

Empowerment of Rural Women in Education Sector: An Analysis of Bangladesh Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment of Women is the burning question not only Bangladesh but also all over the world. Precondition of proper social and economic development empowerment of women in education is very important. But women are neglected in various sectors in Bangladesh. Moreover, rural women are the backward sections of the country. Only training and educational program can be empowered women property without empowerment of women, nation will not reach the ultimate goal. Education is milestone of empowerment of women because it enables them to respond to the challenge, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that it cannot be neglected the important of education in reference to women empowerment in any way. Education is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. Empowerment of women's and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. So education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self – confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. The papers aims to develop the women through education. The research emphasizes empowerment of women at all levels to enhance them to participate the deployment goal of Bangladesh “vision -2021”

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, Skill, challenge etc.

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of women is the key in which women elaborate and recreate what is to be in circumstance that they previously were denied. Empowerment of women is the process that creates powers in their own lives, society, and their communities. So without education a nation cannot be developed for example women. Empowerment is possible when they are able to access the opportunities available to them such as in education, profession and lifestyle. Education is the backbone of the nation for empowerment of women development and welfare. Bangladesh is developing country. No doubt women will pay a vital role in contributing of the country's development. In the present research higher education of women is core centralization. Higher education is necessary for every women because higher education creates a women being self-dependent, self-reliant, self-confident. Education exposes People to new thoughts and ideas and provides necessary skill hence, to think harmonies development without educating women impossibility. Empowerment of women and achieving gender equality is essential for society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. By introducing education in rural areas women have already developed and empowered.

Statement of the Problem

Gender discrimination is the main problem in education sector. Empowerment of women is the flaming

question not only Bangladesh but also all over the world precondition of proper education development empowerment of women is very much needed. But women are disrespected in various sector in Bangladesh mainly in education sector. Bangladesh has a population of about 152.51 million where numbers of male and female are 76.35 million and 76.16 million respectively. In Bangladesh higher education of women depends upon different factors for example age, capacity of the parents, and awareness of the parents, financial matters etc. Education is a foundation of empowerment of women because it enables to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles and to change their lives. For every individual, the right to education is one of the first provisions of the Universal provisions Declaration of human right instrument. The UN International Covenant on Economic , Social ,and Cultural Rights of 1996 declares in article 13,that higher education shall be made equality accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.¹

Significance of the study

Without involvement of women development of a country is impossible. There is no variation of empowerment of women in the world to establish equality, development and peace with education. For ensuring governance it is mandatory to ensure the women education in a country. Women education is also essential for the development of Bangladesh. The development is to provide increasing opportunities to all for a better life, it is necessary to expand and improve facilities for education, health, housing and to save ground the environment. Empowering women is to give women the right. Women can have equal right to participate in education, society and economy .Women can involve in society as they are glad to choose their religious, language, work and other activities .Women are allowed higher education as men .Empowerment of women helps to reduce in domestic violence due people promote and give the value to women.

Objectives of the Study

Every study has to undertake a plan preparation with some objectives. The objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the importance of female education in empowerment of women from an empirical
2. To determine the major challenges of women in society and their socio-economic
3. To know how education changes women's lives and works as a milestone of women empowerment in
4. To study about the importance of empowerment of women and identify its obstacles in

Sources and Materials

The sources which will be used in their research include different book, articles and press reports established in different journals, dailies, weekly and monthly newspapers etc. Several sources of information of this research will be checked from books by eminent authors, articles of the subject and newspaper reports and also from the internet.

REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

Literature review this explores the origin of the term empowerment of women as it is related to gender and equality. This literature review looks at four power perspectives that are used to explain and describe the problems associated with women empowerment globally. There are a lot of native and foreign books, research works, articles, available on this topic. All these will be reviewed in this proposed study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology describes research methods, approaches and designs in detail highlighting those

used throughout the study, justifying choice through describing advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Moreover, research will also be applied for the level of empowerment, socio-economic background and women education method have been used in the present study.

