

Involvement of Women in Politics and Their Empowerment: A Sociological Study in Madaripur District, Bangladesh

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Abstract

Like all over the world in Bangladesh especially in Madaripur Sadar, women have been involving in politics with the passage of democratic revolution. They have participated in politics for their empowerment in political and other sectors. The purpose of the study was to investigate the actual empowerment of the women who were involved in politics either elected or non-elected, by identifying their decision making and controlling power over political party and family. 120 respondents up to 18 years old were selected as sample from the study area following cluster and purposive sampling procedure. This study has been conducted by both qualitative and quantitative data. Although there were some limitations of the researcher like limited time and resources, limited access to resources, limited information and so on, it has been found valuable result. Such as many women have been involving in politics in recent years but they have not been empowered actually. Because, they depend on male persons of the party and are controlled by senior male leaders. Most of the women are elected in their areas in different elections with the help of the popularity of their father or husband. They have participated in the election for the reserved seats. Sometimes, they are known to the general people by the name of their father or husband. Even though they are political leaders, they have no control over the family members. But almost all of them said that political participation has empowered them although a large portion of the respondents said the difficulties of doing politics besides male.

Keywords

Women Empowerment, Political Participation, Decision Making Power, Political Party, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

In the development discourse, the issue of women's empowerment is frequently brought up. The right to make decisions about one's own life is a necessary condition for women to be empowered in all of its forms, including social, educational, economic, political, and legal. Women's status and influence are increased when they actively participate in politics and the decision-making process (Zaman, 2012). Political empowerment is essential because it affects the choices that have a bearing on their life. Both the current and former prime ministers of Bangladesh are female. The perception that women have mostly attained political empowerment may result from this, while the reality is exactly the opposite. Despite the numerous measures that have been made, political empowerment remains painfully slow (Hossain et al., 2022). Political empowerment for women cannot be achieved without ensuring their widespread involvement. Bangladesh has a limited and sporadic base of women in politics. Women are by no means on par with men in formal representational political institutions and power structures, such as the parliament, political parties, the cabinet, local governing bodies, etc., in terms of both number and influence. Women should be given more political clout because of their low engagement in politics and the government's decision-making process (Chowdhury, 2019). The study, which was undertaken as part of a prior proposal, concentrated on the real status and present trend of women's political empowerment in Bangladesh's Madaripur area. Bangladesh is a little, democratic nation in the great planet. There has been a significant improvement in women's empowerment, particularly in politics (Nazneen & Tasneem, 2010; Sharma, 2020). Women represent the ordinary people as leaders at the local-rural level and in Parliament.

Women who are elected to these restricted seats confront a number of structural and attitude impediments, as documented by a number of studies (Goetz 1998; Panday, 2008). Women's representation and participation in municipal politics are hampered by sexism at all levels of the system, including the workplace, education, transportation, and civic engagement (Nazneen and Tasneem, 2010). It is impossible to overstate the importance of women's equal involvement in political life to the whole process of women's growth. It's not only a matter of basic fairness or democracy; it's a precondition for putting women's needs first. Equal rights, sustainable progress, and lasting peace can't be attained until women have a say in policymaking from the ground up (Khan & Ara, 2006). Women should both contribute to and benefit from the local government services and facilities that they use (Huq, 2016). Equally essential, local government also serves as a learning environment for politicians who aspire to serve at the national level. Plans for women's empowerment are repeated in each of Bangladesh's five-year plans (Nazneen and Tasneem, 2010; Parvez et al., 2023). At least three women serve on every union parishad. Pouroshava, Upozilla Parishad, Zilla Parishad, and City Corporations are mixed gender organizations. In our

National Assembly, there are many women (Ahmmed et al., 2022). Our Prime Minister is also a female. With a total size of 283.30 km², Madaripur Sadar is home to 15 Union Parishads and one Pouroshava. Madarimur Sadar is home to numerous political groups (Akhter & Mahmud, 2021). There are many women involved in politics. The political empowerment of women in Madaripur Sadar is the subject of this study. By examining the political participation of women in Madaripur Sadar, the trend of political empowerment of women, the barriers that prevent women from participating in politics, and the ability of elected women to make decisions and exert control over others, researchers have attempted to understand the actual political empowerment of women.

1.1. Rationale of the Study

This study indicates the involvement of women in politics and their empowerment. Politics of women in this area is very common now. But before 30 years, to find political women was rare. Women are involving with politics but their actual political empowerment is not bear question. This research has identified the real empowerment of women who are involved in politics either elected or non-elected. It has also identified the trend of political participation as well as their power of decision making and power controlling over men and other women. This research has contributed to the understanding of existing political women, which may help researchers and policymakers. Above all, this research has not been performed before in this area. So, it must help to know the political participation the trend of political empowerment of women, the constraints that impede women's participation in politics, and the power of making decision of elected women.

1.2. Objectives

The present study is aimed at understanding the actual political empowerment of women. The major objective is to know the decision making power of political women. Basically, this paper has the following specific objectives:

- 1) To identify the trend of political involvement of women and the impediments against political involvement of them in Madaripur district, Bangladesh;
- 2) To know the actual decision making power of political women in their families, societies and political parties;
- 3) To recommend some policy interventions regarding the issue.

