

Challenges Faced by Working Women in Bangladesh and Their Perceived Impacts on Career

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ABSTRACT

Working women in Bangladesh face different kinds of challenges from different grounds irrespective of their socioeconomic backgrounds. The current study aims at measuring the perceived impact of those challenges on women's careers. The extent to which each of the challenges is responsible for disturbance in women's careers has been measured in this study. From the previous literature, five challenges namely- family issues, discrimination in terms of facilities, working conditions at the office, social challenges, and sexual harassment, have been considered. This study finds sexual harassment as the most significant among the aforementioned challenges to have an impact on women's careers. This study also finds that sexual harassment, discrimination in terms of facilities, and family challenges are mostly responsible for creating an adverse impact on women's careers. Human resource managers, line managers, employers, and policymakers are expected to be benefited from the findings of this study which may aid in creating a better workplace for working women in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Career, Challenges, Gender, Working Women.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Women represent more than half of the world's population (Meyer, 2019). However their opportunities for participation in decision-making and leadership positions are still very limited (Hora, 2014). Traditionally, men are the financial providers, and they tend to dominate women in decision-making. Working women have to take responsibility for household activities most of the time and the matter of work-family balance comes (Alfarran, 2021).

Richardson (2003) finds that in most families, women face obstacles even when they are about to reach the peak of their careers. Women face discrimination in societies and their potential is underestimated which leads women towards the feeling of inferiority (Benedict, 2018). Additionally, sexual violence against women and sex trafficking in different forms is common in most of societies both at home and workplace (Batyari, 2019). As women are facing many obstacles in multiple spheres of life including their career, they lack confidence and for that women would not have the option to deal with their subordinates, take free choices and deal with their obligations appropriately (Andal, 2002).

The proficiency of the working woman is constantly suspected by a huge number of people (Salahuddin *et al.*, 2021). Women have all the qualities and skills but they are ignored only because of being women. Women are generally humiliated by other male workers or their bosses. Pogoy *et al.*, (2016) find that women engaged in farming do not get

proper recognition and appreciation for the contribution they do to the economic development and better living standard of their families. Despite having adequate aptitudes to perform more elevated level assignments, women will in general hold lower positions than men. In spite of being working women, at the same time, they have to manage their household work (Aiman, 2022). In our society, a greater part of men denies considering that women are fit enough to work next to men in all departments. Men generally don't offer any help with the nuclear family's work which makes the life of working women inconceivably troubling.

However, in the previous few decades, the role of women in Bangladesh has definitely changed. Women are making a colossal commitment in every sector. Women employee face various challenges in the working environment like gender discrimination, harassment, homegrown limitation, work and family issues and inconsistent compensation (Osmani & Hossen, 2018). The diagram of the helpful network uncovers to us that society is quickly changing and as women face extraordinary difficulties just as to face these difficulties, we should re-evaluate a portion of the qualities with respect to the job of women being developed, both as far as their work inside the house or outside (Sharabi & Harpaz, 2013). The research is to reveal the challenges faced by women in our society while they are working outside. Working women face problems in their families, offices as well as societies. Hence this research designed to identify the challenges faced by women employees.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

A good number of research have been conducted worldwide on the challenges of working women from different perspectives. In this study, different types of challenges have been identified and discussed based on the findings of previous studies.

A. Family Challenges

Qin (2000) demonstrates that men have a tendency of picking 'family oriented' over 'career-oriented' spouses. As a consequence, in some cases, women are forced to quit their jobs for performing the family-related roles. Sidhu (2013) states that women employees need to confront dual-role work and home duty; making it hard for women employees to manage well.

Fisher (2000) contends that there has been a move in the male association in the nuclear family and their "willingness to modify work for family". Ahmad and Aminah (2007) conclude that women experience more work obstruction with family responsibility. Gunavathy and Suganya (2007) state that married women employees followed the reasons, and consequences of work-life disequilibrium for job-life balance. Malik and Aamir (2017) contend that women have an additional responsibility of bringing up and instructing their kids. Hartmann *et al.*, (2006) identify that one of the requirements is a desire for women to endure kids and be answerable for family duty which adds to their families not being eager to put resources into girls' schooling and women's careers. Based on the discussion it can be hypothesized that:

H₁: Family challenges have impact on women's career

B. Working Conditions at Office

Working conditions are supposed to have a significant impact on one's career regardless of his/her gender. But it may have a more significant impact on the career of women. Wirth (2001) mentions that it's hard for women to advance in their careers where there is the absence of favorable working conditions. Molline *et al.* (2014) investigated the challenges which are faced by women employees in decision-making positions. Meyerson (2001) and Bierema and Opengart (2002) agree that concerning the structure and culture of the affiliation, associations are frequently not coordinated to oblige women's qualities. Moreover, some organizations fail to provide privacy and safety during traveling for job purposes. Senthebane (2009) articulates that it was accounted for that one reason behind the moderate headway of women in decision-making positions is lacking affirmation of the numerous potential women good examples that now exist in society. Linehan and Scullion (2005) express that women are commonly positioned in non-vital areas instead of in expert and board occupations that prompts slow career progression. Eagly and Wood (1991) express that this is an explanation of why most women are less pulled into administrative situations, considering the way that progressive social tendencies are more restraining for them than men. Bierema and Opengart (2002) and Molebatsi (2006) state that it might be noticed that there is an extensive and expanding arrangement that what actually holds women down, are imperceptible and fake obstructions which keep deserved women from developing in their profession. Thus, the

following hypothesis can be made based on the above discussion:

H₂: Working conditions at office has impact on women's career

C. Discrimination in Terms of Facilities

Burton (1991) and Bierema and Opengart (2002) agree that equivalent admittance to professional success of women remains an issue. They show that, in contrast to men, there is no straight way to accomplishment in professional success for women. There is likewise no basic elective way for taking to conquer the sexual orientation hole to elevated level positions. As contemplated by Stewart *et al.* (2007), it turns out to be evident that, for women being acknowledged in the board jobs, they ought to have outer support, for training, preparing, task-related skill, etc.

Korn and Ferry (1992) demonstrate that regarding the generalization that women are not as focused on their career as men. In a study of women in senior administration positions; just one third of women had ever withdrawn from nonattendance, while more men took leaves of nonappearance that indicated how dedicated women were towards their career. It means men get more leave facilities than women.

Gregg and Johnson (1990) in a study identified that women employees needed to play out much harder at work in order to make a superior showing than their partners so as to get promoted at the work environment. Women also have fewer leadership opportunities than men. Groot (1996) carried on an investigation to analyze the glass ceiling or dead end of job promotion amongst men and women. The investigation explored that employers don't prefer to choose women for occupations that offer progression. Masadeh (2013) discovers that there exists male domination at the middle management level. Gregg and Johnson (1990) found that they needed to play out much harder at work in order to make a superior showing than their partners so as to get promoted in the work environment. Hence the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H₃: Discrimination in terms of facilities has an impact on women's career

D. Social Challenges

Grove and Montgomery (2000) and Rey (2005) discovered that there is by all accounts enough proof that women lead uniquely in contrast to men employees. Further, they notice that women depict a more participatory methodology, are all the more, take into consideration force and data participation, are more supportive than men, and empower others to make commitments through representation etc. While rather than those qualities of women, men direct from the fore and endeavor to have all the appropriate responses through focusing on duty achievement, achievement of the objectives and crowding data and winning (Grove & Montgomery, 2000).

Nieva and Gutek, (1981) (*as cited in* Astin, 1984) state that culturally, society acknowledged a woman's place was at home, considering her husband and children, as opposed to the workplace. Regarded female characteristics, for example, pleasing nature and convenience were dreaded to be lost if women entered the workforce.

Thus, the hypothesis is:

H₄: Social challenges has impact on women's career

E. Sexual Harassment

Reed (2002) specifies that one of the purposes behind women's hesitance to go into generally male-ruled occupations is a result of sexual harassment or lewd behavior, which includes chauvinist comments, which criticize an individual's work or capability.

Raghavan (2013) identifies with the recently passed Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Bill, 2012. It additionally features on the attributes of the business-like splendid character, socially intelligent spot here and there even in the private settings, connection between clients, long questionable and peculiar working hours. This shows that the business is inclined to the inappropriate behavior and related issues. Pillay (2008) uncovers the setting of women in association and the hindrances they face and how it tends to be survived. It also uncovers the hindrances as sexual harassment, male chauvinism, work-life balance, hierarchical structure, discriminatory limitation and culture were the highest difficulties that a woman faces in her profession movement in the work environment.

Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) investigated that in excess of 80 percent of people view gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the working environment as a steady test. The outcomes uncovered that the greater part of the women accommodation graduates left the friendliness business because of sex segregation or lewd behavior. Another type of inappropriate behavior is making a scary, hostile, or undesirable workplace. Persistently gazing with a goal to incite and passing uncalled jokes or remarks likewise are considered as demonstration of sexual harassment.

Fitzgerald and Cortina (2018) show in a comprehensive survey of examination on sexual harassment, three general classes of sexually harassing conduct have been portrayed gender harassment, undesirable sexual consideration, and sexual coercion. As they noted, gender harassment expresses 'insulting, degrading, or contemptuous attitudes about

women'. One of the significant classifications, undesirable sexual consideration, alludes to sexual advances that are excluded and unwanted. Such practices range from requesting dates, remarks about somebody's body or appeal, endeavors to build up a dating or sexual relationship with somebody, unwanted touching or grabbing, to rape to assault.

