

## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT OF BANGLADESH: IS IT HOPEFUL ?

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### ABSTRACT

The poor representation of women in nearly each policy-making facet of life is a universal matter. In the entire world, women are represented in government in poor ratio to their entire populace. A component of representative democracy is that irrespective of gender, all people have equal prospects to partake in the political arena. In elective points, better representation of women of power is a matter of fairness and parity. Yet, representation of women in many parliaments is often limited. Democracy cannot embellish without a rational representation of women in the parliament, which is the most influential organization of democratic states. The analytical structure of this study undertakes that the presence of women in parliament does not inevitably turn into the functional picture rather it is a result of organizational, sociological and institutional facets. This has failed to make an effective impact on the representation of women in Parliament in a particular political situation. Therefore, the issues that impede or enable women's representation in elective points differ with the issue of socioeconomic progress, culture and the form of political arrangement. The author has taken a modest endeavor to disclose about the significant matters linked to women's poor representation in Bangladesh Parliament.

## INTRODUCTION

The political parties, international organizations, governments, and interested party clusters slanted towards growing women's representation have encouraged a series of initiatives to step forward the obstacles for women in elected organization, comprising using pretentious approaches, equal prospect, and favorable action plans. A number of of the key choices that are presented comprise elementary restructuring of majoritarian electoral arrangements by affecting towards mutual or balanced measures, in addition to the practice for women of reserved seats, the execution of legislative gender quotas by rule, and the implementation of intended gender quotas within certain parties. Encompassing males and females in decision-making procedures is a sine qua non of every representative structure. By definition, democracy, hence cannot be gender-blind. It attempts towards parity and representation of females and males in entirely political and decision-making procedures. What is currently frequently asked is how to raise the quantities of women

in representative organizations such as parliament, and other significant political grounds (Democracywatch, 2003). On the other hand, the representation of women in various legislatures, the greatest authoritative organizations of democratic states, is frequently inadequate (Halder, 2004). In Bangladesh, as somewhere else in the constituency, gender disparity is severely rooted in the whole arrangement. Societal controls at every layer dispossess their subservience to male control. Usually the role of females has been that of mother, daughter, and wife in Bangladesh. Their accomplishments in the socio-cultural setting of Bangladesh is principally domestic, naturally limited to the four walls of the house. Women are weak in all segments in Bangladesh. They have deficiency in access to impartiality on human rights, for the reason that of race, culture, ethnicity, religion, economic and social class scatterings as well. In an expression, women are differentiated household to parliament in Bangladesh (Islam & Sultana 2006). Since 1991, Bangladesh has had a prime minister from woman and leader of the opposition party in the Jatiya Sangsad (the Parliament of Bangladesh) is also a woman. Article 28 (2) of the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh affirms that women shall have equal rights to those of men in every domain of the national and community life (Chowdhury, 2004). Women's representation in the state parliament is currently 19.71 percent, and the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition party, and the Speaker is all of them women. A quantity of female mayors has been elected. The Bangladesh Government amplified the quantity of reserved seats in parliament for women from 45 to 50 by the Constitutional 15th Amendment on June 30, 2011. The popular party's (and fourteen parties' alliance) strategy, which contains promises to confirm to 1/3 reserved seats in parliament as direct election of females. That has not been executed. After the 2014 elections, there are 69 women parliamentarians of whom 50 are on the reserved seats and 19 have been directly elected (Ali, 2014).

In this setting, this paper emphasizes on the inclination and real condition of women's parliamentary picture in Bangladesh. The determination of this study is to inspect the nature and extent of women's representation and to recognize the

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influences which contribute to retain the poor existence of women in Bangladesh parliament.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This paper is written, utterly on the source of secondary bases that contain reviews of books, research reports, journals, proceedings of seminars and websites from the internet.

