



POLICY BRIEF

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Gender Based Employment and Wage

1. Introduction:

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress over the last decade raising per capita income to \$2,064¹ (nominal) along with improvement² of position of woman notably. Bangladesh is now enjoying demographic dividend with over 65% population, almost number of men and women at working age³. These people are the pioneer to develop the country if they get equal opportunity to be employed. But statistics reveals that employment opportunity for male and female (Table – 1.1) as well as their wages and remunerations earn not equal (Table – 1.2). Although the gender gap in employment and income is decreased overtime, the situation needs to be improved significantly. The “Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2018⁴” and yearbook of agricultural statistics, 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2019 from BBS reveals that the daily wage in agricultural sector has increased for both men and women over the period from 2010-11 to 2018-19⁵ (Table – 1.3). Though the wages of both women and men have been increased and the rise of income is comparatively more for women (103.27%) compared to men (90.23%), the difference is still significant (31.51%). The wage gap in agriculture between men and women is from 40.52% to 28.90% (Table – 1.3) and overall increase in wage sector is from 4.50% to 10.56%⁶ (Table – 1.2). The percentage of women worker is increased from 29.85 (2010) to 36.37 (2019), which is far below the male in work is 81.51% in 2019 (Table – 1.1). This has amplified the wage gap as stated in Table –1.2 and in Table – 1.3.

The Constitution of Bangladesh, SDG and 8th Five Year Plan has kept ample of scope for women employment and empowerment. The World Bank feature story⁷ shows that there are positive trends in gender pay gap minimization, but the situation is still far below the parity. The feature report indicates that over 80% of the workers in the garments industry are women. But, BBS survey

¹ BBS, August 11, 2020.

² The Global Gender Gap Report (2020) positioned women of Bangladesh at the 1st in South Asia and 50th in the world.

³ demographic dividend in bangladesh, bbs - Google Search: based on data “Labour Force Survey 2016-17” published by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in 2018

⁴ A BBS survey

⁵ Table – 1.1, Source: Yearbook of Agricultural Statistics, 2012, 2015, 2017 & 2019, BBS

⁶ Source: Labor Force Survey, Bangladesh 2016-17, BBS

⁷ World Bank feature story, Feb. 07, 2017

of Manufacturing Industries (2019) found the number less than 60% in the RMG sector⁸ and they earn wage less compared to their male counterpart (Table-1.5).

ILO observed⁹ from “**Labor Force Survey (2010)**” that 89% of the total labor forces works as informal labor. They do not have even primary education and are usually act as a helper of semi-skilled or skilled labor. The common places of informal employment are in farms, markets, bazaar stalls, and trade fairs. It is argued that women earn less because of less endowment of productive factors or women cannot bargain or are not qualified in versatile jobs similar to men. But this argument does not have strong footing as results in the different Education Boards in Bangladesh shows that the girls score better in academic examinations compared to boys¹⁰. It is usually argued that the female candidates are not suited better like men in different professions. This is not supported by the performance of girls in the field level because the female officers and staffs in the law enforcing agency are performing equally well with their male counterpart.

2. Requirement for employment:

The scope to be employed at any position depends on job-seekers’ academic qualification, training received and experience earned, and sex is not a factor highlighted in the Constitution or in any Act or Law. Of course, there were additional factors like quota system, employers’ social outlook¹¹, physical fitness, special physical outfit for some jobs¹². Usually persons having at least a graduation or post graduation degree are selected for higher position¹³ in an organization in Bangladesh. The scope to be employed and receive wages (including salaries) depends on scope of access to a particular job¹⁴ and bargaining power. Qualifications, experience and availability of jobs increase the bargaining power of a person in the job market.

2.1 Employment scenario by sex in Administration¹⁵: The PACC in the Ministry of Public Administration reveals that the percentage of female officers is far below compared to their male counterpart. Positions under the Ministry of Public Administration are Senior Secretary/Secretary, Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Senior Assistant Secretary and Assistant Secretary, and officers’ serving in the field Administration (Divisional Commissioner, Additional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Senior Assistant Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner) and also there are officers deputed to different Ministries and organizations. Out of existing filled in 6,310 posts, 5,072 are male, while only 19.62% are female. A closer look into the scenario is that higher the position less is the number of women (Table-6.2). The situation at the field level is even worse. Although the only female Divisional Commissioner (Sylhet) Dr. Mosammat Nazmun Ara Khanum (now Secretary, Ministry of Food) performed excellent, no one female officer is appointed as Divisional Commissioner thereafter. Out

⁸ Survey of Manufacturing Industries-2019

⁹ Informal Sector and informal employment in Bangladesh, ILO Publication, December 2012

¹⁰ BANBEIS Statistics, 2018

¹¹ Special favor towards a particular sect of people (which may be of based, age, sex, religion etc.)

¹² Persons’ in armed forces, security and police are in this group.

¹³ Direct employment in senior positions.

¹⁴ The Imam in a Mosque must be a male Muslim with degree on Islam.

¹⁵ Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA), dated, 05/10/2021

of 742 field administration officers (UNO and above), only 22.64% are female (Table-6.3), which is far below the percentage of women in higher education. But these officers are appointed by the Public Service Commission. So, policy maker should dig out the lacuna.

