

Impact of Education on the Participation in Decision Making Process of Married Women in Rural Bangladesh

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Abstract: *This investigation is conducted to know the Impact of Education on the participation in Decision Making process of Married Women at different arena of rural area. To find out the nature of the reality, survey research design was used for this study. The study was conducted at Barapathalia village of Jamalpur Sadar Upazila of Jamalpur district. The respondents of the study consisted of 55 married women who were purposively selected from the study area. Data were collected through direct interview method using an interview schedule. Data were shown statistical tables and analyzed. The study reveals that higher level of education completed women had enjoy the higher level decision making power, on the other hand illiterate and primary completed women had the lower level decision making power.*

KEYWORDS: *EDUCATION, DECISION MAKING, RURAL BANGLADESH*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the commitment in national development. Education helps anyone to play active role in the uninterrupted pace of development programmes of the country and it also helps anyone to achieve all of the human rights. Bangladesh officially the People's Republic of Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. Bangladesh is a developing country. In 1971 Bangladesh established as an independent country. In 'The Constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh', section 15 & 17 mention about basic needs & Education. According to section 15 of the Constitution- "15. It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the state to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people with a view to securing to its citizens –To provision of the basic necessities of life. Including food, clothing, shelter, education & medical care..."

And according to section 17(a) of the Constitution "17. (a) Establishing a uniform, mass – oriented and universal system of education and extend in free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law "Though women compose half of the population in Bangladesh they are not being heard in their society yet. Due to existing poverty, patriarchal values and law, social prejudices, religious dogmatism a large number of girls/ women students fail to reach desired level of education. "Bangladesh has witnessed a rising rate in girl's enrollment at school. In fact; school attendance is higher for girls compare to boys for age 6-10 and 11-15. For those aged 16-20, school attendance drops sharply from level seen at younger ages and attendance is higher for males than for females", (NIPORT -2005).

In our country, women are deprived of their socio-economic and political rights. They are suffering from of the patriarchal values of social system, early marriage, institute of purdah, religious dogmatism and the victim of frequent child bearing & high mortality rate. The status of married women in Bangladesh remained considerably inferior to that of man. Woman in custom and practice remained subordinate to man in almost all aspects of their lives. Most married women live remained centered on their traditional roles and they had limited access to markets, productive service, health care, poverty reduction and local government. The lack of opportunities contributed to high fertility patterns, which diminished family well-being, contributed to the malnourishment and generally poor health of children and frustrated educational and other national goals.

Qadir, (2003) "Despite the constitutional guarantee of equal rights of women with men, they get often trapped of this unequal and disadvantage social position. Women often remain excluded from the process of decision making and policy formation." The illiteracy, lack of basic education, training & experience remain serious obstacles in rural women's development. Besides the lack of awareness and social superstitious also affect the rural women's participation in economic activities outside the family. Nirmala Benerjee and Joyanti Sen "Rural women continue to face a number of constraints on their ability to participate in formal & informal decision making process. Discriminatory and stereotypical attitudes, lack of education, security concerns and freedom of movement may also limit opportunities for women to participate decision making process".

Ahmed et al. (2012) Women's autonomy in decision making is positively associated with their age, education, employment and number of living children. Women from rural area and having no educational background have less autonomy in decision making in society. Women's increased education is positively associated with autonomy in own health care decision making, more schooling, family planning and so on. Women in Bangladesh face discrimination regarding decision making because educational status of women below than any other developing country. Bangladesh will undoubtedly be hampered if the status of women, constituting about fifty percent of the country's population, remains as low as it is today.

Ullah et al. (2011) stated that the importance of education for woman has been accepted worldwide, as it improves their earning ability and empowers them in deciding about their family size, and other family decisions. The study has shown that the educated women delay marriages, use family planning methods, they tend to have small family and play an effective role in society. Education also pays in economic terms for women, by allowing them going out of their houses and work in different sectors of the country, the working women will desire small family so they can easily handle the family matters as well as the official matters. In a large number of the families where women are educated the couple mutually takes the decision about the family size. Bbaale and Mpuga (2011) the positive impact of women's education on their autonomy, leading to later marriages, increased use of contraceptives and lower fertility. Female education has also been claimed to alter household power relations making women more autonomous and giving them greater control of various dimensions of their lives.

II. Objectives of the study

In this study the general objective is to investigate the impact of education on the participation in decision making process of married women in the rural Bangladesh. And the specific objectives are below:

1. To identify the impact of education on the occupation of married women.
2. To find out the effect of education on empowerment of married women.
3. To evaluate the relationship between education & freedom of mobility.

Limitations of the Study

In this study conduct only one village from Jamalpur District, 55 married women were purposively selected from the study area, due to time constraint unable to explore this study vastly.

III. Methodology of the study

This research is quantitative in nature but qualitative methods also have been chosen to analyze the objectives of the study. Survey method was applied in this study. The study was conducted among rural women of Barapathalia village of Jamalpur Sadar Upazila of Jamalpur District, Bangladesh during January to March 2016. 55 married women were purposively selected from the study area, and data were collected through face-to-face interviewing using an interview schedule.

