

## **Women Empowerment through Political Participation of Women in Local Level in Northern Bangladesh: A Case Study of Some Selected Union**

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**Abstract:** Empowerment of women is a holistic concept. It is a multi-dimensional approach and it covers social, political and economic aspects. Political participation is one of the vital indicators of women empowerment. Actually political participation of women in any country gives an overview of how women are treated in society. The study aimed at analyzing the level of women empowerment through the participation of women in local politics. Drawing insights from existing literature, we developed a theoretical framework on women's political empowerment which we applied in the study. The study employed the mixed method. Data was collected through household survey and participant observation. The results of this study show that political ideology, education, age, decision-making power, mention those factors women's political participation in northern part of Bangladesh. The study also finds that progress with overall empowerment of women has been limited.

**Key words:** Women Empowerment, Political Participation, Local Politics, Union Parishad.

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### **I. Introduction**

Women empowerment is the key to all-round development of a country which can be achieved through participation of women in politics. Their participation in politics is also important for facilitating and promoting democratization process. In a democracy, every person can participate in political process and elect their representative through voting. It is argued that if women are not able to take part in politics, they would be unable to contribute the development of society and nation. Through the overall participation, advanced countries have been able to create today's position in politics. When the people play a role in forming their public opinion through direct participation in the politics of a country, the main purpose of politics is achieved. In Europe and America, despite the women's ranges are increasing in politics but women in sub-continent are still behind in politics. In Bangladesh, despite women constitute nearly 50% of the population, however, their participation in politics is very limited. Various indicators reveal that the status of women is much lower than that of men. The development objectives such as accelerated economic growth, poverty alleviation, family well-being, employment cannot be achieved without the contribution and participation of women. Gender discrimination is widespread in all spheres and at all levels as indicated by official statistics on education, health, employment and political participation. Participation of women in politics is an essential part of the political system. It is useless to imagine equality based politics without participation of women. The fact has now been realized with all its significance that without ensuring women's empowerment, national development cannot be achieved. The burgeoning literature suggests that women participation in politics depends on socio-economic and political factors. Therefore, it is very important to study those factors. To our best knowledge, no robust work has so far been done on this issue. The study therefore, aims to fill in this knowledge gap by identifying the factors which are likely to influence the participation of women in local politics in northern part of Bangladesh

### **II. Literature review**

A number of studies have been undertaken on women empowerment through political participation at local level.

Women's empowerment has been described as 'women's power' which is being able to make contributions at all levels as society and having this contribution recognized and valued in community. Power in

the context of women therefore, means participating in decision-making in all sphere of life not just areas of society which are accepted as women's place, creating from a women's perspective, within inclusion of women in decision-making process(Griffin:1989).

The author argues about economic and political conditions of the women. The women should participate in the politics to improve their condition. In our questionnaire we added questions regarding this and a lot of men and women gave positive response that women should participate in politics. The author has also provided reports of institute of social science to support this topics (Mohanty, Dec.1995).

