



Aspects of Women Empowerment in Bangladesh: A Study of Post-Independence Policies and Achievements

Ph.D. Thesis

By

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Women empowerment is one of the major concerns of the policy makers in developing countries. Being the subject of development policies, the inclusion of women into the process of development and therefore their participation in economic activities and socio-political decision-making along with men, have been gaining emphasis in the development plans in many developing countries. Empowerment does mean with opening up the access of the resources such as food, land, employment and other forms of wealth for women, and giving them opportunities of knowledge, power and prestige within family and community and for other social resources. Empowerment facilitates women to grab their opportunities for uplifting their status in society.

Considered as a multidimensional issue, generally indicated by several variables like education, occupation, household decision making, age at marriage, freedom of movement, political representation and legal rights is characterized as the empowerment of women. It has been indicated by various studies that there may be improvement in the status of women in one aspect of life while in others they remain still deprived of their rights. Education makes women capable of assuming greater autonomy or power both in traditional gender-stratified family system and in more egalitarian ones, by extending them more control over their own lives and stronger opinion in matters which may affect their role and position in their families.

Among the basics to strengthen rights of women and enabling them to gain control over own lives and to have influence in social behaviour, economic participation and empowerment are most crucial. This is for the realization of the objective of just and equitable societies. Women are subject to discrimination in the society and have been facing persistent gender inequalities; with a section of female population experiencing multi-faceted disparities and exclusion from decision-making process as the factors like ethnicity and caste have high impact on social structure. It is commonly observed in developing countries that women's authority in decision-making is highly determined by women's age and the structure of family. Generally, elderly women and women in nuclear families participate more often than the women of younger age or women in joint

families. Empowerment can be understood not only as the complete access and control over human, financial, and intellectual resources, but also as an increasing intrinsic capability, seen through greater self-confidence and a deep down transformation of women's consciousness that enables them to overcome both internal hesitation and external barriers of patriarchy and social system. It is found that gender relations as heavily dominated by community norms and values, community (class or caste or religion) are much stronger predictors of the empowerment and development of women than individual traits. For empowering women many have been recommending the primary policy implications of progressively transforming community norms and values about gender relations.

It is a well-established phenomenon that women ascribe a comparatively lower status before men in a patriarchal society like Bangladesh. In such a society men generally have the sovereign control over family operations and society as a whole, while women are often limited to their homes. The World Bank study in Bangladesh revealed that women have had a limited role in the household operations and decision-making, limited access and control over resources such as physical and financial assets, comparatively lower level of individual assets, heavy domestic workloads, restricted mobility and inadequate knowledge and skills that makes their position so vulnerable. Women of Bangladesh have been ranked lowest in the world in terms of their socio-economic status and this has been shown on the basis of several indicators of education, marriage, children, employment, health and social equality.

5.2 Main Findings of the Study

The present study on "Aspects of Women Empowerment in Bangladesh: A Study of Post- Independence Policies and Achievements" has brought to light some important facts regarding the women empowerment and gender discrimination in Bangladesh. The main findings of the present study are briefly discussed as under:

5.2.1 Social Status of Women in Bangladesh

Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1972 and with the enactment of constitution the quest for women empowerment was also started in the country. The beginning of feminist movement and women empowerment in Bangladesh can be traced in early 1970s and

with this a nationwide campaign was started for the inclusion of women in all spheres of society and state. In the initial years of independence only, women in Bangladesh started combatting the patriarchal barriers which were preventing them from attaining their part of development and autonomy. Bangladesh has set a completely different model of feminist movement because of the tradition, culture and social attitudes popular in the country. The Bangladesh model of feminism doesn't resemble the model of feminism popular in the West. In raising the concerns and issues related to women in Bangladesh, the major role has been played by women rights activist groups, feminist research and advocacy organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

Although, before independence of Bangladesh the concerns and issues of women were raised by many activists such as Begum Rokeya, Sister Nivedita and Sarojini Naidu and their contribution was considerable also but a collective approach of women empowerment was seen after 1972 only when the major areas for research on women were marked which were social bonds, domestic issues, inequalities and discrimination. Following the above, many organizations were formed and joined the efforts in 1980 onwards and these collectively have been working for the promotion of rights of women and for the elimination of the gender based discrimination and inequalities in social, political and economic spheres in Bangladesh.

It is evident from the discussion held in second chapter that the gender disparity in Bangladesh is the result of abiding and enduring discrimination between men and women in every sphere of life.

