



আমাদের কথা
AMADER KOTHA
WORKER HELPLINE

OUR VOICE

Amader Kotha Newsletter

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 4 | Fourth Quarter 2024

Q4 2024 HELPLINE HEADLINES

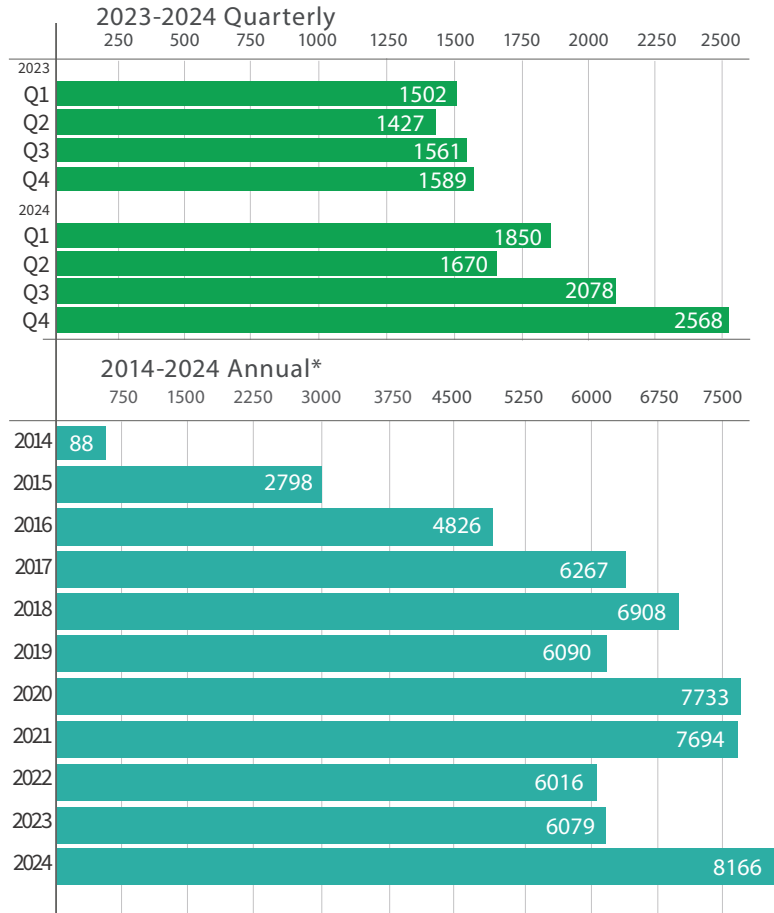
Welcome to the Q4 2024 edition of Our Voice, the newsletter of the Amader Kotha Helpline. In Q4 2024, we continued to provide workers in the Bangladesh readymade garment sector with a trusted communication channel to report and help resolve workplace issues before they escalate into major concerns, and to encourage sustainable solutions.

In this quarter, 6 high-risk safety issues and 7 high-risk labor issues were reported to the Helpline, resulting in engaged factories working to address and resolve worker concerns. Despite disruptions resulted from ongoing power supply shortages and government restrictions on internet and cellular service, the Helpline has continued operations during the government permitted hours in this quarter. Our call recording system is available whenever service is possible at all other times.

Since the Amader Kotha Helpline's inception in July 2014, the Helpline had been launched in more than 1,500 factories reaching more than 1.5 million workers.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you with comments and suggestions at: info@amaderkothahelpline.net.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES REPORTED TO HELPLINE



