

Reasons for Doing Job outside Household and Difficulties Faced by the Working Women of Bangladesh

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Abstract—Bangladesh is a patriarchal and male dominated country. Traditional, cultural, social, and religious values and practices have reinforced the lower status of women accorded to them in society and have limited their opportunities for education, technical and vocational training, and involvement with earning activities outside their households. After independence numbers of women are doing job outside their households. This study attempts to find out the reasons of engaging in earning activities outside households and difficulties faced by upper and lower class working women in Bangladesh. To explore the objectives and research questions of the study descriptive techniques had been used. Survey was conducted among the women who were working in Rajshahi city of Bangladesh and face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect data. Findings of the study illustrates that most of the upper class working women engaged into job because they wanted to utilized their education and to bring solvency in the family, and they spend their income for meeting the needs of all the members of the family. On the other hand, most of the lower class working women involved into earning activities outside their households because they want to bring solvency in their families and spend their income on household expenditure. Both classes became tensed for their children because they had to stay at their working place for long time. Therefore, day care center should be established besides their working place for their children.

Keywords—Working Women, Reasons for Doing Jobs, Working Environment, Difficulties Faced.

I. INTRODUCTION

WOMEN and men are the basic pillars of family and society, without their equal participation in all spheres of life no society or country can progress properly. As far as the potentials of women are concerned, they are no less than men [1]. Bangladesh is a patriarchal and male dominated country in the world. Out of our total population 48.9 percent are women [2] Patriarchy and *purdah* are powerful norms of female seclusion from labor market and this severely restricts women from working outside the family [3], [4].

The status of women in Bangladesh is lower than that of men. Traditional, cultural, social and religious values and practices have reinforced the lower status of women accorded to them in society and have limited their opportunities for

education, technical and vocational training and involvement with earning activities outside their households [5]. Nevertheless, the situation of women is an important factor affecting the socio-economic development of a country. The long term socio-economic development of a country cannot be fully realized if women, who usually constitute half of the total population, enjoy a subordinate position to men; and their talents remain unexplored [6]. The problems affecting the economic and social status of women in Bangladesh are vast and complex. Poverty, lack of education, training and job opportunities has forced them to a state of complete dependency within the family as a daughter, wife or mother of their family in the society [7]. Besides, negative attitudes of society in general and men in particular, towards women working outside their home are also responsible for low female participation in the labor force and lower status.

Women, of course have always worked. Today, Bangladeshi women do contribute to their household and the economy of our country. With increasing poverty and the breakdown of the supportive kinship umbrella, and also due to the demand generated by some sectors of the economy, women's participation in the job market has been increasing during the mid 1980s [5]. After independence of Bangladesh, the numbers of working women outside their households are increasing. But the working women have been facing various problems to involve with earning activities outside their households and at working place those who are already involved. Mahtab [5] pointed that gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the working environment are two major problems that every professional working women face in Bangladesh. The author further mentioned that gender discrimination is applicable in all areas of benefits in factories. For instance irregular and lower wage payment is common in garment industry [5]. The intrinsic conviction of the traditional society is that women are capable of less work than men or less efficient than men governs this injustice of unequal salaries and wages for the same job [8]. But, no society can develop morally, socially, culturally and economically without the participation of women [5].

Therefore, this study attempts to find out the reasons of engaging in earning activities outside households and difficulties faced by different classes of working women in Bangladesh. In so doing, this paper has been structured into different sections. The first section explains the opening of research problem, objective and research questions. The second section focuses on the methodology of the study. The

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third section provides the findings of the study followed by the fourth section which presents some recommendations and conclusion.

A. Objective and Research Questions

The main objective of the study is to find out the reasons of doing job outside the households and the difficulties faced by different classes of working women in Bangladesh. The specific research questions of the study are as follows:

- Why women are involving with earning activities outside their households?
- How different classes of working women spend their incomes?
- What are the problems faced by working women of Bangladesh?

II. METHODOLOGY

To realize the study objectives and research questions descriptive techniques have been used. Rajshahi, one of the oldest cities of Bangladesh was selected purposively for this study. Survey was conducted among the women who were working in Rajshahi to collect data. In this study working women are identified as those women who are working outside their home in order to earn money or livelihood. Comparative analysis has been made among the upper class and lower class working women. Upper class working women includes; class-I, and II job holders in formal organizations and professionals like teachers, bankers, doctors, and engineers etc. Lower class working women includes III and IV class employees in formal organizations; working as day laborer, factory worker, garments worker, maid servants, hawkers and so on. Data have been collected from two categories of working women through face-to-face interviewing using interview schedule. Total number of sampled working women were 220; 110 from upper class and 110 from lower class were selected by using the purposive sampling technique. Collected data were computerized in the SPSS program. Simple descriptive statistical measures such as percentages, frequency distribution and average were used to analyze the primary data; in addition to that chi-square was used in describing the association between selected variables of the respondents for this study.