It cannot be denied that some recent changes have occurred in the status of women in Bangladesh and women marked their involvement in many public activities in recent decades. We have observed that women got empowered in the field of education and health sector; the progress can be seen by examining the statistical data. Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in primary education. Effective public policy, resource allocation for women and strong commitment of government and non-government sectors have played a significant role in empowering women in the education sector. Government of Bangladesh is providing free and compulsory education for the children aged between 6 to 10. Free textbook are also provided at primary and secondary level of education. Girl's education upto 12th grade in public institutions is also provided free of

cost. To reduce dropout and to increase enrollment at primary and secondary levels of education the stipend is also provided to girl students. These initiatives played a vital role in gender parity at primary and secondary level of education. But it is a fact based on observation that women in Bangladesh are far behind the men in terms of the average educational level and the dropout rate is still high among the female students at secondary level of education. The major reason for that is poverty because of which either the girls are not getting enrollment in schools or their admission is withdrawn at premature stage. Slow progress is seen in enrollment of female children at both primary and secondary school levels.

Women empowerment can be seen in some aspects of health sector. Bangladesh has made tremendous success in reducing maternal mortality rate. The policy of Emergency Obstetric Care has played a significant role in reducing MMR. Various model women friendly district hospitals have been established, maternal health voucher scheme has been provided to pregnant female for free checkups. With all these efforts taken by the government the MMR has declined by 178 in 2016 from 648 in 1986. However the MMR is still high in Bangladesh because it is closely related to the subordinate position of women in the household and the restricted mobility of women as the country being a patriarchal society. Birth attendant by unskilled health personal is still prevalent in Bangladesh society.

The society of Bangladesh is patriarchal or male-centered and women are supposed to stay dependent on men throughout their life. Situation of women is highly vulnerable in Bangladesh and because of patriarchal society the true value and proper rights of women are not actually given to them. The constitution of Bangladesh has extended specific oaths for elimination of gender discrimination but the enactment of laws and legal implementation mechanism has been indifferent to the rights of women. From early childhood in Bangladesh women from every class and age group have been deprived of accessibility to education, healthcare and employment as compared to the men.

The limitation of women to reproductive purpose and household works is what is commonly perceived in the society in Bangladesh and they are often not allowed to go outside home for work. The success of sustainable development plans highly

depends upon the assurance of equality for both men and women. Realizing, that gender equality and women empowerment are significant factors behind sustainable growth, since 2000, under the leadership of UNDP the world community has been working hard for this objective and it has marked considerable success in empowering women worldwide and in different countries. But the situation has changed in developed countries more considerably and in developing countries like Bangladesh the vulnerability of women is still not eliminated.

In Bangladesh, women are still facing serious challenges in establishing their rights inside the family, in society and as whole in the state. Being part of a male dominated society, women in Bangladesh are getting neglected in every aspect of their life and are subject to disparity, exclusion and injustice. The legal mechanism and policies on discrimination works too slow because of the socio-political conditions and customs that are stopping women from exercising their rights because girls are considered to be burden in Bangladesh, especially in the poor families.

Women are treated in a bad manner both at home and outside the home, which results in restricting them from taking active part in social activities. The vulnerability of women in Bangladesh has resulted because of many factors, the insignificant among which are their complicated situation at job sectors, issues in enrollment and high drop-out rate in schools, early marriage, high fertility, low health status, high maternal mortality, and inefficiency of legal mechanism. The present study has shown that traditional patriarchy and male dominated society have been the major hindrances that have posed serious challenges to the mobility and participation of women in many conventional and unofficial fields.

5.2.2 Economic Status of Women in Bangladesh

To empower women economically various significant initiatives have been taken by government of Bangladesh. Various job opportunities were created to ensure participation in labour market, facility has been started to provide small and medium loans to start small business. To empower women economically various kinds of allowance schemes have been started through social safety net programme. For economic empowerment of rural women collateral free micro-credit is given. Currently more than

85 percent of females are working in the garment industry of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has enhanced its women labour force from 23.9 percent in 2000 to 36.3 percent in 2016. Despite this the labour force participation is lower than male. Some of the major sectors have shown increasing trends of women employment in Bangladesh in the last three decades. Garment sector is one such industry and in fact it has become the most important working sector for women in Bangladesh and this sector generates the major part of export income for the country. Though, this sector is one of the most insecure sectors for employment in Bangladesh and many evidences of insecure environment for the labourers have been seen in recent years and many other problems like non-payment of proper wages, absence of appropriate job environment, violation of labours' rights, and absence of facilities and human security measures are the common issues workers in this sectors have been facing. Gender wage gap is also evident in the garment sector of Bangladesh, According to a World Bank research garment women workers paid less and occupy junior position than their male counterparts. Government statistics shows that despite of this, around 2 million labourers join this sector every year, majority of which are women.

