

Echoes Through Time: The Evolution of Women's Empowerment in the Historical Context of Bangladesh

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Abstract: Throughout history, the empowerment of women has proven to be the foundation upon which the progress of entire nations rests. This study is focused on women's rights in Bangladesh from the year 2000-2023 with an emphasis on the status of health, education, economic and political prospects for women. Employing the data from Bangladesh and a qualitative study, it identifies what they call the Empowerment Index and scrutinizes how the Bangladeshi Empowerment is manifested both individually and collectively in economic, political, and social spheres. This paper shows a gradual trend towards the decrease in levels of maternal mortality. The rise in female literacy rates; and the employment of women in the Bangladeshi workforce particularly in industries such as the ready-made garment industry. Nevertheless, the inequalities are still evident today and can be observed in such regions as rural areas and different minorities, calling for more intersectional work. The work also points to socio-political issues including the intimidation of women and the drawbacks of development that hinder the improvement of the status of women. It also focuses on collective calls, the necessity of upgrading the working conditions, and the opportunities to use technology to promote women's rights. Thus, by contesting a one-dimensional and polarized view of the empowering effects of the microfinance program in Bangladesh, this study offers relevant insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars involved in the promotion of gender equality in the country.

Keywords: Women's rights, Female literacy rates, Bangladesh, Empowerment Index, Gender inequality, Microfinance program.

Introduction

The story of Bangladesh is not just one of economic growth and political evolution; it is also the story of its women, who have both shaped and been shaped by the nation's journey (Naved et al, 2016).

From the early days of independence, women in Bangladesh have played a pivotal role in the country's development, yet their fight for equal rights and opportunities continues to be a battleground (Naved et al, 2016). Despite numerous policies, international interventions, and grassroots movements aimed at empowering women, the question remains: Are women in Bangladesh truly empowered, or are they still caught in the web of patriarchal structures that limit their potential (Braun et al., 2016).

The paradox of progress in women's rights in Bangladesh is striking. Bangladesh, since its liberation in 1971, has experienced significant socio-political transformations, with women's rights emerging as a key area of focus in its developmental agenda.

As the nation stands on the threshold of its sixth decade of independence, the discourse surrounding women's empowerment is both a reflection of and a catalyst for broader social changes. Napoleon Bonaparte famously stated, "Give me an educated mother, I shall promise you the birth of a civilized, educated nation." This quote highlights Napoleon's belief in the pivotal role of women, particularly mothers, in shaping the moral and intellectual future of society through education (Dwyer, 2013). This research aims to delve into the evolution of women's

empowerment in Bangladesh from 2000 to 2023, examining the progress made, the challenges faced, and the factors that have shaped the current landscape.

Research done so far provides a mixed picture of women's rights in Bangladesh although there have been improvements (Naved et al, 2016). Research plays a central role in focusing on how much government has a positive effect on the community by passing quotas of women in the political system that led to the promotion of women in governance. However, these policies have also been criticized for not necessarily empowering women as most female politicians remain under the dominance of the male political domains (Panday, 2018). Besides, legal changes that have been attempted in a bid to empower women, have gone through criticism from various cultural and religious factions hence leading to a piecemeal attempt at advancing women's rights. Pereira (2022) rightly emphasizes the fact that the conflict over the unities of personal code in Bangladesh re-emphasizes the conflict of law and culture. This has led to a scenario whereby the freedoms that women enjoy in different facets of life are restricted depending on their socio-religious backgrounds thus underemphasizing the part played by the law in protecting the rights of women (White, 2016).

