

Educational Status of the Married Women and Their Participation at Household Decision Making in Rural Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The key focus of this study is to explain the level of education of married women and their participation in decision making process at different arena of rural household. To find out the nature of the reality, survey research design was used for this study. The study was conducted at Maharajpur, one of the unions of Jhenidah district in Bangladesh in 2011. The respondents of the study consisted of 120 married women who were purposively selected from the study area. Data were collected through direct interview method using an interview schedule. Data were shown on univariate, as well as bivariate statistical tables and then analyzed. The study reveals that a significant percent (93.3) of higher level of education completed women had their consent of getting married whereas no consent was made by illiterate women. In the same way 46.7 percent higher level of education completed women had high level of purchasing power in compare to illiterate (.0%) and primary (14.6%) level completed women for the same level of purchasing. In the political decision making 86.7 percent higher level of education completed women had own consent to vote for election in contrast to 77.8 percent illiterate and 70.7 percent primary level completed women were influenced by their husband to decide voting.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Demographic Decision, Household Decision, Level of Education, Political Decision, Socio-economic Decision, Women

I INTRODUCTION

HOUSEHOLD decision making and educational status are critical for economic and human development. Many decisions made at the household level influence the welfare of the individuals living in the household as well as their communities. Decisions such as where to live, how to generate income, how much to invest and consume, contraceptives use and how many children to have constitute common dilemmas faced by households. The outcomes of such decisions are often linked to economic performance at the household level as well as in well-being of the household as a whole. So it is important for all members of the household to take part in household decision making what Becker [1] has termed as utility function where all household members are taking into

account in his neoclassical theory of the household. But women at any stage from girl to till becoming a woman are facing discrimination in taking part in household decision making as our society is male dominated. In this patriarchal society domination on women starts from birth because girl child is not particularly wanted child. Her life is a journey of subordination because she gets less or no chance to take decision about herself. From her birth to marriage her father decides for her on matters. After marriage husband and in-laws get hold of her reins and decide matters about her.

Women's autonomy in decision making is positively associated with their age, education, employment and number of living children. Women from rural area and having no educational background have less autonomy in decision making in society. Women's increased education is

positively associated with autonomy in own health care decision making, more schooling, family planning and so on. Women in Bangladesh face discrimination regarding decision making because educational status of women below than any other developing country. Bangladesh will undoubtedly be hampered if the status of women, constituting about fifty percent of the country's population, remains as low as it is today [2].

Women's decision-making power is related to their mobility. The Women having power to take decisions regarding to go outside alone or go to make household purchases are empower in decision-making. But it is a common scenario of today that women movement has locked in this patriarchal society because of having low educational status.

Ullah *et al.* [3] stated that the importance of education for woman has been accepted worldwide, as it improves their earning ability and empowers them in deciding about their family size, and other family decisions. The study has shown that the educated women delay marriages, use family planning methods, they tend to have small family and play an effective role in society. Education also pays in economic terms for women, by allowing them going out of their houses and work in different sectors of the country, the working women will desire small family so they can easily handle the family matters as well as the official matters. In a large number of the families where women are educated the couple mutually takes the decision about the family size.

Bbaale and Mpuga [4] the positive impact of women's education on their autonomy, leading to later marriages, increased use of contraceptives and lower fertility. Female education has also been claimed to alter household power relations making women more autonomous and giving them greater control of various dimensions of their lives

Education is necessary for the Survival of a nation. The concept education suggests development of valuable knowledge and skills in a society. Hence O'Connor [5] sees the educational system of any society as an elaborate social mechanism designed to bring about in the persons submitted to it certain skills and attitudes that are adjusted to be useful and desirable in the society.

Female education has also been claimed to alter household power relations making women more autonomous and giving them greater control of various dimensions of their lives [6]. Consequently, such greater control of their lives could be reflected in the independent decision educated women take in adoption of family planning where they act independently in fertility matters.

The study further demonstrates that maternal education has been found to be the most significant determinant of fertility behavior and its effect in lowering the number of children a woman desires has been observed in a variety of settings.

Acharya [7] said that education is recognized as a major instrument in empowering women. Education may help a woman to gain a better understanding of her rights and responsibilities, and make her more confident about her possibilities, including the possibility of divorce, decisions of family affairs and her personal affairs within the family. In this case, aware of an educated woman's possibilities, her husband and the family members may decide to consult her before major decisions affecting her are made.