2. Literature Review

Women in Politics: Bangladesh Perspective was the topic of a study carried out by Panday (2008). For his research, he primarily gathered secondary data. He paid particular attention to the pattern and current state of Bangladeshi women's political empowerment. Equal access to power and opportunity for potential realization is provided by political empowerment. It establishes the necessary

framework for bettering cognitive development, perspective development, and the capacity to consider their contribution to national politics. This essay will also exclude discussion of the unique characteristics of women's political rights, including their engagement as voters and political players. Additionally, it seeks to defend the standing of women's participation in political parties and the government's formulation of policy. It outlines various barriers to women's political empowerment that they must overcome in order to become politicians in our nation. Additionally, it advocates for Bangladeshi women's political emancipation (Ferdous, 2014). Despite the fact that women still make up a small percentage of the political population, they now hold numerous key posts, and both local and national politics have seen significant improvements. They now have more political clout and are able to influence the political landscape to some extent.

Halder (2004) conducted a study on "Female representation in parliament: A case study from Bangladesh". In his study, he relied heavily on secondary sources. When speaking about women's political empowerment in Bangladesh, he zeroed in on the current climate and future prospects. Access to political power and the means to develop one's full potential are provided through political empowerment. As a result, they will be better able to think critically, gain perspective, and evaluate their impact on national politics. An examination of women's voting and political involvement rights will also be included in this study. It also seeks to assert the importance of women's voices in government and political parties and to improve their representation in those institutions. It's a barrier that women in our country have to overcome on the path to become politicians. It also provides support for the idea that women in Bangladesh should have more say in politics. It's obvious that fewer women than males are involved in politics, but many women now hold key positions, and encouraging shifts have occurred on both the state and federal levels. Now that they have more influence in government, they can affect policy in some ways.

Ahmed (2008) examines the effect of women's empowerment on the use of contraception as well as how women's empowerment affects contraceptive use. According to a two-stage cluster sampling approach, 840 eligible women were questioned across four villages in two geographically and culturally distinct regions (Comilla and Sylhet Sadarupazilas). Weights for empowerment indicators were also developed by a survey of experts' opinions. According to the results of the study's analysis, the chance of current usage of contraception increases as women's sense of agency does. In particular, the empowerment aspects of reproductive rights, decision-making authority, and awareness have contributed more to current contraception use than any of the others. There was some discussion about what these results might mean for women's ability to pursue higher education.

Chowdhury (2009) entitled research on "Problems of women's participation in Bangladesh politics". Since women are viewed as equal citizens, they reasoned,

they should have the same opportunities as males to participate in public decision making. This led them to the conclusion that political equality is a crucial value in normative conceptions of democracy. Yet, this goal has not yet been accomplished on a global scale. Several causes contribute to the underrepresentation of women around the world, including a lack of education, economic inability, family duties, religion, social stereotypes, electoral system, party ideology, psychological barriers (lack of aggressive power, low self-esteem, etc.). Most low-income nations struggle to break down these barriers. The purpose of this research is to provide an objective assessment of women's political participation in Bangladesh. Specifically, this research endeavors to answer the following queries. We need to know why there are so few female politicians in Bangladesh. Where do women face barriers while trying to enter politics? Can the low number of women in Bangladeshi politics and government be explained by ideas developed in Western liberal democracies? How has the administration planned to get more women into political positions? How far have we come in empowering women to hold public office? There are two primary motivations for conducting a historical and analytical research of women's political empowerment in Bangladesh. It's vital to note that women make up around half of Bangladesh's population and a sizable portion of the labor force. Second, this research should help provide light on the current state of women's representation in politics and the national policymaking process in Bangladesh.

Research was done on "Bangladeshi Women's Political Empowerment in Urban Local Governance" by Zaman (2012). She especially focused on the fact that women in Bangladesh continue to experience a wide range of issues as political institutions are still being formed, despite a noticeably increasing level of female participation in local political organizations. Such women continue to be discouraged from participating and becoming active in politics due to gender-based stereotypes regarding the division of labor. This is not merely a problem of Islamic traditionalism, as the article demonstrates (Hossain, 2015). A lack of awareness of these challenges among female leaders is one of the main elements at play. Focusing on female ward commissioners, the study specifically demonstrates that because they are not given independent wards, they are usually unable to demonstrate their devotion to the public. Women who share wards with males as ward commissioners have less of an impact on the public. Fieldwork has proven that female ward commissioners firmly believe that male colleagues' discriminatory views will persist until they are given separate wards. This reinforces claims that continuing affirmative action is necessary to redress gender imbalances in South Asian politics at all levels (Panday, 2008; Al-Mamun et al., 2022).

In their 2010 study, Nazneen and Tasneem look at how women's empowerment impacts both the usage of contraception and the use of contraceptives. Following a two-step cluster sampling technique, 840 eligible women from four villages in two socioculturally and religiously distinct locations (Comilla and Sylhet Sadar upazilas) were questioned. In order to create weights for empo-

werment factors, a survey of professional opinions was also undertaken. According to the study's data, there is a correlation between women's empowerment and the possibility that they are currently using contraception. Reproductive rights, decision-making ability, and awareness all significantly contribute to the present use of contraception among the several empowerment components. Regarding women's access to education, the ramifications of the findings were examined (Huq, 2016).

Research on "Women's Political Participation in Bangladesh: Rhetoric and Reality" was conducted by Kabir and Haque in 2014. They arrived to the conclusion that women should participate equally with males in public decision-making because they are equal citizens, which is at the heart of the normative conceptions of democracy. However, this goal hasn't been accomplished everywhere in the world yet. Globally, there are various reasons why women are underrepresented, including a lack of education, economic hardship, family obligations, religion, social norms, the electoral process, party ideologies, and psychological hurdles (lack of assertiveness, low self-esteem, etc.). The majority of developing nations are having difficulty removing these hurdles. The objective of this study is to evaluate critically how much women participate in politics in Bangladesh. The study aims to answer the following queries, to put it briefly. Why are there so few women elected to government positions in Bangladesh? What barriers prevent women from participating in politics? Can the low level of women's representation in Bangladesh's politics and governance be explained by theories put forward in the Western liberal democratic states? What policies has the government implemented to boost the number of women in politics? What improvements have been made for women's involvement in public life? In particular, two considerations led to the historical and analytical examination of the political empowerment of Bangladeshi women. The people of Bangladesh are one of the country's most valuable resources, and women make up almost half of the population as well as a sizeable portion of the labor force. The second goal of this study is to better understand the state of women's engagement in politics and the formulation of national policy in Bangladesh.

