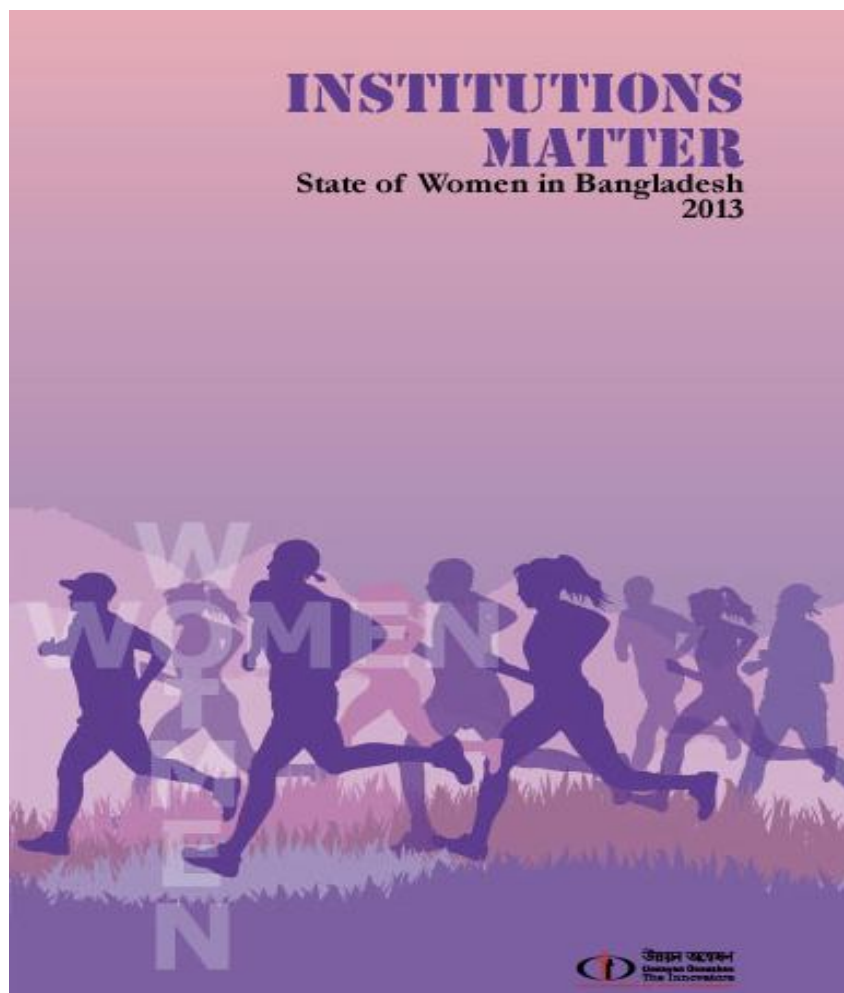


# WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Md. Ayub Ali



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# **WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT**

**Md. Ayub Ali**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Women's employment plays a significant role in the socio-economic progress in any country. To achieve sustainable development, women's enrollment in economic activities is urgently needed. Participation of women in the labour force can change the dynamics of the entire labour market. In Bangladesh, the economic contribution of women is substantial but they are not largely acknowledged. To steer up the economy of the country towards growth and development, women involvement in labour market is urgently needed. Moreover, the employment status of women in Bangladesh is still lower than that of the expected level. Gender equality and empowerment of women is one of the major targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as pursued by the government of Bangladesh. The mainstream economic activities of women can empower and reduce their inequality. Economic opportunity allows women to be independent and lead their lives with dignity. Unfortunately, women do not have the same job opportunities in their working age compared to men. A common scenario is that women are often steered into low payment and less desirable jobs for which they may suffer for their entire lives.

In Bangladesh, women are mainly involved in informal jobs compared to men. The reality of the informal economy for women is more severe. Moreover, low payment, social insecurity, lack of good working environment and scarcity of voice in decision, shortage of equal access to resources and services makes women vulnerable and leads to exploitation. The social and religious cultures of Bangladesh consider women to be 'physically weaker' than men and therefore, the women are restricted to join the economic activity outside the home. Moreover, women friendly working environment as well as employment opportunities is limited here. As a result, the general employment status of women is lower.

Bangladeshi women are still facing the brunt of global challenges, through the feminization of poverty, illness and the burden of unpaid work. In addition, poor infrastructure, higher rate of unemployment, rate of erratic inflation, early marriage, lower health consciousness, less empowerment of women, political instability, corruption and a slow implementation of economic reforms etc, are the obstacles for not allowing further equitable development as well as the progress of women in the country. The earning capacity of women helps to make societies and economies healthier and sustainable. Therefore, an effort is made in this chapter to highlight the employment status of women in Bangladesh so that a clear scenario can be stated which might be very helpful in formulating new policies and programs regarding women-related phenomenon.

## **2 WOMEN IN LABOUR FORCE**

To change the dynamics of the entire labour market, participation of women in the labour force is very much expected. The rate of increase in labour force of women, however, is higher than that of men, though the total number of women labour force is less than half of the total men labour force. In case of women, the number of labour force has increased from 8.6 million in 1999-2000 to 17.2 million in 2010 with an annual rate of 5.06 per cent, whereas the number of male labour force has increased from 32.2 million in 1999-2000 to 39.5 million in 2010 with an annual rate of 2.27 per cent. In Bangladesh, participation of women in labour force has increased mainly due to the rate of increase in women education, augmentation of the garment industry, awareness of people,

advancement of media and the role of government and various NGOs. The rate of increase in women labour force is lower than the rate of increase in women who were beyond the labour force during 2005-2006 to 2010 (Table 5.1). On the other hand, the increments of women beyond the labour force are increasing gradually in the recent time and might be so in the upcoming years. It is apparent that, participation of women in labour force varies largely by their location (i.e. rural and urban). Similar situations are also found for men (Table 1).