Maitra [8] argued that female education is likely to increase the bargaining power of the wife and reduce the power imbalance within the family. The estimated results emphasized the role of female education in reducing total fertility and increasing age at marriage. Also, the higher the education level of woman, the stronger is the effect of education on age at marriage.

Boonto [9] asserted that female education is essentially important in accessing decision-making power and in improving quality of their life. The study further confirmed that women, who have higher education, have higher participation in family planning and contraception used.

Traditionally in the decision making level women in Bangladesh have very few roles in every sphere of household. But to maintain stability in the society, both male and female should have equal role to decide anything. In Bangladesh the tendency of female inferiority creates very few roles in all spheres. Women cannot decide their age at marriage and it depends on the parents or other elder members. They cannot play active role in the place of occupation and as a result their contribution to household income is less. Household income mainly depends on husbands so they take decision in every sector. But the trends of patriarchal decision are changing day by day due to the influence of education among women. From the 21st century in Bangladesh the revolution of female education is observed due to increasing facilities to go school for them. So this study tries to find out whether education of women actually can play role to make decision at household level.

This study have some specific objectives including to find out the level of education of women; to explore the role of education on the demographic decision making of women; to acquaint with the level of education on the

socio-economic decision making of women and to observe the role of education on political decision making of women.

II BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

A. Background

The study was conducted on married women of Mayadarpur village. The village Mayadarpur is located at Maharajpur union in Jhenidah upazila of Bangladesh. It has an area of 0.35 square miles. There is no available recent written document on the village. According to data collected from the Upazila Statistics Office based on 2001 population census, Mayadarpur has 1113 population comprised of 577 male and 536 female. Agriculture is the main occupation of the inhabitants living in this area. Here the literacy rate is 47.21 percent consisting of 52.70 percent male and 41.09 percent female which is lower compared to the national rate. The suicide rate of the village is 0.5 percent. There is no primary or secondary school in the village. So to get education the students has to go to the nearby villages. Women of the village are mainly housewife and have marginalized socioeconomic status.

B. Methodology

1. Samples

On the basis of several specific assumptions derived from the relevant literatures review pointed out above this study investigated educational level of women and their household decision making in rural Bangladesh. In so doing the village Mayadarpur of Maharajpur union of Jhenidah district in Khulna Division of Bangladesh was purposively selected for this study. To collect the data from the study area a sampling unit was developed for married women. Data were purposively collected from a sample of 120 married women for this study since January to February 2011.

2. Variables and Measures

This study encompasses the influence of education on various level of household decision making of married women in rural Bangladesh. Here three aspects of household decision making were identified that include

socio-economic, demographic and political. Different typical concepts of decision making among three aspects are following: Socio-economic aspect: *level of education of married* women was nominally measured and coded as 1= illiterate, 2=primary, 3=secondary and 4=higher; *occupation* was measure nominally and coded as 1=housewife, 2=service holder and 3=business; *decision taker of child schooling* is nominally counted and coded as 1= husband, 2=own (married woman), 3=both (husband and wife) and 4=mother-in-law; and to count *level of purchasing*, categories were counted in ordinal scale and coded as 1= no decision, 2= low, 3= medium and 4= high.

Demographic aspect: *age at first marriage* was measured in interval scale and coded as 1=15-19, 2=20-24, 3=25-29 and 4=30-34; *consent to get marry* is typified by two categories and coded as 1=yes and 2=no; *decision taker of child taking* was counted in nominal scale and coded as 1= husband, 2= mother-in-law, 3= herself and 4= both (husband and wife); and *decision taker of contraceptive using* was counted in nominal scale and coded as 1=husband, 2= own, 3= both (husband and wife) and 4=no response.

Political aspect: *consent of voting* was measure nominally and coded as 1=own and 2=husband.

3. Instrument and Procedure

The study was carried out following survey research design. As a nature this study was exploratory type. To collect data from 120 samples, an interview schedule was used. To realize the objective of the study, data about respective concepts were collected incorporating relevant cases in the interview schedule contained both open and close ended items. Before making final interview schedule, a pilot survey was done to check the valid scales of measurement and scrutiny of irrelevant questions. The data were collected by two trained female interviewers considering the religious and gender sensitive issues. Few times were spent to build up rapport with informants before making interview for collecting data.