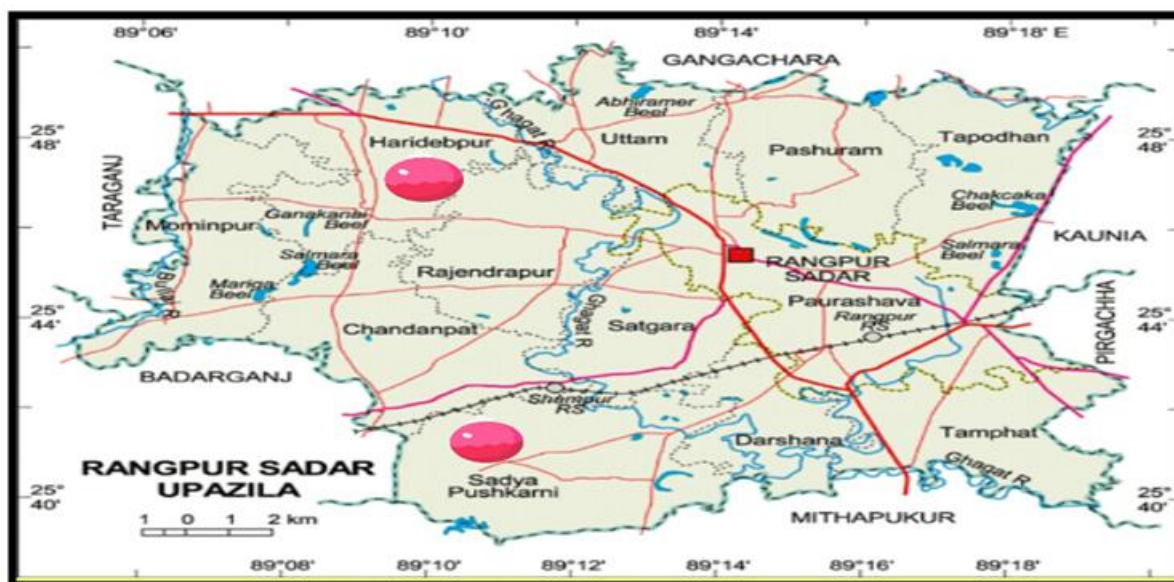
The author discusses in her book in chapter-7 (Paths to Empowerment: Women and Political Participation) about women empowerment, women's right to vote, women's active participation in political parties, women in leadership positions, women administration, addressing future challenges, education for developing women's political leadership, social and political factors and the national policy for the advancement of women. She says two long term goals "freedom" and "empowerment" must be necessary to overcome the problems of discrimination and oppression, and achieve gender equality in all spheres of life. Actually in this chapter she focuses "political empowerment" as a major pre-requisite and pathway to achieving gender equality in Bangladesh and also identifies the major impediments to women's political participation and empowerment and finally suggests strategies to promote women's political empowerment (Nazmunnesa Mahtab, 2007).

In her article she attempts to identify the extent and the nature of participation of women in political and administrative decision making bodies. Five parameters, namely political parties, parliament, cabinet, top administration and union parishad have been selected to analyze the present situation and suggest future course of action. The Constitution of Bangladesh permits to take special measures to ensure women's participation in all walks of public life. But, Bangladesh is still a male dominated country where women's special needs are hardly reflected in the national policies of the country. The major reasons which work as barriers to increase women's decision making roles in Bangladesh are restriction on free movement of women, lack of education, economic dependence, family burden and most importantly absence of a democratic and secular social structure. The present regime has attempted to break the tradition and engage women ministers in productive sectors such as agriculture, environment and education. Another positive change is participation of women in the union parishad through direct election. This is definitely a positive move towards empowering women at the grassroots level(Abeda Sultana, 2002).

In his article he attempts to explore the extent of women's empowerment in politics and their participation in development at the local governance level, particularly in union parishad. Here he says that women are an inseparable element of the development process of any country. Nearly half of the total population of Bangladesh is women. With the passage of time, the contribution of women to family, to society and to the nation has been recognized and is being increasingly discussed the world over. (Pranab Kumar Panday, 2002).

In her article she says people's participation and representation at grass root level are essential to ensure democracy. Women being half of the population deserve equal share in the politics and decision making. Without such participation, they will be deprived of the benefits of development as their social, economic and political conditions are not par with men. In this article she also discusses some impediments that's why women cannot participate in politics such as- they are family-centred, cast vote as their husband or relative desire, less education, religious factors and patriarchal social system etc. As a result of above these factors, women do not play a significant role in election campaigns in organizing public meetings, processions and rallies and other tasks. Actually this article describes women's position, their role in the local and national level politics and administration. The problems and constraints have also been identified. Some strategies have been given to improve the socio-economic and political role of women (Sayeda Rowshan Qadir, 1972).