### **POSITION OF WOMEN IN BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh is factual and convene an extremely male-controlled society, the indispensable characteristics of which is controlled and authority of males and powerlessness and the inconspicuousness of females in each domain of life. Discrimination between man and woman starts at the time of birth and endures all through the family and communal life directs to deprive of equal access to the basic opportunities and rights (Jahan & Kabir, 2012). "Women" voluntary work at household is not acknowledged and consequently, women are measured only as submissive dependents. Within the family, females are reflected as possessions of their other half. Conversely, females are debarred from financial and political control through public patriarchy. In the community ground women are simply reflected as sexual matters and patriarchy is sustained through sexual persecution. Capital growth also supports patriarchy in Bangladesh. Males' approach to females is molded by the advertisements, movies, beauty competitions and pornography where females are used as sexual matters to amass wealth in Bangladesh. Males progressively started to practice the dowry scheme for capital growth as males control their spouse's income openly or incidentally to amass wealth (Chowdhury, 2013). The male-controlled social arrangement and societies of purdah (veil), matrimonial and religious bindings abode them in an imbalanced and underprivileged situation. This undesirable approach to females indicates to cyclic dependency and suppression. The socialization procedure in the family does not inspire them to take an important role. Therefore, women have continued debarred from decision-making and active political involvement. Their probabilities mostly remain unfamiliar and their influences are repeatedly ignored. Usually, women are consigned subordinate roles, since generally female roles are

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allotted and their influence measured and understood by males. Therefore, societal, financial, cultural, and political issues are entirely loaded against women, yet the Constitution of the State confirms equal privileges for all people (Hassan, 2007).

South Asia stances out for its active women leaders who get hold of top political organizations in a constituency where females in total are browbeaten, fettered by illiteracy and accustomed implements, and unused to movement, heritage and opinion in decision making. As far back as 1960, Sirimavo Bandranaike was the first in the constituency to elect a woman Prime Minister Sri-Lanka. Subsequently then a series of eminent female leaders have tracked in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. That the promotion of females to the wheel of state matters has not rendered into a superior contribution of females in politics or other paths of decision making is extensively documented as well. Over the years, numerous efforts have been taken to instate females into the political middle-of-the-road, though with diverse outcomes. At this time, women's reserved seats are delivered for in the parliaments (Mumtaz, 2005). Yet, in contemporary years, females have prepared some advancement to disabling the difficulties. Woman education in the republic has been cultivating. Moreover, women in big numbers are linking income-spawning quests, predominantly in the ready-made garment business, education and micro-initiatives. The regime has taken numerous events for the advancement of female's position in Bangladesh as well (Jahan & Kabir, 2012). The best contemporary progress of women's progress is seen in "The Global Gender Gap Report, 2017" specified in table-1:

Table 1: Position of South-Asian States concerning Gender Gap

Sl. No.	Country	Overall rank
1.	Bangladesh	47
2.	Maldives	106
3.	India	108
4.	Sri Lanka	109
5.	Nepal	111
6.	Bhutan	124
7.	Pakistan	143

Source: The World Economic Forum 2017.

Bangladesh and the Maldives are seen as the highest-ordered states in the constituency, having fastened just under 72% and 67% of their complete gender gap,

correspondingly, while the bottommost-ordered states are Bhutan and Pakistan, devising fastened just under 64% and 55% of their total gender gap, correspondingly. Simply one state in the constituency, Maldives, has completely locked its Educational Achievement gender gap; and simply one state, Sri Lanka, has entirely locked its Health and Endurance gender gap. Yet, the constituency is as well Bangladesh to Nepal, one of the uppermost five hikers over the previous decade on the whole Index and on the Educational Achievement sub index. South Asia from a low base has made the firmest development on departing its gender gap of any county of the world. Bangladesh integrates further its place as the constituency's highest player and ascends, some spots this year, recording development through all magnitudes of the sub index of Economic Opportunity and Participation. Definitely, the state has upgraded gender equivalence for representative, high-ranking official and executive in addition to specialized and methodological roles, as well as projected produced income and remuneration equivalence for comparable work—in spite of an insignificant spreading of its vigorous life expectation gender gap (The World Economic Forum, 2017).

