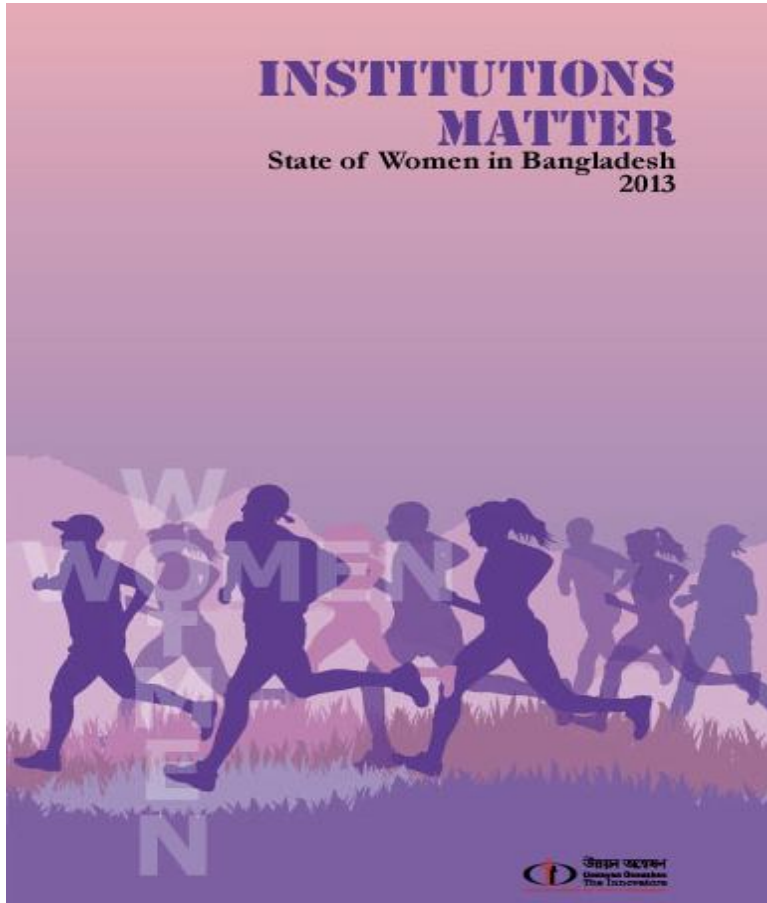


WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Md. Al Amin Islam



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WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Md. Al Amin Islam

1 INTRODUCTION

Women education has received widespread attention in the recent development discourse. It has already been reflected in the various educational policies and programmes related to women of the state. Though some progresses have made in the women education over the years, outcomes are still unsatisfactory. Due to the ancient and traditional mentality, women are less educated even now than their counterparts. There are, however, some improvements in women's education which have mostly occurred due to several income assistance programmes such as the budgetary allocation of government for the women, free primary education, massive stipend programmes as well as food for education programmes.

Education is the variable that intends to promote values and improve the capacity of people that sustain the environment and development issues of any country. It contributes to create awareness, welfare attitudes, skills and behaviour as well as inducing a sense of ethical responsibilities among the people. Education is a fundamental right of every citizen of a country. There is no alternative to education for development of human resources. Furthermore, it is an essential tool for achieving equality, empowerment, social status, peace and overall development. Both men and women are benefited from non-discriminatory education and ultimately, equalize the relationship between them.

In order to participate in the positive change in every sector, women must have equal access to educational opportunities. Educated women realize the benefits of the development. They choose to have fewer children, keep themselves and their children healthier, send their children to school as well as finish their schooling properly. They find employment more readily and earn higher wages or, if self-employed, are more productive. This is because women are more often responsible than men in child rearing and use their earnings for the betterment on the health or education of the children. Educated women are more active in civic affairs. Perhaps most importantly, an educated woman can more easily avoid the vicious cycle of poverty. Instead, she can be part of a virtuous cycle of education that ensures the well-being of her descendants and her country. A study revealed their contributions in which an increase in the women educational attainment raises the subsequent per capita rate of growth in real GDP.

In Bangladesh, women comprise almost half of the population. Therefore, without a meaningful and active participation of women in regular economic activities, a dynamic and sustainable economy is impossible. A sustainable economy is a precondition for national growth and prosperity including the institutionalization of a democratic system. Moreover, an equal participation of educated manpower is a precondition of a sustainable economy. Considering the issue, a special emphasis has been given by the government, donor agencies and NGOs to increase the educational status of women. Hence, there is an urgent need of systematic and in-depth assessment on women's education. This chapter is making a humble effort to make an assessment on women's education in order to have a clear image of the current situation.

2 LITERACY RATE OF WOMEN

Bangladesh has gained some successes in women education over the years that have reflected in various national and international statistics. The progresses, however, remain lower than the desired level. Girl children are more likely to enrol in school due to various initiatives taken by the government and non-government organisations as well as to accelerate the rate of literacy of women. In this section, the rate of literacy of women has been broadly discussed.

