

## **Attitude Towards Female Employment as a Function of Gender, Place of Residence, Education and Age**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate about attitude towards female employment according to gender, place of residence, education and age. Purposively selected 200 respondents were constituted as the sample of the study. Attitude towards Female Employment Scale (developed by Ilyas, 1992) was used for data collection. Data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test, three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson product moment correlation. The findings showed that gender ( $F=5.05$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $198$ ,  $p < 0.5$ ), place of residence ( $F=22.46$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $198$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) and education level ( $F=8.22$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $194$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) had significant effect on attitude towards female employment. According to gender, female participants had more positive attitude than that of male participants. In terms of place of residence, urban participants had more positive attitude than that of rural participants. Participants who had the more educational qualification showed more positive attitude towards female employment. The significant negative correlation coefficient was found between age and attitude towards female employment ( $r = -0.61$ ).

**Keywords:** Attitude, gender, place of residence, education, age.

### **Introduction**

Nowadays women's empowerment and freedom of women have become a significant issue in every corner of the world. Women empowerment is the pre-condition of development in society. Women's participation in economic activity is considered one of the most important indicators to assess the status of women's empowerment, along with other social indicators like status of gender based violence, participation in decision making process and so on. Bangladesh has been trying to extend support to women as they constitute nearly half of its population and half of the potentials. Though the constitution of Bangladesh guarantees general, most of the people's attitude is not favorable towards female employment<sup>1</sup>. They wish to see women to work at home, give birth and rear children and take care of other members of the family. So, women face many problems from their family, society and their working area including eve teasing,

negative evaluation, gender stereotypical attitude etc.

The present study tries to investigate the present scenario about attitude of society people towards female employment with the aim to uphold the importance of engagement of our women in economic activities.

The term attitude refers to an individual feelings, thoughts, an certain rights and privileges for women in predispositions to act in favorable or unfavorable way towards some aspect of his environment<sup>2</sup>. According to Eagly and Chaiken<sup>3</sup> an attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor. Negative attitude and discrimination against women can be traced back throughout history. Gender biasness and social injustice especially towards women is very common. It is a learned or more or less organized tendency to respond in a persistent manner usually negatively towards female role. Negative attitudes of our society

include: societal preference for a boy over a girl child and the belief that, men are strong and women are weak and women are inferior to men. Women are viewed as weak, emotional, communicative, caring, and more interested in relationships /romance, more delicate, vulnerable, and dependent<sup>4</sup>. As a result they are deprived from their rights of education, health care, decision making, economical activities etc.

Over the past few decades; significant progress has been made in reducing poverty in Bangladesh however, there is concern over the extent to which women have benefited from this economic growth and human development efforts<sup>5</sup>. Women in Bangladesh remain particularly vulnerable to live in poverty. Socially prescribed roles and attitudes give our women limited access to economic resources such as capital, skills, and marketing<sup>6</sup>. Participation in economic activities is considered as an indicator of women's improved status in the society. But negative attitude towards female employment and the increased responsibility assigned to women towards family and childcare impede them from attaining better education and employment opportunities.

According to USAID<sup>7</sup> Bangladeshi women face barriers and disadvantages in nearly every aspect of their lives, including access to health services, economic opportunity, political participation, and control of finances. Ferdaush and Rahman<sup>8</sup> investigated about gender inequality in Bangladesh based upon Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) data. They found that in 2007 employed male population of our country was 68.3 percent and employed female population was only 22.9 percent. Truman and Baroudi<sup>9</sup> investigated about gender differences in the information system managerial ranks. They found that women got lower salaries than men even when job age, level, education, and work experience are restricted. In a study of Kapsos<sup>10</sup> on gender wage gap in Bangladesh showed that women earn an average percent less per

hour than men. Controlling for difference in age, educational background, industry, occupation and geographic location, yields an estimated gender wage gap of 23.1%.

Kuruville and Usha<sup>11</sup> conducted a study on the attitude towards women's employment at University of Calicut in India. Their sample size was 360 men and women. Among them 260 were employees and 100 were students. They revealed that in case of both students and employees group women showed more positive attitude towards women's employment than men. Similar result was found by Kuruville and Seema<sup>12</sup> in their study of attitude towards women's employment in India. They also found that female participants showed more positive attitude towards female's employment than male. Desai, Chugh, and Brief<sup>13</sup> studied on resistance to the gender revolution in the workplace with 718 married, male participants. They found that employed husbands tend to view the presence of women in the workplace unfavorably. Elamin and Omair<sup>14</sup> investigated about males' attitudes towards working females in Saudi Arabia. They found that Saudi males reported very traditional attitudes towards working females. Moreover, the single, unemployed, young and educated Saudi males reported less traditional attitudes towards working females compared with married, employed, old, and less educated ones.