Several authors such as Nazneen and Sultan (2014) supported this reasoning in stating that the power of change cannot be affected solely by policies. It is argued that the concept of empowerment should be conceived in a more complex way concerning the idea of

women's agency and subjectivity in the given sociopolitical settings. It is for these reasons that there is a need to shift from policy reform and implementation that has been practiced while ignoring the root cause of the social and cultural aspects that affect the lives of women. With this said, this study locates itself amidst an ongoing discourse on the impact of women's empowerment programs in Bangladesh (Sultana, 2022). Although the study recognizes the stratification that has been achieved in areas including education, health, and political leadership, this study seeks to present a more holistic view of how policy interventions have shaped women's existence more closely. Thus, through tracing out the activities of the actors involved in the women's movement and participation in the parliament this study aims to trace out the enablers and barriers to women's empowerment in Bangladesh (Batliwala, 2017). The study also aims to address the gaps in the existing literature by focusing on the subjective aspects of empowerment, such as agency and freedom, which are often overlooked in favor of more quantifiable indicators like political representation and legislative change. Thus, this research intends to fill this gap and provide new insights into the experiences of today's Bangladeshi women.

Indeed, the main objective of this study is to analyze the social change of women's empowerment in the Bangladesh context between the years 2000 to 2023. To achieve this aim, the research will focus on the following specific objectives: To evaluate the achievement in the significant sphere of women's rights such as education, health, work, and political sphere. To analyze the different stakeholders' engagement such as women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, political parties, and international donors in the construction of women-empowered discourses and practices.

To identify persistent challenges and emerging opportunities in advancing gender equality in Bangladesh. To provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and practitioners working towards women's empowerment.

This research has provided several major findings related to Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh to the existing research literature. First, it provides an overview of the historical analysis of the development of women's rights in the country in the past twenty years with emphasis on the achievements and the barriers encountered. Secondly, by conceptualizing the feminization of policy with culture and grassroots mobilization, this study provides an innovative conceptualization of women's power dynamics, unlike other works that necessarily revolve around women's political enfranchisement and legislation (Sultana, 2022).

Thirdly, it becomes clear that the concern should be made for the objective of younger women on agency and freedom, which are not characteristic of current research studies. Hence, it offers evasive insights into the prospects of women in Bangladesh as well as the prospects of altering the state of the play of gender equality (Naved et al, 2016). Last but not least, the findings and recommendations provided in this study will help the policymakers and practitioners to understand women's rights and ensure women's comprehensive empowerment in the context of Bangladesh society (Naved et al, 2016).

This paper is structured as follows: Introduces the research topic, reviews prior studies, situates the chosen methodology, describes the research issue, states the research goals and outlines the research significance. A critical analysis of empirical research on women's rights and gender equality in Bangladesh focusing on

prominent issues, arguments, and emerging for future research (Hossain, 2017).

Literature Review

Overview of Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh

The discourse on women's empowerment in Bangladesh has been a focal point of both academic and policy-oriented discussions over the past two decades. This literature review seeks to synthesize the various dimensions of empowerment, focusing on the evolution of the concept and its application in the Bangladeshi context. The review covers the period from 2000 to 2023, highlighting the major themes, advancements, and ongoing challenges in the empowerment of women. Through this review, the aim is to understand how the conceptualization of empowerment has shifted and how these shifts have influenced policy and practice.

Conceptual Evolution of Women's Empowerment

Thus, the evolution of the idea of women's empowerment in Bangladesh especially after the turn of the millennium is an appreciable change. Different authors offered their definitions in the early stages of developing this concept, for instance, Kabeer (2015) defined empowerment as the way through which people obtain the capability to achieve meaningful choices in their lives that were otherwise outside the realm of their options. The above conceptualization equates empowerment's hallmark; freedom to make free choices. Based on this, Mahmud et al. (2022) provided a more layered approach where they defined empowerment in different domains, that is economic, socio-cultural familial, legal, political, and psychological domains.

This difference is critical in the case of Bangladeshi women as culture, socio-economic positions, religion or regional differentiation play an important role in expecting women's empowerment. Nazneen and Sultan (2014) have discussed how mainstream development discourses concentrate solely on the economic agency of women ignoring the structures that continue to oppress women.

