# Rise of Women : A Decadal Journey of Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh (2010-2020)

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## Abstract

This research inquiries into the multifaceted dimensions of women's empowerment in Bangladesh, a nation marked by strong patriarchal norms and persistent challenges. Leveraging data from three consecutive Bangladesh Demographic and Health Surveys (BDHS) spanning the years 2011 to 2017-18, our study employs multiple linear regression model to explore the intricate interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and demographic factors influencing women's empowerment. The study focuses on key indicators—household decision-making and attitudes toward wife beating—to construct a Women's Empowerment Index. The analysis reveals a nuanced landscape, indicating significant shifts in women's empowerment over the past decade. Notably, factors such as media exposure, urban residency, education, employment status, and a decline in the age of marriage below 18 emerge as influential contributors to women's empowerment. Despite progress, challenges persist, as evidenced by disparities related to rural-urban dynamics, family size, economic status, and exposure to violence. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions to further empower women in Bangladesh, emphasizing increased awareness, policy initiatives, and community support.

**Keywords:** Women's empowerment, BDHS, Decision-making, Multiple linear regression model

## I. Introduction

Women's empowerment is integral to gender equality and unlocking sustainable development potential. When women can exercise agency over strategic life choices and fully participate across social, economic and political spheres, families, communities and nations progress[1-3]. Assessing women's empowerment necessitates understanding complex embodiments across cultural and institutional contexts mediating complex lived experiences[4-6]. Without the participation of women in every aspect of life, comprehensive sustainable social and economic development could not be achieved. Bangladesh has strong patriarchal norms undermining women's empowerment, from early marriage to constraints under restrictive interpretations of female seclusion[7-8]. Yet growing public investments and policy reforms have aimed to promote women's advancement, spanning stipends incentivizing girls' secondary education to mitigating barriers to political participation[9-11].

To ensure more sustainable and equitable development all over the world, the fifth Sustainable Development Goal focuses on the responsibilities of putting an end to gender imbalance and violence against females, ensuring female's equal human rights, and ensuring the involvement of women at every level of decision-making by the year 2030[12].  In Bangladesh, women constitute approximately 50.46% of the total population, according to the primary data of the Population and Housing Census 2022[13]. The nation will progress significantly if this enormous number of women can be given more influence at whatever cost.

Therefore, it is crucial to empower women in Bangladesh as this can result in more gender equality, increased access to education, promoted women political engagement, enhanced economic and social results, and enhanced quality of life for women, their families, and communities. This enormous significance motivates us to concentrate on identifying possible contributors to women's empowerment.

The conceptualization of women's empowerment varies considerably. A number of studies have been conducted on women's empowerment which explored the potential variables that influence women's empowerment in Bangladesh and worldwide[14-18]. Some studies proposed women's empowerment through two indicators: women's participation in household decision-making and opinions concerning wife abuse, using data from DHS 2010 and BDHS 2014, respectively, showed that age at first marriage, education level, education gap, working status, number of living children, place of residence, media exposure, wealth index, etc. had a significant effect on women's empowerment[14-15]. According to a study, the primary components of the empowerment of women include women's employment position, self-worth, self-confidence, ability to make decisions, and awareness[17]. A comparative study, where NDHS and NFHS data were used to analyze women's empowerment and make a comparison between Nigeria and North India[18]. Based on decision-making and the wife's beating justification indices, the main outcome measure was defined[18]. An evidence-based analysis suggested an idea about women's empowerment based on four indicators: personal freedom, household decision,

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domestic financial decisions, and political independence, which explored how access to social media, education, community cultural values, women's job, and household participation rate significantly affect women's empowerment[19]. Another study focused on domestic and family violence and Armenia's barriers to women's empowerment. The study revealed that women's empowerment in Armenia was significantly impacted by intimate partner abuse as well as in his other study, Bangladeshi women of reproductive age were examined with regard to their power of decision-making and gender roles[20-21]. Furthermore, a separate work established a theoretical framework and tried to discover how maternal nutrition and low birth weight are in relation to empowering women[22].

