

Role of Women in the Sustainable Development in the Context of Bangladesh

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Keywords:

Women,
Roles,
Development,
Bangladesh

Abstract: This study has examined the role of women in the sustainable development in different sectors of economic progress in Bangladesh. To examine the role of women in sustainable development, this paper has attempted to make an investigation into their participation level in parliaments, employment, labor force market, and domestic activities particularly. This paper has also analyzed women's contributions in the mentioned fields. A mixed method research approach has been used in this study for collecting and analyzing data. This paper is based on the information obtained from two different sources, documents and questionnaire survey. Twenty participants from government and non-government sectors for survey questionnaire have been selected as the respondents in this study. Main data of this study have been collected from document analysis of women's participation in social development activities in Bangladesh. Supporting data of this study have been collected through survey questionnaire. Documentary and survey questionnaire data of this study have been presented by using graph and analyzed descriptively. Survey questionnaire data of this study have been analyzed using the SPSS 23.0 for windows. And the descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the responses of the selected participants of this study. Quantitative analyses included numerical number, amount, percentage, frequency counts, etc.

Introduction

Sustainable development depends on equal participation of human capital in a country. Sustainable development is a process which meets the requirements of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a key principle of all planning, policies, actions, and implementations. It creates a society which is broadly based on democracy, freedom, and respect for equality, rights, and solidarity between or within the nations and generations. Bangladesh government has developed all kinds of favorable initiatives and strategies for women to take part in politics, parliament and local government elections, government and non-government employment sectors, and labor force markets. Even, women are very active in domestic activities for favorable initiatives and strategies for them. Fourth Five Year Plan, formulated by Bangladesh government, has given much right to women to empower them in an inclusive development process of Bangladesh. World Economic Forum (WEF, 2017) reports that in recent few years, Bangladesh has made a significant progress in sustainable development of the country for women's participation. Women's role in the sustainable development of Bangladesh cannot be ignored and it must be recognized as they are playing a great role in education and socializing their children for sustainable development of the country. They are voicing in environmental decision making, which is one of the major issue not in Bangladesh but in the world, in —green economy, family, community and society. They are primarily playing significant roles for nutrition, household management, and child care. They are playing roles as animal tenders, water and fuel collectors, and farmers. However, they are working as the catalyst for sustainable development in the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina could have understood it and she has taken measures to overcome all the barriers which women face to take part in sustainable development of the country. Her this milestone efforts and distinguished contribution for a favorable environment for women to take part in development process of the country has brought the Global Women's Leadership Award in April, 2018, honored by the US-based NGO Global Summit of women. Thus, women are working relentlessly through the ages for sustainable development of the

country. This paper has attempted to make an investigation on the roles of women for sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Objective of this Study

The objective of this study is to make an investigation on the roles of women in several sectors in Bangladesh for sustainable development in the country.

Literature Review

Sustainable Development refers to a commitment to ‘leave no-one behind’. For sustainable social development, it requires visionary policies for inclusive development. If everyone is to benefit from economic gains through proper education, education facilities should be under their reach. Social development ensures the well-being of every individual in society so that they can reach their full potential because the success of society is related with the well-being of each and every citizen. Social development means investing in people. Barriers should be removed so that every citizen can make their dreams true with confidence and dignity. If the people are well-educated, trained to enter the workforce and able to make a decent wage, they must be better equipped to meet their basic needs and to be successful. And their families will perform well and the society will benefit from this development. From this theory, women are working and contributing in the purpose of ensuring sustains development in Bangladesh. The development of a society depends mainly on the participation and contribution of man and woman equally. Hopwood, et al. (2005) states that a society plan to make progress towards sustainable development and for this, the society needs to determine both its current status and any required change to sustainability. Such bench-marking is depending on the conceptualization of social sustainability because of the dearth of consensus (Griessler and Littig, 2005), however, social sustainability indicators remain contentious (Hicks et al., 2016). It has been noted that the shortage of a coherent, clear and utilizable conceptualization implies that the choice of indicators is commonly grounded within the availability of indicators and therefore the political agenda (Griessler & Littig, 2005) instead of in theory. In addition, the concept of social sustainability has multiple, diverse dimensions, a number of which are not easily quantifiable (e.g. social equity), resulting in a tendency to use a subsection of the broader social development indicators that are available rather than rigorously defining the key indicators that specifically measure the social sustainability aspect of social development (Hopwood, et al. 2005). More optimistically, Hale et al. (2019) agree that while social sustainability indicators is also contested, this does not necessarily mean that the indications lack value or are inherently social constructions co-opted by a political/economic process. And that they have argued that the simplification of complex social realities into shorthand symbols may be a fundamental process necessary for communication and democratic decision-making, especially when using the indications to move towards a better future.

