

# Empowering of Women in Bangladesh perspective

Kamrun Nahar

PhD fellow, College of Public Administration at Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China

Lecturer, Department of Social Work, SK Burhanuddin Post Graduate College, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Shukui Tan

Professor, College of Public Administration, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, 430074  
Wuhan, China

## Abstract

Women empowerment is the key to achieving all the sector in development all over the world, be it protecting the environment, reducing poverty or ensuring universal access to healthcare. Empowering women are mutually reinforcing in that success in many of the development will have positive impacts on women empowerment. Expansion of women's political, social, economic and cultural also in decision making side well participation and cultivation of women leaders' in term of correspond with attempts to facilitate this expansion. Promoting women's leadership in economic activity, professional organization labor trade unions and politics at community and national levels obvious strategy for promoting women's participation in effective responses to community issues and in turn creating opportunities for empowerment of women and their integration in public activity. (Higgit Rayan) women leadership. This study attempts to examine the women empowerment in Bangladesh. Some dimension are considered the women empowerment :The quality of highest level of education , freedom of choice and movement and also power in the household decision making process and involvement of economic activities , Factor analysis technique of employed to construct the last three dimensions. Results show that all the four dimensions of women empowerment contribute positively and significantly to the decision. Findings of the study have a number of policy implications on this issue for a developing country like Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** Women empowerment, Social dignity, Socio-economic condition, Cultural Dimension, Gender inequality

## 1. Background

Bangladesh is a developing country half of the total population is women whose socio-economic condition is very low. Struggle for modernity, tradition, men-women equality, social dignity, security and for multilateral pressure the position of women in the family is very complex. Here men and women do not participate in social development is not equal. Many indoor and outdoor activities of women are not treated as work. The devaluation of women labor in labor market also hinders women right. But in market economy women of Bangladesh are always facing new challenges. Though women work in educational institution, medical, factories, police, even in the uneven areas, women are neglected, tortured and persecuted. In the society of gender disparity it is difficult for women to stay parallel and enjoy the right of equal participant. All these should be discussed here. No socio-economic, political and cultural development is possible without the empowerment of women. So, identifying the hindrance of women empowerment in my research work to take steps to solve the problems is the main purpose of my research work.

## 2. The Bangladesh Case

Bangladesh has always had a history of women's emancipation since the days of Begum Rokeya to women's active role in the war of independence and through today's Shahbagh movement. Strong administrative and legal structures, coupled with an active civil society have been the foundation for women's movements, for the establishment of rights and the delivery of pro-women services.

Begum Rokeya, was a prolific writer and a social worker in undivided Bengal. She is most famous for her efforts on behalf of gender equality and other social issues.

### **Gender Inequality Index**

<b>Value</b>	0.518 (2012)
<b>Rank</b>	107th <sup>[1]</sup>
<b><u>Maternal mortality (per 100,000)</u></b>	240 (2010)
<b><u>Women in parliament</u></b>	19.7% (2012)
<b><u>Females over 25 with secondary education</u></b>	30.8% (2010)
<b><u>Women in labor force</u></b>	57.2% (2011)
<b><u>Global Gender Gap Index</u></b> <sup>[2]</sup>	
<b>Value</b>	0.6848 (2013)
<b>Rank</b>	75th out of 136

### **3. Objectives of the study**

- i. To understand the importance about the role of women in the development of the society
  - ii. What are the obstacles and the causes of obstacles?
  - iii. To know about the hindrance women face in the field of work.
- IV To know social attitude towards women independence

### **4. Research Methodology:**

In this study the concern was to find out the level of participation of women in all sides of development process of Bangladesh. The study used an exploratory and descriptive research design. Exhaustive literature survey regarding the topic and results concept has been done. Secondary data collected from various sources including research papers, magazines and websites is used for the purpose of study. While some other information were obtained through experiences and observation made by the researchers.

### **5. Discussion:**

#### *5.1 The socio-economic Condition of Women (Social Dignity)*

Most of the women in Bangladesh believe in erotic social value and superstition. In this condition women are always dependent on men. From the early childhood female child is neglected. The birth of male child is welcome on the other hand that of female child is considered as a curse. When the female child is growing up, she realize that she is born to serve the female, she is a curse for the society or family and the social environment enhances her idea and for this men use social superstition, religious sentiment, ignorance's and weakness and helplessness of women.

Women have to lead lower life in the male dominated society. Another cause of it is that mantis the wage earners, so in social attitude the role of women is not considered important as men's. There is another cause behind the less dignity of women in Bangladesh age. Marriage system, relationship and mother, the right of women in the case of marriage is negative. The father becomes the decision maker and mother's decision is always neglected. The registry, demand of bride, witness etc are compulsory. If the marriage is not registered, it is illegal. Since there are double rules in the society, the women can't take action when they are divorced. The agreement in marriage in Islam is equal but in practical, It is not equal. The men have the right to divorce; keep four wives at a time. Here women are not safe they are inferior to men.