**Table 1: Women in labour force**

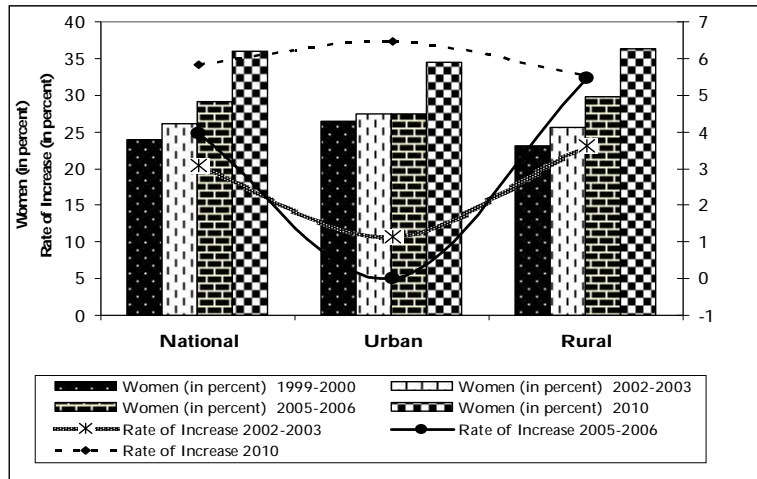
Year	Labour Force (in millions)				Not in Labour Force (in millions)			
	Women	Rate of increase (per cent)	Men	Rate of increase (per cent)	Men	Rate of increase (per cent)	Women	Rate of increase (per cent)
<b>National</b>								
1999-2000	8.6	...	32.2	...	27.3	...	6.2	...
2002-2003	10.3	6.59	36.0	3.93	29.3	2.44	5.2	-5.38
2005-2006	12.1	5.83	37.3	1.20	29.4	0.11	5.7	3.21
2010	17.2	10.54	39.5	1.47	30.5	0.94	8.4	11.84
<b>Urban</b>								
1999-2000	2.2	...	7.1	...	5.9	...	1.4	...
2002-2003	2.7	7.58	8.6	7.04	7.1	6.78	1.5	2.38
2005-2006	2.8	1.23	8.9	1.16	7.5	1.88	1.8	6.67
2010	4	10.71	9.3	1.12	7.6	0.33	2.3	6.94
<b>Rural</b>								
1999-2000	6.4	...	25.1	...	21.4	...	4.8	...
2002-2003	7.6	6.25	27.4	3.05	22.2	1.25	3.7	-7.64
2005-2006	9.3	7.46	28.5	1.34	21.9	-0.45	3.9	1.80
2010	13.2	10.48	30.2	1.49	22.9	1.14	6.1	14.10

Source: Author's calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

## 2.1 Rate of Women Participation in the Labour Force

The rate of participation of women in labour force has gradually increased over the years in spite of different socio-demographic and political problems in Bangladesh. Women participation in the labour force, at the national level, has increased from 23.9 percent in 1999-2000 to 36.0 percent in 2010 with an annual rate of 5.06 percent. In urban areas, the rate of women participation in the labour force has increased from 26.5 percent in 1999-2000 to 27.4 percent in 2002-2003 with an annual rate of 1.13 percent. In the year 2005-2006, the rate of increase in the labour force was zero whereas in 2010, the rate of increase is better (6.48 per cent) than the national level. Whereas, in rural area, the annual rate of increase between 1999-2000 and 2010 was 5.76 percent.

**Figure 1: Women participation rate in the labour force**

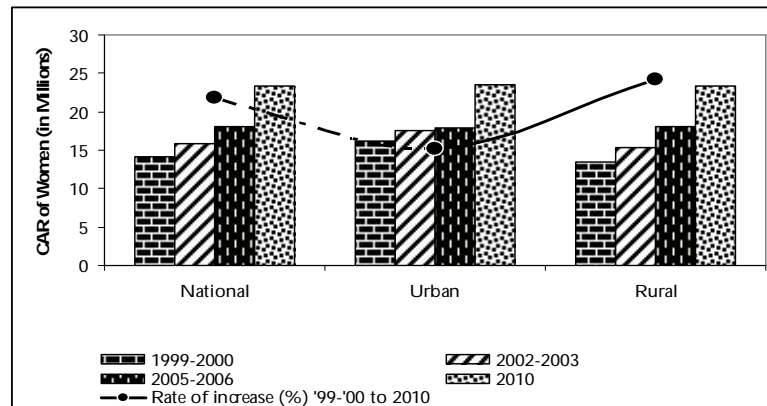


Source: Author's calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

### 3 RATE OF CRUDE ACTIVITY OF WOMEN

The annual crude activity rate<sup>1</sup> among women has increased by 21.75 per cent at national level during 1999-2000 to 2010. In the urban areas, the rate of crude activity has increased from 16.2 per cent in 1999-2000 to 23.6 in 2010 with an annual rate of 15.23 per cent whereas, the rate of rural crude activity has increased from 13.5 per cent in 1999-2000 to 23.3 per cent in 2010 with an annual rate of 24.19 per cent. The acceleration of slums in the urban areas and the increase of rural-urban migration of job seekers is resulting in higher increment of the crude activity among the rural women in the recent and upcoming years.

**Figure 2: The rate of crude activity of women**



Source: Author's calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

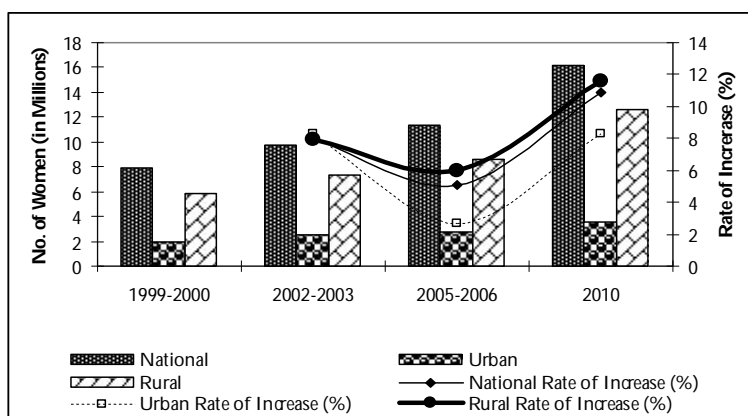
<sup>1</sup> The ratio of the economically active persons to the population aged 15 years and over expressed in per centage (BBS, 2011)

## 4 EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF WOMEN

The participation of women in employment has successively increased with the increase of total population in Bangladesh. The number of employed women has increased from 7.9 million in 1999-2000 to 9.8 million in 2002-2003 with an annual rate of 8.02 per cent per annum whereas this rate of increase was 5.1 per cent between 2002-2003 and 2005-2006. Additionally, this rate was 11.3 per cent between the year 2005-2006 and 2010 at the national level. Augmentation of the garments industry, increment in women's education, advancement of micro-credit, higher inflation and poverty result in the increment of women employment.