2.1 Literacy Rate of Population (7 years and above)

Bangladesh has shown some positive signs in the area of literacy¹, especially for females, over the past few years. For taking some active initiatives and awareness, the rate of female literacy has increased with a more accelerated pace than that of male literacy. Female literacy has increased from 40.8 per cent in 2001 to 53.9 per cent in 2010 at an annual rate of 3.57 per cent, while, for male, the rate of increase was 2.28 per cent per year during the same period at national level (Table 4.1). Additionally, the rate of increase in the percentage of literacy was 2.85 per cent for male and 4.0 per cent for female in the rural area during the same period. On the other hand, in urban areas, it was 1.23 and 2.27 per cent for male and female during the same period respectively. These higher increase rates of female literacy than that of their counterparts has resulted in gender parity. If such improvement in female literacy continues, the gender parity at national level might be achieved by 2020, while it might be realised by the year of 2025 and 2018 in rural and urban areas respectively. Continuation of this rate without taking any initiative indicates that there might be a gap of 38.40, 42.12 and 28.01 per cent from the target of 100 per cent in National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) by 2014 at national, rural and urban area respectively for the female population.

Table 1: Literacy rate of population (7 years and above) by sex and locality

| Year | National | | | Rural | | | Urban | | |
|------|----------|--------|----------------------|-------|--------|----------------------|-------|--------|----------------------|
| | Male | Female | GPI = Female/Male | Male | Female | GPI = Female/Male | Male | Female | GPI = Female/Male |
| 2001 | 49.6 | 40.8 | 0.82 | 44.4 | 36.7 | 0.83 | 64.9 | 54.8 | 0.84 |
| 2002 | 52.8 | 44.5 | 0.84 | 49.3 | 41 | 0.83 | 67.3 | 58.8 | 0.87 |
| 2003 | 53.1 | 44.9 | 0.85 | 49.7 | 41.4 | 0.83 | 67.4 | 58.9 | 0.87 |
| 2004 | 53.7 | 46.2 | 0.86 | 50.2 | 42.9 | 0.85 | 68.1 | 60.2 | 0.88 |
| 2005 | 55.4 | 48.8 | 0.88 | 51.6 | 45 | 0.87 | 67 | 60 | 0.90 |
| 2006 | 55.8 | 49.1 | 0.88 | 51.9 | 45.3 | 0.87 | 67.5 | 60.5 | 0.90 |
| 2007 | 59.4 | 52.7 | 0.89 | 55.5 | 48.7 | 0.88 | 71.1 | 64.5 | 0.91 |
| 2008 | 60.8 | 52.7 | 0.87 | 54.5 | 48.4 | 0.89 | 71.8 | 65.4 | 0.91 |
| 2009 | 59.6 | 53.8 | 0.90 | 55.7 | 49.7 | 0.89 | 71.9 | 65.4 | 0.91 |
| 2010 | 59.8 | 53.9 | 0.90 | 55.8 | 49.9 | 0.89 | 72.1 | 66 | 0.92 |

Source: Author's calculation based on Sample Vital Registration System (2010) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011

¹ Literacy refers to the abilities to read and write text. Literacy is explicitly defined as the four strands of language- reading, writing, speaking and listening. A literacy man can derive and convey meaning, and use their knowledge to achieve a derive purpose of goal that requires the use of language skills, be spoken or written.

2.2 Adult Literacy Rate of Population (15 years and above) by Sex and Locality

The adult literacy rate² of women has increased with an accelerated pace than that of men. This higher rate of increase in women adult literacy over men has resulted in reducing the gender gap and increasing the gender parity. Based upon the historical track record, the rate of increase in adult literacy for women was 3.98, 4.30 and 3.58 per cent at national, rural and urban area respectively during 2001 to 2010. If these rates remain the same, the rate of adult literacy in women might stand at 66.41, 60.51 and 89.02 per cent by 2015 indicating a huge shortfall of 33.59, 39.49 and 10.98 per cent from the millennium development goals (MDGs) target of 100 per cent for national, rural and urban level. In order to achieve the target of adult literacy of 100 per cent for women by 2015, an increase in the adult literacy by 16.1, 20.16 and 6.49 per cent is required from 2010 for the national, rural and urban levels respectively. Additionally, it is also evident that the gender parity has already been achieved in 2010 in the urban area. On the other hand, achievement of gender parity at national and rural levels demands more time. According to the historical track record, gender parity might be gained by 2018 and 2022 for the national and rural area respectively.

Table 2: Adult literacy rate of population (15 years and above) by sex and locality

| Year | National | | | Rural | | | Urban | | |
|------|----------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| | Men | Women | GPI = Women/Men | Men | Women | GPI = Women/Men | Men | Women | GPI = Women/Men |
| 2001 | 53.9 | 40.8 | 0.76 | 47.9 | 35.9 | 0.75 | 70.3 | 57.1 | 0.81 |
| 2002 | 55.5 | 43.4 | 0.78 | 51.4 | 39.1 | 0.76 | 72.2 | 60.7 | 0.84 |
| 2003 | 56.3 | 44.2 | 0.79 | 52.2 | 39.9 | 0.76 | 72.7 | 61.2 | 0.84 |
| 2004 | 57.2 | 45.8 | 0.80 | 53 | 41.6 | 0.78 | 73.8 | 62.7 | 0.85 |
| 2005 | 58.3 | 48.6 | 0.83 | 53.6 | 43.8 | 0.82 | 72 | 62.3 | 0.87 |
| 2006 | 58.5 | 48.8 | 0.83 | 53.8 | 44 | 0.82 | 72.3 | 62.5 | 0.86 |
| 2007 | 63.1 | 53.5 | 0.85 | 58.6 | 48.8 | 0.83 | 76 | 67.1 | 0.88 |
| 2008 | 61.3 | 52.6 | 0.86 | 56.6 | 47.9 | 0.85 | 75.2 | 66.6 | 0.89 |
| 2009 | 62.6 | 54.3 | 0.87 | 58.2 | 49.6 | 0.85 | 75.4 | 67.6 | 0.90 |
| 2010 | 62.9 | 55.4 | 0.88 | 58.4 | 49.8 | 0.85 | 71.6 | 75.5 | 1.05 |

