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Women in the unorganised Sector: Case Study of India and Bangladesh

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Introduction

This article penetrates deep into the poverty line ratio and how in the present scenario, owning a phone is no longer a luxury commodity but a necessity which we will see further as the expenditure is becoming costly when it comes to the different elements of Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index which needs to be taken care of respectively. Hence, the poverty line evolution in the case of India explains the income level dynamics peculiarly. And, thereby comparatively analysing with respect to Bangladesh as well. Then, further understanding the Labour Force Participation Rate with major emphasis upon the Female Labour Force Participation in Bangladesh has been sector-specific therein. And, thus lastly by analysing the domestic workers and the financial integrity of women provides a wholesome view of informal and formal sector workings side by side. This research is conducted in epistemological context to understand the Female Labour Force Participation Rate is concentrated in unskilled or less paid jobs in both the developing countries i.e. India and Bangladesh respectively. Henceforth, the research is qualitative in nature with emphasis on theoretical and terminology implications in it. The quantitative aspects covered in this paper is taken from United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP), World Bank group data and tabulations. In addition to this, there are secondary sources such as newspaper articles and reports respectively.

What are the methods to ascertain the Below Poverty Line in India?

The poverty line has evolved in gradual years from 1979 as recommended by Y.K. Alagh committee to decide the poverty line in accordance to the calorific norms of 2400 Kcal for the rural areas whereas in urban areas the caloric norms to be around 2100 Kcal. Then in 1993, the

Lakdawala Committee proposed the introduction of a State-specific Poverty Line because of the prevalence of varied prices in different states. Then, finally, in 2009, there was a shift in the strategy of ascertaining the poverty line by the Suresh Tendulkar Committee focusing on education as well as health under the brackets of the poverty line to get a wholesome picture. And, also the amount was increased depending upon the gradual years of purchasing power parity such as in the year 2004-05, ₹ 445 (Rural areas) whereas ₹ 578 (Urban areas). On the other hand, in the year 2011-12, the purchasing power parity was to be set at ₹ 816 (Rural areas) and ₹ 1000 (Urban areas) (“Poor people in India: July 1”, 2014). Thus, in totality, there was an equal amount of relevance given to education and health. Then, further by the recommendation of the Rangarajan Committee in 2012, the monthly per capita consumption expenditure was increased to ₹ 972 in rural areas and ₹ 1407 in urban areas. But, in the suggested report of the year 2012, the relevance was given to all the factors i.e. an amalgamation of all case points such as calorific norms, protein, fat requirements, education and health respectively. Henceforth, the end result of such an assessment is that the poverty line basket when taking care of a few items as mentioned by the Suresh Tendulkar committee generates data of people below the poverty line close to 26 % in rural areas and 14 % in urban areas. But, with the consideration of all the factors laid down by the Rangarajan committee increased the people in the below poverty line basket to 31 % in rural areas and 26 % in urban areas provides a practical approach that is taken respectively (Gaur & Rao, 2020).

Now, in the context of Bangladesh, the poverty line is divided into two sets - the upper poverty line and the lower poverty line wherein basically there is the inclusion of the calorific content in terms of the nutritional requirements. In addition to this, is the relevance of education and health, etc. However, with the illustration of the Indian context of evolving dynamics of the poverty line, certain points require critical analysis. Although the International Poverty Line is set at \$1.90 per day, the poverty line is changing with the current scenario as assessed in an article that \$ 3.2 per day or \$ 5.5 per day are the new regional poverty lines presumed in Lower and Middle-Income countries. The statement made by Former World Bank President Jim Yong Kim that ‘our basic needs change with time’ aptly resonates in the present context (Abdullah,2019).

Multi-Dimensional Poverty: -

This terminology means measuring poverty wholesomely through all the parameters such as education-schooling attained, sanitation-hygiene, energy-electricity, living standards, etc. This

gives a true picture of the scenario but the practical feasibility of the same seems to be utopian. And one more eminent factor to be highlighted here is the multi-dimensional poverty with respect to India have female-headed households less poor in comparison to male-headed households but the scenario is completely opposite in the multi-dimensional poverty sphere with regards to Bangladesh (OPHDI).

Indicators (2019)	India (%)	Bangladesh (%)
Health-Child Mortality and Nutrition	31.9	33
Education-Years of Schooling and School Attendance	23.4	36.8
Living Standard –sanitation, cooking Fuel, etc.	38.5	45

Source: The 2020 Global Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI), <https://hdr.undp.org/en/2021-MPI>

What do we understand by Labour Force Participation Rate?

Overview: Bangladesh

The Labour Force Participation Rate is calculated by including the persons who are employed with persons who are involuntarily employed out of the Total Population. Thus, in other words, it does not include the people who are seeking higher education and are voluntarily not looking for work and would hence be incorporated in the denominator under the bracket of Total Population (Hayes, 2020).

$$\text{Labour Force Participation Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of Employed} + \text{Number of involuntarily unemployed}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 100$$

Similarly, one can calculate the Female Labour Force Participation Rate as mentioned above.

The Labour Force Participation Rate will increase with less education, no education and primary level of education. On the other hand, it will decrease with an increase in the level of education attained. Henceforth, female employment in the unskilled sector such as ready-made

garments is just a factor of contribution to the family income and does not imply a better standard of living but can help in sustenance. As can be seen in the Labour Force Participation Rate of married women in Bangladesh, LFPR in was approximately 26% and 42% in 2013 and 2016 respectively. (Kotikula et al., 2019).

