

Women’s Empowerment: Impact of RMG; Case from Gazipur District

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Abstract

Women empowerment mainly emphasizes on participation of women in all aspects of life; economic, social, cultural, political, legal, and psychological. This research examined the impact of ready-made garment industry on women empowerment considering 12 garment companies located in Gazipur district of Bangladesh by applying the feminist theories of economics and liberal feminism. A sample of 360(response rate is 88.33%) women workers has been used for this study. Analysis indicated that the relationship between RMG industry and women empowerment has found to be positive while not all the factors exhibited statistical significance but most of the factors exhibited statistical significance. Current study has also found that women workers of RMG industry are well capable of performing their duties in-line with their male counterparts and have significantly changed their societal status. Current study has depicted that Liberal Feminism is strongly present in the RMG industry of Bangladesh because most of the female workers have achieved affordable healthcare, affordable childcare, reduced sexual harassment, voting right, education, equal pay for equal work, and reduced domestic violence. Therefore, the conclusion is that RMG industry has positive impact on women empowerment. Sexual harassment, job satisfaction, discrimination in wages, satisfactory work environment for women etc. are the most important issues that need to be focused in order to empower women. The prospect is significant and needs to be maintained by the combined actions from individuals, families, societies, an. governments.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Ready-made Garment Industry, Economic Empowerment, Social and Cultural Empowerment, Legal Empowerment

Introduction

Women empowerment is a concept which anticipates that women should participate fully in economic life across all sectors in order to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families, and communities (UN, 2015). The term “women empowerment” could be defined from feminist view point of women liberalisation. According to feminism theories, women empowerment involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of women’s rights and interests (Ikeotuonye, 2015). Empowerment of women benefits not only women alone rather it benefits women, their intimate partners, families, and the communities they are living. Empirical literature on women empowerment indicates that the status of women empowerment in Bangladesh has significantly improved while several issues need to be focused

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well in order to achieve the optimum result (Reza, 2003; Kabeer, 2001). The ready-made garment industry is one of the pioneering industries that can help women achieve what they did not receive from society.

The feminist critics seek a place for the empowerment of women through literary texts. They assume that literary text naturalises the oppression of women through its stereotypical representation of women as weak/vulnerable, seductress, obstacle, sexual object of the male's desire, a procreating device and so on. They argue that literary texts reproduce social biases that see the woman as only the "other" of the male. The feminists criticize a second and other place of women in society and suggest that inequality of sexes does not have a biological basis or origin; it originates in the cultural constructions of gender difference (Deveaux, 1994). They feel that such type of inequality is the hindrance to the empowerment of women. There is the need for a canon of women's writing. The writing of patriarchal society puts a patriarchal ideology. A woman's texts will suggest an alternative picture of the conditions, desires, psychology of the woman. The feminists seek to formulate either a gender-neutral language which will reject patriarchal terms like 'history' and 'mankind' and where the voice of the silenced subaltern-woman will provide an alternative history (Lazzari, 1991). They try to focus on economic independence and a separate space of women and appeal to enter in the positions of power. They also appeal to the readers to read the text without the gender consciousness. Marxist feminism tried to open the complex relations between gender and the economy.

Millions of lives of Bangladeshis have been radically changed by the ready-made garments (RMG) industry; the industry acts as the main pillar of the Bangladesh economy and currently holding the third spot of largest RMG exporter of the world. Since the 1980s the RMG industry of Bangladesh has experienced exponential growth; the industry has grown to over 5,000 factories from only 50 factories. The industry employs more than 4.5 million people of which 80% are women. At present, the RMG industry is the largest employer of women; it has changed the socio-economic status of many women. Many women became financially independent by the blessing of the RMG industry.

However, in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the region, the social structure has deeply embedded the issue of gender inequality. The problem is so severe that women hardly have any control in the society; their role is limited only being mother, daughter, sister, and wife. Women were disadvantaged and deprived of basic rights as well. The situation has radically changed when the RMG industry emerged and offered opportunities that have never been offered to these people. Since then women started participating in economic activities. They have now decision making power, their voice, and ownership of assets due to their ability to generate income for the family. Empowerment of women in Bangladesh has been aided by several sectors; microfinance, ready-made garment, and agriculture are the leading sectors. Many researches have been conducted about empowerment of women in Bangladesh but many of these studies focused on studying the role of microfinance and agricultural sector. Therefore, there remained a gap between previous studies on women empowerment as extant researches inadequately included the role of ready-made garment industry in empowering women. This study endeavoured to study this existing gap

in order to examine the impact of ready-made garment industry on women empowerment. The objectives of this study include:

- To understand major areas of empowerment applicable to the Bangladeshi women garment workers.
- To examine the significance of the relationship between ready-made garment industry and women empowerment.
- To analyse the impact of ready-made garment industry on women empowerment.