IV. Data analysis & Findings

Socio-Demographic Features of Rural women

Among the respondents, 40 percent belonged to the age of 16-25 while 29 percent belong from 26-35 age group, 22 percent from 36-45 age group and less than 10 percent from 46-65 age groups. In addition, highest women completed secondary level of education 47 percent, 24 percent completed primary level & 18 percent from higher education level as well 11 percent from illiterate group. Besides, around 53 percent women lived in nuclear family & 47 percent lived in extended family. Additionally, large numbers of women from house wife were around 67 percent, 16 percent from service holder & 16 percent from business occupation. Moreover, among the religious identity majority of women was Muslim 89.10 percent, only 7.27 were Hindu & 3.64 percent from other religion.

Education and participation in decision making process

In respect of education and occupation, data in Table-1 illustrations that maximum Illiterate (83 percent) & primary level (77 percent) of educated women were housewife while 69 percent among secondary level of education & 40 percent among higher education completed women were housewife. On the other hand only 8 percent women were service holder from primary level of education, and 15 percent from secondary & 40 percent from higher level of education. Beside, few women are also engaged in business. In the decision making process the influence of education is important. Working women especially service holder have the background of higher education. Illiterate women hold the position of housewife as nonpaid job in the family.

TABLE 1

Relationship between education & occupation

Level of Education of married women	Occupation			Total
	House Wife	Service Holder	Business	
Illiterate	5	0	1	6
Percentage (%)	83%	0%	17%	100%
Primary	10	1	2	13
Percentage (%)	77%	8%	15%	100%
Secondary	18	4	4	26
Percentage (%)	69%	15%	15%	100%
Higher	4	4	2	10
Percentage (%)	40%	40%	20%	100%
Total	37	9	9	55
Percentage (%)	67%	16%	16%	100%

In respect of the level of education & purchasing power, data Table-2 reveal that 30 percent higher educated women were high level of purchasing power & 60 percent were medium level of purchasing power. While zero (0) percent women among primary & illiterate level of education were high level of purchasing power. Now a day for women achieving purchasing power education is most key factor.

TABLE 2

Relationship between education & purchasing power

Level of Education of married women	Level of Purchasing			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Illiterate	4	2	0	6
Percentage (%)	67%	33%	0%	100%
Primary	10	3	0	13
Percentage (%)	77%	23%	0%	100%
Secondary	15	10	1	26
Percentage (%)	58%	38%	4%	100%
Higher	1	6	3	10
Percentage (%)	10%	60%	30%	100%
Total	30	21	4	55
Percentage (%)	55%	38%	7%	100%

In respect of the level of education & decision to children schooling, table-3 refer that most of Higher & Secondary level completed women were enjoying high to medium level of power to send school of their children. On the other hand Illiterate & primary level of educated women had nil and low level power. Educated women apparently have more capability and awareness of sending their children to school than illiterate women.

TABLE 3

Relationship between education & schooling of children

Level of Education of married women	Decision of sending children to school				Total
	Nil	Low	Medium	High	
Illiterate	4	2	0	0	6
Percentage (%)	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%
Primary	5	7	1	0	13
Percentage (%)	38%	54%	8%	0%	100%
Secondary	3	6	11	6	26
Percentage (%)	12%	23%	42%	23%	100%

Higher	0	1	5	4	10
Percentage (%)	0%	10%	50%	40%	100%
Total	12	16	17	10	55
Percentage (%)	22%	29%	31%	18%	100%

In respect of the level of education & decision to have children, table-4 reflect that 83 percent illiterate & 54 percent primary level completed women had the nil decision to have children and 17 percent illiterate women & 46 percent primary level completed women had low level of decision making power. On the other hand 66 percent secondary level completed and 80 percent higher level completed women had medium to higher level decision making ability to have children. Here education plays an important role to decision to have the children.

TABLE 4
Relationship between education & have children

Level of Education of married women	Decision to have children				Total
	Nil	Low	Medium	High	
Illiterate	5	1	0	0	6
Percentage (%)	83%	17%	0%	0%	100%
Primary	7	6	0	0	13
Percentage (%)	54%	46%	0%	0%	100%
Secondary	5	4	9	8	26
Percentage (%)	19%	15%	35%	31%	100%
Higher	0	2	4	4	10
Percentage (%)	0%	20%	40%	40%	100%
Total	17	13	13	12	55
Percentage (%)	31%	24%	24%	22%	100%

In respect of the level of education & decision to treatment for own & children, table-5 reveal that 50 percent illiterate women had low & 33 percent had no decision making ability, only 17 percent had medium level of decision making ability to treatment for own & their children. Scenario is much better at primary level of educated women than illiterate women & secondary level completed 38 percent enjoy medium & 35 percent enjoy higher level of decision making power. And finally higher educated completed women had high (50 percent) & medium (40 percent) level of decision making ability to treatment. Higher educated women were actually more conscious about their own & children health.

