

Figure of Socio-Economic Status, Participation and Empowerment of Women in Decision Making Process: Context Sirajganj Municipal Area of Bangladesh

Dr. Md. Rajaul Karim¹, Md. Azmol Hossain², Md. Atiqul Islam³, Fatema Jannatun Nahar⁴, Mst. Rukhsana Khatun⁵

¹Assistant Professor Bangladesh Studies Khwaja Yunus Ali University Bangladesh.

²Assistant Professor Statistics Khwaja Yunus Ali University Bangladesh.

³Lecturer Department of Islamic Studies Khwaja Yunus Ali University Bangladesh.

⁴Hon's (4th Year) Department of English Khwaja Yunus Ali University Bangladesh.

⁵Hon's (4th Year) Department of English Khwaja Yunus Ali University Bangladesh.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.807105>

Received: 12 June 2024; Revised: 28 June 2024; Accepted: 02 July 2024; Published: 06 August 2024

ABSTRACT

Bangladesh gained independence on 16 December 1971. Since independence till date, the government has taken various steps to empower women. Despite all these efforts, the economic structure of women's decision-making process has not yielded the desired results. The main reason is that women's decisions are not valued in any family, social, political, or economic field. In the present study, we have analyzed the socio-economic status of women and their empowerment in decision-making. In doing so, we look at women's age, religion, education, occupation, marital status, family status, maintenance, household expenses, adoption, children's education, property rights, property buying and selling, house building, housework, and health and nutrition.

INTRODUCTION

Women in Bangladesh are lagging in terms of socioeconomic status. Women in Bangladesh are regarded as citizens of lower socio-economic status because they are considered less qualified than men and the scope of their activities is dominated by patriarchal perspectives. In Bangladesh, in many cases, the role of women is more than that of men, but in almost all cases, the status of men is kept above the status of women. In this patriarchal society, the status of women is completely cornered. Thus, social inequality is created. This discrimination is the discrimination between men and women. The upper ranks of society are occupied by men. 1 Although women have equal qualifications, their position is determined below that of men. Men who are considered the head of society or the family cannot think of women as anything more than objects of consumption and housewives. In this way, women have been made subordinate in the family, society, and state structure. From the family to the state sphere, women have been kept out of the decision-making process. And if there is no participation of women in the decision-making process, then their empowerment is out of the question. However, the victory of the liberal democratic system in the international arena and the issue of human rights being very important, its wave has also been felt in the social system of Bangladesh. 2 Therefore, in the last two decades, along with the improvement in the socio-economic status of women in Bangladesh, the process of women's empowerment is accelerating due to the reduction of gender-based discrimination in the decision-making process. However, the nature of this situation is different in urban and rural areas. The rate of

education, awareness, and social mobility is higher in urban areas than in rural areas because the patriarchal influence of the social system is less and the level of gender discrimination is relatively less.³

While discussing the problems and possibilities of women's empowerment in Bangladesh, there is room to discuss women's socio-economic status, political awareness, and participation, culture, and values. Because they are considered as influencing factors in the process of women's empowerment. Since it is not possible to collect samples from the entire country to discuss the socio-economic status of Bangladesh and women's empowerment, 200 women from Sirajganj municipal area have been selected as representative elements. The research has been done with these 200 women as samples. Based on the results obtained from this, the socio-economic status of Bangladeshi women, participation in the decision-making process in various fields, and recent trends in the empowerment process, etc. have also been identified. This part of the study is discussed in detail.⁴

Keywords: Women, Socio-Economic, Empowerment, Participation, Decision, Education.

Research Approach

Research Approach is the prime concern of any research work. For the present research, a mixed-method approach has been used. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been used to address the set objectives and both of the results have been incorporated through cross-sectional description. The researcher thinks that to conduct this research work efficiently, there is no alternative to the mixed method. Therefore, this research approach has been selected to conduct this research work.

Data sources

Data for this study were used from two sources; Primary and secondary. All necessary primary sources of information such as age-based status participation data, religion-based status, education-based status, occupation-based status, marital status, married women's husband's occupational status, general family status, family breadwinner family, women's decision to adopt children, Women in decision making on children's education, Women in decision making on property purchase and sale, Women in decision making on housing, Women's position in property, Women's position in housework, Health and nutritional status dependence on women, Degree of dominance over women etc. from the research area. The study is conducted and the respondents are collected from those directly related to the study.

On the other hand, some information about women's society in Bengal, participation in local politics, women's awareness, women's rights to father's property, women's social status and values, women's rights in the family, women's role in expressing opinions in the family, children. Data has been collected from various books, articles, journals, published and unpublished research papers, and official records including the internet, etc. related to production and child education.

Research field

This study is based on Sirajganj Municipality 2024. The article considers various public-private surveys and case studies conducted on women in these municipalities before 2024.

Selection of study area

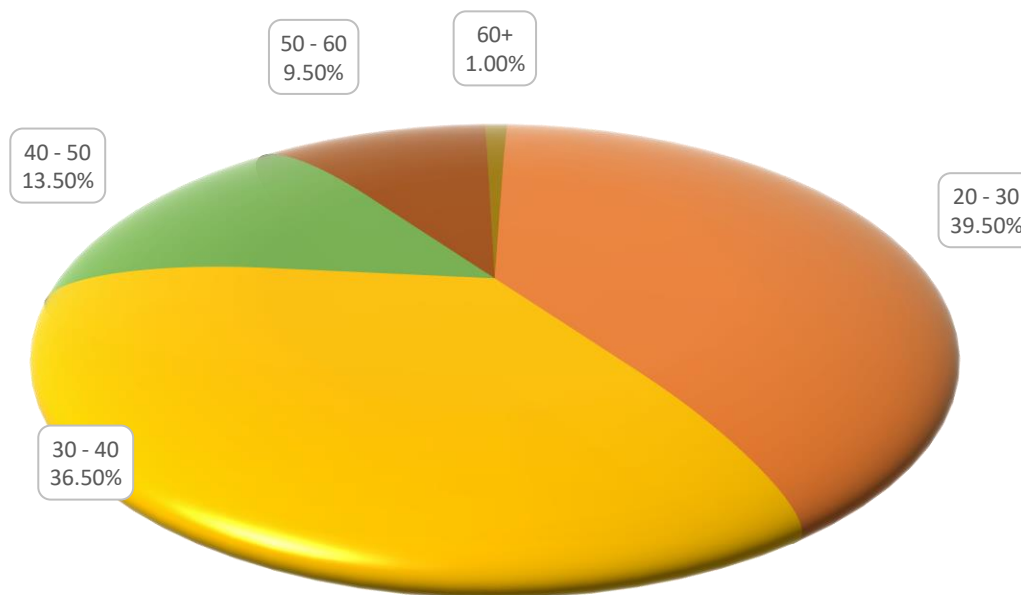
Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan in 1971. Its area is about 1,70,650 sq km. The population is about 18 crores. The country has a total of 8 divisions and 64 districts. Sirajganj is one of the district cities of Bangladesh. We have taken the municipal area of Sirajganj district as our research area. The total area of this district is 2497.92 sq km. Sirajganj district is located at 24000' - 24040' west latitude and 89020' - 89050' east longitude. Pabna to the south of this district, Bogra to the north, Tangail and Jamalpur to the east, and Pabna, Natore, and Bogra districts to the west. The area of this district is 2497.92 km. The land of Sirajganj is flat. The district has some lowlands and wetlands. Most areas of the district are submerged underwater during the monsoon season. Tarash Upazila of this district has a 10 percent area of Chalan Bill. Total cultivated land