2.2 The International situation between male to female¹⁶: The Gender Development Index¹⁷ of United Nations has estimated the Gross National Income ratio in 2011 USD PPP of male and female separately, and showed that the position of women all over the world is worse compared to male. The position of Bangladesh is at the mid-position both among the Muslim Countries and SAARC Countries. Among 19 Muslim Countries, Bangladesh is in 6th position, while among the 8 SAARC countries including Afganistan, position of Bangladesh is 5th. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are ample scope to improve women's position in Bangladesh.

2.3 The comparative employment scenario as percentage of working age population: Although the male and female population in Bangladesh is almost equal and the female students are not inferior in any indicator compared to male, the female candidates do not have equal chance and also cannot enjoy similar facility to compete in the competitive examinations. Though the percentage of women in the total working age population is increasing continually since 2010, they are not getting equal scope of employment. At present, percentage of unemployed women in the working age is more (64.63%) compared to men (18.49%) (Table-1.1). It is clear from Table-1.6 that the share of women disaggregated by age and location is lower compared to their male counterparts. In rural areas, 38.6% of the women in working age gets job, where as employment rate to male labor force is 80.3%, which indicates extremely low employment opportunities for women. The situation in the urban area is even worse. Here, the male labor force participation rate is 81.51%, compared to 36.37% in case of female labor force participation (Table-1.1). Although the scope to be educated in different areas, scope of gaining experience in jobs are better in urban areas, yet employment situation is slightly better in rural areas compared to urban areas (Table-1.6).

2.4 Comparative education position based on sex and area: The sex disaggregated data in Table-2 shows that up to Secondary level, the percentage of male and female enrollment is almost same. However, the percentage of females completed higher secondary and above continually decreases both in urban and rural areas. Based on Labor Force Survey Data (BBS) and using human capital theory Ahmed and McGillivray (2019) identified that wage premium¹⁸ is positively associated with decisions of males to enroll in tertiary education, while they did not find any such association in case for female. The BANBEIS statistics of 2018 also supports this. The cause behind non-consideration of necessity of wage premium is identified by Vimala (2010) in his advocacy, where she has identified (a) Child marriage, (b) Teenage motherhood, (c) Brides education status, and (d) violence against women. Moreover, usually the women do not have decision-making power and also they suffer from social stigma. These are associated with one another, which provokes guardians to get their girls married, instead of giving them higher education. This is again causing problem for women candidates getting scope of employment at higher positions. As a result, enrolment of girls in

¹⁶ List of countries by male to female income ratio - Wikipedia (2017)

¹⁷ hdr.undp.org (2018-12-19)

¹⁸ The average amount that the **wages** of members of a certain group are greater than those of the population as a whole.

primary, secondary and tertiary level education is 93%, 51% and 11% respectively, while boy's enrolment is 90%, 44% and 16% in the respective level of education¹⁹.

2.5 Vocational training by duration, sex and area: Vocational training outside the formal school system provides an important opportunity for many people to develop their skills as a proof of ability in certain specific profession. Bangladesh Education Statistics 2019 (BANBEIS) reveals that girls' enrollment in Technical and Vocational Education in 2019 is 25.34%. According to Labor Force Survey, about 1.9 million persons (about 1.7 percent of the total working age population) have participated in a formal training course outside the general schooling system. The proportion of training in urban areas (3.4%) was much higher than that in the rural areas (1.1%) for both sexes. The percentage of girls receiving training lasting from one week to three months is higher compare to boys (Table-3), while participation of males in trainings for periods less than a week or 4 months and above is more compared to female trainees. But the women are not getting enough scope to be employed. GWAPB's study result identified²⁰ that (a) female trainees are reluctant to be involved in heavy machine training, (b) they possess less physical strength and faces more societal and family pressure, (c) women are enrolled mainly in Garments and Tailoring, Housekeeping and Computer application courses, (d) women do not know how find/explore a job, (e) women do not have relevant information about price-worthy courses, (f) women are not encouraged to join and even they do not approach to heavy machine jobs, (g) unfriendly environment discourage women to work or even approach to work, and (h) women faces resistance in public and private spheres. As a result, in spite of having more training, women in employment is less in number and percentage.

2.6 Unemployment situation by age group, area and sex: Though more women are enrolled in the short duration vocational courses, they do not get attractive jobs. Table-1.1 shows that the higher percentage of working age women are not in job, while Table-4 shows that percentage of unemployed women is more both in urban and rural areas. In rural areas, the unemployment rate for men is 2.9%, while that for women is 6.5%. The unemployment situation for men and women in urban areas stand at 3.2% and 7.7% respectively. The unemployment rate for female is highest in the age group of 15-29 years (Table-4) and in higher secondary (25.2%) and Tertiary level 26.1% (Table-5). High degree of prevalence of adolescent motherhood prevails among the poor teenage girls without education than richer teenage with education (2.76%). Despite substantial decrease in total fertility rate in Bangladesh adolescent motherhood is still highly prevalent. Therefore, social policies including those addressing poverty, ensuring greater emphasis on education for women; and adolescent mothers in rural areas are needed, observed MM Islam (2017)²¹. This may be due to the fact that both male and female in this age group are occupied with completing their academic degree and actively looking for jobs. **Moreover, females are prepared to get married or are already married which limits their employment opportunities.** Over 90.30% women get married within their 29th birth day (Table-5.1).