III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A. Present Socio-Economic and Demographic Status of Working Women

Age, marital status, family size, monthly income, economic solvency of working women were considered as parameter of their present socio-economic and demographic status.

1. Age Structure

Age is an important factor to identify the socio-demographic situation of a man or woman. Since the working ability mostly depends on the age structure. Those who are young in age, they are more active and capable of working and who are older in age; they are comparatively incapable of

working. The upper class working women have mentioned their actual age, but some of the lower class working women totally could not mention their actual age. They reported their approximate age on the basis of the historical event like, year of marriage, war of independence and the born of their first child. It is seen from Table I that highest percentage (56.3 percent) of upper class respondent working women of this study belongs to the age group of 35-45 years followed by the age groups of 25-35 years, 45-55 years, 55-65 years and 65-75 years and their percentage being 24.5, 14.5, 1.8 and 2.7. On the other hand, the highest percentage of lower class working women to the age group 25-45 years (79.1 percent). A clear difference is found in the age structure between the two classes of working women. Average age of the upper class working women is 41.1 years and the lower class working women is 38.09 years. Standard deviation of the upper class working women is higher compared to the lower class working women 8.28 and 7.17 respectively. It indicates that the upper class working women is more aged compared to the lower class working women. As the upper class working women involved in work after completion their study, so naturally they are aged than the lower class working women.

TABLE I
AGE OF THE WORKING WOMEN BY CATEGORIES

Age (Year)	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
25-35	27	24.5	43	39.1	70	31.8
35-45	62	56.3	55	50.0	117	53.2
45-55	16	14.5	11	10.0	27	12.3
55-65	2	1.8	0	.0	2	.9
65-75	3	2.7	1	0.9	4	1.8
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100
Average	41.1		38.09		39.60	
STD	8.28		7.17		7.88	

2. Marital Status

Marriage is a universal social institution that is composed by an adult man and woman to control and regulate their sexual life. All data have been collected from the working women who were married once. In spite of being married, a mentionable number of working women both in upper and lower class is living single (Table II).

TABLE II
MARITAL STATUS OF THE WORKING WOMEN BY CATEGORIES

Marital Status	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Married	96	87.3	58	52.7	154	70.0
Separated	7	6.4	21	19.1	28	12.7
Divorced	4	3.6	24	21.8	28	12.7
Widow	3	2.7	7	6.4	10	4.5
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100

About 12.7 percent of the upper class working women are found living single in the forms of deserted divorced, and widow and the rate of the lower class working women are

higher (46.3 percent) in these categories. If more single living (deserted, separated, divorced and widow) is considered as the more vulnerability in the context of traditional societies of Bangladesh, the findings indicate that lower class working women is more vulnerable compared to the upper class working women.

3. Monthly Income

Income is an important index of measuring socio-economic condition of a person or a family. But it is generally difficult to figure out the monthly income properly. There is a word like proverb in Bangladesh that “it should not to ask about the salary”. For this reason, many of the people in Bangladesh considered their income as confidential matter. Since, with very few exceptions, maximum working women are in formal job, they were able to mention their monthly income. It is seen from Table III that maximum (52.7 percent) working women’s monthly income is between BDT. 1-10,000, while only 3 working women’s monthly income is above BDT. 50,000/= A significant number (45.9 percent) of working women have monthly income range between BDT. 10,000-30,000. But the monthly income of working women have varied from class to class. The estimated average income is highly different from upper class to lower class working women. It is BDT. 19,284.15 for the upper class and BDT. 3,834.09 for the lower class working women. On the basis of chi-square test, this difference is statistically significant. As the chi-square value is 189.74, degree of freedom 4 and significance level .000.

TABLE III
MONTHLY INCOME OF THE WORKING WOMEN BY CATEGORIES

Monthly Income (Tk.)	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
1-10000	7	6.4	109	99.1	116	52.7
10000-20000	81	73.6	1	.9	82	37.3
20000-30000	19	17.3	0	0	19	8.6
40000-50000	1	.9	0	0	1	.5
70000 and above	2	1.8	0	0	2	.9
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100
Average (BDT.)	19,284.15		3,834.09		11,559.12	
STD.	10,061.53		2,706.98		10,673.23	
Chi-Square	Value=189.74		D.F=4		Significance=.000	

If income is considered as the criterion of better position of working women in society, it can be said that the upper class working women are in better position and the lower class working women are in vulnerable position in terms of monthly income.