*Revised case count methodology



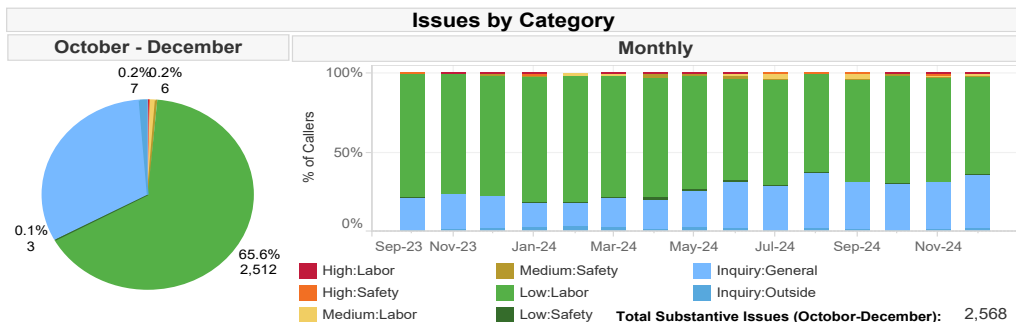
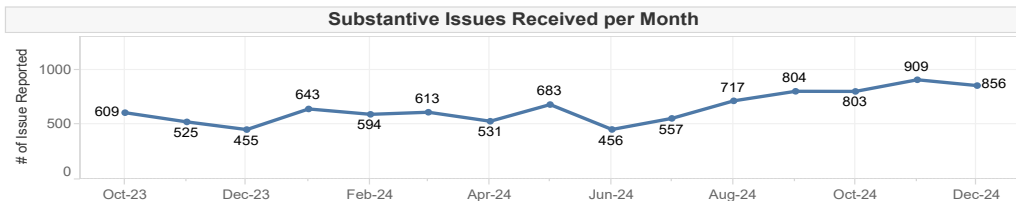
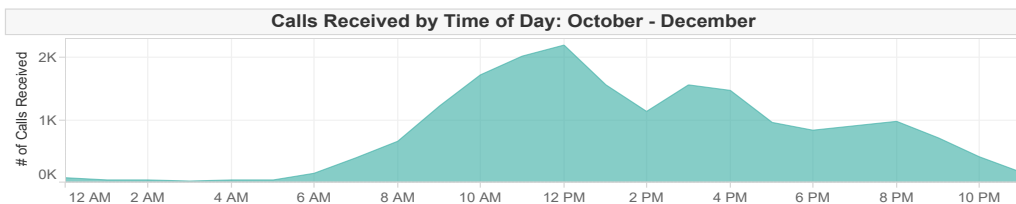
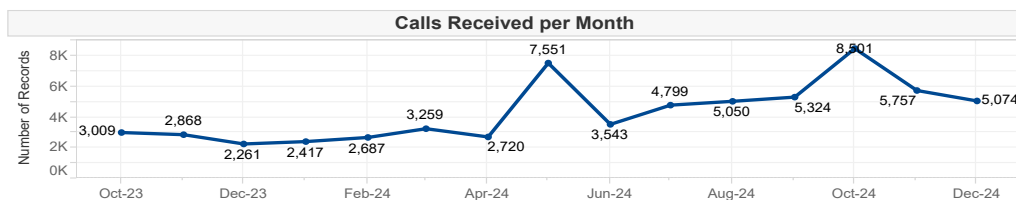
Photo: ©ILO/M.Crozet



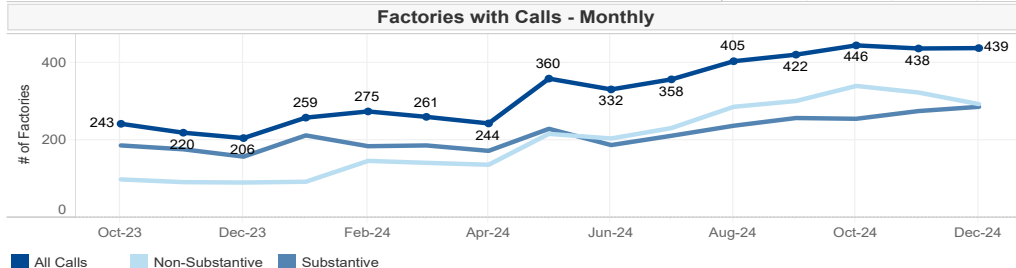
FOURTH QUARTER 2024 FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- 19,332 calls were placed to Amader Kotha in the fourth quarter of 2024, this is a 27.4% increase in calls compared to the previous quarter for a total of 64,830 calls received in the past 12 months.
- 13.2% (2,568) of calls received were substantive issues. A majority (65.6%) related to low risk labor issues such as compensation (including wages and benefits), and termination and leave.
- In total, 7 high-risk labor issues and 6 high-risk safety issues were reported to the Helpline. This quarter continued to have an elevated number of calls related to retaliation, integrity and worker rights issues, with 33 calls.
- The most reported high-risk issues were related to physical abuse and harassment, for a total of 7 incidents. High and medium-risk labor and safety issues made up 2.4% of all substantive issues during last quarter.
- General inquiries comprised 32.0% of issues period, disregarding missed or test calls.