Source: Author's calculation based on Sample Vital Registration System, 2010 and Bangladesh

3 NET ENROLMENT RATE AT PRIMARY LEVEL

Bangladesh has achieved a significant progress in enrolment at primary level over the last few decades. Girl enrolment at primary level has increased from 86.4 per cent in 2002 to 87.8 per cent in 2010 at a rate of 0.20 per cent per year at national level. This rate of increase was 0.32 and 0.37 per cent for the rural and urban areas respectively during the same period. On the other hand, this rate of increase was 0.15, 0.22 and 0.04 per cent at the national, rural and urban level respectively for boys during the same time.

² Adult Literacy program offers not only instruction in reading, writing, and calculation but also provides information and skills to assist participants in obtaining employment, improving their productivity and reaching a better quality of life. These skills help participants to adapt to new workplace environments.

Improvements in the literacy rate especially in female literacy have been seen due to multiple effects from some significant initiatives. This achievement in girls' education is mainly the result of 1990 World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), which encouraged all participating nations to expand their vision to meet goals in the education sector, especially the goal of making primary education universal. Additionally, over the times, investment in the education sector as well as NGOs' involvement in assisting the government of Bangladesh has been increased to meet its goals related to primary education. The ministry for Primary and Mass Education has been established in 1992, which set as its objective as the universalization of primary education as well as the elimination of the gender and poverty-gaps; demand-side interventions such as the female stipend programmes, the food for education (FFE) program and most recently the primary education development program (PEDP II) - a six-year program beginning in the year 2000 which aims to increase access, quality and efficiency across the board in the primary education sector. Nationwide rate of enrolment³ has sharply increased; significant progress has been made in raising equality of access between different geographic and socio-economic groups. In addition, the gender gap has literally been removed at the primary level. Moreover, free and female stipend programmes have resulted in the higher attendance of girls over the years. However, though there has been a significant gain in primary enrolment of girls; the rate of increase over the years remained slower. The primary school enrolment for girls is higher in the urban area than the rural area. The higher infrastructural development in the urban area than that of the rural area is the main reason behind this higher enrolment.

Table 3: Net enrollment rate at primary level by sex and locality

| Year | National | | | | Rural | | | | Urban | | | |
|------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Rate of Growth | | Boys | Girls | Rate of Growth | | Boys | Girls | Rate of Growth | |
| | | | Boys | Girls | | | Boys | Girls | | | Boys | Girls |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2002 | 84.6 | 86.4 | | | 83.7 | 85.6 | | | 85.6 | 85.4 | | |
| 2003 | 81.4 | 82.6 | -3.78 | -4.40 | 82.2 | 82.8 | -1.79 | -3.27 | 82.8 | 80.1 | -3.27 | -6.21 |
| 2004 | 85.1 | 86.4 | 4.55 | 4.60 | 84.7 | 86.1 | 3.04 | 3.99 | 86.1 | 88.6 | 3.99 | 10.61 |
| 2005 | 84.4 | 85.6 | -0.82 | -0.93 | 83.8 | 85.1 | -1.06 | -1.16 | 86.6 | 87.1 | 0.58 | -1.69 |
| 2006 | 84.4 | 85.6 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 83.8 | 85.2 | 0.00 | 0.12 | 86.6 | 87.1 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2007 | 85.6 | 87.4 | 1.42 | 2.10 | 85.2 | 87.3 | 1.67 | 2.46 | 87.1 | 87.6 | 0.58 | 0.57 |
| 2008 | 80.3 | 81.3 | -6.19 | -6.98 | 79 | 80.3 | -7.28 | -8.02 | 82.9 | 83.3 | -4.82 | -4.91 |
| 2009 | 85.7 | 87.4 | 6.72 | 7.50 | 85.2 | 87 | 7.85 | 8.34 | 87 | 87.8 | 4.95 | 5.40 |
| 2010 | 85.6 | 87.8 | -0.12 | 0.46 | 85.2 | 87.8 | 0.00 | 0.92 | 85.9 | 87.9 | -1.26 | 0.11 |

Source: Author's calculation based on Sample Vital Registration System, 2010 and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011

3.1 Dropout Rate at Primary Level

Even though enrolment in primary education has improved over the years, the dropout of students is still persisting. The dropout for girls has decreased from 32.7 per cent in 2002

³ Enrolment rate is a very important determinant of educational achievement of a country. The net enrolment appeared to be main predictor of basic education in Bangladesh.

to 12.2 per cent in 2010 at a rate of 7.84 per cent per year whereas; it was 7.71 per cent for boys during the same period at national level. Again, the annual rate of decrease was 7.55 per cent for boys and 7.79 per cent for girls in rural areas and 7.85 and 7.97 per cent for boys and girls in the urban area respectively over the same period. Additionally, if these rates of decrease remain the same, the targeted rate of dropouts stated in National Plan for Action (NPA-II) of 5 per cent by 2015 might not be possible. Furthermore, there might be a gap of 3.85 per cent and 2.5 per cent for boys and girls respectively at the national level within the stipulated time period.