In accordance with the Gender Gap report released by the World Economic Forum in 2021, Women's economic participation in Bangladesh is 0.418 whereas in India it is 0.326. Also, the female-to-male ratio in Bangladesh is approximately 0.46 and in India, it is 0.28. Hence, what one can ascertain from these figures is that Bangladesh is performing better in terms of women employment in comparison to India. But certain latent factors do go unnoticed, such as attainment of higher education in India by women can lead to non-participation in the labour force. In a similar context, on the parameters of equal wages or income measured by the per capita is an initial case of India (3.38) and Bangladesh (4.09) and in the latter case 0.21 (India) and 0.40 (Bangladesh) (Chaudhari & Ghosh, 2020). Here, the concept that less remuneration is equivalent to under-appreciated work of women and gender discrimination in the labour market peculiarly in the case of Bangladesh is a massive achievement indeed. Thus, in some respects, it is a counter to the initial mind-sets especially in the garment industry of Bangladesh by preferring only 'docile' workers i.e., those demanding low wages. Similarly, the subsidies provided to the targeted women through the Ultra Poor scheme by the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee from 2002 in the form of cash transfers, skill training, health and education for promoting self-employment is a good initiative to be taken up respectively (Brito, 2018).

Domestic Workers: Social Security Implicit or Explicit?

Bangladesh Context -

In a report concerning the plight of the domestic workers in Bangladesh, there is a clear-cut analysis given of how an increase in the Female Labour Force Participation Rate in the Readymade Garment sector does not depict a wholesome picture of the economy. Henceforth, there are considerable numbers of domestic women workers who comprise young girls as well. Bangladesh does not ratify certain provisions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) such as the Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, 2011 and the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952. Although, a constant push has been made by the National Domestic Women Workers Union (NDWWU), it has not been fruitful to a successful extent (WEIGO, 2020, p.9).

Thus, the problems faced like that of an employer-employee relationship or working over hours with constant pay have no written contracts. In addition, to this, there is no mention of their importance in the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006. Just a lip-service or a formality stamp of recognition in Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015 does not holistically serve the purpose. In consonance with this, not confining to the domestic sphere arena but to the international front as well, the migrant domestic workers are facing extreme torture in the Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, etc. .(WEIGO,2020,p.4).

Indian Context -

In India as well, there is no ratification of ILO Convention-189 i.e., the Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, 2011. Thus, what one notices is that the viable social security protection is a missing link with Employee Provident Fund and Employee State Insurance Coverage absent. Although, there is constant deliberation on it, in practice, no fruition can be seen (Magazine & Sasi, 2018)

Financial Sector: Bangladesh –Financial Aspect:

Accounts opened in Bank or any other Financial Institutions	Countries	Men (%) (2017)	Wom en (%) (2017)
	India	83	76.6
	Bangladesh	64.6	35.8
	Lower and Middle-Income countries (average)	62.7	53

Source-Solotaroff et al., p96, World Bank, (2017)

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30881>

In accordance with a case study done in 2017, there is an analysis where women having a bank account, or any other financial security is less in percentage than the average of lower-middle-income countries and that too a little more than half of it (Solotaroff et al., pp.96-97). In sync with this is the low score in the Master Card Index of Women Entrepreneurs for 2020 because of issues like not having financial access, patriarchal dominance etc. And, even if there are a

certain percentage of female entrepreneurs, they are mainly concentrated in low capital-intensive sectors. (“Bangladesh: Bottom rank women entrepreneurs”, 2020).

But, on the other hand, there are a certain number of initiatives taken through *Micro-Finance Institutions* such as the Association of Social Advancement, Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee, Grameen Bank, etc. which critically assess the society and understand the intricacies of the operation systems. Therefore, the fears regarding interest payments, collateral requirements, etc. were skilfully addressed and the flexibility in moulding according to the people worked out immensely. (Solotaroff et al., pp. 100-101).

In the context of India, there are certain social security measures provided and cash transfers have been done but they still certain loopholes, which if not treated will create trouble. Here, the case of JAM i.e. Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile fits into this parameter. The primary focus was to provide cash transfers to the poor, especially women, but the money was transferred to a duplicate account and not the actual person, hence perpetuating repercussions (Dreze & Khera, 2020). In addition to this, the discontinuation of the labour laws by various states during the pandemic made the viability and legality of social security of the labour class questionable and redundant. Thus, the focus of the hour should be on awareness, feasible and doable actions, analysis of the ground reality or situations such as MFIs in Bangladesh or Self-Help Groups in India to provide real-life solutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, what one can understand is that although in the Gender Gap Report Bangladesh scored more than India in 2021 by getting employment in the garment sector. But for a matter of fact by ascertaining a holistic overview of Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index respectively. So, thereby the optimum utilisation of the banking sector or the Micro-finance Institutions in the form of Self-Help groups have initiated the role of women in the financial sector but there is a long way to go in both the countries.

Thus, what one sees is that like there is Jan Dhan Yojana in case of India which has been explained above like Direct Benefit Transfer or through digital transfer of money to their Bank Accounts. And, on the other hand in case of Bangladesh there is the Ultra Poor Scheme. Altogether, both are targeting the female population. But the main point of emphasis here is on the context of steering and sustaining the financial of women by not limiting them in low paid jobs. Henceforth, as can be seen with respect to Female Labour Force Participation rate the focal point should be critical analysis of the regional population and allocation of funds accordingly on a sustainable platform. Thereby, providing effective and efficient results, respectively.

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