In this study, we attempt to explore the potential factors influencing women's empowerment in Bangladesh, recognizing its pivotal role in fostering sustainable development and gender equality. By focusing on household decision-making and attitudes toward wife beating as key indicators, we draw upon data from the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Surveys (BDHS) conducted in the 2010s. Our investigation seeks to unravel the intricate interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and demographic variables that contribute to the empowerment or disempowerment of women in Bangladesh. As we delve into this complex terrain, we aim to shed light on the nuanced dynamics that shape women's agency and participation across various spheres of life.

## II. Data and Methodology

### Data

Secondary analysis has been conducted in this study using the three consecutive BDHS surveys, from 2011 to 2017-18. BDHS data employs two-stage stratified cluster sampling procedures. In general, in the first stage, a certain number of enumeration areas, EAs (such that, 600 EAs in BDHS 2011 and 2014 each and 675 EAs in BDHS 2017-18) were selected with probability proportional to EA size. Using a systematic sampling approach with equal probability, an average of 30 households were selected from each cluster in the second stage. In these surveys, only ever-married women were interviewed. Once the missing values were taken out, the final sample sizes for the surveys were 16274, 16350, and 18723, respectively[23-25].

### Response variable

Information on household decision-making and attitudes toward wife beating has been extracted from BDHS to construct women's empowerment index. Moreover, household decision-making is more precisely described through four questions about: their own health care, major household purchases, their child's health care, and visits to their family or relatives. Four binary variables have been created for the aforementioned decisions, with 'yes' denoting 'respondent alone', 'respondent and husband/partner', or 'respondent and other person', and 'no' denoting any alternative response. On the other hand, information on attitudes regarding violence contain five questions. When it comes to refusing to have sex, leaving the house without permission, neglecting the children, arguing with him, or burning the food, women are questioned if they believe a husband has the right to hit his wife. The answers 'yes' and 'no' to the preceding questions indicate whether or not the person thinks wife-beating is acceptable and why she rejects it. These questions are recoded for analysis purposes in accordance with the favorable responses with women's empowerment. Principal component analysis (PCA) has been used to create the women's empowerment index (WEI) using the above mentioned nine questions, from which we have our desired outcome measure, women's empowerment score (WES)[15,16].

### Explanatory Variables

Table 1 shows the details of selected explanatory variables for this study which are related to women's empowerment in Bangladesh.

### Statistical Analysis

To find out the individual frequency percentage of each of the covariates utilized in this study, a univariate analysis has been carried out. ANOVA-F tests are used in the bivariate analysis of women's empowerment with various selected factors. Since we have women's empowerment score as our outcome measure, multiple linear regression model has been employed to determine the adjusted effects of covariates on women's empowerment score.

### Multiple Linear Regression Model

Suppose $Y$, which is our outcome variable of quantitative type (women's empowerment score), is related to the $p$ regressors. Then the multiple linear regression model can be defined as:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \cdots + \beta_p x_p + \varepsilon;$$

where, $\alpha$ is the intercept of the regression plane, $\tilde{x} = (x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_p)'$ be the $p$-dimensional vector of covariates, $\tilde{\beta} = (\beta_1, \beta_2, \ldots, \beta_p)'$ is the $p \times 1$ vector of unknown