The study "Women Participation and Empowerment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspective" was done by Khan and Ara in 2006. According to their research, sustainable development in underdeveloped nations like Bangladesh is widely recognised as requiring the mainstreaming of women through gender-specific policies. However, this problem has only lately been acknowledged as such in the context of policy reforms in both the administrative and local government spheres. Women now have quotas in grassroots democratic institutions in Bangladesh as a result of recent local government reform. Women's issues in local government had occasionally come up and were highlighted in the government's reform program, as was clear from the 1997 Local Government Reform. A result was the promulgation of the Local Government (Union Parishad) Amendment Act of 1997. It provides 3 directly elected women members from 3 reserved seats in the Union Parishad (Alam et al., 2022). How-

ever, there are significant gaps in gender parity in both the reform agenda and governance strategy. The most well-liked democratic organization at the local level is Union Parishad. Since participation and empowerment are strongly intertwined, the situation of women's engagement at this level is crucial and demands special attention.

Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Two NGOs is the title of Chowdhury's research from 2019. Women can develop their entire identity and strength in all sectors of life through empowerment, an active, multi-dimensional process. Power cannot be given away or exchanged for other things. In order to exercise, sustain, and preserve power, it must first be obtained (Al-Mamun et al., 2022). Women in rural Bangladesh did not have much authority prior to the development of microcredit. They either had limited or no access to the formal job market and lacked the resources to engage in income-generating activities. This essay examines how two non-governmental organizations—Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB) 1 and Nari Uddug Kendra (NUK)—have influenced the socioeconomic standing of rural women in Bangladesh. The majority of the information in the paper is derived from primary data that was gathered through a field survey (using structured and unstructured questionnaires) and a focus group discussion with 50 rural women from Mollar Gaon (Sylhet district) and Pallabi (Dhaka district). It views the work of these two NGOs—which promotes inclusive decision-making, awareness-raising, capacity-building, and a rise in financial stability—as possibly promoting women's empowerment.

3. Theoretical Framework

Born out of the struggles of the feminist movements of the 20th century, feminist political theory is characterized by its commitment to expanding the boundaries of the political Feminism, as a political movement, works to fight inequality and the social, cultural, economic, and political subordination of women. The goal of feminist politics is to end the domination of women through critiquing and transforming institutions and theories that support Women's subordination. Feminist political theorists employ characteristic strategies, methods, values, and concerns. There is a normative and methodological core to feminist political theory, consisting of one of more things—Openness to question the power relations embedded seemingly natural institutions or seemingly natural objects, such as the self, the family, the existing modes of political discussion and debate, whether these are gendered, physical, racial, class-based, or cultural; Critique of the history of political philosophy and feminist political theory and its norms and theoretical exclusions from mainstream political theory; constructing theories that are inclusive and “rejection of essentialism. Focus on experience or critical understanding of individual experience. A further norm of feminist theory and practice is the notion of reflexivity. The famed slogan of this notion is, “the personal is political,” where politics are to be unearthed—in the personal, in the private, in Women's everyday experiences of subordination and inequality.

The framework of this research can be based on the following theories:

- 1) Radical Feminism
- 2) Liberal Feminism
- 3) Marxist Feminism

3.1. Radical Feminism

Analytically, the main difference between radical feminism and other directions of this theory lies in the extent to which the social system based on the power struggle between the sexes—i.e. patriarchy, the rule of men in which women are subordinate category—is considered to be the root of all further oppression, inequality and injustice. The view that the patriarchal society is generally unjust system in which women are categories of people exposed to various types of discrimination and exploitation, is a universal feature of feminist thought and the starting point for all routes within feminism, which, however, differ in the further formulation of this paragraph, its implications and desirable methods for the solution of problems of the female population (Luka, 2011). Radical feminist theory is based on the fact that gender inequality is the foundation of all other inequalities and oppression. Repression against women takes place in the patriarchy that is a hierarchical system of male domination over the female gender, which consists of, and is maintained due to the characteristics which include:

- 1) The obligatory motherhood and limiting the reproductive freedom;
- 2) The social construction of femininity and female sexuality through the creation and presentation of subordinated image;
- 3) Violence against women.

3.2. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism, in contrast, emphasizes women's power to demonstrate and uphold their equality via their own choices and actions. It is an individualistic style of feminism. Liberal feminists contend that because of the erroneous idea that women are inherently less intelligent and physically capable than males, society discriminates against them in the workplace, in public spaces, in positions of authority, and in the marketplace. Liberal feminists are committed to promoting gender equality through political and legal reform because they hold the view that "female subordination is rooted in a system of customary and legal limitations that prevents Women's entry into and achievement in the so-called public realm" (Luka, 2011). Women in Congress, state legislatures, and city halls across the nation have introduced, fought for, and won legislation to end sex discrimination and meet Women's changing needs, proving time and time again that they were right to believe that women lawmakers would represent Women's interests to the best of their ability.