In Bangladesh majority of women are kept excluded from the market oriented production sector. Whatever women are earning from their household production activities is never considered to be counted a part of family income. And if somehow women are getting any opportunity outside the home to be engaged in market oriented production activity, they do not get the permission for it because social structure doesn't allow them. It is evident from the study that during 2016-17 some 5.4 million females were working in the families without any pay. What women contribute to the family income is never received with the respect given to the income earned by men, but still women are somehow involved in various economic activities.

Economically, export industry has promoted and facilitated the employment of maximum of Bangladeshi female labourers which is undoubtedly a progressive indication due to which millions of women have avoided working as a mere domestic worker or ended up at underage or exploitative marriage. But, when compared with the other developing countries, the rate of women employment in Bangladesh is still not satisfactory. The present research has shown that the role of export industry should also

not be appreciated and it is wrong to assume that export industry is helping Bangladeshi women being empowered because the reason behind employing women is that they provide cheap, non-demanding and loyal workers. Gender wage gap is still present in Bangladesh which showcases the inferiority of women in employment sector.

5.2.3 Political Status of Women in Bangladesh

To empower women in politics the number of seats reserved for women in the national parliament have been increased as it was 15 percent in 1973 and in 2019 it was 50 percent. There has been sharp increase in the number of women parliament members in the last national elections. Political participation is one of the universaly recognized rights of women but, in Bangladesh, still there is a gap exists which sets official formal politics far from meaningful practice of realistic political implementation. The country has achieved exclusive political turn-ups, though effective participation of women in the politics is still not seen. Women face threatening challenges in their political involvements by the society.

Gender disparities are evident in parliamentary representation also. Despite the reservation for women in national parliament, in reality very small portion of women representation can be seen in the government in proportion to their population. In the present research it was found that male dominated social system restricts women from actively participating in politics as well as women take less interest in politics which restricts them their active participation. Women have lack of access to financial resources where political system is being commercialized. The present study has shown that commercialization of politics hinders the political participation of women in Bangladesh. Reservation of seats for women in the parliament has only increased the number but it has failed to improve the quality of women in national parliament. The estimation of the degree of general participation is comparatively low.

In major political parties, the presence of women in leadership is considerably low. It has been emphasized that being the highest institution for the adoption of law and rights and their implementation, there must be appropriate representation of women in National Parliament so that the suitable formation of

parliamentary structure and meaningful policy deliberations on basis of equality can be ensured in the country.

5.2.4 Status of Government Policies and Programmes for Women Empowerment in Bangladesh

Various initiatives were taken by Government of Bangladesh to empower women. National Five Year Plans were started by Government of Bangladesh just after the independence. Through the present study it has been found out that during First Five Year Plan no special emphasis was given on empowerment of women and no separate allocation was allocated for advancement of women. Till 1980 only two programs out of seven directed to women were implemented. Total allocation for women's project was less than 1 percent of the plan allocation in both the time period. During Second Five Year Plan direct allocation for women was made and it was also less than 1 percent of the plan allocation in the Second Five Year Plan. The Second Plan philosophy and actual commitment underlying women's issue lacked a clearly articulated policy perspective. Total outlay within Third Five Year Plan was of the order of 0.4 percent of the plan allocation of which only 0.2 percent was for projects under the women's ministry. In the Fourth Plan for the first time aimed to integrate women into mainstream of economy and to subdue the prevalent gender discrimination in all socio economic spheres. During this plan allocation for projects for women was also minimum as out of 6,20,000 million Tk. only 880 million Tk was allocated, which was also less than 1 percent. In the Fifth Five Year Plan the allocation for projects of women was only 0.03 percent of total plan budget. In the Sixth Five Year Plan some targets were set to achieve the women empowerment the target of 33 percent seats in the national parliament was set but only 20 percent target was achieved in 2015. Ratio of literate females to male (percent of ages 20-24) was set to achieve 100 percent but it was achieved by 85 percent during 2015. The target for women employment in non-agricultural sector was set to 50 percent but it increased just to 32 percent during 2015. The Seventh Five Year Plan was related to upliftment of women in Bangladesh but set targets were also not achieved during this plan. With regards to Five Year Plans it was found that lack of financial allocation for women's projects are main obstacle of women advancement during the post

independence period. The present research has shown that just after Liberation War in Bangladesh, through the Five Year Plans and other policies no significant shift has been visible in terms of addressing women's needs and interests particularly.