### III. Materials and Methods



Source: Google Map

The study employed the mixed method i.e. both qualitative and quantitative. The study was carried out at the northern part of Bangladesh. We purposively selected two unions i.e. (Horidebpur, and Sadwapuskoroni)- the lowest tier of local government- of Rangpur Sadar Upazila under Rangpur district. They are typical unions of Bangladesh in terms of population, economy, infrastructure, socio-demographic characteristics of the population and so on. These unions represent typical character of northern part of Bangladesh. Geo-physically, these unions are located in northern part of Bangladesh. Total areas of 2 no. Horidebpur Union is about 29.076 square kilometer. It is surrounded by corn fields. The union is located about 10 kilometers away from Rangpur Sadar. The union is fragmented into 13 villages. And the total area of 4 no. Sadwapuskoroni Union is about 37.67 square kilometer which indicates that the union is big size. It is divided into nine ward and 14 villages. As the land of upper area, it is surrounded by paddy and sugar-cane fields. The union is located about 13 kilometers away from Rangpur City. Actually the distance between two unions is 8 kilometers. The total population of Horidebpur and Sadwapuskoroni union is about 43113 and 54368 which include both male and female. Total percentage of the population is 52.02 and 47.98 respectively. Most of the inhabitants are Muslim 85.76%, Hindus 14.17%, and others 0.02%. The modes of production of these two unions (Horidebpur and Sawapuskoroni) are predominantly agriculture. Most of the people are employed in agriculture- (58.54% and 68.54%) respectively. Ninety five percent students admitted in primary school, average present in the school is 96% and drop out from primary and secondary school is 06% and 14% respectively. There are diversified political practice in these unions; mostly Awami league (AL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jatio Party, Jamat-e-Islam and others. The total voters of Horidebpur and Sadwapuskoroni are 24963 and 27867 respectively. It has been noticed that the upper class educated people of the village are very much aware of current politics. But the poor and educationally backward men and women seem to be busy with their own works and they are not concerned about politics.

**Source:** Five year planning and budget book (2016-17 to 2020-21), 2 no. Horidebpur Union, & 4 no. Sadwapuskoroni Union, Rangpur Sadar, Rangpur.

The study collected both primary and secondary data to achieve the research objectives. The primary data were extracted through household survey with structured questionnaire from respondents. We chose 160 women respondents (80 from each union) from Horidebpur and Sadwapuskoroni union following the simple random sampling method. For the couple of weeks, we observed in person the participation of women in political activities at the local level. The secondary data was gathered through reviewing literatures i.e. the research articles, reports, text books, and dailies.

The data is presented and analyzed in this article through MS-Excel and MS-Word. To present the collected data clearly we also used tables and chart.

### IV. Women Empowerment and Political Participation of Women: key concepts

#### 4.1 Women Empowerment:

Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social political status of women, the traditionally unprivileged ones, in the society. It involves the building up of a society, a political

environment wherein women can breathe without fear of oppression and exploitation in a traditionally male dominated structure.

Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience (Hashemi Schuler and Riley, 1996). Women empowerment is defined as a change in the context of women's life, which enables her increased capacity for leading a fulfilling human life. It gets reflected both in external qualities (viz. health, mobility, education and awareness, status in the family, participation in decision making) and internal qualities (viz. self-awareness and self-confidence (Mathew, 2003).

#### **4.2 The concept of politics:**

The word 'politics' is derived from Greek word 'politika' means "affairs of the cities". It is the process of making decisions that apply to members of group. It also refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance-organized control over a human community, particularly a state. Politics is "the authoritative allocation of values for the society" (David Easton, 1953/1971). "The study of politics is the study of influence and the influential" (or, as the title of the book has it, "Politics [is] who gets what, when, and, how" (Harold Lasswell, 1936/1951)."

#### **4.3 Participation:**

The word "Participation" derives from the word "Participate" which means to take part or become involve in an activity. Regarding that participation is the state of taking part or involvement in an activity. It admits in social science participation refers to different mechanisms for the public to express opinions ideally apply influence- regarding political, economic, management or the other social dimensions. It emphasizes participation must be direct or face-to-face involvement of citizens in social and political development which affect explicitly on their daily life. "Participation means collective and continuous efforts by the people themselves in setting goals, pooling resources together and taking actions which aims at improving their living conditions" Mishra (1984:88). "Participation means people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political process that affect their lives" Human Development Report-(1993:1).

#### **4.4 Political participation:**

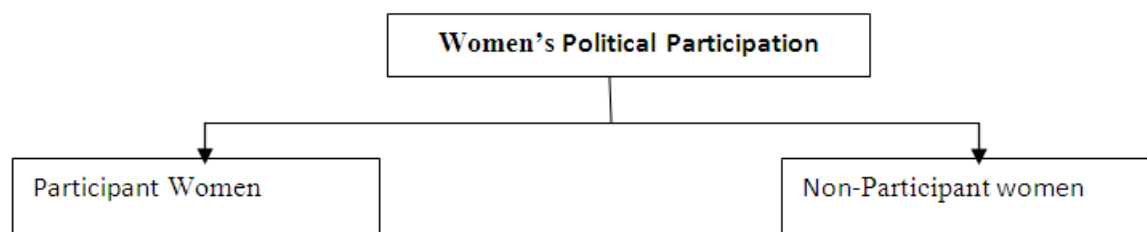
Political participation of women is a democratic right. Women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace can't be achieved (FWCW, 1995:1).