Since secondary data sources have been used in this research, a section is included to discuss the differences between the two and to explain the advantages of using secondary data sources for research. Then the research method, that is, the actual data collection and data analysis method is described and justification. Case study research method is combined with grounded of this research method for document analysis of archival data that was accessed via the Internet. Descriptive methods have been used to investigate the opportunities.

Scope and Limitation

This research will be confined to empowerment of women in education sector as well as the rights of women in the country. This study mainly focuses on the impact of empowerment of women in education sector.

Conceptual Issues

Empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to be transacted nor can it be given away. Power has to be acquired and once acquired it needs to be and once acquired it needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved.^[1] (Pillai, 1995). Before the emergence of microcredit, women in rural Bangladesh were not empowered. They had little or no access to the formal employment market and they did not have the necessary funds to engage in income generating activities. 1 strict). This paper focuses on the impact two non-governmental organizations (Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB) and Nari Uddug Kendra (NUK) had on the socio-economic condition of rural women in Bangladesh. The paper is mostly based on primary data that has been collected through a field survey (with structured and unstructured questionnaires) and a focus group discussion of 50 rural women from Mollar Gaon (Sylhet district) and Pallabi (Dhaka diThe conceptual framework (which has been constructed on the basis of a review of the literature) is illustrated in Figure 1. It considers the activities of these two NGOs (which include participatory decision-making, awareness building, capacity building, and an increase in economic solvency) as potentially contributing factors to women's empowerment. Following this introduction, the paper provides a brief review of some literature focusing on women's empowerment. Section III summarizes some of the key programs of FIVDB and NUK. Section IV provides some background on the overall situation of rural women in the study areas, while the results of the questionnaires and the focus group discussion are presented in Section V, followed by some conclusions.²

Analysis on Bangladesh Perspective

The number of working women increased to 18.6 million in 2016-17 from 16.2 million in 2010. Bangladesh secured the 47th position among 144 countries in 2017 as per The Global Gender Gap Report, whereas India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan remain at 108, 109, 111, 124 and 143 positions respectively

Bangladesh has been a role model in women's empowerment in the past decade, and the country is experiencing an appreciable change in society because of its efforts in this regard.

The concept of women's empowerment and efforts in this area has helped the country attain a steady progress in gender equality, which helped Bangladesh to secure the first spot in gender equality (among South Asian countries) for the second consecutive year at the Gender Gap Index of 2017.

The index, prepared by World Economic Forum, measures education, economic participation, health, and political empowerment to measure gender equality of any country.

Half of the population of Bangladesh is women and their economic participation has increased significantly. In fact, national and international policy strategies have also been reflected in the policy to ensure women's advancement so that they have control over their lives and play an influential role in society as decision makers.

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Bangladesh's achievements in the past decade have been exemplary in many sectors such as in reducing infant and child mortality, poverty alleviation, increase in women entrepreneurship, education, and health. Political Scientist Dr Rounaq Jahan said: "Bangladesh has made consistent policy and program interventions from the 1970s onwards to improve women's condition and reduce gender inequality."³

Education System in Bangladesh

This chapter contains population scenario of Bangladesh as well as some basic features about education system in Bangladesh. The country emerged as an independent and sovereign country in 1971. It is one of the largest delta of the world with a total area of 147,570 sq. km. Bangladesh has a population about 158.90 million (as on 1st July, 2015) making it one of the densely populated countries in the world. The sex ratio which reflects the difference in number between women and men (M/F*100) is 100.30 in 2015

The education system of Bangladesh is mainly divided into three levels (i) Primary (Grade 1 to 5) (ii) Secondary (grade 6 to 12) and (iii) Higher Secondary. Besides there are some private institutions providing English medium education. They offer „O? level and „A? level courses. The age for entering primary education is 6 year where lower secondary, secondary and upper secondary is 11-13, 14-15, 16-17 years respectively. The highest allocation in the national budget for education exposes that Government of Bangladesh is very much keen for human resources and development through education. Bangladesh has also Madrasa system of education which emphasizes on Arabic medium Islam-based education. The system is supervised by the Madrasa Board of the country.

