

Women's Empowerment and Political Participation: A Study of Local Government Institutions in Bangladesh



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Declaration

This thesis paper, entitled "*Women's Empowerment and Political Participation: A Study of Local Government Institutions in Bangladesh*," is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil). I confirm that this is basic work and that the information provided is genuine, and that the source is properly acknowledged. It is based on research I conducted and was not previously turned in for any academic or research purposes.

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Abstract

It is impossible to have a truly democratic and representative government without women's empowerment and participation in the political process. Women should have equal access to political participation in democracy, including being able to fully exercise their rights. A proper democratic society might well be established by ensuring that men and women are empowered holistically, with political empowerment serving as the primary condition for women's empowerment. The construction of access to political party constitutions, manifestos, and state policy structures, as well as establishing equal involvement in all facets of society, became important to women's political participation, leadership, and fundamental contributions to society. In Bangladesh, the participation of women in local government bodies and parliament is mandated by law and constitution respectively. However, this commitment to a quota system does not guarantee the naturalness of women's political engagement overall, from the local to the policy level. Women's political engagement is more hindered by society's patriarchal structure, religious beliefs, and cultural norms. A total of 450 respondents participated in this study as part of the quantitative data collection. In addition, for in-depth understanding, another 12 participants were interviewed as case studies, and 3 FGDs were conducted. According to the findings of this study, the majority of the respondents see social and cultural factors as the key barriers. The dual function of women, politics based on religion, Islam's ban on women in leadership positions, the lack of a women-friendly election system, as well as the current unfavorable psychology of women in politics serve as obstacles. Findings show that respondents view politics as dirty, dissuading women from entering the field and disliking it as a livelihood. Violence against women has also been related to the contemporary political environment. The patriarchy system of society had an impact on the social and cultural climate of society and the polity, which was designed to support the ideologies and policies of political parties with a male preponderance. As a result, it primarily had a negative impact on the attitudes of women toward politics. Due to their exclusion from this patriarchal power structure, women are unable to participate in decision-making in their surroundings and domain. Additionally, women are typically the victims of conventional values that view males as superior. In this sort of socio-economic and political environment, quota systems may be useful in influencing women's political engagement for a brief period of time, but for the long term, more beneficial programs are required to guarantee that women are actually participating in politics. The number of women

nominated for general office must increase; money and muscle power must be under control; and a welcoming electoral environment must be created in order to accomplish this goal. Women must also participate more in mainstream party politics and in the political parties' policy-making processes. Above all, empowering women on a social and economic level can possibly be done by implementing a cross-cutting strategy for gender equality in all political choices, institutional structures, and the allocation of resources, as well as altering men's attitudes toward women's equality of participation in the development of democracies.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women
DPHE: Department of Public Health Engineering
GDI: Gender related Development Index
GEM: Gender Empowerment Measure
GOB: Government of Bangladesh
GO: Government Organization
LG: Local Government
LGD: Local Government Division
LGED: Local Government Engineering Department
LGI: Local Government Institutes
LGRD: Local Government Rural Development
MOWCA: Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MP: Member of Parliament
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
NGO: Non-Government Organization
NILG: National Institute of Local Government
PP: Palli Parishad
RLG: Rural Local Government
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
TNO: Thana Nirbahi Officer
UP: Union Parishad
UPZ: Upazilla Parishad
UNO: Upazilla Nirbahi Officer
UEO: Upazilla Election Officer
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Program
VGD: Vulnerable Group Development
VGF: Vulnerable Group Feeding

Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Local government is typically viewed as the primary vehicle and exclusive means of delivering state benefits and services to the local populace in all circumstances. A democracy is a type of governance in which all members of society are represented. However, the concern about women's low participation is a particular worry for improving democracy, and a real democracy can never be reached unless this tendency is reversed. Women in Bangladesh often have a higher political position than women in other South Asian nations. However, for a number of reasons, women's political engagement in Bangladesh's local government remains insufficient. Local government institutions have been perceived as male-dominated since the British colonial period (Dilara, 1995).

Women make up about half of Bangladesh's population. In a society influenced by ideological, socioeconomic, political, and cultural forces, men and women play diverse roles. However, the fact is that women's living conditions are substantially worse than men's. Many women are restricted to marital relationships, whereas politics is regarded as a public activity that men dominate. Through time, it has become clear that protecting women's empowerment is necessary for achieving national growth. Without the dynamic participation of women, the national goals of social equality, progress, and permanence will not be accomplished. Women's participation in decision-making and local government is one of the majority important and urgent concerns into women's empowerment at the local level (Dilara, 1995). As a result, Bangladesh's government, like governments throughout the world, has taken initiatives to expand women's participation and involvement. The Bangladeshi Local Government Second Correction Act of 1997 paved the ground for greater female representation in the political power structure by maintaining a specific quota for women in local government organizations. However, based on current data, the greater percentage of involvement does not appear to match expectations. At the same time, when it comes to getting their voices heard in management, women confront a number of social, political, and cultural obstacles. It demonstrates that the system of quotas for women's election participation does not fully address the problem of women's empowerment. This study's objective is to evaluate the reality of women's political and economic empowerment in eight

districts from eight divisions in Bangladesh in order to evaluate the efficacy of programs intended to improve women's engagement and influence in local government (Dilara, 1995).

Colonial powers decided to set up national and top-level administrations in other regions to further their political, economic, and social objectives after obtaining self-governing human rights. They generally overlooked the local group and many were delighted to accept local leadership if it was considered advantageous, or they made clumsy attempts to recreate local institutions in our face. As a consequence, colonial governments are often centralized in national, colonial, and provincial capitals, even when they are eventually independent and staffed entirely by native authorities and human resources. However, the need to administer the country while also providing services to the people has led to the development of complicated local government institutions (Panday, 2013). The stated purpose of these local government units was to provide some services while promoting citizen engagement. On the Indian subcontinent, the British invented local self-government in the modern sense. Bangladesh's system is comparable to others that were in effect at the time.

Governing authorities are incapable of contributing in any meaningful way to the lack of stability, according to the history of local government in Bangladesh, as a result of changes in local government levels and administration. Stability has not been maintained on the question of demonstration, just as it has not been maintained on the matter of levels.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Women are in a procession to participate in different local government elections, from city corporations to Union Parishad, in accordance with current regulations such as local government (City Corporation Act. 2011), local government (Purashava Act. 2009), and local government union (Parishad Act. 2009). According to these policies, an extraordinary quota system for women has been designed to persuade them to cast ballots in elections, and women's answers are continually rising, along with the loss of their traditional viewpoints. According to the previous year's findings, though the growing percentage of participation appears to be falling short of expectations, elected women in the local government system appear to be ill-equipped to function and participate in decision-making. Those who face a number of social, political, and

religious challenges, although the problem of equal treatment is implied by existing laws, it is effectively missing. Gender equality during local government and inside the political decision-making process is necessary for democratic governance to be legitimate. By incorporating a gender perspective into development, the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China in 1995, formulated an overall plan for gender equality. It has been suggested that women might be crucial to the prosperity of the country. Social growth and nation-building are significantly impacted by women's participation in home and governmental decision-making processes. On the other hand, the level of engagement that women have in local government decision-making is a key factor in determining their economic and social empowerment. The degree to which women have exercised their political rights is essentially measured by their political involvement. Furthermore, the capacity to exercise one's political rights is required for women to participate in society. Certain fundamental underpinnings exist for women's political participation and demonstration. These are some of them: (a) The need for proportionate female political participation is critical because democracy, equality, and civil rights are required; (b) The lack of feminine representation in local government raises concerns about the autonomous process and the strength of decision-making institutions. (c) Women are informed, in addition to qualified, about their primary concerns and objectives, other than if they are not adequately represented in the political process, they will be denied a fair part of the product. (d) Increasing women's engagement in politics and decision-making bodies will benefit development and good governance; and (e) finally; more women should be permitted to participate in politics in order to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources (Dilara, 1995).

In addition, fostering women's equal participation in the political process is a basic component of modern democratic governance. In the face of the fact that women constitute half of the population, it has been acknowledged that real development would not be feasible if they were excluded from the policy-making process.

However, democratic local government requires well-informed participation and accountability. In terms of participation, democratic local governance necessitates the active engagement of women and minorities in local politics. The rationale is to create channels for their political coalition because the traditional institutional architecture prevents women from participating (Panday, 2013). In such instances, reform becomes unavoidable during regulating to create a positive take apart in favor of women's rights within the institutional framework. When

competing against their male counterparts, women candidates are unlikely to win elections under the conditions of male domination and patriarchy. This does not rule out the possibility of women winning elections in competition with men. In any event, the number is far too small to be deemed representative. As a result of the preceding debate, an important issue arises: who should be responsible for initiating action to achieve gender equality? One possible response: the state could safeguard and encourage increased female depiction in three ways: (a) To begin with, the governing body could possibly adjust obtainable constitutional articles or legal rules, as well as establish new laws or sets of laws, to encourage women to run for public office. (a) Second, the supervisory branch may enforce equal opportunity principles and even take affirmative action to boost women's employment, education, and promotion. (c) Finally, by reinterpreting legislation, the court can contribute to removing gender discrimination in the public sphere (for example, by defending acts as required to achieve equality).

Furthermore, a number of researchers have shown that among alternative institutional contexts, an "electoral structure" is the most important indicator of female depiction during democratic government. Three types of voting systems, in particular, lead to increased female representation: (a) the PR (proportional representation) system; (b) districts with a large number of members; and (c) quota schemes that ensure a certain amount of female representation (Panday, 2013).

It's never easy to ensure gender equality. As a result, the situation for women in Bangladesh is much worse, as their chances in positions of leadership are scarce. Only 10% of senior leadership level seats (Class I and II officers) in the Civil Service are earmarked for women, whereas the ratio is 15% for class III and IV personnel (Panday, 2013).

In the meantime, the "thesis" of the public-private divide has hampered women's participation in politics and public-sector decision-making. In a nutshell, this idea limits women's participation to the private realm. It's worth noting at this point that society has been conceived of as consisting of two spheres since the dawn of Western political philosophy.

The majority of political concerns in the South-Asia region are defined by cash and muscle control, and Bangladesh is no exception. As a result, women find it more difficult to participate in the political process. Women in the public service who are surrounded by male colleagues face a negative environment. Furthermore, societal and social barriers hamper women's attempts

to achieve authority. Men and women are still encouraged to play their traditional roles through community institutions like the home, school, church, mosque, government, and media.

The question at the moment seems to be how substantial the Act of 1997 is in relation to earlier reform efforts. One reason for this is that the act was the first to establish a direct election system for women in local government. As a result, Bangladeshi women are ecstatic about the direct election.

Prior to the passing of this legislation in 1997, there were far too few women standing for local government posts to be considered significant. For example, in the local government elections of 1988 and 1992, the total number of women running for general member posts (which were accessible to everybody) was just 863 out of 114,699 (constituting 0.7 percent) and 1137 out of 169,645, constituting once again a modest 0.7 percent (BBS, 1996).

According to Panday (2013), the number of women who competed during the 1997 and 2003 decisions was greater than before dramatically once the coordinated race allowed "reserved seats" for women. In the 1997 campaign, 44,124 women competed for the saved seats, with 14,019 winning (of those, 582 were chosen unopposed). In the 2003 election, there were 39319 female candidates running for 12,649 reserved spaces.

There is a significant indication of a decrease in the number of women running in support of allowance seats during election conduct between 1997 and 2003. In actuality, comparing the number of female candidates in the past two UP elections (1997 and 2003), it is apparent that this is the case. One probable cause is that the female candidates chosen in the 1997 election had unpleasant engagements while completing their duties, preventing them from participating in the 2003 election. Moreover, since the beginning of the surge, supporters as well as partners of these women may have been affected by the women's contest for saved places; available information confirms that the incredible wave of eagerness among Bangladeshi women sparked by the Act of 1997 has resulted in significant changes. The Act of 1997 sparked an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm among Bangladeshi women, which has had far-reaching consequences.

Without hesitation, one may inquire as to what "participation" entails. In the context of this study, whether it's leading the government or merely exercising voting power, since 1969, the "ladder of participation" has defined many degrees of participation, ranging from highly passive to extremely active participation. However, if power is not properly divided among the

participants, the "ladder of participation" becomes meaningless and irritating. Political "participation" of women within this research more often than not refers to elected women members' commitment to the Upazilla Parishad's decision-making development (hence, UZP).

According to the above-mentioned debates, the Take Action of 1997 has opened up an innovative door for women to contribute to local government with better information. According to the information provided in the foregoing section, there seems to be an incredible amount of passion within the women's community about their participation in local government campaigns.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

General Objective: Using eight districts from eight divisions as a case study, this research assesses the situation of women's empowerment and political participation within local government institutions in Bangladesh.

Specific Objectives: For women's empowerment and political participation in Bangladesh's local government institutions, the study will be focused on the following specific objectives:

- a) To observe existing laws to evaluate their capacity and sufficiency in ensuring women's empowerment;
- b) To the responsibility of women in local government institutions as political participants and their involvement in women's empowerment;
- c) To identify socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious factors to produce barriers on the way to women's empowerment and political participation in local government institutions;
- d) To find out about gender discrimination in local government politics,
- e) To overcome existent barriers to women's empowerment and political participation in local government institutions.

1.4 Research Question

The following question has been asked in light of the aforementioned assessment of the problem and during observation of the concentrated position of women's empowerment and political participation in Bangladeshi local government institutions:

- What is the natural history of women's empowerment with political participation during local government institutions in Bangladesh's eight districts from eight divisions?

1.5 Rationale of the Study

Women's empowerment and political participation in local government are two of the most important issues in front of rural development, in addition to local government. Since their involvement during political opinions, in addition to the political procedure, enables them to focus in the direction of focus on women's issues and the advancement of women's opportunities, it is still more significant during expressions of women's empowerment. Women's engagement in local government would be able to help society adapt to the needs of all residents more efficiently because, as previously stated, a quota system for local government elections has been in existence for the past one and a half decades to regulate in the direction of increasing women's empowerment and encourage their contribution during decision-making, much like the political system in Bangladesh (Panday, 2013). Despite a variety of constraints and restrictions, many academics and researchers believe that the system has ensured women's involvement in local government decision-making to some level. Most studies, on the other hand, appear to have ignored the position of elected women members in their families and social circles.

As a result, the rationale of this study is to measure up to the condition of women's empowerment in eight districts throughout eight divisions in order to better appreciate the purpose of the quota system within women's empowerment in Bangladesh's local government institutions. In this sense, the objective of this study is to observe how remote quotas help on the way to changing popular political culture and creating additional agreeable in the direction of women's political participation in local government.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

What you've through is imperative to investigate, but how you do it is a great deal more significant (Cresswell, 2003). Methodology refers to the direction of the procedure of performing research. Varieties of methodologies with measures were utilized at this time in agreement with the study objectives and research questions. These are discussed more below:

1.6.1 Design of the Study

This study was done utilizing a variety of research techniques, including surveys, focus group discussions, and case studies.

1.6.1.1 Case-Study Method

The expression "case study" on average refers to an in-depth investigation of an entity that is on its own, such as an individual, a small group of individuals, or otherwise a single business. Researchers can bring into play the case study method on the way to retain the complete and essential parts of real-world activities such as human life cycles, organizational processes, neighborhood change, global interactions, in addition to company development. When the investigator has little influence over outcomes and the focus is on top in attendance at observable data within some real-world context, "Are the best advances at what time," "how," or "why" creature are poses (Yin, 2003). According to the statement, the major issue is "how" to improve women's political participation and empowerment within Upazila Parishads (UZPs) so that local government institutions may suggest improved services in the direction of the general population. To facilitate indicates that the study has to describe the obtainable position, examine whether it has better otherwise not, and, consequently, analyze all barriers to development. Since it is a current occurrence and a reality, the case study approach will be suitable for the research. This study takes Gazipur Sadar, Jashore Sadar, Char Fasson Upazila, Feni Sadar Upazila, Gobindaganj Upazila, Paba Upazila, Sylhet Sadar Upazila, and Gafargaon Upazila Parishad as case studies. The rationales of this study have been extremely well served by means of the case study technique.

1.6.1.2 Survey Method

The local government institution structure has made a significant contribution to Upazila Parishad's political participation and women's political empowerment. National people organizations (NPOs), global non-governmental organizations (GNGOs), political party activists, politicians, feminists, social and political scientists, female students, housewives, and community activists, in addition to a little male politician interview. During this development, a systematic questionnaire is in use in the direction of collecting information from people's representatives in local government.

1.6.1.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

This research has been approved in Jashore Sadar Upazila, Char Fasson Upazila, Sylhet Sadar Upazila, and Paba Upazila to gather comprehensive information on the topic of enhancing the local government's construction in Bangladesh. A focus group revise is basically a conversation during which a diminutive group of participants (often eight to twelve) engage in conversation about subjects they feel to be particularly part of an ongoing investigation (Folch-Lyon and Trost, 1981).

1.6.2 Types of Data and Sources

Both primary and secondary information were analyzed in this study. In addition, both primary and secondary sources were in employment to collect the data.

1.6.2.1 Primary Sources

The primary focal point of this study is taking place while identifying the elements influencing the process of amplification of the local government institution system and women's political empowerment and participation. The men who agreed to participate in the interview process were the primary respondents for the study, along with a small group of women's organizations, national people organizations (NPOs), global non-governmental organizations (GNGOs), political party activists, politicians, feminists, social and political scientists, female students, and housewives. In order to measure up to the roles played by the male and female members, they were specifically questioned.

1.6.2.2 Secondary Sources

Information has been collected from appropriate secondary sources such as various articles, books, newspapers, study reports, research monographs, and the general administration of Upazila Parishad. The researcher has also examined a range of papers, reports, and official notes in order to acquire perfect information regarding the extent to which women's political participation and empowerment empowered Upazila Parishad within the framework of local government institutions.

1.6.3 Method of Data Collection

For the purpose of gathering field-level data, two qualified and experienced field assistants were hired. To make the questionnaire easier to understand, it was written in Bengali. Before being used in its final form, the questionnaire underwent pre-testing to assess its validity and usefulness. Individual interviews, focus groups, and case studies were used to gather the main data. Additionally, data was compiled from reports of different local government entities' commissions and committees as well as carefully chosen published research papers. Data was collected from October 6, 2021, to December 15, 2021.

1.6.4 Approach of the Study

The sources of data collection were by means of a mixed-method approach. It is one where the researcher frequently bases information assertions on practical considerations (e.g., consequence-oriented, problem-centered, in addition to pluralistic). To better comprehend research challenges, it uses methodologies of inquiry that entail gathering data either concurrently or sequentially. In order for the final database to contain both quantitative and qualitative information, the data collection also entails obtaining both textual material (such as on interviews) and numeric information (such as on instruments). In this study, both open-ended and close-ended questionnaires were employed. Two different sorts of inquiries are necessary to investigate how Upazila Parishads in the research region may be reinforced. In addition, case studies and focus group discussions (FGD) were employed to gather qualitative data for this study. The FGD research has given in-depth information regarding women's political engagement and empowerment in local government institutions, which has strengthened the local government structure.

1.6.5 Rationale of the Mixed Method

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies is what makes up the mixed method. A qualitative study aims to determine a phenomenon's meaning based on participant perceptions. The researcher has also examined the opinions of various women's organizations, national people organizations (NPOs), global non-governmental organizations (GNGOs), political party activists, politicians, feminists, social and political scientists, female students, housewives, community activists, and several male politicians as regards the political participation and empowerment of women in Bangladesh's local government institutions. The information demonstrates that, notwithstanding an increase, Upazila Parishad involvement is still not at a sufficient level. What aspect affects it in the direction of being durable appropriately? This study has discussed the procedure of every one of these, which incorporate a number of mechanisms of women's empowerment (individual and institutional empowerment), political involvement (elected legislative body), and leadership.

The investigator attempts to assess the phrase "women's empowerment and participation of local government institutions" through the qualitative study from the perspectives of both Vice-Chairmen (female) and Women's Activists. By gathering information from them, the researcher also attempted to outline the official status of the male chairmen and vice-chairmen. The researcher has made an attempt to learn about their perspectives into regulation on the way to improve Upazila Parishad since a local government remains within this situation. In addition, this study attempted to address the research issues from a numerical standpoint, which is why the quantitative technique was used. The quantitative approach helped to obtain accurate results since the researcher employed a large quantity of respondents in addition to both structured and semi-structured questionnaires.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used in this study. Due to the elected officials and concerned individuals' access to a natural setting, a qualitative technique was selected based on the study questions and purpose. In addition, this study attempted to address the research issues from a numerical standpoint, which is why the quantitative technique was chosen.

The qualitative method was chosen since the study's actual findings exceeded the researcher's expectations. This study is anticipated to be exploratory and inductive in character, with an

emphasis on the difficulties people currently have in identifying Upazila Parishad members. Instead of testing hypotheses, qualitative research focuses more on developing them. Thus, the researcher approaches the study with some conceptual ideas about potential theories that they may utilize. Ideas developed via data analysis or existing theories can be used to generate novel theories by connecting them with research results. The flexibility of a qualitative investigation allows the researcher to adjust ideas and hypotheses as events take place. A qualitative study's several stages—including the expansion and reformation of research questions, information collection, data analysis, conceptual framework construction, in addition to modification—approximately always obtain position at the same time and interact with one another. According to Maxwell (1996), this approach is best suited for achieving the following particular objectives: considerate implication and structure; recognizing unanticipated actions and impact; developing new theories; perceptive of the process by which actions take place; and contributing to fundamental explanation (Maxwell, 1996). To increase the ability of the local government institutions in this study, the researcher will be able to analyze the relevance of empowerment, participation (both male and female), and leadership. and to identify the factors that influence how well local governments function within the system.

The qualitative technique was used for this study in order to gather in-depth data from the field. Consequently, the case study and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) methods have been used in order to aid in explanatory investigations and enable in-depth examination of a topic. The advantage of the FGD technique is that it makes it possible to employ a variety of information sources and examine current events in their contexts. The FGD method's disadvantage is that it frequently lacks objectivity and lets prejudicial opinion pressure the consequences. The study is experimental in nature with the intention of applying theoretical hypotheses to give an explanation for the actual development with the help of data gathered on or after the field. It does this by using a number of independent and dependent variables, including effective leadership, women's empowerment, and political participation, in addition to the intensification of local government institutions.

1.6.6 Selection of the Study Area

The research was carried out within the Upazilla Parishad. It was picked with care from eight districts drawn from eight divisions, with one Upazilla Parishad from each district. The following is from Table-1.1:

Table-1.1 Selection of Study Area

SL	Name of Division	Name of District	Name of Upazila Parishad
01	Dhaka	Gazipur	Gazipur Sadar Upazila
02	Khulna	Jashore	Jashore Sadar Upazila
03	Barishal	Bhola	Charfesson Upazila
04	Chittagong	Feni	Feni Sadar Upazila
05	Rangpur	Gaibandha	Gobindaganj Upazila
06	Rajshahi	Rajshahi	Paba Upazila
07	Sylhet	Sylhet	Sylhet Sadar Upazila
08	Mymensingh	Mymensingh	Gafargaon Upazila
Total	-	-	08

1.6.7 Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling is the procedure of choosing a subject matter by starting a wider population of people. The collection is made in order to draw conclusions in relation to the best group. Purposive sampling will be used for the research, not random sampling, in accordance with the study's goals. Women collect information from a variety of women's networks and organizations, national people's organizations (NPOs), global non-governmental organizations (GNGOs), political party activists, politicians, feminists, social and political scientists, female students, housewives, community activists, and some male politicians. There are respondents in each category, including the sample size for the quantitative research was 450 individuals. Comparatively, qualitative research will involve FGD and 12 case studies in the selected subject areas.

According to Fisher's theory of sample size determination $= z^2 * pq / d^2$

Here,

n=Desired number of sample

z=Standard normal deviation at 95% confidence

interval (1.96)p= Expected proportion q= 1-p

$$d = \text{Margin of error in estimation}$$

$$\text{mean} = (1.96)^2 * .5 * .5 / (.05)^2$$

$$= 385.5$$

$$= 423.5 (\text{with } 10\% \text{ dropout})$$

$$= 450$$

Table-1.2 Sampling Frame

Category of respondents	Gazipur Sadar Upazila	Jashore Sadar Upazila	Charfesson Upazila	Feni Sadar Upazila	Gobindaganj Upazila	Paba Upazila	Sylhet Sadar Upazila	Gafargaon Upazila	Total
Chairman/ Vice/ Councilor (male)	1+1+3	1+1+3	1+1+3	1+1+3	1+1+3	1+1+3	1+1+3	1+1+3	40
Vice- Chairman/ Councilor (female)	1+3	1+3	1+3	1+3	1+3	1+3	1+3	1+3	32
Government representatives	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
Civil Society members	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
Active women politician	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	80
Women Activist	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	32
Male Politician	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	30
Female Student at graduate level	26	51	51	31	16	10	10	10	204
# Vice- Chairman/ Women's Activist	1	1+1	1+1	1	1	1+1	1+1	1	# 12 case study & 4 FGD
Total	57+1	82+2	82+2	60+1	47+1	41+2	39+2	39+1	450+12

1.6.8 Data Processing and Analysis

This study has followed the collected data established at the beginning of the field study. The field study's data was collected, and this study has analyzed it. For the purpose of transcribed interviews, typing field remarks, and dividing information into sections based on the information source, the study has organized and prepared the data. A broad notion of how to strengthen local government institutions has been sought after. UZPs' pictures have been coded and classified. After that, information revealed how closely related the ideas concerning enhancing the resilience of local government institutions were. The researcher made an effort to use figures and tables to illustrate the information.

The quantitative feature of the data has been analyzed by means of the factor of the leadership and the respondent's reply. Utilizing the leadership and response variables, the quantitative element of the data has been examined. The entire number of respondents was converted to a percentage, and the results were then examined. The next step is to construct an analytical

generalization to understand the importance of women's participation, political participation, and empowerment in order to improve local government institutions. In other words, they obtained characteristically categorized data, and the analysis and display of the results used a straightforward approach.

1.7 Importance of the Study

At the same time, as Bangladeshi citizens are able to at the moment come forward with satisfaction and expect a number of exceptional and significant moments to have taken place in the last two decades for their extreme expansion, as well as ensuring women's empowerment and political participation in local government institutions, the twenty-first century is beginning to transform into a period of new hopes and aspirations for good governance. For developing nations like Bangladesh to grow, men and women must actively work together. With the results of this study, citizens will receive equitable treatment while receiving services from the government. However, the local population receives these services from the central government via local government institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the causes behind the expansion of the local government system. There are several critical distinctions, particularly in terms of leadership, participation, and empowerment, which may help the local government system grow. Local governments would become more aware and capable of managing themselves. Additionally, it would make it simple for people to interact with political organizations and national and local government institutions.

1.8 Ethical Consideration

Codes of ethics are the standard formulation for moral principles in value-free social science. The study participants were educated about the nature and implications of the research prior to the data collection since the researcher was addressing the delicate topic of women's empowerment and political involvement of local government organizations in Bangladesh. Individuals' voluntary participation in the study was noted. The norms of research ethics state that maintaining anonymity is crucial for preserving respondent identities (Christians, 2000). All personal information about the respondents that could be used to identify them was hidden or

altered for confidentiality reasons, and the true names of the study locations were replaced with pseudonyms. One of the essential tenets of social science research is data accuracy. In this study, the subjects' emotions and expressions—and even their own voices—were recorded to ensure the internal and external validity of the results.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Political parties are intricate and multifaceted in any investigation of women for a variety of reasons. The current study's information collection approach is based on a sample and coordinating interviews on a scheduled timetable. These kinds of studies can take a long time. Additionally, the data was gathered from a variety of regions in the nation, and at the time of data collection, there was significant political instability, which made it difficult to collect all the necessary data. The majority of the female leaders were immersed in a hectic political schedule, making it difficult for the researcher to connect with them. Despite our best efforts, there were a few inevitable instances that deserve particular note. Respondents were questioned in the office, party headquarters, or their homes. However, there were other people present in various areas. She was afraid to address certain concerns openly in the company of the other ladies.

Budgetary restrictions were also taken into account as part of the research. By means of such limited resources, it was extremely complicated to conduct a more complete investigation by assembling talented human resources with superior incentives. It was not imaginable that further perspectives might be obtained using this method. In any case, the interview preparation plan was thoroughly pre-tested and cross-checked with the realistic circumstances. The data was processed in a scientific manner to the greatest extent possible and practicable in order to produce a superior outcome.

Chapter Two
Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter intends to build up a literature review and a theoretical framework describing and analyzing the majority of the important issues raised by the research. There are two parts in this chapter. The first part includes different literature and theories with conceptual analysis. The institutional approach has been used here to understand the fundamental nature of a local government institution (LGI) (especially regulations and norms) that shapes the situation of women's empowerment in political participation at local government institutions.

However, participation in political participation is not only an issue for the institutions; it depends largely on the individuals themselves. Therefore, it is imperative to have a theoretical discussion on that particular issue of the individuals' involvement in the institutions. In doing so, the empowerment approach has been chosen here to create a deep insight, as "empowerment" and "political participation" are very closely interrelated.

The second part highlights the theoretical by means of the conceptual framework of the study, with the indicators of the explanatory variables. An attempt has been made to examine the elements with the intention of influencing women's political participation in UZPs (Panday, 2013).

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Existing Laws for Women Empowerment and Political Participation

2.1.1.1 Laws of Women's Human Rights and the Constitution

The constitution for Bangladesh, a recently established state, was created in 1972. The Constitution, which recognized the fundamental and human rights of women, was drafted by Bangabandhu Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation. Article 27 of the Constitution declares that "all individuals are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law." Article 28(1) of the Constitution states that the state shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of their religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Women "shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and public life," states article 28(2). Article 28(3) states that no citizen should be subjected to a disability, responsibility, restriction, or condition as regards

entrance to any public recreation area or alternative, or access to any educational institution, based solely on their religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Nothing in Article 28(4) prevents the state from taking special measures for the advancement of any underprivileged group of people, including women, children, and families. All citizens should have equal access to work and office opportunities in the republic, according to Article 29(1). No citizen should be excluded from or subject to discrimination with regard to any job or position in the republic's service base exclusively taking place in their religion, race, caste, sex, or other place of birth, according to Article 29(2). According to article 65(3), 50 seats are reserved for women, at the same time because article 9 concerns the representation of women in the establishment of local governmental institutions (Khan, 2011).

