

# An Empirical Analysis on Women Empowerment of Some Selected Areas of Bangladesh

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## Abstract

Study was based on data collected from 400 women from four district named in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalganj respectively of Bangladesh. In 2013 the percentage of only women decision making over loan was 17, 15, 21, 15 and in 2014 percentage of only women decision making was increased to 19, 18, 25, 23 respectively. In 2013 the percentage of only man decision making over crop production was 30, 51, 34, 35 and in 2014 percentage of only man decision making was increased to 24, 34, 23, 22 respectively. In 2013 the percentage of only women decision making over child education was 11, 12, 17, 9 and in 2014 percentage of only women decision making was increased to 17, 19, 20, 15 respectively. In 2013 the percentage of freedom of women to go outside for social activities was 28, 17, 33, 31 and in 2014 percentage of freedom of women to go outside for social activities was increased to 45, 33, 39, 37 respectively. The objectives of the study were to determine the participation of women in decision making process over various activities and to identify the freedom of women in social and cultural activities.

**Keywords:** Women empowerment; Macroeconomics; Poverty alleviation

## Introduction

Bangladesh is a south Asian developing country. Women empowerment is a significant issue for our country. Bangladesh has effectively managed to decrease the gap, which existed between the males and females in the society. Empowerment of women is concerned; their economic and social status has shown a rather promising development. The situation of women in Bangladesh still somewhat remains to be at the beginner's stage. In the gender gap ranking 2009, Bangladesh stood at a rank of 93, did better than other Muslim country. It was an outstanding accomplishment because it intended that, in comparison to the women of the neighboring nations, Bangladeshi women have managed to break free of the gender gap phenomenon. In 2009 Bangladesh situated at the third place amongst all the South-Asian countries on the gender related development index (GDI) (UN). The matter of glad is that Bangladesh is the only country, after China and Nepal, surpassing India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, with the highest number of women taking part in the 'labor force.' Besides, statistics also reveal that a Bangladeshi woman, on average, earns about 55-60% of what a man earns yearly (UN).

## Brief Review of the Literature

Loro [1] comes to the conclusion that microcredit has empowered women in Bangladesh by providing them collateral free loans which they used for income generating activities.

Amin et al. [2] come to the conclusion that women who participate in such NGOs are more likely to a) use contraceptives, b) want no additional children, and c) desire smaller families than women who do not participate or who live outside of the NGOs' program areas.

Hossain [3] examined the impact the participation of rural poor women in credit programs had on contraceptive use and women's empowerment. He comes to the conclusion that the decision-making in family matters, mobility status and access to credit activities by poor women are important determinants for contraceptive use.

Biswas and Kabir [4] examined the effect of women's empowerment on the use of contraception as well as how women's empowerment

affects contraceptive use. The analysis of the study indicates that the higher the of women's empowerment, the higher is the likelihood of current use of contraception. Among the different empowerment factors, reproductive rights, decision-making power and awareness have significantly higher contribution to current use of contraception.

Jahan and Mahmud [5] attempt to reveal the sources of women empowerment. They collected data from purposively selected personnel of the society through specific questionnaires and observed that all the respondents have accepted women's education as the prime source of women empowerment. From the overall discussion it is clear that there is no single factor to be the source for empowering women.

Peter and Mia [6] investigated the impact of female participants on their empowerment, coming to the conclusion that the project was a success to significantly raise the women's economic and social status and decision-making power.

Pitt et al. [7] analyze the impact of microcredit on women's empowerment based on a large household survey conducted in 1998-99, which included a special module on women's empowerment. They find (p. 817) that their "results are consistent with the view that women's participation in micro credit programs helps to increase women's empowerment."

Ward et al. [8] conclude the case of the uneducated women is self-explanatory as they are representatives of the lowest wealth quintile and are forced to work for a living, accepting whatever form of work is available. Similarly, the high rate of employment among women with tertiary education is self-explanatory. Cash employment statistics for women with primary and secondary education has either increased insignificantly or has decreased (BDHS, 2004-secondary level).

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Kamal and Haider [9] have found that in the recent years more and more women with primary and secondary education have accepted sex work as employment and in fact their study show that out of other categories, the sex workers have the highest levels of literacy.

Kamal [10] analyze one of the major sources of contribution has been the increase in the women’s participation in the labour force. The garment sector has had a lion share in contributing to the same. However, in other sectors too, the government has tried to increase women’s participation and has introduced some ‘women’s only’ jobs to encourage women’s participation.

### Objectives

The specific objectives were the followings

To determine the participation of women in decision making process over various activities.