3.3. Marxist Feminism

Consider John Stuart Mill's writings (Mill and Mill, 1970), for example, and compare Marx's silence with them. From a Marxist perspective, we can see that

Marx had little to say directly about the system of gender domination that was prevalent in his own time and that he was not publicly associated with the movement for the emancipation of women. However, Marx's critique of bourgeois society serves as a foundation for a socialist feminism, and in the 20th century, communist political ideologies and societies benefited greatly from these ideas. The "Second Wave" is a term that feminists of today frequently use to identify themselves. The *Feminine Mystique*, a 1963 book by Betty Friedan that compared the ideal of "femininity" with the realities of women's lives, is frequently cited as the beginning of the "Second Wave" of feminism.

Following the conclusion of the Cold War, gender studies and gender perspectives have only lately been introduced to the field of development cooperation. Demont et al. (2007)'s research from the 1970s demonstrated how development plans based on Western and male-centered models neglected to take into account the position and circumstances of women in their society. This design mistake did not help to improve the situation of women; rather, it made it worsen their status and rights. The "Women in Development" (WID) and later the "Gender and Development" (GAD) methods were a manifestation of Boserup's views. The democratic process, gender equality, and political engagement are all interdependent on one another because one concept's execution depends on the others and vice versa. As a result, it is bound by an essential and inevitable link.

4. Methodology of the Study

The body of procedures, guidelines, and precepts used by a discipline is known as its methodology. It is the methodological analysis of methodologies used in a field of study in a methodical and theoretical manner. It entails a theoretical examination of the corpus of practices and guiding ideas related to a field of knowledge. A solid methodology serves as a collection of guidelines for approaching and tackling problems. It includes phases, methods, tasks, techniques, and instruments. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. By utilizing mixed procedures, which integrate quantitative and qualitative methods, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of research themes (Creswell et al., 2007). It frequently includes ideas like paradigms, theoretical models, phases, and quantitative or qualitative methodologies. The study chooses to use a mixed research technique, which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigation, because measuring the life patterns of women is a complicated phenomenon with multiple dimensions. On a broad scale, combining is justified in order to take use of the strengths of the two techniques. This should be taken into account in a given situation in light of the study environment and real-world situations.

4.1. Participants and Setting

As a convenience sample from a statistically significant population was selected

for this inquiry, basic random sampling was used to evaluate it. A semi-structured questionnaire given to test-takers prior to the actual exam is used to accomplish this. Participation is fully voluntary on the part of the respondent, and all information provided will be kept confidential. A total of 120 people from the Madaripur district responded to the survey. The survey's sample includes women who are politically active. 22 in-depth interviews were done to support the findings and to help find and obtain a personal interview utilizing stage sampling and a standardized questionnaire.

4.2. Data Processing and Analyzing

The quantitative information from the questionnaires has been coded, entered into a computer as an Excel file, and then examined using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). In order to encapsulate the key aspects of the data, the analysis starts with descriptive statistics for each question item. Utilizing statistical methods like frequency distribution and percentage measures, analysis and interpretation of the data have been carried out after the data have been processed.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-Demographic characteristics of the respondents are identified on the basis of respondents Age Structure, Religious Status, Educational Qualification and Occupational Status. This entire variable also helps to analyze the Respondents livelihood pattern.

The age structure of a population is the distribution of people among various ages. Here it is shown various age structures of the respondents.

Table 1 represents that 15% of the respondents are age in 18 - 25 years while 30.83% respondents are fall in the category of 26 - 30 years. It also shows that 31 - 35 years of age under 25%, 16.67% women falling in the age group 36 - 40 years and 12.5% respondents' age are above 40 years. This table also indicates that most of the respondent's age range is 26 - 30 years.

Table 1. Age structure of the respondents.

Age Group	Number of the Respondents	Percentage
18 - 25 Years	18	15
26 - 30 Years	37	30.83
31 - 35 Years	30	25
36 - 40 Years	20	16.67
40 Years Above	15	12.5
Total	N = 120	100

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Figure 1 indicates the marital status of the respondents. Among the 120 respondents 62.5% that means 75 respondents are married and only 37.5% respondents (45) are unmarried. So, majority of the respondents are married.

Educational qualification indicates the ability or quality of the respondents because education is the broadest sense of any act or knowledge that determines the outcome of mind, personality and physical ability of an individual.

Figure 2 shows the educational status of political women in the study area. Here it indicates that most of the women (25%) are HSC and they are 30 in number. 20% (24) respondents took primary education, 16.67% (20) women are SSC pass, 15% (18) can sign only and only 10% (12) respondents are graduate. 5% (6) respondents are non-literate and 4% respondents are post graduates. This table also shows that some political women have not any institutional qualification in the study area.

Occupational Status refers to the work or occupation through which someone earns for meet up their needs. The following **Table 2** indicates the occupational status of the Respondents. Among the respondents 60% respondents are housewife, 10% respondents are students, other 30% women related to several works including 15% NGO employ, 13.33% do business and 1.67% respondents are laborers. This table also identifies that most of the respondents are housewife in the study area.