2.1.1.2 Local Government and Constitution in Bangladesh

The foundation of Bangladesh is distinct in that it includes explicit provisions for municipal administration. In older constitutional regimes, the administrative exterior of the capital was handled by the municipal service, with the general populace having little or no involvement. The system of local government bodies contributed very little to the government of the nation. The framers were concerned about creating a truly democratic system that incorporated the people, especially those at the grassroots level. Thus, they inserted articles 9 and 11 at the same time as two major fundamental morality of state strategy. These fundamental tenets of state policy are put into practice by articles 59 and 60 (Hasan, 2007). By a parliamentary act or by including applicable sections in the Constitution, local administrations are given legal standing in terms of political and democratic phenomena. The 1972 Bangladeshi Constitution outlined the constitutional basis and responsibilities of local government in Dhaka University Institutional Repository detail. Local government in all organizational units of democracy, according to Article 59, section of the Constitution, shall be present entrusted in the direction of a body complete of citizens elected into agreement by the law. In order for the provisions of Article 59 to be fully implemented, the local government institutions named in that article must be granted specific powers by law. These powers must include the ability to levy taxes for local purposes, create budgets, and preserve financial resources. It is obvious that the Constitution explicitly lays forth the legal foundation for municipal governance. The Constitution has guaranteed the devolution of authority to local government organizations by Article 59 of Chapter 3 (Panday, 2013).

The state should support local institutions of government made up of representatives from the impacted regions, and to the maximum extent possible, there should be special representation for peasants, workers, and women in such organizations. This position is expressed in Article 9 of the Constitution, which is titled "Promotion of Local Government Institutions." The Republic shall be a democracy in which the public, acting all the way through their selected legislative body, shall actively participate in every area of administration at all levels and wherein fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as respect for each individual's dignity and worth, shall be guaranteed. Article 11, "Democracy and Human Rights". However, the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act 1975, which was passed on January 25, 1975, forbade all of these goals of the framers. The whole "Local Government" section of Section 3 of Part IV of the Constitution was deleted, since in good health like the words "with which effectual contribution of the nation, via their nominated legislative body, into government at all levels shall be ensured" from Article 11. All of these were later restored by the Constitution (Twelfth Amendment) Act of 1991, which essentially brought back the parliamentary form of government from the Constitution's initial text starting in 1972 (Hasan, 2007).

The Local Government Proceed of 1997 was the first to put in place the system of female direct elections at the local government level. As a result, Bangladeshi women have shown a great deal of enthusiasm for direct elections. The figure of women running in local government elections was also miniature in the direction of being considered relevant before this Act was passed in 1997. During the 1988 and 1992 local government elections, only 863 out of 114,699 (or 0.7 percent) and 1135 out of 169,643 (again, 0.7 percent) of all candidates for elected general member positions were women, correspondingly (Panday, 2013).

The figure of women's organizations in the 1997 and 2003 elections was amplified significantly when the direct election introduced "reserved seats" for female MPs. 44,134 women ran for the reserved seats in the 1997 election; 14,029 of them were successful (of those, 592 were elected unopposed). In the 2003 election, there were 39419 women's organizations intended for 12,669 reserved seats (Panday, 2013).

There must have been considerably fewer women vying for quota seats in 2003 than there had been in the elections of 1997. When the numbers for the number of female candidates in the two most recent UP elections (1997 and 2003) are compared, it is quite easy to see that this is the

situation. This might be explained by the fact that the elected female candidates in the 1997 election had terrible experiences carrying out their duties, which ultimately deterred them from running in the 2003 election. Election workers accumulated negative experience while doing their jobs, which ultimately made them decide not to vote in the 2003 election (Panday, 2013). Furthermore, elected women running for reserved seats following the first surge may have influenced these women's supporters and connections. However, the information that is currently available demonstrates that the significant change that the Act of 1997 brought about for Bangladeshi women is still an important and lasting one.

2.1.1.3 Present Situation

The government, led by the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has launched a number of initiatives to make Vision 2021 a reality by promoting women's rights, empowering them, and mainstreaming them throughout development. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has been implementing various programs to reduce women's poverty, stop violence against women, stop trafficking in women, and ensure safety in all environments, including the workplace, in order to ensure that women participate fully and equally in socioeconomic activities. The protection net for women includes initiatives like the stipend for widowed and husband-abandoned women, the breastfeeding look after plan in urban areas, the VGD plan intended for the food protection of distressed women, in addition to loan programs in support of poverty decrease. Then, extensive training is provided to increase the skills of the beneficiaries, employment is created, and a wider range of people are participating in the labor market. Credit facilities are also provided to small and medium-sized businesses with simple terms and without collateral, as well as other forms of patronage to ensure economic success (NSAPR, 2020).

The National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (NSAPR-II) includes a number of initiatives targeted by the side of reducing women's scarcity and mainstreaming them in the overall economy in this period of globalization. This Strategy Paper identifies five initiatives, including macroeconomic management for poor-friendly economic growth; social protection for the most vulnerable people; and human resource development. Participatory empowerment in development activities has received the greatest attention among the five methods. The strategy paper's specific program for reducing women's poverty calls for empowering the most vulnerable or deceased poor women by widening their safety net. In 1998,

a program was launched to provide a stipend to widowed and struggling women. It now covers more than 9,000 women. A widow participating in this program is given a monthly payment of Tk. 300.00. Additionally, they get a maternity allowance. 88,000 low-income moms get Tk. 350.00 per month as part of the initiative. Another development is the continuation of the old age and disability allowances, from which women receive a portion of the benefits. 7,50,000 women who are eligible for the poverty reduction program are given 30 kg of rice or else 25 kg of pusti atta every month for food safety. In order to help women become independent and self-sufficient, the strategy document includes provisions for providing them with various forms of training; income-generating training; training in farming; computer operation; etc. To help small and medium-sized female entrepreneurs, steps have been taken to provide loans with reasonable terms and interest. Additionally, attempts have been made to provide financial support and reduce marketing production bottlenecks. Emphasis has been placed on encouraging home-based micro-industries through fostering the development of textile, handicraft, and weaving businesses. Additionally important are women's increased access to the labor market, the creation of jobs, and skill development. The need for empowering women via training has been emphasized heavily in rural non-farm activities and is mentioned in the strategy document. The sixth Five Year Plan (2010–2015) and long-term perspective plan (2010–2021) have both been developed (NSAPR, 2020).

2.1.1.4 Legal Issues and Women

Some existing laws have been modified, and new legislation has been created to stop the abuse of women and girls in Bangladesh. Between these laws, the Dowry Prevention Act, the Minor Girl Marriage Act, the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act of 2000, and others are remarkable. Through order in the direction of making available lawful support and analysis intended for the obstacle of women's and children's abuse, women's abuse prevention cells and rehabilitation facilities for abused women have been constructed. Additionally, the District and Sessions Judge has money set aside to cover legal fees and other expenses. As a signatory state to the UN Charters for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and the Child Rights Charter (1989), The national parliament amended the citizenship laws in 2009 to include a provision for mother-to-child citizenship transfer. By including Section 509 of the Bangladesh Penal Code in the schedule of the Mobile Court Act, the executive magistrate

was granted the authority to take action to stop and discourage eve teasing and sexual harassment of girls and women (Panday, 2013).

2.1.2 Women's Empowerment and Political Participation: The International Commitments

Since the dawn of civilization, women have been given a lower status than men. Women, all over the world, have experienced different types of exploitation and oppression in every sphere of their lives. However, in the center of the nineteenth century, women's oppression, mutual relationships between women and men, women's social status, and consequently forth, induced the intellectual. At the same time, as a result, individual programmes have been initiated in the way of extirpating these inhumane, gruesome, atrocious and arrogant treatments towards women. These philanthropic activities, in and of themselves, did not demonstrate the grand mission that was so desperately needed to emancipate women from all manner of uncivilized, savage, and discriminatory behavior, nor did there appear to be any strong cohesion between and among various intellectuals (Rustagi, 2004).

Although some achievements in the intangible support of women's development were celebrated, their success story was not too promising. Two world wars, the post-world war crisis, economic depression, political instability and, of course, the cold war outweighed all agendas, not alone women's development and empowerment. Consequently, women's deprivation-howling paid no heed to thinkers. With the economic depression evaporating in western countries and the efforts to kick the final shot of the cold war, the concept of women's empowerment took a "U-turn," albeit not a complete volte-face in attitude toward women's position in society. We observed that after the 1970s, all socio-political and economic conferences gave greater importance to gender equality, women's development, and empowerment. An effort has been made to highlight some of the significant international conferences that reaffirmed the crucial importance of gender equality in this context: (a) Bucharest's World Population Plan of Action (1984); (b) The Rio Conference resting on Empowerment and Development (1992); (c) The International Conference taking place on Population, Mexico (1984). (d) The Vienna Human Rights Conference (e) The Population and Development Conference in Cairo (f) Beijing and the United Nations Fourth Conference on the Status of Women The Copenhagen Global Social Development Summit (g) and the Istanbul Human Settlements Conference (h). However, with respect to this, we can draw hints from various world conferences dedicated to the direction of women's issues in general.

2.1.2.1 First World Conference-1975 (Mexico City: World Plan of Action)

By the side of the first world conference, gender equality and women's issues became the central concerns of the global plan. This conference designated 1976–1985 as the UN Decade for Women. The first three of the four major conferences were held during the UN Decade for Women. At this conference, the World Plan of Action (WPA) was adopted to achieve the objectives of the International Women's Year.

2.1.2.2 Second World Conference-1979 (Copenhagen: Program of Action)

The Copenhagen conference is truly recognized as a milestone towards women's emancipation. At this conference, the UN general assembly adopts the convention taking place on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This conference brought forward the initiatives taken at the Mexico City conference. We recognize some fundamental disparities in various areas. Lack of political conviction, a lack of appreciation for the value of women's contributions, a dearth of women in positions of decision-making, a failure to pay consideration in the direction of the unique needs of women during the planning process, a dearth of services to support women's roles in society, an overall dearth of financial resources, and a lack of opportunity awareness among women are all factors that contribute to the current state of affairs for women. Three specific areas, including equitable right of entry to education, career prospects, and acceptable health care services, were promised urgent improvement at this summit.

2.1.2.3 Third World Conference -1985 (Forward Looking Strategies the Year-2000)

Through this conference, the movement intended for gender equality gained true global recognition with 157 members. This conference was referred to as the "birth of global feminism." There would be three primary groups of measures: constitutional and legal requirements; involvement in society equally; and participation and decision-making equally in politics.

This conference covers an extensive range of areas: employment, health, and education; social services in the direction of industry; science; communications; political participation; and the environment. Table-2.1: Summary of Women's Agenda in the First Three Conferences on Women in the below:

Table-2.1: Women’s Agenda in the 1st 3 Conferences

Categories	Agenda
Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal equality • Enforcement • Awareness raising
Entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to and control over productive resources and services
Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of gender gaps in human development • Support for gender needs
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Women’s visions of an alternatives development agenda
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/programme interventions • Female- headed households
Reproductive labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public/private sector provisioning of service • Male sharing of responsibilities
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence and abuse • Violence and harassment in the public domin
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertion of own agency • Enforcement

2.1.2.4 Fourth World Conference-1995 (Beijing: Platform for Action)

The Beijing Declaration and Platform in Support of Action (PFA), which are considered a turning point in the improvement of women in the twenty-first century, were thoughtfully accepted by the conference. PFA highlights 12 important concerns that demand immediate attention from the government and civic society and are thought to be the greatest barriers in the direction of women's advancement: Women and Poverty, Women and Education and Training, Women and Health, Women and Armed Conflict, Women and the Economy, Women into Power and Decision-Making, Institutional Mechanisms for Women's Advancement, Women and Human Rights, Women and the Media, Women and the Environment, and Girl Children are just some of the topics covered (UNs, 1996).

2.1.2.5 Beijing+5 and Beijing+10

Two further world conferences were held in 2000 (Beijing+5) and 2005 (Beijing+10), coinciding with the commission on the status of women meeting in New York in the direction of reviewing progress and reaffirming commitment to BPA.

Each component of these conferences pays attention to themes related to the road to women's empowerment and makes accessible a diversity of recommendations on how to proceed in the direction of recovering the environment and preparing women in society. Women's political engagement was the primary focus of many processes for the gender hierarchy, including the Arrange for Activity (Mexico, 1975), the Agenda for Activity (Copenhagen, 1980), and the Creative Activities (Nairobi, 1985).

All the way through an attempt to include women in the conventional decision-making process, it may be argued with the intention of the concern of women's empowerment, predominantly political empowerment, is one of the most important and pressing issues in the world today. Males have historically been overworked in terms of political preparation, knowledge, and management. In a book, the former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell made the following observation: "For all intents and purposes, the administration is gendered masculine across all civilizations." This is frequently due to the fact that males have traditionally held the roles that define administration, not because women don't make good leaders".

2.1.3 Policies for Women's Empowerment and Political Participation in Bangladesh

2.1.3.1 National Women's Development Policy implementation

Empowering women is a progressive idea. Experts have noted that socioeconomic concerns like gender equality and women's empowerment are closely related to the direction of growth. Thankfully, the Bangladeshi government has come to the realization that women must be allowed an equal opportunity to participate in development efforts if the nation is to ever grow. In order to build gender equality and women's empowerment, the government has accordingly formulated and passed women's development policies at various periods, and has made notable advancements in a relatively short period of time. The government of Bangladesh's subsequent effort to improve the welfare of women is the implementation of the National Women's Development Policy-2011 (NWDP, 2011).

2.1.3.2 Women's and National Development Plan Strategies

The Sixth Five-Year Plan (2011–2015) will use a two-way approach to reduce gender-based discrimination. First, all sectoral initiatives will take gender into account. In order to ensure

gender equality as stated in the National Constitution, focus will be paid to eliminating all policy and societal prejudices related to women. The objective of women's rights and advancement is to establish a society in which men and women may equally pursue their goals and exercise all of their fundamental liberties.

For this, various legislative frameworks, profitable employment, conducive environments, the eradication of gender inequities in health and education, etc., are the major tactics and policies. In addition, women should be prioritized for involvement in political empowerment and social protection initiatives. This will obviously help in addressing violence against women and gender mainstreaming. Following are the initiatives taken for ensuring women empowerment, (Planning Commission, GoB, 2011).

Table- 2.2 Initiatives Taken for Ensuring Women Empowerment

Name of the Ministry	Taken Initiatives
Ministry of Agriculture	To make it easier for women to participate in agricultural operations by developing complete institutions and programs that is geared toward meeting their requirements.
Ministry of Education (MoE)	Attempts have been made to close the gender gap in poor school attendance by providing stipends and waiving tuition for females living in remote areas.
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME)	To entice guardians to bring their female kids to school, initiatives such as food for education, stipend programs, and social mobilization campaigns have been implemented.
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)	Underlined the need to address the feminization of the HIV pandemic and introduced a strategic framework for male engagement in reproductive health; it works to guarantee that HIV-infected women receive the right care and treatment and aims to avoid mother-to-child transmission.
Ministry of Industry (MoI)	The MoI is educating potential rural female entrepreneurs in "Business Management and Entrepreneurship" in order to mainstream women in the industrial sector. The "Women Entrepreneurship Development (WEDP)" program of BSCIC offers training on entrepreneurship development for potential female entrepreneurs. Women's entrepreneurship is successfully encouraged through the "Self Employment of Rural Destitute Women all the way through Cottage Industries" (SERWTIC) project.

Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA)	It helps families and women who have experienced abuse and prejudice in the justice system.
Local Government Division (LGD)	All city corporations and Union Parishads have designated one third of the Commissioners' chairs intended for women in the direction of being elected in a straight line.
Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW)	Under the auspices of the Rural Social Service Programme, the ministry manages the Mother Club, which offers women training in skill development and microcredit. In order to provide food, shelter, and lifetime health care services to the elderly and needy men and women, six "Shanti Nibash Ones" have been created, one in each of the seven divisional headquarters. The ministry provides old-age payments to impoverished men and women in equal numbers, as well as widow allowances to widowed, abandoned, and destitute women.

2.1.3.3 Women Empowerment in Different Sectors of Bangladesh

The twenty-first century is bringing forth a time of fresh goals and thoughts intended for women. With pride and optimism, Bangladeshi women may anticipate certain notable and major developments in the previous 20 years that will impact their entire growth. Amarta Sen, a renowned economist and Nobel laureate, has hailed Bangladesh's achievements in women's empowerment (An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradiction, 2013). Here, the National Women's Development Policy's contribution to women's empowerment in many industries in Bangladesh is emphasized.

Women and Education

Primary education has attained gender priority. From 11.9 million students in 1990 to 16.7 million in 2008, primary school attendance has grown by 1.4 times since 1990. Due to the fact that girls now outnumber boys in secondary school (52.2 percent vs. 48 percent for males), there has been a noticeable increase in the enrollment of female pupils. The education of girls has received particular attention. Girls receive free primary and secondary education. The availability of stipends for females and the elimination of tuition costs have led to a rise in the number of girls enrolling. Three women's polytechnic institutions have been established at three different divisional headquarters in an attempt to increase the contribution of women in technical

and vocational education. In order to provide possibilities for higher education, the nation has created Central Women's University in Dhaka and International Women's University in Chittagong (GoB, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2011).

Women and Health

There have been substantial improvements in the health of women. Community clinics are being used to provide primary healthcare services to rural, impoverished women. Maternal mortality rates are declining as a consequence of special efforts being made to enhance maternal health care. To treat women and children, three upazilla (sub-district) health complexes and ten women-friendly model district hospitals have been created. Poor women in 35 sub-districts are given vouchers under the Maternal Health Voucher Scheme, which includes TK. 2000 for three prenatal checks, a safe birth, one postnatal checkup, and transportation costs. In addition, a maternity stipend is provided for 24 months at a cost of TK 350 to 88 thousand extremely impoverished pregnant mothers. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR), which was 574 in 1990 and 348 in 2008, has dramatically decreased (GoB, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2008).

Social Empowerment

More women are working in a variety of occupations, including the military, judiciary, civil service, and the navy and air force. Recently, women have been employed as police officers. Women are engaged in the military services, and the All Female Created Police Unit (FPU) has been dispatched to Haiti as part of the UN peacekeeping operation. These demonstrate that, as required by Security Council Resolution 1325, women may take part in crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation, and conflict resolution. The length of maternity leave designed for all women working for the government has been raised to six months, and there are now more daycare facilities. The MoWCA now manages 29 daycare facilities to assist working moms.

Legal Empowerment

The Penal Code of 1960, the Anti-Dowry Act of 1980, the Prevention of Repression against Women and Children Act of 2000 (updated in 2003), the Acid Crime Control Act, and other laws are among the unique legislation that Bangladesh has in place to outlaw certain types of violence against women. Additionally, the government has approved a number of additional noteworthy

laws to guarantee women's legal protection and empowerment. These are what they are: The Act of 2009 amending citizenship Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010, The Representation of People's (amendment) Ordinance, 2008 (a woman must be elected out of two vice chairs in each upazilla), National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009 (at least one woman member is obligatory in the Human Rights Commission), Right to Information Act, 2009 (having women the same as Information Commissioners); A Gazette from 2000 mandated that mothers' names be included alongside fathers' names on all official papers, including passports and school admission forms, in order to guarantee that mothers' identities are recognized.

Political Empowerment

Given that women hold the highest political leadership posts in Bangladesh, the advancement of women in politics is crucial. There are surprisingly many female ministers in the cabinet, including the Hon. Prime Minister of the State, who sits at the highest level of decision-making. Local government has also accelerated the political empowerment of women. Direct elections for the female seats in the Union Parishad are guaranteed under the local government (Union Parishad) amending legislation of 1997. It represents a significant step toward ensuring women have equal access to the democratic system. The vice chairman position has since been reserved for directly elected women at the Upazilla level. Currently, in addition to the Honorable Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the House, Speaker, Whip, Chairman, and members of more than a few standing committees within Parliament are all women, demonstrating the strong political place of women in leadership positions. In the tenth national election, women were directly elected to the parliament. This made up 28% of all seats when combined with the ones that were reserved. Political parties are obligated to reserve at least 33% of all committee positions intended for women in the depiction of the people's (amendment) legislation from 2008.

Problems of Women in Bangladesh

The government has made a significant commitment and launched several measures in the direction of securing the gender reimbursement puncture in the area of women's progress and rights. However, there are still certain obstacles in the way of achieving the intended objectives of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Among these is (a) the poor economic involvement of women. Poor women have a reduced earning potential and receive pay that is

less than that of poor men. Families led by women frequently experience prejudice; (b) there is a lot of violence towards women. A regular occurrence is physical and sexual assault, including the hurling of acid. Additionally, reports of trafficking are present. The main reasons of violence against women include poverty, dowries, early marriage, superstition, societal attitudes, etc.; (c) Women who marry young often stop going to school, which causes them to give birth young. (d) The main issue with gender governance is the implementation of current laws, rules, and regulations, as well as state policy. In order to make governance gender sensitive, it is also necessary to reform some laws, rules and regulations, policies, and institutional mechanisms; (e) In addition, established society, by means of its embittered social outlook, spiritual barrier, purdah system, etc., continues in the direction of being the main obstacle to women's empowerment in Bangladesh.

Prospects of Women's Rights in Bangladesh

Society must acknowledge the productive and reproductive functions of women if Bangladeshi women are to be empowered. The government and society's combined efforts may have made the empowerment process effective. The actions listed below can help with that: (a) It is important to reevaluate, assess, and take the appropriate actions to continue implementing the National Women's Development Policy's aims. A specialized monitoring cell can be established, and an investigation into the reasons for non-implementation should be conducted. (b) The discrepancy in the educational system should be eliminated by the government. The issue of education should be addressed by the government and NGOs together. Adopting a viable education policy is necessary. (c) If women desire to travel for work or other reasons, they should be supported. Human resources are needed in the technical and vocational fields. Women should be allowed to enroll in such programs of study or training. (d) A campaign highlighting the value of education should be run to educate the underprivileged members of society. Both rural and urban women should be given the proper knowledge of women's empowerment. (e) Women from underdeveloped civilizations, such as slums and tribal regions, need special education that can cater to their unique needs. (f) Different management structures should be employed to focus on the interactions between men and women. It is important to guarantee that women are included in training and development initiatives. A quota system may be used for a while to boost the involvement of women. (g) Superstitions and psychological barriers that prevent people from empowering women should be eliminated with the use of education. There

should be awareness campaigns to get rid of all types of discrepancies. (h) Steps should be implemented to increase women's capacity to work effectively as partners with their husbands in resource allocation and household decision-making. There should be more opportunities for women to work in both the public and private sectors. In order to address health inequities that harm women both directly and indirectly, it is necessary to move beyond gender-neutral investments.

2.1.4 Women's Political Participation in Local Government Stairs

2.1.4.1 Political Participation of Women in British India

In India during the medieval period, women's roles in society were extremely precarious, with infant marriages and a prohibition on widow's remarriage being commonplace in several Indian communities. Purdah was restored to Indian society after the Muslim conquest of the Indian subcontinent. The Jauhar gained popularity among Rajasthan's Rajputs. Several Devadasis have been sexually exploited in some parts of India. For political reasons, polygamy has been practiced among Kshatriy Hindous leaders. Ladies have traditionally been restricted to the "Zenana zones" of the home in many Muslim households. Ladies were frequently permitted to be visible in fields such as politics, literature, and religion, demonstrating their disdain for such circumstances. Razia Sultana has become the most straightforward female ruler in Delhi's history. Durgavati, the Gond queen, ruled for fifteen years prior to being killed in a battle by the Mughal emperor Akbar's banner Asaf Khan in 1564. In the 1590s, Chand Bibi defended Ahmednagar against Akbar's successful Mughal army. Nur Jehan, Jehangir's companion, correctly exploited imperial manipulations and was identified as the primary manipulator behind Mughal rule. Jahanara and Zebunnissa were two Mughal princesses who were well-known writers and had an influence on the ruling classes. Jijabai, Shivaji's mother, rose to the position of queen regent through her prowess as a chairwoman and a warrior. In South India, some women ran villages, towns, and divisions, establishing contemporary social and religious institutions (Blair, 2000).

Prominent reformers strive in the direction of elevating women across the British Raj. Governor-General William Cavendish-Bentinck revoked Sati in 1829 as a result of Raja Rammohan Roy's efforts. The Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 was the result of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's efforts to improve the plight of widows. Many women's rights activists made a difference with

their justifications, like Pandita Ramabai. Peary Charan Sarkar, a "Young Bengal" member, founded the first free school for women in India in the Calcutta colony of Barasat in 1847 (Blair, 2000).

While it may seem that the British made no good contribution to women's emancipation under the Raj, they did it more readily than the 'Missionaries.' However, among the Indian women who attained higher degrees during this period were Sarojini Naidu, Kadambini Ganguly, Anandi Gopal Joshi, and Chandramukhi Basu. The initial women's designation, supported by the Indian National Congress, was met by the Secretary of State in 1917 in the direction of applying for political rights intended for women. In the context of the social reform movement, the All India Women's Education Conference, which took place in Pune in 1927, must be treated seriously. The minimum age for women to marry was set at fourteen by the Child Marriage Restriction Act, which was created in 1929. Gandhi then battled for a prohibition on early marriage and urged older men to marry child widows despite adopting at the age of thirteen (Margaret, 1998).

Women played a crucial role in India's fight for freedom. Some of the most well-known liberation opponents are Bhikaji Cama, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Pritilata Waddedar, Dr. Annie Besant, and Kasturba Gandhi. Durgabai Deshmukh and Muthulakshmi Reddy come to mind as two names. In the all-female Rani of Jhansi Regiment of Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Armed Forces, Captain Lakshmi Sahgal served. The first Indian woman to serve as president of the Indian National Congress and governor of an Indian state was the author and campaigner for independence, Sarojini Naidu.

From 1947 to 1949, Naidu held the positions of the first female governor of an Indian state and of the United Collective Territories of Agra and Oudh. In 1925, she became the second woman overall and the first Indian in the direction of being elected president of the Indian National Congress (David, 1965).

Following the partition of Bengal in 1905, Naidu became a part of India's national development. She met Rabindranath Tagore, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Mahatma Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru, who was in the middle of the people she met. From 1915 until 1918, she lectured on topics including nationalism, women's empowerment, and

community welfare all over India. She traveled to London with the president of the Women's International League, Annie Besant, to make the case before the Joint Select Committee intended for a woman's right to vote. She was the driving force behind the Respectful Insubordination Movement and was imprisoned with Gandhi and other activists at one time. She was arrested in 1942 while participating in the "Quit India" agitation (Eisenstein, 1984).

Pritilata Waddadar, another significant female activist, was resolved to take part in the Indian liberation struggle. She was introduced to Surya Sen, who convinced her to join their progressive organization. Surya Sen and Nirmal Sen, two members of the Dhalghat camp, met Pritilata on June 13, 1932. A modern progressive named Binod Bihari Chowdhury was confused that women were no longer allowed to enroll in their college. Pritilata, however, was allowed to enlist because the revolutionaries believed that women carrying guns would raise fewer concerns than men. This was produced by Surya Sen in the direction of being a symbol of violent behavior with the purpose of taking position by the side of the Pahartali European Club in 1932, which had a sign that said, "Dogs and Indians no longer admitted." They made the decision to show aggression towards the membership on September 23, 1932. Potassium cyanide was delivered to the facility's residents and instructed to be consumed in the event of an investigation. At around 10:45 p.m., they arrived at the membership and assaulted it. Pritilata had a single gunshot wound. With the help of the British police, a hurt Pritilata was apprehended. She ingested cyanide and committed herself to preserving a strategic distance from arrest. According to Bangladeshi designer Selina Hossain, Pritilata is suitable for every girl. Her memories inspired a concept called Birkannya Pritilata Believe (Brave Girl Pritilata Believe). According to the concept, she is regarded as "a reference factor of light for females." Through the end of the British Raj in Bengal, another well-known woman baby-kisser, Rani Bhabani, made significant contributions to women's education and empowerment, as well as cultural and non-secular betterment (Hensman, 1996).

2.1.4.2 Women's Political Participation in Pakistan Period

Women's political contributions to Bangladeshi society are no longer adequately recognized in popular records. It's also worth noting that, throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Bangladeshi women were active in the anti-British political movement. As Bangladesh became part of Pakistan

following independence in 1947, a growing number of women took part in self-reliance and democratic initiatives. Despite the fact that the girls played a life-size role in the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 by giving their lives, their ancient efforts remain mostly unknown and unnoticed. Throughout Pakistan's history, Fatima Zinna was instrumental in stressing women's political and socioeconomic freedom. In essence, she has been instrumental in guaranteeing women's voting rights (Kabir, 2003).

For the first time in Pakistani history, women now have the ability to vote in American elections. In spite of the fact that ten seats were designated for girls at the time, just one woman was elected to the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly in 1954, despite the fact that girls typically used their right to vote. Additionally, women were allowed to use their right to vote in Pakistan's well-known 1970 elections. When women actively participated in and raised their voices in national politics for the duration of the Language Movement of 1952, the Six-Factor Movement of 1966, and the Mass Movement of 1969, they contributed considerably on the way to these movements (Kabir, 2003).

2.1.4.3 Political Participation of Women in Bangladesh (1971 to 2018)

Women in Politics of Bangladesh (1971 to 1975)

In the first general election, in 1973, the most effective women were nominated by the major parties, and each woman was defeated in the election. As a result, women's energetic engagement in politics and government became increasingly rare and limited in anticipation of the early 1980s. Women's engagement in politics has become extensively depressed and rejected in this century as a result of major political procedures. A year later, Kamal is no longer mentioned. As a result, academics believe that until Bangladeshi women are accepted into and incorporated into political institutions, girls' financial and social empowerment will suffer (Parvin, 1997).