179964.02 ha, fallow land 15701.64 ha, forest land 50.48 ha. Also, mono-crop land is 19.54%, double-crop land is 59.18%, three-crop land is 21.28%, and irrigated arable land is 74.34%.

Age-based position

Before discussing the process of empowerment of women in the Sirajganj municipal area and the existing problems in it, in determining the socio-economic position, those women whose minimum age is 20 and maximum 60 years have been identified as samples. 5 The following figure shows the age-wise position of women in the municipal area:

Figure 1: Age wise position of women in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal area, January, 2024.

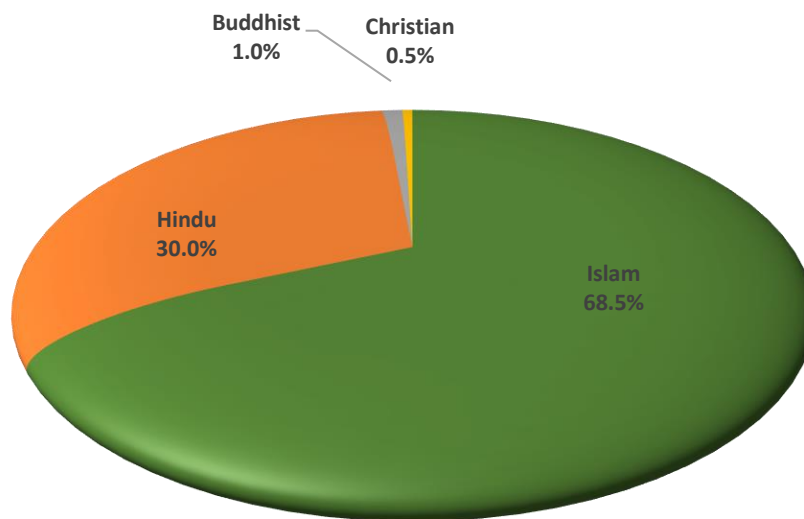
As seen in the above figure, the percentage of women in the age groups 20 to 30, 30 to 40, 40 to 50, 50 to 60 and 60 years are 39.5%, 36.5%, 13.5%, 9.5% and 1.0% respectively. Here it is seen that the rate is higher in women aged 20 to 30 years. Next is the position of women aged 30 to 40 years. Generally: at this age, a person achieves perfection in all aspects and can contribute in all areas. Because women of this age are physically and mentally active at work. However, it is known from these women that they can work but they do not get proper value in the family. They work hard all day to keep the family going. But their hard work is not valued seriously by the male members of the family. Because the male members of the family think that women are bound to do this kind of work and they will do it.

Religion-based position

Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country. About 96% of the population here is Muslim. Islam does not allow women to participate in work outside the home with men. That is why men have repeatedly used religion to prevent women from participating in work. As a result, gender inequality and socio-economic backwardness

of women have been created in our society. Apart from this, the position of women has been determined in every religion. It can be seen that religion determines the position of women in many cases. It also varies by religion. Since religion is an important factor in women's socio-economic status, empowerment, and decision-making, there is a need to have a clear understanding of the position of women based on religion.⁶The following figure shows the religious status of women in urban areas:

Figure 2: Religious position of women in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