Progress in Health and Education

Since 2000, significant progress has been made in improving women's health and education in Bangladesh. The country has seen a substantial reduction in maternal mortality rates and an increase in female literacy (Batliwala, 2017). Moreover, the enrolment of girls in primary and secondary education has risen markedly, reflecting the success of various government and non-government initiatives aimed at promoting girls' education.

However, these achievements have not been uniformly distributed across all sections of society. Chowdhury et al. (2018) highlight the persistent disparities in health and education outcomes, particularly among women from lower socio-economic backgrounds and rural areas.

Economic Empowerment and Labor Force Participation

Gender equality in Bangladesh has been a much-discussed scenario and one of the key issues that our attention is focused on is women's economic standing. Acceptance of women into the workplace and especially the ready-made garment industry has been acknowledged as one of the major sources of women's

empowerment. For example, Heath and Mobarak (2015) opine that employment in these industries has transformed the lives of women for instance through changes in marriage and childbirth patterns which resulted in greater autonomy.

Kabeer et al. (2018) point out that paid work means equal pay, opportunities, and voice do not necessarily represent women's empowerment. Employment critics also state that there exist other factors which define the extent to which employment empowers women such as the quality of employment and the socio-cultural environment within which the woman is employed (Hashemi et al, 2016).

Political Participation and Representation

Another important aspect of women's embayment in the political spheres is political participation in Bangladesh (Braun et al., 2016). The paper will further reveal that there has been a steady improvement in women's political representation in the local government as well as the national parliament within the last two decades. This can be blamed on quotas that have been put in place so that there is a certain level of representation of women in the concerned institution (Hossain, 2017).

Though quotas helped to increase the number of women in political institutions, it has not enhanced their real political power (Khatun, 2018). In the same manner, quotas too are a double-edged sword although it means that women can get into politics; it does not mean that these women are ready to challenge the existing patriarchal norms and Richards (2013) posits this by saying that women are often marginalized in the political arena. The same authors continue to develop other processes where women appear to overcome the lack of political agency and argue that formal structures here act within the informal framework that does not allow women's influence, (Nazneen and Masud, 2017). This continues to be one of the burning issues that check women's political enfranchisement rights, namely, the gap between formal rights and bureaucratic constraints (Chowdhury et al., 2018).

Violence Against Women and Access to Justice

Despite progress in several areas, violence against women remains a pervasive issue in Bangladesh. Various studies have documented the high prevalence of domestic violence, which continues to be a significant barrier to women's empowerment. Naved et al. (2016) provide a detailed account of intimate partner violence, highlighting how socio-cultural factors contribute to the perpetuation of violence against women. Hossen (2014) expands on this by discussing how cultural norms and practices often condone or minimize violence, making it difficult for women to seek justice.

The legal environment in Bangladesh has in recent years been enhanced in as much as addressing violence against women but the practical enforcement of the laws is in some cases lackluster. Pereira (2022) opines that there is a disparity between the formulation of laws and their implementation as the majority of women cannot hire the services of skilled lawyers or afford to sustain their cases to the due process.

Intersectionality and Diverse Experiences of Empowerment

The increasing interest in analyzing the issue of women's empowerment in Bangladesh has led some literature to look at the intersectional characteristics of female respondents based on class,

religious space, and ethnic background. Sultana (2022) analyzes based on how these identities affect, empower, or disempower women's experiences. It portrays how each type of oppression combines to form other complex oppression that portrays the challenges that women of color have (Braun et al., 2016).

In the same way, Huq (2019) focuses on urban, middle-class women, thus problematizing the mainstream development discourses that seek to portray Bangladeshi women as a homogenous category. In this vein, Huq's work emphasizes an appropriate approach to empowerment, which should not be dichotomous empowering/disempowering or applying to urban women only but should consider the variety of women's experiences. This perspective is therefore important in the formulation of policies and interventions for all women not only for the privileged few (Basu et al, 2020).