**Table 1. Description of Selected Explanatory Variables**

| Variable | Category |
|---|---|
| Division | 0 = Dhaka, 1 = Chittagong, 2 = Barisal, 3 = Khulna<br>4 = Mymensingh, 5 = Rajshahi, 6 = Rangpur, 7 = Sylhet |
| Place of Residence | 0 = Urban, 1 = Rural |
| Age at First Marriage | 0 = Age<18, 1 = Age>=18 |
| Spousal Age Gap | Quantitative variable |
| Education Level | 0 = No Education, 1 = Primary, 2 = Secondary, 3 = Higher |
| Education Gap | 0 = No difference, 1 = Higher than partner, 2 = Lower than partner |
| Number of Living Children | 0 = No child, 1 = 1-2, 2 = 3-4, 3 = 4+ |
| Difference between Sons and Daughters | 0 = No difference, 1 = More sons, 2 = More daughters |
| Number of household members | 0 = 1-4, 1 = 5-7, 2 = 7+ |
| Religion | 0 = non-Muslim, 1 = Muslim |
| Media Exposure | 0 = No, 1 = Yes |
| NGO Membership | 0 = No, 1 = Yes |
| Wealth Index | 0 = Middle, 1 = Poorest, 2 = Poorer, 3 = Richer, 4 = Richest |
| Working Status | 0 = No, 1 = Yes |
| Husband's Occupation | 0 = Farmer, 1 = Labor, 2 = Service, 3 = Large business, 4 = Small Business, 5 = Unemployed, 6 = Others |
| Relationship with Household Head | 0 = Head, 1 = Wife, 2 = Daughter, 3 = Daughter-in-law, 4 = Grand-daughter, 5 = Mother, 6 = Mother-in-law, 7 = Sister, 8 = Other relative, 9 = Adopted child, 10 = Not related |
| Sex of Household Head | 0 = Male, 1 = Female |

Note that zero value is assigned to the reference category.

regression coefficients corresponding to x̃, and $\varepsilon$ be the random error term. In this setup, our purpose is to estimate the parameter $\beta_1, \beta_2, ..., \beta_p$ [26].

The statistical software package STATA version 14.0 and SPSS version 20 have been used to attain the results.

### III. Results

Principal component analysis (PCA) is a flexible statistical technique that reduces a set of original variables into key elements, called principal components (PCs). The variance of all the variables can be most fully explained by a small number of linear combinations of the original variables, or principal components[27]. Usually, the majority of data variations are often explained by the first one or two components; in this study, the first component is the women's empowerment score (WES), which serves as our required response variable.

### *Univariate Analysis*

Women who have ever been married and are between the ages of 15 and 49 provided the information in the surveys. Figure 1 shows the varying percentages of women living in different divisions for the three study years. Among these

selected women, over the years, marriage at premature age (i.e., marriage before 18) is decreasing. Majority of the respondents, that is 65.23% (BDHS$_{2011}$), 65.88% (BDHS$_{2014}$), and 63.52% (BDHS$_{2017-18}$) were from rural areas of Bangladesh.

Over time, there has been a noticeable improvement in women's educational attainment and job status (working outside the home). A large number of women are discovered to have been exposed to the media, which likewise shows an upward trend over the years. It is shown that the majority of Bangladeshi women, roughly 70% in 2011 and 65% in 2014 are not active in any NGOs. Further, descriptive statistics for all of the independent variables can be seen from the Table 2 in the 'Appendix'.

### *Bivariate analysis*

The relevant exposure factors have been searched for in the bivariate analysis. Since our response variable, women's empowerment score, is of quantitative type, as per appropriateness, ANOVA-F test is used to measure how much woman's background characteristics impact her level of domestic empowerment in Bangladesh.
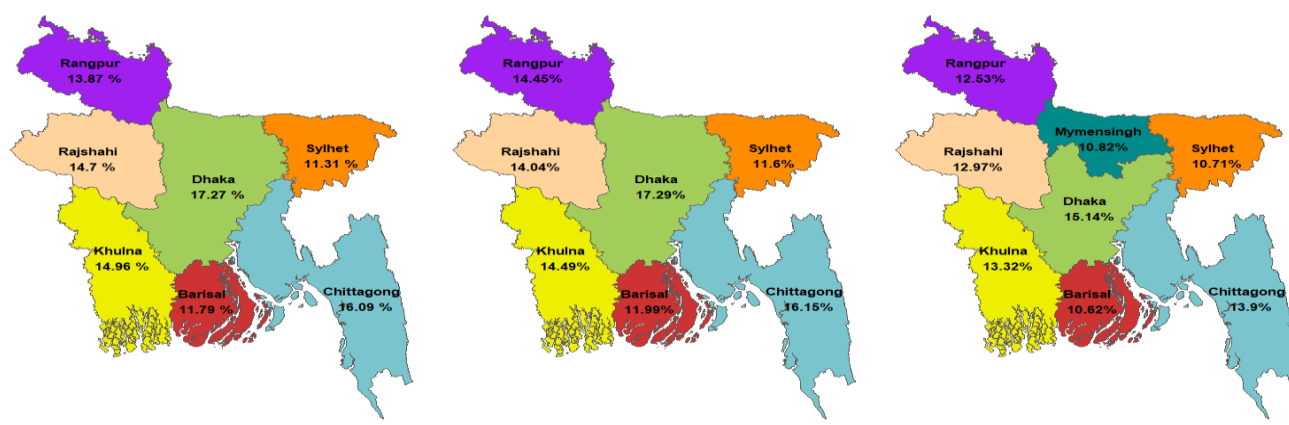
**Fig. 1.** Percentages of women living in different divisions (2011 (left), 2014 (middle), and 2017-18 (right) BDHS)