4. Family Structure

Family is the most and simplest elementary form of society. It is an outstanding primary group, because, it is in the family that the child develops its basic attitudes and considered as the source of socialization. So it was necessary to know their family structure. It is evident from Table IV that the family size of upper class and lower class working women are different. The average number of family member is 3.89 and 4.15 for the upper class and lower class working women

respectively. It is also seen that the highest proportion (59.1 percent) of upper class working women’s family is consisted of more than four members. Rest of the upper class working women has 2 to 3 (36.4 percent) members and 4.5 percent working women have 6 to 7 family members. On the other hand, the highest number (56.4 percent) of lower class working women have 4 to 5 family members, followed by 32.7 percent, 10 percent and 0.9 percent have 2-3, 6-7 and 7-8 family members respectively. It is assumed that the upper class working women are more self-dependent, educated and empowered compared to the lower class working women. Besides, they are married and know the demerits of large scale of family. So their family size is smaller than that of lower class working women.

TABLE IV
FAMILY SIZE OF THE WORKING WOMEN BY CATEGORIES

Family Size	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
2-3	40	36.4	36	32.7	76	34.5
4-5	65	59.1	62	56.4	127	57.7
6-7	5	4.5	11	10.0	16	7.3
7-8	0	.0	1	.9	1	.5
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100
Average	3.89		4.15		4.02	
STD	.839		1.151		1.013	

5. Economic Solvency of Family

The modern civilized society is highly characterized by the basis of economic statuses. It is generally belief in almost every society that economic condition plays a vital role to determine the social status. As usual the researcher collected the information regarding the economic solvency of the working women. It is clearly shown in Table V that maximum (58.2 percent) working women are economically insolvent.

TABLE V
SOLVENCY STATUS OF THE WORKING WOMEN FAMILY BY CATEGORIES

Economic Status	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Surplus	79	71.8	13	11.8	92	41.8
Easy Going	29	26.4	57	51.8	86	39.1
Deficit	2	1.8	40	36.4	42	19.1
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100

If the class of working women is considered, the mentionable upper class working women (71.8 percent) carried out their life economically surplus position followed by 26.4 percent and 1.8 percent working women carried out their life economically easy going and deficit situation. On the other hand, maximum lower class working women are economically insolvent. It is 88.2 percent. Only an insignificant proportion (11.8 percent) of lower class working women carried out their life economically surplus position. If economic insolvency is considered as an indication of vulnerability in maintaining their family, the finding shows that lower class working women are more vulnerable

compared to upper class working women. The working women who have surplus money, they utilize their money in different ways for different purposes.

B. Reasons of Engaging in Job

Generally it is customary concept in our society that a man is considered to be engaged in productive activities since he works on the farm and brings home the products he has harvested or his wage. As a result, a man is considered the principal bread-earner of the family and the main source of the family's income. In recent times in particular after independence, there has been a significant change found in the attitude towards women taking up outside the home. Women have determined to work in different challenging professions outside the home. Many reasons are influenced the working women in this regard. It is seen from Table VI that maximum working women (68.2 percent) are engaged in work in both the classes for bringing about solvency in their family and 0.9 percent are engaged for satisfying their hobby.

TABLE VI
REASONS OF ENGAGING IN JOB OF THE WORKING WOMEN BY CATEGORIES

Reasons	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
To Utilize Education	52	47.3	1	0.9	53	24.1
To Bring Solvency	45	40.9	105	95.5	150	68.2
Own Work	7	6.4	0	0	7	3.2
Hobby	2	1.8	0	0	2	0.9
For Empowerment	4	3.6	4	3.6	8	3.6
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100
Chi Square	Value=82.075		D.F= 4		Significance=.000	

It is shown from Table VI that 47.3 percent upper class working women are engaged in job to utilize their education, 40.9 percent for bring solvency, 6.4 percent for herself, 3.6 percent for her empowerment and 1.8 percent for satisfying their hobby. On the other hand, most of the lower class working women (95.5 percent) are engaged in job to bring the solvency of their family, 3.6 percent for their empowerment and only 0.9 percent to utilize their education. There is significant difference about the reasons for engaging in jobs between the upper class and lower class working women as the chi square value is 82.07, degree of freedom 4 and significance is .000. So it is statistically significant. Data indicate that the lower class working women are bound to engage in job for their economic solvency. It is can be further noted that for the eradicating the economic hardship, woman, are compelled to engage in job.

C. Use of Income

Traditionally we know that female live under the control of male from their early life to death. In the childhood they have to live under father, in adulthood under husband and in elderly life under son. That means all the time of their life, the male in various form dominates them. So the working women were asked to mention how their income (which is earned from

their job) was being spent. They replied that they had to spend their income for multiple purposes.

TABLE VII
USE OF OWN INCOME OF THE WORKING WOMEN BY CATEGORIES

Use of Own Income	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
For All Family Members	83	75.5	21	19.1	104	47.3
Household Expenditure	16	14.5	84	76.4	100	45.5
For Children	6	5.5	5	4.5	11	5.0
Own Expenditure	5	4.5	0	00	5	2.3
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100

It is found that mostly income of working women is exclusively used for all members (47.3 percent) of the family. Almost all the respondents mentioned that they (by themselves or by family head) used their income for household expenditure (45.5 percent) followed by 5 percent for children, 2.3 percent for own purpose (own clothing, cosmetics and whatever they feel, spent their income) (Table VII).