Several initiatives, such as increased educational budgetary allocation of the government for girls, free primary education; massive stipend programmes at the primary level and food for education programmes have resulted in improving the participation of pupils at the primary level. As an outcome of such initiatives and assistance programmes, the dropout rate⁴ for girls has decreased over the period of 2002 to 2010 compared to past decades. These may also happen because of changing socio-cultural norms and religious views, increasing paternal educational qualification or household income etc.

Table 4: Dropout rate at primary level by sex and locality

| | National | | | | Rural | | | | Urban | | | |
|-------------|----------|-------|----------------|--------|-------|-------|----------------|--------|-------|-------|----------------|--------|
| | Boys | Girls | Rate of Growth | | Boys | Girls | Rate of Growth | | Boys | Girls | Rate of Growth | |
| | | | Boys | Girls | | | Boys | Girls | | | Boys | Girls |
| 2002 | 37.6 | 32.7 | | | 37.4 | 32.4 | | | 37.9 | 33.4 | | |
| 2003 | 36.8 | 31.9 | -2.13 | -2.45 | 38.1 | 32.8 | 1.87 | 1.23 | 30 | 27.3 | -20.84 | -18.26 |
| 2004 | 34 | 30.5 | -7.61 | -4.39 | 34.8 | 31 | -8.66 | -5.49 | 29.6 | 27.6 | -1.33 | 1.10 |
| 2005 | 28 | 24.4 | -17.65 | -20.00 | 29.3 | 25.3 | -15.80 | -18.39 | 23.4 | 21.3 | -20.95 | -22.83 |
| 2006 | 27.7 | 24 | -1.07 | -1.64 | 28.9 | 24.8 | -1.37 | -1.98 | 23.2 | 21 | -0.85 | -1.41 |
| 2007 | 28.7 | 24.8 | 3.61 | 3.33 | 29.3 | 25 | 1.38 | 0.81 | 26.5 | 24.3 | 14.22 | 15.71 |
| 2008 | 22.7 | 19.4 | -20.91 | -21.77 | 22.6 | 18.9 | -22.87 | -24.40 | 23 | 20.4 | -13.21 | -16.05 |
| 2009 | 27.2 | 25.4 | 19.82 | 30.93 | 29.3 | 26.5 | 29.65 | 40.21 | 25 | 23.3 | 8.70 | 14.22 |
| 2010 | 14.4 | 12.2 | -47.06 | -51.97 | 14.8 | 12.2 | -49.49 | -53.96 | 14.1 | 12.1 | -43.60 | -48.07 |

Source: Author's calculation based on Sample Vital Registration System, 2010 and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011

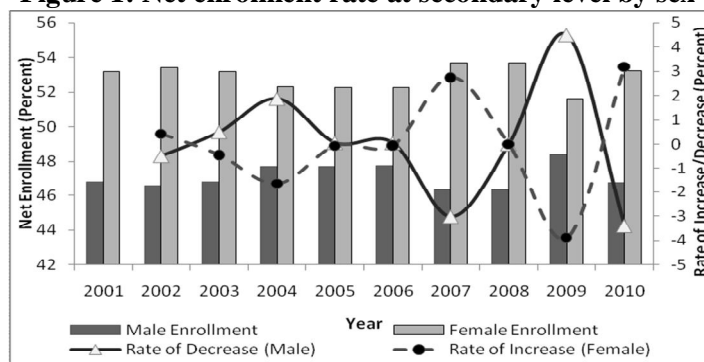
4 NET ENROLMENT RATE AT SECONDARY LEVEL

Like primary education, Bangladesh has already achieved a significant increase in the secondary school enrolment over the preceding years. The rate of enrolment of girls at secondary level has fluctuated a little bit over the period of 2001-2010 which was slightly higher than that of the boys. The female enrolment at secondary level was found at 53.20 per cent in 2001 which has decreased annually by 0.43 per cent from 2001 to 2005 and increased by 0.37 per cent from 2005 to 2010. Additionally, female enrolment at secondary level has increased by an annual rate of 0.01 per cent between 2001 and 2010 whereas it decreased by 0.01 per cent for male in the same time. A combined effects of

⁴ The dropout rate is defined as the percentage of a cohort of pupils who enrolled in a specific grade but could not reach the next grade in the next academic year. It is also an important indicator to determine, how proportion of pupils enrolled but not receiving a specified grade.

various affirmative programmes such as the female secondary school project (FSSP) financed by the government of Bangladesh (GoB), the female secondary school assistance programme (FSSAP) assisted by the World Bank (WB), the female secondary education stipend project (FESP) assisted by the Norwegian Agency for development (NORAD) have resulted in some improvements in female enrolment at the secondary level.