¹⁹ The Global Gender Gap Report 2014: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/>

²⁰ Gender, vocational training and employment – Report of a study (2014) by Gender and Water Program, Bangladesh.

²¹ Source: Published online 2017 Nov 27. doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0188294](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0188294), PMID:29176807

2.7 Employment status by sex in different Ministries: The employment scenario in few Ministry shows that percentage of women among both Officers and Staffs are insignificant (Table-6.1). Data from 6 (six) Ministries/Divisions reveals that the highest number of female is in the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (27.59%), while lowest number is in the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. The Officers in different Ministries are appointed/deputed by the Ministry of Establishment and so the number of male or female may vary, but the staffs are appointed by the Ministry itself and so the percentage of female among the staff is a yardstick to opine about how well the women are appointed. The percentage of staffs is insignificant almost in all the Ministries, justifies the proposition that women are deprived. Comparing the percentages of 2017-18 and 2018-19, it is seen that the percentage of women in the staff position is decreased, which indicates that among the new appointees, the number of female is less. Ministry is in the heart of the Capital and if male and women has equal opportunities to compete their, the percentage of male and female would be almost equal.

A question may arise whether the education alone is a yardstick for employment. Table-5 shows that education alone cannot ensure equal job opportunity for job seekers, although the academic Board results at Secondary and Higher Secondary examination shows girls' position better in the academic examinations. Statistics shows that the percentage of unemployed female is almost double of male. The situation is worst at Tertiary level and onwards.

Lower female employment may result because of (a) violence against women (VAW), (b) transport problem, (c) safe and secure accommodation, (d) baby care center, (e) communication and accommodation problem to face interview, (f) lack of scope to avail seasonal employment moving to respective areas which may be the major causes for not showing high interest by women to be employed. Action Aid survey identified that a total of 54.7% women living in urban areas face sexual harassment in Bangladesh. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a sister organization of the World Bank, found that only 23% companies are aware about the need for day care center²².

Religious ritual [feeding ritual (ভাত কাপড়ের অনুষ্ঠান) in Hindu Community and "Denmohor in Muslim Community] is treated as a protection for women and impose liability on men. It is revealed from Table-5.1 that women are married at a comparatively lower age and in between couples, usually men are senior to women by age²³. About 90.30% women get married on or before reaching the age 29, while within the same age percentage of men married is only 63.40%. Again, married women depends more on their husband or decision maker in husband's family about seeking employment (position, place, etc.) Moreover, most of the men marry when they can earn, while the guardians arrange the marriage of their female members considering bridegroom's earning capacity. Usually a male does not look about the earning power of the girl, but on her physical complexion and other traits. Therefore, guardians look more for complexion and traits required for getting their female member married, not on getting them educated. All these act as a negative factor for women employment and higher education.

²² 'Tackling Childcare: The Business Benefits and Challenges of Employer-Supported Childcare in Bangladesh' Dhaka, November, 2019.

²³ Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2018

2.8 The Above discussion and Tables (1-5) shows that (a) *in spite of better quality, women trained in vocational courses are not getting proper opportunities of employment.* (b) *Violence against women (VAW), lack of availability of day care center, lack of availability of temporary accommodation, consultation²⁴ and social safety may be the bar that limits the availability of jobs for women,* (c) *Availability of job information of their choice,* (d) *The social belief that the earning is the absolute responsibility of the male family members impedes the employment need, scope, urge and facility for female candidates.* (e) *The employment opportunities of female decrease with their age, i.e., higher the age, the higher is the percentage of their unemployment.* (f) *Religious racism, socio-cultural, political backwardness, lack of religious freedom and finally* (g) *lack of safe accommodation during and post pandemic period and calamities.*

3. Comparative analysis of employment:

The employment situation in Bangladesh is gender sensitive. Female are not getting equal opportunities like their male counterparts across different sectors. Moreover, during and post crisis period, women are the worst sufferer.

3.1 Employment situation by occupation and sex: Table-6.4 attached below shows that more women are employed in professions and sectors classified as professionals, skilled agriculture, forestry and fishing and craft related trades. On the other hand, The College Study²⁵ (2019) blog in its career for women students identified following jobs in order of priority. Jobs are: (a) Teaching, (b) Nursing, (c) Salesman and Office Clerks, (d) Clerks, Secretaries and Officers in various capacities, (e) Garments, Handicrafts and Toy Factories and in factories producing Jan, Jelly, cold drink etc., at home or outside. (f) Stitching clothes, help in shoe-making, (g) Cosmetics production, clothes and shoes designing, painting and engraving, and (h) Medical profession special in the area of women and Children. This may give birth to an idea that the women in other sectors are not suited at all or cannot do better compared to their male counterpart. Different studies show that even in the sectors, where the women are very less in number are performing excellent. Actually, doing better in a certain profession depends on the scope, not on the sex. Therefore, it is not segregation of employment; rather making information available to job seekers and make them able will compete in different employment.