TABLE 5
Relationship between education & treatment for own & children

Level of Education of married women	Decision to treatment for own & children				Total
	Nil	Low	Medium	High	
Illiterate	2	3	1	0	6
Percentage (%)	33%	50%	17%	0%	100%
Primary	3	4	4	2	13
Percentage (%)	23%	31%	31%	15%	100%
Secondary	1	6	10	9	26
Percentage (%)	4%	23%	38%	35%	100%
Higher	0	1	4	5	10
Percentage (%)	0%	10%	40%	50%	100%
Total	6	14	19	16	55
Percentage (%)	11%	25%	35%	29%	100%

In respect of the level of education & decision to using contraceptive, data in the Table-6 shows that no illiterate & primary level completed women had their own decision to use contraceptive. 8 percent secondary completed women had their own decision to use contraceptive & 54 percent secondary completed women using contraceptive were decided both husband & wife. The negotiating tendency of using contraceptive was till high

among others that were counted 54 percent secondary completed and 80 percent for higher level completed women. In our country every women cannot take decision about uses of contraceptive method but uses of contraceptive method plays a very important role for reproductive health of women. Taking decision of using contraceptive in Bangladeshi women feel very shyness and unconscious of their reproductive health, but education creates awareness among women.

TABLE 6
Relationship between education & using contraceptive

Level of Education of married women	Decision to take contraceptive/ using contraceptive			Total
	Husband	own	Both	
Illiterate	4	0	2	6
Percentage (%)	67%	0%	33%	100%
Primary	9	0	4	13
Percentage (%)	69%	0%	31%	100%
Secondary	10	2	14	26
Percentage (%)	38%	8%	54%	100%
Higher	2	0	8	10
Percentage (%)	20%	0%	80%	100%
Total	25	2	28	55
Percentage (%)	45%	4%	51%	100%

In respect of the level of education & freedom of mobility, decision making ability to freedom of mobility is one of the important factors of women empowerment. The Table-7 reflects that no illiterate women had decision making ability to mobility, in most cases (67 percent) their husband take decision and for 17 percent take decision to their family member. On the other hand 40 percent higher educated women had own choice and 40 percent take decision jointly with husband. In this study show that education has the influential role about decision making ability to freedom of mobility.

TABLE 7
Relationship between education & freedom of mobility

Level of Education of married women	Freedom of physical mobility				Total
	own	husband	jointly with husband	senior family member	
Illiterate	0	4	1	1	6
Percentage (%)	0%	67%	17%	17%	100%
Primary	2	6	2	3	13
Percentage (%)	15%	46%	15%	23%	100%
Secondary	6	6	8	6	26
Percentage (%)	23%	23%	31%	23%	100%
Higher	4	1	4	1	10
Percentage (%)	40%	10%	40%	10%	100%
Total	12	17	15	11	55
Percentage (%)	22%	31%	27%	20%	100%

In respect of the level of education & assent of voting, data in the Table-8 shows that only 17 percent illiterate and 31 percent primary level completed women voted with their own choice, whereas the consent of husband was considered to vote for 83 percent illiterate and 69 percent primary level completed women respectively. On the other hand 90 percent higher level completed women voted with their own choice and only 10 percent voted with choice of their husband. In our country women are subordinated to vote, they are influenced by their husband & family members but the tendency of subordination is being reduced due to influence of education. Most of the higher level educated women vote with their own consent.

TABLE 8

Relationship between education & assent of voting

Level of Education of married women	Assent of voting		Total
	Own	Husband	
Illiterate	1	5	6
Percentage (%)	17%	83%	100%
Primary	4	9	13
Percentage (%)	31%	69%	100%
Secondary	12	14	26
Percentage (%)	46%	54%	100%
Higher	9	1	10
Percentage (%)	90%	10%	100%
Total	26	29	55
Percentage (%)	47%	53%	100%

V. Recommendation and Conclusion

Education is the foundation for the development of any nation. The nations having more education rate is more developed. The overall rate of education of our country is very lower compare to other developed countries. Female education rate in our country at primary & secondary level is good but become lower at higher level education and particularly the rate variation is much more visible in the rural level. As half of our population is female, the country's overall development is not possible without escalating the development of women of our country. Therefore the development of skilled and educated women is required for a successful nation. The country's statistics demonstrates that almost 53 percentage women of rural areas enroll at the secondary level of education but more than fifty percent of them dropped out the education due to early marriage, job, socio-economic problems (such as family violence, social superstition, lack of empowerment, malnutrition) etc. As a result the women specially married women of our country fail to achieve their general and social rights as well as become impede to put opinions and participation in the decision making process in the family and society which ultimately hinders the overall progress and development of the country. For the development of women need to take some initiatives like education & training for women, different type of income generating activates with financial support in the areas of craft production, embroidery, cattle fattening, nursery development etc., create gender awareness the major concerning areas to combat gender inequality & discrimination must include education, income, dowry, early marriage, divorce right, health & nutrition & so on. The reality of the rural women of Bangladesh is that their economically dependent and remain a vulnerable, educationally backward, as well as politically and socially disadvantaged, as marginalized group that is yet to enjoy equality in status and excess to service resources and decision making process. Today Bangladeshi rural women started to contribute to the economically productive activities of the country. Yet, they have limited and restricted access to the decision making process. If suggested measures are taken the rural women in Bangladesh may enjoy an environment conducive their more participation in decision making process.

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