Methodology

Research Question and Data Relevance

This paper explores the condition of women in Bangladesh for the last 23 years to assess the scope and frontiers of women's empowerment in different aspects like economic, political, educational, health, and violence against women. The study is, therefore, exploratory and based on secondary documentary evidence to understand trends in empowerment and existing challenges (Basu et al. 2020). Secondary data is ideal for this research since it offers a wealth of information on the designated topic of research and enables the analysis of time series data points. This method is important to realize the contextual factors surrounding women's rights in Bangladesh and how useful interventions, policies, and programs can be implemented in Bangladesh's social context to enhance gender equality (Braun et al., 2016).

The use of secondary data is appropriate given the scope of this study, which aims to synthesize existing knowledge rather than generate new primary data (Basu et al. 2020). By drawing on diverse sources such as academic literature, policy documents, reports from international organizations, and statistical databases, the study can provide a multifaceted perspective on women's empowerment (Mobarak, 2015). This approach is also relevant because it allows for the analysis of large datasets and longitudinal studies, which are essential for tracking changes over time (Huq, 2019).

Data Collection and Sources

Credible secondary data were sourced for this study to ensure that all the literature and statistical data available concerning women's empowerment in Bangladesh were pondered on quite well. These sources include:

The research utilized published journal articles, books, and conference papers in the peer-reviewed between the year 2001 and the year 2023. From this literature, the author obtained theoretical underpinnings, quantitative and qualitative data as well as research findings on the various aspects of women's emancipation. Sources of literature include Heath and Mobarak (2015); Nazneen and Masud (2017) and Huq (2019) which focus on economic and political women's improvement and the cross-cutting dimensions of women's improvement respectively.

Texts such as national policies, strategic plans, and government documents were not only scrutinized but compared to identify the

policy context of gender equality in Bangladesh (Huq, 2019). One of these documents is the National Women Development Policy of the Government of Bangladesh which portrays the Government's vision regarding women's development and these are followed by the strategic action plans that have planned to enhance the socio-economic status of women (Panday, 2018). In this case, Women Empowerment documents are helpful tools towards this quest and the intended conclusion about the state's role as being either empowering or disempowering of women.

The data from United Nations agencies, the World Bank, and other multilateral organizations proved useful in giving information on the global and regional status of women's participation and rights. These are the reports starting from the UN Women and World Bank that provided a comparative analysis of Bangladesh in terms of progress compared to its neighboring countries (Huq, 2019). For example, specific information was collected from the World Bank regarding fertility rates and female literacy which also gives us the background of Bangladesh's success in these aspects (World Bank, 2023).

Reports and publications from national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were included to gain perspectives on grassroots and community-level efforts to empower women (Panday, 2018). These sources often highlighted the gaps between policy and practice, providing a critical view of the challenges faced by women in Bangladesh. For example, NGOs have been instrumental in documenting instances of violence against women and advocating for legal reforms.

Quantitative data were sourced from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the World Bank Open Data, and United Nations databases. These sources provided essential statistics on indicators such as maternal mortality, female literacy rates, and labor force participation (Hashemi et al., 2016). Statistical data is crucial for measuring progress and identifying areas where disparities persist.

Findings

Conceptual Evolution

In the last couple of years, specifically since joining the year 2000, the dimension and perception of 'empowerment of women' has changed dramatically in the context of Bangladesh. Kabeer (2015) laid down a key seminal definition of empowerment, which is widely employed in subsequent studies; it is understood as the ability of the individual to make life choices that were outside his/her domain earlier. Based on this, Mahmud, Gubern, and Ramdaspillay (2022) used culture-specific formative research to design a contextually appropriate multidimensional empowerment framework; economic, sociocultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological domains were identified out of this framework. As seen in Table 1 below, this framework is an important aspect of empowerment in that individualism does not exclude achievements from the outside world.

Table 1.

The double continuum of women's empowerment

Dimension	Individual	Collective
Economic	Financial literacy: 65%	Women's cooperatives: 12,500
	Women-owned businesses: 7.2%	Microfinance groups: 220,000

Political	Voter turnout (women): 80%	Women in local govt: 23%
	Women in decision-making: 18%	Women's rights orgs: 3,500

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2023.