Figure 1: Net enrolment rate at secondary level by sex

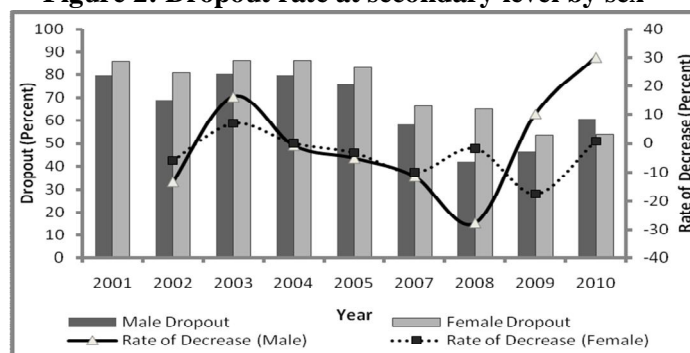


Source: Author's calculation based on Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics-2006, 2008, 2010 and 2011, Ministry of Education

4.1 Dropout Rate at Secondary Level

In spite of undertaking various positive initiatives, especially for females, the rate of dropout in the secondary level remains higher than that of the expected level (not only for females but also for males). The rate of dropout at the secondary level for females was 86.02 per cent in 2001, which has decreased to 83.29 per cent in 2005 and further decreased to 53.83 per cent in 2010. The rate of decrease in the percentage of female dropout during 2005 to 2010 was higher than that of 2000 to 2005. This rate was 0.79 per cent between 2000 and 2005 whereas it was 7.07 per cent between 2005 and 2010. A similar result were found in case of males, which was 79.73 per cent in 2001 and decreased to 75.77 per cent and 60.53 per cent in 2005 and 2010 respectively. The annual reduction rate of dropout in males between 2005 and 2010 was 4.02 per cent which was also higher than the rate of reduction (1.24 per cent) from 2000 to 2005. Additionally, during the period from 2001 to 2010, the rate of female dropout has decreased at an annual rate of 4.16 per cent which was about 55.22 per cent higher than that of their male counterparts (2.68 per cent). The recent price hike of essential commodities and deteriorating socio-cultural and religious activities against females might be the reasons behind this decreased rate of dropout.

Figure 2: Dropout rate at secondary level by sex



Source: Author's calculation based on Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics-2006,2008, 2010 and 2011, Ministry of Education

5 NET ENROLMENT RATE AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL

Like primary and secondary level, Bangladesh has progressed at higher secondary levels compared to the past decades. Women enrolment at higher secondary level has increased from 41.64 per cent in 2005 to 44.90 per cent in 2010 at a rate of 1.57 per cent per year. On the other hand, it was 1.71 per cent between the year of 2001 and 2005. Moreover, it is apparent that female participation has increased between the year of 2001 and 2010 whereas male enrolment has followed a decreased trend during the same period. This increased trend of women enrolment at higher secondary level over male has resulted in reducing the gender gap. According to the historical track record, gender parity might be achieved by 2018.

Table 5: Net enrolment rate at higher secondary level by sex

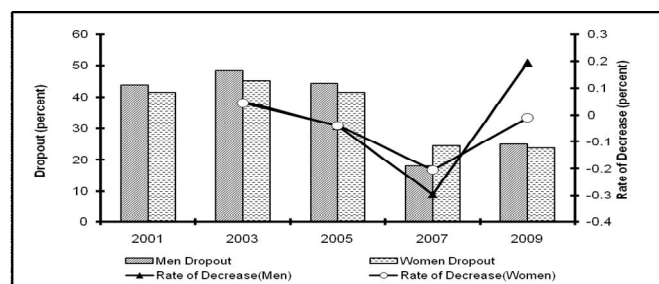
| Year | Men | Women | Rate of Growth | | GPI = Women/Men |
|------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|--------------------|
| | | | Men | Women | |
| 2001 | 61.03 | 38.97 | | | 0.64 |
| 2002 | 60.89 | 39.11 | -0.22 | 0.35 | 0.64 |
| 2003 | 60.82 | 39.18 | -0.13 | 0.19 | 0.64 |
| 2004 | 60.11 | 39.89 | -1.17 | 1.81 | 0.66 |
| 2005 | 58.36 | 41.64 | -2.91 | 4.38 | 0.71 |
| 2006 | 58.41 | 41.59 | 0.08 | -0.12 | 0.71 |
| 2008 | 55.77 | 44.23 | -2.26 | 3.17 | 0.79 |
| 2009 | 55.45 | 44.55 | -0.57 | 0.72 | 0.80 |
| 2010 | 55.10 | 44.90 | -0.62 | 0.77 | 0.81 |

Source: Author's calculation based on Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2011, Ministry of Education, 2012

5.1 Dropout Rate at Higher Secondary Level

The dropout at higher secondary level for women has reduced to 23.87 per cent in 2009 from 41.5 per cent in 2001 at a rate of 5.31 per cent per year. On the other hand, it was 5.39 per cent for the men during the same time (2001-2009). Though some progress has been made in the enrolment scenario of the country, rate of dropout remains high both for men and women as well as their rate of reduction remains lower than the expected rate.

