

DOMESTIC COALITIONS AND THE PUSH FOR POLICY CHANGE IN BANGLADESH'S GARMENTS AND TEXTILES INDUSTRY

My talk will focus on highlights from our recently published report, where we challenge the commonly held notions about Bangladesh's success in garments and textiles. Bangladesh's focus on being a low cost leader and international pressures to reform the sector only provide part of the explanation for why Bangladesh has not drastically lost market share after the phase out of the international quota system in 2005.

In 2007 and 2008, through semi-structured in-depth interviews in Dhaka with international buyers, government officials, factory owners, and middle managers, and focus groups with factory workers, we find that increased dialogue by various means among all these domestic stakeholders has been key in building a consensus for creating an agenda for reform. This growing consensus has led to some crucial changes at the factory and national levels which have made the sector more competitive and increased confidence among the international buyers and garment retailers.

We also argue that although these domestic policy reforms are critical for Bangladesh's future success in this industry, another key aspect that impacts competitiveness is the restrictions faced when exporting to the United States (though not the E.U. in Bangladesh's case). I will discuss some proposals to rectify this discrepancy and the controversies surrounding them

Sanchita Saxena BIO

Sanchita Saxena is the Associate Director of the Center for South Asia Studies (CSAS) at UC Berkeley. Sanchita is also currently a Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C. where she is working on a book (Forthcoming, 2011. *Policy Reforms Influencing Competitiveness in the Garments and Textiles Industries: Case Studies from Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka*. New York: Cambria Press, Inc.) which examines domestic coalitions in the garment industry, and their influence in enacting policy reforms in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka.

Prior to joining CSAS, Sanchita was the Assistant Director of Economic Programs at the Asia Foundation, where she co-authored *The Phase-Out of the Multi-Fiber Arrangement: Policy Options and Opportunities for Asia*. Sanchita received her Ph.D. in Political Science (focus on Comparative Political Economy) from UCLA in 2002. Her research interests include politics of economic policy and reform, the role of NGOs in development, local economic governance and decentralization, and international trade.

Sanchita has taught courses in Comparative Politics, The Politics of Developing Countries, and the Politics of Economic Reform in Asia and Latin America at UCLA, UC Davis, and the University of San Francisco. She is a trustee of the American Institute of Indian Studies, the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, and the American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies. Sanchita is also a member of the Advocacy Committee of Human Rights Watch, San Francisco.

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