To identify the freedom of women in social and cultural activities.

### Research Methodology

#### Sample size and sampling technique

For any type of research work representativeness of collected information must have to be ensured so that valid and dependable conclusions can be drawn. In order to ensure representativeness of the data and information to be collected, we propose that probabilistic sampling strategy is to be followed. It is delineated below. Since the team had no information on necessary parameters such as standard deviation, the sample size was determined by using the following formula with 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error at the project level:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 P(1 - P)}{e^2}$$

Where,

n=Sample size

Z=Value of the standard normal variate

P=Proportion/Probability of success

Q=1-P

e=Margin of error

Assumptions:

Z=1.96 (The value of the standard variation at 95% Confidence level)

P=0.5

Q=0.5

e=0.05 (Allowable margin of error at 5%)

n=1.96<sup>2</sup> × 0.5 × 0.5/0.05<sup>2</sup>=3.8416 × 0.25/0.0025=0.9604/0.0025=384.16 (Table 1).

#### Sources of data

The study was involved in collection of data both from the primary and secondary sources. Different types of data and their sources are discussed under the following heads:

**Primary data:** Primary data have been collected through field survey. One set schedule of questionnaire was used for the respondents.

The data thus collected have been subsequently processed, tabulated and analyzed for the purpose of the study.

**Secondary data:** The secondary sources include govt. publications, annual reports on women empowerment, seminar papers, journals, published and unpublished thesis, and topic related various books, web site etc.

### Results and Discussion

The results presented in this study are based on the data collected from 4 (four) locations.

#### Participation of women in decision making process

Percent of participants was reported women participation in decision making process over taking loan, use of loan, child education, child marriage, family planning, medical care, house repairing etc.

**Participation of women in decision making process over loan:** The figure shown that the power of decision making of women is increasing day by day in selected areas. In 2013 the percentage of only women decision making was 17, 15, 21, 15 and in 2014 percentage of only women decision making was 19, 18, 25, 23 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalganj respectively. On the other hand the decision making percentage both man and women have increased surprisingly (Figure 1).

**Participation of women in decision making process over use of loan:** Women participation in the decision making process of using the loan indicated their level of empowerment. The figure shown that the power of decision making of women has increased in selected areas. In 2013 the percentage of only women decision making was 9, 8, 17, 9 and in 2014 percentage of only women decision making was 14, 11, 19, 13 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalganj respectively. On the contrary the decision making percentage both man and women have increased amazingly (Figure 2).

**Participation of women in decision making process over crop production:** Most of the households involve agricultural production directly or indirect at small scale or large scale. The figure shown that

Name of Districts	Sampling unit
Manikgang	100
Kisorganj	100
Tangail	100
Gopalganj	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>

Table 1: Distribution of respondents.

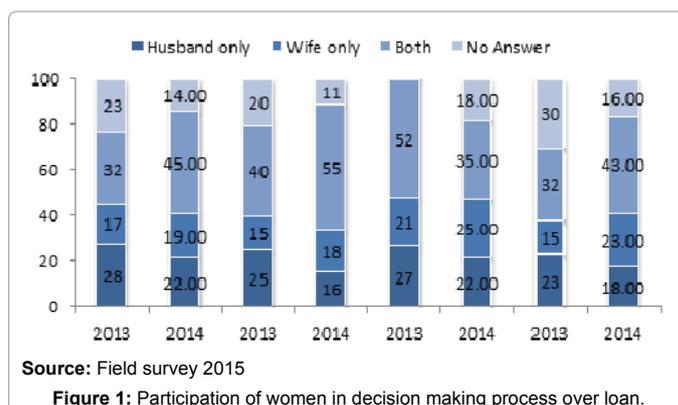


Figure 1: Participation of women in decision making process over loan.

the power of decision making of women has increased in selected areas. In 2013 the percentage of only man decision making was 30, 51, 34, 35 and in 2014 percentage of only man decision making was 24, 34, 23, 22 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively. It was indicated that the decision making power of man is decreasing and decision making power of women is increasing (Figure 3).

**Participation of women in decision making process over sale of product:** Normally, poor farmers sale their agricultural products at harvest season. Women can play vital role to sale the agricultural products. The figure shown that the power of decision making of women is increasing day by day in selected areas. In 2013 the percentage of only women decision making was 15, 6, 13, 8 and in 2014 percentage of only women decision making was 17, 11, 19, 15 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively. On the other hand the decision making percentage both man and women have increased surprisingly (Figure 4).