Figure 3: Dropout rate at higher secondary level by sex

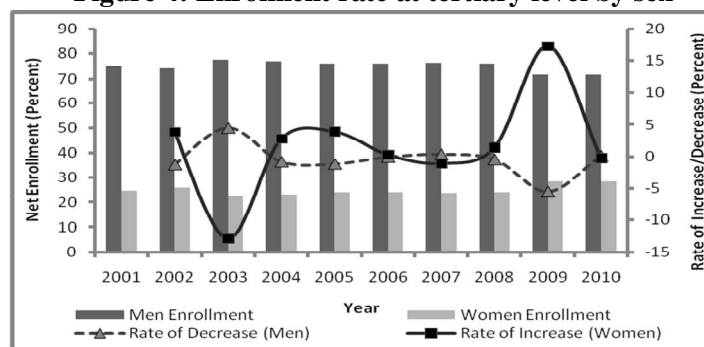


Source: Author's calculation based on Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics-2006, 2008, 2010 and 2011, Ministry of Education

6 NET ENROLMENT RATE AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Women enrolment at tertiary level remains much lower than that of their male counterparts. Higher education has enormous potential to promote prosperity in the developing nations (UGC, 2006). Higher education of women, however, is far behind compared to men. Women enrolment was only 24.86 per cent in 2001 and has increased to 28.26 per cent in 2010 at a rate of 1.52 per cent per annum. Men enrolment, on the other hand, has decreased between 2001 and 2010 but it is far away from their female counterparts. More specifically, men enrolment at tertiary level has decreased from 75.14 per cent in 2001 to 41.74 per cent in 2010 at a rate of 0.50 per cent per annum. Wide spread poverty and less empowerment of women might be responsible for such differences in enrolment between men and women.

Figure 4: Enrolment rate at tertiary level by sex



Source: Author's calculation based on Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics-2006, 2008, 2010 and 2011, Ministry of Education

7 ENROLMENT RATE AT PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

With the demand of economic and technical development, the professional education⁵ sector has been expanded and the enrolment rate at professional education is increasing over the time. The women enrolment in medical, dental, textile and college of technology has been found in 30.39, 41.81 and 6.21 per cent at 2008 that has increased to 37.91, 44.13 and 9.49 per cent with a rate of 24.74, 5.55 and 52.82 per cent respectively in 2009. On the other hand, the rates of enrolment in medical and dental college institute has decreased at a rate of 0.34 per cent and 0.68 per cent respectively whereas in the textile college it has increased by 2.11 per cent between 2009 and 2010. Again, the rate of female enrolment has been gradually decreasing at nursing college, homeopathic college and nursing institute. It is noted that in 2008, no male student was enrolled into the nursing institute. Moreover, the men and women enrolment at lather technology and college of law remained stagnant during 2008 to 2010.

⁵ Professional education can be defined as many ways. It can be defined by the goal of education. In this definition, professional education would be the education of different levels by means of which people qualify for a certain profession or specialty. On the other hand, professional education can be defined by the type of educational institution: this would be the education obtained in professional secondary schools and in universities and institutes. The type of professional education that is obtained, the duration of training and the degrees obtained on the system of education in each country. Professional education has been viewed as an instrument of state for forming a valuable person for society. The role of education is condensed to training personnel for science, industry and agriculture and the everyday activities of a country.

Table 6: Women enrolment rate at professional education by type of institute

| Types | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | Rate of Growth | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-----------|
| | | | | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
| Medical College | 30.39 | 37.91 | 37.78 | 24.74 | -0.34 |
| Dental College | 41.81 | 44.13 | 43.83 | 5.55 | -0.68 |
| Nursing College | 97.37 | 86.87 | 86.69 | -10.78 | -0.21 |
| Homeopathic College | 27.55 | 26.27 | 26.24 | -4.65 | -0.11 |
| Unani/Ayurvedic College | 22.09 | 22.32 | 22.3 | 1.04 | -0.09 |
| Nursing Institute | 100 | 72.03 | 70.34 | -27.97 | -2.35 |
| Textile Technology College | 6.21 | 9.49 | 9.69 | 52.82 | 2.11 |
| Leather Technology | 8.74 | 8.74 | 8.74 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Law College | 28.27 | 28.27 | 28.27 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Art College | 24.31 | 14.44 | 14.34 | -40.60 | -0.69 |
| Music College | 43.78 | 43.78 | 44.08 | 0.00 | 0.69 |

Source: Author's calculation based on Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics-2006, 2008 and 2010, Ministry of Education

8 BARRIERS TO WOMEN EDUCATION

Socio-economic and cultural factors as well as institutional matters are largely responsible for the improvements in the education of women. In spite of several progresses in educational sector, women are far behind compared to their male counterparts.

Economic Hardship: Poverty is one of the most common forms that hamper the achievements of women education. Still one-third (31.5 per cent) of the population in Bangladesh is living below the poverty line (HIES, 2010). The recent price hike of essential commodities (especially, food prices) makes their livelihood difficult to maintain it properly. People (especially poor) spend a large part of their expenditure on food and cut off expenditure from other basic necessities like education for their children. Therefore, children of poor households are forced to engage in various income generating activities which popularly known as “child labour”. Additionally, the engagement of rural female children with garments sector is an indicating factor for increasing girl's enrolment at primary level. After getting primary education, however, girls are migrated to urban areas to work in garments industry for family maintenance. Moreover, financial barrier is very crucial to the expansion of access at secondary education. The cost per student at secondary education is often higher than at primary level because of a combination of factors: a more diverse curriculum, more subjects, greater investments in infrastructure and better qualified and highly paid teachers (NPEF 2007). Indirect costs of education continue to be an obstacle in enrolment of the poorest households (Lewin, 2008). The costs of pens/pencils, copybooks, private coaching, transportation, and school uniform remain a relative economic burden for poor households. Lack of money to buy essential school materials for children's schooling is likely to cause lack of enrolment in the first place and potentially high dropout at a later stage (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003). Under these circumstances, poor people might take education as an additional burden.