#### *5.2 The Economic condition of women*

The main aspect of women empowerment is the equal rights of women in the working field. From the ancient period women were engaged in household chores preparing field sowing seeds, weddings harvesting and many other activities. The picture of invisible contribution of women was shown in the moderate National income in 1993. According to this statistics, the production which is produced and used in house is it worth of 16 trillion dollar. Of them 10% – 35% production is produced in houses by women who do not need to pay. In 1990 it is

stated in a statistics if the activities of women in the family are counted and added to the national income, the total income of the world increases form 20% to 30%. But these activities of women are not granted. Here the annual and daily activities of rural women granted by UNICEF in 1991 and Department Female affair in 1994 are shown below. Years of Rural Women in Bangladesh

Month	Activities
Baishakh (Apr 15-May 14)	Bringing soil form pond, cultivating vegetables watering, weeding, making of mango pickle.
Jaistha (15 May – 14 June)	Making mango pickles, cultivation of curry
Ashair (June 15 -July 14)	Fishing, knitting, produce fish, knitting katha and clothes, rope of jute etc.
Shrabon (1 5 July- August 1 4)	Harvesting, cleaning, boiling rice, basking drying straw for cows and piling and making cold earth& other reproductive work
Vadro (August 15-Sep.14)	Cleaning wet place and mushroom of after flood, preparing hearth and box for paddy, products from jute.
Assin (Sep.16-Oct. 15) and Kartik (Sep. 14-Going to father's house, Dec.14)	cultivating vegetables and pulse.
Agrohayon (Nov. 15-Dec.14)	Husking, collecting rice making fried rice
Poush (Dec. 15- 14 January)	Cakes of new rice and chira and muri
Magh (15 January- 14 Feb.)	Dat juice, gur making and making cakes
Falgun (Feb.15-March 14)	Decoration of houses, making floor high and aripping, cultivating vegetables, uproot mastered etc.
Chaitra (March 15-14 Apr.)	Cleaning houses and repairing, sowingVegetables making fans of plum tree.

The labour of women is considered as a strong weapon to alleviate poverty in the whole world. At present a major part of total population is women who work outside the homes. According to the report by BBS (1995-96) the number of workingwomen is 21 million is 38.1% of the total labour. Now women labours are working in medical sciences, teacher, nurse, health, family planning, including, garments factory, tea factory, mine, manufacturing Intention Labor.

#### 6. Organization works from 1951 to present time:

- Equal Wage Convention 1951
- Discriminatory Service convention 1959
- Social rules Convention 1962
- Investment rule Convention 1964
- Education leave Convention along with wage 1948

Human Society Development convention was taken such steps. Women are lagging behind in the field of govt. and non-govt. administrates duties.

In our country appointment of women judge was unlawful and eradicating that problem women judge was appointed after 1975 and at present out of 60 judges two judges is woman in the Supreme court of Bangladesh.

In BCS (Gen.) woman was appointed first in 1989 and in administration in 2000. And women policy super was appointed few years ago. Women have been recently appointed in armed medical core. Even women lag behind in BCS.

Besides less wage want of service and security disparity of working hours, leave, etc. one the obstacles in the ways of women. Though the garments factories are fault on the basis on women labor it is found that 20% women work 12 hours daily on 30% women work 13 hours daily. Besides women workers suffer from insecurity of commission and way to garments, weekly leaves etc.

Table 1. Average wage of agriculture labor (1974-2000)

Year	Average wage ratio		Percentage
	Women	Men	
1973-74	3.23	6.89	48
1981-82	6.75	13.79	48
1984-85	11.85	24.54	48
1989	21.41	25.80	83
1999	89.0	01.63	80
2000	86.0	61.00	75
2000	86.0	61.00	75

### 7. Area of professional working women

In the field of profession it is mentionable that the participation of women in the important sectors is few. Even there is no woman in some sectors. On the other hand the number of women in the work which has no value is satisfactory. It is found that in the Adam sumari of 1981, 75% women are engaged in household choruses. The position of men and women according to profession is shown below.

	Persons related to work (thousand)		
	Total	Male	Female
1. Professions related to technical works	1469	1129	240
2. Related to medical, dental & animal treatment	249	227	21
3. Statistics and mathematicians	1	1	–
4. Economists	12	11	1
5. Administrators and other officials	294	218	16
6. In transportation	218	218	–
7. Related to household activities	846	223	623
8. Writers & Reporters	12	11	1

It is worth mentioning that the number of male workers is greater than female one's on all spheres with some exceptions like household activities where 626,000 female workers out of 846000 take part. Its main cause is that remuneration in household activities is less and these places have not yet been identified as work places.