4. Analysis

Both descriptive (percentage) and inferential (chi square) statistics were used for data analysis. Results on the variables were presented with cross tabulation. Besides primary data, some relevant secondary data were also used for this study.

III RESULTS

A. socio-economic and Demographic Information

Data in the Table I show that about half of the women (45.8 percent) belonged to the age of 30-39 while 38.3 percent of the total respondents belonged to the age group of 20-29 and 15.8 percent of the respondents belonged to the age of 40-49. On the other hand, among the religious identity majority of the women (93.3 percent) was Muslim and only 6.7 percent was Hindu. Again, the highest (45.8 percent) women completed secondary level of education; following 34.2 percent completed primary, 12.5 percent completed graduation and only 7.5 was illiterate. Overwhelmingly large number (73.3 percent) was housewife, 24.2 percent was service holder and only a few i.e. 2.5 percent was related to other occupations notably shopkeepers. Most of the women i.e. 71.7 lived in nuclear family while each of 14.2 percent lived in both extended and joint family. About two-thirds of the women got married at the age of between 15-19 years, the second highest i.e. 20 percent women got married at the age between 20-24 years. Besides, only 4.2 percent got married first at the age of between 25-29 years and only a few i.e. 0.8 percent got married at the age between 30-34 years.

TABLE I

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

| Categories | No. | Percentage |
|---|-----|------------|
| Age (in Years) | | |
| 20-29 | 46 | 38.3 |
| 30-39 | 55 | 45.8 |
| 40-49 | 19 | 15.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Religion | | |
| Islam | 112 | 93.3 |
| Hinduism | 8 | 6.7 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Education | | |
| Illiterate | 9 | 7.5 |
| Primary | 41 | 34.2 |
| Secondary | 55 | 45.8 |
| Higher | 15 | 12.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Occupation | | |
| Housewife | 88 | 73.3 |
| Service holder | 29 | 24.2 |
| Business | 3 | 2.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Family Types | | |
| Nuclear | 86 | 71.7 |
| Extended | 34 | 28.3 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Age at First Marriage (in Years) | | |
| 15-19 | 90 | 75.0 |

| | | |
|-------|-----|-------|
| 20-24 | 24 | 20.0 |
| 25-29 | 5 | 4.2 |
| 30-34 | 1 | 0.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

B. Socio-economic Decision Making

1. Level of Education and Occupation

Data in the Table II expose that all the illiterate and primary level of education completed women were housewife while 60.0 percent among secondary level of education and 33.3 percent among graduation completed women were housewife. On the other hand, 34.5 percent among secondary level of education and 66.7 percent among higher level of education completed women were service holder. Besides, among the secondary level of education completed women only 5.5 percent were engaged in business. Here the value of Chi-square shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and occupation of the women at .000 percent level of significance for 6 degree of freedom.

TABLE II

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION

| Level of Education of Married Women | Occupation | | | Total |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------|----------|-------|
| | Housewife | Service Holder | Business | |
| Illiterate | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| % | 100 | .0 | .0 | 100 |
| Primary | 41 | 0 | 0 | 41 |
| % | 100 | .0 | .0 | 100 |
| Secondary | 33 | 19 | 3 | 55 |
| % | 60 | 34.5 | 5.5 | 100.0 |
| Higher | 5 | 10 | 0 | 15 |
| % | 33.3 | 66.7 | .0 | 100 |
| Total | 88 | 29 | 3 | 120 |
| % | 73.3 | 24.2 | 2.5 | 100.0 |

Pearson Chi-square Value= 38.746; DF= 6; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) .000

2. Level of Education and Decision of Sending Children to School

Data in the Table III show that among the illiterate women none had their own decision to send children to school while only 7.3 percent among primary, 5.5 percent among secondary and 6.7 percent among higher level of

education completed women had their own decision to send their children to school. On the other hand, among the higher level of education completed women no husband took the decision of sending their children to school while 44.4 percent among the illiterate, 17.1 percent among the primary and 9.1 percent among secondary the decision to send children to schooling was taken by the husband himself. Again, the highest 93.3 percent among the higher level of education completed women, 85.5 percent among secondary completed, 75.6 percent among primary completed and 44.4 percent among the illiterate women the decision to send their children to school was taken by both the husband and wife collectively. Moreover, only 11.1 percent among the illiterate women the decision to send their children to school was taken by their mother-in-law. Here the value of Chi-square shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and decision taker of child schooling at .000 percent level of significance for 9 degree of freedom.