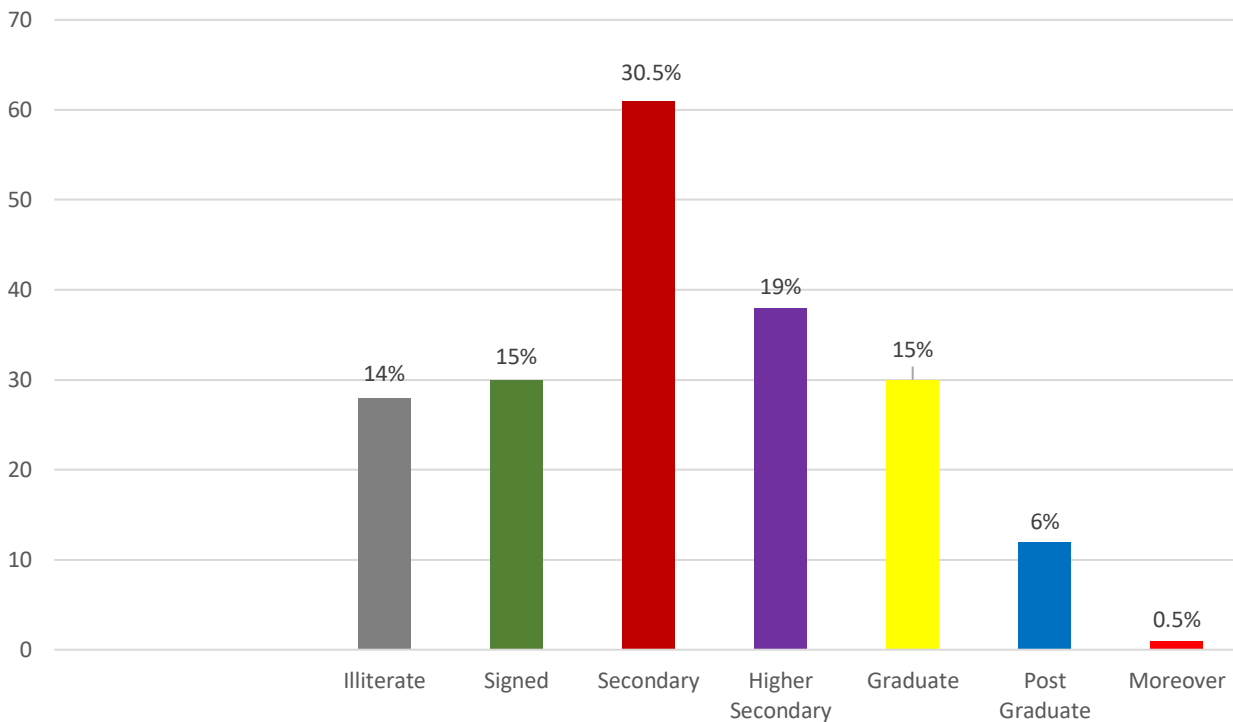
As shown in the figure above, 68.5% of women follow Islam, 30.0% follow Hinduism, 1.0% follow Buddhism and the remaining 0.5% follow Christianity. Each work has empowered women in different areas. Islam mentions the rights of women in the scriptures. But a class of Muslim religion traders and fatwabazars in Bangladesh have used this religion to corner women and subjugate them in every aspect, starting from the process of empowering them. Moreover, in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, the supremacy of men has been accepted in various fields, including the inheritance of women in the property of father and husband. However, even in rural and urban Bangladesh, there are many examples of religion being used to undermine women's rights. There are examples of this in Sirajganj municipal area. According to the table, the main religion of Sirajganj city is Islam. It can be assumed that Islamic law prevails in the lives of a large part of these women. And the decision-making process of women is being hindered under the cover of this Islamic life law.

Education-based position

Keeping women away from education is responsible for the development of human personality, sense of responsibility, protection of rights, and civic consciousness, especially in the current situation of Bangladesh, the existing inequality between men and women, gender discrimination in the decision-making process, and the marginal position of women in empowerment. Moreover, education is the most important sector for the development of women in Bangladesh. Looking at the education rate of women in the Sirajganj municipal

area, it seems quite helpful for participation and empowerment in the decision-making process. 7 The following figure shows the educational status of women in urban areas:

Figure3: Educational position of women in Sirajganj



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal area, January, 2024.

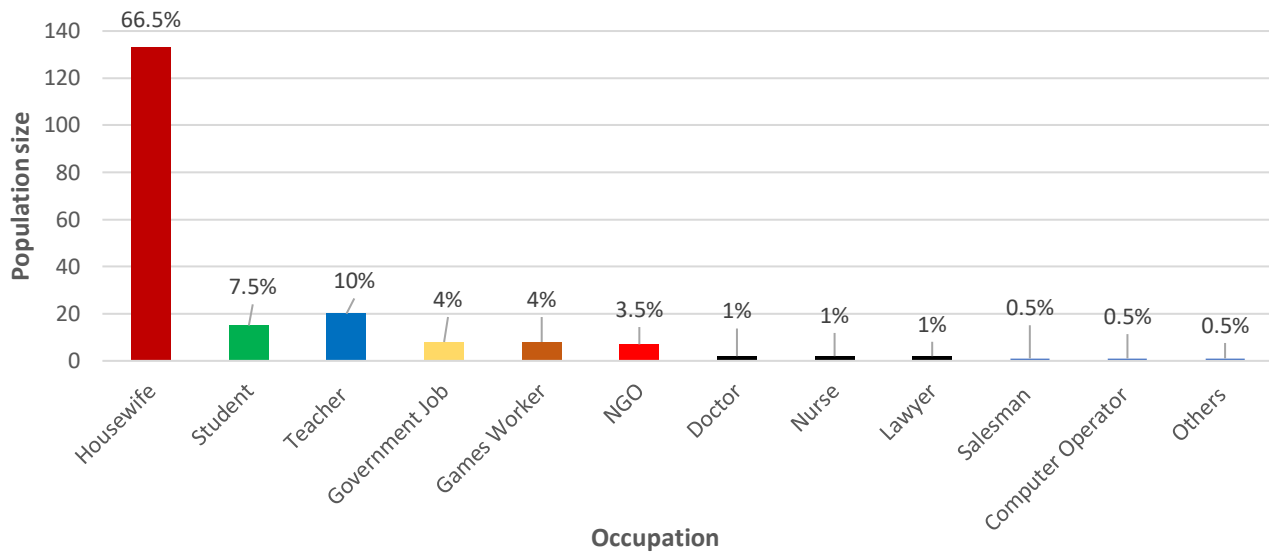
The above figure shows that 14.0% of women in urban areas have low literacy, 15.0% of women have sign knowledge, 30.5% of women have secondary education, 19.0% of women have higher secondary education, 15.0% of women are graduates, 6.0% of women are postgraduates and 0.5% women have higher educational qualification.

The education rate in Bangladesh is generally many times higher in urban than rural. Already many districts of Bangladesh have become illiteracy-free and many districts are on the way to becoming illiteracy-free this is through the government's Total Literacy Movement (TLM) and this movement has started in the urban areas of each district. Such events are often seen in Sirajganj too. What is called 'Jagrat Sirajganj.' However, a significant portion of urban women are illiterate. Women who did not get an education said they were illiterate because it was not possible to overcome social restrictions at that time. But overall, it can be seen that the level of education of women in urban areas is relatively good. As a result, there is naturally more awareness among these women and, naturally, the socio-economic status of these women will work in favor of their empowerment. But at this stage, it can be said that urban women are fairly advanced in education and this helps empower them and voice their opinions.

Occupation-wise position

Judging the overall condition of women, it can be seen that most of the women in the society are confined to the house and they do housework. These women are called housewives. However, due to the lack of economic evaluation of this profession, it was not recognized as a profession. In urban areas, many women work in various occupations besides housework. However, their position is negligible 8 The following figure shows the occupational status of women in urban areas:

Figure 4: Occupation wise position of women in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal area, December, 2024.