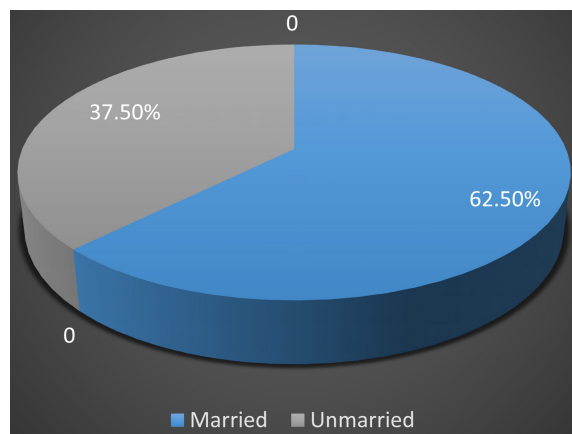


Figure 1. Marital status of the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

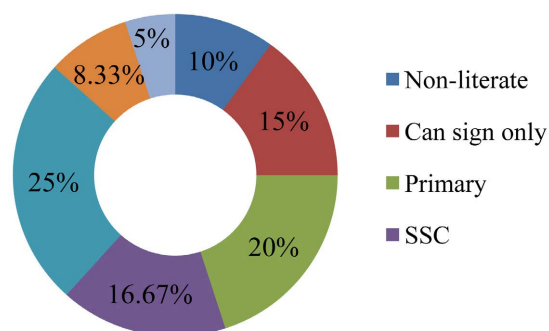


Figure 2. Educational qualification of the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

Table 2. Levels of political activities of the respondents.

Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Village	6	5
Union Parishad	65	54.17
Pourashava	5	4.17
Upazilla	25	20.83
District	16	13.33
National	3	2.5
Total	N = 120	100

Source: Field survey, 2022.

The following **Figure 3** shows the family types of respondents. It indicates that most of the respondents are from nuclear family and they are 66.67% (80) among the respondents, 20.83% (25) are from joint family and only 12.5% (15) are from extended family.

5.2. Time of Active Political Activities of the Respondents

The below **Figure 4** shows the time limit of respondents' active political activities. Most of the respondents have been active in the political activities since 5 - 10 years and they are 43.33% (52), 20.83% (25) respondents since 1 - 5 years, 20% (24) respondents since 10 - 15 years, 5.83% (7) respondents since 1 year and only 10% (12) respondents since more than 15 years.

5.3. Levels of Political Activities of the Respondents

Table 2 indicates the level of political activities of the respondents. It shows that 54.17% (65) respondents are active in the Union Parishad level politics, 20.83% (25) are active in Upazilla level, 5% (6) in the village level, 4.17% (5) in Pourashava level and only 13.33% (16) are active in District level. But there are only 2.5% (3) respondents are active in the national level politics.

5.4. Information about the Support of the Family for the Respondents

Figure 5 indicates the family supports of the respondents in their politics. Most of the respondents said that their families support them and the respondents said "Yeas" are 68.33% (82). But 31.67% (38) said that their families do not support them in their political activities.

5.5. Ideological Belief of Respondents

Figure 6 indicates the ideological belief of the respondents. It shows that most of the respondents believe in democracy and they are 60% (72). 25% (30) respondents believe in secularism, 10% (12) respondents believe in religious ideology and 3.33% (4) respondents believe in socialism. But only 1.67% (2) respondents believe in communism.

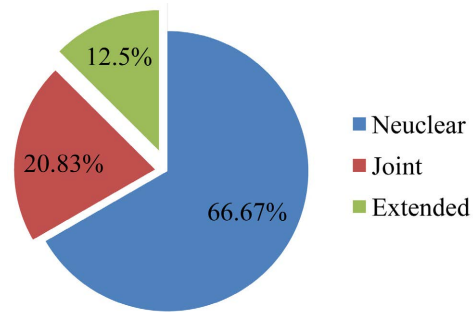


Figure 3. Family types of the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

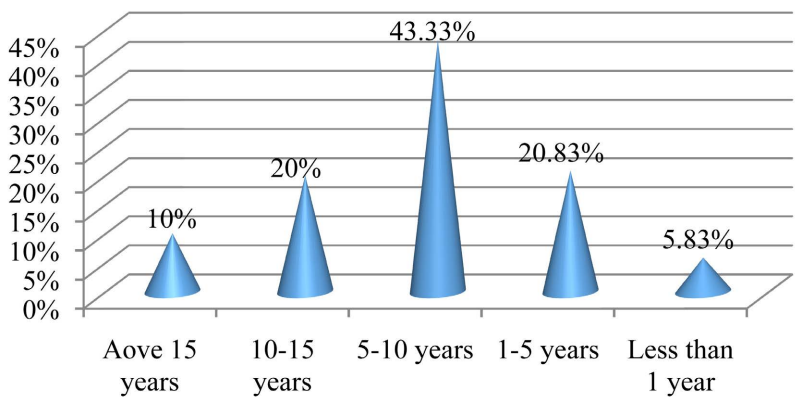


Figure 4. Time of active political activities of the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

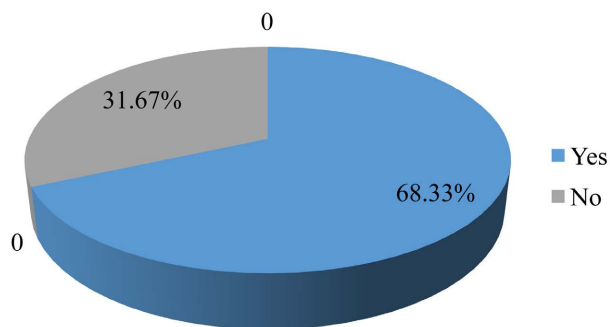


Figure 5. Having support of the family or not. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