3.2 Employment situation by status in employment: The employment status of men and women gives a different view. Women, irrespective of academic degree usually work at home and contribute to their family members. Ability to cook, home services were the main criteria in formal selection of a bride even a decade before. But the situation is changed over time. Table-7 shows that the percentage of women engaged as house helper is decreased from 50.1% in 2013 to 28.4% in 2016-17. This is because of (a) creation of job opportunities, which attracted women more and more as their regular formal earning sources, and (b) increase of awareness and improvement of

²⁴ Consultation implies discussion about something for decision making.

²⁵ Essay on Careers for Women for Students - The College Study (2019)

personalities. Although the percentage of men employed as employer is increased much more over the period, the increase of percentage of women in **Own Account Worker** and **Employer** is no less important. This indicates that if the women are supported, they can shine better as investor too. Therefore, we can conclude that **contributing as family helper** is not the choice but the compulsion for the women.

3.3 Employment distribution by major Industries and sex: Table-8 shows where women are getting better scope to be employed. Highest percentage of women is employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors, where employment is mainly informal in nature. This does not prove that female candidates should look for informal jobs and jobs in these areas only. In spite of huge employment, these sectors are not most attractive to the women and women should be given enough scope to be employed in other sectors too. It is widely believed that women are better in teaching at the primary level. But the Gender Budget showed that only 39.75% are women in teaching occupation in Primary Education²⁶. Women are recruited in Administration, Police Service and Armed Forces after 1980 in Bangladesh and their overall performance is equally well, when compared with their male counterpart. Therefore, policy makers should think not on employment segregation, but on creation of employment opportunity for women and educate them to make able to compete in all the areas.

A look into the existing situation in Bangladesh shows that the second highest percentage of women is employed in manufacturing sector (15.4%). Women in the manufacturing sector mostly work in the RMG sector. Though statistics of different organizations provides different figure about women engaged in the RMG sector²⁷, the SMI²⁸ data shows that from among the persons engaged in RMG sector, 58.15% are female. But this sharing of position in the RMG sector is not equal in all the positions. Most of the female workers are in the production related works (almost 62.54%). The number of female employees in other manufacturing industries is insignificant. Moreover, the CPD study shows the percentage of women even in the garments industry is decreasing. Women in primary education, health and social work activities, arts, entertainment and recreation and in other services are not significantly high. Women serving in a position that requires staying away from their family members are negligible due to VAW, unavailability of day care center, suitable working condition, etc. Therefore, the facilities required for employed women should be cared first to increase women in employment.

3.4 Overseas employment: In addition to sectors stated above, a good number of women and men are working overseas. Table-9 shows that the number of both men and women working abroad increasing over the period from 2012 to 2017. In 2012, 37,304 women and 560,886 men were in overseas employment, increasing to 121,940 women and 874,086 men in 2017. The percentage increase in overseas employment thus amounted to 2.27 times for women and to 0.56 times for men. Although the increase of women's employment was continuous, the rate of increase women was not uniform. The rate of increase was over 32% up to 2015, and then the percentage of increase

²⁶ Male and Female Teachers (2018): Source: APSC 2017 (Provisional)

²⁷ ILO, UNWOMEN study found 61.17% (2018), CPD found 60.80% and BGMEA claims 80%

²⁸ Source: SMI-2019, BBS

was declined in 2016 and 2017. The growth rate of women's employment overseas was only 3.2% in 2017. This indicates that there are some other factors which discouraged women for overseas employment. Governmental measures are required in this respect.

3.5 *Above discussions in sections 3.1 to 3.4 shows that a good number of women are working as family helper due to lack of suitable employment opportunities in their chosen field or profession. Creation of better scope in the employment, equip them with proper education and training and creating better environment of employment with safety, security and day care center at workplace will help increase women employment.*

4. Wages, wage determinants and gender gaps in Bangladesh

The poorer and illiterate people mostly work in the informal sector (agriculture or in non-agricultural sectors), to assist skill or semi-skill workers. They do not have bargaining power, and so, are deprived of justifiable wage. Their wages are not regular, and their yearly income is not fixed. As a result, wage of seasonal employment should not be treated as the yardstick of living standard. Smruti Chand²⁹ identified 8 factors, namely (a) Ability to Pay (b) Demand and Supply (c) Prevailing Market Rates (d) Cost of Living (e) Bargaining of Trade Unions (f) Productivity (g) Government Regulations, and (h) Cost of Training as the wage determinant. Obviously there are a number of additional factors and in-depth studies on wage discrimination of women workers are needed to identify those factors.

4.1 Average monthly earning of men and women: Although average monthly wage is increased over the years 2013, 2015-16 and 2016-17, but the increase is more for men than women. Men wage over the period is increased by 17.24%, while that of women is increased by 10.81% only. The possible causes for widening this gap may be due to lack of so called ability, less urge to dig out employment or lack of chances to get suitable sources of employment. Their narrow field of employment has decreased their level of employment and wage due to lack of bargaining power.

A question may arise about why is the wage (includes salary) gap between men and women is increasing over time. Debora Ward³⁰ has identified several causes in her study taking 5 years data. As per her opinion, the causes for gap are: (a) Women and men are in different jobs and male are doing better salaried jobs, which contribute 36% of current gender pay gap, (b) Jobs done by women are undervalued, which drives down the average family earning, (c) Most of the senior roles are held by men, which has caused pay gap, (d) It is a believe that women enjoy extra 'motherhood leave', which causes pay gap. Although, 77% of the health workforce and 82% adult social care workforce in UK are female, majority of the most senior non-medical roles are held by men. Even the payment gap is found among the doctors in UK, as observed by Jeremy Hunt, President of the Royal College of Physicians. It is observed (Table – 11) that the number of working hours served by women is less compared to their male counterpart. Moreover, longer maternity leave may discourage employer to employ a woman in jobs which requires continuous and longer working hours.