Thus, the literature review of this study reflects that social development refers to a qualitative change in the structure and framework of a society that helps a society to realize the aims and the objectives better. Development is a process by which society is changed structurally for some specific results. Now, this process has picked up in speed and intensity and the society has witnessed a great change with this structural development. Development depends on many factors and these factors influence the results of developmental efforts. For the effective change of a society, an effective motive is an essential precondition. And this motive must enable to overcome obstructions that impede the social change. For sustainable development, it requires equal participation and contribution of human capital of a country. Maiden step to streamlining the women with development including their administrative empowerment and decision making capability was taken the government of Bangabondhu in 1972. The government of Bangabondhu has first reserved 10% quota for women’s participation in all areas of employment. In 1973, two women became the members in the Cabinet of Bangladesh. In 1974, one woman became DG of Bangla Academy.

The present government has created multi-scopes for women for their participation in all areas of society and state administration ensuring their empowerment. In recent years, the participation of women in all areas is praiseworthy. Women are playing a significant role for sustainable development of the country. The Prime Minister of the Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh, the Deputy Leader and the Opposition Leader of the parliament of the country are women. Along with 45 elected women in the

reserved seats, a number of women has been elected in the cabinet. All these elected women are playing important roles for sustainable development of the country. The legal provision of women's participation as members in reserved wards of the local government including Union Parishad has been made by honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Appointment of women in the administration, education sectors, Army, Navy and Police has been made by the government of Sheikh Hasina. All these appointed women are playing a great role for sustainable development of the country. However, this paper has made an investigation on the role of women in sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Methodology of this Study

This paper is based on the information collected from diverse sources. Data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. A mixed method research has been used in this study for collecting and analyzing data. This paper is based on the information obtained from two different sources, documents and questionnaire survey. Twenty participants from government and non-government sectors for survey questionnaire have been selected as the respondents in this study. Main data of this study have been collected from document analysis of women's participation in social development activities in Bangladesh. Supporting data of this study have been collected through survey questionnaire. Documentary and survey questionnaire data of this study have been presented by using graph and analyzed descriptively. Survey questionnaire data of this study have been analyzed using the SPSS 23.0 for windows. And the descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the responses of the selected participants of this study. Quantitative analysis has included numerical number, amount, percentage, frequency counts, etc.

Table: 1
Selected Respondents of this Study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Government	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Non-government	3	15.0	15.0	40.0
	Chairman/Vice-chairman/Member in Local government institutions	6	30.0	30.0	70.0
	Political worker	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
	Others	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Findings of this study

This paper has attempted to make an investigation on the role of women in sustainable development in Bangladesh. To reach the object of this study, data have been collected diverse sources like documents, survey questionnaire, and interview.

Findings from Documents

First, this study has made an investigation on the documentation to find out women's role in sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Table: 2
Women's Participation in Several Sectors

Participated Areas	Percentage of Participation
Parliament (10 th)	20.9%
Upazilla Parishad Chairman (2017)	1.4%
Union Parishad Chairman (2017)	0.7%
Union Parishad Members (2017)	25%
Employment in Government Ministries Directorates and Corporations (2017)	37.1%
Divisional and Deputy Commissioner's Offices	11.0%
Autonomous Corporations	11.5%
Directorate of Nursing	90.5%

(Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics)

It is found that the participation of women in 10th parliament is 20.9% which is praiseworthy. The participation of women in local government is also remarkable. It is found that the participation of women in Upazilla Parishad Chairman is 1.4%, Union Parishad is 0.7%, and a member in Union Parishad is 25%. Participation of women in Government Ministries Directorates and Corporations is 31.1%, in Divisional and Deputy Commissioner's Offices is 11.0%, in Autonomous Corporations is 11.5%, and in Directorate of Nursing is 90.5%.