An empirical study conducted in all 64 districts in Bangladesh on estimating women's contribution to the economy shows that, women who are involved in paid work have to discuss with their family member and need to seek permission to spend their earned income<sup>15</sup>. These phenomena were found more common in rural areas than urban. By investigating violence against women in rural areas of Bangladesh, Hartman and Boyce<sup>16</sup> found that only very poor women can go outside to work in rural areas of Bangladesh. From the investigation about gender inequality in Bangladesh, employed female population of our urban areas was found greater (23.6 percent) than rural areas (22.7

percent)<sup>8</sup>. Vukovic, Stulhofer, and Birkelund<sup>17</sup> investigated about attitudes to women's employment and gender roles in Croatia. They found that rural respondents showed more negative attitude towards female employment than urban. Kuruvilla and Seema<sup>12</sup> conducted a study on attitude towards women's employment in India and found that traditional concepts regarding gender roles and the restricted mobility in rural areas serve as major impediments to women's employment outside home. In a study of attitudes regarding female employment, Misra and Panigrahi<sup>18</sup> found urban people showed more positive attitude towards female employment than rural.

From the investigation of Misra and Panigrahi<sup>18</sup> education was found positively correlated with attitude towards female employment. Sharma<sup>19</sup> investigated about modernization and status of working women in India and found that education help people to format positive attitude towards female employment. Similarly Vukovic, Stulhofer and Birkelund<sup>17</sup> found, more educated respondents showed more positive attitude towards female employment from their study of attitudes to women's employment and gender roles in Croatia.

Misra and Panigrahi<sup>18</sup> examines attitudes regarding female employment among people of different ages. They found that younger people have more positive attitudes towards women working outside their homes than do older people. Similarly, Vukovic, Stulhofer, and Birkelund<sup>17</sup> showed younger age groups had less traditional attitude towards female employment than the older age groups.

The overall development of a country depends upon the maximum utilization of her people, both men and women. Participation of women in economic activities is essential not only for reducing poverty but also for achieving social justice. Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives. Female employment and

empowerment are directly related to the economical, cultural and other progress of the nation. But in our country, *women* are less likely *than men* to *participate* in economic activities due to various reasons. Among them negative attitude towards female employment is one of the crucial reasons. Women who are involved in job or other economic activities, not treated well in our society. Some people argue that, if women do jobs or other economic activities then the household works will be hampered. Moreover, some male employees think that, women are not capable enough to take a good decision making and are not skilled enough like them. Such attitude had been responsible for discouraging many qualified women for joining various vocations. As a result they remain in many ways inferior to and dependent on men. But female employment has been identified as a major footstep towards attaining sustainable development by different economic and social world organizations and nations around the world. In order to change the deep rooted perceptions and attitude regarding gender roles and female employment, effective interventions in favor of women's emancipation is required. Recognizing the need, the present authors are influenced to find out the actual present scenario about the attitude towards female employment of our society. There are many factors exist that can influence attitude towards female employment. Among them gender, place of residence, education level and age are important enough to study. The findings of the study will help the policy maker and proper authority in our country to take necessary steps to minimize the negative attitude towards female employment of our society and will promote the participation of female in economic activities in order to play a vital role in nation building. Considering the above facts the present study was designed (a) to investigate whether attitude towards female employment varies according to gender, place of residence and education level; (b) to investigate whether there is any relation between age and attitude towards female employment.

## Materials and Methods

### Sample

A total of 200 respondents were selected purposively as study participants from different areas of Chattogram district. Age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 62 years. Among them 100 (50%) participants were male and 100 (50%) were female. Each gender group again consisted of 50 urban and 50 rural participants.

### Measuring Instruments

#### *Demographic and Personal Information Questionnaire.*

A demographic and personal information questionnaire was used to collect data about participant's place of residence, age, gender, education etc.

#### *Attitude Towards Female Employment Scale*

The scale was developed by Ilyas<sup>20</sup> for measuring attitude towards female employment. It is a 12 item Likert type scale in Bengali. Items of the scale cover questions related to paid employment of women and opportunities and difficulties of female employment. All the items of the scale are positive. Each item has favorable to unfavorable response dimension and has three alternatives ordered according to the degree of 'favorable', 'moderate' and 'unfavorable' work attitude towards female employment. The scoring of items is '0' for unfavorable, '1' for moderate and '2' for favorable. Total attitude score of any individual was obtained from the sum total of scores of all the 12 items. The scale scores range from 0 to 24 where 0 expressed most unfavorable and 24 expressed most favorable attitude. The corrected item-to-total correlation coefficients ranged from 0.32 to 0.52 and the alpha coefficient of the scale was found 0.75. The validity of the scale was assessed on the external criteria- work status (working and non-working). Significant F-ratio of attitude towards female employment score by work status  $F(1,945 = 87.395, p < 0.05)$  indicated the validity of the scale.