In 2009 Gender budgeting in Bangladesh has also been introduced by which more gender equal society can be built by influencing the budgeting process. Gender budgeting broadly addressed the gender gap in opportunity and ultimately to empower women socially economically and politically. Gender budget is gearing up the empowerment of women in every sector. Along with different policies and programmes the government launched the gender responsive budget to implement national women development policy. Various ministries were involved in this gender budgeting process as a result empowerment of women can be seen in the educational and health sectors. Gender responsive budget is not about creating the separate budget for women or increase the amount of spending rather GRB seeks to ensure that the allocation is carried out in ways which are effective and contribute to women empowerment and gender equality.

Bangladesh signed up Eight Millennium Development Goals aimed at reducing global poverty, hunger and disease by 2015. With the help of various national and international organizations and funding agencies Bangladesh has achieved some of set target for gender equity and empowerment of women. A spectacular progress has been done in the MDGs, the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education has increased, the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament has also increased. Bangladesh has made some gains through programmes to improve food security, to provide access to training, day care facilities, hostels for working women and advocacy to reduce violence against women. However gender disparities are evident in tertiary level of education. The factors that hinder the lower enrollment at tertiary level include high cost of education, mobility restriction and high rate of crime against women. The present study has found that low economic condition, conservative attitude towards female education were the important factors which restrict the achievement of women in higher education sector. The government of Bangladesh took lots of programs to minimize the effect of gender inequality. MDGs programme and Sustainable Development Programmes (SDGs) are started by the government of Bangladesh to

reduce the vulnerable condition of women. In some areas SDGs programme got the success and provided noticeable progress to ensure women safety and also, they tried to establish women's rights after living in male dominated society. In spite of getting success in balancing the gender issues, enormous amount of gender disparity is still in the country.

The present study has revealed that Government of Bangladesh has tried to implement some major steps to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women. But because of irregular monitoring these steps haven't been proved successful. The initiatives built and implemented haven't actually reached to the destination and political and administrative corruption along with lack of awareness has caused the prevalence of age long patriarchy, and maintained the dependency and vulnerability of women.

5.2.5 Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Women Empowerment in Bangladesh

Various non-governmental organizations are working to empower women in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad is working to protect human rights of women in Bangladesh. To ban dowry in the country a law was enacted. Various rehabilitation centers are operating to provide housing for victims of trafficking. A shelter home namely Rokya Sadan is also operating by BMP for the victims of violence. Necessary facilities are provided by the shelter home to uplift the status of women in society. Nari Pokko organization is also working for the advancement of women's rights. The main aim of this organization is resistance against violence, discrimination and injustice.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee is also empowering women's financial status. They provided financial services to small holder farmers, micro and small entrepreneurs, migrated workers households specially women. It provides emergency support to women returnee migrants. Skill development programme was started by Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee in which various facilities like providing toilet facility at workplace, promote safe working environment, equal wage for equal work and access to clean drinking water and health facilities has also been promoted. For community empowerment *Polli samaj* a democratic institution was promoted. It works for combating social issues, problems and violence against women.

Association of Social Advancement is improving the status of poor people by providing them awareness about importance of saving and microcredit facility. ASA introduced credit programme by which poor women have created self-employment by drawing loans from ASA which help them become self reliant .

Grameen Bank of Bangladesh is famous for its role in introducing a new era of women empowerment and eradication of rural poverty through micro-credit programme. It is a credit programme for the poor, and more than 90% of its loan borrowers are female. Various scholarship facilities to the children of Grameen members are provided to ease their education situation. It provides small loan as illiterate women are not able to understand big amount of investment. Poor women and the women headed households have been empowered by the access to credit and savings. Village phone programme was an initiative of Grameen Bank. By this programme, loans are provided to Grameen Bank clients mostly women to purchase a mobile phone from which women can create their micro enterprises and improve their income generation. The present study has revealed that as being a patriarchal society male guardian is in charge of the loan amount and they spend unnecessary money which creates burden on women as they become incapable to return loan amount and it leads to financial burden on the women rather than to empower them.