Literature Review

Bangladesh is such a country where women hardly worked outside their home, but the ready-made garment industry was the first industry to offer large-scale job opportunities for women since 1980s. Contemporary research performed by Heath and Mobarak (2013) have discussed significant benefits of having access to industrial job and its positive impact on gender empowerment considering data spanning thirty years in Bangladesh. Dalal, Dahlstrom, and Timpka (2013) have studied the interaction between ready-made garment industry and non-economic empowerment of women associated with intimate partner violence in Bangladesh. The study has found that women have better non-economic conditions within their family and the degree of violence with their intimate partners also decreased significantly. However, empirical analysis on women empowerment by Itohara (2013) has found that women working in the RMG industry earns as much as their partners, thus enabling women to participate more in family matters. The garment sector is the largest employer of women in Bangladesh. The garment sector has provided employment opportunities to women from the rural areas that previously did not have any opportunity to be part of the formal workforce. This has given women the chance to be financially independent and have a voice in the family because now they contribute financially.

Early marriage is one of the major problems faced by the girls in Bangladesh. Due to early marriage girls face tremendous social, psychological, educational, and economic problems. Researches on the effect of employment of women on early marriage (Hathaway, 2009; Hoque and Itohara, 2009) have found that women, aged between 15 and 22, who actively participates in financial aspects of their respective families face reduced exposure to early marriage. Gender justice is another important aspect of women empowerment. Gender justice has increased in Bangladesh according to Kabeer (2011) compared to Kabeer (2001).

Empirical researches on women empowerment have identified several variables in order to measure women empowerment. Review of extant literature on women empowerment indicated that empowerment of women are best measured by five major dimensions; economic, social and cultural, legal, political, and psychological (Reza, 2003; Kabeer, 2001). Economic empowerment is crucial for Bangladeshi women because it helps them achieving financial independence, acquiring equal opportunity to gain positions in economic power, and entering into workforce (Fan and Rajib, 2013). Women need control over their own bodies, access to family planning services, freedom from sexual and domestic violence, and greater visibility in social spaces in order to achieve their social and cultural empowerment. Access to legal issues and awareness of legal rights are very crucial for Bangladeshi women because most of the women in this country

do not have access to legal services (Arif, 2014). Political empowerment of women is another vital issue as it helps spreading women in representing political system and access to vote. Moreover, psychological empowerment helps women to have self-worth and psychological happiness; it is vital for women (Uddin, 2015).

Feminist movement creates self-awareness in women. This self-awareness helps to enrich their life. The process of self-awareness transfers their hidden, individual fears into security and independence. Feminism studies of women as writers, and its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women (Erickson and Faria, 2011). Feminism does not only seek a place for women in literary texts but it seeks a place in society. Their appeal is to be considered them as a human being and equal to the male. Today if we see the condition of women in Bangladeshi society, we come to know that their place is better than previous but it is not satisfactory. The women are rejected before their birth through the abortion of foetus. If this is a scene in the society, we need to stress this issue through literary texts. Today is a more need to write about the inequality in the society. Feminism is a supporting stone for women to preserve their identity, their existence (Mayoux, 1992). It is used to relieve women from the burden of patriarchal system. It makes clear vision of male being and creates a feeling of equality in them. Overall, Feminism helps to enrich and empower the life of women.

Several sub movements of feminist ideology have developed over the years; some of the major subtypes are listed below. These movements often overlap, and some feminists identify themselves with several types of feminist thought. However, Liberal feminism asserts the equality of men and women through political and legal reform. It is an individualistic form of feminism, which focuses on women's ability to show and maintain their equality through their own actions and choices (McMullen, 2006). Liberal feminism uses the personal interactions between men and women as the place from which to transform society. According to liberal feminists, all women are capable of asserting their ability to achieve equality; therefore it is possible for change to happen without altering the structure of society (McMullen, 2006). Issues important to liberal feminists include reproductive and abortion rights, sexual harassment, voting, education, "equal pay for equal work", affordable childcare, affordable health care, and bringing to light the frequency of sexual and domestic violence against women. On the contrary, Feminist economics broadly refers to a developing branch of economics that applies feminist insights and critiques to economics (Swirsky and Angelone, 2015). Research under this heading is often interdisciplinary, critical, or heterodox. It encompasses debates about the relationship between feminism and economics on many levels: from applying mainstream economic methods to under-researched "women's" areas, to questioning how mainstream economics values the reproductive sector, to deeply philosophical critiques of economic epistemology and methodology.