²⁹ Source: [Top 8 Factors Influencing the Determination of Wage Rates \(yourarticlelibrary.com\)](https://yourarticlelibrary.com)

³⁰ Debora Ward, [The gender pay gap: what now? | The King's Fund](https://the-kings-fund.org) blog published on 14 June, 2018.

Though the employment situation is shown higher in the education sector (Table-8), this is not found similar in all the stages. The BANBEIS data used in the Gender Budget Report 2019-20 shows that the percentage of women in the officer rank in Secondary and Higher Education Division was 29.79% in 2017-18, which was increased to 32.98% in 2018-19³¹. The percentage of female teachers at Secondary and Higher Secondary level is 27.14%³². I M Mohammad³³ (2020) found that in developing countries, primary education was a priority investment policy and educating women was more profitable than educating men for the state.

Years of education and a dummy variable for skill level are positively related to wages, and the results are greater in urban areas, implying a higher return to human capital in urban jobs³⁴. A recent study by the ILO finds that women in Bangladesh are often considered to be inferior contestant in the labor market, largely owing to traditional societal views that the primary role of women is to fulfill reproductive and domestic functions, rather than fully participate in education, training, and paid work. This, in turn, limits women's choice of income-earning activities and results in industry-level or occupational segregation, whereby women are relegated disproportionately to jobs viewed as less important, requiring lower skills, and with lower earnings.

Though the situation in Bangladesh is improved significantly, the gender based wage gap has not been totally removed. The female labor force is growing rapidly due to social changes favoring women's employment, higher female unemployment and underemployment rates, higher poverty rates among female wage workers' households, which reduces their relative bargaining power, and increased job segmentation (occupational segregation) along gender lines. The economic push-pull factor put the female labor in the weaker position. Side by side, a reverse situation prevails. The increase in demand for female workers in the urban areas due to increase in education, skills and experience put them in a better position.

It is apparent in Table-8 that the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is the top industry for women employment, after which comes the manufacturing industry. The second and third most prevalent industries for women are education and health and social work, while for men are transport, storage and communications and construction (followed closely by hotels and restaurants). This is because, women are better scope to be employed, have better facilities and the overall situation is suitable to them. But if we look employment in terms of wage, the highest wages are in construction, financial services, electricity, gas and water industries and the lowest average wages are observed in the education, health and social work and hotels and restaurants industries. Therefore, employment segregation will deprive women from employment in the lucrative position and salaries in different sectors. Although more women are employed in the RMG sector, they are mostly employed in the low paid position (sewing section). To provide a clear picture of the dynamics driving women's employment and wages as well as overall wages in different industries, it is necessary to examine estimates of industry-level gender wage gaps.

³¹ Bangladesh Bureau of education information and statistics (BANBEIS), 2018.

³² BANBEIS statistics cited in Gender Budget Report 2019-20, Page 39.

³³ <http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/~memoirs/kiyou41.PDF>

³⁴ Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2018

Kapos (2008) observed that women earn 21 percent less an average per hour than men. Controlling for differences in age, educational background, industry, occupation and geographic location, yields an estimated gender wage gap of 15.9 per cent, but including the effects of industrial and occupational segregation into the estimate yields an estimated wage gap of 23.1 per cent. Industrial segregation increases the overall wage gap by an estimated 7 percentage points. Gender gaps are observed in almost every industry, across all levels of education and in every establishment size class, with the largest gaps observed in the hotels & restaurants and construction industries, among workers with primary education or less, and in mid-sized establishments. Gender-based occupational segregation increases the gender wage gap in construction, financial intermediation and manufacturing industries, but mitigates it in the education, hotels & restaurants and other services industries.

Differences in the occupational distribution of women and men increases the wage gap in three industries (financial intermediation, construction and manufacturing), which reflects the fact that women tend to being engaged in low paying positions in these industries. Occupational differences decrease the wage gap in another three industries (education, other services, and as previously mentioned in hotels and restaurants), which means that women tend to work in higher-paying occupations within these industries.

4.2 Causes behind gender gap: Most widely accepted cause for the wage gap between men and women is “the penalty women face for becoming mother, women's lack of negotiating skills and the bias that women face from their employers,” according to Olivia Mitchell of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania³⁵. “The fact that such a large percentage of the gap cannot be explained underscores the need for policies directly targeting discrimination in order to completely eliminate the gap,” argue economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn of Cornell University³⁶.

4.3 How to minimize the wage gap: Measures to minimize the wage gap in Bangladesh include initiatives that have been working, including access to education for women, enforcement of minimum wage laws, and greater transparency. In addition, some extra steps are called for. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), key policy areas to reduce the gender pay gap are: contracts, promotions and remuneration. Bangladesh still has a long way to go in these areas, according to a study done recently by Manusher Jonno Foundation, in collaboration with others, in the RMG sector. 72.70 percent of the workers in Dhaka and Gazipur said that they did not have a job contract. The situation, however, was comparatively better in Chittagong and Narayanganj.