**Participation of women in decision making process over child education:** The figure shown that the power of decision making of women is increasing day by day in selected areas. In 2013 the percentage of only women decision making was 11, 12, 17, 9 and in 2014 percentage of only women decision making was 17, 19, 20, 15 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively. On the other hand the decision making percentage both man and women have increased surprisingly (Figure 5).

**Participation of women in decision making process over child marriage:** The figure shown that the power of decision making of women has increased in selected areas. In 2013 the percentage of only man decision making power was 23, 52, 23, 36 and in 2014 percentage of only man decision making was 15, 39, 18, 28 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively. It indicated that the decision making power of man is decreasing and decision making power of women is increasing (Figure 6).

**Participation of women in decision making process over medical care:** The figure shown that the power of decision making of women has increased in selected areas. In 2013 the percentage of only women decision making was 17, 20, 19, 13 and in 2014 percentage of only women decision making was 19, 27, 25, 19 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively. On the contrary the decision making percentage both man and women have increased remarkably (Figure 7).

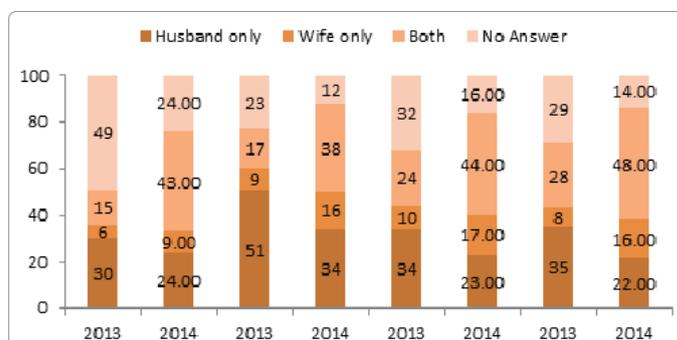
**Freedom of women to go outside for social activities:** The figure shown that in 2013 the percentage of freedom of women to go outside for social activities was 28, 17, 33, 31 and in 2014 percentage of freedom of women to go outside for social activities 45, 33, 39, 37 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively. The figure indicated that the freedom of women to go outside for social activities is increasing day by day in selected areas significantly (Figure 8).

**Freedom of women to engage in cultural functions:** The figure shown that the freedom of women to engage in cultural function is increasing day by day in selected areas significantly. In 2013 the percentage of freedom of women to engage in cultural function was 25, 17, 28, 32 and in 2014 percentage of freedom of women to engage in cultural function was 33, 29, 39, 37 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively (Figure 9).

**Freedom of women to engage in group activities:** The figure shown that in 2013 the percentage of freedom of women to engage in group activities was 33, 26, 29, 23 and in 2014 percentage of



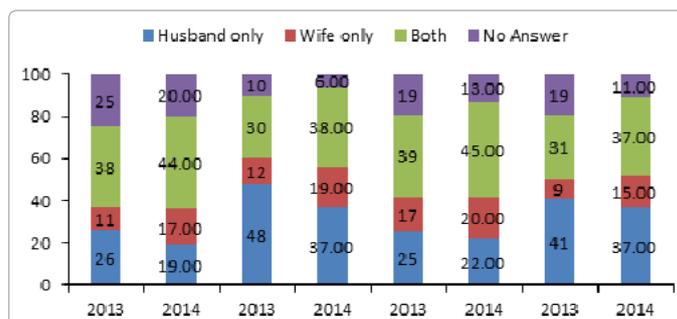
Source: Field survey 2015  
Figure 2: Participation of women in decision making process over use of loan.