People are without a doubt any country's most valuable resource, including Bangladesh. Given that women make up about half of Bangladesh's population and workforce, using these resources can help the country flourish. As a result, it is critical that individuals participate in politics and governance in sufficient numbers to guarantee that the government is truly democratic and representational. Women's participation in politics is still discouraged, rejected, and fought

against in reality. "Women have been left out of the game of power politics in Bangladesh," Choudhury said. Their participation in the well-known democratic struggle, electoral campaigns, and in-network artwork has not resulted in a greater public impact. Only a few have been successful in gaining access to positions of public decision-making (Chowdhury, 2002). It is said that gaining a party's nomination entails a set of costs, particularly in recent years. As a consequence of their limited financial means, women are usually disadvantaged in gaining preference intended for political parties. Even if they have money, they will no longer be considered suitable for gathering nominations immediately for the reason that they are women.

Women in Politics of Bangladesh (1975 to 1990)

This reality is evident in the nations with the highest population growth, where women have held political office more frequently than males "in times of social or political distress." Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, in contrast to this nation, both arrived in Bangladesh during times of social and political unrest as sources of strength. We also look at similar incidents that occurred in other Asian countries, including those involving Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Corazon Aquino in the Philippines, Srimavo Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka, Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia, and Srimavo Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka, to name a few (Chowdhury, 2002).

In the 1979 elections, which were held under the army's authority and featured 2,225 candidates for 300 seats, the most effective 17 women received more than 15% of the vote, but none of them were elected. Before the 1988 parliamentary elections, it had been permitted for the stipulation of reserved seats intended for women to expire. Sheikh Hasina Wazed was named the first lady head of the celebration by the Awami League (AL) in 1981, while Begum Khaleda Zia was named the first lady birthday celebration chairman by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in 1984. These prominent female politicians at the highest levels of government got their start in politics mostly due to familial ties. They both hail from prominent political families that have attracted a lot of sympathy and backing from the general public and the media. Sheikh Hasina is the daughter of Sheikh Mujib, who founded Bangladesh; Khaleda Zia was married to General Zia, the country's first president, who was killed in 1981 (additionally assassinated in 1975). As a result, it is reasonable to assume that Bangladesh's political heritage is based mostly

on women's participation in politics in accordance with their own circle of relatives' beyond or gift direct connection with the energy form and social activities (Chowdhury, 2002).

Women in Politics of Bangladesh (1991 to 2018)

Nonetheless, Bangladesh has the distinction of having three female Prime Ministers in a row: Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-1995 and 2001-2006), Sheikh Hasina (1996-2000 and 2009-present), a remarkable feature in international political beliefs. Both Khaleda and Hasina have established themselves as well-known and efficient leaders who have expertly guided their respective parties in terms of attracting attention and gaining the backing of a huge number of followers. They also worked together in opposition to President Ershad's autocratic administration in 1990. Except for Bangladesh, there is no other country on the globe where women are at the top of the government and in charge of the competition. As a result, women in Bangladesh must have a significant advantage in developing their political participation rights in order to achieve equality. However, it does not describe the proper depiction of women's political participation (Parvin, 2012).

Although, if there are female leaders at the top, most women are disqualified from political views and the government, in addition to experiencing discrimination and repression on the inside. Additionally, it appears that with the intention of the current legal system, it does a terrible job of shielding women from exploitation and financial hardship. On the other hand, women appear to be less involved in a hierarchical celebration. Women in the BNP and AL's inner circle of advisers have yet to be contained. Certainly, the small rise of women in politics has occurred because women face constant monetary and social constraints, as well as cultural barriers. Women also lack schooling, as well as the support of events and volunteers, in addition to societal prejudices and situational impediments. As a result, women's reputations have remained stumpy, bleak, and discouraging. According to a renowned Bangladeshi women's activist, male politicians ignore the reality that politics is about dark money and armed hooliganism, as well as convincing citizens to vote by going from house to house. Women are no longer included in this divisive political tactic, and they are routinely ostracized because of their gender (Parvin, 2012).

None of Bangladesh's major political parties, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

and the Awami League (AL), have expressed genuine interest in women's issues or otherwise encouraged women's involvement in public life. To be sure, there has been a lot of buzz surrounding the aforementioned significant developments for increasing the proportion of women actively engaged in politics. For instance, the major political parties only nominated 24 female candidates for the 7th preferred election, which was held in June 1996. It is significant to note that Jamat-e-Islami (JI), a conservative Islamic party, has never put a single woman forward for nomination in any election since it has always opposed gender equality and, in particular, women's involvement in politics. Some "mullahs" (locally based non-secular fundamentalists) actively oppose women running for public office. Although statistically minor, it is worth noting that in one union inside Bangladesh, specifically "Kalikapur" in the Madaripur area, females are still barred from using pooling facilities owing to local "fatwas" arguing that women's voting rights are meaningless (Shehabuddin, 1999).

More than 56 women competed for seats in Bangladesh's 2001 parliamentary elections, which were exceptional. With 30 candidates nominated by each of the major political parties, the AL won this election with 10 women standing for 14 seats. AL Chief Sheikh Hasina ran for five of the fourteen seats with the purpose of being open, winning four of them. Another AL candidate who ran for office, Hamida Banu Shova, also won. Motia Chowdhury, Sajeda Chowdhury, and Jinnatunnessa Talukder, three former AL ministers, were among the eight more AL women who ran but were unsuccessful. Khaleda Zia, the head of the BNP, ran for five seats and won each one. Khaleda and Hasina were declared victors in a few of the seats because of their widespread popularity and the lack of a strong challenger in the bulk of them. In the 2001 elections, seats were also gained by Israt Sultana (Elen Bhuttu) and Khurshid Jahan Haque, two female candidates sponsored by the BNP. Seven out of the eight available seats were won by female BNP candidates as a response. The wife of the previous president, Ershad, Rowshan Ershad, was preferred as a candidate by the Islami Jatiyo Oikya Front. Nine women campaigned for office as independents, but none won due to a lack of party support, funding for their campaigns, and organizational issues (Shehabuddin, 2005).

Seventy-six percent of voters turned out in the 2001 elections, which was extremely high above the ground and significant in contrast to many sophisticated nations. This incredible turnout of women voters in a predominantly Muslim culture can be attributed in large part to women's

developing political consciousness. It was obvious that the authorities were making great efforts to enhance women's political involvement in this event as well as making unique arrangements, such as providing separate cubicles for female voters totally run by female presiding and polling officials. In spite of the poor weather, challenging travel conditions, sacrifice of household duties, and lengthy delays, a sizable number of women traveled to remote areas to exercise their right to vote. The election was conducted by "custodian authorities," who provide safety by dispatching armed individuals, police, and other individuals in charge of maintaining law and order, according to observers, who claim that women voters showed up at the polling booths for this reason. Women should be able to vote without fear of intimidation, political violence, or losing their employment. This means that, while women are becoming more interested in participating in national elections, their representation in most elections remains low when conditions are favorable (Parvin, 2012).

Qualifying for the Bangladesh Parliament is a challenging and taxing process due to escalating campaign expenditures and post-election violence. As a result, women have found it difficult to get involved in conventional politics and seek government. Additionally, female parliamentary candidates typically lack a comprehensive marketing campaign strategy, enough volunteers, and a significant network. In order to take polling centers, they are not delighted about giving sanctuary to hooligans. An observer claims that the key events chose to identify individuals who have a significant quantity of black money in addition to their own bikes and musclemen in order to seize the voting booths and buy votes, motorbikes, and gangsters. Major political operations typically exhibit a disregard for the idea of choosing management based on commitment and quality during the proposal phase. All of this explains why Bangladeshi women who compete for political posts alongside males experience prejudice and discouragement. The amount of black money, muscle power, and violence that characterize Bangladesh's national elections poses a significant barrier to women's participation at a time when male money dominates politics and elections around the world, raising questions about whether or not Bangladesh is a fully functional democracy. The locations of elected female MPs in Bangladesh's Jatiyo Sangsad (National Parliament) from 1973 to 2018 are shown in Table 2.3 (Election Commission of Bangladesh, 2020).

Table 2.3 Women Members of the Parliament (1973-2018)

Year of election	% of Women candidate	Won during Direct seats and by-Elections	Total selected women	Reserve Seats	% of women during the parliament
1973	0.3	0	0	15	4.8 out of 315
1979	0.9	0+2	2	30	9.6 out of 330
1986	1.3	5+2	7	30	11.21 out of 330
1988	0.7	4	4	0	1.31 out of 300
1991	1.5	8+1	9	30	11.81 out of 330
1996	1.36	13+2	15	30	13.03 out of 330
2001	1.79	6	6	45	13.62 out of 345
2008	-	19+1	20	50	20 out of 350
2014	-	19	19	50	19.71 out of 350
2018	-	23	23	50	20.86 out of 350

In 2008, the Bangladeshi parliament had the greatest proportion of female members (20%), including those in reserved seats. The number of women in Parliament has decreased, however, as a result of the 1988 Parliament's regulations that designated 30 seats for women. There is ongoing discussion about the issue of allocating seats for women. "Should this system of distributing 30 seats intended for women in the legislature be preserved in its present form or should an additional satisfactory understanding be studied?" the Bangladeshi committee questioned. Women's rights activists urge that at least 100 seats in the national legislature be allocated to women, who would subsequently be elected by the general public in a general election.

Table-2.4 Representation of Women in the Parliament (1973-2018)

assembly	straight chosen	held in reserve seats	Total representation	Average Women Representation (%)
1 st assembly	0	15	15	4.76
2 nd assembly	2	30	32	9.70
3 rd assembly	5	30	35	10.61
4 th assembly	4	00	4	1.33
5 th assembly	4	30	34	10.30
6 th assembly	3	30	33	10.00
7 th assembly	8	30	38	11.52
8 th assembly	7	45	52	15.07
9 th assembly	20	50	70	20.00
10 th assembly	19	50	69	19.71
11 th assembly	23	50	73	20.86

The Bangladesh Parliament included reserved seats in addition to Table 2.4, revealing that there are 15 women overall in the first assembly, all of whom are designated on top of their reserved seats, making up 4.76 percent of the parliament's entirety contributions. The percentage of women elected to the 2nd and 0.33 percent legislatures increased somewhat, by 9.7 and 10.6 percent, respectively, while the 4th assembly's representation of women remained at 1.33 percent owing to the absence of a reserved seat. But starting with the fifth assembly, reserved seats were assured, and the percentage of women voting in the fifth and sixth legislatures was virtually equal (10.30% and 10%, respectively). The percentage of women voting in Bangladesh's assembly has steadily risen, reaching 11.5%, 15%, and 20% in the seventh, eighth, and ninth legislatures, respectively. As a consequence, from 30 to 50 reserved seats were added gradually (Election Commission of Bangladesh, 2020).

2.1.4.4 Women Participation in Parliament and Cabinet

In the seventh legislature, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina selected three women for the direction of her 42-member cabinet (1996). Other female cabinet ministers provided protection for Motia Chowdhuri, the minister of agriculture, and Sajeda Chowdhuri, the minister of health (Minister for Environment and Forest). The two ladies who had been kept in the cupboard did not develop after that. In the ninth legislature, Khaleda Zia won a second term as prime minister after Sheikh Hasina lost the legislative elections of 2001. In addition to her, Khaleda Zia's BNP-led coalition administration has kept three female cabinet members in the extraordinary 62-member cabinet. The ladies in question are Minister of Women and Children's Affairs Khurshid Jahan Huq, Minister of Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman, and Adviser for Primary and Mass Education Jahanara Begum (Cabinet Division, 1996).

To the contrary extreme, Sheikh Hasina's AL-led grand coalition administration has safeguarded six female cabinet ministers in the one-of-a-kind 58-member large cabinet in nine parliaments, in addition to her. In addition, from 2008 to the present, the woman presided over 35 standing committees of the national parliament. As a result, Bangladeshi women's leaders have had a difficult time gaining access to the highest echelons of decision-making. It makes sense for political leaders who are ambitious to want to assign female ministers to "soft" ministries. The same politically and financially successful men from major political parties who have climbed

through the ranks to hold more important ministries have historically controlled government and politics. Women's participation in a unique cabinet parliament is shown in table 2.3 above. In the 2018 reward parliament, five female legislators served in the cabinet, including the Prime Minister, Ministry of Education, and other kingdom ministers, and one deputy minister. Which of the above 10 parliament's shows a decrease in quantity? (Cabinet division, GoB, 2020).

Table-2.4 Women in Cabinet

No	official serve	Title	Secretariat and Executive offices
1	Seventh Parliament (1996-2001)	Prime Minister	Armed Forces Division Ministry of Defense Ministry of Establishment Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources Cabinet Division;
	Sheikh Hasina		
2	Begum Matia Chowdhury	Minister	Agriculture
3	Shajada Chowdhury	Minister	Forest and Environment
1	Eighth Parliament (2001-2007)	Prime Minister	Ministry of Establishment Ministry of Defense Armed Forces Division Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources.
	Begum Khaleda Zia		
2	Kurshid Zahan Haque	Minister of State	Women & Children Affairs
3	Begum Selima Rahman	Minister of State	Cultural Affairs
1	Ninth Parliament (2009-13)	Prime Minister	Ministry of Public Administration Cabinet Division Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Division Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources.
	Sheikh Hasina		
2	Begum Matia Chowdhury	Minister	Agriculture
3	Shahara Khatun	Minister	Posts and Telecommunications
4	Dr. Dipu Moni	Minister	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5	Begum Monnujan Sufian	Minister of State	Labour and Employment
6	Meher Afroze	Minister of State	Women & Children Affairs
1	Tenth Parliament (2014- 2018)	Prime Minister	Ministry of Public Administration Cabinet Division Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Division Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources Ministry of Home affairs
	Sheikh Hasina		
2	Begum Matia Chowdhury	Minister	Agriculture
3	Meher Afroze	Minister of State	Women & Children Affairs

4	Esmoth Era Sadak	Minister of State	Public administration
1	Eleventh Parliament (2019- till)	Prime Minister	Ministry of Public Administration Cabinet Division Ministry of Defense Armed Forces Division Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
	Sheikh Hasina		
2	Dr. Dipu Moni	Minister	Ministry of Education
3	Begum Monnujan Sufian	Minister of State	Ministry of Labor and Employment
4	Fazilatun Nessa	Minister of State	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
5	Ms. Habibun Nahar	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

2.1.4.5 Women Rights in Constitution

This feature has been ingrained in national politics as an outcome of political growth strategies. Bangladesh transitioned from a parliamentary to a naval to a presidential system, pushing economic integration with the regional and global markets while acting as a catalyst for socio-political advancement. Women's chances were altered by the nation's compassion, despite their rich educations and hereditary political power. The turbulence that followed independence, particularly in India, provided opportunities intended for women and legitimized their contribution to public life (Mumtaz, 2005). It was completed when the Indian government ratified the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution, which guaranteed a 33 percent quota of seats at the local level for women. Bangladesh's promising democracy began in the direction of feeling the pressure by means of the disintegration of the authoritarian leadership in 1990, following a public movement. Since then, the authorities have become concerned about the democratization of neighboring authorities' devices. As a result, in 1993, the Local Government Ordinance, 1983 was revised to increase the number of UP wards from three to nine. In addition, by removing the nomination system for female participation, the amendment allowed for the indirect election of three female participants by the chairman and members of the individual UPs. Again, by a reform in the ordinance in 1997, direct election for female participants was

allowed; hence, the changes in the UP's shape were accounted for, to some measure, as the democratic transformation inside the nation (Mumtaz, 2005). In each country, the Constitution plays a critical role in ensuring women's political involvement. The Indian Constitution, for example, is devoted to bringing about socioeconomic and political change. The tasks to give power to women and marginalized groups are a reflection of the Indian Constitution's democratic spirit, and they may be introduced collectively from some of the amendments in those fields, particularly the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, which provide for women's political participation (Ishrat & Nasreen, 2002).

Bangladesh's constitution, like India's, guarantees gender equality. Women can run for any non-obligatory position, including the presidency, without facing any criminal consequences. The Constitution's Article 9 encourages women to have a prominent role in local government (Ishrat & Nasreen, 2002).

Consequently, the Upazilla stage's local theatrical representation of women has significantly increased. This widely disseminated document aims to empower women at the grassroots level. This is dependable by means of Bangladesh's Constitution, which states in Article 9: "The nation shall instigate a local government establishment composed of the legislative body of the region concerned, and in such establishment, exceptional examples will be given to peasants, human resources, and women as far as possible."

2.1.4.6 Participation of Women in Political Parties

Competition political events have recently been used as a powerful engine to direct and put pressure on governments to adopt changes that would increase women's involvement. The celebration of strength has significant incentives to escape responsibility in a number of ways all too often, but ready for action events have their own motives to uncover government wrongdoings and publicly condemn incumbents for their sins. In the case of India, political events have played an important role in exacerbating the difficulties of women's equal involvement over the decades. Another important feature is that local government elections in India are held on a celebratory basis. Politicians have a significant impact on this aspect, from candidate selection to election. In Bangladesh, however, the situation is rather different. As a result of political upheaval, competitive events are constantly criticizing the authorities. They

seldom have time to speak up or apply pressure on authorities to demand affirmative action on behalf of women. However, a few leftist political events are more vociferous on such issues, citing their egalitarian ideology as a reason, but the voice has no end consequence in the absence of nonstop representation in parliament. As a consequence, their voices aren't heard via the use of the authorities. However, since the end of 2010, local government elections in Bangladesh have been held on a party-based system. This is a favorable mindset for political events, and there has been a lot of enthusiasm in the direction of women's participation at a local level. Additionally, all of Bangladesh's biggest political gatherings are presided over by female chairpersons, despite the fact that this is regrettable given how poorly girls' lives remain in general (Nasreen, 2010).

Table 2.5 highlights the diversity of women's politicians in Bangladesh during various political events. According to the facts of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) party, the Permanent Committee was formed with the help of 17 contributors, with females serving as examiners for their respective government committees. Out of 379 members, women held the most effective 29 positions. This situation continues to be terrible for the Bangladesh Awami-league, where five women served as presidium contributors among 18 contributors, and just 15 women participated in the relevant government committee among 109 contributors. This position is more often than not the equal inside diverse political events, except that the Permanent Committee of the Jatiya Party has been prepared with the help of 37 contributors, with women's positions remaining three positions under the examination of their government committee, out of which 201 women carry the most effective 21 positions. This situation is usually the same in other political events in Bangladesh, with the exception that no women's involvement was proposed by their critical committees (www.albd.org.bd, www.bnpsd.org.bd, www.jatiyaparty.org.bd, 2020).

Table-2.5 Women's Participation in Political Parties

Political Parties	The high-level committee's name	Total Member	Women's Members
Bangladesh Awami League (AL)	Presidium Secretariat	17	3
	Executive Committee	109	15
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	National Permanent Committee	19	2
	National Executive Committee	379	29

Jatiya Party	National Permanent Committee	37	3
	National Executive Committee	201	21

2.1.4.7 Women's Participation in Local Government

This gives you an idea about the claim that Bangladesh has a four-tier local government structure, with the town, union, upazilla, and zila level all being comprised through a coordinated take part in an election of the population. A recently proposed legal framework calls for a predetermined figure of women (for instance, three in each town, union, and Upazilla body) in the direction of being officially chosen from saved seats in each of the four local administrations.

This impact of change means that a certain percentage of women must run for seats in all local governments, together with the Union Parishad, Upazilla Parishad, Zila Parishad, Municipality Organization, and City Corporation. In addition to the 12,788 women elected from reserved seats, the final UP decision in 1997 appointed 20 women in the direction of Union Parishad chairmanships (out of 102 women candidates). Furthermore, 45,420 female candidates ran for the preserved UP seats around the country, with more than 75% of female voters casting ballots.

Additionally, there are UZP committees that monitor different reform initiatives, with women leading one-third of them and assisting in the management of the committee for the safety of women and children, as well as the committee for culture and sports. People and commissioners beginning to save seats are confident in the direction of appointing inside mindfulness-building exercises related to gender-based issues and women's development as well as to fight remorselessness toward women and children. These standing committees should have one-third of their members come from the protected seats.

In Bangladesh, each of the three wards must have a place reserved for women, and municipal corporations and city corporations must adhere to the same structure. The 1997 Act guarantees a one-third representation of women by the side of the appointment point as well as at the user level by connecting them into improvement committees and initiatives. The total number of

women open agents in Bangladesh has increased more than before to 1,510 at the Upazilla level, thanks to the assignment of three women to each Upazilla Parishad.

As partners and parents are frequently assigned in most new social structures, the government is thus making an effort in the direction of engaging a considerable entitlement of the public in the improvement procedure. Women are predominantly involved in a range of local government choices, from city corporations in the direction of Union Parishads, in accessible law, such as the local government (city corporation) Act. 2011, the local government (Purashava Act. 2009), and the local government union Parishad Act. 2009. According to these regulations, a wonderful quota system has been created for women in order to empower their support between the races, and women's reactions are fast increasing, as are their previous attitudes. However, based on past data, it appears that the higher rate of cooperation isn't up to par, and the women chosen to work inside the local government framework aren't appropriately prepared to function and participate in decision-making. They are confronted with a variety of social, political, and religious barriers. Although 49, the question of rising to treatment is advised under current rules, it is effectively truant (Solaiman, 2018).

Local government is a structure that provides local residents with central government services and amenities. Because of its representational character, the representation of the people's representatives is expected to stay constant in proportion to the male and female population. Equal involvement of women is politically vital as a part of human resources. However, we should emphasize that males have dominated municipal government since its inception. For women in our nation, they were unable to vote in elections until 1956, when elections were held under universal adult legislation for the first time. In Kolkata, women were allowed to take part in an election in a municipal election for the first time in 1923 (Alam, 1984).

Following the creation of Bangladesh, multiple elections for government were held to strengthen the surrounding authorities' establishments. It must have emerged from the local government machine's conversation that the authorities took the initiative to order chairs for females during order in the direction of emphasize their participation during the decision-making process. In 1973, meant for Paurashavas and in 1976, intended for Union Parishads, the government took the first step in the direction of ensuring female involvement in local governance. The government

consequently made sure that there were designated seats for girls in both Paurashava and Union Parishad. A Local Government Act passed in 1983 saw an amplify in the number of reserved seats from two to three (Khan, 1997). All relevant LGIs, including municipalities, metropolitan corporations, and Union Parishads, now have a direct representation of women of 1.33 percent. The Hill District Councils, Zila Parishads, and Gram Sarkars are the three organizations that have not yet been put into existence. When they are put into action, they will follow the same discourse. Aside from that, each Upazilla Parishad will receive one reserved seat for a female vice-chairman to ensure that girls are represented in this local authority's institution (Moin, 2011).

With the availability of reserved seats, 15,270 women would be capable of contributing to the LGIs now operating in Bangladesh. Table 2.6 reveals that 4554 Union Parishads have 13662 seats and 492 Upazilla Parishads have 492 seats. In the urban LGI, 50,330 Paurashava and 126 city corporations are allotted 990 spots (CC). Apart from that, our nation has 64 Zila Parishads (BBS, 2012) with 192 seats earmarked for women, but they are now inactive due to the lack of elections. Table 2.6, on the other hand, shows the seats allotted for women in various functional LGIs.

Table-2.6 Reserved Seats for Women in LGIs

Local Government	Number	No. of reserved seats (into each unit)	number of reserved seats
Union Parishad	4554	3	13662
Upazilla Parishad	492	1	492
Paurashava	330	3	990
City Corporation	12	30+14+10+10+9+9+8+8+8+7+7+6	126
Total	-	-	15270

Based on data showing women's participation in LGP in Bangladesh, we exposed the pattern of women's participation in fashionable seats inside local government. Women's empowerment in Bangladesh, like in additional developing nations all over the world, is a problem within all sectors of domination and state affairs due to their regular growth into appointment. Dealing with the shifting social and political situations throughout the world has also become crucial. Bangladesh's women's empowerment procedure has highlighted constitutional and legislative popularity, masking the central and local governments' tires in response to the global endeavor.

As a consequence, their thoughts are frequently empowered, and they may be actively participating and responding as a result.

2.1.4.8 Civil Society Contribution for Women in Politics

Civil society is typically defined as an interconnected network of individuals (or families) and the state. Its democratic functions include making recommendations to citizens, acting as a watchdog over the state, and assisting political opposition in general. For USAID and other aid organizations (Blair, 2000), civil society is critical for democratic local governance. It is vital to certify the reasonable involvement of women in decision-making in order to ensure democratic local government (DLG). In this setting, and in response to the DLG problem, civil society has an imperative responsibility to ensure women's participation.

Individuals might take for granted that the intention of civil society has gotten off to a good start at the national and state (and, to a lesser degree, district) levels, where groups of women, environmentalists, professionals, farmers, and others have had an important political position for a number of years. In contrast, Bangladeshi civil society organizations (CSOs) are distinct from Indian CSOs. CSOs were uncommon in Bangladesh prior to 1990. Several of them were operational after the restoration of democracy in 1991. However, due to the following factors, such firms are no longer successful in promoting women's problems: First and foremost, there is a lack of a diverse range of civil society organizations that handle women's issues, as well as a relaxation of such organizations' political characteristics. Civil society organizations are clearly separated into political streams. Something that competes with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the other that is associated with the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) (BNP). Because of this, such companies have not been able to win the confidence of the general public, in addition to the government (Blair, 2000).

2.1.4.9 Women Organization and Political Participation

Women's personal groups play a vital role in persuading the Indian and Bangladeshi governments to change the norms governing women's involvement in politics, as well as fighting for similar social and political rights for women. The experience in India and Bangladesh

demonstrates that women's procedures provide them with a space that they now have and are obliged to retain and preserve.

At the end of 2001, as Bangladesh's 30 reserved seats in the National Parliament came to an end, a number of women's organizations joined together to mobilize public opinion and put together the political determination desirable in the direction of pushing for a quota system that reflected their attitude. In order to manipulate the government, political party, and lawmakers prior to Parliament's dissolution in 2001, a collection of 20 women's groups banded together through the Mohila Parishad (Women's Council—the most well-known motion-oriented women's organization). In favor of increasing the number of reserved seats in Parliament and instituting a system of straight elections intended for girls inside those seats, women activists marched in front of the street, created human chains, and staged symbolic protests. However, the Bangladeshi government was not sufficiently affected by this heightened degree of engagement (Chowdhury, 2002).

The election process remained the same even though the number of reserved seats was greater than the previous two from thirty in the direction of forty-five. Women's organizations went to court to challenge the government's actions, particularly the holding of indirect elections, after the government released a bill designating 45 seats intended for women in parliament (by the 14th modification). The court rejected their appeal. These women's businesses were frequently involved in creating a range of training programs to foster women's leadership potential, in addition to advocating for women's equal rights. In 1970, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP), a mass-based entire institute, was found inside. While it is enthusiastic about the direction of a society based totally on gender equality, democracy, and peace, it has played a crucial role in boosting women's formal involvement and has worked on educational programs for developing female political leaders. In order to address the key issues faced by these constituencies—separation, hostility, and confrontation with male co-workers—BMP decided to intervene in three of them. The BMP's plan was to increase the number of support organizations to three female members, one from each of the Union Parishad and a municipal council. There were 15 female guards from the politicians' district at each assistance center to watch over BMP participants. BMP had prepared the staff to assist the selected representative. They coordinated community gatherings and established connections with other groups. They arranged town hall

meetings for their constituents, made friends with influential politicians, and connected representatives with government officials. Additionally, they planned integrated education for male and female council members and enhanced the potential of elected female council members. The result was that elected women were more actively involved in and effective in securing development projects for their districts; they addressed issues unique to women; and they established a self-sustaining women's cell. In order to assist women understand what is best for them, what their rights are, and what they should accomplish, women's enterprises have created a variety of training programs.

2.1.4.10 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Engagement for Women

Women's involvement in national and local politics has remained remarkably near to the ground, in the face of some concerned women who raise the need for amplified female existence in politics and governance. The growing influence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in advancing the cause of different human rights intended for women in all sectors of life has had a significant impact on the establishment. NGOs have undertaken a variety of educational programs for women in Bangladesh over the past few years, including campaigns for women's equal rights. About 1,000 citizens of the union parish and Upzilla parish have found it difficult to complete their education since the bulk of the state's residents are poor, illiterate, and vulnerable. But when it comes to organizing and uniting people, NGOs have been important. Although there are several NGOs in Bangladesh attempting to provide women with more self-assurance and information about their position as Union/Upzila Parish members, their aptitude to do so via education varies greatly (Ashman, 1997).

"Jatiya Mahila Shanshad," "Women for Women," "Naripokho," "Bangladesh National Womens' Lawyer Association" (BNWLA), "Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha," "Democracy Watch," and "Khan Foundation" are strong champions of women's rights, gender equality, and empowerment in Bangladesh. The government tried to take affirmative action and impose strict regulations in order to solve the problem of ongoing discrimination and the exclusion of women from political involvement. In their fight for political equality, Bangladeshi women still have a long way to go in spite of the efforts of women's groups and organizations.

These non-governmental organizations (NGOs) work to advance the rights of women and sporadically become actively involved in politics. The Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh (ADAB), a conglomerate of specialized NGOs, is believed to have had a substantial impact on the public uprising alongside the Khaleda Zia regime that broke out in the middle of the 1990s. The Democracy Awareness Education Program, which the ADAB oversaw, contributed to the high voter turnout of 74% in the 1996 election. In order to conduct awareness-raising seminars around the country, this campaign used 15,000 running shoes.

These sports encouraged both women and men to stay out of political politics, especially female participants, who gained a lot of knowledge from these programs. Another example is Gano Shahazzi Sangstha's efforts (GSS). While pushing its landless organization contributors to run for the Nilphamari local Upazila Parishad office, the NGO was violently attacked by area landlords, who set fire to the NGO's schools, assaulted team members and contributors, and searched houses for books and publications. 61 NGOs use these sports to build recognition amongst their female donors in relation to their involvement in political development. They also put a lot of pressure on the government in the direction of making important changes to its rules regarding women's participation.