#### **WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENT OF BANGLADESH: A STATISTICAL OUTLINE**

Parliaments are the significant establishment in a demonstrative democracy. From 1954, females are working out their voting privileges in Bangladesh. In society, a significant extent, of women empowerment in general is their involvement in politics. The demonstration of women and the insertion of their viewpoint and knowledge into the decision-making procedure therefore certainly directs to way out that are more feasible and gratify a wider series of societal necessities. It is evident that the ordinary quantity of female's legislatures in National Parliament may not adequate enough to confirm women's involvement in decision-making organizations. However, their attendance at Parliament accomplishes the essential form of gender parity and procedure of empowerment (Barkat et al., 2012).

Excluding the reserved seats, The Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh delivers for Parliament (the Jatiyo Sangsad) in total a 300-member (Chowdhury, 2002). In the 1972, Bangladesh first announced a quota for women in

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constitution for an age of 10 years, with 15 reserved seats for women along with the 300 general seats. An amendment of the constitution in 1979 for an entire age of 15 years, amplified the quantity of females' reserved seats 15 to 30. This modification terminated in 1987, and consequently, in the subsequent election, there were no reserved seats. In 1990, the 10<sup>th</sup> adjustment to the constitution comprised a fresh facility for 10 years of 30 seats, which terminated in 2000. In 2001, there was no quota for women elected in the eighth Parliament; however, it approved for a period of 10 years through the 14<sup>th</sup> adjustment to the constitution, which assured 45 reserved seats for females. With the 15th amendment in 2011, this was amplified to 50 seats. The age of 10 years terminates earlier to the subsequent arranged general election in 2019 (Paasilinna, 2016). The olden times of Bangladesh Parliament appearances the negligible position of women in cooperation in democratic and demonstrative politics. Table-2 offers the number and per cent of women in diverse Parliaments of Bangladesh throughout 1973-2017.

Table 2: Depiction of Women in Bangladesh Parliament (1973-2017)

Parliament	Year of Election	Reserved Seats	Direct Elected	Total Representation	Average Women Representation (%)
First Parliament	1973	15	0	15	4.80
Second Parliament	1979	30	2	32	9.70
Third Parliament	1986	30	5	35	10.6
Fourth Parliament	1988	00	4	04	1.30
Fifth Parliament	1991	30	4	34	10.30
Sixth Parliament	1996	30	3	33	10
Seven Parliament	1996	30	8	38	11.5
Eight Parliament	2001	45	7	52	15.1
Ninth Parliament	2008	50	20	70	20
Tenth Parliament	2014	50	19	69	19.71

Source: Election Commission of Bangladesh.

Table 2 appearances that the Bangladesh Parliament in 2008 had the uppermost demonstration of women (20%) comprising the reserved seats. Yet, Parliaments in the 1988, the requirements for women for 30 reserved seats were not continued, which stemmed in less women signified in the Parliament. In the first Parliament, entire demonstration of women is 15 whereby they wholly were adopted on their reserved chairs persist 4.8% of full member of Parliament somewhere second and third Parliament appearances slight upsurge of 9.7 and 10.6% of whole elected member however women participation persist lowermost in 1.30% owing to facility of

no reserved seat in fourth Parliament. Though, from the fifth Parliament facility of reserved seat had been guaranteed where in fifth and sixth Parliament involvement of women just about same 10.30 % and 10% was. Representation of women in Parliament of Bangladesh has been progressively augmented in seven, eight and ninth parliament were 11.5%, 15% and 20% correspondingly. Therefore the figure of reserved seat augmented progressively from 30 to 50 as well.

### **REASONS OF WOMEN'S UNDERREPRESENTATION IN BANGLADESH**

Women round the sphere at each socio-political level discover themselves underrepresented in parliament and far distant from decision-making stages. However the political playground in all states has its own specific features, one characteristic residue shared to all: it is patchy and not encouraging to females' involvement. Numerous experimental studies have adequately proven the point that females who want to go into politics frequently discover the public, political, traditional and societal environment unfavorable or even antagonistic to them. Women usually face frequent difficulties in enunciating and determining their individual interests (Democracywatch 2003). These difficulties have been considered into three comprehensive extents: socioeconomic, ideological and political.