Table: 3
Women's Participation in Labor Force Market (1990-2019)

Value of Participation	Percentage of Participation
Maximum Participation Value	36.37%
Minimum Participation Value	24.65%
Average Value	28.71
World Average Value (Based on 181 countries)	51.96%

(Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics)

The table 3 shows that the maximum participation value of women in labor market (1990-2019) is 36.37%, while the minimum participation value is 24.65%. The average value of women's participation in labor market in Bangladesh (1990-2019) is 28.71%, while the average participation of women in the world based on 181 countries is 51.96%.

Women's Role in Agricultural Sector in Bangladesh

The economy of Bangladesh largely depends on agriculture. This sector directly or indirectly related with all kinds of development in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, women are playing an important role to improve the agriculture sector which is the most important sector of the economy in this country. Through their participation in agriculture sector in the country, women are overall contributing to the national wealth and sustainable development of the country. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 71.5% of women are employed in this sector. Women are very actively working in agricultural production in Bangladesh. In rural Bangladesh, women do most of the agricultural works in their homestead. Thus, they always work in the production of food and other products in village areas in Bangladesh, and they are contributing much for sustainable development of the country.

Women's Role in Garments' Sector in Bangladesh

Garments sector is a great consideration for the development of the country. This sector largely relates with the development of export sector in Bangladesh. The garments sector plays a significant role in earning foreign currency of the country. According to Rahman, 90% of the employees in the garments sector is woman. And in the ready-made garments sector, the number of employed women is more than 3 million. Thus, women are also playing a great role in earning foreign currency doing jobs in garments sector in Bangladesh.

Findings from Survey Questionnaire

Secondly, this study has made an investigation by using a set of questionnaire to find out the role of women in sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Table: 4
Women Play an Important Role to Uplift the Sustainable Level of Education in Bangladesh

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Neutral	2	10.0	10.0	15.0
	Agree	9	45.0	45.0	60.0
	Strongly agree	8	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The statistical data presented in the table 4 show that women are playing role to uplift sustainable level of education in Bangladesh. 85% respondents of this study agree with the issue that women are playing

an important role to uplift the sustainable education level in Bangladesh. 10% respondents are neutral in this case, while only 5% respondents do not agree with this issue that women are playing roles to uplift sustainable education level in Bangladesh.

Table: 5
Women Play a Great Role to Achieve Sustainable Economic Goal of Bangladesh

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Neutral	4	20.0	20.0	25.0
	Agree	8	40.0	40.0	65.0
	Strongly agree	7	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The statistical data presented in the table 5 reflect that women are playing role to achieve sustainable economic goal of Bangladesh. 75% respondents of this study agree with the issue that women are playing an important role to achieve sustainable economic goal of Bangladesh. 20% respondents are neutral in this case, while only 5% respondents do not agree with this issue that women are playing roles to achieve sustainable economic goal of Bangladesh.

Table: 6
Women Play Roles to Ensure Equal Participation in Politics and Elections

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Agree	12	60.0	60.0	65.0
	Strongly agree	7	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The statistical data presented in the table 6 reveal that women are playing role to ensure equal participation in politics and elections. 95% respondents of this study agree with the issue that women are playing an important role to ensure equal participation in politics and elections. Only 5% respondents are neutral with the issue that women are playing roles to ensure equal participation in politics and elections.

Table: 7
Women Play Role to Remove Gender Illusion and Disparity from Bangladesh

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Agree	12	60.0	60.0	65.0
	Strongly agree	7	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The statistical data presented in the table 7 show that women are playing role to remove gender illusion and disparity from Bangladesh. 95% respondents of this study agree with the issue that women are playing an important role to remove gender illusion and disparity from Bangladesh. 5% respondents are neutral with this issue that women are playing roles to remove gender illusion and disparity from Bangladesh.

Table: 8
Women Play Roles to Establish Equal Rights

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Agree	10	50.0	50.0	55.0
	Strongly agree	9	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The statistical data presented in the table 8 show that women are playing role to establish equal rights in Bangladesh. 95% respondents of this study agree with the issue that women are playing important roles to establish equal rights in Bangladesh. 5% respondents are neutral with this issue that women are playing roles to establish equal rights in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

The socioeconomic condition in Bangladesh has been improved significantly over last ten years. Improvement in different sectors concerning education, health, exports, imports, commodity markets, agriculture, empowerment, and family and social status can be observed for women's direct participation and their role in the sustainable development in Bangladesh. Their dynamic participation and role in labor market and in official estimations of gross domestic product are significant. Bangladesh can rightfully claim as a trading country for its connection with global economy through exports and imports. The role of women in the sustainable development in Bangladesh is well recognized.

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