As can be seen from the above figure, 66.5% of urban women are housewives. That is, they are isolated from income-generating occupations. They work all day in the world but do not get any economic value from it. Although these housewives are involved in productive work, they have not been recognized for it till now. However, their labor is helping to keep the country's economy moving. Housewives are not financially independent because they do not receive any economic value for their labor. As a result, the family is not able to participate in decision-making and is not able to stay in the power structure. Moreover, they are far away from the decision-making process at the society and state level, far away from the empowerment process. Most women are thus confined to the home and are isolated from empowerment processes at the family, community, and state levels and lag in decision-making. Also, 15.0% of urban areas are female students. That means they are still learning.

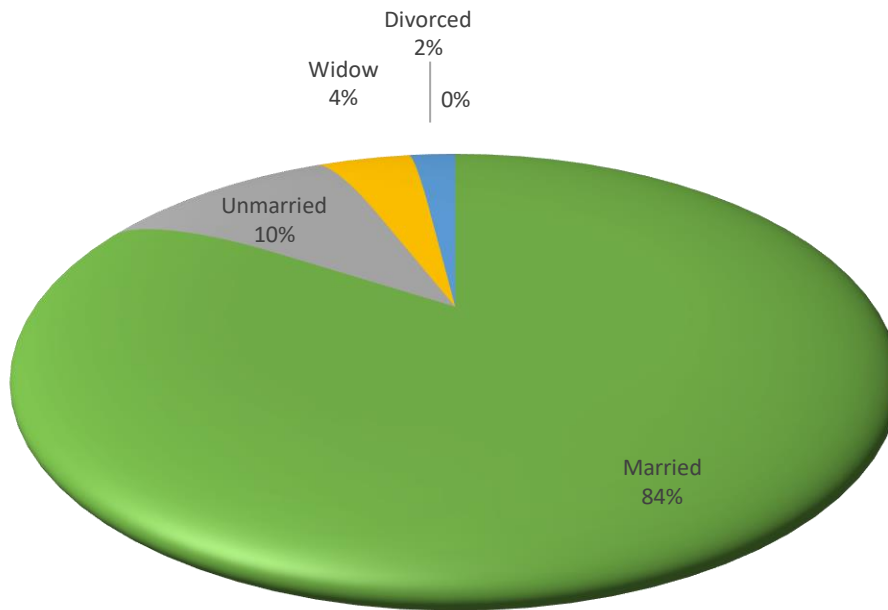
A significant proportion (10.0%) of women in urban areas are involved in the teaching profession. In this case, the government reserves a quota for women and since this profession is comfortable for women (according to teachers) they are involved in this profession. Also, 4.0% of women in urban areas work in government offices, 4.0% women work in garment or tailoring professions, and 3.5% women work in NGOs. Besides, 1.0% of urban women are bankers, 1.0% doctors, 1.0% nurses, 0.5% lawyers, 0.5% salesmen and 0.5% computer operators. So, it can be seen that very few women are involved in the important professions of society and the state. And those who are involved in this profession, their position in the process of empowerment is better than housewives, integrated and they are much ahead of housewives in decision-making.

Marital Status

Behind the low socio-economic status of women in Bangladesh, a functional cultural element is the marital relationship that is narrow in scope but wide in depth. Generally, unmarried women are under the father or elder brother, and married women are under the husband. Moreover, widows have no sense of self-respect.

Divorced women have to live in society and have to endure various slanders of others. However, this does not happen in men.⁹ There are four types of women in the Sirajganj city area. A figure indicating the marital status of women in urban areas is presented below:

Figure 5: Marital status of women in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal area, January, 2024.

As seen from the above figure, 84.0% of urban women are married, 10.0% single, 4.0% widowed and 2.0% divorced. So, it can be said that most of the women in the study area are married and they are staying at their husband's house. A significant portion of them is being controlled by the husband or the head of the family. Their likes and dislikes depend on the head of the family. Similarly, unmarried women are under the control of their parents or elder brothers. Widows are largely dependent on the wishes of their sons. So, it is natural and self-evident that the economic power in the society will be controlled by him.

Besides, divorced women have to endure various harsh words from society. Taking or giving a divorce is their crime. Our society does not degrade a man if he is divorced. He must not be bullied under any circumstances. But it is different for women. That is, this society does not accept that women have the power to decide about their marital will and unwillingness.

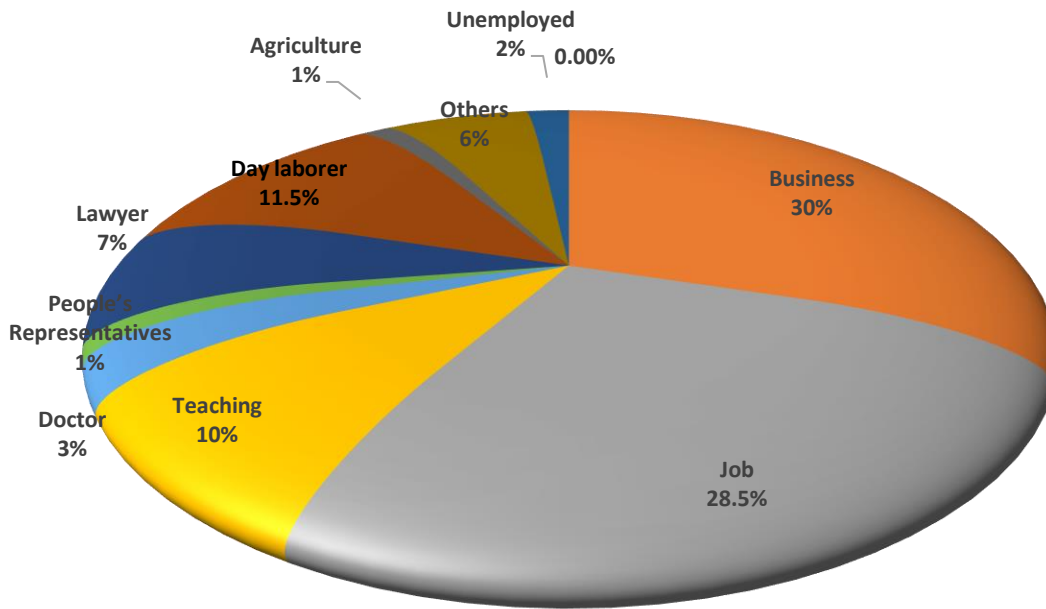
As a result, widows and divorced women always suffer from inferiority. Because of this they cannot participate in the decision-making process or are forced to stay away from the empowerment process at any position from family to state.