2.1.4.11 Contribution of Mass Media for Women

The media play a crucial role in societal transformation. The statements that are presented and rehashed in the media have a lasting effect on the psyche of the reader, audience, and spectator. As a result, gender-sensitive requirements have been implemented in several areas throughout interior South Asia. In recent years, the media has been a major force in advancing women's causes. In actuality, there are two reasons behind the media's perspective. It both informs the public about the authorities' decisions on a particular issue and alerts them to the challenges faced by women. In this method, the media emphasizes the need for legislative action and the challenges associated with obtaining equal rights for women. The fact that the media in Bangladesh was firmly under state control until 1990 has made this engagement in the news more obvious. In 1991, a slew of new personal television and radio stations sprung up. In the United States, the rise of virtual media has resulted in a notable change: a visible presence of female faces on the show, competing with their male counterparts. News networks now have more female reporters, albeit not the same number of male and female reporters as before. As a

consequence, the digital media portrays a new scenario: a gender empowerment trend explored in the presence of female reporters who play critical roles in shouldering more responsibilities in revealing critical facts to the general public. These channels do an excellent job of spotlighting gender issues. They exhibited female leaders to audiences and broadcast numerous programs on females with the intention of increasing the general attention given to girls. In addition to the printed media, there are over 430 daily newspapers published in different regions of Bangladesh. In India, the media is not subject to government regulation, which is a vast improvement over Bangladesh's condition. These media outlets, including newspapers and television, shape public opinion, pressuring authorities to accept reforms without hesitation (Ashman, 1997).

The media discusses a wide range of worldwide events, including International Women's Day. The overall plan may have been more concentrated on the reality that empowering women is intimately tied to development challenges if more women had been represented on the committees that made the choices.

In spite of the fact that women make up half of the inhabitants in every nation on earth, they only represent half of the national legislature in none of them. For a long time, Sweden had the highest percentage of female lawmakers. Comparatively, Rwanda had 48.8% female legislators in the legislature in 2003. Girls' outcomes in Western industrialized countries are not necessarily superior in terms of the legislative presence of women. For instance, the UK is ranked 52nd, below Mexico, Namibia, and Vietnam. Unexpectedly, the United States dropped to 61st place in 2005, trailing only Zimbabwe and Ecuador (Ashman, 1997). The stories of girls in school or women in the workforce are quite different from the stories of girls, politics, and energy. Women still have a long way to go in politics despite their considerable achievements in higher education and formerly male-dominated sectors. From women's suffrage to their involvement in local and national politics, South Asia's long history of conflicts is currently playing out. For the state, the decision to give girls quotas or reserves has produced mixed results. Although they were engaged in local and national politics, Bangladeshi women faced several social, spiritual, and political obstacles.

2.1.5 Barriers to Women's Empowerment and Political Participation in Local Government

2.1.5.1 Barriers of Women Participation in Politics

In Bangladesh, a developing nation with a young democracy, the majority of women are illiterate, in poor health, and unaccounted for by the authorities. Even though it is not always achievable in the direction of measuring gender discrimination in all areas, the feminization of poverty and being without a job, as well as asymmetrical employment promotes involvement and preventive socio-cultural effects taking place in instruction, nutrition, health, and political participation, have all served to limit women's mobility. They are given little credit for their mostly unpaid domestic work, low social status, and lack of access to property and land (Kalpana, 1986; Rustagi, 2004). A variety of factors, including the size of the polity's land area, have an influence on women's political engagement. Due to socioeconomic demographics, political history, culture, and the character of the political group, women's political engagement in Bangladesh confronts a number of difficulties. These issues are made worse by socioeconomic, cultural, religious, political, and ideological factors. As we attempt to comprehend differences in the degree and character of these attributes in developed and growing international locations, they are comparable in many developing international locations, which we shall examine in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

2.1.5.2 Factors of Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Developed and Developing Countries

Given that the UN recognized in 1990 that a legislature's intention cannot be deemed gender-equitable without at least 30% female representation. In order for their presence to have an effect on the organization's output, practice, and culture as well as make sure that the intention of the representation of women is predictable as normal and will last, it is believed that there must be 30% of women inside a decision-making institution. At the national level, only four countries in Western Europe had such a critical accumulation in 1990, and the UK was not one of them. Three more Western European nations had reached the 30% mark by the year 2000. The UK was still absent from the list. In industrialized nations, notably in the Nordic countries, there is a reliable rising development in women's depiction and appointment into politics. Nine of the twelve nations with more than 33% of women in parliament are classified as having high levels

of human development. However, the advances in nations with medium and low levels of human development are not considerable. Despite these Nordic nations, the United States, the forerunner of liberal democracy, falls short of expectations in this area. In the United States election of 2012, the representation of women fell from 27% to 22%. However, these countries have far higher standards of living for women (i.e., the rate of education, economic independence, social mobility, etc.). As a result, it seems that there are certain challenges. Despite Rwanda's social and economic backwardness, women make up around 54% of the parliament's membership. In Rwanda, the process of gradually institutionalizing democracy has not been effective. In India, just 15% of women vote in parliamentary elections. In actuality, the proportion of women's involvement is influenced by the social and political systems in many countries. Because of the legal framework (quota), women in industrialized nations are not interested in entering politics, in addition to their professional and economic progress. Additionally, although having the same legal system, participation rates are low in underdeveloped nations because of low levels of education, weak economies, and socio-religious barriers.

The structural and functional constraints that women face are influenced by the social and political systems of a society. Traditional democratic legal precedents are insufficient to grant women access to the federal political process. The parliamentary system, political party conduct, illiteracy, and poverty are among the additional considerations. Women's participation in and access to formal political power structures, however, varies regionally. Political exclusion of women is frequently caused by socio-cultural and functional restrictions that limit women's individual and collective action, political structures and institutions, social and political discourses, and established and developing nations equally (Farzana, 2005). In reality, despite differences in type and severity, the reasons and impediments are essentially the same in developing and wealthy nations, as indicated in table 2.7 below:

Table: 2.7 Barriers to Women's Political Participation

Barriers	Developed country	Developing countries
Ideological and Psychological factor	a. The Perception of Politics as not a good 'career'	a. The Idea That Politics Is "Dirty" d. Politics is a man's job.
Political factor		

Nature of political institution	(a)Lack of party support, (b) The election system's characteristics, (c)the form and scope of any quota restrictions	a. lack of get-togethersustain (financial and other resources) b. natural history of electoral system c. environment and level of quota provisions d. male values political institution and political attitude
Decentralization structure	a. Inequity of quota system	b. Absence of equality, lack of a constituency for women.
Economic factor	a. Profession and technical line up of business.	b. Feminization of Poverty c. being without a job d. separation into lower-paid jobs e. discrimination of disburse between men and women f. post-conflict peace negotiations and rehabilitation problems
Socio-Cultural factor		
Culture	a. double Burden b. family obligation	a. religion b. twin Burden c. relationsobligation d. violence adjacent to women
Lack of social capital and political capability	a. Lack of Confidence b. Absence of Social Mobility	a. Women have low self-esteem b. due to confidence c. social mobility; d. lack of education and training; e. lack of cooperation with and assistance from women's groups and other NGOs.
The Role of the Mass Media	a. lack of media awareness to women's assistance and potentiality	a. Lack of media coverage of womenprospective and contributions b. dearth of media that values women
Right to information	a. Available but not women friendly process	lack of access to knowledge about the rules, regulations, and governing bodies that affect their daily life

Women's presence in decision-making and power structures has improved, but their representation in politics still falls short of the crucial 30 percent mark established by the Beijing Platform for Action. The sociopolitical, economic, and cultural components of the aforementioned hurdles are described below with reference to developed and developing nations. This inequality depends on the following factors limiting women's political participation

2.1.5.3 Ideological and Psychological Barriers

Women's relationships in politics are shaped by the means of patriarchy, which is a system of male dominance. It creates a hierarchy of gender relations where men are given predilection and turns male and female interests towards men and women. During the understanding of the term "patriarchy," it is "a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men determine what role women shall or shall not play by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor in which the female is everywhere subsumed in the male." (Andrienne, 1998).

The patriarchal system places males in the public realm as fathers and husbands and places women in the private sector of the home as mothers and spouses. This is one of the key variables that determine the degree of female political engagement across the world. This ideological gap does not, however, accurately represent reality. In the daily lives of women, the lines between public and private are frequently blurred. In contrast to the public sphere, which is associated with men, the home domain is still clearly the most suitable space for women in both the North and the South. Women must negotiate their entry into and claim on public space in accordance with the material and discursive alternatives available within a specific culture and society. In spite of the fact that the ideology of gender roles is not fixed but rather has remained within instability while intertwined by means of the economic, social, and political institutions of a particular country, women continue to be considered confidential all the way through nations, which have led in the direction of their exclusion from politics.

The following ideological and psychological factors impede women's access to politics: (a) gender ideology, cultural norms, and social roles assigned to men and women; (b) women's lack of confidence in their ability to run for office; (c) women's perception of politics as a "dirty" game; and (d) how women are portrayed in the media.

The Perception of Politics like 'Dirty'

In this society, women consider political opinions in the direction of being a "dirty" game. This has caused them to misplace confidence in their ability to contribute during political processes. Actually, there is a global consensus on this concept. Unfortunately, this assumption holds true for many countries. Despite the fact that the reasons for this differ, there are certain universal characteristics. The basis of passive corruption can be viewed as an exchange between the

advantages and benefits of the economic market (such as money, votes, and employment) and the public market (such as laws and budget bills), which seeks financial gains by promoting monopolistic conditions and avoiding competition. Additionally, it has become clear that the expense of election campaigns has significantly increased, which increases the need to exploit every available funding source. Additionally, in certain nations, organized crime and corruption intimidate women and make them dread losing family members, which discourages them from being involved in politics or running for public office. Corruption may take many different shapes. The buying of goods and services, as well as extortion and bribery in the public sector, are prominent instances of it. In the face of the fact that new democracy requires time to establish and take root, corruption has grown more omnipresent in countries where the process of political and economic transformation is taking an attractive shape in the absence of civil society and where new institutions are forming. However, the "law of the jungle," the mafia, and corruption have engulfed the market economy in many places where changes in taking sides and economic configuration have already occurred. Together, these factors scare women and heighten their fears of losing loved ones, preventing them from participating in political beliefs.

Despite the fact that perceptions of corruption may not always accurately represent the reality, they continue to have an impact on women's perceptions of political careers. Is it just a coincidence that countries with low to moderate levels of corruption seem to have higher percentages of women in elected positions? Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and New Zealand, for example, have the lowest levels of corruption, with women constituting between 30 and 45.4 percent of the total number of MPs, or five to ten times more than in countries with a higher level of corruption (Karam, 2005).

2.1.5.4 Political Barriers

The structure of politics is a decisive element in determining whether or not women participate in politics and is a driving force for a stable political culture that values political participation. Politics, according to Vicky Randall, is the "communication otherwise operational out of relationships inside a preexisting power system" (Farzana, 2005). The traditional definition of politics regards politics as an action, an aware, and active appointment during the procedure by which resources are divided between citizens. This concept deviates from that definition. This political philosophy views family life as unrelated to politics and restricts political engagement

to the public sphere. Although the public-private divide that is used in the conventional understanding of politics to keep women out of the public political sphere forces them into it, they do it as moms and wives. The male dominance in politics, political parties, and official political organizations is another impediment to women participating in politics. Male-dominated political parties generally embrace male-dominant conduct and have a male perspective on issues of national importance, which demoralizes women because their point of view is usually disregarded and not taken into account in the party's policies. Because of the gender prejudice of the male leadership, women are often not elected to positions of influence inside party organizations. Sometimes odd hours are set aside for council and legislative sessions, interfering with women's responsibilities in the home. Hossain and Akhter (2011) recommend the intention of many women in parliament to fill in for male family members who were once politically involved but are no longer capable of holding office for a number of reasons (usually, detention or corruption charges). Many women who occupy prominent positions in party structures or in parliament view their other halves as role-playing participants in a political environment where support is the norm.

The stronger autonomous structure and level of democratization encourage women to engage in politics. Secular democracies in Europe and several emerging countries have far greater opportunity for women's engagement in politics than countries where religious dogma has been corrupting political views and the democratic system. In the middle of all the political obstacles that women face, the following stand out (Ballington and Karam, 2005): (a) the domination of the "masculine model" of political life and elected government body; (b) a lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates; (c) limited access to political networks; (d) the more stringent standards and (e) training practical to women; and (e) a lack of consistent contact and cooperation with other public information

Decentralization Structure

Another aspect to be taken into consideration in regard to decentralization processes and how they affect women is In reality, many of the nations under study are experimenting with decentralization procedures in which some responsibilities and powers of the central government are transferred to local organizations. These processes must be combined by means of a gender-transforming viewpoint, giving significant weight to women's collective burden, addressing their

interests and needs, and developing mechanisms intended to integrate women into the decision-making process if they are to be advantageous to women and to promote their political participation. These measures aren't always in existence and can even be decentralized, as was already mentioned (see Point-Political Factors).

Women first achieved access to political, economic, and social rights in the 20th century. All of these accomplishments are having a huge impact on women's lives, and even while gender-based discrimination has been mostly eradicated, there are still gaps in many professions. Women continued to face both new and old issues at the start of the twenty-first century, including terrorism, intra-and interstate conflicts, and poverty. Complementary work and family household tasks, separation into lower-paying jobs, remuneration disparity between men and women, feminization of poverty, an increase in violence against women, and exclusion from post-conflict peace consultation, treatment, and modernization efforts are some of the ongoing challenges. The nature of the electoral system, the kind of quota requirements and the degree in which they are imposed, the customization of many of these institutions to male standards and political attitudes, and the lack of financial and other assets to fund women's campaigns and boost their political, social, and economic reliability are supplementary bureaucratic and interior factors that may influence women's right of entry to decision-making bodies.

However, the cited impediments differ depending on the political circumstances in each country. Based on the foregoing, it is vital to put in place institutions and methods in the direction of promoting women's political involvement and representation. As previously stated, the larger goal of gender equality and women's political participation are familiarly associated. As a result, many of the strategies listed below as ways to assist women's participation are also embraced broadly within the larger goal of gender equality. Based on sociological survey data that went beyond the previously noted barriers, this study aims to critically assess the political participation of women in Bangladesh.

2.1.5.5 Economic Barriers

In both sustainable and consolidating democracies, the state of the economy has a considerable impact on women's participation in the legislature. Women's socioeconomic situation within society has a direct impact on the top of their involvement in political institutions and elected bodies. For example, researchers point in the direction of the correlation between women's

governmental employment and the proportion of women operational outside the home, as well as the percentage of women college graduates. According to some researchers, socio-economic status takes second place to the electoral system in women's legislative employment within recognized democracy.

Due to a lack of sufficient economic resources, the socio-economic obstacles impacting on women's participation in parliament are: (a) illiteracy and limited access to education and choice of profession; and (b) the dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations. According to Bangladesh's former MP Razia Faiz, Lack of a constituency and a lack of funding are "the two biggest obstacles to women entering parliament." Women move from their father's house to their husband's house... They resemble refugees in many ways. They lack a basis from which to communicate with others or acquire knowledge and skills about the difficulties. They also don't possess any money; instead, it belongs in the direction of their fathers, husbands, or in-laws. This is another major obstacle for women in developing nations, given the rising cost of running an effective campaign (Ballington & Karam, 2005). To be involved in politics, one must have access to significant material resources. Private funding of elections is common, and having financial resources is necessary to have some degree of impact. Women's possibilities for political engagement are limited by their lack of access to resources for production and product ownership.

The Growing Feminization of Unemployment and Poverty

"The rising proportion of women in the labor force has been one of the most extraordinary recent developments." Absent of the 2.8 billion people who had employment in 2003, 1.1 billion of them were women. Real financial empowerment for women, a fair distribution of household responsibilities, equal pay for equivalent work, and a gender balance across all occupations have not yet materialized despite greater gender equality inside terms of the number of male and female employees. In conclusion, "true equality in the workplace is still elusive" (ILO, 2004).

In 2004, there were more than 40% of women working in all paid jobs worldwide. But because of patriarchal cultural norms, practices, and institutions, women's involvement in the economy is still viewed as being devalued on a national scale (Parvin, 1995). Women contribute significantly to the national economy via both paid and unpaid work. In terms of the latter, rural women's contributions and position as large voters should not be disregarded. Though the significance of

women's biological and social responsibilities is obvious, their contribution to all aspects of life is sometimes disregarded. Women's increasing engagement in the democratic process will benefit from poverty eradication. Women will be removed from the confines of the home and be able to participate fully in politics and political elections thanks to economic empowerment, education, and knowledge access. It is recommended that women's health, education, and employment facilities be given, as well as structural improvement and increased contribution of women during decision-making and human resource organization, in order to eradicate gender poverty and strengthen women's empowerment (Parvin, 1998).

2.1.5.6 Socio-Cultural Barriers

Women remain subordinated to men throughout, although the kind and degree of that subordination vary by nation. Gender role ideology not only produces a hierarchy in which female sex is frequently viewed as inferior to male sex because of their socially assigned reproductive tasks, but it also generates a dualism of femininity and masculinity. The state, society, and family allot insufficient funds for women's human development, which maintains the status quo. This is reflected in social indices across all countries, which indicate an unreliable degree of gender disparity in employment, politics, health, education, and ownership of productive resources. Class, caste, and ethnicity, which control access to resources and opportunity, also intercede gender. One of the biggest obstacles to women participating in public politics is their socio-cultural dependence. Due to their twin responsibilities in the producing and reproductive spheres, women also find it challenging to contribute to politics. Due to their significant responsibilities as wives and mothers, as well as their competing domestic tasks and care obligations, they have little time to engage in politics. Women have restrictions on movement due to cultural norms in several nations, particularly South Asia. The system of sex separation restricted their freedom of movement. Women in politics must be given the opportunity to interact with both male and female supporters and speak at public events.

Religion

Religion also has a significant responsibility in observing women at home and away from public life and political participation. The type of religion that forbids participation by women is the sole distinction. Bangladesh is approximately 90% Muslim, and the people's religion is Islam. Bangladesh has a population of approximately 150 million people, with Muslims constituting

88.3 percent, Hindus constituting 10.5 percent, Buddhists constituting 0.6 percent, Christians constituting 0.3 percent, and animists constituting 0.1 percent (BBS, 2011). Islam provides a strong defense of patriarchy and is clear-cut regarding the sexual distribution of labor and responsibility, sanctifying male authority. Religion has also placed limitations on how far women can go from their homes. When Muslim women in Bangladesh leave the house, they are instructed to wear a veil called a "purdha" to keep them physically apart from men. Once people get used to staying inside the "purdha," they are likely to be unable to find interest in political pursuits. Fundamentalism's growth in Bangladesh has led to new forms of violence and oppression against women. The expression "fatwa," which in Islamic legal parlance refers to an explanation of an ambiguous sensible position or an opinion by a jurist trained in Islamic law, and "mullahs," which is a term of take in hand for an important person known or considered to be knowledgeable in religious matters inside the countryside, are being used more regularly in the direction of explaining the personal belongings of violence against women. In addition, there has been a growth in religious fanaticism, which has slowly crept into the political mainstream. Several measures taken by subsequent governments have aided in its growth. The latter include the legitimate implementation of Islam as the state religion, the government's increasing confidence on top of aid from Middle Eastern Islamic nations, the configuration of subsequent governments with the Jaamat-e-Islam party at the bottom of seats, and increased government funding for religious educational institutions. Jaamat-e-Islam is the name of a political party whose main objective is to establish the Islamic imperative in Bangladesh (Ishrat & Nasreen, 2002).

The Dual Burden

Women do a disproportionate share of household labour in most nations. Their access to information, lack of education, and poverty all place further restrictions on their capacity to participate in politics. It must be understood that women find it challenging to participate in political life when survival is their first priority and they are forced to spend the majority of their time gathering family requirements. Women suppose that choosing between a private and a public life is necessary for them to enter politics. As a replacement intended for women, they should view their lives as a continuous process. They must decide what they want to achieve in life and rank their goals in priority order. Whether it's to become a bride, mother, professional, or lawmaker, in attendance is a confident time frame designed for achieving each of these goals.

Life is long, and women can do a lot of things (Ballington & Azza, 2014). This is made worse by a rise in female-headed households (which now account for 25% of all families worldwide), especially in developing countries where this is partly caused by ongoing hostilities. However, some women may also work full-time in professions outside of being husbands and mothers (e.g. as teachers, lawyers, or doctors). Given these facts, serving as an MP may be considered a third full-time job.

Lack of Social Capital and Political Capabilities

Women's conventional responsibilities have been viewed as a significant barrier to achieving leadership positions. The impacts in this respect include a lack of political engagement abilities and resources, a lack of education, a lack of economic resources, and a lack of access to information technology. Despite these constraints, women must be regarded as political players and vital participants in decision-making and responsibility.

Women's political participation and representation are critical. Indeed, each adult must exist as an inhabitant of a state within the framework of fundamental democratic principles and must be permitted to actively participate in decision-making and correspond to his or her assemblage inside the organization intended for his or her requirements and safety. One group cannot speak for the legitimate interests of the other since men and women in society have different interests, objectives, and necessities. Without the participation of women (Lorraine, 1997), democracy cannot provide accommodation for the diversity of desires and interests of the whole group of people.

Karam (2005) asserts that the inclusion of women in politics has changed the natural history of the political program itself. Women frequently bring up topics such as reproductive physical condition and preference, nutrition, equal opportunity in instructive and qualified settings, care, juggling work and home obligations, and the environment in public. Changes in perception of men and women's roles inside society and the sexual distribution of labor, into speech, in how women are regarded, and in how political institutions purpose have been brought about by women's participation in spheres of power (Karam, 2000). Women's involvement in politics and decision-making is important for development. Due to the lack of consideration given to women's needs, wants, and aspirations in the political arena. Women's different appointments inside political life "play a critical role in the overall process of women's growth," according to

the Beijing Platform for Action guidelines. Equal depiction of men and women in decision-making is not just an obligation intended for democratic organization or fundamental justice; it may also exist as an essential situation intended for captivating women's benefit. Without women's active participation and the integration of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goal of equality, progress, and peace cannot be achieved (UNDP, 2000).

In other words, women's empowerment depends on their involvement in politics. Girls are converted into supplementary attentiveness of the limits, prejudice, and disadvantages they experience in society as "women" as they leave their families to become engaged citizens and coworkers with the aid of men. They develop a sense of their collective identity and acquire the skills necessary to set up pressure and change agents. Women's civic engagement may take many different forms. They can get involved in already established official political channels, where they can create specialized groups or not. For instance, women serving as members in the legislature may decide to establish a committee or other specific body to protect women's concerns and interests. However, they can band together in interest groups and civil society organizations, and depending on their size, how they are organized, and the social and political effect they have, they may become interested in a social movement. Nevertheless, it is essential to pay attention to their speech as well as the values they uphold. Women served as the symbol and stewards of traditional culture and ethics during patriarchal ideology. The system may even provide young people with engagement with the opportunity to support such ethics. These women uphold patriarchal values in order to become "superwomen," yet they are not "pro-women" (Labani, Kaehler & Ruiz, 2010).

Education and Training

A stage is to determine whether literacy is required for several candidate nomination processes, even though there is no consistent correlation between literacy rates and the presence of women in political views. This makes it more complicated for women to sign up as candidates for office and makes them feel less confident about getting involved in politics. Many women don't have the political skills necessary to participate in politics successfully, aside from having a minimal level of education. As a result, more women who are competent for political careers are needed. This is able to be achieved by giving women early access in the direction of employment opportunities that are conducive to political leadership, such as specialized training in

neighborhood or community-based organizations. In order to prepare women for political careers, it is necessary to raise gendered political awareness, have skills in lobbying, and network (Ballington & Azza, 2014). Women's leadership programs play a special role in achieving this goal because they enable connections to be made with larger groups of women and various politicians. They are also occasionally the only venues where women can be prepared for and encouraged to pursue a career in politics in parliament. Young women's participation and the necessity of teaming up with men should both receive special attention.

Lack of Confidence

One of the primary reasons for women's under-representation in official political institutions, such as parliaments, ministries, and political parties, is a lack of trust. If they have confidence and commitment, women may achieve the highest heights of political power (Lorraine, 1997). Because of this, women must have confidence in themselves and reject the ingrained notion that they must follow men as their leaders. Women are on par with men in terms of potential and equality, but only they have the strength to stand up for themselves. Women are outstanding organizers, supporters, and campaigners, yet they are often afraid to enter politics and stand for government.

Social Mobility

In Bangladesh and India, cultural traditions act as a roadblock to women's activism and participation in public life. The family, caste, and religion are strong institutions that uphold and support these cultural norms. Voting locations being close to women's homes and places of employment usually deter them from using their right to vote. Competitors must be mobile to fulfill their commitments, which range from submitting nominations to running for office. Female delegates aren't able to participate completely because of the late hours, travel reserve, and lack of an accompanying male. In addition to these problems, the family situations of the female members limit their mobility. According to Mukhopadhyay's research, "Bangladesh is a Muslim nation; she (a female member) is a woman, thus she cannot go out in the evening," as one husband put it. He (the husband) thought that his wife should take care of the kids. (Mukhopadhyay, 2003). As a result, it might be challenging for women to work outside the home.

The Role of the Mass Media

The media should be regarded as the fourth responsibility of the government due to its influence on public opinion and awareness. The media has at least two purposes in every culture: it provides information on current events and shapes public opinion by promoting a variety of viewpoints. The media regularly under represents women's issues and organizations. The media seldom takes action to encourage or advance women's views and does not adequately enlighten the public about women's rights and responsibilities in society. The information that women are on average the first to be touched by political, social, and economic changes and reform that occur in a country—for instance, they are among the first to lose their jobs—has not yet been accepted by the majority of the world's media. The media also ignore the fact that women are usually excluded from political decision-making.

Although the media does feature stories about female politicians and businesswomen and their accomplishments, such coverage is unusual and sporadic. More often discussed subjects include film stars, fashion shows, art, and the keys to eternal youth. It should come as no surprise that such beliefs do nothing to increase women's common sense of self-worth and respect, let alone motivate them to pursue positions of public responsibility. There is a dearth of international and comparative research despite the fact that the role of the media in the election process cannot be understated. They were among the first to lose their jobs. In practice, a lack of sufficient coverage of women's problems and the actions of female MPs adds to a lack of public knowledge about them, which translates into a lack of constituency for female MPs. The media must continue to respect men and women's equal worth and dignity.

The above discussions on relevant literature give a comprehensive picture of women's present status, their empowerment, and participation in the political arena in the context of national (LGIs) and international (LGIs) levels. This review will be useful in gaining a better understanding of women's political participation across the world, especially in developing nations.

2.1.6 Operational Definition

2.1.6.1 Empowerment

The word "empowerment" refers to measures intended to raise the level of autonomy and self-government in individuals and communities so they may more effectively and responsibly

advocate for their own interests. It is the process of growing stronger and more self-assured, particularly when it comes to taking charge of one's life and asserting one's rights. Self-empowerment and self-response are terms used to describe the process of empowerment. The process of empowerment, which includes self-empowerment and self-rule, is also known as "empowerment," as is the outcome. However, the ultimate goal of empowerment should be to redistribute power among individuals, families, communities, castes, racial or ethnic groupings, or even whole countries. We may change the structures of subordination by making significant changes to the laws, property rights, control of women's labor and bodies, and the organizations that support and preserve male supremacy (Batliwala, 1993).

The World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) urged people to acknowledge that one of development's primary objectives is to provide individuals, especially women, the chance to build on their own capabilities. People must actively engage in the formulation, execution, and assessment of decisions that have an impact on how societies run and how well they are performing in order for this empowerment to occur. "Agenda for women's empowerment" refers to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women's Platform for Action, which states that "the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in the larger national and international community" (Oxaal and Baden, 1997).

The following factors, through agreement by Vanessa Griffin (1987), aid in defining what the term "empowerment" means: Having or obtaining greater control; speaking out and being taken seriously; human being capable in the direction of describe and produce from a female viewpoint; having an impact on social decisions that affect the entire society; and being acknowledged and valued as equal citizens and valuable contributors to society. The capability and opportunity to contribute inside decision-making and its performance, as well as the process for acquire be in charge of over resources, can all be referred in the direction of as empowerment.

2.1.6.2 Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment and gender equality have been two of modern development's most widespread themes (Hossain, 2015). The phrase alludes to the advancement of women's rights in all aspects of life. This is to make women capable of organizing themselves to enhance their self-reliance, affirming their right to self-determination for encompassing choices and charging

resources. These capabilities will help them to take on challenges and to break from their own subordinate position in society. It does, however, indicate the overall development of the lower classes of society to bring them to an advanced situation, almost at the same level (Khan and Ara, 2006). "Women's capacity to develop their own self-reliance and inner fortitude" (Caroline, 1991). This was described as having "the ability to manage significant material and immaterial resources in order to make decisions about one's life and influence the course of change." According to Sen and Grown state that in order to empower women, systems of subordination must be changed, including laws, civil codes, property rights, inheritance laws, the ability to control women's bodies and labor, and social legal institutions that uphold male dominance.

2.1.6.3 Politics

Vanessa Griffin (1987) noted that the following factors help Politics is the study and practice of influencing others, whether publicly or privately (starting Greek: politikos, meaning "of, for, or connected to citizens"). More specifically, the phrase relates to attaining and exercise position of governance—prepared power in excess of a human community, particularly a state. Politics uses a number of tactics, including persuading others to agree with one's political beliefs, making bargains with political opponents, passing laws, and resorting to violence, including engaging in conflict with other people (Lasswell, 1936).

The most popular and often use explanation of politics was provide by Easton (1965), who connected the political system in the direction of the "reliable distribution of values intended for a group of people." American political scientist Lasswell (1936) defined political views as "who gets what when and how." According to the most common definition of politics, it is "the sort of communication between classes, social groups, and nations, whether directly or unintentionally tied in the direction of the expression and exercise of power" (Burlatsky, 1978).