Political participation is a term having many meanings. It is used to refer to many different kinds of activity: voting, campaigning and contact. Political participation may be any voluntary act to influence elections and public policy. Milbrath and Goel (1977:2) states that "political participation may be defined as those actions of private citizens by which they seek to support government and politics." According to Myron Weiner (1971:161) "Political participation is often used to mean only successful efforts to affects the actions of government or to choose government leaders". He also use this concept "to refer to any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods intended to influence the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs, or the choice of political leaders at any level of government, local or national ." Huntington, (1967:4) states that "political participation is activity by private citizens designed to influence governmental decision making".

It can be said that political participation is any activity that shapes, affects, or involves the political sphere. Political participation refers to those activities of the citizen that influence political decisions of government and it would help to establish the responsible government.

#### **4.5 Women's political participation:**

Women's political participation means- women's ability to participate equally with men, at all level, and in all aspects of political life of public and private in decision-making. It extends to other arenas, such as family life, cultural and social affairs and the economy includes women's political mobilization, access and participation through civil society and other of the polity.



- ❖ **Participant Women:** A women who has the right to participate in politics and can take decision about political activities such as, voting, candidate selection, political ideology and political campaign etc.
- ❖ **Non- Participant Women:** Women who are eligible to vote but don't take part in political activities and sometimes can't cast their vote in elections are called non-participant women. And they don't take decision about political affairs.

**4.6 Comparison between participant and non-participant women:**

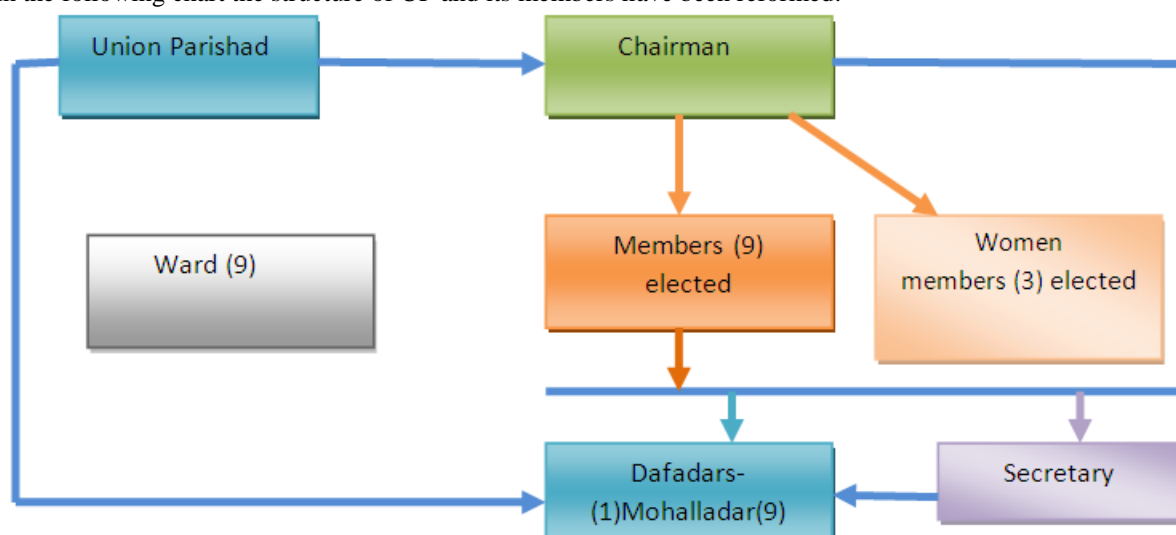
Factors	Definition	
Age	Women who have right to vote	Women who have not right to vote
Education	Well educated	Not well educated
Income	Higher level of income	Lower level of income
Decision making	They can take decision about political affairs	They can't take decision about political affairs
Political Interest	More interest in politics	Less interest in politics
Party ideology	They believe party ideology	They don't believe party ideology