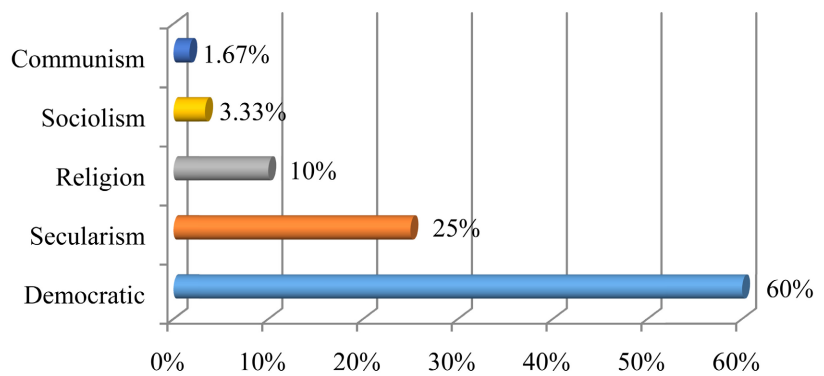


Figure 6. Ideology of the respondents in politics. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

5.6. Supports from General People to the Respondents in Politics

Figure 7 indicates the percentages of respondents where they said how the general people support them in their politics. 40% (48) said that general people gave them “good support”, 30% (36) said that general people’s support is very good, and 20% (24) said that their support is not good. But 10% (12) respondents said that general people oppose the politics of women in Bangladesh especially in Madaripur. One of the respondents Sharmin (pseudonym) in our field data have opined her opinions:

“We are getting support as a female to participate in politics very minimal rate to expose. Besides we have faced numerous problems regarding this issue”.

Another of our older respondents Nurzahan (pseudonym) have shared her experiences regarding support to general people issue:

“The mechanism of women in participation politics is much more critical in political arena. General people perceive a negative viewpoint from ourselves.”

5.7. More Women Are Participating in Politics or Not

According to Figure 8, 85% (102) respondents think that more women is participating in the politics than past some decades. But 15% (18) think that their rate of participating in politics is not increasing actually.

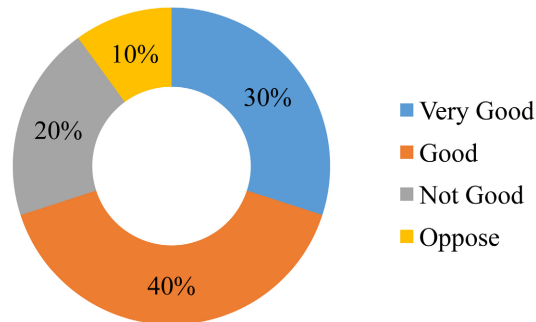


Figure 7. Support of general people to the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

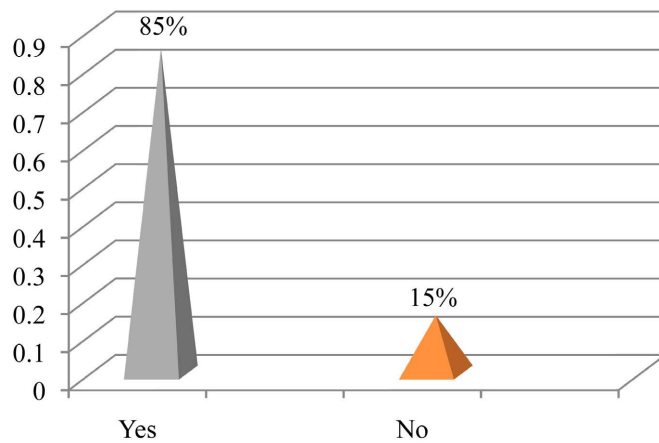


Figure 8. More women come in politics or not. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

5.8. Feeling Constraints and Impediments of Respondents in Politics

Figure 9 indicates the constraints and impediments felt by the respondents in their politics. 81.67% (98) respondents said that they feel many constraints and impediments in the politics. But 18.33% (22) respondents said that they have not felt constraints and impediments in politics.

5.9. The People Who Constraint Respondents from Politics

Figure 10 indicates the percentage of respondents telling the persons who constraint them from politics. Most of them said that parents and relative's constraint them from politics. 30.61% (30) among 98 respondents said their parent's constraint them from politics. 28.57% (28) feel constraints from their relatives, 20.41% (20) from husbands, 18.37% (18) from local people and 2.04% (2) from other people.

Regarding constrains from politics our filed interview revealed many exciting findings. All of our respondents were female so they were deprived in willingly participation in political involvement. One of our participants Rafiza (pseudonym) has shared her experience on such issue:

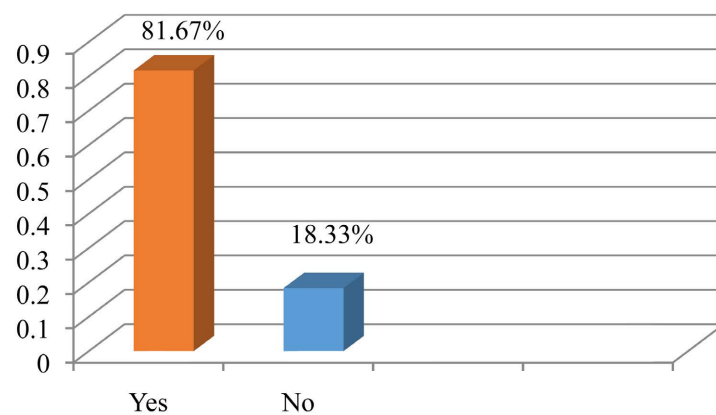


Figure 9. Feeling constraints and impediments in politics. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