Category	Issue	Count
High(Level 3):Labor	Physical abuse & harassment	7
High(Level 3):Safety	Active fire in the factory	4
	Cracks in beams, columns or wall following an earthquake. (includes walls or w...	2
Medium(Level 2):Labor	Compensation issues (including wages delayed more than a month; and other i...	7
	Retaliation, integrity issues and worker rights: Issues that present potential viol...	33
Medium(Level 2):Safety	Unsafe or poorly maintained machinery	7
	Inadequate ventilation	2
Low(Level 1):Labor	Compensation-Wages	595
	Termination	384
	Compensation-Benefits	290
	Leave	256
Low(Level 1):Safety	Unhealthy and unhygienic working environment	3





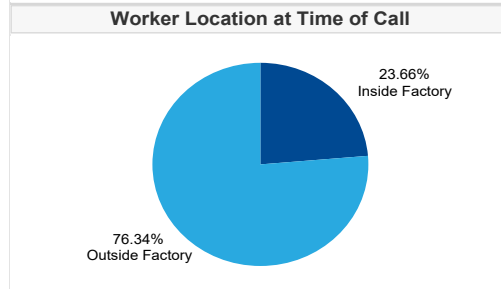
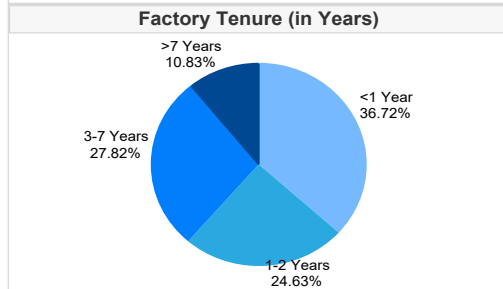
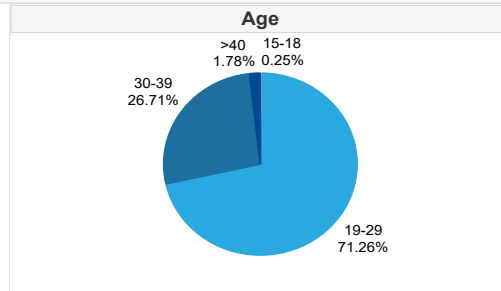
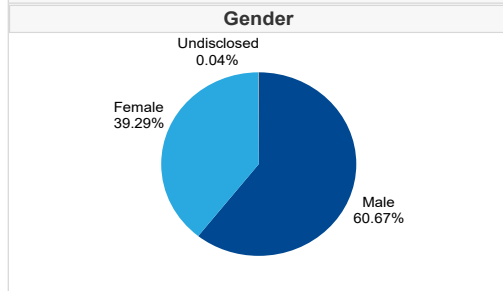
FOURTH QUARTER 2024 FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS, CONTINUED:

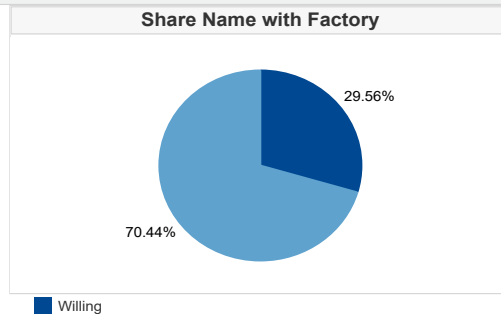
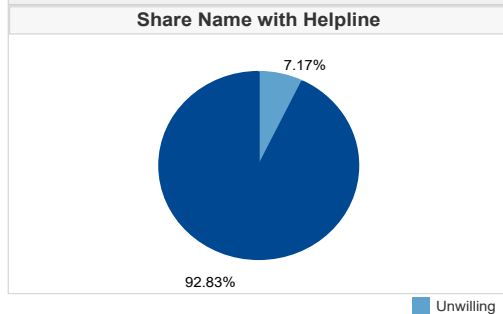
- On average, the peak call times in Q4 2024 were between 10am to 1pm. This quarter 24% of workers called from inside factories, with 76% calling from outside the factories, which remains roughly unchanged from last quarter.
- This past quarter, 30% of workers indicated that they were willing to share their name with their factories when reporting grievances to the Helpline, which is an increase from last quarter. 93% of workers were happy to share their name with the Helpline itself, demonstrating the very positive level of trust workers have with us.