However, as Nazneen and Sultan (2014) argue, mainstream development discourses often overlook the entrenched power structures that continue to subjugate women, focusing disproportionately on economic aspects. This critique highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of empowerment.

Progress in Health and Education

Table 2.

Significant strides have been made in women's health and education outcomes in Bangladesh since 2000. Table 1 illustrates these changes over time:

Indicator	2000	2010	2020	2023
Maternal mortality ratio	322	194	165	142
Total fertility rate	3.2	2.3	2	1.9
Female literacy rate (15+)	41.40%	52.40%	72.90%	76.80%
Girls' net enrollment (pry)	84.80%	94.70%	98.10%	98.70%

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2023.

Low maternal mortality rate and low fertility rate, enhanced female literacy level, and school enrollment of girl child present the positive developments. Nevertheless, Chowdhury et al. (2018) have stressed that these data hide existing disparities according to class status and residence area.

Comparative Perspective on Fertility Rates

Bangladesh's progress in reducing fertility rates is noteworthy.

Table 3.

Bangladesh's progress compared to neighboring countries.

Country	2000	2010	2020	2023
Bangladesh	3.2	2.3	2	1.9
India	3.1	2.6	2.2	2.1
Pakistan	4.8	3.9	3.4	3.2
Nepal	4.1	2.9	2	1.9

Source: World Bank, 2023.

Education and Literacy: A South Asian Context

Table 4.

Highlights the progress made in reducing female illiteracy in South Asia.

Country	2000	2010	2020	2023
Bangladesh	58.60%	47.60%	27.10%	23.20%
India	54.30%	49.20%	33.80%	30.50%
Pakistan	70.50%	60.70%	48.40%	45.10%

Nepal	75.20%	56.70%	41.20%	37.80%
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Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023

Despite improvements in enrolment rates and gender parity in education, the quality of education and retention rates, especially for girls in rural areas, remain problematic (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2019). The persistence of these challenges highlights the need for continued investment in educational quality and infrastructure, particularly in underserved regions.

Labor Force Participation

Women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh has seen significant progress, particularly in labor force participation, as detailed in table 5.

Table 5:

Years of education in the labor force by quintiles (2000-2023) (Bangladesh Labor Force Survey, 2023).

Q.	2000			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	1.6	0.6	1.4	3.2	2.8	3.1
2	2.2	1.2	2.1	4.1	3.7	4
3	3	1.7	2.9	5.3	4.9	5.2
4	4.5	3.4	4.4	7.1	6.7	7
5	7.7	6.8	7.6	10.2	9.8	10.1
Total	3.9	2.7	3.8	6	5.6	5.9

Source: Bangladesh Labor Force Survey, 2023.

While these figures indicate progress, they also highlight persistent disparities. The overall gender gap in educational attainment has narrowed, but remains significant, particularly in lower-income groups. Heath and Mobarak's research demonstrate that exposure to factory jobs, especially in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector, has led to delayed marriage and childbirth among women. However, Kabeer et al. (2018) caution that paid work does not automatically translate into empowerment, as the quality of jobs and their impact on women's wellbeing must also be considered.

Political Participation and Representation

Women's political participation in Bangladesh has seen notable advancements, particularly at the local government level. Figure 1 illustrates the trend in women's representation in the national parliament from 1990 to 2023. The proportion of seats held by women has steadily increased, reflecting the impact of gender quotas and other affirmative action policies.

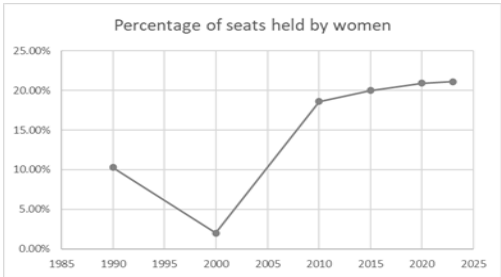


Figure 1: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament, 1990–2023.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023.