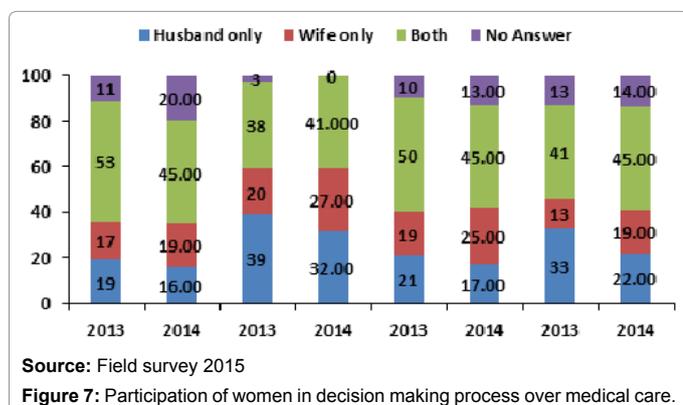
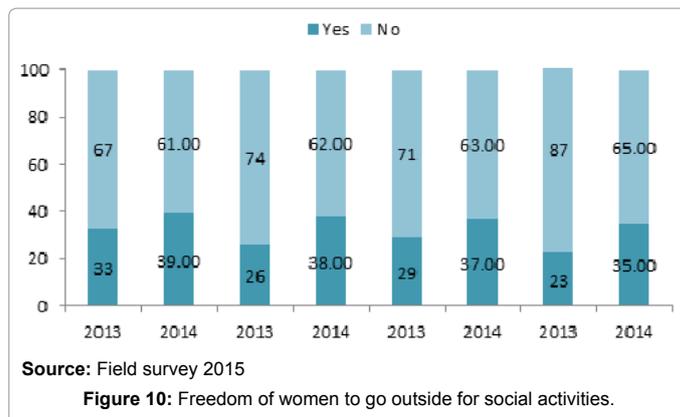
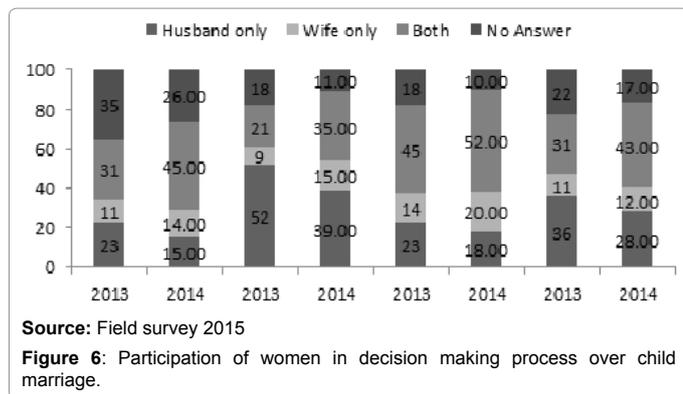
Source: Field survey 2015  
Figure 3: Participation of women in decision making process over crop production.



Source: Field survey 2015  
Figure 4: Participation of women in decision making process over sale of product.



Source: Field survey 2015  
Figure 5: Participation of women in decision making process over child education.



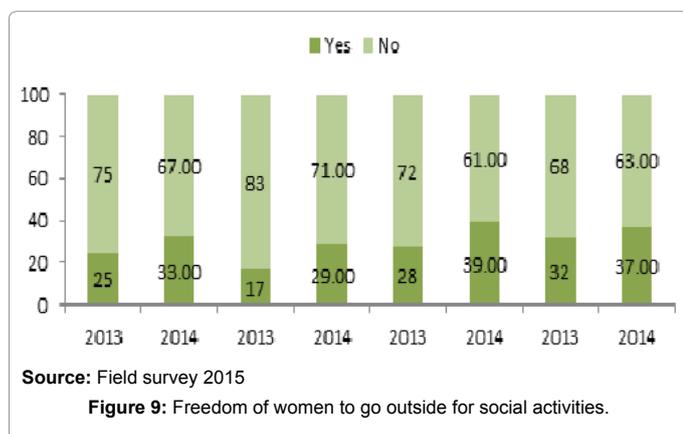
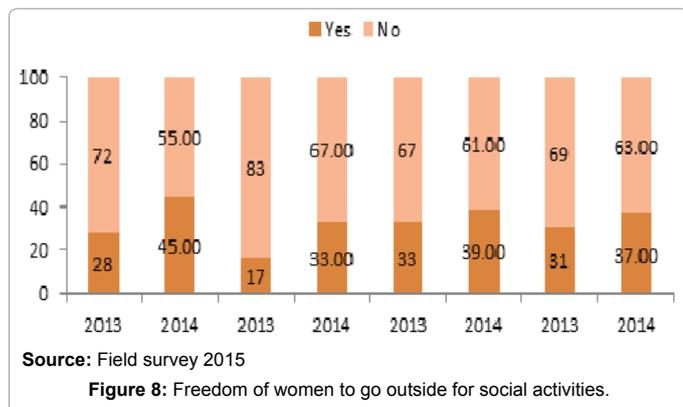
freedom of women to engage in group activities was 39, 38, 37, 35 in Manikganj, Kishorganj, Tangail and Gopalgang respectively. The figure indicated that the freedom of women to go outside for social activities is increasing day by day in selected areas significantly (Figure 10).

### Conclusion

Women empowerment is the most concerning issue for the all poor country in the world. For the betterment of the country we should provide the congenial environment for women employment which would make speedier the wheel of the economy of our country. This study shown that in the selected areas the percentage of women empowerment has been increased dramatically that is more important for our country development.

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