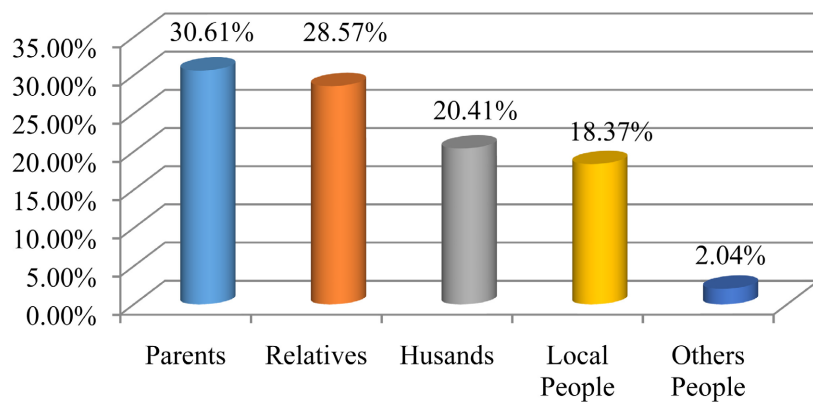


Figure 10. People who constraint from politics. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 98).

“As a female in participation in politics we have faced a lot of complexities. From my own experiences my husband was agree for my decision but my mother in law were so anger for my participation. Initially I have faced numerous problems from blaming culture with neighbors’, relatives and so on”.

Not only Rafiza but also mostly participants have lamented their experiences regarding constraints and complexities, such instances following by Mohima (pseudonym):

“I have already faced a risk whenever I have decided to enter myself as a political leader. From the beginning local people have labeled me as a worst and disobedient female for my decision making”.

5.10. Barriers Faced by the Respondents from Other Political Parties

According to **Figure 11**, 85% (102) respondents said that they faced many barriers from the opposite political parties but 15% (18) respondents said that no barriers came from other political parties.

5.11. Barriers Faced by the Respondents from Own Political Parties

Figure 12 represents the answers of the respondents about the barriers from

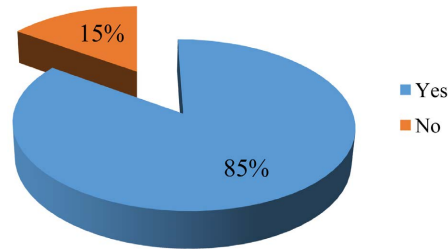


Figure 11. Barriers faced by respondents from other political parties. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

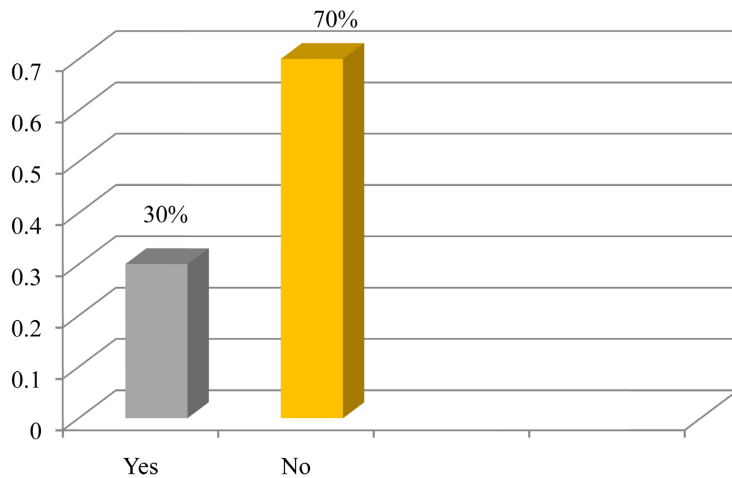


Figure 12. Barriers from own political party faced by the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

the own political parties they face. 30% (36) said that they face the barriers from their own political party but 70% (84) said that there are no barriers from own political party.

5.12. Level of Own Political Party from Where Barriers Come to the Respondents

Table 3 represents the levels or sources of barriers those are faced by the respondents from their own political party. 50% (180 among 36 respondents faced barriers from the same level of position in their political party, 33.33% (12) from higher level and 16.67% (6) from lower level.

5.13. Gender Disparity in the Political Participation for the Respondents

Figure 13 shows the answers of the respondents about the gender disparity in politics. 73.33% (88) respondents said that gender disparity is acute in politics but 26.67% (32) respondents said that there is no gender disparity in the politics in the study area. Regarding gender disparities our respondents have shared their tragic experience in our interview session, such story has shared Bithi (pseudonym) in below:

“Being female as a vulnerable creature gender disparity was shown in every sphere in our life tasks. In political arena I have also faced disparities in group nomination, position and such hegemonic power formation. It seems women are vulnerable so we can't hold right position to catch up our desired destination”.

Another of our respondents Runa (pseudonym) has lamented her sorrowing in such issue:

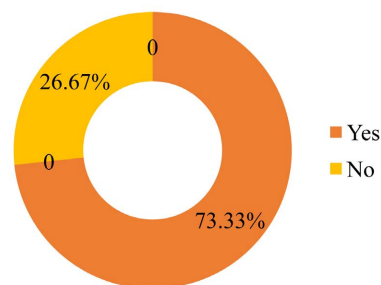


Figure 13. Gender disparity in politics. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

Table 3. Barrier level of own political party of the respondents.

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lower Level	15	16.67
Higher level	45	33.33
Same Level of Respondents	60	50
Total	N = 120	100

Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

“...gender disparities are the foremost structure and barrier for women as a candidate. We faced political domination by male leader whereas we have no independence regarding such hegemonic power”.

Table 4 shows the decision making power of the respondents in their parties. 45.83% (55) respondents have power of making decision in their political parties. But 54.17% (65) respondents said that they have no power of making decision in the party.