### 8. Property and Women

The causes of poor condition of women are the traditional heritage system and ownership of properties. In Muslim society a female child gets less share of her father's property than a male child and in absence of the husband, the wife gets less than her children. This inheritance system recognized by the religion degrades the women in male dominated society.

Besides, the persons who hold more properties, have more power to take decision in any matter. In rural society the land lords hold the power in society and only they take any decision. In Bangladesh the land and its management belong to the male, not to the female, which makes the men inheritors. Power is such a stuff which is always exercised on the weak. In a family the husband exercises his power on the wife and the children which is the main theme of the male dominated society.

### 9. Educational Status

Education is one of the basic elements of man to develop personality, sense of responsibility, sustaining rights, civic sense and especially national progress. But in the field of education women of Bangladesh lag behind men. In the field of national educational the percentage of women education is rather frustrating. Compared to men. It is true that all the development programs in Bangladesh included women on priority basis and still they are being given priority but they are found half of the male in education even after liberation period. This disparity starts in the primary level and it increases in higher education. The admission ratio in different seven Universities was

77.20:22.80 including male and female students in 1999. In different program primary education was declared compulsory and in order to less the difference between male and female, female education was given more importance.

Despite this, it was seen in 1995 that of the total students, 63% were male and 37% were female. It is not worthy that at present 95% students who are eligible to go to schools are admitted in primary schools and on completion of primary education 38% drop out of it. Here is a data of drop out in primary level in percent.

Class	Boys	Girls
I	2.2	4.9
II	3.7	4.9
III	7.9	7.8
IV	6.9	7.3
V	9.7	22.8

## 10. Rights of women

In the constitution of the people's republic of Bangladesh some fundamental rights for women are :

Article 10. : Steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life.

Article 28(2): women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state & of public life.

Article 28(4): Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making special provision in favor of women children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.

In a recent study it is found that 12% enjoy human rights fully, 8% enjoy minimum human rights, 7.8% can enjoy equal rights in human activities and 7.6% can enjoy open freedom.

### 10.1 What steps to be taken to ensure their human right?

- To take law full steps
- To expand Education
- To raise consciousness
- To achieve economic solvency
- To get equal phase in their father's property.

From this study it is noticed that all women opine to take the shelter of law, correct the law, raise consciousness of their rights and responsibilities, provide more opportunities, continue campaign, ensure equal share of property, express rights of freedom, and avoid fundamentalists and so on.

## 11. Women and law of Bangladesh:

Some laws have been introduced to protect the women rights, injustice made to then and those are still in action. Those are dowry opposing act 1980 (Reach field in 1982). In this law punishment has been imposed directly or indirectly for receiving and giving dowry. Under this law one year jail may be offered on Tk. 5000 fine or both applicable.

For killing inhumanly death or life long joint is offered. Women and Children Oppression curbing act 2000 makes the base of protecting women rights. Under this law hijacking raping, killing after this law hijacking raping, killing after raping, raping by turn, in case of raping by police law has been make for offering death centaur. Under this law sexual harassment is a punishable offence. We describe in detail desks wards as what we gird in preceding to analysis the total situation of the research work.

Table 2 Participation of women in National Election (MP)

Year of Election	Percentage of Women Candidate
1973	0.3
1979	0.9
1986	1.3
1988	0.7
1991	1.5
1996	1.9
2001	2.0

Table 3 The numbers and percentage of women ministers at different times in

Administration	Number of Ministers	of totalNumber of total home	Percentage
1072-75	50	2	4
1979-82	101	6	6
1982-90	133	4	3
1991-96	39	3	5
1996-01	38	4	10.52
2001-06	60	4	7

Source: Cabinet Division, Govt. of Bangladesh.

## 12. Women and Administration

Among the administrative cadres, BCS admin stands top considering aristocracy. They are the propelling power of stately affairs. Very few women affaires are at this cadre presently. Since 1998, no women were in secretary level in the serve centre of power – Secretariat. Recently women are getting promotion in different state organizations including ministry of women and child affairs. Important national organization, namely UGC, Election commission is devoid of women. There are only two women ambassador. There are two women justice in Supreme Court High Division.

Table-4: The participation and percentage of women at higher administration in Bangladesh.

Description	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Secretarial	48	1	49	2.7
Additional Secretarial	54	1	55	2
Join Secretary	271	5	276	1.5
Deputy Secretary	552	7	559	1.1
Senior Assistant Secretary	2014	200	2214	9.0
Assistant Secretary	957	160	1117	14.3
Total	3996	374	4369	8.5

Source: Establish Ministry 2012

### **13. Steps in women empowerment:**

Bangladesh government is taking different kinds of steps to empower the women. Such as, quota system, including women in local government by ratio system, scholarship system in education for women. In parliament 45 reserved seats are for women members, in primary sector 60% women are recruited as teacher.

