provided by Nirapon.

## HELPLINE FOCUS

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The second is by providing periodic case studies of workers who have called and the outcome of the process their call initiates. These examples of brief case studies occurred in the first quarter of the year and help demonstrate the Helpline in action:

### **Compensation for Maternity Leave**

A pregnant sewing operator called to say that she attempted to file the required medical papers for authorizing her maternity leave but factory management refused to accept the papers. The management citing the regulation that maternity leave requests must be received 6 months in advance of the expected due date which was not the case. The Helpline spoke with management and confirmed that the worker had missed the deadline and, as a result, was ineligible to receive the benefit. However, if the worker submitted the completed forms, the management would agree to accept them. This was communicated immediately to the worker who complied with the request. The Helpline confirmed directly with the worker that the issue had been resolved and the case was closed.

### **Loud Sound from Boiler**

A factory employee called to report that sometimes their boiler makes a loud and disconcerting sound. The boiler operator told the employee that this is a routine sound that occurs while the gas pressure is high. The employee called the Helpline to say that he was concerned for his safety and, while he did not wish to disclose his identity, he wanted the Helpline to intervene. After the Helpline called management, an engineer inspected both boilers in the factory, made adjustments, and reported back to the Helpline that the issue, while not life threatening, had been resolved. The employee confirmed that the engineer had been on site and the loud sound had gone away.

### **Partially Blocked Stairs**

A sewing operator called to report that the 1st and 3rd floor stairwells were partially blocked by cartons of finished product. As an urgent safety issue, the Helpline called the factory management immediately to report the problem. The factory said that they were

“shifting finished cartons to the warehouse for shipment and during that process, management ... kept them off the floor by placing them temporarily on the stairs.” By 5 pm that day, the cartons had still not been removed, according to the worker. Once again the Helpline intervened with management. By the end of the evening, the boxes were removed and, in accordance with Helpline protocol, the Helpline will contact the worker again in 15 days to determine if the stairs have remained clear and the case was closed.

### **Excessive Overtime Hours**

The caller to the Helpline reported that he has been working overtime from 11 pm to 3 am for many weeks, some workers have been getting sick, and one worker had apparently died, although the relationship of the worker's death to the hours of work was not proven. Workers refused to work in protest of the excessive hours of work and called for an immediate reduction. The situation became quite tense as workers gathered outside the factory where they refused to enter. Management called the industrial police to ensure calm.

During the ensuing days, the Helpline continuously monitored the situation through phone communications with workers and through pleas to management to resolve the situation. Management finally reduced the working hours to 2 overtime hours per day, to the satisfaction of the workers who called and the case was closed.

**With nearly 2,000 substantive calls coming into the Helpline in the first quarter of the year alone, we can look to both the quantitative and qualitative results to understand impact. With ongoing support from factories and brands that allow us to do our work, each day we provide important and timely information from workers in a way that promotes beneficial impacts.**

We hope you find this edition of Our Voice useful and informative. Please let us know if we can answer any questions you may have by contacting us at: [info@amaderkothahelpline.net](mailto:info@amaderkothahelpline.net).

*-Doug Cahn, Amader Kotha Project Director*

## WHO ARE WE?

Amader Kotha, or “Our Voice” in Bangla, is a unique collaboration among three project partners—Clear Voice, a project of The Cahn Group that operates hotlines and builds effective grievance mechanisms in supply chains; Phulki, a respected civil society organization working to improve the lives of workers and their families in Bangladesh; and ELEVATE, the parent company of Laborlink, a leading business risk and sustainability solutions provider. Each partner brings years of experience building innovative, best-in-class labor compliance programs in supply chains.