2.1.6.4 Political Participation

In general, political participation refers to the direct involvement of individuals in decision-making, including both the design and execution of policies. The extent of women's representation and engagement in local governance is now one pointer of a nation level of improvement (Jayal, 2005). According to Huntington and Nelson (1976), political participation is a private citizen action intended to have an impact on governmental decision-making. According to Uphoff (1979), participation is described as a person's involvement in the decision-

making process for implementing development programs, their willingness to share the benefits of such programs with others, and their efforts to assess those programs. According to Mishra (1984), participation was defined as "collective and ongoing efforts" made by the populace in establishing their own objectives, collecting resources, and taking action to better their living circumstances. According to Holcombe (1995), participation was defined as taking part in an action or an event, such as a decision-making process. According to Quddus (1997), participation was defined as the "voluntary and democratic involvement" of individuals in the creation of policies, planning, and the contribution to development programs. According to Pandit (2010), political participation allows a person to influence decisions.

With all the above definitions, it can be stated that all these forms of participation are interrelated. However, the different definitions of "participation" are taken together to get a comprehensive thought of women's political participation within the decision-making of local government institution. The definitions are use here in a limited intellect as the present study's specific interest is women's role in women's empowerment and political participation in the Upazila Parishad. For this study, participation refers to women's involvement in development activities and in the meetings of the Upazila Parishad.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Institutional Approach

In analyzing women in political settings today, the word "institution" is often employed. This phrase has elevated the significance of researching the "role of institutions" in politics over the years (Thelen, 1999).

In this study, the institutional method has been employed to explain the main problems with the research. It is crucial to define the function of institutions in this process into order in the direction of understand the topic of women's political participation and empowerment. The notion of institutionalism is explained in the following paragraphs to clarify how institutions may promote or impede women's empowerment and participation in local government organizations' decision-making bodies. According to this definition, "institutions" are "both official and informal norms and processes that shape behavior" (Thelen & Stenimo, 1992).

Institutional frameworks have the power to promote women's autonomy in leadership, group decision-making, and decision-making. In institutional frameworks, or the social arrangements of formal and informal regulations and practice that regulate behavior, women pursue their goal. How women exercise their agency is determined by institutional frameworks. The institutional framework will also determine how much power women have to allocate resources (Alkire, 2005; Alsop, 2006; Samman & Santos, 2009).

Using three sub-elements (formal laws and policies, informal norms and connections), institutions function in the four spheres of family, society, the state, and the market (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996; Klugman, 2014; Markel & Jones, 2014; Scott, 2008). Each of these arenas has its own set of regulations and customs. These settings are not only local; they also occur on a national, regional, and worldwide scale.

As a result, institutional norms, routines, and regulations are taken into account when determining politics and governance. Individuals behave in institutions in accordance with social norms and ideals (March & Olsen, 1996).

Historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism is three methods Hall & Taylor (1996) presented to illustrate the concept of institutions. Regulative, Normative, and Cultural Cognitive Pillars were the three pillars of Institutionalism established by William Richard Scott in 2008. These three pillars serve to limit and regulate behavior inside institutions. Rules, laws, and other structures that try to control and govern behavior are included in the regulative pillar. As it outlines what is proper and suitable, the normative pillar contains a prescriptive component. Systems, societal values and conventions, and expectations are all included. Shared beliefs among individuals are part of the cultural cognitive pillar.

Table 2.8: Definitions of Institutions

Author	Core Ideas
Thelen and Stenimo (1992)	Both formal and informal rules and procedures
March and Olsen (1984,1993, 1995, 1996).	Individual functions within social values and normative expectations.
Hall and Taylor (1996)	Three approaches-historical, rational choice, and sociological institutionalism
North (1990)	Constraints created by humans that influence political, economic, and social interaction.
Alkire (2005); Alsop et	Social structures that manage the allocation and control

al.,(2006); Samman & Santos(2009)	of resources through formal and informal norms and practices, behavior, and displays of agency.
Kabeer & Subrahmanian(1996); Klugman et al.,(2014); Markel & Jones,(2014; Scott, 2008)	Analyzed in connection to three sub-elements and four venues (family, society, state, and market) (formal laws and policies, informal norms and relations).

2.2.2 Institution-building

The discussion above suggests that there are several ideas, methods, and viewpoints about institutionalism. The most recent theory used is Scott's framework. This theory will examine how various decisions are influenced by normative, regulative, and cultural factors. The institutional theory of William Richard Scott (2008) has therefore been useful in understanding the facts while taking the context into account for this investigation.

According to Scott, an institution has three pillars: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. These pillars are thought to be the foundational elements of institutions. These element are considered as “building block of institutional structure” that provides "the elastic fibers" that resist change (Scott, 2001).

Regulative Pillar

The rule-setting, punishment, and oversight functions are referred to as the regulatory pillars. Individual behavior is constrained and regularized by normative organizational behavior (Scott, 2008). Formal laws and regulations are developed by the state itself as well as via the ratification of international agreements. Laws and regulations are crucial because they set guidelines for decisions regarding the participation of female representatives in local government activities. The government of Bangladesh has implemented major laws, norms, and quotas to encourage women in the direction of contribute in various decision-making processes at the local government level. These are a few instances of the institutions that make up local government in Bangladesh's regulatory pillar.

Normative Pillar

Norms outline acceptable ways to achieve desired outcomes; they dictate how things should be done. Scott (2008) claims that the normative system places a focus on normative laws that provide a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension to social life. Norms are behaviors that the community as a whole has endorsed.

Generally speaking, norms are societal ideals, shared convictions, presumptions, attitudes, conventions, ideologies, traditions, practices, culture, laws and rights (Gammage et al., 2016). Norms are implicit, informal, and decentralized in contrast to explicit regulations. The regulatory pillar creates consolidated, formal, and clear rules. Both normative and regulatory standards may be applicable to a person who is a part of an institution.

Normative systems have the capacity to encourage and facilitate social activity while also placing restrictions on social behavior. Gender norms support or contradict formal rules (Brikci, 2013; & Clinton, 2015).

For example, there is a normative expectation in many countries that women will solely engage in domestic duties and that only males should be interested in extracurricular activities. However, those countries could also have laws stating that men and women are equal and have the same rights to participate in activities outside the house. An obvious example of such a society is Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi women are elected to local government organizations under regulatory laws, but because of gender conventions, males do not collaborate to give them any authority there. This is an instance of how gender stereotypes go against regulatory laws. In this situation, the regulations can be completely useless. This is prevalent across Bangladesh.

However, it is expected of a member of a local government institution that they will voice their opinions on any matter that affects their residents. No one will contest the fact that the elected female members are empowered and permitted by standards to offer action plans to the local government entities. However, gender conventions may lead male members to ignore or disregard the plans they hear from female members. In rural Bangladesh, we observe both sides of the norm: powerful women and women with little influence.

As a result, the pillars frequently work against one another since they are independent and equal. Real communities are much more complex than one might initially assume from reading their rules. As a result of norms and cultural-cognitive elements, problems that are "fixed" on a regulatory level may not actually be solved at all. These sums up Bangladesh, which is why many people who have researched women's empowerment in Bangladesh, have been perplexed.

The expectations about how women should act and how much they should participate in certain social circumstances at various points in their lives are referred to as norms (Edstrom, Hassink, Shahrokh & Stern, 2015). Gender norms are important components of institutional structure that affect women's empowerment, but they are seldom written down for everyone to see unless it is via study. Systems of patriarchal society result in male dominance, gender discrimination, and the undermining of women.

In South Asia, individuals (including women, if not well-indoctrinated) prefer to give emphasis to the norms in their instinctual behavior, not the regulative standards, which Scott does not particularly address because he is writing in America. As a result, the Bangladeshi patriarchal societal system has much greater influence than the Constitution and all other laws combined. Despite the fact that Scott also made notice of this kind of circumstance, he also stated that institutions will not last if they do not adhere to the norms of their settings (DiMaggio, & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

In order to comprehend why women are both empowered and disempowered in Bangladeshi local government organizations, we may apply Scott's pillars. In contrast to the other, one pillar disempowers.

The Cultural-Cognitive Pillar

The nature of social reality is composed of the cultural and cognitive components of institutions. The social environment a person lives in determines their behavior. According to the cognitive paradigm, a creature's behavior is mostly determined by its internal representation of its surroundings (Scott, 2001). Culture is "acquired knowledge" that a person uses to make sense of their experiences and create social behavior. It is critical to understand that culture can be learnt and supports individuals in their efforts to engage in social interaction and communication with others. Internal problems in women's lives and how they interact with their environments are related to cognitive variables. Three pillars are exposed in the follow table:

Table 2.9: Scott's 3 Pillars

Element of Theory	Regulative	Normative	Cultural- Cognitive
Basis of compliance	Expedience	Social obligations	Taken-for-grantedness Shared understanding
Basis of order	Regulative rules	Binding Expectations	Consulting schemes
Mechanisms	Coercive Regulative	Normative	Mimetic

Logic	Instrumentality	appropriateness	Orthodoxy
Indicators	Rules, laws, sanctions	certification	Common belief, Shared logic of actions
Basis of legitimacy	Legally sanctioned	Morally governed	Comprehensible Recognizable Cultural supports

Although fundamental components of institutions include laws, customs, and cultural ideas, the idea also takes into account human behavior and material resources. Human behavior retains and reorganizes rules, norms, and meanings as they emerge through correlations.

2.2.3 Empowerment Approach

The empowerment approach is a sophisticated idea. This approach aims to empower women and influence changes in legislation, policy, the economy, and society. It differs between individuals, sexes, cultures, social classes, and jobs. It could differ because of geographic, national, and regional variations as well as urban and rural environments. The ability of individuals living in poverty to participate in, engage in negotiations with, exert influence over, take control over, and hold accountable institutions that have an impact on their lives is known as empowerment (Narayan, 2002).

According to Kishore (2000), it entails the decision-making responsibilities, economic independence, legal rights, inheritance, and access to education and knowledge of women. Batliwala (1994) asserts that empowerment is mostly about "power." Alkire (2007) defined it as having "control over one's own decisions, autonomy within a given area, and a rise in a particular form of agency." Rowlands (1997) believes that empowerment encompasses more than just decision-making. According to Sen (1993), a "person's capability" was a reflection of empowerment. According to Kabeer (2008), it is the "extension" of people's capacity for strategic life decision-making in circumstances where it had previously been denied to them. Karl (1995) defined "empowerment" as "a continuum comprising multiple linked and mutually reinforcing components," including capacity development, action, participation, and awareness-raising.

Table 2.10: Varied Ideas of Empowerment

Author	Core Idea
Sen (1993)	Capability
Batliwala (1994)	Power

Karl (1995)	Awareness building, capacity building
Rowlands (1997)	‘Opening up access’ to decision-making
Kishore (2000)	Making choices, being financially independent, having access to education and knowledge, and having legal and inheritance rights.
Narayan (2002)	Capabilities, Participation
Kabeer (2005)	Three dimensions-resources, agency and achievements
Alkire (2007)	Autonomy and agency
World Bank (2009)	Access to information, participation in local org.& capacity

2.2.4 Naila Kabeer’s Empowerment Approach

The perspective on women's emancipation taken by Naila Kabeer in 1991 is strongly tied to the lives of women in developing nations. In light of the current situation, Naila Kabeer's (1999) empowerment strategy has also been adopted here to address the current situation in Bangladesh.

The "Three Dimensional Model" by Naila Kabeer (1999) is employed in this study to create the conceptual framework. According to Naila Kabeer, "the procedures by which people that are denied the ability to make decisions gain such ability" are considered empowerment (Kabeer, 1999).

When it comes to the three interconnected and dependent aspects that make up choice, Kabeer regarded empowerment as a process of transformation. Resources, agency, and accomplishment are these. Women have access in the direction of and control over resources during this process, empower them on the way to raise their voices and shape decisions. The capacity to make choices in pursuit of one's own goals is known as agency.

Resources (pre-conditions)

Agency is exerted through the use of resources (Kabeer, 2005). Women and girls have both material and immaterial resources that give them power. Human, social, and material resources are the three different categories. Resources boost decision-making ability and serve as a vehicle for exercising agency (Kabeer, 1999). They are acquired through social structures and interpersonal connections in society (Kabeer, 2005). Human resources include a person's education level, abilities, creativity, and access to training programs, as well as their involvement with social support networks, self-efficacy, imagination, and creativity. Both people and organizations can gain from having control over available resources. Participation in

organizations, network connectivity, and the availability of role models outside of the family are all examples of social resources. Women's self-awareness can rise with strong social networks. Access to financial resources can influence one's ability to get education, training, or health treatment. Resources interact with one another and are dependent on one another. Due to the accessibility of these tools, women can create their own agency. Women make decisions to increase their power of choice and voice.

Agency (process)

According to Kabeer (1999), "agency is the capacity to define one's goals and carry them out." "Agency" refers in the direction of a person's or a group's capacity to speak up makes deliberate decisions, pursue objectives, and have an impact on outcomes. Agency may be defined as the capacity for individual decision-making. It includes behaviors like bargaining, negotiating, deceit, subversion, manipulation, resistance, protest, and reflective and analytical thought processes. The core of the empowering process is agency. Empowerment requires access to and control over resources, which is a required prerequisite. The term "agency" refers to a woman's own goals, talents, and skills. It takes into account the intent, drive, and goal that people have for their behavior (Kabeer, 1999b, 2001, Gammage et al., 2016, Kulgman, 2014). Additionally, it includes activities like bargaining, negotiation, deceit, manipulation, subversion, resistance, protest, as well as reflective and analytical thought processes. Kabeer makes a distinction between transformational and effective agency. While transformational agencies give women the ability to address the restrictive nature of their positions, effective agencies give women better skills to carry out their duties. Women who possess transformative agency have a stronger capacity to oppose the patriarchal restrictions placed on them.

Achievements (outcomes)

The measure to which one's skills (i.e., resources and agency) are manifested is how Kabeer defined success. These are the effects of decisions. If power is not a factor, it is important to determine if discrepancies in success are caused by one's capacity to confront injustices rather than a difference in personal choice or personality traits, such as sloth (Kabeer, 1999; Kabeer, 2005). These are the effects of decisions.

Triangulating the Dimensions

Thus, these three characteristics form the foundation of Kabeer's conceptualization of empowerment. When creating meaningful and reliable empowerment measures, they are viewed as being inseparable (Kabeer, 1999). Each dimension's reliability depends on others.

Figure 2.1: Kabeer's 3-dimensional Model



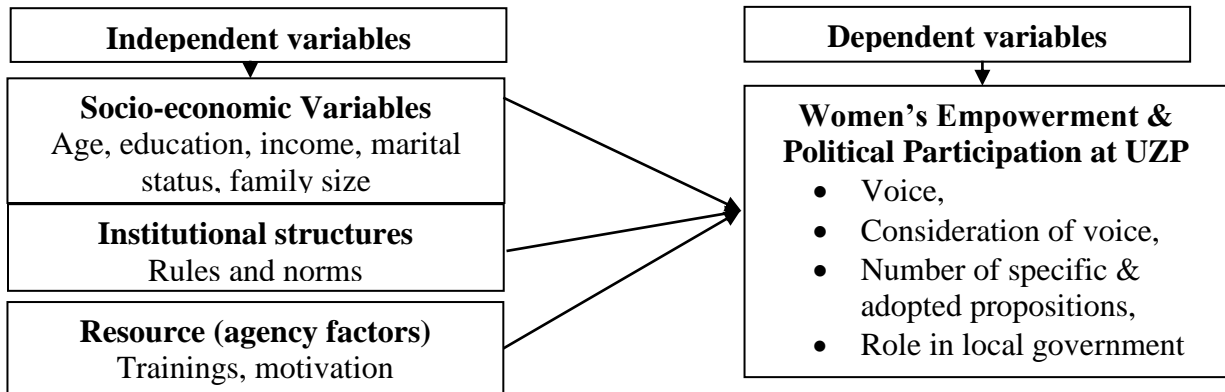
Source: Naila Kabeer (1999)

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Dependent and independent variables have been extensively drawn from the existing literature. The dependent variable is the political involvement of women in the decision-making procedure at UZP. Independent variables are broadly classified as socio-demographic, institutional structure, and resources (agency factors). Socio-economic variables include age; educational attainment; income; marital status; and family size of women. Institutional structures include rules and norms. On the other hand, resources (agency factors) are training and motivation for this study. The variables that are identified as key determinants of decision-making at Upazila Parishad are socio-demographic, institutional structures, and resources.

By using these variables, the framework are used based on the assumption that the political participation of women at Parishad depends on how clearly the rules and laws are understood by the women and how the rules are framed to support them in the present socio-cultural context. Understanding and applying formal rules and laws enables women to influence decision-making. Agency factors, including resources, skills, education, training, and motivation, make them capable in this respect. The Analytical Framework has been used to give an overview of the variables in this study. An attempt has been made within the framework to highlight the casual links between these variables.

Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework



Thus, the decision-making impact of women depends not only on their sharing ideas, views, propositions or voices in the meetings but also on the acceptance of those voices or on the consideration of those voices by the other members of the meeting (including the local member of Parliament (advisor of Upazila Parishad), Upazila Chair (UZC), UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) and line-depart officials of the Upazila Parishad or other members of the Upazila committee, and finally by their ability to influence the decisions of the Parishad).

When they understand the existing rules and laws regarding their rights, responsibilities, and other related information, they become confident. Their capability grows when they have their own income sources. Moreover, the socio-political condition of the locality is also connected with how well their male colleagues accept their enhanced voices at the discussion table. Their social mobility is hampered by Bangladesh's socio-cultural environment, which also occasionally prevents them from leaving the country to attend meetings or other public events. Due to inadequate knowledge, it has become difficult for them to have a clear idea or understanding of the rules, laws, and policies of governance. Thus, in the decision-making or agenda-setting or other important affairs, they feel neglected; they even sometimes seem deprived of getting notice of the important meetings on time.

Chapter Three

Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics of Study Population

The information received from respondents served as the foundation for the analysis. The term "data" refers to the recorded answer patterns of the respondents as well as the instrument utilized in the study (Lin, 1976). As a result, data analysis is an essential component of any research project. This is a piece of quantitative research, which is difficult by nature and crucial in the context of the subject and measurement. The researcher has offered significant quantitative and interpretive data analysis.

3.1 Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics of Study Population

In this study, each household is measured as a unit of investigation. As a result, the head of the household has been chosen to be interviewed while being assessed as a respondent. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher collected socio-demographic data from each respondent, including their gender, age, name of the division, district, and Upazila, marital status, household size, occupation, education, and monthly income. This information would give some fascinating material that came up in the interviews, which helped to relate the environment and the respondents' experiences in the local region as well as to contextualize the data. In the case of interviews, information from respondents was gathered extensively in order to assess the socio-demographic status of the respondents in depth.

3.1.1 Respondents' Gender, Age, Education, Marital Status, Household Size, and Household Head

In the following table-1, given the nature of research work, the present study has considered gender balance when selecting the respondents. The sample of the study consists of 450 respondents in eight upazilas of Charfassion, Gazipur Sadar, Jashore Sadar, Feni Sadar, Goindaganj, Paba, and Sylhet Sadar, Gafargaon under the Eight District of the Eight Division. Among the respondents, the percentage of males was 33% and that of females was 77%. The age distribution shows that 4% of the total respondents belong in the age category of 21–30, 12% into the age category of 31–40, 62% within the age category of 41–50, and 21% within the age

category of 51–60. Education is a very important factor for every human being as it enhances one's ability to understand social issues and also helps to improve one's socio-economic condition. It is found in the study that 23% of respondents are at the primary level of education, 13% of them have passed the JSC, 9% of them have passed the SSC, 10% of the HSC, and 45% of female students at the graduate level.

Table -1 Socio-demographic Traits of Respondents

Gender		Age		Education		Marital Status		Household Size		Household Head	
Category	%	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%
Female	77	21-30	5	Primary	23	Married	87	2-4	13	Herself	37
Male	33	31-40	12	JSC	13	Divorced	3	5-6	65	Husband	56
		41-50	62	SSC	9	Separated	10	7+	22	Son	7
		51-60	21	HSC	10						
				Graduate (Female Student)	45						

Source: Field Survey, 2021

It is evident in the table: 1 that 87% are married, and most of them have informed us that their husband supports them in political involvement. It is also found that 3% are divorced and another 10% are separated. It is found in the study that 13% belong to the (2-4) household size category, 65% have (5-6) family members, and 22% (7+). It is found that 37% are the household head, 56% have replied that their husband is the household head, and only 7% have replied that their son is the household head in their family.

The survey also indicated that those men and women come from well-educated households and are financially well-off as a result of their marital status. Despite their degrees, these women are unemployed, contributing to the local educational system's dysfunction. They had all attended local elementary schools, but in high school, 10% stated they attended the government high school in their neighborhood, while the remaining 9% attended secondary institutions. Increased participation in elementary-level education has resulted in a rise in the percentage of men and women educated. As a consequence, all of the women had finished their elementary schooling. This growth in female enrolment may be linked to government programs such as the female remuneration plan, media outreach, settlement and village-based schools, and the conscription of female primary school instructors. Some of the Upazila Parishads' campaigns were also important.

It should be emphasized that, according to findings, female Upazila Parishad members come from homes where 23% of the husbands and guardians are illiterate. This is one of the primary causes behind women's ineffective involvement in Upazila Parishads. Women who have earned a name for themselves in the Upazila Parishad, on the other hand, have encountered a gender class barrier in a male-dominated culture. Despite significant advances in women's social standing, their low status in family and society persists to this day. This is owing to society's strong patriarchal framework. Women's economically disadvantaged conditions may have an impact not just on social synchronization but also on social preferences in a variety of areas.

It is often assumed and anticipated that educated individuals take an active role in decision-making processes. Given that almost half of the respondents in this survey have a higher educational background, the findings may represent an inclusive attitude. As a result of their participation in political decision-making, educated women are anticipated to better identify their demands and take advantage of opportunities within the policy framework. The table data suggests that higher-educated women are more interested in participating in the UZP, despite the fact that there is no age restriction for voting.

3.1.2 Occupation of the Respondents

We have attempted to focus on the frequency distribution and percentage of the respondents to know the occupation pattern of the respondents. Table 2 shows the frequency distribution and percentage distribution of respondents by occupational status.

Table -2 Respondents by Occupation and Upazila Name

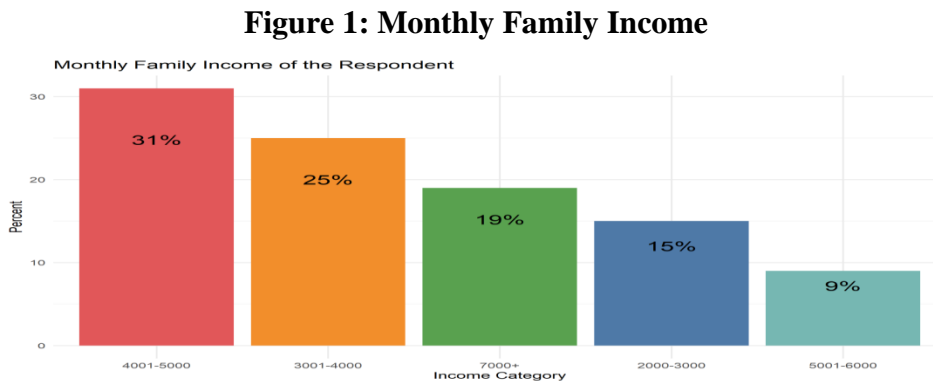
Occupation Category	Name of Upazila								
	Gazipur Sadar	Jashore Sadar	Charfesson	Feni Sadar	Gobindaganj	Paba	Sylhet Sadar	Gafargaon	%
Chairman/ Vice/ Councilor (male)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	8.88
Vice- Chairman/ Councilor (male/female)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	7.11
Government representatives	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3.55
Civil Society members	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3.55
Active women politician	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	17.78
Women Activist	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	7.11
Male Politician	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	6.22
Female Student at graduate level	26	51	51	31	16	10	10	10	45.56

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table shows that about 8.88% of respondents are involved in Chairman/Vice/Councilor (male) activities and 7.11% of respondents are involved in Vice-Chairman/Councilor (male/female) activities of local political participation. It further observed that, as part of a patriarchal society, there are no male or female respondents who are involved in political participation activities. But it is an interesting matter that, besides women’s political participation activities, 3.55% are engaged in governments’ representative sectors. Besides these occupational groups, 3.55% are civil society members, among whom 17.78% are active women politicians, and 7.11% of the respondents are women activists involved in political participation. A significant number of respondents are male politicians (6.22%) and 45.56% are respondents to the concept of women’s participation in local government institutions.

Our society is typically controlled by men; almost 9 out of every 10 homes are headed by men. According to the findings of the survey, certain changes in household leadership have occurred. Furthermore, the share of female-generated households increased at an annual rate of 4.81 percent over the previous five years (2005-2010). This suggests that female empowerment and consideration of women's human rights in Bangladesh has intensified within recent years. Increased occupational sector shows that females are more inclined to leave their traditional family household job and pursue other occupations such as agricultural, industrial, transportation and communication, and business to supplement their income while caring for their families. Their economic independence enables them to comprehend their social, political, and economic human rights.

3.1.3 Income of the Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2021

According to Figure 1, the monthly income of about 15% of respondents is less than TK 3000. On the other hand, about 25% of households earn between Tk 4000 and Tk 5000. Another 9% earn between Tk 500 and Tk 1000. Only 19% earn more than 7000+ taka per month.

The wealthy have a greater influence in politics and have more access to local government infrastructure, particularly in third-world nations. As a result, it may be argued that a representative with sufficient money and assets will have a greater effect on decision-making than an individual with little or no wealth. As a result, the comparatively substantial honoraria and allowances serve as both an incentive intended for women to run for office and an empowerment tool for female participation once elected.

The findings of the research also gain strong support with a statement from the local government institutions. The research area's sample consists of 450 respondents, with 77% being female and 33% being male. The age groups 41–50 account for the majority of respondents in this area (62%), followed by the 51–60 age groups (21% of the respondents). Table 1 reveals that the majority of them (45%) hold a graduate (female students) degree, followed by an HSC degree (10%). As a result, it is worth noting that the majority of respondents who identify with local government are older and have a greater level of education. It is evident that 87% are married, and 56% have replied that their husband is the household head. Most of them have informed us that their husband supports them in political involvement, but they feel that women do not yet have a political environment at the local government level. It is found in the study that 65% have 5–6 family members, and 22% have 7+. Due to family responsibilities, it becomes impossible for women to play a political role. This agrees with "the role conflict theory" (Bochel, 2000) that emphasizes the traditional role of women where a woman feels guilty if she fails to fulfill her expected family roles. Women may participate less in their work due to such guilt. A significant number of respondents (more than 45.56%) are engaged in female students' graduate-level activities. Besides this, more than 17.78% of respondents are active female politicians in local government institutions. Along with these activities, the respondents of local government institutions are involved in the Chairman/Vice/Councilor (male) (8.88%) and Vice-Chairman/Councilor (male/female) (7.11%) and do their job as government representatives, civil society members, and women activists.

Adequacy and Capacity of Existing Laws for Women's Political Participation in Local Government Institutions

4.1 Existing Laws for Women's Political Participation in Local Government Institutions

Half the population of our country is made up of women. So women's development is the precondition of national development. To ensure national development, there should be equal opportunity and equal rights for women to ensure national development. In our constitution, through several articles, the equal rights and opportunities of both men and women have been established. It is a regrettable reality that a policy direction to preserve the rights of its women was not formed for 40 years after attaining independence. Women's empowerment has a great deal of potential thanks to the women's development policy. Women's rights have been protected in the creation and application of economic policies thanks to the national women's development policy.

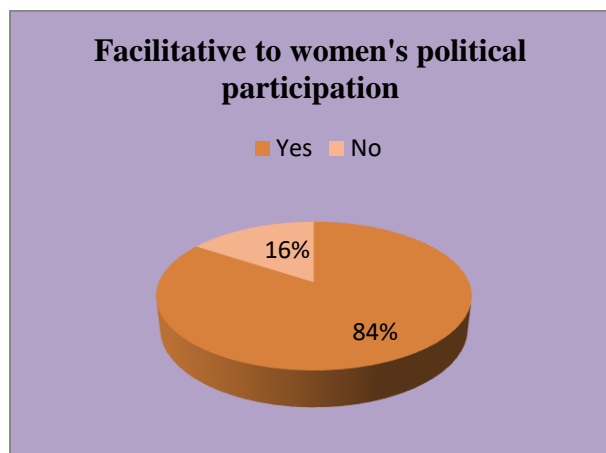
Our female population had collectively endured years of exploitation and neglect. They were continually persecuted in a male-dominated culture due to prejudice, social stigma, mental and religious intolerance, and other factors. Our women's skills and work put into home duties were never fairly valued. In the last decades of the 19th century, women heeded the call for a focus on general education. The women also understood that by joining the anti-British movement, they were depriving themselves of their rights. A major step toward achieving this goal was the inclusion of women in the self-determination movement, the mass revolution, and the language movement in 1952. The Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led the War of Liberation that resulted in Bangladesh's becoming an independent state in 1971, and it was a bloodbath. Along with the males, women in this nation significantly contributed to the War of Liberation. There were a significant reawakening among people who anticipated receiving an education and finding jobs. Rural illiterate women have a strong desire to become independent. Women need to be included in national productions more than ever. A development plan was created to secure the empowerment of women in an independent and sovereign Bangladesh. The NGOs also kept on with their varied initiatives to better the socioeconomic situation in the country's outlying regions. Along with the political parties, women's groups

actively and covertly supported the fight for democracy in the nation. They also developed a keen awareness of the need to secure their socio-economic and political rights, opening up a promising future for the advancement of women in the nation.

4.1.1 Facilitative to Women’s Participation

Figure 2 shows that 84 percent of local governments believe that the laws of various governments are conducive to women's political involvement and empowerment, while the remaining 16 percent believe that the laws are not.