5.14. Facing Harassment in the Politics of Respondents

According to **Figure 14**, 60% (72) respondents faced harassment in doing

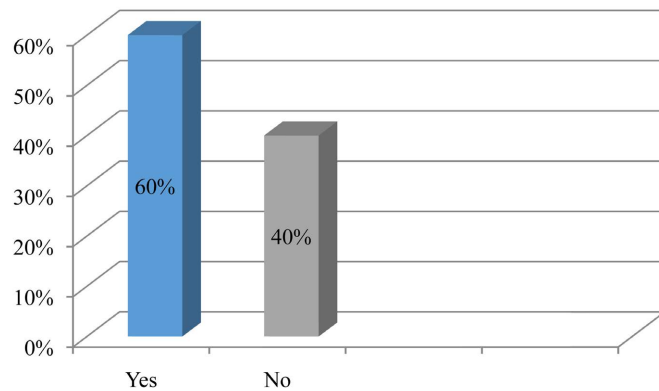


Figure 14. Facing harassment in politics of the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

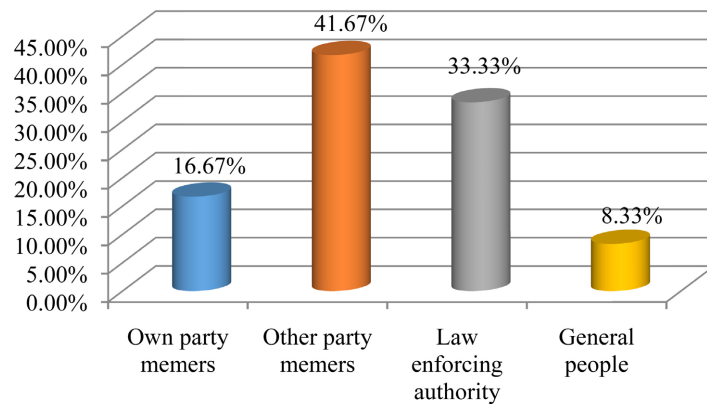


Figure 15. People who harass the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022; (N = 120).

Table 4. Decision making power of the respondents in their parties.

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	55	45.83
No	65	54.17
Total	N = 120	100

Source: Field survey, 2022; (N= 120).

the politics and 40% (48) respondents said that they did not face the harassment in politics.

Figure 15 shows the people who harass the respondents. Most of the time the respondents have been harassed by the opposite political parties and law enforcing authorities like police, RAB etc. 41.67% (30) respondents have been harassed by other political party members, 33.33% (24) by law enforcing authorities, 16.67% (12) by own party members. But 8.33% (6) respondents have been harassed by general people. Lily Khatun (pseudonym) has shared her tragic experience:

“Harassment of female as a political entity are considered mere thing to do. Own party members including senior leader harassed or provoking us for holding power and getting fabulous attraction for exercise power.”

6. Possible Suggestions and Recommendations

Although involvement of women in politics has been increased in the study area, actual women empowerment has not been established. Women should be more conscious of their rights. State and government must be aware of the empowerment of women. There are some recommendations here listed in below:

- ❖ Ensuring equal allocation of fund for female & male representatives.
- ❖ In the manuals and orders of local government, roles and responsibilities of the women members should be clearly defined.
- ❖ Discrimination in budget allocation and paying honorarium should be removed.
- ❖ Paying heed to women representatives.
- ❖ At least 35% allocation of budget has to ensure for women representatives of reserve seats.
- ❖ More priority must be given to monitoring the status, conditions and rights of women.
- ❖ Various opportunities for leadership training, training regarding the activities of local level and education should be given to women in order to encourage them to take up political and leadership position.
- ❖ Finally, research on women’s participation in politics, their voting behavior, consciousness and participation in the political parties must be undertaken.

7. Conclusion

This study has placed a focus on the enlightening and congruent facts regarding the participation of women in politics and their empowerment of Madaripur Sadar. This study found a link between women’s empowerment and political participation. Politics is actively pursued by women in Madaripur Sadar. However, their actual empowerment, power of decision-making and control, and the barriers to their involvement in politics are evident. The general public should be aware of these. The main goal of this study was to evaluate the decision-making and managing abilities of political women. The fact that women partici-

pate so heavily in politics in this study area has contributed to the good findings. Although some secondary data were used, data were acquired using the survey approach. Women from rural and urban areas have both been included as respondents. As a consequence, practically the same situation of women's empowerment in the research area has been discovered.

The study demonstrates why and how women engage in politics. Regardless of whether they win or lose in the various stages of elections, the majority of women in politics really feel more empowered. Women are dependent on the judgment of top male political figures. Even while many respondents are active in the election of social services, they are powerless over their families. The majority of them have run for office with the support of their husband's or father's popularity. However, almost all of the respondents believe that as a result of this increase in engagement, women have become significantly more powerful.

8. Limitations and Future Directions

The goal of the current study is to comprehend the genuine political empowerment of women. The main goal is to understand the political women's decision-making capacity. Future research should look into how rural residents view politics and women's engagement, how communities may support women's empowerment, and how people generally associate women's politics with social phenomena. The author places a strong emphasis on the significance of "Political empowerment of women orientations, as well as related elements, as a topic where further research is urgently needed." The implementation of the proactive initiatives recommended by the study guarantees the existence of women in politics in the extremely complex and dynamic environment. The study would undoubtedly increase the chances for academics, political figures, and social scientists to rediscover and rethink methods that would allow them to adjust to diverse advances and changes in political processes.

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Data Availability

The article contains all of the data necessary to support the results. Thus, no additional data sources are required.

Conflicts of Interest

The author states that no conflict of interest exists in connection with the publishing of this article.

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