**4.8 Union Parishad (UP)**

The local government tradition that Bangladesh has is quite an old scenario. Around 10 to 15 villages or 10,000 people consist of the UP and this tradition has been recognized for more than 100 years. UPS were responsible for looking after the welfare of the local people providing all sorts of facilities and these activities have become more focused with the decentralization of government in 1982. There are remarkable things that had been brought to UP with the commitment of local government act in 1997. Amendment says that the union parishad will be constituted of 1 chairman and 12 members. Among the 12 members, 3 seats are reserved for women. Each union is divided into 9 wards and each ward has 1 member elected directly by people's votes. Every 3 ward's voter will elect 1 women member for the reserved seats. But any women voter can elect a member for any of the 9 wards besides the reserved 3 seats. The chairman will be elected by direct vote of the voters of his or her union. The functions of UP was denoted with the help of the ordinance 1983, up ordinance (amendment) 1983 and 1997 and there were 34 specific functions. However the law suggest that the function of up are even more covering all the key issues and governmental acts.

**4.9 Structure of Union Parishad**

In the following chart the structure of UP and its members have been reformed:



**Figure:** Structure and organizational hierarchy of UP in Bangladesh

Source: LGRD Ministry Bangladesh, 2014

## V. Findings and Analysis of the Study

### 5.1 Number of Participant and Non-Participant Women in Local Politics:

The number of participant and non-participant women among the total 160 respondents are shown in the following table on the basis of field survey.

Answer	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes (Always)	110	68.75%
Yes (Sometimes)	20	12.5%
No	20	12.5%
No response	10	6.25%
	Total-160	Total-100%

[Source: Field Survey]

Table 5.1- demonstrate that among 160 respondents, 69% women participate in local politics always, 13% participate sometimes, 13% don't participate and the percentage of no response is 6%. From this table it becomes proved that the women of Horidebpur and Sadwapuskoroni Union are more conscious about political participation and they cast their vote total 82% (always+sometimes) in the Union Parishad election. Although they cannot be empowered due to various reasons.

### 5.2 Reasons of political participation:

The women of the Horidebpur and Sadwapuskoroni Union told some reasons of their participation in politics. How many women participate in local politics for which reasons the following table presents that percentage.

**Table 5.2** Percentage Distribution of various reasons

Reasons	Frequency	percentage
Political ideology	20	15.38%
Interested in politics	15	11.54%
Candidates qualification	30	23.08%
Candidate from my locality	25	19.23%
Political family	5	3.85%
Power politics	10	7.69%
Candidate is my relative	15	11.54%
Economic self-dependency	10	7.69%
	Total-130	Total-100%

[Source: Field Survey]

The above table illustrates that, there are some specific reasons behind the thinking of women whose participate in local politics (always+sometimes). Among 130 (82% of the total respondents) participate and cast their vote in local election, 15.38% participate for the reason of political ideology, 7.69% for power politics 11.54% for interested in politics, 23.08% for candidate qualification, 19.23% for locality, 3.85% for the background of political family, 11.54% for relatives and 7.69% for economic self-dependency. Maximum number of women of two unions told that they participate in local politics for candidate's qualification. They also participate in local politics but they cannot play significant role in local politics.

### 5.3 Reasons for Not-participate in local politics:

The non-participant women of 160 respondents remarked some important reasons of their not participation in local politics. The results of the question why you don't participate in local election in expected level are given in below on the basis of field survey.

**Table 5.3:** Respondent's Opinion on Various Reasons for Not-participate in local politics:

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
No interest in politics	4	13.33%
Inexperienced candidate	6	20%
Having not economic power	2	6.67%
Political violation	3	10%
Election system is not free and fair	10	33.33%
Not hope to get benefited	5	16.67%
	Total-30	Total-100%

[Source: Field Survey]

The table presents the reasons of non-participate women in local politics. Among 30 non-participant women (20% of total respondents) 13.33% don't participate in local election for not interest in politics, 20% for inexperienced candidates, 6.67% for having not economic power, 10% political violation, 33.33% for default

electoral system and 16.67% for not to hope get benefited. Majority percent women don't participate in local politics for the default electoral system. So it is a great problem in local political system.