The number of employed women in the rural area has doubled compared to the urban area in 1999-2000. After a decade, in 2010, the rate of increase of the rural women has reached at 11.36 per cent per annum, whereas their urban counterparts have increased at 8.0 per cent. In urban areas, the annual rate of growth in women's employment has increased to 8.33, 2.67 and 8.33 per cent in 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010 respectively, and 7.92, 5.94 and 11.63 per cent respectively for the rural areas.

**Figure 3: Employment situation of women (15+ years)**

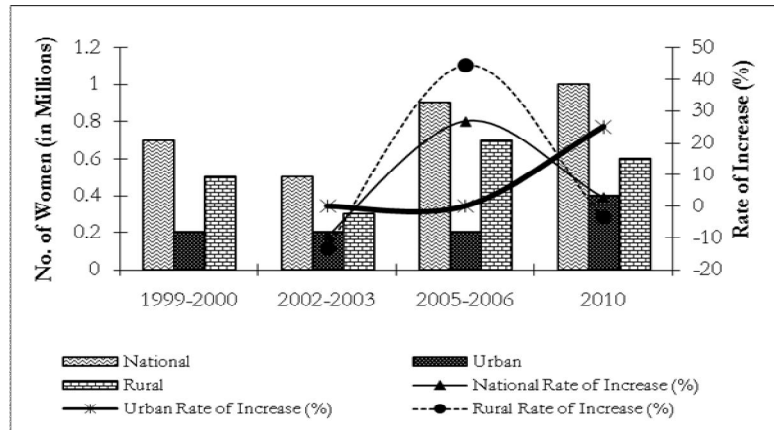


Source: Author's calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

## 5 UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF WOMEN

The number of unemployed women has regrettably increased at the national level in parallel to the increment in the rate of employment, except in 2002-2003. Unemployed women have increased from 0.7 million in 1999-2000 to 1.0 million in 2010 with an annual rate of 4.28 per cent per annum. The country has experienced declining rate of unemployment between the period 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 with a rate of 9.52 per cent whereas, this rate of increase was 26.67 per cent between 2002-2003 and 2005-2006. Additionally, this rate was 2.78 per cent between the year 2005-2006 and 2010 at the national level. During the period of 1999-2000 and 2002-2003, zero growth of unemployment has been shown in the urban areas and a decline of 13.33 per cent has been found in the rural areas. The highest annual increment of unemployed women at the national and rural area was found in 2005-2006 but was zero for the urban areas. In 2005-2006 to 2010, urban unemployed women have increased at 25.0 per cent whereas the annual rate of rural unemployment has decreased at 3.57 per cent.

**Figure 4: Unemployment situation of women (15+ years)**

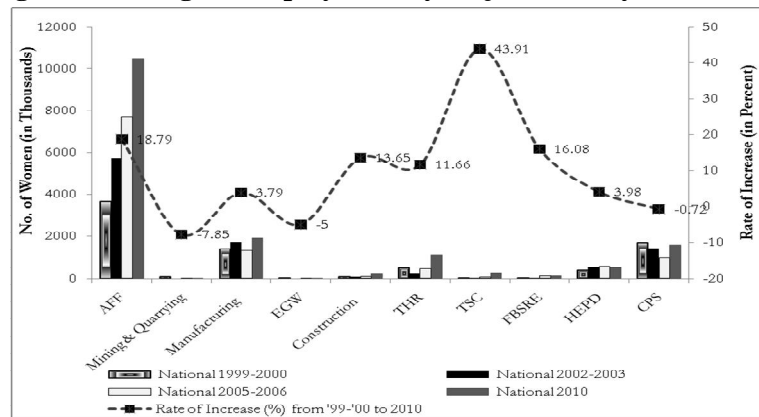


Source: Authors calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

## 6 SECTOR WISE STATUS OF WOMEN

The gross domestic product (GDP) growth depends on the capital intensity of growth in the relevant sectors (Rahman, 2002). The net impact of the composition of growth in GDP and the role of women employment in various sectors determine the changes in total employment. A broad sectoral distribution of the women employee at national level shows a decline in mining and quarrying, and in the electricity, gas and water sectors during 1999-2000 to 2010 (Figure 5). In this period, participation of women increased notably in the transport, storage and communication sector.

**Figure 5: Change of employment by major industry at national level**



Notes: AFF indicates Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries; EGW indicates Electricity, Gas & Water; THR indicates Transport, Storage & Communications; FBSRE indicates Finance, Business & Real Estate; HEPD indicates Health, Education, Public Administration & Defense; and CPS indicates Community & Personal Services

Source: Authors calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

The annual rate of increment in agriculture and its subsequent stabilization has been decreasing day by day at the national level. Acceleration of urbanization, fast communication, increase of garments industry, high price hikes of agricultural materials and natural disasters in land etc. are the results of a decline in this sector from the annual

rate of increase of 19.38 in 2002-2003 to 9.19 in 2010. In 2005-2006, the annual rate of increase in the participation of women in agriculture, forestry and fisheries was 11.04 per cent. Women, generally, are interested in risk free and comfortable jobs, consequently declining women's contribution in the mining and quarrying as well as in the electricity, gas and water sector.

### **6.1 Sector wise Employment by Locality**

In the women employment of urban and rural areas, more contribution of rural women is seen compared to their urban counterparts in the period of 1999-2000 to 2010 (Table 5.2). During the period of 1999-2000 to 2010, urban women have the highest rate of annual growth in agriculture, forestry & fisheries following finance, business & real estate, construction, transport, storage & communication, manufacturing, and trade, hotel & restaurant etc. Meanwhile rural women have the highest annual rate of growth in transport, storage & communication following trade, hotel and restaurant, agriculture, forestry & fisheries, construction, finance, business & real estate, health, education, public administration & defense and manufacturing. It is a good anticipation in employment for rural women because their rate of annual growth in health, education, public administration & defense and trade, hotel and restaurant is increasing whereas it is decreasing for the corresponding urban women. Urban women are more interested in finance, business and real estate than community and personal services whereas the rural women play a different role (Table 2).