Basic Unit for Resources and Opportunities (BURO) is also working to reduce poverty among poor and rural people in Bangladesh. It also provides micro credit to the poor and rural poor, over the years organization have provided microcredit to 1.1 million poor, particularly women. The major thrust of the organization is given on the opportunities to the access of the women community that promotes their rights in the family and society.

5.2.6 Role of International Organizations in Women Empowerment in Bangladesh

The partnership of Asian Development and Government of Bangladesh is ensuring gender equality in the country. ADB has contributed in the health and education sectors of Bangladesh. With the support of ADB female enrollment has increased and dropout rate has decreased, the secondary education development programme was initiated with

the help of ADB to government's vision of promoting secondary education and reducing dropout rate. In primary education ADB is supporting the Third Primary Education Development Programme with loan of \$320 million. PEDP programme III also started by the help of ADB has improved learning outcomes, completion rates and reduced regional disparity. ADB has also provided assistance for developing secondary education. With the help of ADB the government of Bangladesh has introduced a number of reforms in examinations system, teacher training programme and poverty targeted stipend programme. ADB help established the Directorate of Non-Formal Education which supported 2.9 million learners in which 57 percent was women.

International Labour Organization is supporting the Bangladesh to empower women. Technical and Vocation Education and Training reform was initiated by the ILO to provide opportunity and career advancement for the youth. TVET provide skill training to engage youth in labour force. Women participation in TVET in Bangladesh is low as segregation of occupation by sex is a social reality. Male dominated society entertains cultural values which reflect in their occupation segregation. At TVET institute women are mostly engaged in training of sewing, tailoring housekeeping and some computer training programs while more productive industry such as automobile repair, welding and machine operation were occupied by the male members.

The changing pattern of women's role, participation, mobility and empowerment is getting visible. Though, changes in social mindset, increasing awareness and consciousness, more supportive policies and actions towards women demonstrated by various institutions of society, national and international policies and programmes are having positive impacts for women but, all these have been limited to a smaller section of Bangladeshi society.

5.2.7 Prevalence of Gender Discrimination and Perception of Women Empowerment in Bangladesh

The present study has revealed that gender discrimination is still prevalent in reality despite various legal actions in Bangladesh. At family level women are most likely to feel empowered with respect to access to financial control. Women continue to feel threatened due to physical violence at home and neglect in health care also persists in

Bangladeshi patriarchal homes. It was also found through the study that though in rural areas prevalence of less control on finance among women is very high whereas in urban area prevalence of physical violence against women is widespread at family level.

In society higher rate of women in Bangladesh face challenges of eve teasing and harassment. Women are imposed to obey the purdah system. The established stereotype of women in Bangladesh, the veil, exists as much more than just a physical signification. Whatever her position or status may be, she has to fit in an identity and she has to perform the roles determined for her by ethnic moral authority. In present research it has been found that though in rural areas women are bound to strictly follow social norms like wear burqa and veil, whereas in urban area the problem of eve teasing and harassment are widespread.

At work places also women are still facing discrimination in terms of wage; as they are paid lesser than men and are being victimized of sexual assaults at work place. Female are denied the higher position in their organizations is a tendency prevailing even today as they are considered incapable of performing greater responsibilities. It was found in the research that in rural areas women are discriminated economically by not being provide equal wages, whereas in urban area the major concern of women has been different forms of sexual harassment at considerably higher rate.

At educational places also gender discrimination is prevalent in Bangladeshi society. It has been found out that lack of toilet facility also persists at educational places. In many of the educational institutions female students are still treated inferior than their male counterparts. A higher prevalence of violence (physical violence, sexual violence and eve teasing) was observed against women in Bangladesh at educational places.

In Bangladesh, it was strongly perceived by women that they are neglected in terms of inheritance of property. It was observed that higher proportions of female are landless. They still perceived that their role in decision making is minimum. Gender wage gap is also there in Bangladeshi society and women participation in low paid job is higher than their male counterparts. There are different roles and responsibilities imposed by society on the basis of gender in Bangladesh. These stereotypes are still perceived by women and same can be evident by their participation in low paid jobs. It is a sign of

empowerment that in Bangladesh the co-education is encouraged and they are not bound to choose any particular subject to study.