Primary level education is provided under two major institutional arrangements (stream)-general and madrasa, while secondary education has three major streams: general, technical-vocational and madrasa. Higher education, likewise, has 3 streams: general (inclusive of pure and applied science, arts, business and social science), madrasa and technology education.

Technology education in its turn includes agriculture, engineering, medical, textile, leather technology and ICT. Madrasas functional parallel to the three major stages, have similar core courses as in the general stream (primary, secondary and post-secondary) but have additional emphasis on religious studies.

Major Obstacles in Women Education

Gender equality is crucial to achieving sustainable development. Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only human right, but also has multiple effects across all development areas including education. Bangladesh has gradually reached to sex-parity at primary and secondary levels of education; however, drop out of girls especially at upper secondary level is major concern for development.

There are different gender based socio-economic, cultural barriers that hinder women to complete higher levels of education. Among them, child marriage, early motherhood and violence against women are some of the major obstacles and/or consequences. This chapter examines interlinks between girls higher education and prevalence of child marriage, early motherhood, economic status and violence for instance.

There are some obstacles of women empowerment in the study area. Women are deprived of getting proper empower mental facilities all over the Bangladesh. In the study area, the researcher has tried to find out the main obstacles of women empowerment. The following obstacles were found against women empowerment.

Family Restriction

Most of the families in the study area are Muslim. So, it is restricted for the girls to go to school. The table shows the family restriction for the girls students.

Table 4.1: Family Restriction Status in the Study Area

Total respondents	Restricted families	Number of victims	Rate of adolescent from higher studies
250	60(24%)	70	40%

The table shows that 24% family having restriction for the girls to go to school under the study. The rate of victim of family restriction is 40%. So the higher education was threatened by the family restriction.

Early Marriage

Early marriage is one of the major obstacles in the study area for women empowerment and education. Guardians think that girls are their burden. So, they always try to marry them. The following table shows the early marriage status of the women in the study area.

Table 4.2: Early marriage status

Total respondents	No. of victim of early marriage	Percentage of victim
250	75	30.40

The table shows that 30.40% girls are victimized in early marriage in the study area. So, they are deprived of higher education and it has been stopped their education forever for early marriage.

Illiterate Guardians

The study has found that some guardian are illiterate as well as ignorant and for this reason some guardians are not willing to send their female child to the educational institutions. The following table will depict the painful picture of the situation of illiteracy of the guardians in the study area.

Table 4.3: Illiterate Guardians status

Total respondents	No. of Illiterate guardians	Percentage of Illiterate guardians
250	134	53.60

The table shows that 53.60% guardians of the women are illiterate. They have no knowledge about the importance of education and no knowledge about the development of women empowerment. So, most of the women remain uneducated in the study area.

Religious Legislation

In the study area some girls are victim of religious legislation as well as social legislation. Some guardians consider that girls do not need higher education. So, women were victimized of social and religious legislation and their study had been stopped. The table below has shown the picture of the religious legislation of the study area.

Table 4.4: Religious legislation of the study area

Total respondents	No. of victim of religious legislation	Percentage of victim
250	55	17.60

The table shows that 17.60% girls could not achieved higher education for the religious legislation in the study area. Some guardians do not understand the real meaning of the religion. So, they stopped the study of their girls.

Lack of Social awareness

Though some NGOs are arranging awareness programs among the guardians, they, in fact, are not getting aware of sending their female children to the educational institutions. They think that women education is not essential. So, for their lack of awareness some women still remain uneducated in the study area. The table shows the lack of awareness of the guardians in the study area.

Table 4.5: Lack of awareness of the guardians in the study area

Total respondents	No. of guardian who have not awareness of education	Percentage of guardians who have not awareness of education
250	35	14.80

The table shows that 14.80% guardians have no knowledge about the importance of education and empowerment in the study area. They are not aware about the role of their female child in building up the nation or making the country develop. So, for the lack of awareness about the importance of education women in the study area have been deprived of getting higher education.