**Table 2: Change of employment by major industry at urban and rural level**

Employment by Major Industry (Thousand)	Urban				Rate of Increase ('99-00 to 2010)	Rural				Rate of Increase ('99-00 to 2010)
	1999-2000	2002-2003	2005-2006	2010		1999-2000	2002-2003	2005-2006	2010	
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries	297	1065	909	1794	50.4	3352	4707	6774	8712	16.0
Mining and Quarrying	10	0	1	1	-9.0	69	1	6	15	-7.8
Manufacturing	513	577	653	848	6.5	878	1129	645	1060	2.1
Electricity, Gas and Water	10	7	1	6	-4.0	8	1	2	2	-7.5
Construction	26	31	25	52	10.0	69	66	78	175	15.4
Trade, Hotel and Restaurant	149	102	185	166	1.1	351	145	269	917	16.1
Transport, Storage & Communication	22	15	35	40	8.2	24	10	31	208	76.7
Finance, Business & Real Estate	22	19	80	64	19.1	24	7	46	56	13.3
Health, Education, Public admin. & Defense	230	274	305	215	-0.7	150	276	264	320	11.3
Community and Personal Services	689	415	462	484	-2.9	996	997	506	1087	0.9
<b>Total</b>	1967	2505	2656	3969	10.2	5924	7339	8621	12533	11.2

Source: Authors calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

## 7 STATUS OF WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT

A large number of women employees have been absorbed in the unpaid family helper category during 1999-2000 to 2010 in Bangladesh, though the annual rate of growth has been gradually declining (Table 3). The number of unpaid family workers, at national level, has increased from 2703 thousands in 1999-2000 to 9116 thousands in 2010 with an increase rate of 23.73 per cent per annum. Women employment in the self-employed and employer category is following the discrepancy annual rate of growth. During the foresaid decade, annual growth of employment has increased with the rate of 23.73 per cent and 13.82 per cent in the employer and self-employed category respectively at the national level. The country has experienced gradual increment in women employment as employee and the respective annual rate of growth was -6.25, 0.10 and 2.29 per cent in the year 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010.

Highest contribution of employment for women as an employer has successfully increased in the rural area from 1999-2000 to 2010 and gradually, their rate of annual

growth has increased however, in the urban areas the annual rate of growth of women as an employer is not steady. Furthermore, at the end of this decade it was found to be zero. In the year 2002-2003 to 2010, women household aid (Irregular paid worker, apprentice, domestic worker and others) has increased in the urban areas but remained steady in the rural areas. The annual growth rate of women in the urban areas with a self-employed status has risen in 2002-2003 and 2005-2006. This rate then reduced, and in the rural areas firstly, this rate increased by 5.90 per cent, secondly it declined by 15.62 per cent and finally, it lifted up to 63.75 per cent.

**Table 3: Status of women in employment (in thousands)**

Year	SE	RI (%)	Er	RI (%)	Ee	RI (%)	UFH	RI (%)	DL	RI(%)	HA	RI (%)
<b>National</b>												
1999-2000	2130	...	11	...	1617	...	2703	...	1431	...	...	...
2002-2003	2416	4.48	15	12.12	1314	-6.25	4728	24.97	947	-11.27	424	...
2005-2006	1789	-8.65	13	-4.44	1318	0.10	6780	14.47	729	-7.67	649	17.69
2010	5073	45.89	30	32.69	1439	2.29	9116	8.61	849	4.11	704	2.12
<b>Urban</b>												
1999-2000	538	...	2	...	931	...	298	...	198	...	...	...
2002-2003	542	0.25	7	83.33	541	-13.96	985	76.85	253	9.26	177	...
2005-2006	793	15.44	3	-19.05	885	21.19	593	-13.27	180	-9.62	201	4.52
2010	537	-8.07	2	-8.33	882	-0.08	1769	49.58	202	3.06	280	9.83
<b>Rural</b>												
1999-2000	1592	...	8	...	686	...	2405	...	1233	...	...	...
2002-2003	1874	5.90	8	0	773	4.23	3743	18.54	694	-14.57	247	...
2005-2006	996	-15.62	10	8.33	432	-14.70	6187	21.77	548	-7.01	447	26.99
2010	3536	63.75	28	45.0	558	7.29	7347	4.69	647	4.52	424	-1.29

*Note: SE stands for Self Employed/Own Account Workers; RI stands for Rate of Increase; Er stands for Employer; Ee stands for Employee; UFH stands Unpaid Family Helper; DL for stands for Day Labourers; and HA stands for Household Aid<sup>1</sup>*

Source: Authors calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

## 8 OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF WOMEN

Bangladesh has experienced a positive gain in the participation of women in the employment sector. Among them, the agricultural sector is the highest. Over the years, women have been involved in agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector, but the annual rate of increment in these occupations have been declining, and successively increasing in the service, professional and technical, and administrative and managerial jobs. The number of women who are involved in agriculture, forestry and fisheries at national level, has increased from 3.8 million in 1999-2000 to 5.8 million in 2002-2003 with an annual rate of 17.11 per cent. In 2005-2006 and 2010, the annual rate of increase in this sector is

<sup>1</sup> Household Aid: Irregular paid worker, apprentice, domestic worker and others

11.16 per cent and 9.09 per cent respectively. The number of service workers has decreased from 0.4 million in 1999-2000 to 0.3 million in 2002-2003 with an annual rate of 7.75 per cent. In 2005-2006 and 2010, the annual rate of increase of this sector was -3.01 and 12.95 per cent respectively. The number of women in the administrative and managerial occupations has decreased from 15 thousands in 1999-2000 to 4 thousands in 2002-2003 with an annual rate of 24.44 per cent. In 2005-2006 and 2010, the annual increase of this sector is 150.0 per cent and 84.09 per cent respectively. In the professional and technical occupation, the annual rate of increase is 2.49, 7.53 and 1.06 per cent in 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010 respectively which shows a slower rate of growth. Income from the agricultural sector is lower than the professional wages and salary (Adnan and Mojidalifa, 2012) resulting in the decline of the annual rate of increase in Bangladesh. In addition, increase in women's literacy, awareness and readymade garments are the cause of women's increase in the service, technical and professional sectors.