However, as Panday (2018) notes, quotas alone are insufficient to ensure meaningful political empowerment. Nazneen and Masud (2017) further explore the interplay between formal institutions and informal practices, highlighting the challenges women face in translating numerical gains into substantive political power.

Violence Against Women and Access to Justice

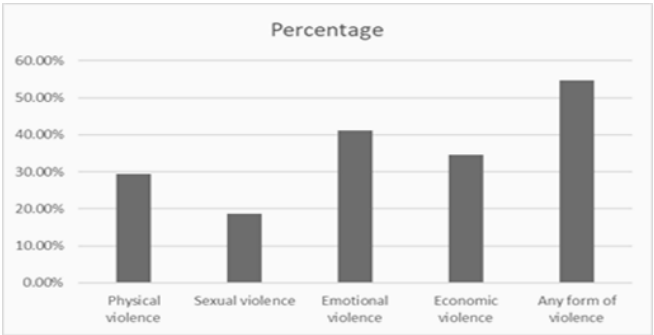


Figure 2: Prevalence of domestic violence by intimate partner

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and UN Women, 2023.

Thus, the following intersections of women’s empowerment in Bangladesh highlights, and from Table 6, it is evident that the intersectional approach is more apparent than in the past. This new theoretical framework adds class/occupation, religion, ethnicity and gender.

Table 6: Revisiting the double continuum

Dimension	Individual	Collective
Economic	Urban employed women: 35.6%	Rural women's cooperatives: 8,200
	Rural employed women: 28.4%	Urban women's networks: 1,500
Political	Women MPs from minority: 3	Grassroots women's orgs: 5,000
	Women in corporate boards: 15%	Women's rights coalitions: 250
Social	Girls' secondary education: 72%	Women's health initiatives: 3,200
	Women's digital literacy: 45%	Community savings groups: 180,000

Source: Compiled from various national and international reports, 2023.

The findings presented in this study highlight the multidimensional nature of women's empowerment in Bangladesh. While significant progress has been made, particularly in health, education, and

political participation, persistent gaps remain, especially in terms of addressing structural inequalities and violence against women. The role of collective action, technology, and intersectional analysis is crucial in advancing the empowerment of all women in Bangladesh, particularly those who are most marginalized (Dwyer, 2013).

Discussion

From the outcomes provided in the present study, it is possible to conclude that there is a rich multilevel nature of empowerment of women in Bangladesh. In the last twenty years, Bangladesh has made a remarkable improvement in the human development indicators in the fields of health, education, economic, and political spheres (Hashemi et al., 2016). However, these advancements are expanded and discordant and obscure inequality such as class, geographic location, and status. This discussion also will discuss these findings and reveal the following successes and challenges that are still influencing the prospects of empowering women in Bangladesh.

Shifts and Multidimensional Empowerment

The evolution of the concept of empowerment, as observed in Bangladesh, reflects a broader global trend towards recognizing empowerment as a multidimensional phenomenon. Kabeer's (2015) definition, which emphasizes the ability to make strategic life choices, has been instrumental in broadening the scope of empowerment beyond mere economic indicators. The framework proposed by Mahmud et al. (2022) further enriches this understanding by incorporating economic, socio-cultural, familial, legal, political, and psychological dimensions. This holistic approach is crucial in a context like Bangladesh, where empowerment cannot be fully understood or achieved through economic means alone.

However, as there are increasing discussions on these multiple dimensions, Nazneen and Sultan (2014) pointed out that there is a tendency for neoliberal development discourses to confine the empowering process in terms of economic powers, and fail to address the power relations that still subjugate women. Indeed, this critique has particular relevance for the Bangladeshi context, where Beverley Bain and Jyoti Hosagrahar have demonstrated that economic liberalization does not mean real empowerment – this may mean labor force participation or access to micro-finance. Two arguments from this part are related to the limitations of the economic approach to women's empowerment by pointing to the continued dominance of patriarchal structures and the weak correlation between women's economic activity and their social/political status (Mahmud et al., 2022).