In garment sector many women are working and being solvent. By micro-credit system many women are bringing economical solvency in their family. BRDB besides Grameen Bank, Proshika, Asha etc, and non-government organizations are playing role in the development of women from rural area. In this way these institutions helps in women empowerment in Bangladesh.

### **14. Research findings**

We describe in detail downwards on what we find in preceding to analysis the total situation of the research work.

- (1) Women representation is very limited in different level of government especially in ministries.
- (2) Regularly women in mass representative organizations is scarcely as candidates.
- (3) Women don't exercise the power of decision making in every sphere of politics and bureaucracy.
- (4) Different wage rate for women.
- (5) We keep a great role in garments sector as wager
- (6) They are playing important roles in education
- (7) Their participation in politics are increasing
- (8) The women are being solvent by the opportunity of micro credit.

### **15. Recommendations**

1. Women should participate more and more in politic to establish their rights in politics.
2. The working field of women should be extended to increase the economic power of women.
3. Social attitude towards men and women should be changed. Through social movement. Along with political parties women organizations should come forward along for this
4. The govt. should be cordial and active to implement the effective steps in the rules and regulation committee.
5. Women should be appointed in the higher administration with post of cabinet secretary and in the ministry and department.
6. To eradicate the disparity of men- women wage reformation in wage distribution is necessary.
7. Women workers can't protest against the injustice of the higher authority for lack of the help of law.
8. Political and lawful rights of women should be included in the education syllabus.
9. All the international agreements against women persecution including extinction of all discriminatory activities against women should be implemented fully or to take steps to implement.

10. Reserve seat for women should be maintained for UP level to all sectors.
11. They should not be nominated for reserve seat, rather should be elected directly.
12. We should behave with the female child equally in the house and outside the house and the positive aspect of female child should be shown.

#### 15.1 Policy advice recommendations:

There are some recommendations, outlined below, are designed to help develop a bold and clear vision, formulate detailed policy, and ensure a bright future for empowering women of Bangladesh.

- Establishment of policies, regulations and women development project assistance that will ensure sustained women development.
- More efficient and balanced use of women knowledge and skill and others resources
- Ensure human rights, establish democratic values and practices, improve governance consciousness and establish rule of law for women empowerment.
- Create the employment facilities
- Investment in education sector and human resources development
- To develop the socio economic condition and other infrastructure
- To reduce the all kinds of discriminations against women in Bangladesh.

#### References

- "Human Development Report 2014"* (PDF). The United Nations. Retrieved 24 July 2014.
- "The Global Gender Gap Report 2013"* (PDF). World Economic Forum. pp. 12–13.  
<https://www.cia.gov/Library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html>  
<http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/education.html>  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/genderInstitute/about/resourcesNailaKabeer/mahmudAndTasneemTheUnderreportingOfWomensEconomicActivity.pdf>  
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/RuralWomen/CDABangladesh.pdf>
- McEvoy, Mark (3 April 2014). "Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh – rapists act with impunity". *Survival International - The movement for tribal peoples*.
- Iqbal, Jamil M. (2 November 2009). "The fate of the Chittagong Hill Tracts tribes of Bangladesh". In *Defence of Marxism*.
- "Bangladeshi Gang Rape". *Vice News*. November 21, 2014.  
<http://www.unicef.org/sowc09/docs/SOWC09-CountryExample-Mali.pdf>
- Early marriage, UNICEF, retrieved 27 August 2015
- Bangladesh: Girls Damaged by Child Marriage: Stop Plan to Lower Marriage Age to 16, Human Rights Watch, 9 June 2015, retrieved 27 August 2015
- Mansura Hossain (Mar 7, 2015), Age of marriage 18, but 16 with parental consent, Prothom Alo, retrieved 27 August 2015  
[http://phrplanbd.org/attachments/article/42/DV%20Act\\_Engling%20Translation%20%28unofficial%29.pdf](http://phrplanbd.org/attachments/article/42/DV%20Act_Engling%20Translation%20%28unofficial%29.pdf)  
<http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR265/FR265.pdf>  
<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2012/afghanistan-domestic-violence.aspx>  
<http://www.irinnews.org/report/86100/bangladesh-dowry-violence-continues-unabated>
- Afridi, Tehniya S (8 July 2013). "Eve teasing: The power game". *The Express Tribune (Pakistan)*. Retrieved 9 February 2015.
- "Eve-teasers beat dead youth in Dhaka", *Daily Star*, 11 October 2014.
- Barrett, Grant (2006), "Eve Teasing", *The Official Dictionary of Unofficial English (McGraw-Hill Professional)*, p. 109, ISBN 0-07-145804-2  
<http://www.irinnews.org/report/91356/bangladesh-when-sexual-harassment-leads-to-suicide>  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2223rank.html>  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1744386/>