For women, the challenge represented by the new market economy was different. In fact, some historians have argued that the market revolution provided more of an opportunity than a challenge for many women (Erickson and Faria, 2011). Jeanne Boydson, for example, has suggested that women were among the earliest and most energetic participants in the market economy. While traditional patterns of production and exchange continued to guide their

husbands, women developed cottage industries that could earn profits in the marketplace. Spinning and home crafts, milk, egg, and butter businesses all generated profits for women independent of the household's primary livelihood. It was these profits, moreover, that often enabled households to transition toward more full participation in the new market economy. Money earned by a woman's egg business, for example, could be used to purchase additional land on which to raise a cash crop.

Other women took on work as sewers and fitters in the new large-scale shoe and clothing operations owned by merchant capitalists. They became part of the decentralized manufacturing plants that replaced the small shops owned by master shoemakers and tailors. Previously barred from these occupations by traditional understandings of the craft, women found work within the fragmented production processes of the new "putting-out" systems (Swirsky and Angelone, 2015). And as they filled these roles within the emerging industries, Boydston continues, women faced fewer psychic challenges than men. While working-class men bristled under the demoralizing demands of the new production processes, while they wrestled with the loss of status that accompanied their transformation into permanent wage earners, women faced fewer challenges to their sense of self. More accustomed to subordinate positions, they accepted the limitations inherent in the new economy more easily. In fact, unburdened by traditional conceptions of social mobility, they could embrace the new opportunities offered by the expanding market with less anxiety. Transnational investment is a key strategy of globalization. Transnational investors demand a cheap and 'flexible' labor force. Poor nations and communities recruit women workers in order to compete for investors by keeping wages as low as possible and safety requirements at a minimum. Women are very often temporary, part-time workers and/or home-based workers, with little access to benefits, no job security in a low wage service sector job (McMullen, 2006). This is the sector of largest job growth in many countries. Where is a woman worker's right to a freely choose a job which pays equal pay for work of equal value? Where is a woman worker's right to safe and healthy working conditions and just and fair wages that will make possible an existence worthy of human dignity? Does globalization give her equal opportunity for employment and protection from unemployment? There appears to be little or no room for the rights of women workers under globalization (McMullen, 2006).

According to Zaman et al. (2009), economic empowerment of Bangladeshi women is the most important factor of all because most of the women face discrimination due to the fact that they do not contribute to their family financially. Women need control over income because they are being considered as burden in their families for not having income to provide (Hossain and Hoque, 2015). Most of the researches on women empowerment highly focused on economic empowerment; this is because women have been kept within four walls and never allowed to work outside, consequently families believed that female members are the ultimate burden (Sarker and Afroze, 2014). Zaman et al. (2009) and Sarker and Afroze (2014) have studied the overall level of job satisfaction between male and female workers in the RMG industry. These studies have found that female workers have higher job satisfaction compared to male; moreover, the focus group discussion indicated that most of the female workers believed that they are being valued in their families.

The social and cultural environment of Bangladesh also does not allow women to have access to resources or income. Moreover, the social environment views women's role in developing a society negatively (Rahman and Sultana, 2013). Due to several social and cultural constraints women are lagging behind. Researches on ways to improve social and cultural empowerment of women indicate that Bangladeshi women lack control over their own bodies from sexual and domestic violence (Kurpad, 2014). Rahman and Sultana (2013) further argued that women are also required to have greater visibility in order to shift cultural norms that place women subservient to men. On the other hand, legal empowerment is another issue that needs to care about. Not only women living in rural areas but also women living in urban areas and cities do not have much access to legal services (Hossain, 2015). It is important to ensure legal empowerment of women because it will provide a framework for legislation that expands knowledge and awareness of legal rights. If legal empowerment of women is possible it will expand the opportunity for individuals to mobilize for increased women's rights laws, utilizing the judicial system to create reform from above (Abdin, 2014).

Political empowerment is another important issue because Chowdhury and Chowdhury (2011) argued that as long as women represent in the political system of a country development or empowerment of women will not be initiated smoothly. Rahman and Naoroze (2007) have studied the role of political empowerment in fostering overall development of women in 17 developing countries from Asia and Africa. The study has concluded that right to vote and having knowledge of and the ability to be involved with the political system and being represented in local and national governments positively influences women empowerment. Further studies suggest that the higher the participation of women in the political system the higher the pace of women empowerment (Rahman, Karmaker, Mia, 2010). However, psychological empowerment of women is another crucial factor to consider. The feeling of self-worth and psychological happiness could not be built among the women without having access to psychological empowerment (Jahan, 2012). Jahan (2012) further argued that psychological empowerment of women comes with the acceptance of women's rights and their inclusion in society.

The RMG industry of Bangladesh has created job opportunities for women since 1980s. Through providing job opportunities this industry helped strengthen the economic empowerment of women in this country. More and more women are participating in this industry and researches indicate that women have been able to earn their own livelihood and have increased influence over their families. Rahman and Sultana (2013) have investigated gender equality and empowerment of women status in Bangladesh through the RMG industry by using geospatial data mining techniques. The study has found that women workers in the RMG industry have higher social recognition than women workers living in the rural areas.