Cultural Barriers: In Bangladesh, the education of the women remains neglected especially, in the rural and poor dominated households. Investment in women education

seems luxuries by the parents in most of the cases. Marriage is more prioritized instead of education in case of their daughters as they will stay at their husband's house after marriage. Therefore, investment for their education is not necessary and like a lost of money⁶. Besides, sons are thought as the main income provider along with taking care of their parents. As a result, girls are not encouraged to send to school and/or they are often withdrawn from school.

Structural Barriers: Inequality is a part of the social structure. Socio-cultural norms, religious matter, lack of parental education and less expectation from girls' education create inequality in the women education. People belonging to the lower class of the society are not allowed to be associated with the upper class any way. There has been no strong motivation policy to address the matter of literacy towards the lower castes.

Geographic Isolation: Geographic isolation is also a strong barrier in achieving women education. Rural urban differentials have played a vital role regarding this. Lack of educational institutions as well as distance between home and educational institutions in the rural areas hamper the women enrolment. Education of women in *haor* and *char* areas is affected by the lack of institutions as required as well. Economic deprivation, social inequalities, geographical isolation, unequal income distribution, bad transportation etc. create an uncomfortable situation for the children especially for girls to enrol in the school.

Parental Education: Education status of the parents has a positive impact on women education. A non-educated parent is failed to calculate the long term benefit of education. Illiterate parents do not aware about the long term benefits of their daughter's education and the 'girl' are thought to be an additional burden to the family. Therefore, they make a short term benefit of sending their children to the labour market by dropping them form school.

Over Population: Bangladesh is one of the populous countries in the world. Large size of its population demands more educational institutions against its growing citizen. There is, however, a huge lack of educational institutions for the growing population. This demand of extra educational institutions cannot be established radically compared to the population growth. Thus, over population creates a barrier in the advancement of educational sector and women education as well.

Demographic Barriers: Some demographic variables are largely responsible for lowering women education. Secondary education of female is highly affected by the onset of puberty. Additionally, majority of the rural and as well as urban girls get married at a very early age cutting themselves off from the educational institutions. Early marriage, household responsibilities, pressure to work, family reputation and related issues etc. are responsible as well to get an easy access in women education and its completion.

Violence against Women: Violence against women is a significant factor for hampering the women education. Violence against women has increased over the years (ODHIKAR, 2012). Under these circumstances, parents are feeling insecure to send their daughter outside their home and/or dropping down their girls from educational institutions. As a result, rate of women education is lowering down. Recently, eve teasing and sexual

⁶ See Annex-B

harassments in educational institutions has added a new concern for parents in terms of their girls' safety issue. If an educational institution is thought to be a site of physical or sexual violence then parents will be reluctant to send their girls to educational institution, and also students will be reluctant to attend there (Jones and Espey 2008). Therefore, women education has largely affected by the violence from the society, especially from the patriarchal domination.

9 CONCLUSION

Despite considerable progress in the women education, a large portion of women is still far behind from the real light of education. Education is the key that enables to transmit specific, targeted, useful tools for survival and betterment of the quality of life. Near about half of total women population, however, are deprived from this reality. It is also difficult to reach the desired targets of development unless efforts are accelerated to improve the women education and their participation in educational institutions. The results of this chapter not only explores the women educational status at different levels but also determines the socio-economic and other related factors that are affecting women education with a view to suggesting where the priority should be given to solve the backdrops. Various reasons like misuse of budgetary allocation, price hike of essential commodities, socio-economic and religious tradition, geographic location etc. have a major impact on ensuring women education. Diverse multiple providers and highly centralized public sector management prevent area-based planning for women education. The projections, which are provided in this chapter, indicate that the country is well on the track to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs) targets and national plan for action- II (NPA-II) targets related to education within the scheduled time whereas women education demands some additional times.

Operational and structural reformation should involve the beneficiaries of women education in managing school activities. Decentralize the higher educational institution or creating new institution in the rural areas should be the vital concern so that rural female can easily get higher education. Policies should be targeted towards the poor children especially for female for greater enrolment. Failure of timely implementation of the educational expenditure should be reduced and the poor colonial administrative pattern should be eliminated. Ensuring female security in educational institutions is badly needed. The government should attempt to take stronger measures for revising and renewing existing strategies. Otherwise, the aim of achieving desired targets of women education might be an elusive one.