Occupational position of married women's husbands

The husband's occupation also acts as a factor in the empowerment of married women. For example, if the husband's profession is agriculture or daily labor, the way he looks at his wife, and the way he evaluates her rights, must be different from that of an administrative officer in a government office. Below is the

professional position of married women's husbands taken.¹⁰ As a sample of the research work conducted on the Sirajganj municipal area:

Figure 6: Occupational status of husbands of women in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal area, January, 2024.

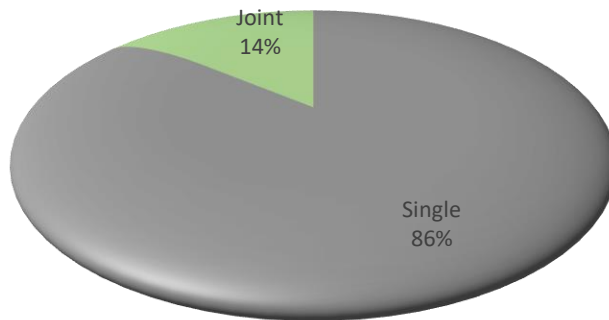
As can be seen from the above table, 30% of women in urban areas have a husband's occupation of business and 28.5% of their husband's occupation is job. Moreover, teachers 10%, doctors 3%, lawyers 7%, public representatives 1%, other professions 6%. Daily laborers and farmers are 11.5% and 1% respectively.

From this information, it can be said that most of the women's husbands in urban areas are involved in good professions in society. As a result, they are advanced in education, their mentality is also aware of the rights of others. Which will help to involve women in the empowerment process.

Typical Position of Family

Family is the smallest unit of society. In several ways this family structure determines the position of its members in the social structure: it helps in empowerment including participation in decision-making processes. Among the families of Bangladesh, the joint family is one of the most important elements of society and state structure. Members of a strong joint family play an effective role in all aspects of the social system, including decision-making. But from the internal side of that family, the opinions and decisions of anyone other than the head of the family may not be acceptable at times or in many cases. The opposite is true for single families. Since the family size is small, its members are not able to exert influence in various areas of the social system and often cannot express independent opinions. The joint family system is gradually disappearing in Bangladesh. It is disappearing even faster in urban areas. After the Industrial Revolution, the joint family system began to break down in Bangladesh, which continues to this day.¹¹ While some joint families survive in rural areas, it is very rare in urban areas. The following figure shows the typical position of women in Sirajganj municipal area:

Figure 7: Typical household position of women in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal area, January, 2024.

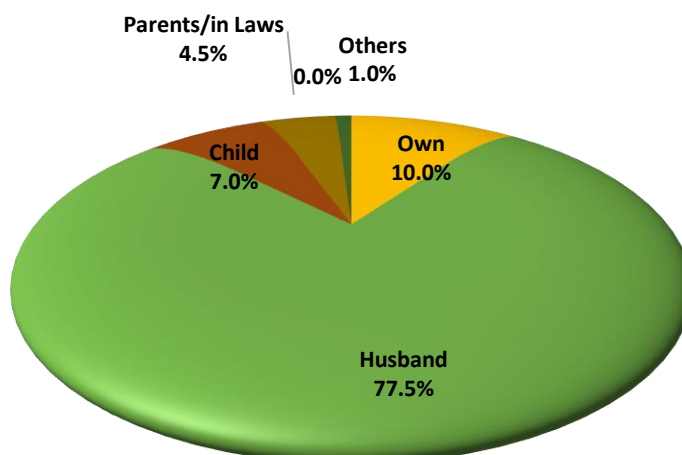
As seen from the above figure, 86.0% of urban women belong to single families and 14.0% belong to joint families. In this case, it can be said that there are more single families in the Sirajganj city area. Women in this city have at least one positional relationship in the family structure.

However, it is not right to think that women's position or decision-making will be empowered only if there is a single family. Because our society is patriarchal. In this social system, men dominate all aspects of family and social structure. He who bears all the incidental expenses including maintenance of the family naturally exercises all the powers and decisions of the family. Studies show that men do the household maintenance and all the expenses. As a result, the position of men in the family is determined, as the head of the family, the leader, or the all-rounder. And how powerful the women of that family will be depending on the extent of the exercise of power.

The breadwinner of the family

As discussed above, employed persons naturally have an impact on other family members. The following figure presents information on breadwinners in the Sirajganj Municipal area.

Figure 8: Household breadwinners in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal area, January, 2024.

As can be seen from the above figure, 86.0% of the family types are monogamous while 77.5% of the families are supported by their husbands. Although a section of women is involved in the profession, some of them are supported by their husbands. In this case, the husband's income is higher. Moreover, 10.0% of women are supporting the family by themselves. This part of the woman is naturally at the center of the family's power structure and decision-making process. 70% of women's families are supported by their saints. This picture is observed in the families of women who are divorced or widowed or whose husbands are unable to earn. And in this case, the woman is given considerable importance in making family decisions. Moreover, 4.5% of women's families are supported by their in-laws or parents. The reason for this is that most of them are single and in the case of in-laws supporting them, many of them have husbands who are unable to earn or earn less than the in-laws.

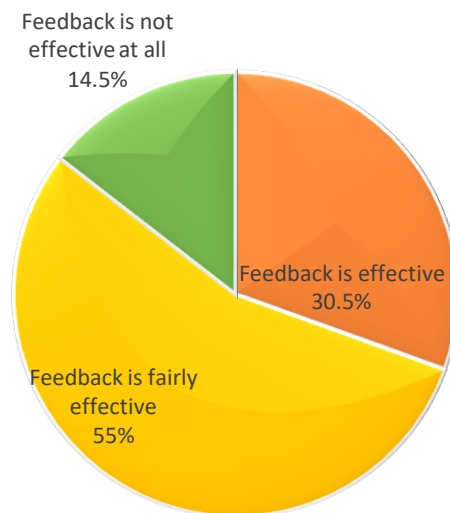
So, from the detailed data, it can be seen that the women in the urban areas have remained in a subordinate position even though their position is supposed to be consolidated in terms of maintaining and supporting the daily expenses of the family. Because the power of sustenance is generally his position at the top and he has the power to make all the decisions.