Occupational mobility has also been observed in both urban and rural areas. In the urban areas, the annual rate of decrease has been studied among clerical workers and it has increased among sales workers, administrative and managerial, and production, transport labourers & others occupations. The rest of the sectors have a mysterious annual rate of growth. In the rural areas, clerical workers have a decreasing trend, and sales workers, administrative and managerial have shown an increasing trend. In the agricultural sector, there is more participation of women in the rural areas than the urban areas.

**Table 4: Women aged 15+ years (in thousands) by major occupations during 1999-2000 to 2010**

Employment by Major Occupation	1999-2000	Rate of Increase ('99-'00 to '02-'03)	2002-2003	Rate of Increase ('02-'03 to '05-'06)	2005-2006	Rate of Increase ('05-'06 to '10)	2010
<b>National</b>							
Technical	375	2.49	403	7.53	494	1.06	515
Managerial	15	-24.44	4	150	22	84.09	96
Clerical Workers	130	14.1	185	-7.38	144	-6.94	104
Sales Workers	443	-11.81	286	-5.94	235	112.23	1290
Service Workers	1239	-7.75	951	-3.01	865	12.95	1313
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries	3814	17.11	5772	11.16	7705	9.09	10506
Production, Transport, Others	1875	6.542	2243	-6.4	1812	7.96	2389
<b>Urban</b>							
Technical	204	-0.82	199	14.74	287	-6.53	212
Administrative,	11	-21.21	4	41.67	9	47.22	26
Clerical Workers	68	12.75	94	-7.09	74	-8.45	49
Sales Workers	122	-7.1	96	-3.47	86	21.8	161
Service Workers	426	-10.33	294	15.42	430	-2.62	385
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries	311	80.92	1066	-4.75	914	24.04	1793
Production, Transport, Others	833	-3.24	752	4.65	857	5.45	1044
<b>Rural</b>							
Technical	171	6.43	204	0.49	207	11.59	303

Managerial	4	-33.33	0	433.0 <sup>3</sup>	13	109.62	70
Clerical Workers	62	15.05	90	-7.78	69	-5.43	54
Sales Workers	321	-13.6	190	-7.19	149	164.43	1129
Service Workers	813	-6.35	658	-11.29	435	28.27	927
Agriculture, Fisheries	3503	11.45	4706	14.77	6792	7.07	8713
Production, Transport, Others	1042	14.36	1491	-11.96	956	10.12	1343

Source: Authors calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

## 9 VARIABLES AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN

Employment status of women is related to various socio-economic and demographic variables. Some of the variables have positive impacts whereas some other have negative. Education has a direct impact on the employment, since it is assumed that educated people get better jobs. Moreover, the impact of women's employment focuses on the inflation and economic-demographic dependency ratio all over the country.

### 9.1 Effect of Women Education on their Employment

The propensity of attaining employment, among the higher educated women has increased with speed than those who have had primary or no education in Bangladesh. In the year 1999-2000 to 2010, the rate of increase of women is 3.68 per cent and it has tripled for the women who have passed degree or above (Table 5.5). This is because educated women have a higher potential to face challenges, to maintain the situation as well as to bargain with others, in order to have a greater possibility of a job. The rate of increase of employed women, at the national level during the recent decade, is the highest among the women who passed classes six to ten. In the year 1999-2000, women who passed from class six to ten was 855 thousands and it has achieved 4144 thousands in the year 2010 at an annual rate of 38.47 per cent. Additionally, it is found that the rate of acceleration in the incidence of employment among the illiterate women have increased from 4.8 million in 1999-2000 to 6.77 million in 2010 with an annual rate of 3.68 per cent at the national level.

The differentials in the increase of women employment are even more marked between the rural and the urban areas. Only 1.90 per cent of the illiterate women employees have increased in the urban areas compared to 4.09 per cent increase in rural area over the last ten years. Increase of small scale entrepreneurs, augmentation of garment factories and micro-credit programmes are the main reasons for women employment in the rural areas. The highest annual rate of increase is 38.47 per cent, 19.19 per cent and 51.06 per cent among those who have studied from class six to ten during 1999-2000 to 2010 at the national, urban and rural levels respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Annual rate of increment is calculated as  $(13/3)*100$

**Table 5.5: Incidence of employment by level of education**

Level of Education	Employed(in thousands)				Rate of Increase from 2000 to 2010 (Per cent)
	1999- 2000	2002- 2003	2005- 2006	2010	
<b>National</b>					
No Education	4897	5743	5861	6697	3.68
Class I-V	1589	1475	3783	3709	13.34
Class VI-X	855	1746	573	4144	38.47
SSC/HSC & equivalent	410	622	720	1308	21.90
Degree/equivalent & above	141	258	340	345	14.47
<b>Urban</b>					
No Education	940	1152	1092	1119	1.90
Class I-V	393	369	580	896	12.79
Class VI-X	336	515	410	981	19.19
SSC/HSC & equivalent	190	294	329	462	14.31
Degree/equivalent & above	108	174	244	208	9.26
<b>Rural</b>					
No Education	3956	4591	4769	5577	4.09
Class I-V	1196	1106	2029	2812	13.51
Class VI-X	518	1231	1336	3163	51.01
SSC/HSC & equivalent	220	327	392	844	28.36
Degree/equivalent & above	33	84	94	137	31.52

Source: Authors calculation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

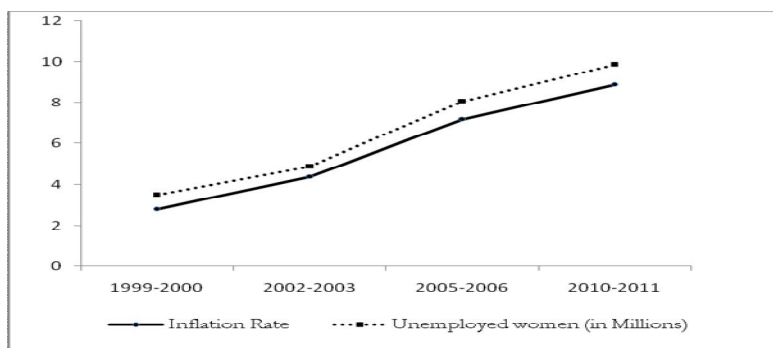
### 5.9.2 Impact of Inflation on Women Employment