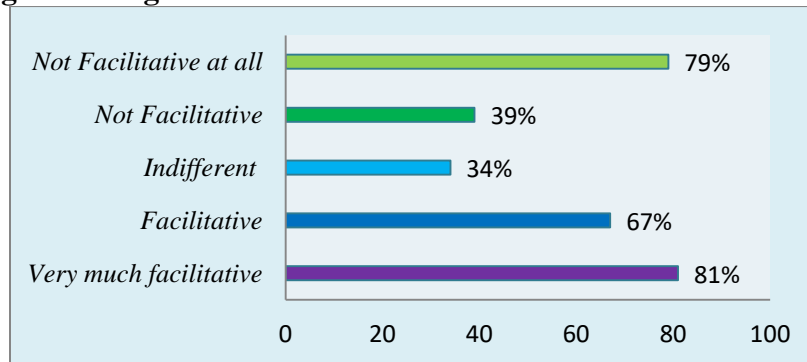
Figure 2: Women's Political Participation



Source: Field Survey, 2021

4.1.2 Kinds of Facilitative to Women’s Participation

Figure 3: Degree of How Facilitative Different Governments Are



Note: Multiple responses

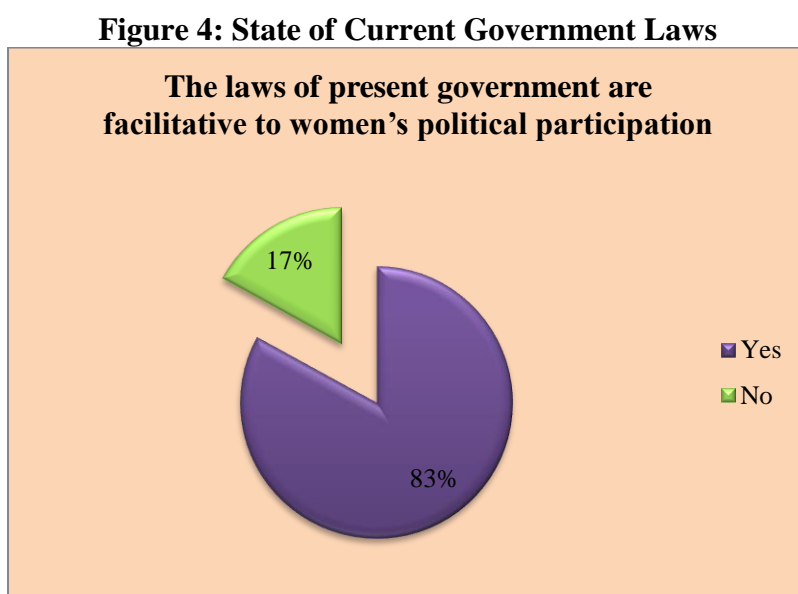
Source: Field Survey, 2021

Various administrations in Bangladesh have enacted various laws to promote women's empowerment. The Special Quota System is one of the most important pieces of legislation in this area. Figure 3 shows that the majority of female public representatives (81 percent) feel that

the laws enacted by the government are extremely helpful in the direction of women's empowerment; while the remainder (67 percent) believe that the laws are helpful. Figure 3 shows that 79% of respondents are not supportive of women's political participation at all, and the majority of them have informed us that they are not supportive of their political involvement and political participation.

4.1.3 Current Facilitative to Women's Participation

Figure 4 shows that 83 percent of local governments believe that current government laws are favorable to women's political involvement and empowerment, while the remaining 17 percent believe that the laws are not.



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table-3: Present Government to Women's Political Participation

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very much facilitative	423	94
Facilitative	389	86
Indifferent	55	12
Not Facilitative	115	26
Not Facilitative at all	291	65

Note: Multiple responses Source: Field Survey, 2021

Different legislation has been enacted by the current administration to aid women's empowerment in Bangladesh. The Special Quota System is one of the most important pieces of legislation in this area. Table 3 demonstrates that the majority of female public representatives

(94%) feel that the intentions of the laws enacted by governments are extremely helpful to women's empowerment, while the remainder (86%) believe that the laws are helpful. It is evident in Figure 3 that 65% of the respondents are not facilitative in all of the women's political participation, and most of them have informed us that not facilitative support them in political involvement and political participation.

The male-dominated and male-biased climate inside local government and political institutions discourages women's participation. For the reason that there are few women in decision-making bodies, these women are obliged to activate surrounded by the constraint of approval through a male-dominated society. They are sometimes neglected and maltreated by their male coworkers. The majority of males feel that women should not run for public office. They also diminish the value of reserved seats.

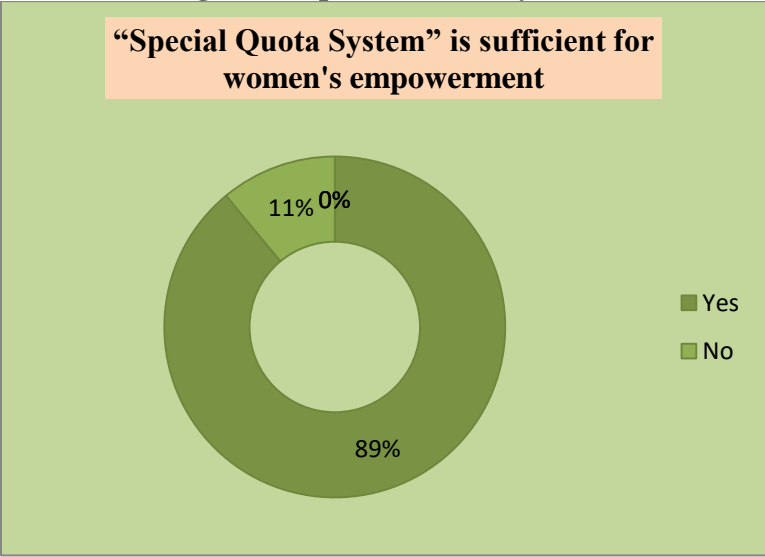
Men's requirements for cooperation by the side of the local government level are a key obstruction in the direction of women's decision-making efficacy. As a result, women are unable to focus on their true difficulties. Their attitude toward women reveals itself in a variety of ways, including a lack of respect and honor, ill-manneredness, laughing, and so on. Some women also said that when they asked for cash for development initiatives, the chairman and male members were disappointed. On the other hand, in most cases, males systematically distinguish against elected female members, orally attack them, assign them to particular development committees, exclude them from the arbitration committee, and so on. The majority of the female members stated that they had an arguable relationship with their respective chairmen and male members. They seldom receive compassion, support, or collaboration from their male peers or the chairman.

4.1.4 Special Quota System for Women's Empowerment and Participation

India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have all implemented quota systems at the municipal level for women's reserved seats by means of direct election. The presence of institutional hurdles that limit women's ability to run for election and become legislative bodies is one method to explain the low rate of women in formal politics. Some examples include the election system, political party, and level of development, gendered norms and cultural differences, and socioeconomic difficulty. Implement quotas as a tool to adjust for systemic hurdles like this.

The institution of reserved seats in Bangladesh (1997), India (1994), and Pakistan (2001) has been documented as an important move, not only in increasing the number of women in official political views but also in empowering women in the region. Women have 33% of the seats in India, 29% in Pakistan, and 25% in Bangladesh, and all legislators are chosen directly (Emma, 2004). In Bangladesh, direct elections to local authorities have resulted in a qualitative shift in their role perception. In general, they have claimed a place inside the local body and have made a strident appeal for their terms of orientation to be implemented.

Figure 5: Special Quota System



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 5 shows that 89 percent of government officials believe the government's quota system is effective for women's empowerment and political engagement, while the remaining 11% believe the quota system is ineffective.

4.1.5 Quota System to Ensure Women's Participation in Politics

Reserved seats, on the other hand, ensure a specific number of women because the seats themselves can only be filled by women. The notion of quotas or reserved seats, which is a word that encompasses many diverse techniques and systems with varying outcomes, may gain popularity in the future. It is critical to distinguish between legal quotas and party quotas that are supported by law or the constitution. There is also a distinction between quotas as reserved seats and electoral or candidate quotas. Reserved seats are a mechanism in Bangladesh that guarantees women a fixed number of seats in parliament or local government in spite of election results. The

other two methods require a specified percentage of women on the voter lists provided during the election (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2003). It is crucial to highlight the extent to which these various sorts of quotas really boost the number of women in politics (Krook, 2003). There must be a significant difference in results when comparing "quotas as reserved seats" to "electoral quotas" or "candidate quotas." The issue here is a lack of guidance on where female candidates should be put on party or election lists. They are less likely to be elected if they are near the bottom of the list.

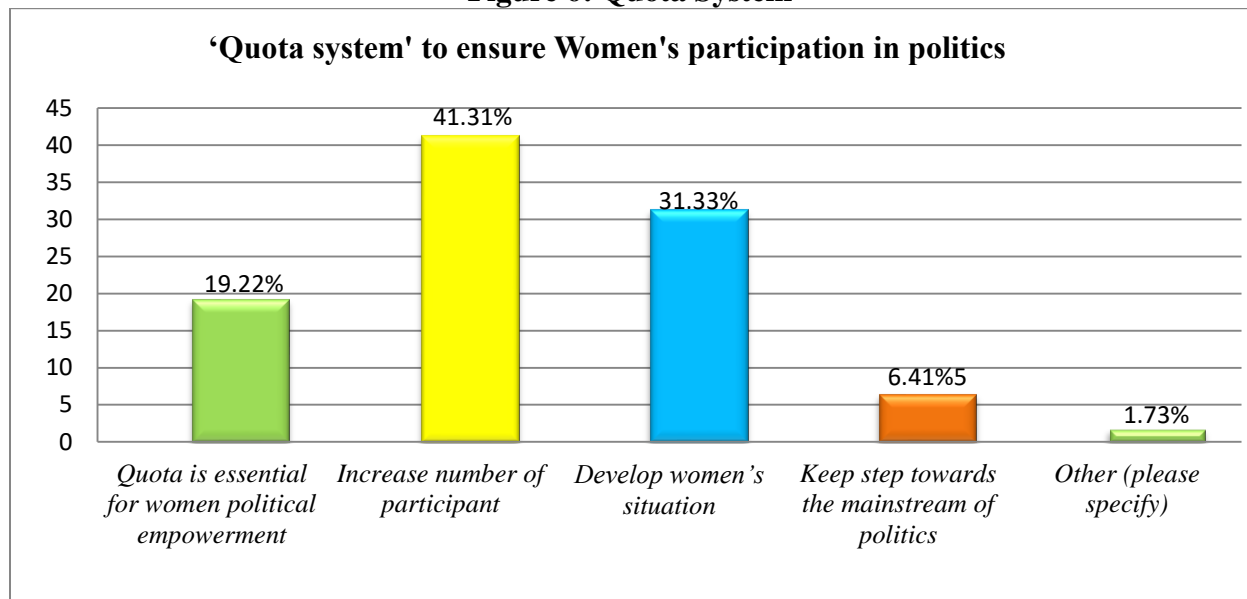
Seats are reserved for women by law or constitution in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. It is also necessary to distinguish between "reserved seats with indirect election" and "reserved seats by means of direct election" in the cases of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In an indirect election system, a specific number of seats are designated for women, but they are chosen and chosen by other people, such as directly elected legislators.

It has been noticed that the issue of reserved seats on the side of local level politics is a new worldwide conversation on top of women in institutional politics, which is a significant component in the recent establishment of quotas in South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Hence, women at the grassroots level have poorer political knowledge and serve the patriarchal interests of the family; hence, their appointment into politics is patriarchal in nature. Local politics in rural Bangladesh has determined that local government as an institution primarily serves the interests of the affluent and powerful elite, while the poor are perceived as being controlled, pushed, and violated by the local elites (Nathan, 1998). Political empowerment appears to need a previous process of social empowerment, which allows for successful political participation.

Women were chosen and then elected, ultimately under the quota system that was in place in Bangladesh from the 1970s until 1996 (at both the national and municipal levels). Researchers have harshly criticized the arrangement, and reserved seats in parliament, according to Najma Chowdhury, show a paternalistic attitude to women's representation. Instead of empower women; society's patriarchal political culture repurposed these tools to further marginalize women in the political realm (Chowdhury, 1994). She argued that the mechanism of indirect election of reserved seats in parliament merely insured that the party with the largest numerical majority in the legislature retained control of the seats. The nomination procedure also resulted

in a preference for excellent contacts with the ruling political class over local political support (Chowdhury, 1994 & Chowdhury, 2002).

Figure 6: Quota System



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 6 indicates the significance of a quota system in securing women's representation in local government. Quotas are needed for women's political empowerment, according to respondents (19.22 percent). According to respondents, a quota system is necessary to ensure that women are represented in local government (19.22 percent). It was obvious that their new function as reserved seat holders had altered the social status of the majority of the women, both in their families and in the community. They were able to speak in public, and people listened to them. One of our instances (Case 1: Rahela Begum) states that "just social status and a legitimate economic position for a woman cannot be realized without comparable political empowerment."

At the same time, elected members of the Upazila Parishad have enhanced their social empowerment. Respondents (41.31%) stated that the number of participants at the local level has been steadily growing. According to respondents, this method has the potential to improve women's status in official politics (31.33 percent). Respondents are moving closer to the mainstream of politics as a result of this method (6.41 percent).

At this point, it's important to note and report that women's quotas aren't being met, or that even when they are, women's representatives are perceived as political appointees who play a passive

role. Quotas for women's representation tend to act as a ceiling rather than a minimum, and hence may have a negative impact on women's representation in the long run. As a result, there has been a lot of discussion over women's involvement, and most women are against the quota system.

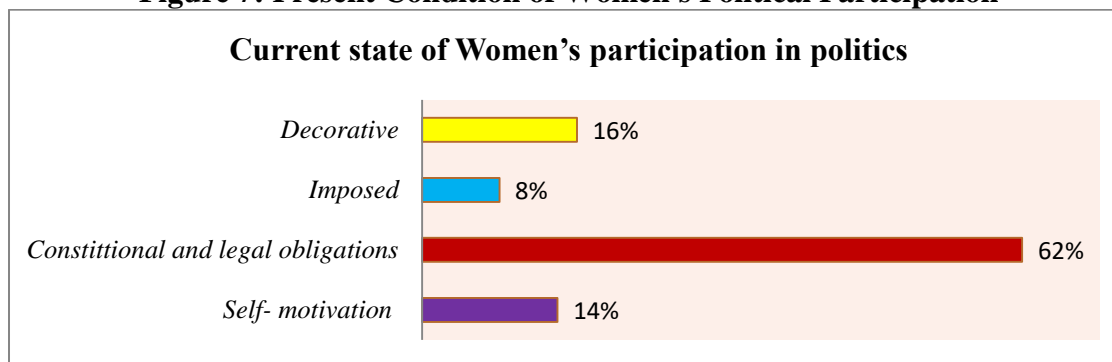
Case Study: 1

Rahela Begum was a former Vice-Chairman of Gazipur Sadar Upazila in Dhaka's Gazipur Sadar Thana. She is the mother of two children and is married. She holds a bachelor's degree. Before being elected to the Upazila Parishad, she was the head of Mahila Unnayan Samiti. Her father was a member of the council. At various periods, her grandfather, father-in-law, and husband were elected to the City Council.

Rahela Begum says that "a woman's proper social standing and economic role cannot be attained without comparable women's political empowerment." To live safely in a world of global democracy, Bangladeshi women must strengthen their grassroots political involvement. Despite the fact that the municipal government law of 1997 provided for reserved seats for women, it did not effectively ensure their actions or duties. As a result, there is a discernible distinction between regular and reserved seating. According to Rahela Begum, "as a result, prejudice and apathy have naturally emerged." White counterparts are considered to be more prevalent in general seats, which leads to more inequality between male and female members of local government than ever existed. According to Rahela Begum, one reason for the low incidence of women in official politics is the presence of institutional hurdles that limit their capacity to compete for election and become legislators. Some examples include election systems, political parties, and the level of development; gendered norms and cultural differences; and socioeconomic difficulties. Implementing quotas becomes a tool to adjust for systemic hurdles like this.

4.1.6 Perception of Women's Participation in Politics

Figure 7: Present Condition of Women's Political Participation



Source: Field Survey, 2021

According to a vast percentage of respondents (62%), women's participation is solely a system of constitutional and legal responsibility. However, 14% of respondents said it was at their discretion, and 8% indulged in something obnoxious. Surprisingly, the share of ornamental items climbed by 16 percent.

4.2 Laws, Policies, and their Implementations

According to the survey, 89 percent of respondents believe that the government's quota system is effective for women's empowerment and political participation, but they see the quota system's incompatibility as a political barrier to women's participation in local government. The majority of women are elected utilizing approaches that exclude women's preferences as an electoral constituency. Generally, quotas are used to conduct affirmative action to feminize legislatures, requiring political parties to field female candidates for a certain proportion of the seats they are seeking (Huntington & Nelso, 1976). Since they accept that women do not constitute a politically separate group with interests confined to gender-related problems, quotas are typically considered a viable solution to address the underrepresentation of women. Unlike ethnic or racial differences, gender disparities do not correspond to specific geographic areas or communities. Due to quotas, women are permitted to join political parties, although these organizations' goals reflect a variety of sometimes incompatible philosophies. According to Anne Phillips, if the parties that women join do not present "a clearly woman-friendly platform (that men would claim they are equally capable of adopting), there is no assurance that women will defend women's interests": "gender parity is in this sense a shot in the dark" (Phillips, 1995).

Formal laws and policies are enacted by the state. Sometimes they originate from international treaties or conventions, and sometimes from local government authorities. However, it is rules and regulations that are the key factors to strengthening and constraining women's voices. In this study, the understanding of acts and rules from the respondents' perspective is highlighted. First, this study aims at finding out the respondents' understanding of the existing rules and acts.

The first case study shows how acts and rules became a source of empowerment for the FVC. Because of their understanding of norms and laws, FVCs were able to question the power structure. Furthermore, respondents perceived "inconsistency" with overlapping demands in the

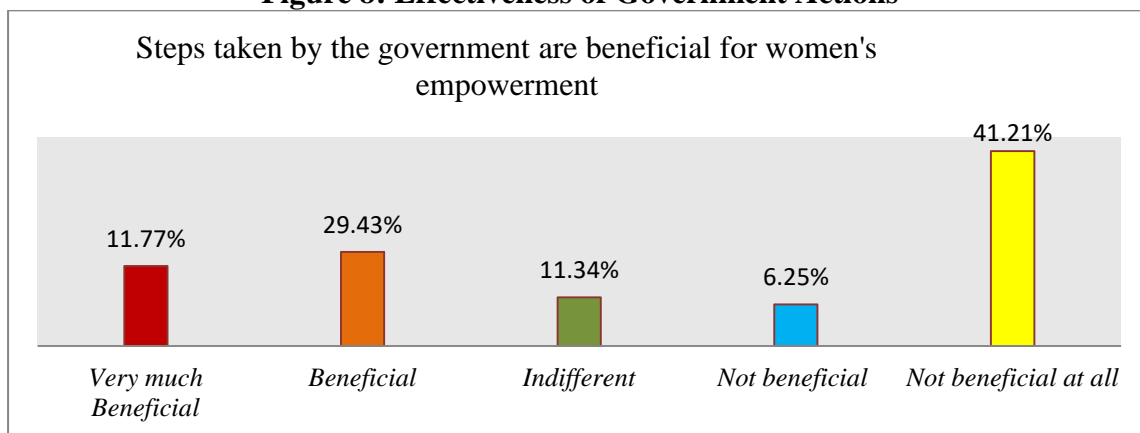
current rules and other rules. In this regard, they noted that while the rules and acts were functional, they were not adequately executed. UZPs faced no repercussions for such "scofflaw" behavior. This represented a chasm between what was put on paper and what was really practiced. Once again, the law is not a magical force: it is a weapon. However, over half of all respondents deemed rules and acts to be "unhelpful" since "current rules and acts give the Chair unparalleled control." Although the rules provide that a majority of UZP members can overturn the Chair's decision, this was not the case. Rules and acts have no effect on power relations.

Political Participation and Women Empowerment in Local Government Stairs

5.1 Steps Taken by the Government for Women’s Empowerment

In every developing nation, such as Bangladesh, mainstreaming women via gender-specific policy is a predictable obligation intended to attain factual development. Figure 8 shows that in the current political environment, 41.21 percent of the steps taken by the government are not beneficial at all to women's empowerment in local government structures, while 11.77 percent are very much sufficient, with the remaining 29.43 percent stating it as beneficial and 11.34 percent stating it as indifferent. As an example, one of our cases (Case-2: Tamanna Sultana).

Figure 8: Effectiveness of Government Actions



Source: Field Survey, 2021

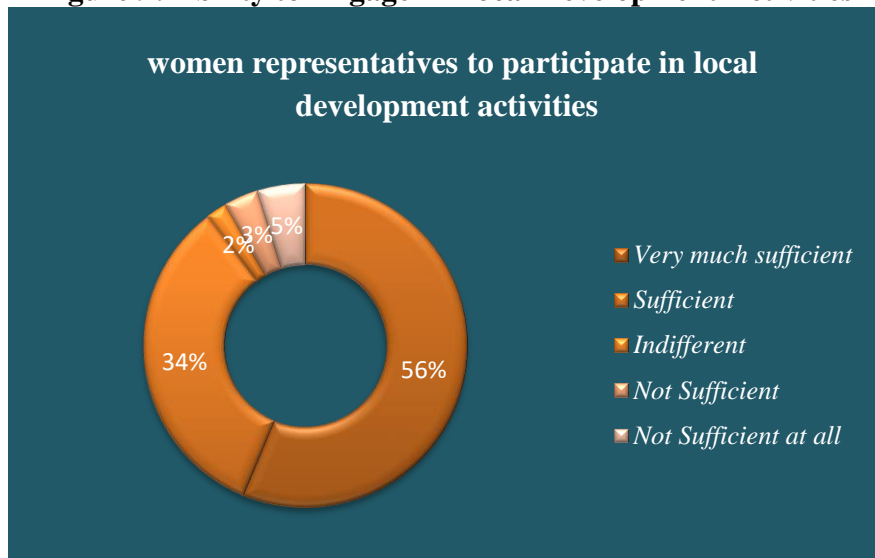
Case study-2

Tamanna Sultana says that the Vice-Chair of Paba Upazila in Paba Sadar Thana of Rajshahi District commented "Maid Becomes Vice-Chair Too," which was published in the local newspaper when she was elected as a female Vice-Chair. It was true that once she worked as a maid for five years in people’s houses because those were her bad days. Her husband had worked on other people’s land. It was difficult for him to maintain the family alone. So, she started working in other people’s houses as a maid. At night, she used to sew bed covers (katha) to support her family. Soon, she formed a women’s group in her locality that sewed katha. Within a very short time, she became famous for her handiwork. When she found herself a bit more financially solvent, she started a business to provide food

for the patients at the Upazila Health Complex. Her elder son had already completed a BSc in Engineering from RUET (Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology). Soon, the people of the locality started to see her as their confidant. When she took the decision to participate in the Upazila elections, she did not get the nomination from her desired party. She was not disappointed by the decision of the political party and participated in the election as an independent candidate. She got a huge vote from the people, which gave her confidence. When she stood for re-election, the political leaders came to the Upazila to give her their nomination. This time, the people of the locality wanted her as the Chair of the Parishad. Every two months, she personally visited line department officials and told them to call meetings of the Standing Committee. It was due to her performance in the committee meetings that they got the JICA fund for the development of the Upazila. Only two upazilas in the Rajshahi district received funds from this project, totaling 25 lakhs. Her Upazila stood first in terms of the performance of Standing Committee meetings regularly.

5.2 Engagement Women in Local Development Activities

Figure 9: Ability to Engage in Local Development Activities



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 9 suggests that 56 percent of female representatives believe women's contribution to development activities is extremely important, while the remaining 34% believe it is sufficient.

Table- 4 Actions Required to Advance Women's Empowerment in LGIs

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Training and development of skills	194	43.11
Allocation of resources	149	33.21
Participation and Opinion	276	61.41
System of Effective Monitoring	167	37.04
Women's rights awareness	209	46.34
Other (please specify)		

Note: Multiple responses Source: Field Survey, 2021

Several methods to advance women's empowerment were recommended by the female public representatives. Table 4 reveals that 61.41 percent of them believe that women are not encouraged to participate in meetings and supplementary events and express their opinions. As a result, women should step forward to take part. Women's training and development of skills were stressed by 43.11 percent of respondents, while women's rights awareness was indicated by 46.34 percent. Other ideas included a good monitoring system and efficient funding allocation. In one of our cases (Case-3: Nurjahan Islam Nira),

Case Study-3

Nurjahan Islam Nira was elected Chairperson of Jashore Sadar Upazila in Jashore District's Kotwali Thana. She is the mother of three children and is married. She has a master's degree. Before being elected to the Upazila Parishad, she was the head of Mahila Unnayan Samiti. Her father was a politician and a freedom fighter.

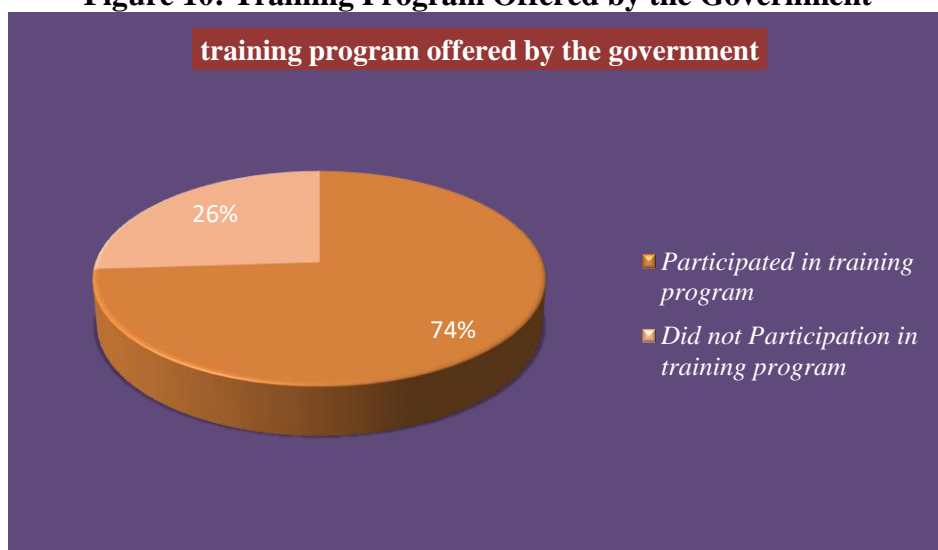
Nira Begum belongs to the direction of a political family and was married to another by means of the same tradition. She has made her aware of the operations of the Upazila Parishad. In her judgment, the Upazila Parishad Chairperson is the Upazila's leader. She is more concerned about women's concerns and violence against women as a woman chairwoman. She is aware of the various issues that women face in her district. She believes that women would be more comfortable approaching a female chairman to discuss their difficulties, rights, and obligations.

She and her sister-in-law visited several parts of the Upazila during the election campaign. Before the election, she held at least one meeting in each community. She also visited many households in order to get votes from both male and female councilors. Despite the fact that she faced four male candidates in the election, she won by a large majority. She is unaffiliated with any political party. Consequently, she hasn't had any particular

challenges in carrying out her duties as chairman. She began convening monthly meetings of the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program after becoming chairwoman. Although the Upazila Parishad's general meetings are not held on a regular basis, members of the Upazila Parishad attend all meetings when they are called. The Thana and Zila administrations cooperate with her. Religious leaders have been known to cause issues. According to Islam, women cannot serve as chairpersons or leaders of an Upazila Parishad. Their statement, however, had no effect on her election or effectiveness as chairwoman. According to her, the primary difficulty that women in the upazila face is dowry, which causes a lot of family discord and marital strife. Even at night, she travels to a different Salish village every night. During Salish, she is accompanied by two or three family members. Women who are directly elected can serve as great role models for future generations.

5.3 Training from Government and NGOs

Figure 10: Training Program Offered by the Government



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 10 demonstrates that 74% of female public officials took part in training programs, while the rest did not. One of the most imperative prerequisites intended for developing the capability of members of a local government entity is training. Women's legislative bodies are an essential element of local government entities, and they are responsible for a variety of tasks. As one of our cases (Case-4: Josna Ara Millee) says, "It can be predicted that training programs make

women legislative bodies efficient and conscious of their duties, responsibilities, and also women's human rights."

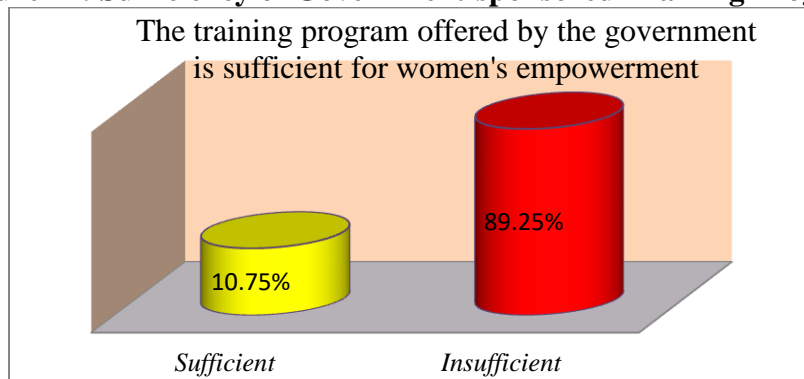
Case study-4

Josna Ara Millee, Vice-Chairperson of Jashore Sadar Upazila, in Kotwali Thana of Jashore District. She is married and the mother of two children. She is a postgraduate.

She says that she proposed a project (the financial years 2020–2021) for the arrangement of training for the poor, helpless women in all ups of the Upazila. Recently, they got the JICA project fund. She put forward a proposal to arrange training for 60 women and said that, after completion of the training, the successful participants would be awarded sewing machines. But the Chair did not agree with her proposal. The Chair argued that there were lots of other problems that they needed to address. Then she reminded the Chair that their Upazila Parishad had got the JICA fund project as a result of her action. In order to get a JICA project, each upazila must fulfill some criteria. One of these criteria was the meetings of standing committees. She told the Chair that he could not deny her demand as she had performed her duties and responsibilities in the standing committee sincerely, and that's why the Upazila was enlisted to grant the fund for the JICA project. In the meeting, she was supported by the UNO and the Upazila Engineer. Although the Chair did not really agree, he could not deny her demand. Finally, the project was implemented under her leadership.