We have seen from the analysis of the above data that most of the women's family income and expenses are higher than their husbands in terms of family maintenance. And from that, it can be said naturally that most of the women in the urban area are dominated by their husbands and men.

Family Expenditure and Effectiveness of Women's Opinion

The earner in the family also dominates spending and many women's opinion is not effective. The figure below shows how effective women's opinions are in managing family expenses in Sirajganj municipal area.

Figure 9: Position of Women in household expenditure in urban areas



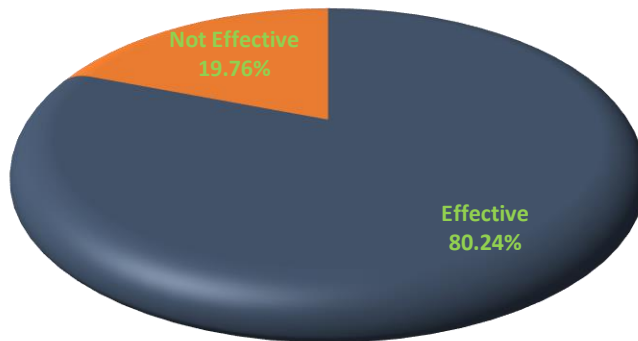
Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

As can be seen from the above figure, 30.5% of women's opinions are effective, 55.0% of women's opinions are fairly effective and 14.5% of women's opinions are not effective at all. Women's empowerment is largely dependent on the effectiveness of women's role or opinion in household expenditure management. Where a little more than one-fourth of the total number of women have voiced their opinions, the picture of women's empowerment at the family level is easy to imagine.

Women's decision to adopt a child

Women have to accept all the sacrifices to have a child. Not only giving birth; Women also have to do the work of bringing him up. It is sad but true that women are forced to adopt children without the opinion of that woman. In rural areas although this is a common phenomenon, women in urban areas are relatively aware in this case, their position is better than that.¹² The following figure shows the effectiveness of opinion on the adoption of children in the Sirajganj Municipal area:

Figure 10: Efficacy of adoption decision for women in urban areas



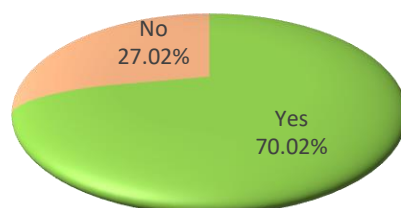
Source: Data is collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

As can be seen from the above figure, 80.24% of women are effective in taking opinions and 19.76% are not effective in taking women's opinions. 19.5% of women's views on such personal matters as not taking women's views indicate women's oppression or subordination, as well as 80.95% of women's views being effective compared to the previous decade and rural areas as well. Positive for strengthening the position of women in society and family.

Women in making decisions about children's education

Women are worse off in making decisions about their children's education than in adopting children. In which subject the child will study, and in which field he will decide his future, in this case, the decision-making is absolute male dominance. In this regard, women are kept aside as they do not understand everything. ¹³ The following figure shows the performance of women in Sirajganj Municipal area in making decisions about their children's education:

Figure 11: Women in making decisions about children's education



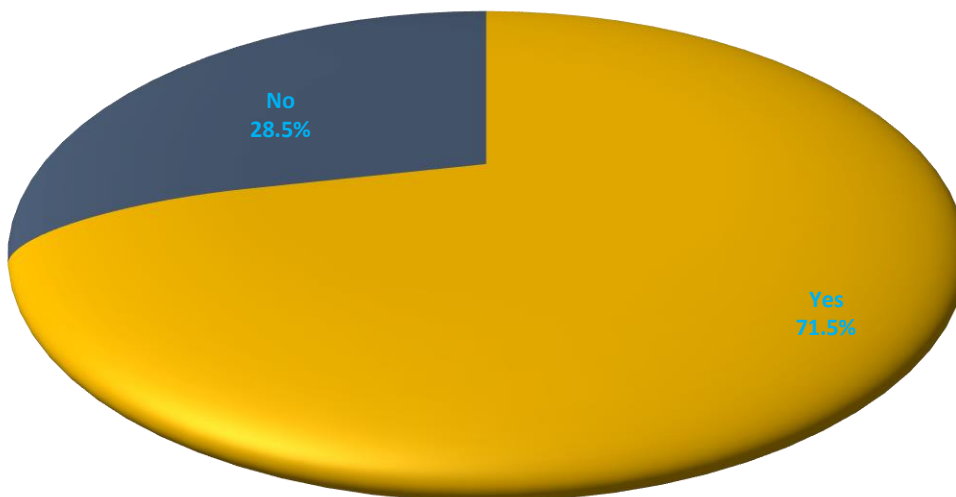
Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

As can be seen from the above figure, 72.02% of women can decide or participate in decisions regarding their children's education. And 27.98% of women do not have that power. Parents want to see a bright future for their children. Just as a father dream of what subject his child will study, so a mother dreams of what subject her child will study. But this dream of more than a quarter of women is crushed by male dominance. Which suggests subjugation rather than empowerment of women.