**Table 3. Bivariate Analysis (ANOVA) of Women's Empowerment Score in Bangladesh with Selected Covariates**

| Background characteristics | P-values | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **2011** | **2014** | **2017-18** |
| **Division** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Place of Residence** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Age at First Marriage** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Spousal Age Gap[a]** | 0.002 | 0.006 | 0.283 |
| **Respondent's Education Level** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Education Gap** | 0.004 | 0.053 | 0.002 |
| **Number of Living Children** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Difference between Sons and Daughters** | 0.002 | <0.001 | 0.871 |
| **Number of Household Members** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Religion** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Media Exposure** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **NGO Membership** | 0.020 | 0.001 | - |
| **Wealth Index** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Working Status** | <0.001 | <0.001 | 0.028 |
| **Husband's Occupation** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Relationship with Household Head** | <0.001 | <0.001 | <0.001 |
| **Sex of Household Head** | <0.001 | <0.001 | 0.003 |

'a' in the superscript indicates p-value of the Pearson correlation coefficient.

**Table 4. Association between Different Background Characteristics with Women's Empowerment Obtained from Multiple Linear Regression Model**

| Background characteristics | Estimate | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **2011** | **2014** | **2017** |
| **Division** | | | |
| Dhaka (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Chittagong | -0.324*** | -0.214*** | -0.063 |
| Barishal | -0.017 | -0.486*** | -0.285*** |
| Khulna | 0.112** | -0.292*** | -0.099** |
| Mymensingh | - | - | 0.153*** |
| Rajshahi | -0.408*** | -0.227*** | -0.036 |
| Rangpur | 0.169*** | -0.050 | 0.010 |
| Sylhet | -0.392*** | -0.341*** | -0.102** |
| **Place of Residence** | | | |
| Urban (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Rural | -0.086*** | -0.058 | -0.171*** |
| **Age at First Marriage** | | | |
| Age<18 (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Age>=18 | 0.092*** | 0.095*** | 0.080*** |
| **Spousal Age Difference** | 0.005 | -0.005 | 0.001 |
| **Education Level (Respondent)** | | | |
| No Education (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Primary | 0.039 | 0.062 | 0.209*** |
| Secondary | 0.245*** | 0.266*** | 0.405*** |
| Higher | 0.583*** | 0.577*** | 0.656*** |
| **Education Gap** | | | |
| No difference (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Higher than partner | -0.046 | -0.022 | -0.099*** |
| Lower than partner | 0.022 | 0.022 | 0.077** |
| **Number of Living Children** | | | |
| No child (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| 1-2 | 0.542 *** | 0.621*** | 0.285*** |
| 3-4 | 0.603*** | 0.819*** | 0.358*** |
| 4+ | 0.602*** | 0.781*** | 0.314*** |
| **Difference between Sons and Daughters** | | | |
| No difference (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| More sons | -0.066 | -0.031 | -0.067** |
| More daughters | -0.069 | -0.019 | -0.083*** |
| **Number of household members** | | | |
| 1-4 (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| 5-7 | -0.085 *** | -0.155*** | -0.073*** |
| 7+ | -0.193 *** | -0.289*** | -0.103** |
| **Religion** | | | |
| Non-Muslim (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Muslim | -0.178 *** | -0.233*** | -0.244*** |
| **Media Exposure** | | | |
| No (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Yes | 0.084*** | 0.125*** | 0.130*** |
| **NGO Membership** | | | |
| No (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | - |
| Yes | 0.069** | 0.089*** | - |
| **Wealth Index** | | | |
| Middle (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Poorest | -0.141*** | -0.222*** | -0.044 |
| Poorer | -0.084** | -0.088** | -0.033 |
| Richer | 0.165*** | 0.017 | -0.030 |
| Richest | 0.402*** | 0.288*** | 0.079** |
| **Working Status** | | | |
| No (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Yes | 0.288 *** | 0.156*** | 0.106*** |
| **Husband's Occupation** | | | |
| Farmer (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Labor | -0.006 | 0.068** | -0.015 |