5.4 Training Program Obtainable by the Government is Sufficient Intended for Women's Empowerment

Figure 11: Sufficiency of Government-sponsored Training Program



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 11 reveals that 89.25 percent of female Upazilla Parishad public representatives believe that women's involvement in training programs is more than adequate.

5.5 Satisfaction with the Progress Level of Women's Participation in Bangladesh Politics

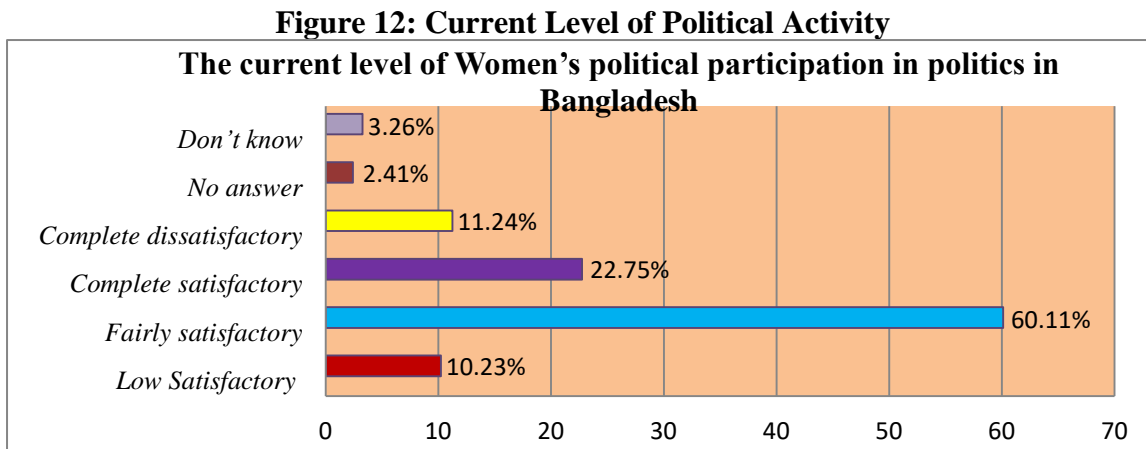


Figure 12 reveals that 10.23% of respondents find the current level of female political participation to be unsatisfactory, while 60.11 percent find it to be good. However, when respondents rated their level of engagement as "completely good," the proportion fell to 22.75 percent. 2.41 percent of the respondents remained mute when asked a question, while 3.26 percent claimed ignorance.

This is primarily ensured by the quota system, which a small number of participants believe has subordinate usefulness at the local level and no value in increasing women's participation at the national level. This is an accumulation in the direction of being a barrier to true empowerment for women, and a large proportion have expressed concern about gradually reducing the quota system, allowing women to achieve indirect election. Most women regard political opinions as dirty games, and others argue that they lack the courage to participate in local government politics; additionally, the number of participants reveals their dissatisfaction with pursuing politics as a vocation. However, the lack of collaboration between NGOs and institutions or organizations playing significant roles in ensuring women's political participation has been identified as an essential impediment, as has the media's role in promoting women's contributions. In terms of political hurdles, considerable difficulties stem from predominantly male-dominated political institutions in which women continue to have uneven positions in party structures; they are denied party support, whether on the basis of financial or other influence.

Regarding the male dominance nature of their male colleagues, they have little access in the direction of communication by means of the party high level and the culture of material and immaterial communication. A large percentage of respondents have been assured of the political participation environment within the party to get the post. Women's political perspectives are generally overlooked in party decision-making.

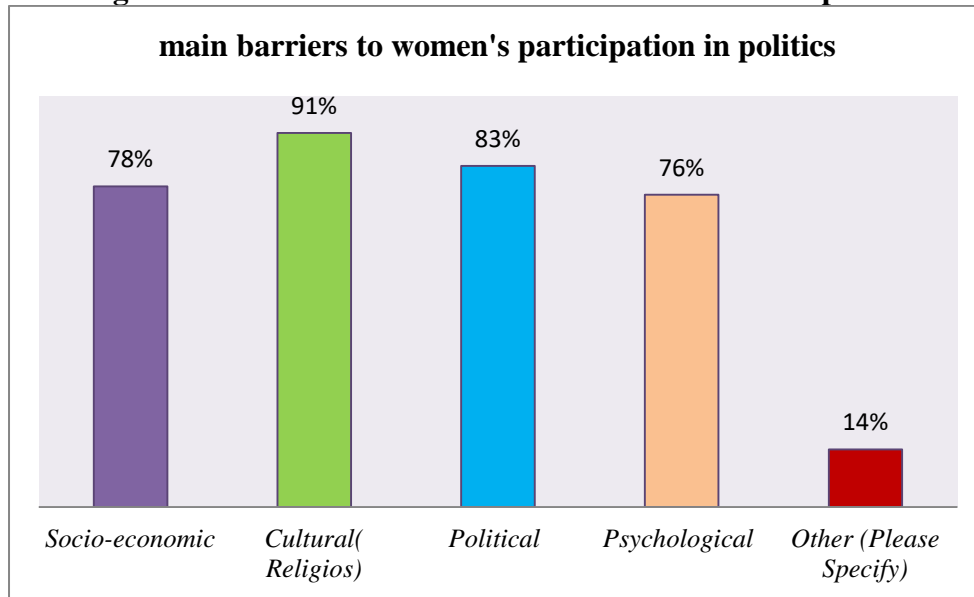
The study discovered a small number of participants. 56% of government representatives believe that possibilities for women to participate in development activities are enough, while the remaining 34% believe that they are insufficient. According to 46.34 percent of them, increasing knowledge about women's human rights, skill development and training, and women's viewpoint and participation should all be emphasized. Women's empowerment and political engagement in local government organizations, according to 33.21% of respondents, may be accelerated by correct funding allocation and altering social attitudes toward discrimination. An efficient monitoring system and enhanced participation by male officials are other crucial elements that help promote women's empowerment. However, the growth of democratic values in public life and the economic development of a community are harmed and hampered as a result of the exclusion of women from positions of authority and elected bodies. In a society where men, who do not necessarily support women's political participation in local government institutions, dominate the majority of governing institutions, it is critical to emphasize that women must lead the process of organizing and mobilizing their network, learning to correspond their interests with their male counterparts and different organizations, and pushing intended for mechanisms in the direction of improving women's political representation. Positive action should be taken in the direction of ensuring that representation represents the entire variety of society, with the goal of establishing a "gender-balanced" legislative body. Despite the fact that each country has distinct implications of impediments that may differ in nature, women should compete in local government around the country in order to create an equal playing field with males.

Barriers to Women’s Participation in Local Government

6.1 Major Barriers in the Direction of Women’s Political Participation in Local Government

Figure 13 demonstrates that the majority of respondents (78%) believe that family would obstruct women's engagement in politics, whereas the majority of respondents (91%) believe that women's economic incapability is the biggest barrier. Surprisingly, more than two-thirds of all interviewees (83%) chose the occasional political environment as the major impediment to women's participation. However, research suggests that the share of society-culture as a barrier has dropped by 11%. Furthermore, 76 percent and 14 percent of current respondents, respectively, believe that the insufficiency of the socioeconomic situation and the attitude of women are the biggest barriers to participation in politics. As an example, one of our cases (Case-5) is Josna Ara Begum.

Figure 13: Main Barriers to Women's Political Participation



Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Case Study:5

Josna Ara Begum was an ex-elected Vice-Chair of Feni Sadar Upazila, in Feni Sadar Thana of Feni District. She is married and the mother of two children. She is a graduate (Pass). She was chairperson of Gram Poribar Union shongtha before being elected as Vice-Chair of the Upazila Parishad. Her father was an

active politician. Her grandfather, father-in-law, and husband were post-politicians at different times. According to Josna Ara Begum, in Bangladesh, a growing country where democracy is solidifying, the great majority of Bangladeshi women remain uneducated, in poor health, and invisible within the national accounting system. The feminization of poverty and unemployment, as well as asymmetrical labor market participation and constrictive socio-cultural influence on top of education, nutrition, health, and political participation, have all served to limit women's mobility, even though it is not always possible to quantify gender discrimination in all spheres. She feels that women's poor statuses, lack of access in the direction of land and property, and disrespect for their mostly unpaid domestic work are to blame. She stated that women's political engagement is influenced by a variety of circumstances, including the political environment. Women's political engagement is typically hampered by socioeconomic, cultural, religious, political, and ideological elements, which are impacted extensively by socioeconomic, cultural, religious, political, and ideological forces.

6.2 Family Barriers to Women's Participation in Politics

The most frequently mentioned impediment to public life (activism and obligations) is a lack of time due to the necessity of complementary family and work responsibilities in every country on the planet. Every single response mentions it. The matter of time is intricately linked to familial obligations, which many women continue to accept or feel are required of them, taking precedence over duties to the government or to themselves.

The issue is exacerbated by insufficient daycare facilities, a lack of family support, party refusal in the direction of changing their timetable and meeting schedule, and the fundamental constraint of public life, which has led to an official investigation. Upazila Chirperson Mrs. Sharmin Akther of the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) stated, "Having worked in high party and political positions, I believe such tasks to be arduous, stressful, and thankless." Women who do not run for political office are wise.

Table 5: Why Family is the Biggest Barrier

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The dual roles of women (family and social)	437	97
Policy and limits on family practice	185	41
Patriarchy	347	77
Other (please specify)		

Note: Multiple responses Source: Field Survey, 2021

Among those who believe that family is the most significant obstacle, 97 percent believe that women's dual duties (family and social) prevent them from becoming active participants. Surprisingly, just 41% of respondents said policy and constraints on family practice would be a deciding factor. On the other hand, 77 percent of respondents said the patriarchal culture acquired from the family was a major factor in preventing women from participating in politics. Sufia Reza argues one of our cases in Case 6.

Case Study: 6

Sufia Reza, 36 years old, women's development activities and poultry farmer of Gobindaganj Upazila, in Gobindaganj Sadar Thana of Gobindaganj District. She is married and the mother of four children. She has an HSC Pass. She bluntly says, "All women are not supposed to be involved in politics." However, Sufia Reza informs us that every rural person is more or less acquainted with national political issues. She has adequate knowledge of the existing situation in national politics. But in the context of local politics, she only knows the names of the representatives of her village and the year of the last local election. She cast her vote in both the last national and local elections. But, the voting decision was made by her husband. Sufia Reza says, "Uni kato manusher shatha melamesha koren." Pan onek khoz khabor. Ar, uni, onek valo dik thik korta paren. Unar kathar baira jai na ami. Tasara ida to atta vot-i. ir dam. Amra to aar desh chalai "Hasina and Khaleda." He (her husband) meets different people. Thus, he gets different information. Therefore, he has the capability to make the right decision. And above all, I never disobey him (her husband). However, it is just a vote. It does not mean it is so important. The country is not ruled by us. It is ruled by either Hasina or Khaleda. Sufia Reza informs us that she does not have any political affiliation. She believes that there is hardly any housewife in rural societies who has considerable political affiliation. She thinks that women who have no responsibility for their families and have no strong kinship ties are involved in politics or maintain political connections. "Valo gharer bou-beti ra raznitti-t name na". (Wife or daughter, coming from a decent family, never involved in politics). Nevertheless, Sufia Reza has some negligible acquaintance with some local leaders. She explains that a few years ago, she went to Gobindaganj town with some of her neighbors and family members to see the Prime minister. But that visit was completely non-political. She, in fact, never attends any political gatherings, activities or meetings.

6.3 Religion Barrier to Women's Participation in Politics

Table- 6 Factors Influencing Religion as a Barrier

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Women are not allowed to lead in Islam	216	48
It is illegal/sinful to attend a gathering or rally	99	22
Working with males is not a good idea	126	28
Politics based on religion	239	53
Other (please specify)		

Note: Multiple responses Source: Field Survey, 2021

According to respondents, politics based on religion, according to respondents, has a significant effect on obstructing women's participation in politics, with 53% of respondents believing it has a significant effect. The ground of forbidden rule from the government has a significant effect on women's participation in politics. Attending a gathering or protest is illegal, and working with guys is not a good idea, as has been voiced by 22% and 28% of respondents, respectively. Furthermore, 48% believe that women are not allowed to lead in Islam. Rezia Sultana explains one of our cases (Case-7: Women Cannot Communicate in Salish and Public Gatherings since it is banned in Islam for women to speak in front of males). Traditional sentiments are dramatically summarized by Jabunnasa Haque, a nominal MP in Bangladesh's Awami League (AL): "Women should not participate in political life—women belong in the kitchen."

Case Study-7:

Razia Sultana is a women's activist from Gafargaon Upazila, in Gafargaon Thana of Mymensingh District. She is 45 years old. She says that our women's access to public places like shops, bank offices, local NGO offices, fairs, cinemas, etc. But women cannot access public meetings with political organizations; Women have to go to all these places with any male member of their family, like their husband, sons, and so on. Razia Sultana says that women wear burkaks while going to public places. She informs us that it is her mother-in-law and husband's strict order to wear burkha. She further informs us that if a mature woman does not wear a burkha while going to public places, she will certainly go to hell after her death.

However, Razia Sultana says, many women do not go to the market. Her

husband sells her homemade goods at the market. Sometimes the middleman/buyers collect the goods from the house. Razia Sultana is not sure about people's reaction to women's access to public places. She believes that if a woman moves while wearing a veil, no one will judge her. Many women, on the other hand, never attend shalihs or participate in communal decision-making. Many women asked in surprise, "How could a woman talk in a collective meeting among men?" They (women) can at best listen to men in a collective meeting."

6.4 Ideological and Social Capital Barriers to Women's Participation in Politics

Table- 7 Ideological and Social Capital as Barriers

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Women's issues have made little contribution to political parties' ideologies and programs	257	57
Women's lack of self-assurance	185	41
Social mobility is limited	140	31
Lack of collaboration and support from various women's groups and non-governmental organizations	342	76
Women's potential contribution has not been promoted in the media	419	93
Other (please specify)		

Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 7 shows that 57% of respondents supported that woman's issues have made little contribution to political parties' ideologies and programs. According to 41% of respondents, women's lack of self-confidence is responsible for a lack of ideological and social capital. Although 31% of respondents responded that social mobility is limited, a huge majority of 76 percent expressed worry about a lack of collaboration and support from various women's groups and non-governmental organizations as the main reasons for influence. Surprisingly, 93 percent of respondents claimed that women's potential contributions have not been highlighted in the media, citing a lack of ideological and social capital as a barrier in the direction of women participating in political views. In one of our cases (Case-8: Runa Begum), election campaign, electoral struggle, dispute, fight, arena, disagreement, win, lose, triumph, defeat"-a recurrence of

warlike expressions that are more usually associated with male culture and upbringing. As a result, many women think that they can have a bigger effect outside of politics, such as through volunteer organizations (such as Mohila shomithi, Naripokko, and others) or by working hard.

Case Study – 8

Runa Begum was a Sylhet Sadar Upazila School Teacher and a Women's Political Activist in Sylhet Sadar Thana of Sylhet District. She is the mother of four children and is married. She holds a bachelor's degree. She was the Mahila Kollyan Samiti's chairman. Her father worked as a teacher at a public school. At one point or another, her grandfather, father-in-law, and husband were all politicians.

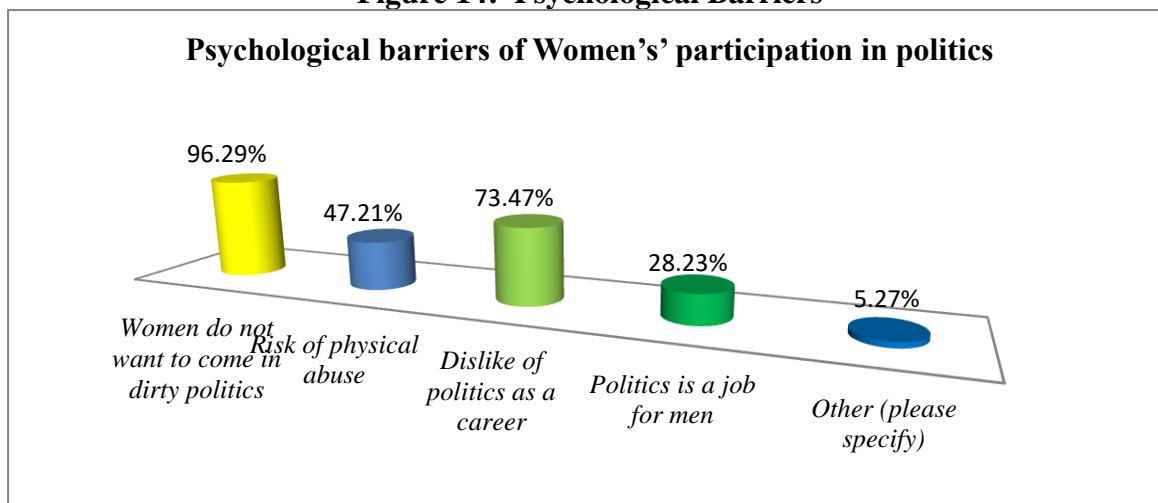
She contends that patriarchy shapes women's political ties as a system of male supremacy. It converts males and females into men and women and establishes a gender hierarchy in which men are favored. According to Runa Begum, Islam is "a familial-social, ideological, and political system in which men, through force, direct pressure, or ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what role women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male."

Runa Begum believes patriarchy uses gender-purpose ideology as an intellectual instrument to position women in the private arena of the home as mothers and wives and men in the public realm. This is one of the most important elements influencing women's political engagement across the world.

This ideological split, however, does not represent reality. In women's daily lives, the lines between public and private are frequently blurred. However, the home sphere remains visible in both the North and the South as the appropriate zone for women, whereas public space is identified with males. In connection to the discursive and material options accessible in a particular culture and society, women must negotiate their admission into and claim to public space. Although gender role ideology is not fixed but rather fluid as it intersects with a society's economic, social, and political structures, women continue to be characterized as private throughout countries, resulting in their exclusion from politics.

6.5 Psychological Barrier to Women's Political Participation in Politics

Figure 14: Psychological Barriers



Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

In the majority of the interviews, 96.29 percent were questioned about psychological hurdles that prevent women from being involved in dirty politics. As in one of our examples (Case-9: Hosnara Parvien). 47.21 percent of those polled were aware of the risk of physical abuse, and 73.47 percent of those polled opposed politics as a career. On the other hand, a small percentage of 28.23% feel that politics is primarily a male-dominated profession. Lack of motivation and a bad impression of politics stymie women's political participation. A critical view of politics is accompanied by a lack of interest, which may be attributed to a lack of training as well as a lack of confidence in political activity. "Unease with the entire political atmosphere," says Diva Mahrunnasa, a young female political activist (student wing). Many important responders describe a male-dominated macho environment that is hostile to women. "Lack of interest because of the unfriendly milieu and fierce rivalry from males," says Jabunnasa Haque, a nominal MP in AL.

Case Study- 9

Hosnara Parvien was a lecturer at Adarsha Degree College and a political activist from Paba Upazila in Rajshahi District's Paba Thana. She is a married woman with two children. She has a post-graduate degree. She was the chairwoman of the Mahila Kollyan Samiti and a member of the governing bodies of several schools

and colleges. Her father worked as a teacher. Her grandpa, father-in-law, and husband were all union politicians at one point or another.

According to Hosneara Parvien, many women believe that "politics is a "dirty" game." She claims that it has shaken their faith in their ability to engage in democratic processes. In reality, such a view pervades local political barriers.

According to Hosneara Parvien, politics is always governed and controlled by males; men construct the rules of the political game and men determine the criteria for evaluation. If this male-dominated approach is maintained, women's interest and engagement in politics will dwindle. The conventional definition of politics restricts political engagement to the public sphere, whereas the private realm of family life is regarded as apolitical and secure. She claims that the traditional understanding of politics uses the public-private divide to exclude women from politics. The male character of politics, a lack of party support, restricted access to political networks, and a lack of quotas have all been recognized as important political barriers for women.

6.6 Political Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Politics

Table-8: Political Barriers to Women's Participation in Politics

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Women's involvement is hindered by legal and policy limitations	141	31.23
Political structures and applications that are efficient for men	330	73.41
Women's status in the party hierarchy is unequal	402	89.27
political parties' lack of support / attempt to enhance women's participation (financial and other)	420	93.33
Senior leader and member's arrogance and unlawful demands	122	27.11
Compulsory participation in a high-risk political program	258	57.26
Male colleagues' unwillingness to cooperate and unfair struggle for positions in politics	308	68.48
The party's material and immaterial transaction environment for receiving post	231	51.43
Failure to Communicate Intensively with High-Level	437	97.11
The candidate nomination procedure is unfavorable to women.	145	32.23
Women's involvement is discouraged by election campaigns that use dark money, muscle power, party lobbying groups, and other tactics	132	29.33
Women are not well-served by electoral systems	155	34.42
Quota system incompatibility	284	63.00
Women's opinions are either disregarded or utilized to legitimize political decisions	401	89.02
Women's perspectives are undervalued in politics	343	76.21
Other (please specify)		

Table 8 reveals that 31.23 percent of respondents viewed both the damaging authorized and strategy rules and the requirement to participate in dangerous political programs as obstacles to women's participation. However, 73.41 percent of interviewees agreed that political structures and applications that are efficient for males are barriers for women, and that women's place in the party hierarchy is uneven. According to 93.33 percent of respondents, political parties' lack of support for or endeavor to increase women's involvement (financial and other) at a comparatively low level of 27.11 percent has appeared to senior leader and member arrogance and unlawful demands as a political obstacle. 57.26 percent and 68.48 percent of respondents, respectively, said that compulsory involvement in a high-risk political program, male colleagues' refusal to collaborate, and unfair competition for jobs in politics all contributed to women's lower proportion of political engagement. "Politics is typically regarded as a malpractice of brutal competition," says Nargis Begum, a national-level women's activist and crucial informant. And Hamida Begum, a female activist and researcher, warns of "society's disgust with politicians."

However, a sizable majority of respondents (97.11 percent) said that failure to communicate intensively with high-level officials may lead to the rejection of women's nominations in elections and political structures. On the other hand, when the candidate nomination procedure is unfavorable to women and women's involvement is discouraged by election campaigns that use dark money, muscle power, party lobbying groups, and other tactics, the proportion of opinion has decreased sharply in front of respondents, 32.23 percent and 29.33 percent.

All first responders who are directly involved with responders who are actively involved in national political opinions cite difficulty or obstruction inside the party, particularly when nominating a candidate. One responder, Mrs., stated that "the party conducts less zealous activity in favour of female candidates." According to several respondents, parties continue to be concerned that people may be unwilling to vote for a female candidate.

Furthermore, 34.42 percent expressed worry that electoral systems do not adequately serve women, and 63.00 percent cited quota system incompatibility as a political barrier to women's involvement. 89.02 percent of the time, women's opinions are either ignored or used to justify political actions, but one-third of the time; women's opinions are not given importance in politics.

6.7 Socio-economic Barrier to Women’s Political Participation in Politics

Table-9: Socio-economic Barriers

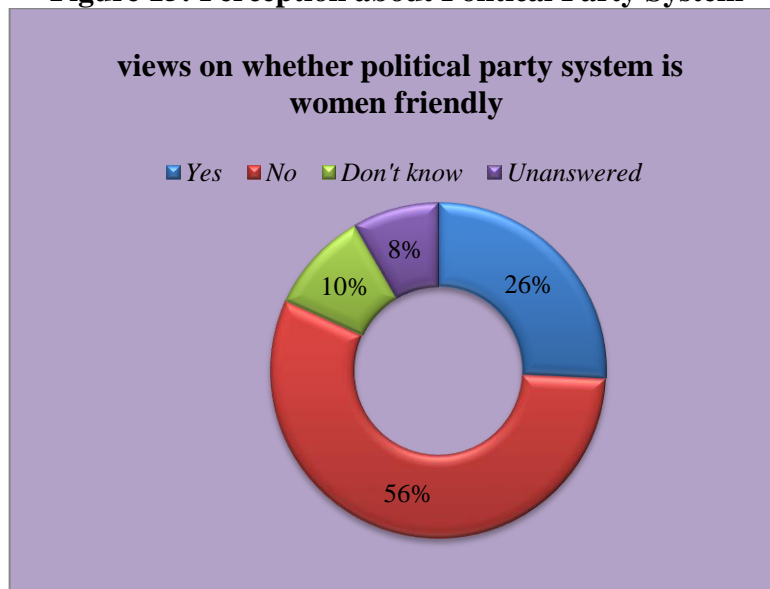
Category	Frequency	Percentage
Women's poverty and unemployment have put a halt to their political participation.	375	83.33
Education, training, and other facilities are insufficient	154	34.21
Women with disabilities are unable to spend money on political campaigns	398	88.45
Terror, extortion, and a muscle-power-dependent fan group if you don't comply	438	97.29
Violence against women	401	89.11

Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 9 shows that 83.33 percent of respondent’s chose as a socio-economic barrier, women's poverty and unemployment have stifled their political participation. Conversely, approximately 97.29 percent of respondents believe that women are unable to participate due to terror, extortion, and a muscle-power-dependent fan group if they do not comply, and that violence against women is the most important belief, believed by 89.11 percent of respondents. Only 34.21% gave preference to education, training, and other facilities that are insufficient.

Figure 15: Perception about Political Party System



Source: Field Survey, 2021

In the current environment, just 26% of respondents support a women-friendly party structure. However, 56 percent of respondents disagreed. The remaining 10% and 8% had no notions or stayed mute when asked to respond. As a sample, one of our cases (Case-10) is Shamima Akther.

Case Study-10

Sylhet Sadar Upazila Vice Chairman and a Sylhet District Women's Political Activist in Sylhet Sadar Thana. She is the mother of three children and is married. She has a master's degree. Her father worked as a teacher at a public school. At one point or another, her grandfather, father-in-law, and husband were all Upazila politicians.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to name the barrier to women running for political office that they had encountered. It was the question that garnered the most in-depth responses and the most comments. Regardless of the geography or where the parties involved fall on the political spectrum, certain themes reoccur, giving the manifestation that the barrier to participation in politics is widespread and universal. "Problems are no longer in the legislation, but in people's brains and attitudes," says Shamima Akther, a local woman activist and councilor.

The majority of roadblocks to progress, as in the case of women, are deficiencies of various kinds: daily complications, lack of time due to prioritization of family or career, lack of training, lack of money, insufficient media influence, and, above all, the persistence of traditional prejudices and stereotypes about the putative roles of men and women in the family and in public life. All of these issues indicate the survival of conventional male and female social role stereotypes, as well as a negative perception of politics. They are exacerbated by women's ongoing inferiority complexes and feelings of inadequacy, which make them hesitant to participate in public life.

According to the above survey, 97 percent of respondents believe that women's dual roles (family and social) are the main barriers to women's participation in local government institutions, while 77 percent believe patriarchy is the barrier, implying that socio-cultural factors in Bangladesh are not conducive to women's participation in local government political views. These findings back up feminist theory, which claims that the factors in women's private lives influence their public lives, such as their socioeconomic and political lives. Whereas traditional theorists define politics as public affairs, feminist and liberal theorists define women's private

lives as the entirety of their female empowerment. According to the results of the study, in Bangladesh, women's private lives play an important role in their political engagement and many impediments in their personal lives are also barriers to their political participation and empowerment. Women, like males, sometimes reject political engagement. According to the findings, the majorities of Bangladeshi women regards Bangladeshi politics as nasty and are willing to risk violence against women. In fact, after the 1990s, Bangladesh's political culture, particularly the practice of keeping women out of rallies, meetings, protests, and procession, as well as attacks or abuse on top of the streets through law enforcement agencies or followers of the ruling party, was the main reason for the development of this mentality. Women, on the other hand, cannot actively participate or be successful in politics without internal democratic practice inside political parties; equitable inclusion of women in the party structure; and rules and initiative to increase women's participation. According to Parvin (1994), patriarchy is a cultural phenomenon in which the acts of elected female members of local government bodies are dominated and controlled by influential male members of the political party in question.

Financial bankruptcy and a lack of additional assistance from political parties or governments are cited as impediments to women's involvement in local government politics by 93.33 percent of those polled. Women, on the other hand, are unable to acquire higher levels of responsibility due to a lack of democratic cooperation within the party. All political orders, according to one of the case studies by Shamima Akther, emanate from the party's highest head, particularly intended for political parties like AL, BNP, and JP. There is a rural area. Unless she has a solid reference, women's access to the leader is difficult. The basic rationale is that the vast majority of female politicians elected in a straight line or intended for reserve seats have a family or a relative. Her political family heritage, financial stability, and bodily strength exceed her party principle traits in this environment. According to a survey, 89.11 percent of women believe that financial bankruptcy prevents women from entering mainstream politics. Furthermore, these women are unable to tolerate a politics based on muscle and violence.

Liberal democratic thinkers place a premium on a country's adoption of laws and regulations that allow for the equal and genuine involvement of both men and women in the creation of a democratic society. When we look at Bangladesh's political culture, we can see that the constitution states that men and women are equal, and that different acts and legislation have been implemented to encourage women's empowerment, rights, and participation, such as the

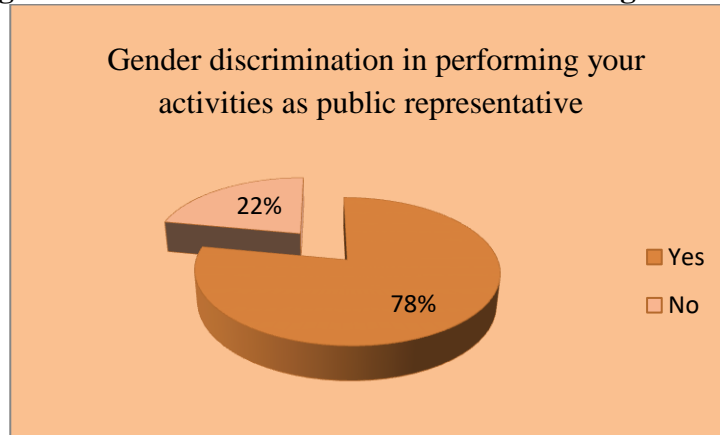
reservation of 50 seats in the parliament and the reservation of seats in local governance institutions (Union, Paurashava, and Upazila elections).