The last significant classification, sexual pressure, involves sexual advances in which the representative is offered an advantage for submitting (in exchange for salary increases or promotions or something else), or is compromised with a negative outcome on the off chance that they do not. Crosby *et al.*, (2004) state that sexual harassment through jokes, abuses, and misogynist remarks that express negative perspectives on women in a non-sexual way. Sexual harassment includes sexualized affronts, for example, alluding to ladies by debasing names of female body parts, showing explicit pictures, or offering rough remarks about female sexuality. Thus, the hypothesis is:

H₅: Sexual harassment has impact on women's career

III. METHODS

According to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources female population in Bangladesh was reported at 49.42% of total population in 2019, while female labor force was 30.63 % of total labor force in 2020 (World Bank, 2020).

The population of this research is unknown; hence this study determined the sample size based on the 'rule of thumb' for determining the sample size proposed by Roscoe (1975). A survey was conducted on the female executives of both government and private organizations. A set of structured questionnaires was prepared which contained both open and close-ended questions. 29 questions were incorporated according to the variables and their respective constructs as shown in Table I.

TABLE I: VARIABLES AND CONSTRUCTS

Variables	Constructs	Authors
Family challenges	Dual responsibility	Fisher (2000), Gunavathy and Suganya (2007), Malik and Aamir (2017)
	Lack of support	
	Childbearing	
	Conjugal life conflicts	
Discriminations in terms of facilities	Deficient maternity leave	Gregg and Johnson (1990), Burton (1991)
	Discrimination in promotion	
	Fewer leadership opportunities	
	Being deprived of training program	
Working conditions at office	Lack of separated hygienic ladies' toilet	Molline C. Mwando, Patrick W. Mamimine, Farayi P. Kanokanga, Felistas Chimutingiza (2014), Meyerson (2001) and Bierema and Opengart (2002)
	Lack of privacy in sitting arrangement	
	Conflicts in decision making due to gender	
	Lack of privacy and security during traveling for work	
Sexual harassment	Requires for sexual favors (quid pro quo)	Fitzgerald and Cortina's (2018), Woods and Kavanaugh (1994), Fitzgerald and Cortina's (2018), Crosby, William, & Beirnat, (2004)
	Stalking harassment	
	Unwelcome touching or grabbing	
	Slang conversation using offense and offensive language	
Social challenges	Late night working seems not cool and safe	Bierema and Opengart (2002)
Perceived Impact on career	Negative attitude of top management toward female employees	
	Negative attitude of the male colleague	
	Spreading rumors and lies about a co-worker's life	

IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A. Demographic Profile Analysis

From Table II it can be seen that out of 127 respondents, 75.6 percent respondents are below 35 years, 20.5 percent are from 36 to 40 years and 3.9 percent are from 41 to 45 years. The Table II also shows that out of 127 respondents 2.4% had an educational background of H.S.C level, 34.6% had Graduation and 63.0% had post-graduation. 59.8% of the respondents had job experience of below 5 years, 26.0% had 6 to 10 years and 14.2% had 11 to 15 years. It also shows the marital status of the respondent. From the Table it can be seen that out of 127 respondents 59.8% of respondents were married, 37.0% were unmarried and 3.1% females were either widowed or separated.

TABLE II: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE ANALYSIS

Description (N=127)	N	%
Age		
Below 35 years	96	75.6
36-40 years	26	20.5
41-45 years	5	3.9
Level of Education		
H.S.C	3	2.4
Graduation	44	34.6
Post-graduation	80	63.0
Experience Level		
Below 5 years	76	59.8
6-10 years	33	26.0
11-15 years	18	14.2
Marital status		
Married	76	59.8
Unmarried	47	37.0
Others	4	3.1

Source: Field Survey, 2020

TABLE III: CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Family Challenges	5	0.782
Working Conditions at Office	4	0.781
Discrimination in Terms of Facilities	5	0.808
Social Challenges	2	0.747
Sexual Harassment	5	0.916
Perceived Impact on career	3	0.861

Source: Field Survey, 2020

TABLE IV: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE ANALYSIS

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Perceived Impact on Career	Pearson Correlation	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Family Challenges	Pearson Correlation	0.519**	1	-	-	-	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	-	-	-	-	-
3. Working Conditions at Office	Pearson Correlation	0.565**	0.334**	1	-	-	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	-	-	-	-
4. Discrimination in Terms of Facilities	Pearson Correlation	0.592**	0.362**	0.689**	1	-	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	-	-
5. Social Challenges	Pearson Correlation	0.383**	0.415**	0.488**	0.389**	1	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	-
6. Sexual Harassment	Pearson Correlation	0.705**	0.460**	0.648**	0.485**	0.415**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field Survey, 2020