| | | |
|-------|-----|-------|
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |
|-------|-----|-------|

TABLE III

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND DECISION
TAKER OF CHILD SCHOOLING

| Level of Education | Occupation | | | | Total |
|--|------------|-----|------|---------------|-------|
| | Husband | Own | Both | Mother-in-law | |
| Illiterate | 4 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| % | 44.4 | .0 | 44.4 | 11.1 | 100.0 |
| Primary | 7 | 3 | 31 | 0 | 41 |
| % | 17.1 | 7.3 | 75.6 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Secondary | 5 | 3 | 47 | 0 | 55 |
| % | 9.1 | 5.5 | 85.5 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Higher | 0 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 15 |
| % | .0 | 6.7 | 93.3 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 16 | 7 | 96 | 1 | 120 |
| % | 13.3 | 5.8 | 80.0 | .8 | 100.0 |
| Pearson Chi-square Value = 24.809; Df=9; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)= .000 | | | | | |

3. Decision of Purchasing Different Household Items

Data in the Table IV indicate that 97.5 percent of the total respondents participated in decision to food purchasing and remaining 2.5 percent respondents did not involve in decision making.

TABLE IV

DECISION OF FOOD PURCHASING OF THE RESPONDENTS

| Responses of Purchasing | No. | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----|------------|
| Yes | 117 | 97.5 |
| No | 3 | 2.5 |

4. Level of Education and Level of Purchasing

Data in the Table V reveal that no higher level of education completed woman had lower level of purchasing power while highest 55.6 among the illiterate women had lower level of purchasing power following 24.4 percent among the primary and 7.3 percent among the secondary level of education completed women had lower level of purchasing power of family articles. Again, no illiterate woman had high level of purchasing power of family articles while the highest 46.7 percent among the primary level of education completed women had high purchasing power following 40.0 percent in secondary level and 14.6 percent among primary level of education completed women had high level of purchasing power. Moreover, 44.4 percent among the illiterate women had medium purchasing power, 58.5 percent among the primary, 52.7 percent among the secondary and 40.0 percent among the higher level of education completed women had medium level of purchasing power. Here the value of Chi-square shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and level of purchasing power of the women at .000 percent level of significance for 9 degree of freedom.

TABLE V

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND LEVEL OF
PURCHASING DECISION

| Level of Education of Married Women | Level of Purchasing | | | | Total |
|--|---------------------|--------|------|-------------|-------|
| | Low | Medium | High | No Decision | |
| Illiterate | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| % | 55.6 | 44.4 | .0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Primary | 10 | 24 | 6 | 1 | 41 |
| % | 24.4 | 58.5 | 14.6 | 2.4 | 100.0 |
| Secondary | 4 | 29 | 22 | 0 | 55 |
| % | 7.3 | 52.7 | 40.0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Higher | 0 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 15 |
| % | .0 | 40.0 | 46.7 | 13.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 19 | 63 | 35 | 3 | 120 |
| % | 15.8 | 52.5 | 29.2 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| Pearson Chi-square Value= 34.652, Df=9 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)= .000 | | | | | |

C. Demographic Decision Making

1. Level of Education and Age at First Marriage

Data in the Table VI represent that all the illiterate women and 97.7 percent primary level of education completed women had the tendency to get married at the age group of 15-19 while 65.5 percent among secondary and 46.7 percent among higher level completed women got married at the same of age group. Again 27.3 percent of the secondary level and 40 percent of the higher level of education completed women got married at the age group of 20-24. Moreover 7.3 percent among secondary and 6.7 percent among higher level obtained women involved marriage at the age of 25-29 and the age group of 30-34 covered by 6.7 percent of the higher educational level completed women. Here the value of Chi-square indicates that there is a relationship between educational status and age at first marriage of women at .000 percent level of significance for 9 degree of freedom.