The present study has revealed that gender discrimination in the Bangladeshi society has led to the marginalization of women in social, economic and political spheres of life. The woman are discriminated at home in terms of health care, nutrition, education and decision making with the result their educational attainment, employment and political participation are negatively impacted. The malnutrition problem among the woman is 63.3% (anaemia), literacy rate is 71.18 %, employment rate is 36.3%, the rate of membership in major political parties is 3.54% and the membership in the elected bodies is 21 %. As against it the level of malnutrition among the male's is 36.6% (anaemia), literacy rate is 76.67 %, employment rate is 80.5%, membership in political parties is 96.4 % and the membership in elected bodies is 79 %. Thus the hypothesis, “The gender discrimination in various fields of life is mutually interrelated and one type of discrimination reinforces the other type.” has been proved very much adequate.

The present study has revealed that till 1980's womens' active participation in politics of Bangladesh was minimal. In 1981 Sheikh Hasina and in 1984 Khalida Zia were chosen by the Awami League and Bangladesh National Party respectively. In 2019 parliamentary election the ratio of women was only 21 percent where as 79.4 percent of male members were directly elected for general seats. Even after the 45 years of independence women representation is negligible. In religious based political parties namely Jammat-e-Islami there is no woman member in their two important committees. Women's representation within the two major political parties, Awami League and Bangladesh National Party is low and men typically dominated leadership position. Women in Bangladesh politics are on surface and the decision making process is still dominated by men. From the status of political representation of women in Bangladesh, it can be deduced that the social, economic and political empowerment of women could not be advanced in Bangladesh because the political system of the country is dominated by the men. Thus the hypothesis, “the male dominated political system in Bangladesh is responsible for neglect of women empowerment in social, economic and political spheres of life” has proved very much adequate.

The present study has revealed that minimum financial resources are obstacle in women empowerment in Bangladesh. Just after Liberation War in Bangladesh in Five Year Plans and other policies no significant shift has been visible in terms of addressing women's needs and interests particularly. Empowerment and development of women is inadequate due to the deficiency of financial resources. The financial allocation for women specific projects from the First Five Year Plan to Fifth Five Year Plan has been less than 1.0 percent of the total budget of Bangladesh. Thus the hypothesis that, "the lack of financial resources has been an important obstacle in women empowerment in Bangladesh during the post-independence period" has proved very much adequate.

The present study has revealed that the growth of GDP and public spending on women development programmes are not co-related. The concept of gender budgeting in Bangladesh was initiated in the fiscal year 2009-10 in four ministries with broader perspective of achieving gender justice. Since then the allocation of gender budget shows an upwards trend. As discussed in Graph 3.2 (Chapter 3), the graph of allocation in this particular sector is promising and following an upward trend till 2012-13 when allocation for women development programme was 28.68 % which was 5.23 of GDP. Financial year 2013-14 has witnessed a downward trend in both the variables. Continuously for three financial years, 2013-14 to 2015-16 allocation for women development programme shows a downward trend whereas GDP growth rate were increasing during the same period. During financial year 2016-17 to 2019-20 allocation for women development programme and GDP growth rate shows an increasing trend. Thus the hypothesis that, "there is a positive co-relation between the growth in GDP and public spending on women development programmes and schemes in Bangladesh" has proved inadequate.

5.3 Future Policy Recommendations

In order to ensure gender Justice and women empowerment in the country the government of Bangladesh must take the following steps:

- 1) The government must organise the social awareness programmes in educational institutions, cultural centers, government offices industrial centers and other public places to create gender sensitivity in the country.

- 2) Special police stations and women police brigades must be established in the country to control the crimes against the women in family, place of work and in the society at large.
- 3) More and more vocational and professional training centers for women in the country need to be established to enhance the employability chances of women in the country.
- 4) The laws of the land concerning the age of girls at marriage, inheritances of property, equal wages, number of working hours, domestic violence against the women, trafficking of women etc need to be effectively implemented in the country.
- 5) The reservation for women in government educational institutions, vocational and professional training centers, government employment and bureaucracy need to be created to ensure the participation of women in education, training and government services.
- 6) The political parties must ensure proper participation of women in elected bodies at different levels in the country through proper transparent reservation policy for the women.
- 7) Special funds for women development programmes need to be allocated and the involvement of women in Planning, execution and monitoring of such programmes need to ensure proper results are achieved in the area of social, economic and political empowerment of women in the country.
- 8) Gender responsive budget should be utilized in an appropriate manner and there should be specific guidelines on how to spend or utilize the allotted amount in the direction of empowering women.
- 9) Social Safety Net Programmes should be monitored by the high level government officials to ensure transparency and accountability.

10) The amount of money should be increased to the beneficiaries under government schemes (old age allowance, widowed allowance) as during the research it was found that amount of service is poor and it's not enough to fulfill their any single need.