Economic Survey and Labour Force Survey in Bangladesh showed a higher increment of unemployment due to rising inflation<sup>4</sup> rate (Figure 5.6). That is, Bangladesh is experiencing stagnation<sup>5</sup> in the economic flow. The rate of inflation has increased from 2.79 per cent in 1999-2000 to 8.88 per cent in 2010 with a rate of 5.06 per cent per annum whereas; the number of unemployed women has increased to 1.0 million in 2010, from 0.7 million in 1999-2000, with an increment of 5.06 per cent per annum. That means, with the increase of 6.09 per cent inflation there were 0.3 million unemployed increment in the recent decades of Bangladesh. In 2002-2003, the inflation rate and unemployment gap was modest and after that, the unemployment increased with the increment of inflation. Between the year 2002-2003 and 2010-2011, the rate of increment of inflation and unemployment per annum was 10.27 per cent and 10.0 per cent respectively.

<sup>4</sup> *Inflation Rate* means the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services rises, and, subsequently, purchasing power falls.

<sup>5</sup> A condition of slow economic growth and relatively high unemployment - a time of stagnation - accompanied by a rise in prices, or inflation is called stagflation.

**Figure 5.6: Impact of inflation on women unemployment**

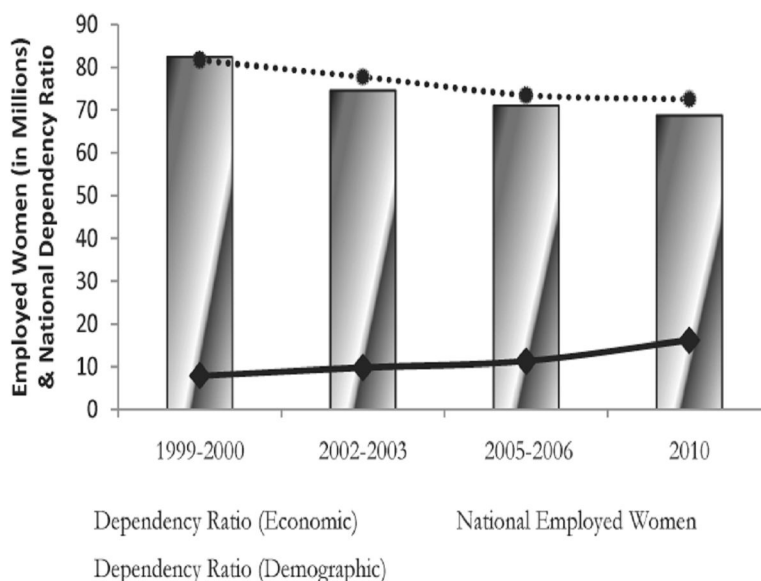


Source: Authors calculation based on Bangladesh Bank, Bangladesh Economic Survey-2011, Ministry of Finance and Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

### 5.9.3 Effect of Women Employment on Dependency Ratio

Women employment has declined the overall dependency in Bangladesh both in the economic and the demographic sector. The economic and demographic dependency ratio of women have decreased 1.65 per cent and 1.12 per cent respectively per annum between the year 1999-2000 and 2010 whereas, the number of employed women has increased from 7.9 million in 1999-2000 to 16.2 million in 2010, with an annual increment of 10.51 per cent. In Bangladesh, with the increment of employed women of 8.3 million there is a 13.6 per cent decrease of economic dependency and 9.1 per cent demographic dependency. With the increase of women employment, economic dependency is reducing more than the demographic dependency.

**Figure 5.7: Impact of women employment on dependency ratio**

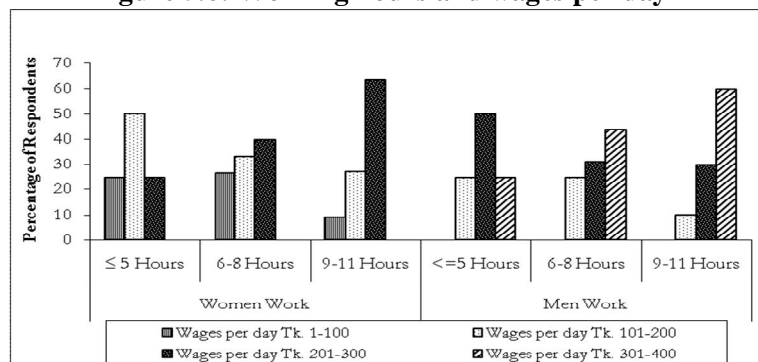


Source: Authors compilation based on Labour Force Survey (1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005-2006 and 2010) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2002, 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively)

## 5.10 WAGE DIFFERENTIALS BY SEX: A MICRO SURVEY

Women in the developing world are slotted into areas that demand heavy duty with extra time<sup>6</sup> with the lowest wage. Moreover, they are contributing as the subordinate roles in plantation agriculture. In the recent and upcoming years women will make up an estimated eighty-five per cent or more of garment industries workforces in Bangladesh, but they are concentrated in the "unskilled" and "semi-skilled" job categories (Billah, 2012). Even though, they are investing their labour and time but they are far from the expected reward. In the workplace, even though men and women are working for the same time, men get more wages than their female counterparts. Based upon the survey report conducted by Unnayan Onneshan 2012, 33.33 per cent men have got their average daily wage between BDT. 301 and 400, while women did not even receive this wage, even if they worked for the same amount of time like their male counterparts. On the other hand, 13.33 per cent women have wages Tk. 1-100 per day whereas no men belong to this category, investing the same time. Out of 30 women, working 9-11 hours, 23.33 per cent gets wages BDT. 201-300 while 43.33 per cent men earn BDT. 301-400.