| Service | 0.047 | 0.182*** | 0.033 |
| Large business | 0.061 | 0.071 | 0.042 |
| Small Business | -0.004 | 0.006 | -0.053 |
| Unemployed | -0.058 | -0.227 | 0.464 |
| Others | -0.028 | -0.061 | -0.020 |
| **Relationship with Household Head** | | | |
| Head (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Wife | -0.357 *** | -0.359*** | -0.125 |
| Daughter | -0.379 *** | -0.296*** | -0.093 |
| Daughter-in-law | -0.811*** | -0.731*** | -0.500*** |
| Grand-daughter | -0.862** | -0.087 | -0.035 |
| Mother | -0.495*** | -0.372** | -0.214 |
| Mother-in-law | 0.019 | -0.221 | -0.417 |
| Sister | -0.400*** | -0.216 | 0.018 |
| Other relative | -0.607*** | -0.509*** | -0.279*** |
| Adopted child | 0.156 | 0.307 | -0.290 |
| Not related | -0.503 | -0.572 | -0.098 |
| **Sex of Household Head** | | | |
| Male (Ref.) | Ref. | Ref. | Ref. |
| Female | -0.010 | -0.027 | 0.033 |

Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05

Table 3 depicts that except few covariates, such as the difference between sons and daughters (in BDHS 2017-18), spousal age gap (in 2017-18) and, education gap (in 2014), rest of the selected variables have been found to be potential for women's empowerment from BDHS 2011 to 2017-18.

*Multivariate Analysis*

Estimated regression coefficients obtained from the multiple linear regression model are shown in Table 4. It represents the adjusted regression coefficients of different covariates for women's empowerment over the years of BDHS 2011 to 2017-18. It is found that women from Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Sylhet (but for BDHS 2011, it increased in Khulna) had lower women's empowerment score on an average as compared to Dhaka resident women. On the contrary, women who lived in Mymensingh (available only for BDHS 2017-18) and Rangpur (significant in 2011) had increasing empowerment score on average as compared to the reference category. Women from rural areas had decreasing empowerment than urban dwellers, that is, women who were rural residents had 0.08 (BDHS 2011), and 0.171 (BDHS 2017-18) units lower empowerment scores on an average than urban women. Women being married at the age of 18 years or higher increased the empowerment score about 0.092, 0.095, 0.080 units on average, respectively for the three study years than women who married below 18 years. Average women empowerment score increased for the women who completed primary (only significant in 2017-18), secondary, and higher education than women with no education. Education gap between husband and wife was found significant only for BDHS 2017-18. An unexpected result was found in case of education gap. While average empowerment score decreased by 0.099 units for wife with higher education than husband, women who have lower education than partner had higher empowerment score of 0.077 units than those who have no education gap. Number of children was believed to be one the most potential factors for having empowerment and the analysis showed the expected result. Compared to women without children, women with children scored more empowered on average. From BDHS 2011 to 2017-18 BDHS, couples who had 3-4 children experienced an increase in their women's empowerment score by 0.603, 0.819, and 0.358 units on average compared to those who had no child. Couples with 1-2 children and those with 4+ children also gave the similar result. This study indicated that women living in big size families had decreased empowerment score on average than women living in a small family with 1 to 4 members. Muslim women had 0.178, 0.233, and 0.244 units lower empowerment score on average than their counterparts, respectively for the study years. Media exposure was appeared to be one of the significant covariates for women's empowerment with high p-value (<0.01). Women who were media exposed increased the average empowerment score by 0.084 (in 2011), 0.125 (in 2014), and 0.130 (in 2017-18) units than who were not. Compared to women from middle class families, women from poorer and poorest families had lower empowerment score. On the other hand, women's empowerment score was found higher for richer (significant in only BDHS 2011) and richest families than the reference group. For the women who belong to the richest families, empowerment score increased by 0.402, 0.288, and 0.079 units on average,