### Study design

Cross-sectional survey research design was followed for conducting the present study.

### Procedure

Data were collected from some areas of Chattogram city and from some rural areas of Chattogram. Areas were selected on the basis of convenience of the researchers. For collecting relevant data from the participants under study, the demographic and personal information questionnaire and the scale were administered to them individually. Along with written instruction within the questionnaire, the participants were instructed verbally to make it sure that they had understood the task. Then they were requested to answer the questions sincerely and honestly. All possible clarifications were made to any problems faced by the respondents while answering the questions, and there was no time limit for the respondents to complete all the items of the scale. They took approximately 10 minutes to complete the scale. All of the 200 participants completed the questionnaires, so there was no refusal rate. After accomplishment of their task, the answered questionnaires were collected from them and they were given thanks for their sincere cooperation.

## Results and Discussion

The data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test, three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson product moment correlation. All statistical analyses were carried out using the statistical program SPSS version 20.0 for windows.

Table 1 shows that female participants ( $M = 15.36, SD = 6.12$ ) had more positive attitude towards female employment than that of male participants ( $M = 12.38, SD = 5.80$ ). Urban participants ( $M = 16.33, SD = 5.50$ ) showed more positive attitude towards female employment than that of rural participants ( $M = 11.41, SD = 5.76$ ). Table 1 also shows that participants who had the more educational qualification showed more positive attitude towards female employment.

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of attitude towards female employment according to gender, place of residence and educational level

Variable	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	Male	100	12.38	5.80
	Female	100	15.36	6.12
Place of residence	Urban	100	16.33	5.50
	Rural	100	11.41	5.76
Educational level	Postgraduate	45	18.53	5.00
	Graduate	43	15.18	5.19
	HSC	41	13.56	5.12
	SSC	36	11.77	5.83
	Junior high school	24	9.33	5.06
	Primary	11	7.54	3.29

Note N = Number of Sample; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

**Table 2:** Three-way Anova of attitude towards female employment score according to gender (g), place of residence (p) and education level (e)

Source of variance	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.( <i>p</i> -value)
G	113.68	1	113.68	5.05	.02
P	505.17	1	505.17	22.46	.00
E	925.22	5	185.04	8.22	.00
G * P	10.62	1	10.62	.47	.49
G*E	171.59	5	34.31	1.52	.18
P*E	226.41	5	45.28	2.01	.07
G* P* E	42.80	4	10.70	.47	.75
Error	3980.24	177	22.48		
Total	45968.00	200			

Note SS = Sum of Square; df = Degree freedom; MS = Mean square

Table 2 indicates that gender ( $F = 5.05$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $198$ ,  $p < 0.5$ ), place of residence ( $F = 22.46$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $198$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) and education level ( $F = 8.22$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $194$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) had significant effect on attitude towards female employment. No interaction effect was found among the variables. To provide specific information on which means of educational level are significantly differ from each other, the least significant difference (LSD) post hoc test was computed.

Mean differences are found in Table 3 through post hoc test (LSD) between post graduate and graduate, HSC, SSC, junior high school, primary; between graduate and SSC, junior high school, primary; between HSC and junior high school, primary; between SSC and primary.

Table 4 shows that, the significant negative correlation coefficient was found between age and attitude towards female employment ( $r = -0.61$ ).

The first objective of the present study was to investigate whether attitude towards female employment varies according to gender, place of residence and education level. Result shows that gender ( $F = 5.05$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $198$ ,  $p < 0.5$ ), place of residence ( $F = 22.46$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $198$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) and education level ( $F = 8.22$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $194$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) had significant effect on attitude towards female employment. According to gender, male participants had less positive attitude towards female employment than female participants. The result is consistent with the previous

**Table 3:** Post Hoc Test for educational level of participants on attitude towards female employment score

(I) Educational level	(J) Educational level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Significance (p-value)
Postgraduate	Graduate	3.34*	1.11	.003
	HSC	4.97*	1.13	.000
	SSC	6.75*	1.17	.000
	Junior high school	9.20*	1.32	.000
	Primary	10.98*	1.76	.000
Graduate	HSC	1.62	1.14	.158
	SSC	3.40*	1.18	.004
	Junior high school	5.85*	1.33	.000
	Primary	7.64*	1.77	.000
HSC	SSC	1.78	1.19	.139
	Junior high school	4.22*	1.34	.002
	Primary	6.01*	1.78	.001
SSC	Junior high school	2.44	1.38	.079
	Primary	4.23*	1.80	.020
Junior high school	Primary	1.78	1.91	.351