TABLE VI

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

| Level of Education | Age at First Marriage | | | | Total |
|---|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | |
| Illiterate | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| % | 100.0 | .0 | .0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Primary | 38 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 41 |
| % | 92.7 | 7.3 | .0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Secondary | 36 | 15 | 4 | 0 | 55 |
| % | 65.5 | 27.3 | 7.3 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Higher | 7 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 15 |
| % | 46.7 | 40.0 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 90 | 24 | 5 | 1 | 120 |
| % | 75.0 | 20.0 | 4.2 | .8 | 100.0 |
| Pearson Chi-square Value = 24.867; DF= 9; Asymp. Sig.(2-sided)=.000 | | | | | |

2. Level of Education and Consent to Get Marry

Data in the Table VII reveal that all the illiterate women and 85.4 percent of primary level completed women had no scope to give consent about their marriage while 78.2 among secondary and 93.3 percent among

graduate completed women had their scope to give consent about their marriage. On the other hand, only 6.7 percent higher level of education completed and 21.8 percent among secondary completed women had no scope of giving consent to get merry. Here the value of Chi-square shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and consent to get marry of the women at .000 percent level of significance for 6 degree of freedom.

TABLE VII

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND CONSENT TO GET MARRY

| Level of Education | Consent to Get Marry | | |
|--|----------------------|-------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Total |
| Illiterate | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| % | .0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Primary | 6 | 35 | 41 |
| % | 14.6 | 85.4 | 100.0 |
| Secondary | 43 | 12 | 55 |
| % | 78.2 | 21.8 | 100.0 |
| Higher | 14 | 1 | 15 |
| % | 93.3 | 6.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 63 | 57 | 120 |
| % | 52.5 | 47.5 | 100.0 |
| Pearson Chi-square Value = 68.945; DF= 6; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000 | | | |

3. Pregnant at First Time

Data in the Table VIII represent that among the respondents 26.7 percent became pregnant at the time when they were at the age of 15-19 years; 39.2 percent became pregnant at first time at the age of 20-24 years; 31.7 percent became pregnant at first time during their age of 25-29; and only 2.5 percent became pregnant at first time between the age of 30-39 years. The study has brought to light on the practice of early marriage in rural society. As about 62.9 percent of the respondents got married between their ages of 15-24 so they had faced serious health consequences of being pregnant of such an early age. Girls, who marry young, inevitably have children early, and have many children, because their knowledge of contraception is poor and their power to negotiate its use is weak.

TABLE VIII

PREGNANT AT FIRST TIME OF THE RESPONDENTS

| Age (in groups) | No. | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----|------------|
| 15-19 | 32 | 26.7 |

| | | |
|-------|-----|-------|
| 20-24 | 47 | 39.2 |
| 25-29 | 38 | 31.7 |
| 30-34 | 3 | 2.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

4. Level of Education and Decision to Have Children

Data in the Table IX represent that no illiterate and no higher level of education completed woman had their decision to have children while only 2.4 percent among primary and 9.1 percent among secondary completed women had their own decision of child taking. Moreover, no mother-in-law of the higher and secondary completed women had their decision to take children while 22.2 percent among the illiterate and 4.9 percent among the primary completed women's mother-in-laws had their decision of child taking. Overwhelmingly large number of decisions of taking children has been taken by both husband and wife. It was noted that the decision of child taking by both husband and wife counted above 90 percent for primary, secondary and higher level completed women except illiterate that was calculated at 77.8 percent of the total respondents of that category. Here the value of Chi-square shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and decision to have children of the women at .000 percent level of significance for 9 degree of freedom.

TABLE IX

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND DECISION
TAKER OF CHILD TAKING

| Level of Education of Married Women | Decision Taker of Child Taking | | | | Total |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------|-----|-------------------------|-------|
| | Husband | Mother-in-law | Own | Both (Husband and Wife) | |
| Illiterate | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 9 |
| % | .0 | 22.2 | .0 | 77.8 | 100.0 |
| Primary | 1 | 2 | 1 | 37 | 41 |
| % | 2.4 | 4.9 | 2.4 | 90.2 | 100.0 |
| Secondary | 0 | 0 | 5 | 50 | 55 |
| % | .0 | .0 | 9.1 | 90.9 | 100.0 |
| Higher | 1 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 15 |
| % | 6.7 | .0 | .0 | 93.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 2 | 4 | 6 | 108 | 120 |
| % | 1.7 | 3.3 | 5.0 | 90.0 | 100.0 |
| Pearson Chi-square Value = 19.476; DF= 9; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)=.000 | | | | | |

5. Uses of Contraceptive Method

Data in the Table X indicate that majority of the woman that was counted in 96.7 percent of the respondents used contraceptive method and 3.3 percent did not use it. The study found that the women who were illiterate did not use contraceptive methods due to lack of their knowledge and consciousness about it.