Women in decision-making regarding property purchase and sale

For family or personal needs, there are many times to purchase and sell land or property. In this case, both men and women are supposed to make decisions jointly as companions or fellow travelers, but many women are separated from it. 14 The following figure shows the decision-making of women in buying and selling property in Sirajganj Municipal area:

Figure 12: Women's decision making in buying and selling property



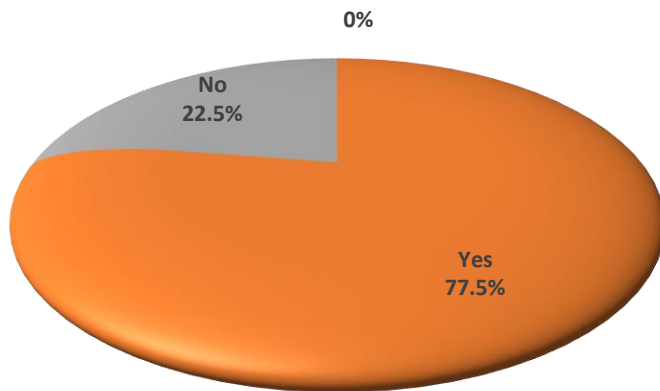
Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024

As can be seen from the above figure, 71.5% of women's opinions are taken in property buying and selling and 28.5% of women's opinions are not taken. Where there is no women's opinion in buying and selling property, women should not have the right to enjoy it. The marginal position of women in the property of the father or husband, then without taking the opinion in buying and selling it, the network of inferiority of women has been created from the socio-economic point of view. And by breaking that net, the position and empowerment of women in the power structure is not possible.

Women in decision-making on housing

Housing such as land acquisition or property purchase and sale Women are also prevented from giving their opinion in construction. The following figure shows the position of women in the decision-making process of house construction in Sirajganj municipal area.

Figure 13: Women in household decision making

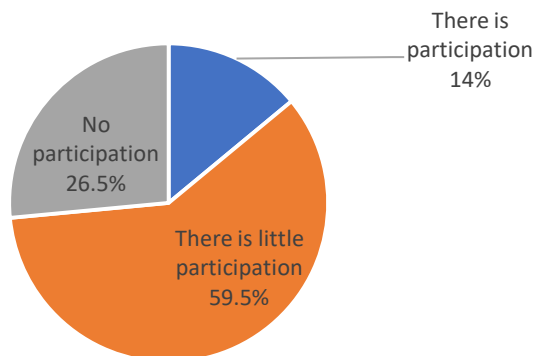


Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

As can be seen from the above figure, 77.5% of women have participated in house-building decisions and 22.5% of women have no participation.

Although this patriarchal society tries to confine women to the house in the name of doing housework as an area of prescribed roles, women's opinions are not taken into account in the construction of that house. Which hurts the process of women's empowerment. As for decision-making in family work, there are other areas of the family where women's decisions are not implemented or taken. The figure below shows the participation of women in family decision-making in Sirajganj Municipality.

Figure 14: Women in overall family decision making



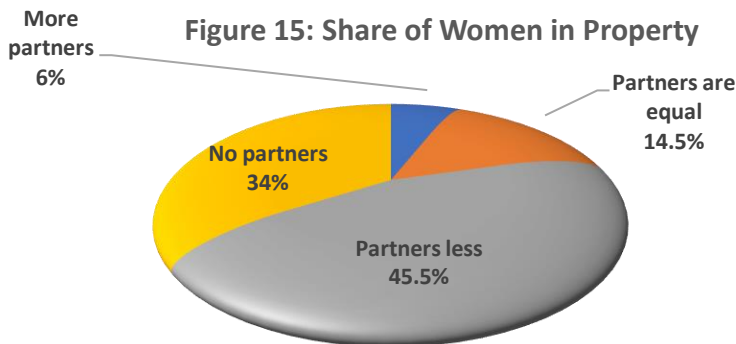
Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024

As can be seen from the above figure, 80.95% of women's opinions are effective and 19.76% of women's opinions are not effective in adoption. Not taking the opinion of 19.5% of women in such a private personal matter of women is a sign of oppression or subordination of women, as well as the image of 80.95% of women's opinions being effective compared to the previous decade and rural areas is also positive for strengthening the position of women in society and family.

Women's position in property

Participation and empowerment in the decision-making process is a prerequisite for the extent to which he has tangible rights in immovable and immovable property. Moreover, those who have more wealth in the society

have more decision-making power. Property ownership or the level of ownership of it plays a far more effective role in achieving gender equality or empowering women than any other factor. However, women's rights or ownership of family property in Bangladesh is relatively low. This is because, in Muslim society, daughters get less share in their father's property, and in the absence of the husband, female children get less share in the husband's property. In Hindu society, women have no rights over their father's and husband's property. This is why women's share of family property in Bangladesh is low.¹⁵ And this is playing a major role in hindering empowerment by creating gender disparity in decision-making. This study shows that women in most cases do not have legal rights to property in urban areas. But many can enjoy it freely. Nevertheless, women have to live according to the opinion of the man who owns the property. ¹⁶ The figure below illustrates the share of women in property.



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

As can be seen in the above figure, 6.0% of women share more, 14.5% of women share equally, 45.5% of women share less, and 34.0% of women have no share in family property. Women's empowerment is naturally hampered where men dominate material possessions.

Women doing housework

The lack of recognition of women's domestic work is due to the lack of real appreciation of women in Bangladesh. Women's labor in housework and family occupations has been identified as a traditional responsibility of women. If each work of unpaid domestic workers was calculated on the basis of monetary value, the true value of women's labor would be understood. But most women feel that this traditional responsibility falls on them, rather than the value of their work.¹⁷ The following figure illustrates the household tasks performed by women in Sirajganj Municipal Area:

Figure 16: Performance of domestic work by women in urban areas



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

The above figure shows that 94.0% of women always do housework or all family work, 5.5% of women work occasionally and only 0.5% of women are not able to work. In this case, physical disability has been blamed.

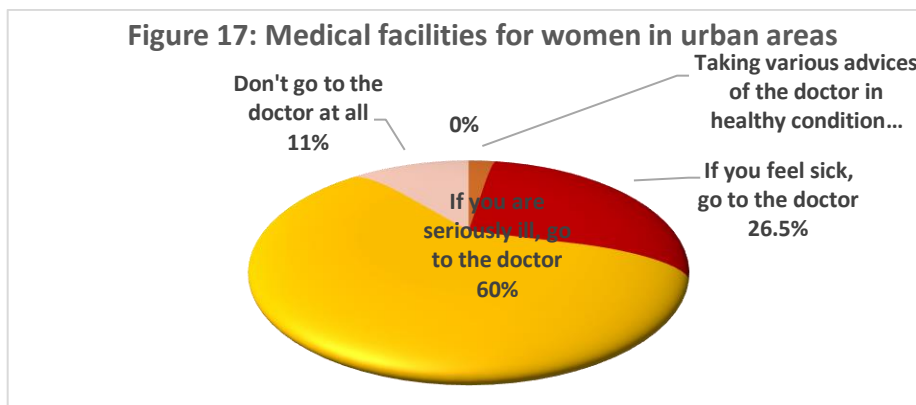
And most of those who do housework occasionally are involved in significant occupations. The little time they get after fulfilling their professional duties, they spend on household work.