**5.4 Relationship between Age and Political Participation:**

The changing pattern of political participation on the basis of age is in the following table.

**Table 5.4 Percentage Distribution between Age and Political Participation**

Age	Number of respondents	Number of participant women	Percentage	Number of non-participant women	Percentage
18-25	28	25	89.29%	3	10.71%
26-35	44	40	90.91%	4	9.09%
36-45	32	30	93.75%	2	6.25%
46-55	24	20	83.33%	4	16.67%
56-65	18	10	55.56%	8	44.44%
66+	14	5	35.71%	9	64.29%
	<b>Total-160</b>	<b>Total-130</b>		<b>Total-30</b>	

[Source: Field Survey]

Age is an important variable which has a close connection with the political participation. From the previous studies all over the world many researcher said that women's participation in politics increases mildly with age until it reaches a peak in the middle years and then gradually declines with old age. The above table demonstrates that among 28 respondents, 25 (89.29%) participate in local politics belong to 18-25 age groups, 90.91% belonging to 26-35, 93.75% belonging to 36-45% age groups, 83.33% belonging to 46-55%, 55.56% belonging to 56-65 and 35.71% belonging to above 66 age groups. From the above discussion we can say that the respondents of young women and middle age groups are not more conscious about politics although they participate in politics than the old age groups.

**5.5 Relationship between Education and political participation**

The table represents how the political participation of the local women related with the educational level.

**Table 5.5 Relationship between Education and political participation**

Level of education	Number of respondents	Number of participant women	Percentage	Number of non-participant women	Percentage
Illiterate	40	37	92.5%	3	7.5%
Primary	60	54	90%	6	10%
SSC	30	20	66.67%	10	33.33%
HSC	16	10	62.5%	6	37.5%
Graduate	8	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Post Graduate	6	4	66.67%	2	33.33%
		<b>Total-130</b>		<b>Total-30</b>	

[Source: Field Survey]

Education is an important factor for women empowerment. It is true that higher educated women are more likely to participate in local politics than the less educated women. But the scenery of the Horidebpur and Sadwapuskoroni Union is different from that speech. From the table it can be said that the majority, (92.5%) percentage illiterate women participate in local politics. Because they get some benefits from local leaders such as, get money, get cloths, VGF cards etc. And primary level 90%, S.S.C level 66.67%, H.S.C level 62.5%, Graduate 62.5% and Post graduate 66.67%. The respondents of Graduate and Post Graduate level from which we have taken data most of them are service holder as a result they can't participate in local politics especially in local election for lack of time management, duties in polling station and mostly for default electoral system. Actually majority percent of women are illiterate that's why they cannot play role in local politics.

**5.6 Decision making and women's participation in local politics**

Every people have the right to take decision about political affairs. So women's decision making regarding political affairs play significant role to participation in local politics. So the question of the level playing field based on the results of the women who take decision about politics affairs has been analyzed through this figure.

**Table: 5.6** Participant women’s opinion on decision making about political affairs.

Answer	Number of responds	Percentage
Yes (Always)	20	15.38%
Yes (Sometimes)	10	7.69%
No	82	63.08%
No response	18	13.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

It can be seen in the above table that, among the respondents 130 whose participate in local politics 63.08% (82) of them said that they did not take decision independently about political affairs. 15.30% (20) said that they take decision always and 7.69% (10) take decision sometimes and 13.85% (18) had no response.

**5.7 Decision making and women’s participation in local politics.**

This figure illustrated the percentage of decision making about political affairs by non-participant women

**Table 5.7** Non-participant women’s opinion about decision making regarding political affairs

Answer	Number of responds	Percentage
Yes (Always)	5	16.67%
Yes (Sometimes)	4	13.33%
No	15	50%
No response	6	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

Figure: 5.3 Illustrated that among 30 (18.75% of 160 respondents) non-participant women 16.67% (5) said that they take decision always independently and 13.33% (4) take decision sometimes about political affairs, 50% (15) said that they did not take decision and 20% (6) ceased themselves from any kind of comment in this matter.

**5.8 Purpose of taking opinion about political affairs.**

Most of the women of our country are illiterate. They are not conscious about political affairs. So they cannot take decision about caste votes, supporting political parties, participation in any political programme etc. The results of the question which matters women have to take opinion from husband, father or mother and son or daughter about political affairs.