TABLE V: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.780a	0.609	0.592	0.74008

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sexual Harassment, Social Challenges, Family Challenges, Discrimination in terms of Facilities, Working Conditions at Office.
Source: Field Survey, 2020

B. Elements Wise Measurement of Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability Analysis)

Table III shows that the Cronbach's Alpha for family challenges, working conditions at office, discriminations in terms of facilities, social challenges, sexual harassment and perceived impact on career.

From Table III it can be seen that all of the values are above 0.5, indicating that the data is reliable.

C. Pearson Correlation Analysis

The following interpretations have been made based on Table IV. Pearson correlation values for correlation of Perceived Impact on Career (dependent variable) with other independent variables (family challenges, working conditions at office, discrimination in terms of facilities, social challenges, and sexual harassment) are 0.519**, 0.565**, 0.592**, 0.383**, and 0.705** respectively. In every case, the sample size (N) is 127 and Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000.

The Table IV indicates that all of the independent variables are positively associated to the dependent variable. It also indicates that all of the variables are positively associated to each other. However, the level of association varies as the Pearson Correlation values refer. The Table IV depicts that the association between sexual harassment and perceived impact on career is very high and positive. The result indicates that women strongly perceive that the career of women is highly affected by sexual harassment.

The second strongest association exists between discrimination in terms of facilities and perceived impact on career with Pearson correlation value of 0.592**. It may depict that women moderately perceive that the discrimination in terms of facilities in the workplace is responsible for hampering their career. Subsequently, medium positive associations are found with family challenges and working conditions at office with Pearson correlation values 519** and 0.565** respectively. Lastly, positive association has been observed between social challenges and perceived impact on career though the Pearson correlation value is moderately lower than the previous ones.

TABLE VI: COEFFICIENT

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.174	0.243	–	0.715	0.476
Family Challenges	0.233	0.080	0.197	2.914	0.004
Working Conditions at office	-0.019	0.102	-0.017	-0.187	0.852
Discrimination in Terms of Facilities	0.368	0.098	0.301	3.762	0.000
Social Challenges	-0.008	0.070	-0.008	-0.112	0.911
Sexual Harassment	0.480	0.079	0.483	6.082	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived Impact on career

Source: Field Survey, 2020

D. Regression Analysis

The proportion of variance in perceived impact on career (dependent variable) which was explained by variations in the independent variables is measured by Adjusted 'R-Square'. Here, Table V shows that 59.20% of the variance is explained by the Adjusted 'R Square'. It shows the dispersion of the dependent variable estimate around its mean. If the Std. Error of Estimate is greater than 10% of the mean it is considered to be high. Here the standard error of the estimate is 74.01%.

From Table VI, it is found that sexual harassment bears the highest weight (0.483) among the determinants considered while the lowest weight is carried by working conditions at office (-0.017). Among these elements, sexual harassment (Sig. = 0.000) is statistically significant with the highest B value of 0.483 shows a positive influence on perceived impact on career which is significant at 99% confidence level. Discrimination in terms of facilities (Sig. = 0.000) is statistically significant with the second highest B value of 0.301 shows positive influence on career which is significant at 99% confidence level. Family challenges (Sig. = 0.004) is also statistically significant with B value of 0.197 showing positive influence on career which is significant at 99% confidence level -0.017 l. social challenges (Sig. = 0.911) and working conditions at office (Sig. = 852) are found to have no positive impact on women's career with negative B values of -0.008 and -0.019 respectively.

E. Results of Hypotheses Test

Three hypotheses namely- H1: Family challenges have impact on women's career, H3: Discrimination in terms of facilities has impact on women's career, and H5: Sexual harassment has impact on women's career are accepted since these are found to be true having positive impact on career as perceived by the working women in Bangladesh. Two hypotheses namely- H2: Working conditions at office has impact on women's career, and H4: Social challenges has impact on women's career, are rejected.

V. CONCLUSION

Bangladesh is experiencing an increased number of women participations in the labor market. However, the working women of Bangladesh are still facing various challenges in the workplace. This study aimed at exploring the significance of those challenges and their association with the perceived impact on career. This study proposed five key factors to have an impact on women's career. Among those three factors

namely- Family challenges, Discrimination in terms of facilities, and Sexual Harassment that have significant impact on women's career. Moreover, sexual harassment was reported as the worst among the challenges that working women are encountering. The findings are in light with many previous studies.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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