\*\*  $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed), \*  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)

research findings of Desai *et al.*<sup>13</sup>, Kuruvilla and Usha<sup>11</sup>, and Kuruvilla and Seema<sup>12</sup>. In our country still now it is the common thought that male are the only bread makers for his family. Most of the male thought that women are suitable for child rearing and family maintaining activities and they believe that women cannot take on positions of high official responsibility. Many thought that women whose husbands made enough income to support their family should not be allowed to hold jobs. The socially prevalent attitude is that a father or a husband feels undignified to live on earning of her daughters and wife respectively<sup>21</sup>.

**Table 4:** Relation between age and attitude towards female employment

Attitude Towards Female Employment	$r$	Significance level ( $\alpha$ )
Age	-0.61	0.01 (two-tailed)

On the other hand nowadays, women of our country are moving towards a wide world of opportunities and achievements, breaking the traditional beliefs and social restrictions. They think that, participation in economic activities can give them some financial independence,

more control over their lives, ability to contribute to their families' finances. That's why female participants showed more positive attitude towards female employment than male.

According to place of residence, rural participants had less positive attitude towards female employment than urban participants. This finding is in agreement with the results obtained by some previous studies<sup>12,18,17</sup>. In our country rural cultural norms insist that women's first responsibility is to her home. Most of the rural people have stereotypical view that girls are born only for household works and they will serve the grooms family throughout her life. Moreover, rural women face more challenges than urban women such as, lower education attainment, transportation challenges, lack of child care facilities, limited access to information on employment opportunities and these multiple factors impede them to access employment. On the other hand, rural social construction, norms and beliefs that creates barrier in women's participation in the economic activities are tend to break down in urban areas<sup>5</sup>. Urbanization offers greater access to employment opportunities. Some, mainly younger women in urban areas are taking up

factory employment in export-oriented industries such as garments, where the labour force is predominantly female<sup>22</sup>.

Participants who had the more educational qualification showed more positive attitude towards female employment. This result is supported by Misra and Panigrahi<sup>18</sup> and Sharma<sup>19</sup> and Vukovic, Stulhofer, and Birkelund<sup>17</sup>. Education helps people to build opinion and develop appropriate point of view on many things of life. It gives us appropriate knowledge of the world around us. The more educated people are the more they have the sense of the importance of changing the world, equality and the importance of female rights related issues. Thus education plays an important role to understand the strength and capability of women and help to formulate the attitude towards female employment in more realistic and positive form.

The second objective of the present study was to investigate whether there is any relation between age and attitude towards female employment. Significant negative correlation coefficient was found ( $r = -0.61$ ). It indicates that, young people's attitude towards female employment is more positive than the older peoples. It may cause that older people poses a stereotype that women are born only for child productive activity and take care of her family and make food for them. Women have no rights to do any job in the outside of the house. Older people have the age-old patriarchal traditions and values that, men are better than women as far as the ability to work hard and only men can look after their parents<sup>8</sup>. That is why girls are subject to discrimination from their births. But at present young generation can understand the importance of female employment. They can understand that women lives are not only for child rearing and family maintaining activity. They feel that women can do the entire thing simultaneously as male do and this is necessary for developing the country as well as the world. That's why young generation showed more positive attitude towards female employment than the older people.

Though women's participation in economic activities is increasing in recent years, the majority of them are employed in low-paid and low status jobs. Women's participation in the job market is often not their own decision. As a result of strong patriarchy in Bangladesh society, male members of the family usually dictate or guide such a decision<sup>23</sup>. Above all, Women's contribution to the family income is not recognized to the same extent as men's. Working women often have to suffer harassment like eve teasing to even sexual harassment<sup>1</sup>.

We cannot expect sustainable progress without the economic participation of our women because they are almost half of the people. So, proper empowerment of women, ensuring equal opportunities and bringing them into the mainstream economic activities are the crying need of our society to become a developed country. But the defective socialization processes and negative attitude towards female employment still prevailing in our society sustains the subordination of women and restrains men from considering women as equal citizens. Proper policy can be implemented as soon as possible to minimize the challenges and conflicts of women which would help them to contribute in national economy. The family, education system, religion and media all may take combined efforts to break the stereotypes and reform the traditional attitude, customs and values that would help to women's advancement and development.

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