Advancements in the standard of living, especially amongst women, in the South Asian nation of Bangladesh have been rated among the most successful in the last two decades (Kabeer, 2015). The decline in maternal mortality, the rise in literacy, and almost the universal enrolment of girls in primary education are evidence that policy intervention can work in terms of policy goals. But these improvements are not spread across the board. Correct in stating that hiding behind average buries some inequalities, especially by region and income level between the rural and urban populations of a country (Chowdhury et al., 2018).

The comparative analysis of fertility rates and literacy across South Asia further highlights Bangladesh's achievements in these areas, yet also emphasizes the ongoing challenges. While Bangladesh has

outpaced its neighbors in reducing fertility rates, it still struggles with issues like quality of education and retention rates, particularly for girls from marginalized communities (Nazneen and Masud, 2017). These findings suggest that while access to education has improved, the quality and inclusiveness of education remain critical areas for further investment and reform.

Economic Empowerment

The analysis in the study showed improvement in women's economic activation and education enrollment ratio suggesting improvement in women's economic activation. Nevertheless, such gender disparities remain, aggravated by the fact that they are present in the low-income quintiles as well (Kabeer et al., 2018). The research evidence supports Heath and Mobarak's study which argues that as much as employment in factories particularly in the RMG sector has offered a form of employment for women, it did not automatically translate to power. The mismatch between the economic engagement and the limited agency points to the role of the Quality Employment Act and the social justice where women's labor force participation takes place (Nazneen and Masud, 2017).

The debate on microfinance also includes the sense that such a method is empowering also includes this aspect. Although it has been seen to yield impacts toward the welfare of women, some scholars like Muhammad Karim (2021) take a critical view of embracing microfinance as a magic bullet. Criticism which argues that microfinance perpetuates power relations and powerlessness stresses that for development intervention it is needed to consider not only economic factors but socio-political ones as well.

Persistent Challenges

Although women have fared relatively better in contemporary political systems evidenced by the constantly growing number of female parliamentarians, the major obstacles to women's effective political participation persist. This paper also agrees with Panday (2018) and Nazneen and Masud (2017) that quotas have contributed to the expansion of women's visibility in politics but have not necessarily improved their political power. The findings presented show that political institutions are still pervaded by patriarchal norms and informal practices which suggests that the issue of women's under-representation cannot be solved solely through quotas.

Violence against women is still a huge problem in society even though there are laws that protect them (Kabeer et al., 2018). This form of violence, as noted in the study, is well embedded in the socio-cultural practices, which allow violence against women and girls. This has been compounded by Pereira's (2022) discussion of the existing formulation and enforcement of laws making it difficult for legal measures to address and solve this problem hence the need to advance legal enforcement and bring about social change.

Conclusion

This study has shown that there has been considerable progress towards the welfare of women in Bangladesh which has now featured favorably on issues such as maternal health, education level, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, and political inclusiveness. Significant improvement has been made over the recent years, and the easier proof is: a decline in maternal mortality, an increase in the rate of female literacy, as well as an increase in female employment (Khatun, 2018). Despite this, achievement is not uniform across all regions, and actual

opportunities are often hidden behind these accomplishments. Patriarchal structures alongside socioeconomic injustices and gender violence have remained a blockage to the achievement of women's emancipation (Muhammad Karim, 2021).

Thus, the results discuss the need to impact the empowered generations beyond simple economic

changes and use a multidimensional and intersectional approach. Future endeavors should consequently concentrate on eradicating such structural factors as identifying and eliminating barriers to the inclusion of girls in school, improving the quality and inclusiveness of education, increasing the quality and status of employment among women, as well as increasing the effectiveness of women's political participation. In addition, the study emphasizes the need to increase the effectiveness with which legal frameworks are enforced and to increase support for collective women's initiatives. To guarantee that all women including those from the deprived sections can enjoy such rights in the true sense, it takes such an elaborate and complex approach.

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