Issue Resolution: October - December		
Resolved	Helpline Response to Information Request	50%
	per Factory	25%
	per External Party(ies)/Referral	8%
Party(ies) Unwilling to Resolve	Worker Does Not Seek Assistance	3%
Unable to Pursue	Non Listed Factory	14%
	Insufficient Documentation / Invalid Claim	0%

Caller Profile: October - December



Willingness to Share Personal Information: October - December



Progress to Date (from July 2014 onward)

Total Calls
Inbound 459,816
Outbound 404,663

Substantive Issues
 62,665

Helpline Launched Factories
Factories: 1,514
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-participating 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 on the Helpline's CRM database.



Inside the Amader Kotha Helpline: How Helpline Officers Support Bangladesh's Factory Workers

To Our Amader Kotha Subscribers,

Factories in Bangladesh, especially in the garment industry, are often rife with challenges for workers – from unsafe conditions to wage disputes. The Amader Kotha Helpline has become a critical resource in supporting these workers, providing a safe space for them to voice concerns, and receive assistance. Behind this lifeline are dedicated Helpline officers who navigate a complex landscape of workplace issues, cultural barriers, and systemic challenges, while also witnessing the transformative impact of their efforts.

One of the core experiences of the frontline Helpline team is handling a diverse range of complaints. These issues often include unsafe working conditions, wage disputes, harassment, and violations of labor rights. Many workers, especially women who comprise the majority of the workforce in Bangladesh's garment industry, face significant power imbalances and fear retaliation for raising concerns. In January 2025, the Helpline received 21 reports of retaliation and integrity-related issues, 2/3 of which were reported by women. Helpline officers must approach these cases with sensitivity and confidentiality, ensuring that workers feel heard and supported. The trust-building process is critical, as many workers initially hesitate to report issues due to a lack of familiarity with formal complaint mechanisms or fear of job loss. In 2024, 45% of workers who reported issues through the Helpline shared their name with the factory, highlighting the need for increased worker trust.

“Several skills are essential for handling complaints from garment workers such as active listening, problem solving, knowledge of labor laws, and sensitive communication,” explains Tahmina Haque, Amader Kotha Helpline officer. “I acquired those skills through a three-month period of Phulki training. In my daily work, I actively listen carefully to note all details from workers' complaints to ensure accurate reporting and effective resolution.”

Helpline officers often encounter cultural and social barriers while addressing workplace concerns. In many instances, workers' grievances stem from deep-seated norms or systemic issues, such as excessive working hours or a lack of gender equity. Many workers, particularly women, have never had the opportunity to voice their concerns within a formal structure. “In some cases, workers don't even know that they have the rights to speak up,” explains Tahmina Haque. This is often compounded by traditional gender roles, which make it even harder for women to assert their rights.

Helpline officers spend time educating workers about their rights and building a relationship of trust, which is crucial for ensuring they feel safe when reaching out for help. “Beyond solving immediate grievances, the information we receive from workers and communicate to factory managers has led to long-term improvements such as greater awareness of labor laws and increased worker solidarity. Many workers have become more proactive in addressing issues and supporting their colleagues,” said Tahmina Haque. This is reflected in an increase in Helpline usage throughout 2024, from ~700 issues reported per month between January and April, to over 1,300 issues being reported in December.

A significant aspect of the Helpline officers' role is managing crisis situations. “In the factory, we received training to learn how we can share our concerns with the Amader Kotha Helpline any time, toll free. The Amader Kotha Helpline is there to talk to our management and help resolve our concerns if we are not successful by ourselves. Even outside the factory, we can rely

on the Helpline – my friend used the number to report a fire near his home. The fire department came quickly, and he and his neighbor were safe,” said factory worker Kamruzzaman. “During incidents like factory fires or building collapses, Helpline officers become lifelines for workers seeking immediate assistance,” said Amader Kotha Helpline Officer Nuzhat Tabassum Shaily. “Their ability to coordinate with factory management, emergency services, and worker representatives is critical in ensuring swift action. The emotional toll of handling such crises is considerable, but officers find motivation in the knowledge that their interventions can save lives and prevent future tragedies.”