Economic empowerment is the prime achievement of women workers in the RMG industry. RMG industry employed more than 4.5 million women and each of the workers earns at least 80 USD per month¹. According to Monsoor (2012), reducing the income differential may ensure

¹<http://www.dhakatribune.com/op-ed/2013/sep/26/wages-rmg-industry>

women participation in every industry and legislative actions and policies may also act as an important guideline for women empowerment. In Bangladeshi RMG industry labor unrest happens due to increased demand from workers while recent survey on women workers by Ahmed, Raihan, and Islam (2013) indicated that almost 87% of the women workers do not want to be involved in such unrest. However, it is obvious that RMG industry helped Bangladeshi women to achieve economic empowerment.

The social and cultural environment of Bangladesh has changed significantly from that of early 1990s. Society, now-a-days, does not view women as burden rather many families are now willingly allowing women to participate in different activities apart from earning income. However, the growth of RMG industry and increased participation of women in this industry helped achieve social parity (Ahamed, 2013). Dalal, Dahlstrom, and Timpka (2013) have studied the interactions between RMG industry and non-economic empowerment of women and concluded that there is a positive relationship although the association was indirect. Although, RMG industry does not offer legal information to its workers but workers in this industry have become aware of their legal rights due to increased incompliance of the garment factories. Consequently, the feeling of achieving legal rights has flourished in the minds of women garment workers as well. This will create awareness of legal rights among women workers which, in turn, will ensure legal empowerment.

Political empowerment is something that cannot be ensured through RMG industry rather creating awareness on rights to vote and participation of women in the political system may facilitate political empowerment of women (Emeagwali, 2005). However, psychological empowerment is possible through RMG industries because there are many RMG factories or companies that offer day-care services for the child of women workers. This is something that psychologically encourages women and ensures psychological happiness (Kabeer, 2011).

However, a recent study from psychological scientists Natalia Karelaia of INSEAD and Laura Guillén of the European School of Management and Technology found that female leaders may benefit from holding positive perceptions of themselves as women by using Liberal Feminism and Feminist Economics. The researchers found that women with more positive perceptions of their gender identity – the social and cultural expectations associated with one's gender – experienced less of a sense of conflict between being a leader and a woman (Karelaia and Guillén, 2014). Women who felt less of a clash between their identities as women and leaders reported less stress and more positive views on leadership roles and it supports the views of Liberal Feminism. In the first of three experiments, the researchers had a diverse group of female business school graduates complete assessments on gender identity, leadership identity, and identity conflict between the two. In a second study, 65 women leaders were randomly assigned to either a positive gender identity condition or a control condition. The women in the positive gender identity condition were asked to think about “specific reasons that made them and/or others think positively of women” before completing a writing exercise (Karelaia and Guillén, 2014). Participants in the control condition were asked to focus on “reasons that made them and/or others think negatively of women” before their writing assignment. For the third study,

over 600 women in leadership positions responded to an online survey where they answered the same assessments on their gender and leader identities as in the first study (Karelaia and Guillén, 2014). They also completed measures on psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and perceived stress. Across all three studies the researchers found that women with a more positive gender identity reported less identity conflict, better psychological well-being, and a more positive view of leadership roles which clearly supported the views of Liberal Feminism and Feminist Economics (Karelaia and Guillén, 2014).

Review of literature indicates that ready-made garment industry provides women to have income opportunity, access to resources, ownership of assets, opportunity for employment, and representation in economic decisions. All these achievements make sure women's economic empowerment. RMG industry also provides women freedom from sexual violence, reduced discrimination, and greater visibility in the society which ultimately ensures women's social and cultural empowerment. Moreover, the RMG industry helps ensuring legal empowerment of women through creating awareness about legal rights and mobilization of women rights. In addition to that, self-worth and psychological happiness helps ensuring women's psychological empowerment. Considering the literature reviewed above and critical analysis of extant literature the theoretical framework of this study is as follows:

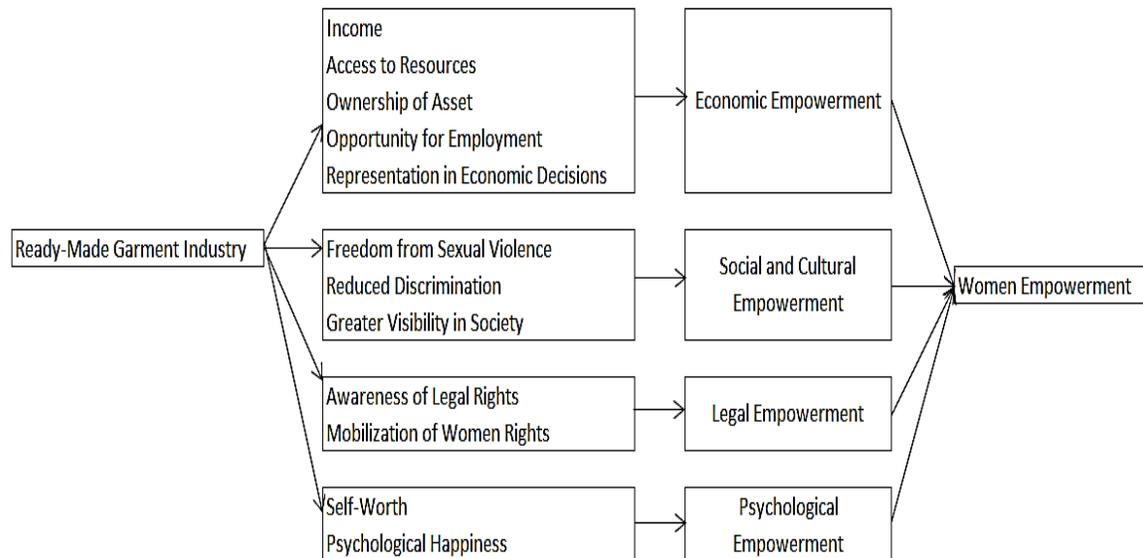


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Research Methodology

Methodology of this research has been developed focusing on the objectives of this study. In order to achieve the objectives of this study Gazipur district has been chosen purposively because

of availability of garment companies or factories in this area. In Gazipur, there are many garment factories but only 12 factories or companies have been selected for this study. The reason for selecting 12 garment factories includes accessibility, communication system, availability of respondents, and there was no study that focused on garment factories in Gazipur district. Random sampling technique has been employed to determine the sample size. Random sampling strategy has been used because it reduces biasness from the researcher and increases the possibility of achieving higher reliability (Balsley, Clover, Clover, 2012). However, a sample of 360 respondents, 30 from each garment, has been chosen by using random sampling technique. In order to ensure the conformity of the objectives of this study a draft interview was arranged to collect relevant information. The draft interview was designed in a way that included all relevant aspects of research objectives. On few respondents, the draft interview was pre-tested so that new information could be gathered and integrated in the main interview session (Bryman and Bell, 2013). The draft interview helped improving, rearranging, and modifying the original interview questions. As most of the women garment workers do not have proper education to understand complicated questions, therefore the interview questions have been framed in an understandable manner. Questions were appropriately structured so that most reluctant respondent could have no hesitation in answering the questions (Minichiello, 2010).

However, data has been collected directly from the selected respondents by face-to-face interview on a set of field level primary data collection strategy. The interview schedule has been designed after consulting with the management of respective factories. Data for this research has been collected from August to September, 2015. The researcher assured all the participants that collected data will remain anonymous and confidential as well as be used exclusively for research purpose only. The researcher further assured the participants that this research will not cause any harm to them rather produce benefits to women garment workers in course of time.

In order to reduce possible error in data collection procedure the researcher has employed field checking and independent re-interviewing of the respondents strategies (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2013). These measures helped the researcher to increase the reliability of the data collected. However, data processing has been manually edited and coded and finally summarized carefully. Data analysis has been performed using SPSS 16 because this research required quantitative analysis of data in order to measure the impact of RMG industry on women empowerment. The researcher has performed descriptive statistics and other reliability measures to understand the characteristics of dataset. In addition to that, chi-square test for association has been performed in order to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables (Yin, 2013). Finally, the researcher performed binomial logistic regression in order to predict the probability that an observation falls into one of two categories of a dichotomous variable based on one or more independent variables that can be either continuous or categorical (Zikmund, 2013).

Findings

Empirical literature on women empowerment indicates that the status of women empowerment in Bangladesh has significantly improved while several issues need to be focused well in order to achieve the optimum result. The ready-made garment industry is one of the pioneering industries that can help women achieve what they did not receive from society. Many researches have been conducted about empowerment of women in Bangladesh but many of these studies focused on studying the role of microfinance and agricultural sector. Therefore, there remained a gap between previous studies on women empowerment as extant researches did not include much research on the role of ready-made garment industry in empowering women. This study endeavoured to study this existing gap in order to examine the impact of ready-made garment industry on women empowerment.