4.4 Above discussion divulges that (a) gender-based pay gaps within individual occupations is disadvantageous to women, (b) construction contribute to the overall gender gap in the industry – accounting for over 40 per cent of the full gap – while differences in returns to women and men within occupations plays only a small role, (c) financial intermediation, occupational segregation is responsible for gender pay gap in the industry, but gender-based differences within occupation

³⁵ Referred by Abdulla Shibly in Daily Star (Published on September 23, 2018)

³⁶ Referred by Abdulla Shibly in Daily Star (Published on September 23, 2018)

returns do not play a significant role, (d) occupational segregation deprives women in employment and wage, (e) occupational segregation does not contribute to the gender pay gap in health and social work industry, but difference in wages benefits men, (f) the hotels and restaurants industry, both occupational segregation and differences in wages within occupations benefit women, (g) occupational segregation and differences within-occupation in other services industry returns both work to reduce the gender wage gap.

Policy recommendation:

- (1) As the gender based segregation with respect to employment does not ensure better employment and wage for women, women should be equipped through education and training to compete in different positions in different sectors, and policy makers should ensure minimum facilities required for women unmarried, married and mothers.
- (2) Government may take effective steps to eradicate wage discrimination in informal sector between male and female workers. Side by side, database for job seeking girls may be prepared to provide them required training, arranging transitional housing, counseling, job placement services and day care center in different sectors to encourage and make confident women to serve.
- (3) To compete for employment at any place in Bangladesh requires skills, high level awareness and information source available to female job seekers and it should be ensured by developing technical and vocational education/training institutions equipped with quality and modern technology support.

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Annexure (Tables)

Table-1.1: Participation rate of total working age male and female in Bangladesh

Year	Percentage of female worker (Female in work/Female Working age)X100	Percentage of male worker (Male in work/Male Working age)X100
2010	29.85	83.19
2011	30.34	82.64
2012	30.84	82.08
2013	31.34	81.52
2014	31.85	80.96
2015	32.37	80.39
2016	32.88	79.83
2017	35.86	81.43
2018	36.15	81.48
2019	36.37	81.51

Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?locations=BD>

Table-1.2: Average monthly income by year and sex, 2013, 2015-2016, 2016-2017

Year	Women	Men	Total	% of Wage gap
2013	11.1	11.6	11.5	4.50
2015-2016	12.1	13.1	12.9	8.26
2016-2017	12.3	13.6	13.3	10.56

Source: Labor force survey, Bangladesh, 2013, 2015-2016, 2016-2017

Table – 1.3: Changes in non-formal (agricultural) wage by sex and year

Year	Women	% increased women	Men	% increased men	Wage Gap percentage
2010-11	153		215		40.52%
2011-12	181	18.30%	252	17.21%	39.23%
2012-13	208	14.92%	275	9.13%	32.21%
2013-14	222	6.73%	287	4.36%	29.28%
2014-15	222	0.00%	295	2.79%	32.88%
2015-16	236	6.31%	312	5.76%	32.20%
2016-17	253	7.20%	328	5.13%	29.64%
2017-18	301	18.97%	388	18.29%	28.90%
2018-19	311	3.327%	409	5.41%	31.51%
% Changes over the period		103.27%		90.23%	

Source: Yearbook of agricultural statistics, 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2019, BBS



Table – 1.4: Labor Force as a percentage of working age population

Age Group	2013			2015-16			2016-17		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
15-29	41.40	67.10	53.80	32.30	69.60	49.90	32.30	66.70	48.70
30-64	30.20	97.30	63.40	41.00	94.60	68.00	42.30	94.70	68.40
65+	12.50	54.60	33.60	11.10	52.30	34.20	8.70	47.10	31.00
Total	33.50	81.70	57.10	35.60	81.90	58.50	36.30	80.50	58.20

Source: Labor Force Survey 2013, 2015-16 and 2016-17

Table – 1.5: Employment cost by category and Sex

Employment Category	Sex	Employed persons	Salary and wages by category	Cash and non-cash benefit by category	Yearly salary, wages, benefit by category
		Number	In '000 taka	In '000 taka	In '000 taka
Administrative and Managerial	Male	192,505	450,785,501	41,337,587	30,593,374
	Female	12,450	134,974,223	11,179,266	1,875,632
Clerical and Sales	Male	214,290	350,788,912	34,148,607	27,475,311
	Female	20,083	119,017,732	12,460,848	2,551,493
Production and related workers	Male	1,995,957	492,466,539	46,893,239	215,991,205
	Female	2,101,830	413,628,390	37,153,565	2,112,594
Working owner/ Proprietor/Partner	Male	40,679	375,728,990	38,994,824	15,294,062
	Female	2,177	86,613,350	7,460,210	1,008,753
Temporary Labor	Male	352,654	146,394,558	13,080,210	34,677,621
	Female	76,851	50,207,823	4,626,743	7,278,870
Family Helper	Male	2,676	3,828,507	830,785	183,648
	Female	3,785	4,951,632	956,492	258,524
Total		5,015,936	2,629,382,158	248,822,376	569,066,889