**Figure 5.6: Working hours and wages per day**



Source: Unnayan Onneshan Field Survey, 2012

### 5.10.1 Wage Difference by Some Selected Variables

Wage rate varies according to some variables like religion, profession, physical fitness and so on. Muslim women earn less than the Non-Muslims (mainly shantal, Christian who were converted from Santal and Hindu), due to physical fitness and other religious barriers. Income of women labour in the agriculture profession is less than the garment workers (Table 5.6). Garments workers get their salaries on monthly basis whereas agricultural labourers are paid daily. It is natural that the physically strong have a higher capacity to work. Physical fitness has an effect on the earnings of women in Bangladesh, mainly in the agriculture sector. In this sector, men are preferred than women, and women get preferences in the works where less physical labour is needed. In such cases, women are paid the lowest wages.

<sup>6</sup> According to International Labour Organization, Washington convention has limited the hours of work in industrial undertakings to eight in the day and forty-eight in the week that entry into force on 13 June 1921

**Table 5.6: Wage difference by socio-demographic variables**

	Per centage of women's wage per day		
	Tk. 1-100	Tk. 101-200	Tk. 201-300
<b>Religion</b>			
Muslim	75.0	53.33	45.45
Non-Muslim	25.0	46.67	54.55
<b>Profession</b>			
Agricultural Labour	100.0	53.33	27.27
Garments Worker	0.0	46.67	72.73
<b>Physical Fitness</b>			
Strong	0.0	20.00	72.73
Moderate	25.0	53.33	27.27
Weak	75.0	26.67	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Unnayan Onneshan Field Survey, 2012

## 5.11 CONCLUSION

In Bangladesh, there have been some progresses in women employment over the last two decades but it is quite lower than the desired level. More specifically, most of these progresses are mainly due to the compulsion of life. This chapter not only explores the degree of women employment but also its patterns. It also indicates that employment of women is not increasing at a similar pace than that of the labour force. Moreover, the wage rate of women is low, so failing to attract a large number of unemployed and underemployed women, willing to invest their excessive time. In addition, socio-economic and demographic variables, such as education, religion, inflation and physical fitness are touching the employment status of women. In order to accelerate the employment status of women, socio-economic barriers along with traditional outlook against women should be reduced. To increase the productivity of labourers, proper training and skill generation among the workers especially women should be ensured and managerial efficiency in the industries need to be improved.

Sectoral and occupational change varies from urban to rural areas. Mainly the increment rate of women employment in Bangladesh is decreasing in the recent and upcoming decade. Moreover, self employment and employer among women are growing at a discrepancy rate whereas they prefer service. However, the more rural women are expressing themselves as employer than their urban counterparts. According to Rahman (2002), the labour market situation will tighten further as the informal sectors in both urban and rural areas increase investment, and absorb more family members into these activities.

It is difficult to estimate the factors that made growth of Bangladesh more egalitarian but women employment, among others, could be an important contributing factor. Moreover, Bangladesh needs a comprehensive economic growth where participation and anticipation of members should be ensured, employment opportunities must be generated and equal rights will be guaranteed. Furthermore, a sound working environment for the



marginalized portion should be given top priority in all sectors. To enjoy the advantages of comprehensive economic growth, proper monitoring of labour force competency, more securities on agricultural growth, enhancement of small and medium scale entrepreneurship programs, increase of regional co-operation and reception of global investments should be maintained. Most of all, proper utilization of demographic window<sup>7</sup> and its augmentation can create an inclusive growth in Bangladesh. It is difficult to reach the targets towards development unless, efforts are accelerated. Therefore, the government should be creative in formulation policies and programs regarding this matter.

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<sup>7</sup> Demographic window is defined to be that period of time in a nation's demographic evolution when the proportion of population of working age group is particularly prominent. This occurs when the demographic architecture of a population becomes younger and the per centage of people able to work reaches its height (Mongolian views). Typically, the demographic window of opportunity lasts for 30–40 years depending upon the country. In Bangladesh, it is starting between 2010-2015.

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## Appendix - A

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter was conducted based on the data of various secondary sources like, Labour Force Survey (LFS) and other reports conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Bangladesh Economic Review of Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh etc. Using these data, growth rates were made by using the simple mathematical equation:

$$P_t = P_0 (1 + r t)$$

$$\therefore r = \frac{1}{t} \left( \frac{P_t}{P_0} - 1 \right)$$

Where,

$P_t$  = Value of the present year

$P_0$  = Value of the previous year

$t$  = Time interval between previous and present years

$r$  = Growth rate

Different statistical reports, relevant research papers, books and many national and international journals have also been reviewed for this chapter. The survey data of Unnayan Onneshan is procured by statistical packages of social sciences (SPSS) version 16.0.

## CASE STUDY I



Michoka Marande is a woman of 30, who converted to Christianity from Shantal, and lives in a village nearer to Puthia Thana of Rajshahi District. Her signature is her only educational qualification whereas her husband's level of education is up to class three. Michoka is the mother of three daughters, lives in a single family. She is an agricultural labourer who works with her husband. After her marriage, she got involved in this profession. At about 6.00 AM she goes to the field or the house of the landowner to work and return home within 1.30 PM to 2.00 PM. Michoka's daily income varies between Tk. 150 to Tk. 200 whereas her husband and other male counterparts earn Tk. 200 to Tk. 250, doing the same job and investing the equal time. She got involved in this profession due to poverty, uprising price of daily foods and to maintain for her family. She stated- *My family has grown and the children need extra things. My earnings are able to give them sufficient things to eat and wear. If only one of us worked, we wouldn't be able to afford necessary things for them. I have to work all day long, whether in the field or home (own), but less capability to earn money than my husband from the same work. However, erect price rising of foods making difficult to maintain family like our landless labour. Is there any opportunity for us, to remove our poverty doing a suitable job?*