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Appendix - A

Mathematical Equation

$$P_l = P_b (1 + ry)$$

$$\Rightarrow r = \frac{1}{y} \left(\frac{P_l}{P_b} - 1 \right)$$

Where,

P_l = Value of the launch year;

P_b = Value of the base year;

y = Number of years between launch year and base year;

r = Rate of growth

Then, a projection using this method could be computed as:

$$P_t = P_l (1 + rz)$$

Where,

P_t = Value of the target year;

P_l = Value of the launch year;

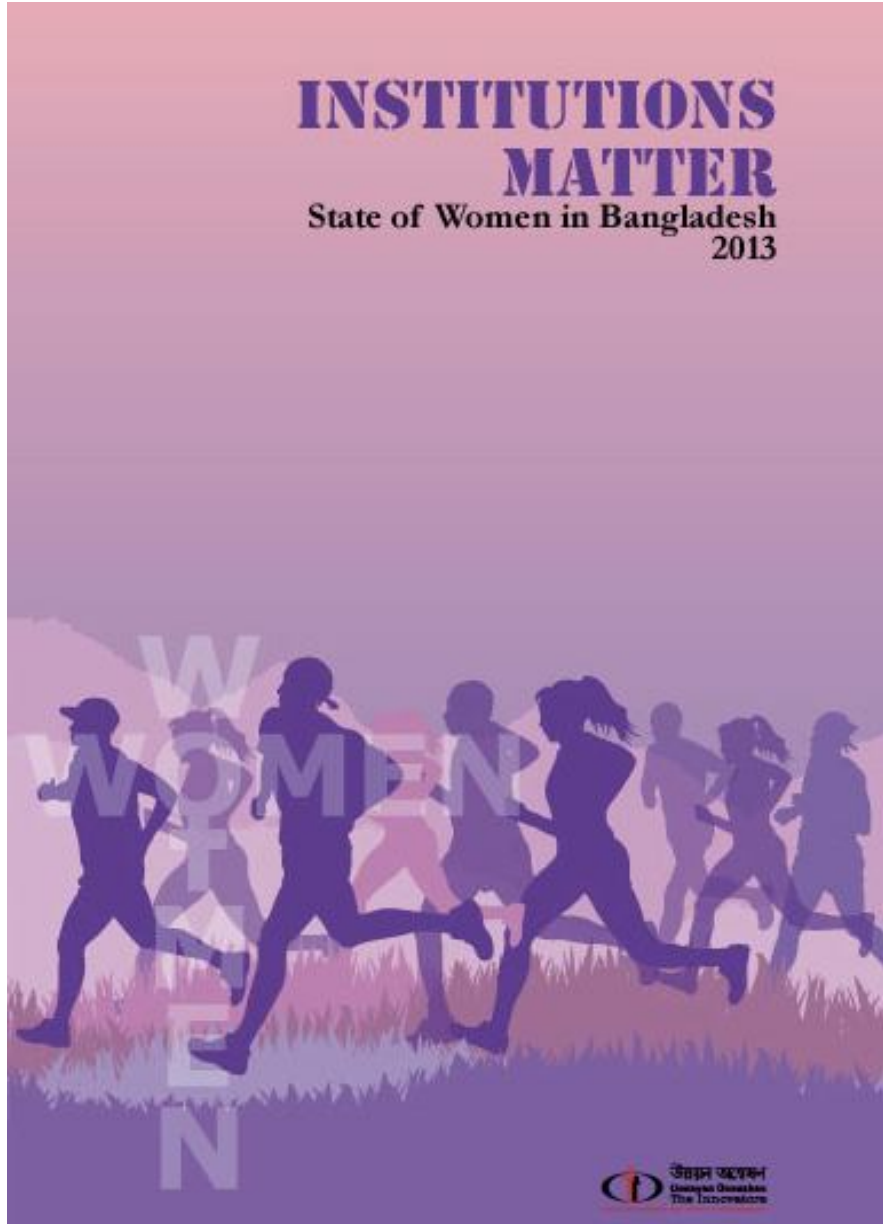
z = Number of years between target year and launch year;

r = Rate of growth

Appendix – B

Rehana Akhter is a woman of 27 years old. She lives on the roadside of Panthapath, Dhaka. She has been living for five years in Dhaka city, migrated from Jamalpur district with her husband. They have 4 children. Rehana works as a maid in two houses and earns BDT 3000 per month. Her husband is a rickshaw puller who earns BDT 150 to 200 per day. Rehana has no home as well as no roof, over her head where she is living. They had a home in her home district, but her husband was not able to afford them. So, they had decided to migrate here in Dhaka city.

Here, they found work but they lost their home. They have become rootless and destitute people. Rehana and her husband are now able to feed their children. Nevertheless, now they are far away from the fulfillment of other fundamental requirements. Their children go to a free school of a non-government initiative where they have their primary level education. Their life is going on. As they have no savings, Rehana feels insecure about the future of her children. They are unable to provide them expenditure for higher education further. In case of her daughter education, she told, "*kisudin pore bia dimu beshi poraie luv ki?*" She think, investment in her daughter education means the loss of money. She believes that her son will provide their requirements in the near future. Therefore, investment in her son will be more beneficial than that of her daughter. Rehana says that- '*I am always poor; I have no home to live*'. They spent all of their money for food and medicine. The price hiking and eviction are making their life more vulnerable day by day. If the expenditure of the daily life increases rapidly, they will stop the schooling of their children and engage themselves in any work for earning otherwise. There is no way for survival, they think. Though the amount of Rehana and her husband's income has been increasing but still, they are unable to fulfill the basic needs of their life. Rehana was born in a poor family where she did not get all her basic needs. Still again, she is poor and could not able to meet her basic needs. From begging to present, she is struggling with multidimensional poverty and she does not know that really she will overcome this situation someday or not.



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