Source: Survey of Manufacturing Industries, BBS 2012

Table – 1.6: Labor Force as percentage of working age population

Age Group	Rural			Urban			Bangladesh		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-29	66.4	32.3	48.9	67.5	32.3	48.2	66.7	32.3	48.7
30-64	94.9	46.3	70.2	94.2	32.0	64.0	94.7	42.3	68.4
65+	48.8	9.3	32.1	41.2	6.7	26.9	47.1	8.7	31.0
Total	80.3	38.6	59.3	81.0	31.0	55.7	80.5	36.3	58.2

Source: Labor Force Survey 2017: BBS



Table – 2: Percentage of population, by level of completed education, sex and area

Education	Rural			Urban			Bangladesh		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
None	31.8	36.9	34.4	18.4	24.3	21.4	27.9	33.2	30.6
Primary	23.9	22.4	23.1	20.8	20.1	20.4	23.0	21.7	22.3
Secondary	32.4	35.0	33.7	36.7	39.8	38.3	33.6	36.4	35.0
Higher Secondary	7.6	4.3	6.0	12.3	9.9	11.1	9.0	6.0	7.5
Tertiary	3.5	1.2	2.3	11.5	5.9	8.6	5.8	2.6	3.2
Others	0.8	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Labor Force Survey, 2016-17

Table – 3: Percentage of population received vocational training by duration, sex and area

Education	Rural			Urban			Bangladesh		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<1 Week	16.3	4.5	11.8	11.5	6.2	9.5	13.6	5.5	10.5
1-2 Weeks	57.9	60.9	59.0	29.9	43.6	35.1	41.9	51.1	45.4
3-4 Weeks	11.8	19.9	14.8	40.6	30.2	36.7	28.2	25.7	27.3
1-3 Months	11.4	13.2	12.0	16.8	17.8	17.2	14.5	15.8	15.0
4-6 Months	1.4	0.8	1.2	0.4	1.4	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.0
> 6 Months	1.3	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Labor Force Survey, 2016-17

Table-4: Unemployment rate by age, group, sex and area

Age Group	Rural			Urban			Bangladesh		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-17	10.1	14.1	10.9	9.7	9.0	9.5	10.0	12.0	10.5
18-24	8.9	12.2	10.0	9.1	12.8	10.4	8.9	12.4	10.1
25-29	4.6	9.8	6.5	5.6	10.7	7.3	4.9	10.0	6.7
30-64	0.9	4.0	1.9	1.1	4.8	2.0	1.0	4.2	1.9
65+	0.6	2.5	0.8	0.7	2.2	0.9	0.6	2.4	0.9
Total	2.9	6.5	4.1	3.2	7.7	4.4	3.0	6.8	4.2

Source: Quarterly Labor Force Survey, 2015-16

Table – 5: Unemployment rate aged 15 or older, by education, sex and area

Education	Rural			Urban			Bangladesh		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
None	1.0	2.5	1.6	0.9	2.2	1.4	1.0	2.5	1.5
Primary	1.8	4.8	2.7	1.7	4.8	2.6	1.8	4.8	2.7
Secondary	3.4	6.8	4.6	2.8	9.4	4.5	3.2	7.4	4.6
Higher Secondary	12.3	25.2	15.5	9.2	27.7	14.1	11.1	26.2	14.9
Tertiary	11.1	26.1	14.2	6.2	18.3	9.0	8.3	21.4	11.2
Others	4.8	0.0	4.4	5.6	2.5	5.5	4.9	0.3	4.6
Total	3.0	5.9	4.0	3.3	8.9	4.9	3.1	6.7	4.2

Source: Labor Force Survey, 2016-17

Table – 5.1: Marital status of population (Male and Female) aged 10 years and above

Age Group	Never married		Currently Married		Widowed/ Divorced/ Separated	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10-14	99.60	99.30	0.40	0.60	0.10	0.10
15-19	96.50	76.20	3.40	23.00	0.20	0.80
20-24	73.50	25.40	25.90	72.80	0.60	1.80
25-29	35.60	7.40	63.40	90.30	1.00	2.20
30-34	11.20	2.10	87.80	94.90	1.10	3.00
35-39	3.10	1.10	95.90	94.20	1.00	4.70
40-44	1.50	0.80	97.30	91.00	1.20	8.30
45-49	1.00	0.60	97.50	86.30	1.60	13.10
50-54	0.80	0.50	97.60	78.40	1.60	21.00
55-59	0.50	0.40	97.20	70.80	2.30	28.70
60-64	0.60	0.50	95.80	56.40	3.60	43.10
65+	0.70	3.20	90.40	33.40	8.90	63.50
Total	38.60	26.20	59.90	63.30	1.50	10.50

Source: Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2018, published by BBS

Table – 6.1: Employment scenario at Secretariat in different Ministry

Ministry	Officers (%)				Staffs (%)			
	2018-19		2017-18		2018-19		2017-18	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Primary and Mass Education	31	8	86	14	85	15	85	15
Secondary and Higher Education	74.12	25.88	77.11	22.89	76.84	23.16	73.91	26.09
Technical and Madrasa Education	81	19	76	24	90	10	89	11
Medical Education & Family Welfare	56	17	73	15	13	7	14	7
Rural Development & Cooperatives	76	24	78.43	21.57	73.07	26.93	75	25
Fisheries and Livestock	72.41	27.59	70.58	29.42	78	22	76	24