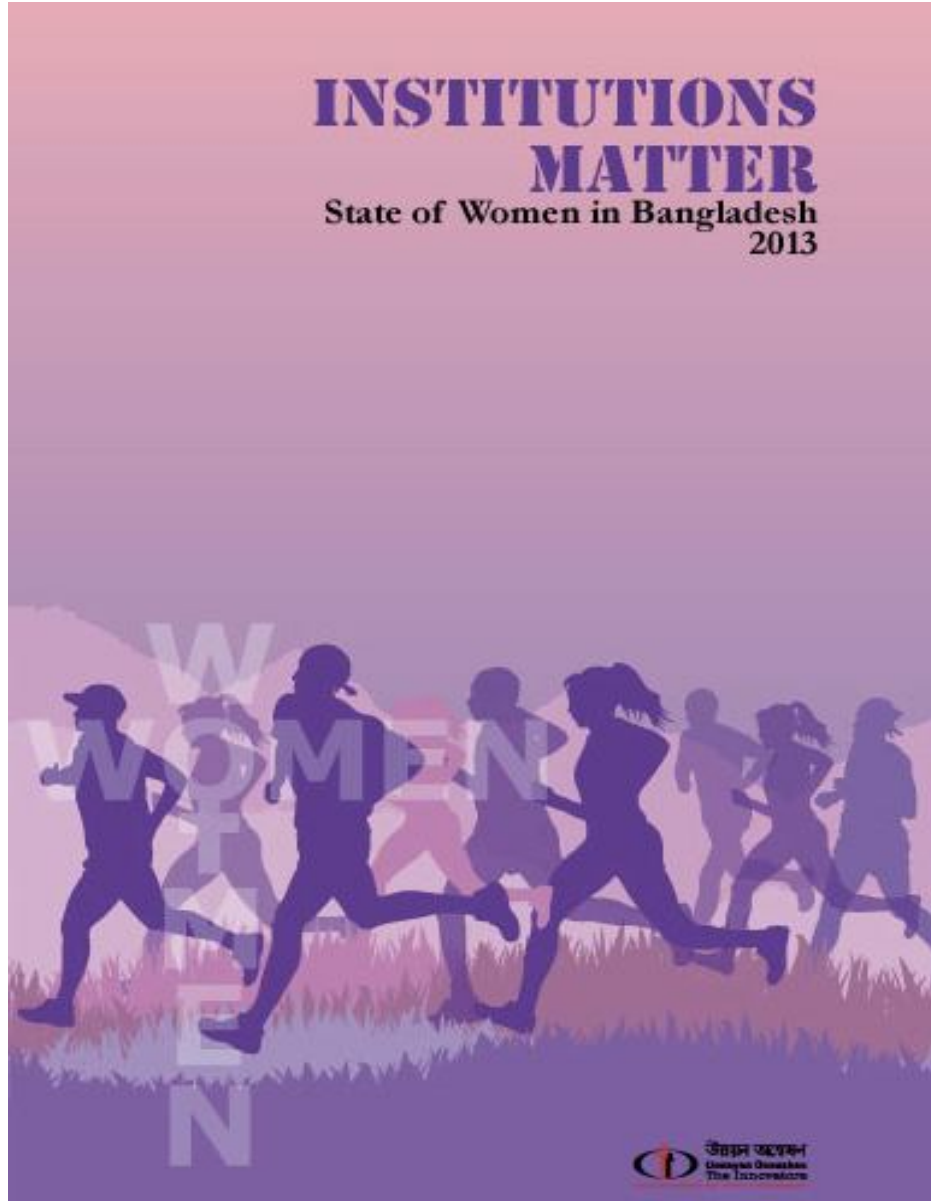
## CASE STUDY II

Mrs. Kulsum Nahar, 26 years old, is a married woman living in Kazipara at Mirpur, Dhaka. According to Kulsum, she has a sound fitness. She has migrated to the Mirpur from Bazra Union of Ulipur sub district of Kurigram district about seven years ago, with her husband. River erosion in the Banks of the Tista had melted their agricultural land. So, her family had decided to migrate in Dhaka city. At present, Kulsum lives with her husband, children and mother-in-law. They have one daughter and one son. She has completed class seven while can not read or write except signature. Kulsum works in a garments industry and her monthly income is BDT 7500. Her office time starts from 8.00 am and most of the time she returns home after 7.30 PM. Mr. Moshiur, her husband, is a rickshaw puller who earns BDT 200 to BDT 250 in a day but he does not work in a whole month. He longs for his wife's earnings to maintain their daily lives. According to him-

*Bou kamai kore, ami sara mas kaj korle oto taka khabe ke?* (My wife is earning, if I work in a whole month then who will utilize that money?). Kulsum remembers from her past, her husband was a dutiful and polite man before coming Dhaka. Kulsum is not satisfied with her existing salary. She accused her manager, that her male colleagues get more money and extra facilities from the organization for being male. Already she has resigned from four factories for a better opportunity. But she does believe that organizations are preferring men over women in case of facilities and earnings. In the earlier year, she got injured two times but her factory did not take care of her. When factory demands excessive over duty and night duty, Kulsum feels insecure to return home. If there is any opportunity with her existing education, she has a plan to move.

### **CASE STUDY III**

Sleha Khatun is a landless widow of 43 years of age. She lives in a village named Muradpur at Sadar sub district in the Dinajpur district. Her husband died five years ago. She has one daughter and three sons. All of them are married. Her daughter and youngest son live with their father-in-law's family and rest of her children live separately from their mother. Shahana has no education. She is an agricultural labour and when there is no agricultural work she becomes a maid. Three years ago she got involved in agricultural labour. After her husband's death, she became a professional maid. After that she engaged in this profession to earn more money since the cost of living increased and she faced difficulty to maintain her livelihood. Now she earns BDT 90 to BDT 130 in a day working from the beginning of the day until evening. During this time, her male colleagues get BDT 200 to BDT 250 due to their better working capacity and male preferences. She takes rest at the time of prayer and lunch. She got injured three times and suffered from fever and bad headache two times in the last year. She is sustaining her livelihood by doing this job. In her words- *Chele manush kore ki korbo, ei boyos e khatte hoy. Sorire sokti kom, kom kaj korte pari tai saradin kaj koreo konorokome din jay* (Why we will give birth and look after our offspring?, they will reject us when they will grow up. I am physically weak and less capable of doing work, so I get less money and am sustaining my life with this existing money).



**Unnayan Onneshan**  
16/2, Indira Road, Farmgate  
Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh  
Tell: + (880-2) 8158274, 9110636 Fax: + (880-2) 8159135  
E-mail: [info@unnayan.org](mailto:info@unnayan.org) Web: [www.unnayan.org](http://www.unnayan.org)