The successes of the Amader Kotha Helpline highlight the positive outcomes of the human touch and personalized attention provided by Helpline Officers. Since its inception, the Helpline has received almost 50,000 reported issues with over 37,000 issues being resolved through the Helpline’s work, leading to tangible improvements in factory conditions. Workers have reported increased confidence in addressing grievances, and many factories have implemented reforms based on Helpline feedback. In one instance, a worker was slapped twice on her face by the line leader. After the incident, the worker reported the issue to the administrative officer who asked the line leader to apologize. No apology was received and so the worker called the Helpline. Subsequently, the line leader received a 7-day suspension and is now being watched closely to make sure the inappropriate behavior does not reoccur. In another instance, a worker called to say that neither he nor his co-workers had received full payments of wages the previous month. Later the same day, Helpline representatives received word that the workers who had received less than the full amount received their back pay. “One particularly impactful moment was when a worker called to thank me after we resolved a longstanding issue with unpaid wages. Her gratitude and relief reminded me of the importance of our work and the positive impact it can have on individuals and their families. It was a powerful reminder that our efforts truly matter,” said Tahmina Haque.



“One particularly impactful moment was when a worker called to thank me after we resolved a longstanding issue with unpaid wages...It was a powerful reminder that our efforts truly matter.”

— Tahmina Haque, Amader Kotha Helpline Officer

For Helpline officers, these successes bring a sense of fulfillment. “Working at the Helpline has brought me a lot of pride,” said Nuzhat Tabassum Shaily. The gratitude expressed by workers who receive assistance often serves as a powerful reminder of the value of the Helpline’s work. At the same time, these experiences underscore the need for continuous capacity-building, both for Helpline officers and the broader ecosystem of labor rights.

In conclusion, the experience of Helpline officers dealing with workplace conditions in Bangladeshi factories is marked by both challenges and triumphs. “My hope for the future of the Helpline is that it will become an even more accessible and comprehensive resource for people in need, utilizing advanced technology to provide immediate, personalized support, and expanding its reach to address a wider range of issues while maintaining a strong focus on empathy and confidentiality,” said Amader Kotha Helpline Officer Rajia Sultana. While systemic challenges in Bangladesh’s garment sector persist, the dedication of Helpline officers and the progress achieved thus far are a source of great pride and offer hope for a safer, more equitable future for Bangladesh’s factory workers and a tangible benefit for factories and the brands that rely on their labor.



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 LRQA, the leading supply chain risk and sustainability solutions provider globally. Each partner brings years of experience building innovative, best-in-class labor compliance programs in supply chains.

কিভাবে হেল্পলাইনে যোগাযোগ করবেন?

আপনার ফোনটি কল করার জন্যে প্রস্তুত করুন

হেল্পলাইন নাম্বার ডায়াল করুন

আপনার কথা আমাদের জানান। আপনার পরিচয় গোপন থাকবে।

আমাদের কথা AMADER KOTHA WORKER HELPLINE

ফোন করুন...
০৮০০৬৬৬৬৬৬৬৬

টোল ফ্রি নম্বর
নিরাপদ কর্মপরিবেশ আপনার আমার লক্ষ্য
{Safe working environment is our goal}

Clear Voice Hotline Service
Phulki
NIRAPON
ELEVATE

আমাদের কথা AMADER KOTHA WORKER HELPLINE

নিরাপদ কর্মপরিবেশ
আপনার আমার লক্ষ্য
{Safe working environment is our goal}

ঝুঁকি, সচেতনতা ও নিরাপত্তার স্বার্থে
ফোন করুন
০৮০০৬৬৬৬৬৬৬৬

টোল ফ্রি নম্বর

Clear Voice Hotline Service
Phulki
ELEVATE

Information about Amader Kotha is publicized in factories