Bangladesh's politics is characterized as liberal democratic; however, the prerequisites for such a system have not yet been met. As a result, the climate conducive to women's empowerment has yet to be formed. Despite the numerous and insurmountable restrictions created by society and patriarchy, women's participation in politics in Bangladesh remains a challenge. Because of Bangladesh's socioeconomic, religious, political, and cultural context, radical feminists and Marxist feminists want to eliminate patriarchy and build an equal political system. Nevertheless, this theoretical approach is not feasible in Bangladesh's political system. As a result, religion plays an imperative role in the development of political and social structures in this country. According to the primary study, 53% of respondents believe religion-based politics is a barrier, while 48% believe it is not. Regarding Bangladesh's sociopolitical, cultural, and religious framework, more women-friendly change is required, as well as a comprehensive right-based strategy to secure women's access to and involvement in local government politics. This encompasses a wide range of political and socio-cultural organizations, political parties, and electoral systems, all of which need to be made more woman-friendly in order to eradicate religion-based politics and provide a level playing field in a liberal democratic polity.

Measures of Overcome the Gender Discriminations at Local Government Level

7.1 Gender Discrimination and Women's Political Participation in Local Government

Figure 16: Gender Discrimination in Performing Activities



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 16 shows that 78 percent of female public representatives believe that the government's gender discrimination in performing activities is effective for women's empowerment and political participation, while the remaining 22% believe that gender discrimination in performing activities is ineffective.

7.2 Kinds of Gender Discrimination for Women in Political Participation

Table-10: Gender Discrimination in Political Participation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Dominated by a male representative	393	87.34
Amounts of money are distributed unequally	357	79.43
Insufficient opportunities for decision-making participation	317	70.36
Other (please specify)	60	13.40

Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 10 lists the most prevalent forms of discrimination. We can observe that male representatives' dominance is the most prevalent kind of discrimination against women,

according to 87.34 percent of female representatives. As one of our cases (case-11: Rokeya Begum) says, "Rajnitir amra ki bujhi; eda to bata seleder kam" (We know nothing about politics. It is all about the males' business). 70.36% commented that women's representatives do not have inadequate participation in decision-making opportunities. The other 79.43% complained about the amount of money being distributed unequally.

Case study: 11

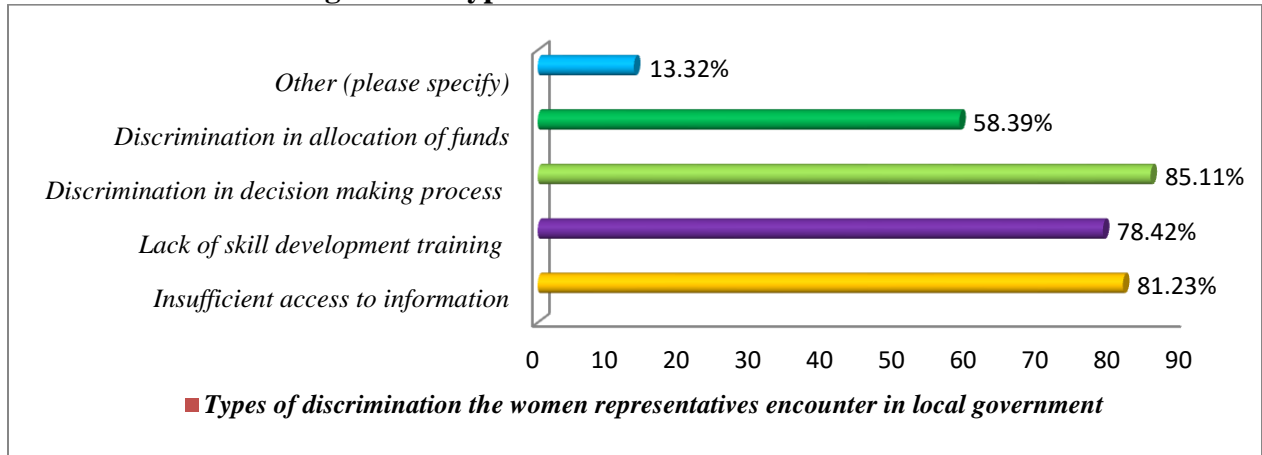
Rokeya Begum was a women's political activist in Charfassion Upazila, in Chairfassion Thana of Bhola District. She is married and the mother of two children. She is an Eight Pass. Rokeya Begum says that "Rajnitir amra ki bujhi; eda to bata seleder kam" (we know nothing about politics). It is all about the males' business). In such a blunt way, Mrs. Rokeya Begum, a rice mill worker, expressed her opinion. To describe the reason behind local women's political disempowerment, she says that poverty is so acute in local areas that people are mostly concerned with their lives and subsistence. Greater social interests, state affairs, society, local politics, etc., do not bear any significance in their lives and thoughts. Besides this, education also plays an important role in women's political distaste. Amra to Murkh, Rajnitir Panch Ghonch Ki Amadar Mathi Dukay? We are illiterate. How could we understand the complications of politics?"). So said Rokeya Begum, mother of four children. Social norms and values are also great obstacles to women's political involvement. At the familial and social level, women's political involvement is not only discouraged but also condemned to a large extent. Rokeya Begum says, "Meeting, misile rajnitte bata chelader shathay shathay thaka gramer manush vala chokhay dhakay na, barir lok o kaw chai na." (The villagers and family members do not accept women's political participation in political activities as it involves working with outsider men.)

Rokeya Begum also informed us that even the male activists don't want to accept women as their political coworkers. However, Rokeya Begum informed us that although women are not active in politics, they have satisfactory informational awareness of national political issues. They often discuss the existing political conditions at home and at work. Rokeya Begum says that she cast her vote in the last national election. But she made the decision, mostly persuaded by her husband. In the last local election, she cast her vote in line with her husband's decision. Drawing her attention to the time minister and the leader of the chief opposition party, she was asked to evaluate women's prospects in politics. Rokeya Begum possesses a very negative view on women's political empowerment issues. She said that although the leaders of the two main parties were women, politics is

only for men. She insisted on delimiting women’s involvement in the political sphere to casting their votes only.

7.3 Types of Discrimination of Women Representatives

Figure 17: Types of Discrimination Encountered



Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 17 exhibits the many forms of gender discrimination experienced by women in local government. It is clear that 85.11 percent of respondents believe that women's representatives encounter prejudice during the decision-making process. As one of our respondents (Case-12) justifies, "Mohila ra ki kotha bolbay, tara ki buje esthanio sarkar somporay, bolo dekhay ki bolba sune." Women's representatives face discrimination in the decision-making process, and many listen to them but do not take them seriously. According to 58.39 percent of respondents, women's representatives are discriminated against in the allocation of funding. 78.42 percent of those polled, while 81.23 percent of those polled.

Case study: 12

Aklima Begum is a Vice-Chairman and a woman activist by profession in Charfesson Upazila, in Charfesson Thana of Bhola district. She is 34 years old. She says that access to local government places like the Upazila Chairman's office, local NGO offices, and women's activists' offices is limited. But she has to go to all these places with any male member of the family, like her husband, sons, and so on. Aklima says that she faces discrimination in the decision-making process and in the political participation of local government while going to public places. She informs us that it is her mother-in-law and husband's strict order to be in public places.

Aklima is not sure about people’s reaction to women’s access to public places. She believes that if a woman moves with a veil, people will never condemn her. However, she never attends to any Shalihs (ADR) or participates in any decision-making process of the community. She asked, surprised, "How could a woman talk in a collective meeting among men?" "They (women) can at best listen to men in a collective meeting".

7.4 Importance of Women in the Decision-making Process in Local Government

Table-11: Importance of Women in Decision-making Process

Category	Percentage (%)
It is accorded a high level of importance.	0.00
To some extent, importance is provided.	5.60
Indifferent	0.00
Not significance is given	33.12
Not significance is given at all	61.28

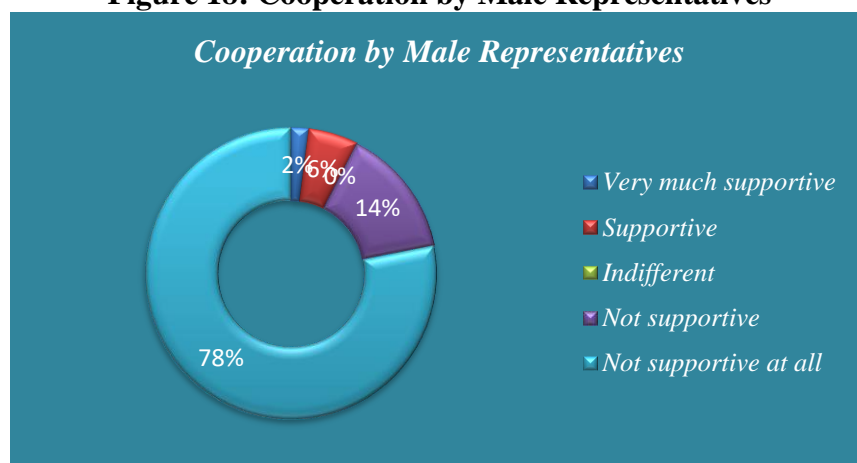
Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table-11 demonstrates that more than 61.28 percent of the female legislative body believes women are not given enough significance in the decision-making process, while 33.12 percent believe they are. Only about 5.60 percent said that significance is given in the decision-making process to some extent. As a result, the majority of women legislators are dissatisfied with the extent of their participation in the decision-making process.

7.5 Male Representatives Supportive of Female Representatives in the Decision-making Process

Figure 18 reveals that more than 78 percent of female representatives believe male representatives are not cooperative at all when it comes to making decisions. Another 14% believe the male representatives are unwilling to cooperate. Only 6% of respondents think male politicians are cooperative.

Figure 18: Cooperation by Male Representatives



Source: Field Survey, 2021

7.6 Removal of Barriers to Women’s Political Participation in Local Government

Table-12: Opinions about Removal of Barriers

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quotas should be eliminated	401	89.32
Women's members will be assigned specific responsibilities	329	73.14
Without any political influence	424	94.32
As elected officials, active participation is required	308	68.42
Work is distributed equality	401	89.14
Other (please specify)		

Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table-12 highlights that both male and female representatives believe that there are several impediments intended for women in the direction of effectively participating in and functioning well in local government actions. The table below offers an idea of their perspectives on how to overcome the barriers: In response to the question, "How do you feel about removing obstacles to women's political involvement in local government representatives?" Quotas should be eliminated, according to 89.32 percent of respondents. It is worth noting that the introduction of quotas in Bangladesh (1997) was viewed as a watershed moment, not just in terms of increasing the number of women in official politics but also in terms of political empowerment for women in the area. The elected designated seats for women do, without a doubt, contribute to improving

participation and women's access to the decision-making process quantitatively, albeit this is not always the case. That is why these women are divided over the quota system.

According to 73.14 percent of respondents, special tasks for women's political participation would be allocated to women's members so that women in the legislative body can meaningfully participate in all sorts of functions. Women's duties and responsibilities should be explicitly defined in local government manuals and legislation. According to 94.32 percent of respondents, the local body should be free of political interference. Upazila Parishad elections are claimed to be technically non-party based. Despite this, there is informal or direct linkage to national parties, and election results often reflect support for the ruling and opposition parties.

On rare occasions, political parties can have a say in who represents the local area at the local level. A strong attachment to a political party is one of the most basic necessities intended for a candidate's contention. In some cases, one can "buy" the support of a political party by donating the proper amount of money. Politics at the local level suffers as a result of these types of unfair political communication. It is vital that elected leaders take an active role in the process. According to 68.42 percent of respondents, when women are directly chosen by the community, they may also legitimize their right to act on behalf of other women. Women's duties can only be performed if their responsibilities and tasks are defined specifically in the contract.

The remaining respondents (89.14 percent) asked for an equal distribution of labor and responsibilities. They claimed that male and female delegates should share equal labor and that this should be represented in the handbook. The division of the union's various wards is another issue. As previously indicated, the union is divided into nine wards, each of which is represented by a member chosen as a general member. Women elected to reserved seats, on the other hand, must cover three wards, making their wards three times the size of ordinary members'. In this case, a female member should receive three times more cash for development initiatives than a member from a general seat.

7.7 Reducing Barriers to Women's Political Engagement in Local Government

Table-13: Ways and Means of Reducing Barriers

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To education and Skill Development Training	302	67.11

To awareness build up about rights and duties	366	81.43
To increase cooperation by male representatives	420	93.23
To effective implementation of government procedures	311	69.17
To establishment of Good Governance	366	81.43
To raise political empowerment	438	97.32
To safe womanhood	393	87.29
To generate decision making policy	429	95.28
Other (please specify)		

Note: Multiple responses

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 13 presents the views of local government politicians on ways to overcome barriers to women's political participation. 81.43 percent of local government representatives believe that raising awareness about women's rights and responsibilities is the most effective way to overcome barriers to women's political involvement in local government. 67.11 percent believe that education and skill-development training may help women overcome barriers to political engagement. 81.43 percent believe that establishing excellent governance is one approach to eliminating barriers to women's political engagement. According to 69.17 percent of respondents, efficient execution of government processes can minimize barriers to women's political involvement and representation. How to improve women's participation in local government politics 97.32 percent expressed regret that they had not been able to accomplish anything according to their ability in terms of political empowerment and that they had not attended Upazila Parishad meetings. 95.28 percent were active in policy decision-making and 87.29 percent were devoted to safe femininity. It was obvious that there was a disconnect between what they had done and their awareness of local issues, as well as what they wished to do about them.

In the study, 78 percent of female public representatives believe that the government's gender discrimination in performing tasks is effective for women's empowerment and political involvement, while the remaining 22% believe that gender discrimination in performing activities is ineffective. These studies investigate the issue of women's empowerment within local government entities. Female representatives were discovered to be dominated by male representatives and to be provided insufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making. Other forms of discrimination include inequitable funding distribution, male dominance, gender discrimination, and so on. In spite of the fact that the present government has enacted a number of laws and acts to help women's empowerment, such as the Special Quota System, these laws

and acts have not been shown to be as beneficial as they could be. Political parties have a lot of work to do to increase the number of women in politics. More women need to be encouraged, attracted, supported, trained, and mentored by political parties. Affirmative action programs, such as quotas for women, may be implemented by a political party. Parties can play a bigger role if they pick an equal number of women in both the party structure and the pre-selection process. Furthermore, the confrontational attitude of politics must be changed. To lure more women into local government politics, leaders must put an end to the harsh culture of assaulting one another.

In this light, the survey concludes that after examining some of the barriers women face in the political environment of local government in Bangladesh, it is critical to consider how more women can be encouraged to enter politics and actively participate by vying for and winning more seats at all levels of local government. This section looks at how certain nations across the globe have been able to overcome barriers to women's political participation in local government and what Bangladesh may learn from their accomplishments.

Many respondents believe that four parts of local government political processes need to be modified to accommodate more women, according to Women's Empowerment and Political Participation (Tayo & Adetunde, 2016). These are the following: (a) Legislation: A constitutional amendment or revision is required to ensure that women's rights are strongly enshrined and discriminatory elements are eliminated. (b) Institutional or procedural change: this includes cultural shifts and increased gender awareness, both of which are outcomes of cultural shifts. Men and women, regardless of their class, ethnicity, or marital situation, should be constantly reminded that they are capable of dominating. (c) Management Style of Political Parties: Political parties have a responsibility to help women advance in politics. Women should be included in the running of political parties. Political parties must have gender-sensitive constitutions that provide appropriate representation for women. (d) Changes in representation: this refers to action plans that are capable of enhancing and securing women's continued access to the legislature. Female politicians should develop confidence by being appointed to decision-making positions inside their parties, and the party structure should be made gender-sensitive against their will, with a deliberate strategy to place women in key political roles. Women do not currently hold key executive positions in any of Bangladesh's major political parties. Women are created as leaders inside the parties by standing by the side of the best. (e) Impact on Output:

Women's laws and regulations, according to several researchers, should be on the agenda of any policymaking. (f) Gender Quotas: This is an efficient way to achieve gender equality in politics in a short period of time. Reserve seats are established to ensure that a specific number of political seats are exclusively allocated to women. Candidate quotas, both political and legal, set a minimum number of women on political party candidate lists for elections. (g) Change in discourse: laws should be utilized to influence public perceptions of female politicians. They should be considered sensible and intelligent in the same way that man (Tayo & Adetunde, 2016).

We speak out that gender education has to be inculcated into the nation's education curricula at all levels to overcome the obstacles of women's political participation in local government in the all-generation standing order of women's discrimination and male dominance. Both male and female pupils/students should be required to take the topic or course (where applicable) from elementary through university.

Chapter Eight
Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

Women's participation in community activities improves awareness of women's communities since they have various needs and perspectives. Bangladesh's government has adopted the stipulation of reserved seats (special quotas) and changed different laws in the direction of ensuring gender equality in local government. In view of the fact that Bangladesh's independence, all elected administrations have the need for an implementation local government in the direction of providing successful local governance. The mechanism of direct election for women was first established in 1997 under the Local Government Act. It is crucial to understand the extent to which the system of women's participation in local government helps women's growth as well as their capacity to play an important role in local government. On the other hand, there are various persistent challenges that have become barriers to women's political participation in local government, which is cause for concern. As a result, it is critical to protect women's rights; their political engagement in this area is critical for all, particularly women, because improving women's situations is impossible without assuring their equal political participation in all aspects of society. It is worth highlighting that women in our country lag behind in terms of education, employment, and social security, among other things. Their empowerment and overall development are yet to be prioritized. Women's greater political participation during decision-making, particularly at the grassroots level, is expected to have a positive influence on top of establishing their equal rights and amplifying their women's empowerment department.

Because of the present socio-economic, political, and cultural hurdles, an appropriate environment intended for women to attain their full potential and actively contribute to local government must be created. Furthermore, government activities, civil society, and the media may play an important role in creating awareness among women at the local government level. Female legislative bodies were determined to be dominated by male legislative bodies, and they were given insufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making. Other kinds of discrimination include unequal financial distribution, male dominance, and gender discrimination, among others. Despite the fact that the current government created many laws

and acts to assist women's empowerment, such as the Special Quota System, these laws and acts have not proven to be more effective than intended in increasing women's empowerment and political participation. As a result, the conditions for women's empowerment and political participation in our nation are less than ideal. To strengthen women's empowerment and political involvement, the administration and other stakeholders in local government should build a favorable atmosphere as well as take facilitative actions and legislation to encourage women's empowerment. Otherwise, capitalizing on the enormous potential of women in Bangladesh to achieve sustainable development goals would be challenging.

8.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, some recommendations are made here to support the formulation of appropriate policies for the concerned powers that be as well as the government, with the hope of reducing the existing problems and challenges in women's empowerment and political participation in local government institutions.

- In order to create awareness, social awareness, and a positive attitude toward women's rights, female and mass education should be extended and accelerated.
- Local government information on top of local government activities and the roles of male and female members should be explained and correctly executed in order to incorporate women members into the overall activities of local government institutions.
- Male members of local government institutions must adjust their attitudes in order for women to participate. The male members are obliged to be courteous by accepting the thoughts of the female members and providing them with the chance to voice their views.
- To minimize prejudice in project participation or membership in different standing committees, particular job tasks are supposed to be clearly defined and clarified in the local government handbook.
- In order to strengthen their competence in this area, a regular preparation program or seminar on the roles and obligations of women members in local government institutions should be held for female members of LGIs.

- Various grassroots women's development projects should be created, and women members of LGIs should be included in these to provide them with the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of women in our country.
- Whenever they seek assistance from the administration in resolving a problem in their communities, administrative assistance should be offered to female members.
- It is necessary to improve mobilization and awareness among women, as well as throughout the community. In addition, the government must take the required steps to strengthen women's position.

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Appendix-1: Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire

Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) research is the subject of a survey named “Women’s Empowerment and Political Participation: A Study of Local Government Institutions in Bangladesh”.

(This survey is exclusively designed for academic M. Phil research. Everyone is cordially requested to extend his/her cooperation)

Section A- Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics

No	Question	Coding Categories	Skip
01	Respondent's name		
02	Gender	a. Female b. Male	
03	Respondent's age	a. 21-30 Years b. 31-40Years c. 41-50 Years d. 51-60 Years	
04	Division's Name	a. Dhaka b. Khulna c. Barishal d. Chittagong e. Rangpur f. Rajshahi g. Sylhet h. Mymensingh	
05	Name of District	a. Gazipur b. Jashore c. Bhola d. Feni e. Gaibandha f. Rajshahi g. Sylhet h. Mymensingh	
06	Name of Upazila	a. Gazipur Sadar Upazila b. Jashore Sadar Upazila c. Charfesson Upazila d. Feni Sadar Upazila e. Gobindaganj Upazila f. Paba Upazila g. Sylhet Sadar Upazila h. Gafargaon Upazila	

07	Qualifications in Education	a. Primary b. JSC c. SSC d. HSC e. Honors f. Master's	
08	Occupation of respondent	a. Chairman/ Vice/Councilor (male) b. Vice- Chairman/ Councilor (female) c. Government representatives d. Civil Society members e. Active women politician f. Women Activist g. Male Politician h. Female Student at graduate level	
09	Marital Status of respondent	a. Married b. Divorced c. Separated d. Widowed	
10	Monthly Income of respondent	a. 2000-3000 b. 3001-4000 c. 4001-5000 d. 50001-6000 e. Others (specify).....	
11	Household Size	a. 2-4 b. 5-6 c. 7+	
12	Household Head	a. Herself b. Husband c. Son	

Section B- Adequacy and Capacity of Existing Laws for Women's Political Participation in LGIs

No	Question	Coding Categories	
01	To what extent do you think, different countries laws are favorable to women's political participation?	a. Yes b. No	
02	If Yes, what kind of facilitative?	a. Very much facilitative b. Facilitative c. Indifferent d. Not facilitative e. Not facilitative at all	
03	Do you think the current government laws are favorable to women's political	a. Yes b. No	

	participation?		
04	If Yes, what kind of facilitative?	a. Very much facilitative b. Facilitative c. Indifferent d. Not facilitative e. Not facilitative at all	
05	Do you believe the "Special Quota System" is enough to empower women in local government?	a. Yes b. No	
06	How do you recommend the 'quota system' for ensuring women's political participation?	a. Quota is essential for women political empowerment b. Increase number of participation c. Develop women's situation d. Keep step towards the mainstream of politics e. Other (Please specify)	
07	What are your thoughts on the present situation of women's political participation?	a. self motivation b. Imposed c. Decorative d. Constitutional & legal obligation	

Section C- Political Participation and Women Empowerment in Local Government Stairs

No	Question	Coding Categories	
01	Do you believe the government's actions are useful for women's empowerment in local government structures in the current political climate?	a. Very much facilitative b. Facilitative c. Indifferent d. Not facilitative e. Not facilitative at all	
02	How satisfactory do you believe the opportunities for women to participation in local development initiatives are?	a. Very much sufficient b. Sufficient c. Indifferent d. Not sufficient e. Not sufficient at all	
03	What measures do you believe should be implemented to help women gain more influence in local government?	a. Training and development of skills b. Allocation of resources c. Participation and Opinion d. System of Effective Monitoring e. Women's rights awareness f. Other (please specify)	
04	Did you take part in any government-sponsored training programs as a male or female representative?	a. Taken part in the Training Program b. Did not take part in the	

		training program	
05	Do you believe the government's training program is sufficient for women's empowerment?	a. Sufficient b. Insufficient	
06	Do you feel at ease with the present level of women's political participation in Bangladesh?	a. Low satisfactory b. Fairly satisfactory c. Complete satisfactory d. Complete dissatisfactory e. No answer f. Don't know	

Section D- Barriers to Women's Participation in Local Government

No	Question	Coding Categories	Skip
01	What are the main barriers to women's participation in politics?	a. Socio-economic, b. cultural (religious) c. political and, d. psychological e. Other (please specify).....	
02	Why do you believe that family is a barrier to political participation?	a. The dual roles of women (family and social) b. Policy and limits on family practice c. Patriarchy d. Other (please specify)	
03	Why, in your opinion, does religion operate as a barrier to women's political participation?	a. Women are not allowed to lead in Islam b. It is illegal/sinful to attend a gathering or rally c. Working with males is not a good idea d. Politics based on religion e. Other (please specify)	
04	Why, in your opinion, do ideologies and a lack of social capital make it difficult for women to participate in politics?	a. Women's issues have made little contribution to political parties' ideologies and programs b. Women's lack of self-assurance c. Social mobility is limited d. Lack of collaboration and support from various women's groups and non-governmental organizations e. Women's potential contribution has not been promoted in the media f. Other (please specify)	
05	What do you believe are the psychological hurdles to women's political participation? (Multiple responses are permitted.)	a. Women do not want to become involved in dirty politics. b. Possibility of physical abuse c. Politics as a vocation is unappealing to me d. Politics is a man's profession. e. Other (please specify)	
06	Which of the following political barriers prevent	a. Women's involvement is hindered by legal and policy limitations	

	women from participating in politics? (Multiple answers allowed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Political structures and applications that are efficient for men c. Women's status in the party hierarchy is unequal d. political parties' lack of support / attempt to enhance women's participation (financial and other) e. Senior leader and member's arrogance and unlawful demands f. Compulsory participation in a high-risk political program g. Male colleagues' unwillingness to cooperate and unfair struggle for positions in politics h. The party's material and immaterial transaction environment for receiving post i. Failure to Communicate Intensively with High-Level j. The candidate nomination procedure is unfavorable to women k. Women's involvement is discouraged by election campaigns that use dark money, muscle power, party lobbying groups, and other tactics l. Women are not well-served by electoral systems m. Quota system incompatibility n. Women's opinions are either disregarded or utilized to legitimize political decisions o. Women's perspectives are undervalued in politics p. Other (please specify) 	
07	Which of the following do you believe are socioeconomic obstacles to women's participation (multiple responses are acceptable)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Women's poverty and unemployment have put a halt to their political participation. b. Education, training, and other facilities are insufficient c. Women with disabilities are unable to spend money on political campaigns d. Terror, extortion, and a muscle-power-dependent fan group if you don't comply e. Violence against women 	
08	Do you believe Bangladesh's political party system is welcoming to women?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Don't know d. Unanswered 	

Section E- Measures to Overcome Gender Discriminations at Local Government Level

no	Question	Coding Categories	Skip
01	Do you face any gender discrimination while carrying out your duties as a public representative?	a. yes b. no	
02	If so, what kind of gender discrimination are you referring to?	a. Dominated by a male representative b. Funding allocation that is disproportional c. Inadequate chance to participate in decision-making d. Other (Specific).....	
03	What kinds of discrimination do you believe women's representatives face in local government?	a. Lack of information access b. Training for skill development is lacking c. Discrimination in the decision-making process is a problem d. Funding discrimination e. Other (Specific).....	
04	How important do you believe women are in the local government decision-making process?	a. It is accorded a high level of importance b. To some extent, importance is provided c. Indifferent d. Not importance is given e. Not importance is given at all	
05	Do you believe the men representatives in the decision-making process are supportive of their female counterparts?	a. Very much supportive b. Supportive c. Indifferent d. Not supportive e. Not supportive at all	
	How do you think the challenges of women's in political participation can be overcome and you're Comments?	a. b. c. d. e. f. g. h. i.	

Appendix-2:In-depth Interview

1. Check list for Case Studies

❖ Primary Information

- (a) Name
- (b) Age
- (c) Family Size

• Socio-economic Information

- (a) Housing Situation
- (b) Occupation
- (c) Income
- (d) Household Head

Key Question:

- Information on the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of rural society;
- The status of women in the household and different domestic activities
- The competence and appropriateness of current laws to ensure women's empowerment
- In local government organizations, the role of women's political participation
- Women's access to information and consciousness on various rights and privileges
- Men's attitudes in the family, society, and the workplace
- Political participation in local government entities is hampered by socioeconomic, political, cultural, and religious reasons.
- To gender discrimination in local government politics.
- Identify strategies for overcoming existing barriers to women's political empowerment through local government participation.

2. Check list for Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Opening Question:

- What is your name?

Introductory Question:

- Where do you live?
- What is your occupation?
- Tell me about your life-style?
- Do you have any ideas about local government Institutions?
- Do you prefer women to participate in local government institutions?

Key Question:

- Tell me about your Information on the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of rural society?
- What is the status of women in the household and what different domestic activities?
- Do you think the current law is capable and appropriate to ensure the empowerment of women?
- How reasonable is the political participation of women in local government institutions and why?
- How is women's access to information and awareness about various rights and privileges?
- Tell me about the men's attitudes in the family, society, and the workplace?
- How about political participation in local government entities is hampered by socioeconomic, political, cultural, and religious reasons?
- What kind of gender discrimination do women suffer in local government politics?
- How do you think local government participation can identify strategies to overcome existing barriers to women's political empowerment?

3 List of Names of Case Study

SL	Name	Occupation	Upazila	District
01	Rahela Begum	Vice-Chairman	Gazipur Sadar Upazila	Dhaka
02	Tamanna Sultana	Vice-Chairman	Paba Upazila	Rajshahi
03	Nurjahan Islam Nira	Chairman	Jashore Sadar Upazila	Jashore
04	Josna Ara Millee	Vice-Chairman	Jashore Sadar Upazila	Jashore
05	Josna Ara Begum	Vice-Chairman	Feni Sadar Upazila	Feni
06	Sufia Reza	women's development activities	Gobindaganj Upazila	Gobindaganj
07	Razia Sultana	women's activist	Gafargaon Upazila	Mymensingh
08	Runa Begum	Teacher	Sylhet Sadar Upazila	Sylhet
09	Hosneara Parvien	Lecturer and political activist	Paba Upazila	Rajshahi
10	Shamima Akther	Vice Chairman	Sylhet Sadar Upazila	Sylhet
11	Rokeya Begum	women's political activist	Charfassion Upazila	Bhola
12	Aklima Begum	Vice-Chairman	Charfassion Upazila	Bhola