respectively for BDHS 2011 to 2017-18. It is seen that as time passed by empowerment score for the richest families was decreasing than the previous years. Women's employment status was found to be strongly associated with their empowerment. On an average employed women got 0.288, 0.156, and 0.106 units more empowerment score, respectively for the study years than those who were unemployed. Women whose husbands worked in service sector as well as women whose husbands were labor, were found to be significant for only BDHS 2014, which also indicated that for these two occupation groups of husbands, their wives had more empowerment score than women whose husbands were farmers. Being head of the household, women got more empowerment than any other relationships with the household head to make decisions and stand out against violence.

## IV. Discussion

The findings of this research shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of women's empowerment in Bangladesh over the past decade, drawing on data from three consecutive Bangladesh Demographic and Health Surveys (BDHS) spanning from 2011 to 2017-18. The study utilizes a multiple linear regression model to examine the intricate interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and demographic factors influencing women's empowerment, focusing on key indicators such as household decision-making and attitudes toward wife beating.

The study reveals a shifting landscape of women's empowerment over the past decade. Notably, factors such as media exposure, urban residency, education, employment status, and a decline in the age of marriage below 18 emerge as influential contributors to women's empowerment. The decreasing trend in premature marriages and the observed improvements in women's educational attainment and job status signify positive strides. However, challenges persist, with disparities evident in rural-urban dynamics, family size, economic status, and exposure to violence. According to the study findings, higher education consistently emerges as a significant factor associated with increased empowerment. This aligns with broader literature suggesting that education equips women with the awareness and agency to assert their rights[28]. Contrasting results to previous research work are found regarding the education gap between spouses[29]. The unexpected finding that women with lower education than their partners exhibit higher empowerment scores warrants further exploration, deviating from conventional expectations. The influence of media exposure on women's empowerment is striking, emphasizing the role of information dissemination in fostering awareness and autonomy. Women exposed to media consistently exhibit higher empowerment scores, which is in line with another study from India[30]. However, the varying impact of economic status on empowerment is noteworthy, which is consistent to other study[31]. While women from the richest families experience increased empowerment, the

diminishing trend over the years suggests evolving societal perspectives toward economic status.

Family dynamics play a crucial role, with the number of children positively correlated with women's empowerment, which aligns to the results of previous study[32]. Contrary to expectations, families with more sons or daughters exhibit declining empowerment, challenging traditional assumptions. Additionally, women in larger families experience decreased empowerment on average compared to those in smaller families, emphasizing the need to address these nuanced dynamics in empowerment interventions. The strong association between women's employment status and empowerment underscores the transformative power of economic independence. Similar result is found previously from another study in Bangladesh[33]. Interestingly, women whose husbands work in the service sector or as laborers exhibit higher empowerment scores, challenging stereotypes associated with specific occupations. Moreover, similar to other literature, women heading households consistently report higher empowerment, indicating the pivotal role of leadership in decision-making processes[34]. The study underscores the concerning association between violence and lower empowerment, highlighting the urgency of addressing gender-based violence as a barrier to women's agency. Geographic disparities reveal lower empowerment scores in certain divisions, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions in specific regions.

