

ASSIGNMENT 01

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Finding Bottlenecks for Low Female Partnership in Bangladeshi Workspace

After the Independence, Bangladesh has secured lot of success in many areas and among them women development is a discussable one. In that issue we have changed the scenario a lot. But still there are some “Questions” and “Issues” which cannot be ignored under the flood light of today’s women development. We will basically focus to “Still having lots of supports and facilities why there is less women participation in our entire national labor force”.

Less women participation in national workforce is a common issue around the globe. Even highly developed or least developed countries (LDC) are not out of this issue. And interestingly the causes are similar. The main and common points those actively participate for this issue to be an “issue” are: religious problems, lack of education, lack of experiences & skills, lack of time to pay in workspace because of household activities and maintenance of children. Women cannot be benefited because they cannot pay time to gather experience and education because of household activities. And for the lack of experience and education they cannot be employed in higher, specialized or responsible jobs.

Moreover in different society women are being discriminated in various paths especially because of male dominated society. Today the scenario is changing everywhere, but slowly.

The Positive Approaches in Few Words

Today females are in everywhere. They are seen in streets, desks, schools, colleges, universities, air plane's cockpit, teaching, professional jobs etc. in everywhere. In recent SSC and HSC examination females proved that if they are given chances they can even do better than males. In informal schools run by NGOs 100% teachers are female. Everywhere there is female quota: from school to parliament. Garments' leading workforce is female. Today females are working in military and paramilitary forces. These all indicates the developments and changes of women empowerment and as well as huge female participation in our workforce. But still having lots of supports and facilities the increase rate of female participation is still not satisfactory. The main reasons and factors will be discussed below.

Reasons for Low Female Participation

Less Salary

Sometimes it happens that, having more expertise and experience women get lesser salary than males, because of the wrong perception about females. The employers believe that female workers do less work and their work is less productive relative to male workers. This scenario is most commonly viewed in garments and construction industry.

A government survey conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in 2007 reveals the picture of difference of male-female salary and wages. Male labors' daily average earning is 132 BDT where female is 92 BDT. According to economic definition cutting or digging soil sector is informal labor and RMG (Ready Made Garments) sector is considered as formal labor. In formal labor male workers' daily average income is 137 BDT and female is 130 BDT. In informal labor a male worker's daily average income is 130 BDT where a female worker's income is 91-93 BDT. Among the total labor force 68.4% workforce is in formal sector and 31.6% in informal sector. In formal sector male participation is 87.6% and female 12.4%. Women participation is more than 13% in informal sector. BBS has conducted this survey on 202 professions and in 37 sectors.

Lack of Education

Not only in Bangladesh but also in other developed and least developed countries lack of knowledge or lack of education is a major point that works behind less female participation in national workforce. In the country like Bangladesh, the drop-out rate of females in primary and intermediate level of education is higher than the drop-out rate of males. In many cases many family don't send their female child to school for primary education.

The situation is worse for women in higher and technical education. This is due to the fact that, education for girl is still considered economically less useful as investment as they leave family after marriage, and this mostly happens in poor family.

In the statistics of BBS it has found that women participation is more in informal sector rather than working in formal sector and the difference is more than 1%. The survey conducted by BBS for 2007 reveals that low educational qualification is an important reason for low female participation in the workforce. According to the survey the illiteracy rate is double between male & female workers in formal-informal sector. Women labor's illiteracy rate is 30.7% and male is 16.3%. Here 20.3% female workers have primary education and 16.7% have secondary education. And for male workers under the same issue, 29.4% male labors have dropped-out in primary level and 28.5% have dropped-out in secondary level. The total illiteracy rate is low in formal sector. In informal sector illiteracy rate is 30.3% & the rate of less literate is 33.5% and in formal sector sequentially they are 12.5% and 25.8%.

Social Insecurity

Social insecurity discourages females to join in workforce out of home. Violence against women is a major problem here. The varieties of violence range from physical to mental; such as teasing in the streets, acid/kerosene burning, kidnapping, killing, abduction, rape etc. Even the policeman, whose duty to protect, sometimes involved in violence like rape.

Ill Representation of Religious Views

Islam is a very modern and dynamic religion. But in the country like Bangladesh because of the lack of proper religious knowledge women often face barriers from religious leaders and their "*fotwa*" (rule imposed by religious leaders). So, when a women step ahead she has to fight against those before start the career or work. This is mostly seen in village areas.

Trafficking of Women

Trafficking of women in both inside and outside the country has increased that also a reason for low female participation. Women became confused where they can go or whom they should trust. Because of trafficking employers cannot get the access to those women.

Culture and Believes

In our culture it is believed that women need not to be educated, they will work at home and think only about the household activities or child rearing issues. They are believed that they (women) are weak and less productive than males. Poor women are exposed to various hazards. They are tortured for fetching dowry from father and they are tortured mentally and physically for various issues in father's home and husband's home.

Because of capitalism and open air culture, obscene presentations of the female body in most films are seen. Even in television they are also presented as an object rather than a subject. This is a reason that creates a bottleneck to work women in media which is also an important part of entire workforce.

These issues break women's mind to join in workforce. These issues may not directly a reason but indirectly women's dishonor in different issues creates negative impact to join in a workforce to work with males.

Male Dominated Society

In male dominated society women workers are discriminated in many ways. Women are harassed physically and mentally. They are discriminated in terms of salary, promotions etc issues. This discrimination often discourages women to step forward to involve themselves to be included in workforce.

Lack of Infrastructural Support

There is a lack of female hostels for unmarried working females in the city or the office area. Few industry or industrial area has child-care centers although this is a requirement as per the regulation of ILO. Moreover, women don't get maternal leave mostly and in many cases they are not being paid during that period. Transportation is another problem for females. In our country for women there is no better transport support for female students or female workers. It's really a huge hassle to get in

into a public transport and if they somehow managed to get in over there they harassed in many ways by other male passengers.

Malnutrition

70% of women are victim of malnutrition. A housewife takes care of everyone's health and hardly anyone take care of her health. The daily per capita calorie intake for men is 1927 kilo calorie and for women is 1599 kilo calorie. And due to that reason women cannot work properly in the workforce and improper works in work space encourage for leaving the job and discourages to others.

Pressure of Household Works

Women are culturally believed that they are the only responsible party to do all house hold activity. This ultimately led males not to contribute in household works and give all pressures to females. So, when a woman thinks, after the whole day's job she have to come home and have to sit for preparing foods and do all the household works she highly discouraged to write her name in the list of job holders.

Lack of Proper Law and Their Usage

Bangladesh doesn't have the law to protect the working women from different discrimination. We have many international treaty signed for ensuring discrimination free workspace but we couldn't ensured them and utilized them. So, if the law passed with the protective mood to protect women from various discrimination definitely it would be a encouraging point for increasing more women workers.

Discrimination in High Level & Politics

In government and non-government offices there are lesser promotions. In many cases women get more opportunities in low grade jobs.

There has been a widespread discrimination in distribution of resources between elected female and male members of Union Parishad, City Corporations and National Parliament. Moreover, there have been reported cases of harassment of women UP members, physical or otherwise by their male counterparts.

Finding Solutions in Short

To come out from the problems, to solve the bottlenecks for low female participation rate in our workforce apparent change requires; male dominated society undergoes a psychological change consequent upon a socio-economic transformation, religious views need to be changed and women have to aware of their own rights.

Concluding Remarks

The women development along with the target of increase the female participation in our national workforce has been started since after our independence and running till today with the believe of “Without Women It’s Hard To Think About Economic Development”. The light of hope is always there to give us the strength to step ahead and it’s same in that particular issue, too.

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