In this study, quantitative data has been used to make analysis. Quantitative data analysis requires measurement of reliability. The measurement of reliability has been performed using Cronbach's Alpha (Internal Consistency). The reliability analysis indicated that the value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.744 which means that the dataset used for this study has higher reliability as the value is greater than 0.70. However, the higher value of Cronbach's Alpha does not necessarily mean the outcome is unidimensional. In order to examine the exact relationship between the variables Chi-square analysis along with binomial logistic regression has been performed.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.744	12

Table 1: Internal Consistency Analysis

Chi-square test for independence, also called Pearson's chi-square test or the chi-square test of association, is used to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables. The chi-square test has been performed between age and choice of empowerment. Here, by choice of empowerment the researcher meant what type of empowerment does women RMG workers feel to have achieved. The result indicates that most of the women aged 18 years felt that they are being economically empowered through working in RMG industry. Women who are aged 19 years indicated that they are socially and culturally empowered; women aged 20 years felt they are legally empowered, women aged 21 years felt they are socially and culturally empowered, women aged 22 years felt they are psychologically empowered, women aged 23 years felt they are both legally and psychologically empowered, women aged 24 years felt they are socially and culturally empowered, and women aged 25 years felt they are both economically and psychologically empowered. In addition to that, 24.4% of the participants believed they are economically empowered, 25% believed they are socially and culturally empowered, 22.1% believed they are legally empowered, and 28.5% believed that they are psychologically empowered through ready-made garment industry.

Age * ChoiceOfEmpowerment Crosstabulation

	Choice of Empowerment				Total
	Economic	Social & Cultural	Legal	Psychological	
Age 18 Count	9	7	8	5	29
% within Age	31.0%	24.1%	27.6%	17.2%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	21.4%	16.3%	21.1%	10.2%	16.9%
% of Total	5.2%	4.1%	4.7%	2.9%	16.9%
19 Count	4	7	3	6	20
% within Age	20.0%	35.0%	15.0%	30.0%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	9.5%	16.3%	7.9%	12.2%	11.6%
% of Total	2.3%	4.1%	1.7%	3.5%	11.6%
20 Count	5	3	7	6	21
% within Age	23.8%	14.3%	33.3%	28.6%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	11.9%	7.0%	18.4%	12.2%	12.2%
% of Total	2.9%	1.7%	4.1%	3.5%	12.2%
21 Count	3	10	6	8	27
% within Age	11.1%	37.0%	22.2%	29.6%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	7.1%	23.3%	15.8%	16.3%	15.7%
% of Total	1.7%	5.8%	3.5%	4.7%	15.7%
22 Count	5	5	2	6	18
% within Age	27.8%	27.8%	11.1%	33.3%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	11.9%	11.6%	5.3%	12.2%	10.5%
% of Total	2.9%	2.9%	1.2%	3.5%	10.5%
23 Count	4	2	6	6	18
% within Age	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	9.5%	4.7%	15.8%	12.2%	10.5%
% of Total	2.3%	1.2%	3.5%	3.5%	10.5%
24 Count	6	7	4	6	23
% within Age	26.1%	30.4%	17.4%	26.1%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	14.3%	16.3%	10.5%	12.2%	13.4%
% of Total	3.5%	4.1%	2.3%	3.5%	13.4%
25 Count	6	2	2	6	16
% within Age	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	37.5%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	14.3%	4.7%	5.3%	12.2%	9.3%
% of Total	3.5%	1.2%	1.2%	3.5%	9.3%
Total Count	42	43	38	49	172
% within Age	24.4%	25.0%	22.1%	28.5%	100.0%
% within ChoiceOfEmpowerment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total	24.4%	25.0%	22.1%	28.5%	100.0%

Table 2: Cross-tabulation Table

The Chi-square test for association (Pearson Chi-Square) table indicates that the value of significance is less than the alpha value, i.e. the value of significance is 0.019 while the alpha value is 0.05. This implies that the relationship between RMG industry and women empowerment is statistically significant.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.038 ^a	21	.019
Likelihood Ratio	18.056	21	.045
Linear-by-Linear Association	.181	1	.040
N of Valid Cases	172		

a. 13 cells (40.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.53.

Table 3: Chi-square Test for Association

Binomial logistic regression (often referred to simply as logistic regression), has been conducted in order to predict the probability that an observation falls into one of two categories of a dichotomous dependent variable based on one or more independent variables that can be either continuous or categorical. Although SPSS generates several tables of output when binomial logistic regression is carried out but only three main tables can explain the whole output of this regression. First of all, the model summary of the regression needs to be explained because it helps understanding how much variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the model (the equivalent of R^2 in multiple regression).