## V. Conclusions

Women's empowerment based on the household decision-making and attitudes toward wife beating is influenced by various factors. Despite constituting half of the population of Bangladesh, women are lagging behind with respect to being empowered[13]. The goal of our research is to identify potential influences on women's empowerment in Bangladesh using data from BDHS surveys conducted in 2010s. In order to obtain accurate estimates of the adjusted regression parameters, the study analyzes women's empowerment using a multiple linear regression model. The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between the likelihood of experiencing empowerment and factors such as media exposure, urban residency, education, job, and a decrease in marriage age of less than 18. In addition to these, women who live in rural regions, have larger families, are not the head of the household, have lower economic standing, are frequently experiencing violence, struggling to participate in household decision-making. Women's empowerment can be improved and accelerated more quickly by ensuring that more actions are taken, increasing women's awareness, and building more facilities.

Our study possesses certain limitations. While inquiries about decision-making and perceptions of violence were directed solely to women, a more comprehensive understanding could be achieved by also soliciting responses from men. Additionally, it's worth noting that

women's empowerment extends beyond decision-making and opinions on violence. Utilizing a broader range of indicators would enhance the precision of our latent response variable.

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**Appendix**

**Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Selected Background Characteristics**

| Background characteristics | 2011<br>n=16274 | 2014<br>n=16350 | 2017-18<br>n=18273 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Division** | | | |
| Barisal | 1918 (11.79%) | 1960 (11.99%) | 1832 (10.62%) |
| Chittagong | 2619 (16.09%) | 2640 (16.15%) | 2397 (13.90%) |
| Dhaka | 2811 (17.27%) | 2827 (17.29%) | 2612 (15.14%) |
| Khulna | 2435 (14.96%) | 2369 (14.49%) | 2297 (13.32%) |
| Mymensingh | - | - | 1866 (10.82%) |
| Rajshahi | 2393 (14.70%) | 2295 (14.04%) | 2237 (12.97%) |
| Rangpur | 2258 (13.87 %) | 2363 (14.45%) | 2162 (12.53%) |
| Sylhet | 1840 (11.31%) | 1896 (11.60%) | 1847 (10.71%) |
| **Place of Residence** | | | |
| Urban | 5658 (34.77%) | 5579 (34.12%) | 6830 (36.48%) |
| Rural | 10616 (65.23%) | 10771 (65.88%) | 11893 (63.52%) |
| **Age at First Marriage** | | | |
| Age < 18 | 12624 (77.57%) | 12429 (76.02%) | 13772 (73.56%) |
| Age ≥ 18 | 3650 (22.43%) | 3921 (23.98%) | 4951 (26.44%) |
| **Mean Age Gap** | 9.15 | 9 | 8.4 |
| **Education Level (Respondent)** | | | |
| No education | 4003 (24.60%) | 3612 (22.09%) | 2766 (14.77%) |
| Primary | 4876 (29.96%) | 4785 (29.27) | 5865 (31.33%) |
| Secondary | 5986 (36.78%) | 6331 (38.72%) | 7373 (39.38%) |
| Higher | 1409 (8.66%) | 1622 (9.92%) | 2719 (14.52%) |
| **Education Gap** | | | |
| No difference | 8419 (51.73%) | 8421 (51.50%) | 9481 (50.64%) |
| Wife with lower education | 4065 (24.98%) | 3727 (22.80%) | 3878 (28.65%) |
| Wife with higher education | 3790 (23.29%) | 4202 (25.70%) | 5364 (20.71%) |
| **Number of Living Children** | | | |
| No child | 1620 (9.95%) | 1575 (9.63%) | 1905 (10.17%) |
| 1- 2 | 8297 (50.98%) | 8770 (53.64%) | 10141 (54.16%) |
| 3- 4 | 4888 (30.04%) | 4718 (28.86%) | 5457 (29.15%) |
| 4+ | 1469 (9.03%) | 1287 (7.87%) | 1220 (6.52%) |
| **Difference between Sons and Daughters** | | | |
| No difference | 4966 (30.51%) | 4944 (30.24%) | 5893 (31.47%) |
| More sons | 5330 (32.75%) | 6004 (36.72%) | 6767 (36.14%) |
| More daughters | 5978 (36.73%) | 5402 (33.04%) | 6063 (32.38%) |
| **Number of Household Members** | | | |
| 1- 4 | 6252 (38.42%) | 6817 (41.69%) | 8053 (43.01%) |
| 5 - 7 | 7209 (44.30%) | 7010 (42.87%) | 7790 (41.61%) |
| 7+ | 2813 (17.29%) | 2523 (15.43%) | 2880 (15.38%) |
| **Religion** | | | |
| Non-Muslim | 1827 (11.23%) | 1586 (9.70%) | 1871 (9.99%) |
| Muslim | 14447 (88.77%) | 14764 (90.30%) | 16852 (90.01%) |
| **Media Exposure** | | | |
| No | 5443 (33.45%) | 5970 (36.51%) | 6457 (34.49%) |
| Yes | 10831 (66.55%) | 10380 (63.49%) | 12266 (65.51%) |
| **NGO Membership** | | | |
| No | 11304 (69.46%) | 10777 (65.91%) | - |
| Yes | 4970 (30.54%) | 5573 (34.09%) | - |
| **Wealth Index** | | | |
| Middle | 3141 (19.30%) | 3326 (20.34%) | 3623 (19.35%) |
| Poorest | 2760 (16.96%) | 2928 (17.91%) | 3517 (18.78%) |
| Poorer | 3045 (18.71%) | 3088 (18.89%) | 3566 (19.05%) |
| Richer | 3464 (21.29%) | 3450 (21.10%) | 3821 (20.41%) |
| Richest | 3864 (23.74%) | 3558 (21.76%) | 4196 (22.41%) |

