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Computing beyond Gender-Imposed Limits

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Gender inequality has always been a factor in computing. Women's participation in user research, design, deployment and use of technologies has historically been limited, challenging the potential of technologies. Although there has been some recent development, they are limited by a variety of factors such as access to physical space, limited use of technology, and the right to use are constrained by gender norms. The fact that in user research the inputs of targeted women are not taken into account. A basic limit of computing is that we cannot conceive of people who are silent and invisible in society. Therefore, there is a gap in the process of knowledge construction. As a result of the lower participation of women in the technological workforce, there is a lack of women's perspectives in the design and development of computer technologies. Social and cultural norms do not support equal rights of men and women in every aspect of life. Women's participation in public places is seriously affected by sexual harassment, power practices, gender-based violence and gender-based spatial divisions of work. Social and cultural norms place women in a more disadvantageous situation. In Bangladesh, the limitations on women's use of technology reflect the wider picture of misogynistic behaviour on technology systems. The social embarrassment and the role of law and order agencies have made a lot of the affected remain silent that amplify the existing social disconnections. Feminist theories advance arguments around the politics of visibility, representation, identity and reproduction that are often absent in mainstream discussions around production (design) and consumption (use). For example, HCI (Human Computer Interaction) focuses on design and usage ignoring the

many other interactions with technologies, including maintenance, repair and recycling. The worthy contributions of people in those professions are often 'invisible' in HCI. The same goes for household chores, which are mainly done by women, but which are not recognized by our society. Often they are made invisible. This politics of invisibility conceptualize the marginalization that happens to different communities other than women. A feminist agenda for computing is essentially an agenda of removing systematic marginalization - gender-based or otherwise - that advances the discipline towards a practice of greater equality and freedom. The limitations placed on women are not insignificant, but they are widespread, complex, interrelated and rooted in the history and tradition of a society. For designing a sustainable solution, it is crucial to understand the limitations thoroughly. While resources are generally limited to humanity as a whole, some resources are more limited to some groups than others. This unequal distribution of opportunity and resources forms different kinds of constraints for different communities. This paper presents both the limits for women around computing and the optimism to overcome those.