TABLE X

USES OF CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD OF THE RESPONDENTS

| Response | No. | Percentage |
|----------|-----|------------|
| Yes | 116 | 96.7 |
| No | 4 | 3.3 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

6. Level of Education and Decision to Use Contraceptive Method

Data in the Table XI reflect that no illiterate woman had their own decision to use contraceptives while 9.8 percent among primary level of education completed women and 6.7 percent among the secondary level completed women had their own decision to use contraceptives. Again 12.2 percent of primary level completed women's usages of contraceptive method were decided by their husband. Moreover, the uses of contraceptive methods of all illiterate women were decided through the negotiation of both husband and wife. The negotiating tendency of using contraceptive was still high among others that were counted 78.0 percent for primary completed women, 89.1 percent for secondary and 73.3 percent for higher level completed women. Here the value of Chi-square shows that there is a significant relationship between level of educational and decision to use contraceptives of the women at .000 percent level of significance for 9 degree of freedom.

TABLE XI

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND DECISION
TAKER OF CONTRACEPTIVE USING

| Level of Education of Married Women | Decision Taker of Contraceptive Using | | | | Total |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-------------|-------|
| | Husband | Own | Both (Husband & Wife) | No Response | |
| Illiterate | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| % | .0 | .0 | 100.0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Primary | 5 | 4 | 32 | 0 | 41 |
| % | 12.2 | 9.8 | 78.0 | .0 | 100.0 |
| Secondary | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 55 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|------|------|-------|
| % | 3.6 | 5.5 | 89.1 | 1.8 | 100.0 |
| Higher | 0 | 1 | 11 | 3 | 15 |
| % | .0 | 6.7 | 73.3 | 20.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 7 | 8 | 101 | 4 | 120 |
| % | 5.8 | 6.7 | 84.2 | 3.3 | 100 |
| Pearson Chi-square Value = 21.371; DF= 9; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided).000 | | | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-------|-------|--------|
| Total | 54 | 66 | 120 |
| % | 45.0% | 55.0% | 100.0% |
| Pearson Chi-square Value = 16.880; DF=3; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)= .000 | | | |

D. Political Decision Making

1. Level of Education and Consent to Vote

Data in the Table XII show that 22.2 percent illiterate and 29.3 percent primary level completed women voted with their own consent whereas the consent of husband was considered to vote for 77.8 percent and 70.7 percent of illiterate and primary level completed women respectively. Contrary a significant portion (86.7%) of higher level of education completed women voted with their own consent and only 13.3 percent of the women voted with the consent of their husband. Additionally consent of voting of secondary level completed women was around equal for both own consent and consent of husband that were counted 49.1 percent and 50.9 percent for own and consent of husband respectively. Here the value of Chi-square shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and consent of voting of the women at .000 percent level of significance for 3 degree of freedom.

TABLE XII

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND CONSENT OF VOTING

| Level of Education | Consent of Voting | | Total |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------|--------|
| | Own | Husband | |
| Illiterate | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| % | 22.2 | 77.8% | 100.0% |
| Primary | 12 | 29 | 41 |
| % | 29.3% | 70.7% | 100.0% |
| Secondary | 27 | 28 | 55 |
| % | 49.1% | 50.9% | 100.0% |
| Higher | 13 | 2 | 15 |
| % | 86.7% | 13.3% | 100.0% |

IV DISCUSSION

Education plays a decisive role to identify the household decision making of married women in Bangladesh. Several aspects are depicted below on the basis of the nature of results.

Here first focuses on the background information of the respondents. It provides the detail picture about age structure, gender status, religion, occupation and so on. These variables also act as indicators for study. This study indicates that most of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-39. The religion shows that a significant portion (93.3%) of the total respondents belongs to the religion of Islam, and remaining to Hinduism. The findings of the present study corresponded to those of another study conducted by Feld and Hayes [10] which indicated that the majority of Bangladeshi women are Muslim, with a significant Hindu minority. Education here plays very critical role as it is considered as independent variable for this study. Most of the women in the study area belong to the education of secondary level counting 45.8 percent and the second highest 34.2 percent are primary level completed women. Bangladesh as made immense gains in girls' education but net attendance rates in secondary education at only 53 per cent for girls [11].