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	226.774 ^a	.064	.085

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 3 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 4: Summary of Binomial Logistic Regression

This table contains the Cox & Snell R Square and Nagelkerke R Square values, which are both methods of calculating the explained variation. These values are sometimes referred to as pseudo R^2 values (and will have lower values than in multiple regression). However, they are interpreted in the same manner, but with more caution. Therefore, the explained variation in the dependent variable based on defined model ranges from 64.0% to 85.0%, depending on whether the researcher reference the Cox & Snell R^2 or Nagelkerke R^2 methods, respectively. Nagelkerke R^2 is a modification of Cox & Snell R^2 , the latter of which cannot achieve a value of 1. For this

reason, it is preferable to report the Nagelkerke R^2 value. Therefore, it can be said that 85% variation in the dependent variable has been explained by the regression model.

Binomial logistic regression estimates the probability of an event (in this case, having empowerment) occurring. If the estimated probability of the event occurring is greater than or equal to 0.5 (better than even chance), SPSS Statistics classifies the event as occurring (e.g., empowerment being present). If the probability is less than 0.5, SPSS Statistics classifies the event as not occurring (e.g., no empowerment). It is very common to use binomial logistic regression to predict whether cases can be correctly classified (i.e., predicted) from the independent variables. Therefore, it becomes necessary to have a method to assess the effectiveness of the predicted classification against the actual classification. There are many methods to assess this with their usefulness depending on the nature of the study conducted. However, all methods revolve around the observed and predicted classifications, which are presented in the "Classification Table", as shown below:

Classification Table^a

Observed			Predicted		
			Empowerment		Percentage Correct
			No	Yes	
Step 1	Empowerment	No	42	40	48.2
		Yes	32	58	64.4
	Overall Percentage				58.1

a. The cut value is .500

Table 5: Binomial Logistic Regression Classification Table

Firstly, it can be observed that the table has a subscript which states, "The cut value is .500". This means that if the probability of a case being classified into the "yes" category is greater than .500, then that particular case is classified into the "yes" category. Otherwise, the case is classified as in the "no" category (as mentioned previously). In this case, the probability of being empowered is greater than 0.50, therefore that particular case is classified into the "yes" category. Moreover, the overall percentage row indicates a value of 58.1 which is higher than the cut value (i.e. 0.50). As a result, it can be said that the probability of being empowered through RMG industry is 58.1%. However, the "Variables in the Equation" table shows the contribution of each independent variable to the model and its statistical significance. This table is shown below:

Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a								
Income	.285	.325	.769	1	.038	.752	.398	1.422
Access To Resources	.099	.323	.095	1	.048	.905	.481	1.706
Ownership Of Asset	.042	.337	.016	1	.029	.958	.496	1.854
Opp For Employment	.468	.326	2.053	1	.052	1.596	.842	3.026
Econ Decisions	.251	.325	.596	1	.040	1.285	.680	2.428
FreedomFromSexualViolence	.254	.340	.557	1	.055	1.289	.662	2.507
Reduced Discrimination	.020	.331	.004	1	.053	1.020	.533	1.952
Greater Visibility In Society	.230	.327	.496	1	.041	1.259	.663	2.392
Legal Rights	-.443	.329	1.817	1	.078	.642	.337	1.223
MobilizationOfWomenRights	-.523	.322	2.634	1	.105	.593	.315	1.115
Self Worth	.125	.333	.140	1	.058	.883	.460	1.696
Psychological Happiness	-.476	.323	2.169	1	.041	.621	.330	1.171
Constant	.453	.631	.514	1	.473	1.572		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Income, AccessToResources, OwnershipOfAsset, OppForEmployment, EconDecisions, FreedomFromSexualViolence, ReducedDiscrimination, GreaterVisibilityInSociety, LegalRights, MobilizationOfWomenRights, SelfWorth, PsychologicalHappiness.

Table 6: Variables in the Binomial Logistic Regression

The Wald test ("Wald" column) is used to determine statistical significance for each of the independent variables. The statistical significance of the test is found in the "Sig." column. From these results it can be seen that Income ($p = .038$), Access to Resources ($p = .048$), Ownership of Asset ($p = .016$), Economic Decisions ($p = .040$), Greater Visibility in Society ($p = .041$), and Psychological Happiness ($p = .041$) added significantly to the model/prediction, but Opportunity for Employment ($p = .052$), Freedom from Sexual Violence ($p = .055$), Reduced Discrimination ($p = .053$), Legal Rights ($p = .078$), and Self Worth ($p = .058$) did not add significantly to the model.

Therefore, the regression equation becomes:

Women Empowerment = $.453 + .285$ (Income) + $.099$ (Access to Resources) + $.042$ (Ownership of Asset) + $.468$ (Opportunity for Employment) + $.251$ (Economic Decisions) + $.254$ (Freedom from Sexual Violence) + $.020$ (Reduced Discrimination) + $.230$ (Greater Visibility in Society) - $.443$ (Legal Rights) - $.523$ (Mobilization of Women Rights) + $.125$ (Self Worth) - $.476$ (Psychological Happiness)

Putting it altogether, the analyses indicate that majority percentage of participants believed that they are being empowered after started working in the RMG industry. Crosstabs analysis indicated that the relationship between RMG industry and women empowerment is statistically significant. The binomial logistic regression analysis indicated that the relationship between RMG industry and women empowerment is positive while not all the factors exhibited statistical significance but most of the factors exhibited statistical significance. Finally, it could be said that the Bangladeshi RMG industry contributes positively to empowering women workers through offering different opportunities. Therefore, the conclusion is that ready-made garment industry has positive impact on women empowerment.