Women's Rights in Law⁵

The Constitution of Bangladesh embodies the principles of gender equality, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and promotes equality of opportunity for women to participate in politics and in public life. It also provides for special provisions for women as a particularly disadvantaged group.

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides that the State shall aim to promote a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and political, economic and social freedom, equality and justice, will be secured for all citizens.

In local Government institutions, the State must encourage and promote the representation of peasants, workers and women.

Under the Constitution of Bangladesh, women's rights are protected under the broad and universal principles of equality and participation. These principles are found in the following Articles in the Constitution.

The Constitution of Bangladesh contains some provisions of the rights of both man and woman. The Constitution states that steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life⁶. The Constitution also provides to ensure equality of opportunity of both man and woman⁷. That is to say that in all sectors of national life the participation and equal opportunity both man and woman to must be ensured by the state. The Constitution also affirms the rights to work at a reasonable wage⁸. The Constitution provides that the rights to social security in situations of unemployment, illness, disability and widowhood⁹.

The Constitution states that all are equal before law and entitled to equal protection of law¹⁰. The term equality before law and equal protection of law is that no person shall on the grounds of only religion, caste, sex, race or place of birth be subjected to incapacity, liability, or condition.

Equal protection of law by the competent authority has been guaranteed to every citizens as like as man and woman. Everybody has a right to life, liberty, reputation or property.

Equality of opportunity in public employment, which is defined as: 1) equal employment opportunity for all citizens employed in the service of the State; 2) non-discrimination in employment for all citizens in the service of the State; 3) special provisions for adequate representation of the population within the State-sponsored employment¹¹.

As the citizens of Bangladesh, woman has the right to protection of law¹². So, in the eye of law everyone is subject to equal protection of law regardless sex, compelled to be witnesses against

themselves¹⁸ and they shall not be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment¹⁹.

The constitution of Bangladesh also provides some another fundamental rights like every citizens shall have the rights to move freely throughout Bangladesh from one place to another²⁰. And ensures that every citizens shall have the right to assemble and to participate in the public meetings and processions peacefully and without arms subjects to any reasonable restrictions²¹. Every citizens shall the rights to form associations or unions subject to any reasonable restrictions²².

Freedom of speech, thought, and conscience is guaranteed in the Constitution²³.

It is the provision of the Constitution that for the protection of minority rights and allows religious communities to establish, manage and maintain religious institutions²⁴. Though the constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women in public life, it does not extend equality provisions into the private sphere, where religious laws are recognized. Personal laws (i.e. religious laws) in the private sphere are in some cases discriminatory against women.

Freedom of property²⁵.

Privacy has to be maintained strictly and willful violation of this strictness in the violation of the guarantee as mentioned and endorsed by different national and international instruments. (Art . . 43 7 12 of UDHR)

Freedom of compulsory education²⁶.

The Constitution also reserves 50 seats in the National Parliament for women²⁷. This provision was created through a constitutional amendment in 1979 as a temporary special measure for 10 years. It was renewed for a second, ten-year term in 1999.

Besides the Constitution there are some other rights which are inserted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 also observes the women's rights:

The UDHR provides that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights²⁸.

Every woman has the right to life, liberty and security²⁹. Because all human beings are equal. The women are treated as a person and recognized by the universal documents is very essential³⁰.

As a human being, women has the right to take effective remedy by the competent and impartial court and tribunal³¹.

As a human being, women has the right to freedom of movement and residence³².

They have the right to marry and to form a family³³. Like any other citizen women has the right to hold property³⁴. They are protected by social security³⁵. A man has right to pay for his work. Like a woman has also the right to equal pay for equal work³⁶.

In many times women are neglected and they suffer many disabilities. So, in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age and other lack of livelihood, they should be specially protected and a special security must be ensured³⁷.

Universally it is recognized that the women have the right to take education³⁸.

FINDINGS

Under the above discussion it can be said that, there are some problems for empowerment of women in education sector. These are given below:

(a) Lack of skilled school teachers:

Due to lack of experienced school teacher, women empowerment is hampering. A major challenge for teacher education in the twenty first century is to provide society with qualified teachers to teach and prepare the next generation of citizens.