In the category of occupation, the greater part of the respondents is housewife that counted 73.3 percent of the respondents. Efroymsen, Biswas and Ruma [12] showed that 81 percent of women were involved only in housework (no paid employment). Most of the respondents' family types are nuclear (71.7%). A significant portion of the women were married before their standard age of marriage.

In the socio-economic decision making the influence of education is significant. Working women especially service holder have the background of higher education. Illiterate women hold the position of housewife as nonpaid job in the family.

Decision of sending children to school is a major familial decision that affects children. Literate women apparently have more capability and awareness of sending their children to school than illiterate women. Now it is more observed that most of the literate women take decision with their husbands about schooling of children

and the trend is still half among illiterate women. Study reveals that 93.3 percent respondents among higher level completed women take joint decision of child schooling in contrast to 44.4 percent of the respondents among illiterate women.

Another major component, level of purchasing of women varies based on their level of education. The secondary and higher level completed women have upper level of decision making power than illiterate and primary level completed women. It is observed from the study that 55.5 percent of illiterate women have low level of purchasing decision in contrast to 46.7 percent of the high level completed women for high level of purchasing decision. Women's participation in formulation of decisions was limited to small purchases, buying of food, household consumption items, health care and children's schooling [13].

In demographic decision making process education plays influencing role at household decision making. Age at first marriage differ according to the level of education of the women. It is found out that the women who got married earlier had lower level of education whereas higher level of education completed women got married at later age than previous one. This study prevails that all illiterate women got married between the ages of 15-19 years while 46.7 percent of higher level completed women got married at the same age. Additionally it is also observed that the age of first marriage increases with the increasing rate of education. Murshid and Yasmeen [13] identified that 75.0 percent respondents complete their first marriage at age between 15-19.

The findings also corresponded with the finding by Khuda [14] that the average age of marriage for girls in Bangladesh is between 13-16 years and almost all the girls are married before they are 25 years of age.

Consent to get marry of the women is influenced by the level of education. It is observed that higher educated women had the consent to get marry than the illiterate and primary level completed women. Study reveals that 93.3 percent higher level of education completed women have consent about marriage whereas no illiterate woman decides about her marriage.

Decision of child taking of demographic aspect is influenced by education. Now the maximum decision comes jointly incorporating both husband and wife. But the proportionate rate is still higher among higher level completed women that are counted 93.3 percent. Besides, other members of the family give decision to take child of the respondents. But the influence of other members varies

based on their level of education. Study reveals that 22.2 percent mother-in-law of the illiterate respondents decides of taking children. Only few percent of the respondents had own decision of taking children. Murshid and Yasmeen [13] discovered in their study that 57.0 percent respondents have no consent to get marry.

Decision to use contraceptive method plays pivotal role for reproductive health of the women. It is a major decision that women need to take for their life. A number of studies also showed women's educational level as the strong determinant of taking birth control and childbearing decisions [15, 16, and 17]. In Bangladesh every woman can not take decision about uses of contraceptive method. Taking decision of using contraceptives in Bangladeshi women vary according to their level of education. Education creates awareness among women. Study shows that 9.8 percent primary completed and 6.7 percent higher level of education completed women have their own decision and no illiterate woman decides about using contraceptive. The study reveals a positive side that decision about using contraceptive comes jointly of both husband and wife among illiterate and literate women.

Finally the influence of education on political decision at household level observes in Bangladesh. Political decision express in the aspect of consent to vote during election. Historically in Bangladesh women are subordinated to vote. They are influenced by their family members. But the tendency of subordination is being reduced due to influence of education. This study depicts that a significant portion (86.7%) of higher level of education completed women vote with their own consent whereas 77.8 percent of the illiterate women are influenced by their husband to vote during election.

V CONCLUSION

Though many factors affect the ability of women to take part in the decision-making process in the household, education plays a decisive role here. In socio-economic decision making level education motivates occupation, decision of sending children to school and level of purchasing power. Educational status influence demographic variables for decision making including age at first marriage, consent to get marry, decision to have children, and decision to use contraceptives. Education also plays a role in political sector including consent to vote. Due to the influence of the education, women in Bangladesh are getting more decision making power at household level than earlier though the rate is slower than

other neighboring south Asian countries. It is noticeable that in many cases women and husbands jointly make decision that indicates the respect to each other and strong bonding of family. Therefore government should promote education for all rural married women to make room for them to establish their right in decision making at family as a single unit of society.

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