The findings of Table VII shows that highest proportion (75.5 percent) of the upper class working women spend their money for all members of the family, followed by 14.5 percent in household expenditure, 5.5 percent for children's needs, 4.5 percent to meet up their own necessity. On the other hand the highest 76.4 percent lower class working women spend their money on household expenditure. From the data it is clearly seen that most of the upper class working women spend (47.3 percent) their money for all members of the family. If authority of spending income is considered as the indication of empowerment in all section of people, findings can be drawn that the working women are more empowered in social position compared to non-working women.

D. Problem in Work Place

The women in general in the traditional societies of Bangladesh are facing multidimensional problems. Gender discrimination is one of the major problems that every working women face in Bangladesh [5]. The respondents were asked whether they face problems or not in their working place of the study area. It is seen (Table VIII) that the maximum working women (82.7 percent) of both the classes have faced problem in their working place.

TABLE VIII
WHETHER THE WORKING WOMEN FEEL PROBLEM IN WORK OR NOT BY CATEGORIES

Feel Problem in Work	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Yes	88	80.0	94	85.5	182	82.7
No	22	20.0	16	14.5	38	17.3
Total	110	100	110	100	220	100

On the basis of category of working women, it is also seen that 80 percent of upper class working women face the problem in working place and 20 percent of working women did not face the problem. On the other hand, 85.5 percent of

lower class working women face the problem in working place and 14.5 percent working women did not face any problem. If more percentage is considered as the more severity of problem, it can be said that the problem of working place is comparatively severe for the lower class (85.5 percent) working women compared to upper class working women (80 percent).

Again the working women are inquired about the nature of problems in working place (Table IX). Most of the working women have replied that the major problem (56 percent) in their work place is tensed situation for their children which creates problem. They have also mentioned other problems in work place as too much laborious work (22.5 percent), long time stay outside the home (10.4 percent), bad environment (6 percent), negative attitude of boss (3.8 percent) and husband's insult (1.1 percent).

TABLE IX
NATURE PROBLEMS OF THE WORKING WOMEN IN WORKING PLACE BY CATEGORIES

Problems in Job Place	Working Women				Total	
	Upper Class		Lower Class			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bad Environment	3	3.4	8	8.5	11	6.0
Long Time Stay	15	17.0	4	4.3	19	10.4
Bad Behave of Boss	2	2.3	5	5.3	7	3.8
Too much Labour	14	15.9	27	28.7	41	22.5
Husband's Insult	1	1.1	1	1.1	2	1.1
Becomes Tensed for Children	53	60.2	49	52.1	102	56.0
Total	88	100	94	100	182	100
Chi Square	Value=14.023		D.F=5		Significance=.015	

If the category of working women is considered, data indicates that the lower class working women seriously faced the problem in work place like bad environment (8.5 percent), bad behave of boss (5.3 percent), excessive laborious work (28.7 percent) compared to the upper class working women . It is 3.4 percent, 2.3 percent, and 15.9 percent.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women's participation in jobs outside their households is not given the same consideration as that men's receives. Despite the economic necessity impelling many women into the labor force, their work was often considered secondary and frivolous. Women faced discrimination in pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement and access to interesting jobs. Additionally, women were still expected to perform the majority of household and child securing task, regardless of their work status. The result is that women's work is really never done [1]. However, women alongside the male are increasingly participating in outdoor income earning activities keeping pace with the development of the country and minimize their economic hardship. It is essential to ensure more women participation in all activities like economic, social, political etc. if we desire to have our rate of national development upgraded.

This paper sought to identify the reasons for doing job and problems faced in work places by working women of different classes in Bangladesh. Findings of the study shows that there are clear difference between upper and lower class working women on why they involved into earning activities outside their households, how they spend their income and the types of problem they faced in their working place. Most of the upper class working women engaged into job to utilize their education and to bring solvency in the family. On the other hand, most of the lower class working women involved into earning activities outside their households because they want to bring solvency in their family. Most of the upper class working women spend their income for meeting the needs of the family members. But most of the lower class working women spend their income on household expenditure. Both upper and lower class working women became tensed for their children because they had to stay on their working place for long time.

Working women have to maintain the equilibrium and balance between their home and career [1]. For the sustainable development of our society numbers of measures can be taken to enhance the opportunities for our women and to ensure their active participation in the labor force and development process. Negative attitudes of the society members can be changed through awareness raising programs of media, working conditions should be improved to some extent up to the desires of women, and day care center should be established besides their working place for their children.

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