**Working Status**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No | 14366 (88.28%) | 11356 (69.46%) | 9870 (52.72%) |
| Yes | 1908 (11.72%) | 4994 (30.54%) | 8853 (47.28%) |

**Husband's Occupation**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Farmer | 4609 (28.32%) | 4346 (26.58%) | 4584 (24.48%) |
| Labor | 6247 (38.39%) | 6614 (40.45%) | 8475 (45.27%) |
| Service | 1142 (7.02%) | 1151 (7.04%) | 1193 (6.37%) |
| Large business | 1027 (6.31%) | 501 (3.06%) | 479 (2.56%) |
| Small business | 2772 (17.03%) | 3254 (19.90%) | 3550 (18.96%) |
| Unemployed | 413 (2.54%) | 106 (0.65%) | 4 (0.02%) |
| Other | 64 (0.39%) | 378 (2.31%) | 438 (2.34%) |

**Relationship with Household Head**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Head | 752 (4.62%) | 1039 (6.35%) | 1486 (7.94%) |
| Wife | 11502 (70.68%) | 11355 (69.45%) | 12384 (66.14%) |
| Daughter | 1239 (7.61%) | 1137 (6.95%) | 1536 (8.20%) |
| Daughter-in-law | 1818 (11.17%) | 1962 (12.00%) | 2325 (12.42%) |
| Granddaughter | 21 (0.13%) | 24 (0.15%) | 38 (0.20%) |
| Mother | 113 (0.69%) | 100 (0.61%) | 105 (0.56%) |
| Mother-in-law | 26 (0.16%) | 23 (0.14%) | 28 (0.15%) |
| Sister | 223 (1.37%) | 190 (1.16%) | 224 (1.20%) |
| Other relative | 566 (3.48%) | 502 (3.07%) | 583 (3.11%) |
| Adopted/foster child | 4 (0.02%) | 5 (0.03%) | 7 (0.04%) |
| Not related | 10 (0.06%) | 13 (0.08%) | 7 (0.04%) |

**Sex of Household Head**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 15106 (92.82%) | 14886 (91.05%) | 16546 (88.37%) |
| Female | 1168 (7.18%) | 1464 (8.95%) | 2177 (11.63%) |