**Table 5.8** Percentage distribution on purpose of taking opinion

Purpose of taking opinion	Number of responds	Percentage
Casting Vote	80	50%
Supporting Political Party	40	25%
Participate in any Political Programme	20	12.5%
Others	10	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

5.8 Table- demonstrated that among the total number of 160 respondents, 50% women said that they take opinion for casting vote, 25% take opinion for supporting political party. And 12.5% women take opinion to participate in any political programme and 6.5% take opinion for other matters. So it can be said that the women of Horidebpur and Sadwapuskori Union take opinion from husband, father or mother, son / daughter about political affairs.

**5.9 Political ideology and political participation of women (who participate in politics):**

Political ideology is an important determinant of political participation. It shapes the decision of the voters. So the question of the level playing field based on the results of the women who believe in political ideology as determinant of political participation has been analyzed through this figure.

**Table 5.9:** Participant women’s opinion on political ideology

Answer	Number of responds	Percentage
Yes	55	42.31%
No	45	34.61%
No response	30	23.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]



It can be seen in the above table that, 42.31% (55 respondents from 130 who participate in local politics) respondents said that they believe in political ideology, 34.61% did not believe in political ideology, and 23.08% ceased themselves from any kind of comment in this matter.

**5.9.1 Types of political ideology:**

There are various types of political ideology. Believe in political ideology may vary from man to man. So the question of the level playing field based on the results of the women who believe in which type of political ideology has been illustrated in the following figure.

**Table 5.9.1:** Respondents opinion on various types of political ideology

Types	Number of responds	Percentage
Democratic	40	72.73%
Liberal	8	14.55%
Conservative	3	5.45%
No response	4	7.27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

The above Chart shows that among the women whose believed in political ideology, 72.73% of them believed in democratic political ideology which is the highest figure here, 14.55% believed in liberal political ideology 5.45% believed in conservative ideology and 7.27% had no comment in this regard. The present political situation is not stable and democratic exercise is not applied in politics. For the lack of democratic exercise, women could not achieve political empowerment.

**5.10 political ideologies of non-participant women:**

This figure illustrated the percentage of believed in political ideology by the non-participant women.

**Table 5.10** political ideologies of non-participant women:

Answer	Number of responds	Percentage
Yes	10	33.33%
No	15	50%
No response	5	16.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

Table 5.10 indicated that among 30 non participant respondents 33.33% believed in political ideology, and 50% did not believe in political ideology and 16.67% do not any kind of comment in this matter as per table no 5.10

**5.10.1 Types of political ideology:**

The results of which political ideology followed by non-participant women has been analyzed in the following figure

**Table: 5.10.1** Respondents belief on various types of political ideology

Types	Number of responds	Percentage
Democratic	3	30%
Liberal	2	20%
Conservative	2	20%
No response	3	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

Table 5.10.1 - explained that, the non-participant women who beliefs in political ideology, 30% believed in democratic ideology 20% liberal, 20% conservative and 30% had no response about this mater. Although they do not participate in politics but they are more conscious about democracy.

**5.11 Influenced by someone to participate women in local politics**

Most of the women at local level are not conscious about political activities. They have no political knowledge. They always influenced by someone to participate in local politics and give their vote without his own decision. To identify the participation of women in local politics, respondents are questioned if they have any influenced by someone to participate in local politics. The required data analyzed in the following.

**Table 5.11:** Percentage distribution of participant respondents who were influenced by someone to participate in local politics

Answer	Number of responds	Percentage
Yes	80	61.54%
No	30	23.08%
No response	20	15.38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

5.11 Table- illustrated that among 130 respondents 61.54% said that they were influenced by someone participate in local politics. 23.08% said that they did not influenced by someone and 15.38% had no response this question.

**Table 5.12** Participant Women’s opinion on influenced by someone

Influenced by someone	Number of responds	Percentage
Father	10	12.5%
Mother	5	6.25%
Husband	30	37.5%
Son	15	18.75%
Political Leader	10	12.5%
Elder Brother	7	8.75%
Elder Sister	3	3.75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total-80</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

Figure 5.12, it can be said that, 12.5% respondents were influenced by father to participate in local politics. Next, the influenced rate 6.25% by mother, where 37.5% respondents were influenced by husband and 18.75% also influenced by son. And 8.75% were influenced by elder brother and 3.75% respondents said that they were influenced by elder sisters as per table no 5.12. According to the table, we can said that the maximum women of Horidebpur and Sadwapuskorani Union were influenced by husband to participate in local politics.