(b) Burden of excess curriculum:

The Curriculum is decided on basis of learning outcomes declared by the education department with a proper definition for students of each class. But these private schools overruled the government decision and continue to prescribe text books with high concepts.

(c) Poverty:

Poverty and education are inextricably linked, because people living in poverty may stop going to school so they can work, which leaves them without literacy and numeracy skills they need to further their careers.

(d) Poor school attendance:

Across the country, more than 8 million students are missing so many days of school that they are academically at risk.

(e) Grading System:

A better system would establish and maintain high standards for student work, restoring integrity to grades and reflecting discriminating professional judgment.

(f) No internet and Multimedia:

Access to the internet is fundamental to achieving education for the future. It opens doorways to a wealth of information, knowledge and educational resources.

(g) Illiteracy:

Education is the backbone of a nation. When a person is not able to read even simple books and is not able to write anything more than his own name. This is an illiteracy. Illiteracy is main problem in education system.

By reducing above problems, education system in Bangladesh should continue to improve.

Some Recommendations of Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh

Having discussed the concept obstacles of women empowerment in relation to women a few recommendations may be suggested for improving the lot of women in this respect:

- Women should be involved in income generating
- To increase the expenditure of women education and
- To innovate awareness building courses for
- To create practical training facilities for
- To increase women participation in health, education, agriculture, industry and development
- To increase the expenditure of women training and
- To ensure the participation of women in local and international forums.
- To ensure the security of women along with the removal of violence against them.
- To ensure equal partnership of both male and female in empowerment

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be said that a magnificent success has been achieved in the development sector in Bangladesh through the spread of women education. But the position of women has changed a bit. Comparatively the family obstacles have also lessened. Now-a-days women are working at industries especially women feel interested gradually by achieving education. It must be noted that poverty has a positive influence to break down the social obstacles for women and to take part in economic activities in our society. If the women from poor family's income generated, the family will be benefited. The real condition influence social values and norms very much. Necessary for the progress of women in Bangladesh. So, it seems to be remained static. The participation of women in jobs is attracting. Garment factory that is built with the labor of women has become the main source of foreign currency. Women are contributing their own in the development activities of Bangladesh. For the development of human resource,

women empowerment and education has a great role and it has been cleared from the previous discussion. Education is the master key to unlock the door to women empowerment at the grass root level. Women's empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. Empowerment of women's is all about equipping and allowing women to make life determining decision through the different problems in society. Alternatives, it is the process for women to redefine gender roles that allows for them to acquire the ability to choose between alternatives when have otherwise been restricted from such an ability.

FOOT NOTES

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2. Section II, section VI
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4. www.humanandhopeassociation.org
5. Women's rights in Bangladesh, Dr. Md. Shahidul Islam, Rajshahi University Law Review 2007.
6. Article 10 of The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
7. Article 19(1), *ibid*
8. Article 15(b), *ibid*
9. Article 15(d), *ibid*
10. Article 27, *ibid*
11. Article 29, *ibid*
12. Article 31, *ibid*
13. Article 32, *ibid*
14. Article 33(1), *ibid*
15. Article 33(2), *ibid*
16. Article 35(2), *ibid*
17. Article 35(3), *ibid*
18. Article 35(4), *ibid*
19. Article 35(5), *ibid*
20. Article 36, *ibid*
21. Article 37, *ibid*
22. Article 38, *ibid*
23. Article 39, *ibid*
24. Article 41, *ibid*
25. Article 42, *ibid*
26. Article 17, *ibid*
27. Article 65(3), *ibid*
28. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
29. Article 3, *ibid*
30. Article 6, *ibid*
31. Article 8, *ibid*
32. Article 13(1), *ibid*
33. Article 16(1), *ibid*
34. Article 17, *ibid*
35. Article 22, *ibid*
36. Article 23(2), *ibid*
37. Article 25(1), *ibid*
38. Article 26(1), *ibid*