Source: Gender budget report 2019-20: Finance Division

Table-6.2: Employment scenario by sex in Administration: Total in Administration Cadre

Sl #	Designation	Total	Male	Female	Female %
1	Secretary	76	66	10	13.16
2	Additional Secretary	456	402	54	11.84
3	Joint Secretary	705	616	89	12.62
4	Deputy Secretary	1954	1602	352	18.01
5	Sr. Assistant Secretary	1341	1001	340	25.35
6	Assistant Secretary	1778	1385	393	22.10
	Total	6310	5072	1238	19.62

Source: MOPA list of officers updated on 11/04/2021

Table-6.3: Employment scenario by sex in Field Administration

Sl #	Designation	Total	Male	Female	Female %
1	Divisional Commissioner	10	10	0	0.00
2	Addl. Commissioner	15	15	0	0.00
3	Deputy Commissioner	64	53	11	17.19
4	Addl. Deputy Commissioner	231	187	44	19.05
5	Upazila Nirbahi Officer	422	309	113	26.78
	Total	742	574	168	22.64

Source: MOPA list of officers updated on 11/04/2021

Table-6.4: Employed population by occupation and sex

Occupation	2013		2015-16		2016-17	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Managers	0.5	1.2	0.7	2.3	0.6	2.1
Professionals	5.4	4.5	5.6	4.7	5.5	4.5
Technicians and Associate Professionals	1.1	2.0	0.9	2.4	0.9	2.3
Clerical support workers	1.1	1.8	0.7	1.8	0.8	1.8
Service and Sales workers	8.7	19.7	3.7	20.6	4.9	21.6
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	44.5	33.6	50.8	25.2	51.7	23.8
Craft and related Trade Workers	23.7	15.8	14.9	16.7	17.5	16.9
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	2.7	7.1	3.5	9.3	2.2	8.9
Elementary Occupation	12.3	14.0	19.3	16.7	15.8	17.9
Other Occupations	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Labor Force Survey 2013, 2015-16, 2016-17, BBS

Table - 7: Distribution of Employed Population by Status in Employment and Sex

Status in Employment	2013		2015-16		2016-17	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Employer	0.1	1.2	0.4	3.7	0.6	6.1
Own Account worker	12.3	52.2	33.1	47.6	39.3	46.5
Contributing Family Helper	50.1	5.1	37.6	4.6	28.4	4.1
Employee	32.8	41.2	28.5	43.6	31.2	42.6
Others	4.7	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Labor Force Survey 2013, 2015-16, 2016-17, BBS



Table – 8: Distribution of Employed Persons by major industries and Sex

Status in Employment	2013		2015-16		2016-17	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	53.5	41.7	63.1	34.0	59.7	32.2
Mining and quarrying	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Manufacturing	22.5	13.9	14.9	14.2	15.4	14.0
Electricity, Gas, steam and air condition	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.2
Water supply; sewerage, waste mgt.	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Construction	1.0	4.8	1.1	7.5	1.4	7.5
Wholesale and retail; repair motor vehicle	4.6	16.4	2.5	18.0	3.4	19.0
Transportation and storage	0.7	8.8	0.7	10.7	1.1	11.9
Accommodation and food service activities	0.7	1.8	0.6	2.1	1.0	2.3
Information and communication	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.4
Financial and Insurance activities	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8
Real estate activities	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3
Professional, scientific and technical jobs	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.6
Administration and support services	0.3	0.9	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.8
Public Administration and defense	0.6	1.6	0.6	2.1	0.8	2.0
Education	4.2	2.8	4.8	3.1	4.8	3.1
Human health and social work activities	1.7	1.1	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other service activities	3.3	2.5	4.9	3.3	5.4	3.3
Activities of households as employers	5.8	0.5	4.7	0.6	5.0	0.6
Activities of extraterritorial organizations	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Labor Force Survey, 2013, 2015-16 and 2016-17

Table – 9: Overseas employment by Sex

Changes in Overseas Employment												
Bangladesh	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Number of Overseas employees.	37304	560886	56402	343787	76006	337977	103701	446517	118158	626041	121940	874086
% increase			51.20	-38.71	34.76	-1.69	36.44	32.11	13.94	40.21	3.20	39.62
Total Change											226.88	55.84

Source: Bangladesh Man-power Employment and Training (BMET),
Quoted from Gender Statistics of Bangladesh, 2018, BBS

Table – 10: Trends of average monthly income (in '000)by year and sex

Year	women	% change	men	% Change	Total	% Change
2013	11.1		11.6		11.5	
2015-16	12.1	9.01	13.1	12.93	12.9	12.17
2016-2017	12.3	1.65	13.6	3.82	13.3	3.10
Total changes*		10.81		17.24		
Source: Labor force survey, Bangladesh 2013, 2015-16 and 2016-17						
• Total changes shows the changes from year 2013 to 2016-2017.						

Table – 11: Average weekly working hours by sex, area and year

Year	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
2013	40	45	42	46	41	46
2015-2016	36	52	47	55	39	53
2016-2017	36	51	47	55	38	52

Source: Labor Force Survey 2013, 2015-16 and 2016-17