According to liberal feminists, all women are capable of asserting their ability to achieve equality; therefore it is possible for change to happen without altering the structure of society. Current study has also found that women who are working for the RMG industry are well capable of performing their duties in-line with their male counterparts and have significantly changed their societal status without altering the structure of the society. Issues important to liberal feminists include reproductive and abortion rights, sexual harassment, voting, education, "equal pay for equal work", affordable childcare, affordable health care, and bringing to light the frequency of sexual and domestic violence against women. Current study has depicted that Liberal Feminism is strongly present in the RMG industry of Bangladesh because most of the female workers in this industry have achieved affordable healthcare, affordable childcare, reduced sexual harassment, voting right, education, equal pay for equal work, and reduced domestic violence.

Furthermore, the Feminist Economic Theory broadly refers to a developing branch of economics that applies feminist insights and critiques to economics. It encompasses debates about the relationship between feminism and economics on many levels: from applying mainstream economic methods to under-researched "women's" areas, to questioning how mainstream economics values the reproductive sector, to deeply philosophical critiques of economic epistemology and methodology. Current study has also depicted that feminist insight regarding economics is at work in the RMG industry of Bangladesh as more and more women are getting opportunities in the mainstream economic activities of Bangladesh. Moreover, the reproductive RMG industry of Bangladesh also enabled women workers to achieve societal and economic well-being through applying feminist theory of economics.

Conclusion

Millions of lives of Bangladeshis have been radically changed by the ready-made garments (RMG) industry but there were criticisms regarding the fact that does ready-made garment industry contribute positively to empowering women. Empowerment of women benefits not only women alone rather it benefits women, their intimate partners, families, and the communities they are living. Empirical literature on women empowerment indicates that the status of women empowerment in Bangladesh has significantly improved while several issues need to be focused

well in order to achieve the optimum result. The ready-made garment industry is one of the pioneering industries that can help women achieve what they did not receive from society. Microfinance, ready-made garment, and agriculture are the leading industries that helped Bangladeshi women to empower and achieve what they needed to achieve. This study focused on studying the impact of ready-made garment industry on women empowerment. However, one of the major objectives of this study was to understand major areas of empowerment required for Bangladeshi women. Review of extant literature on women empowerment indicated that empowerment of women are best measured by five major dimensions; economic, social and cultural, legal, political, and psychological. Economic empowerment is crucial for Bangladeshi women because it helps them achieving financial independence, acquiring equal opportunity to gain positions in economic power, and entering into workforce. Women need control over their own bodies, access to family planning services, freedom from sexual and domestic violence, and greater visibility in social spaces in order to achieve their social and cultural empowerment. Access to legal issues and awareness of legal rights are very crucial for Bangladeshi women because most of the women in this country do not have access to legal services. Political empowerment of women is another vital issue as it helps spreading women in representing political system and access to vote. Moreover, psychological empowerment helps women to have self-worth and psychological happiness; it is vital for women.

Another objective of this research was to examine the significance of the relationship between ready-made garment industry and women empowerment. The crosstabs analysis indicated that 24.4% of the participants believed they are economically empowered, 25% believed they are socially and culturally empowered, 22.1% believed they are legally empowered, and 28.5% believed that they are psychologically empowered through ready-made garment industry. Final objective of this research was to analyse the impact of ready-made garment industry on women empowerment. The binomial logistic regression analysis indicated that the relationship between RMG industry and women empowerment is positive while not all the factors exhibited statistical significance but most of the factors exhibited statistical significance. Finally, it could be said that the Bangladeshi RMG industry contributes positively to empowering women workers through offering different opportunities. Therefore, the conclusion is that ready-made garment industry has positive impact on women empowerment.

However, the results of this study signify the women empowerment status considering the women workers in the ready-made garment industry of Bangladesh. Yet, there are certain aspects prevailing in this industry that can further empower women. Sexual harassment, job satisfaction, discrimination in wages, satisfactory work environment for women etc. are the most important issues that need to be focused in order to empower women. Policy formulation for women empowerment needs to be enacted so that women can face increased benefits and participate more actively in this industry. The prospect is significant and needs to be maintained by the combined actions from individuals, families, societies, and governments; thus, women in the ready-made garment industry could be further empowered.

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