**5.13 Non-Participant Women’s opinion on influenced by someone**

This figure illustrated the percentage of influenced by someone in politics of the non-participants women

**Table 5.13:** Non-participant women’s opinion on influenced by someone

Answer	Number of responds	Percentage
Yes	15	50%
No	10	33.33%
No response	5	16.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

It turns out that in table 5.13, among 30 (160 respondents) non-participant women 50% said that they were influenced by someone. 33.33% respondents said that they did not influenced by someone and 16.67% ceased themselves from any kind of comment in this matter.

**Table 5.14** Percentage distribution of non-participant women’s opinion on influenced by someone

Influenced by someone	Number of responds	Percentage
Father	3	20%
Mother	1	6.67%
Husband	6	40%
Son	2	13.33%
Political Leader	1	6.67%
Elder Brother	2	13.33%
Elder Sister	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

[Source: Field Survey]

According to table 5.14, the non-participant women’s opinion who were influenced by someone to participate in local politics, 20% respondents said that they were influenced by father, 6.67% influenced by mother, 40% influenced by husband, 13.33% influenced by son, 6.67% influenced by political leader and 13.33% influenced by elder sister.

**6.1 Conclusion:**

Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21<sup>st</sup> century. But practically women empowerment is still illusion of reality. Political participation is the key to democratic system; it is the essence of democracy and good governance. Every citizen has the right to participate in politics. Actually it is a democratic right. Bangladesh is a democratic country and to strengthen democracy women’s

participation in local politics has great importance. Without women's participation in politics and decision making, the overall development of the country will not be possible. As a result political participation of women to local politics is a great concerning issue in this regard. For this, in this research we have tried to analyze in detail the effects of several variables on both participant and non-participant women. These variables included education, age, political ideology, candidate qualification, decision making etc. Main concentrating is the variation of political participation among the participant and non-participant women in local politics. The objective of the research is to investigate and analyze women empowerment through the level of participant and non-participant women in local politics. For this, various determinants contribute to the women's decision to participate or not participate in local politics. In findings we have included the determinants which we have get from the field survey. In chapter conceptual analysis we have showed the definition about participant and non-participant women and their general comparisons. We have explained the comparison between participant and non-participant women of Horidebpur and sadwapuskoroni union through frequency and table and which mostly helped to clear explanation about women's political participation. So, the discussion is proved from the above analysis. The study reveals that women's political participation by age and education was different. The young and middle aged women are not more conscious about politics due to lack of education although they participate in local politics than old age women. Most of the women don't take decision independently about political affairs. Most of the women believe democratic political ideology. But the present political situation is not stable and democratic exercise is not applied in politics that's why women could not achieve political empowerment.

## **6.2 Recommendations:**

On the basis of this research we have tried to recommend in some important point and hope that there will be bring a positive image-

1. Educational opportunities such as formal education and training should be made available to women, as they are important preconditions for individuals' professional advancement in politics and for gender balanced political representation.
2. Democratic exercise should be applied in local politics.
3. Strict control must be imposed especially at the time of election on many and arms, with a view to create favorable environment for women's entry politics.
4. Creating decent environment for women's decision making that's women can easily participate in local politics.
5. Women leaders at the grassroots and national levels must be sensitized, through mass media, booklets, seminars, conferences and leadership training organized by the government and training institutes, NGOs to assume and asset women's political roles more effectively.
6. Women should be made aware of their potential political power and their contribution to political process as voters, political parties and women politician's leaders.
7. Organizations of women at the grassroots level should be institutionalized, so that these organizations get wide support. Strengthening women's organizations at the grassroots level would be an effective strategy to promote women's political participations.
8. Women candidates need to be assisted economically and morally by political parties, women's organizations and trade unions.
9. Women who are already in the political arena should creatively develop their own strength and strategies and act as role model for other aspirants. They are expected to help eradicate malpractice in politics.

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