However, due to the lack of economic evaluation, this labor is completely rejected. If this labor of women was added to the national production, it would have increased manifold. Although it is done in many countries, there is no system for measuring it in Bangladesh. For example, the number of economically active women in India has jumped from 13% to 88% after the International Labor Organization (ILO) set new international standards for economic productivity. Women have been freed from this invisibility mainly due to the setting of new standards to measure women's unrecognized economic contribution.

So where women's labor is not valued, where karma is not recognized; It is normal for women to have a marginal position in the decision-making process there. As a result, they stay away from the family power structure.

Health and Nutritional Status

Bangladesh suffers from malnutrition and poor health comparatively; the health condition of women is more deplorable due to various reasons. Gender inequality exists here too. Women have less access to health and nutrition compared to men. Due to the patriarchal social system and men often being the only or the main source of income for the family, they are given priority in treating diseases. Men receive most of the medical care provided by the state. That is, men get priority in this matter. Although the statements are harsh, their reality can be found in this study. This picture is from the city to the countryside Areas are more depressing. Discussed research shows that there is a disparity between men and women in terms of health and nutrition. The rate of women who do not go to the doctor despite being sick is the highest 18It is highlighted in the figure below:



Source: Data collected from Sirajganj Municipal Area, January, 2024.

As can be seen in the above figure, 2.5% are in healthy condition, 26.5% in mild illness, 60.0% in severe illness, and 11.0% do not go to the doctor. Analyzing the reasons for this plight of women's health care, it can be seen that women's illness is not a priority due to many religious or social superstitions and financial considerations. Usually fever, cold, and cough is not any disease in women. A woman cannot even be called a patient until she is in bed. Even there are many women who want to hide many complex diseases to save the money of the family. The condition of rural women is worse than that of urban women.

CONCLUSION

Bangladesh's government has various programs for women's development. The government has systematically sown the seeds of women's development to advance women at the same pace as men. He expressed optimism that it will become a fruitful tree in the future. Women's participation and empowerment in the decision-making process of economic and social development in Bangladesh has been recognized by the state and several programs have been launched in continuation of this. However, it is clear from the current research that the steps taken by the government to empower women are not yielding the expected results. Even these

backward women are yet to realize the importance of their involvement and empowerment in the decision-making process. The awareness process among women has not yet started with few exceptions. Most of the women in the study area are married and live in their husband's house. Almost all of them are controlled by family members or husbands. Whether they want it or not is up to the family. Research shows that more than a quarter of women's views on children's education are ineffective. However, both parents should make a joint decision for the child. Women's opinions are not effective in buying and selling property and building houses. It can be assumed that women's economic empowerment has not occurred in this area as these women cannot express their opinions in making decisions regarding family expenses, property purchase and sale, and house construction. Women's views on general issues were not as effective in the family context. Again, the position of women in family property is marginal. Inheritance practices in religious terms marginalize women in family property. As a result, women's economic empowerment has been hampered and played a role in pushing women away from personal, family, social, cultural, and political power structures. Almost all women do housework. But there is no economic evaluation of this work of women. Therefore, where there is no evaluation of women's work, there is no recognition of work, and it is normal for women to have a marginal position in the decision-making process. It hinders family empowerment as well as personal, social, cultural, and political empowerment. Therefore, it can be said that without the development of the women's society, the socio-economic development of Bangladesh will never flow into the Kángit sector. So, for women's involvement and empowerment in the decision-making process, it is necessary to strike at the root of their problems in women's development. Because women's empowerment and socio-economic development will be achieved only when women's social, economic, political, and legal liberation is established on a solid foundation.

REFERENCE

1. Rahman, S., Economics, Politics and Law: A Gender Perspective, Development Action, Steps towards Development, (Dhaka: United Press Ltd., 1999), p. 47.
2. Sahay, S., Women and Empowerment: Approaches and Strategies, (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1998),p.10.
3. Karl, M., Women and Employment, Participation in Decision Making, (London: Oxford University Press,1990),p.154.
4. Noman, A., Status of Women and Fertility in Bangladesh, (Dhaka: University Press Limited,1984),p.5.
5. Jahan, R., Women in Bangladesh, in Women for Women, (Dhaka: University Press,1975), pp.1-32.
6. Habibullah, Md., World Bank, Bangladesh: Selected Issues in Rural Employment, March 1983,Table-1.8,p.118.
7. Ahmed, K. K., et.al (eds.), Situation of Women in Bangladesh, (Dhaka: Ministry of Social and Women Affairs,1992),p.110.
8. Khaliullah, M., Health Services for Bangladesh, in situation of Women in Bangladesh, (Dhaka: Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Affairs,1988),p.III.
9. Islam, M., Women Health and Culture, Women for Women, (Dhaka: NGO Forum,1988),p.48.
10. Safilior, R., Constantine, Socio-Economic Development and the Status of Women in the Third World, (New York: The Population Council, 1985),pp.34-39.
11. Rezaul, Md., Women Development of Bangladesh, (Dhaka: Somay Press, 2022),p.73.
12. Jahan, F., Women in Bangladesh,(Dhaka: Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Affairs,2021),p.43.
13. Zaheer, H., Women's Freedom in Bangladesh,(Dhaka: Discovery, 2023),p.67.
14. Nasser, K. A., Barriers and Remedies to Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh,(Dhaka:Time Press, 2022),p.63.
15. Lohani,K., Empowering Women in Bangladesh,(Dhaka: Nowroz Kitabistan,2023),p.13.
16. Sarkar, J., Empowering Women in Bangladesh,(Calcutta: Chadhi & Ghose, 2023),p.7.
17. Pillai, J.K., Women and Empowerment, (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1995),p.147.
18. Khan, S., The Fifty Percent: Women in Development and Policy in Bangladesh, (Dhaka: 1988), p.1.