### **SOCIOECONOMIC REASONS**

#### **Patriarchal Domination**

The key way of entrance to the Parliament, that is direct election from regional areas, is a bit reachable to females. The political parties of Bangladesh under dominant hold of male candidates, recommend male contenders in these populations. Therefore, male candidates play out competitions for influence and political dominance at community levels. This domination is mirrored at state level politics, where males claim a principal part in the domination of the government. Deliberated weak contenders, which actually they are, females are sidestepped in approval of the male contenders since practical political concerns edict that recommendations be conferred to the more reliable contenders, for no party would like to grant a population to its antagonist. Females with a long political relationship with a party may be fruitful in attaining recommendation; moreover, there have been numerous

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examples where they are pressed into reserved seats. In Bangladesh, the past of parliamentary elections discloses a motivating spectacle, which yet is not nonconforming of Bangladesh. Females whose political recognition accumulates from the political influence of male candidates are thought to vicariously retain the political power of their male supporters and such credentials at community level stretches these females better outlook of winning party recommendation along with the election (Chowdhury, 2010).

### **Religious Understanding Fact**

In Bangladesh, male-controlled societal system, as by Islamic law female has to shield herself wholly with cloth which is named purdah. As stated by Quranic sections the explanation of “PURDAH” is for diffidence. However the “purdah” which denotes to diffidence is as well appropriate for male. However, male-controlled schemes make this purdah method on the females’ drive to retain females in distant. At the outset, we must take into consideration that Islam is a belief and Muslims are the supporters. Supporters are the human being. Muslims are the human being. As of any fact of understanding we move ahead from debating the difficulties like laws or other events we have to recognize the player’s presentations. As a faith, if we study Islam afore creating any statement, we can perceive that there are no attachments or uneven conclusions for male or female. Very guidelines from Islamic rule are all about duties or a code of behaviors to the mankind. There are numerous misapprehensions and misinterpretations progress from not thoughtful about the matter as it is actually won out. Not the almighty Allah or His Prophet designated or specified mistakes or unsatisfactory approach to males or females (Rahman, 2014). Yet, Muslim females frequently face unbelievable disapproval and are repeatedly condemned by pretended holy fundamentalists on the source that there is no provision for females to be national front-runners under Islam that is not correct. In Bangladesh the event is to some extent equivalent, though currently this is not that risky. Illiteracy and erroneous education arrangement are guiding Bangladesh in an erroneous mode.

### **Lack of Fiscal Possessions**

Election campaigning in Bangladesh can be costly because of the significance of actually organizing and inspiring great numbers of groups, particularly at the parliamentary level where electorates comprise overall around 300,000 constituents. Women at large do not have the equivalent monetary possessions as males. Women are repeatedly not up to speed of their individual or their household's monies, even if they do have the financial wealth and are thus controlled in their expenditure, creating it tougher for them to even intend organization for office. Then cash is indispensable to move forward in a party, obtaining party permits, and administration of a campaign for election on the scale essential to success in an electoral point, the deficiency of financial possessions or control over those possessions frequently averts females from inflowing into middle-of-the-road of politics. This is very noticeable in particular-member constituencies, which need big campaigns by distinct contenders (Paasilinna, 2011). Females' deficiency of the right to use, to economic possessions is an issue with political parties demanding monetary assistances from hopeful contenders as well. The condition is no good for independent contenders who, regardless of not having to make up the role that cash plays in inner political party dynamic forces, moreover need important means to track a campaign in the non appearance of any fiscal backing from a political party.

### **Deficiency of Education**

Women's advancement in achieving political influence certainly rest on, however, partly, on the gradation of advancement they have made external politics. One significant extent is education. A lot of women deficiency in access to education, that is essential for an equivalent political point with males, and this might affect their political viewpoint. If we observe females' conditions in the educational scheme of Bangladesh, the unfortunate presentation of females can be seen all over the society. The drive for enlightening Bengali Muslim daughters was on track at the commencement of the 19th century by limited fresh modernist Muslim males when they observed Muslim females were underprivileged equated to Hindu and Western females. Rokeya Sakhawat Husain, a devoted feminist, initiated the first Muslim girls'

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school in 1911. Yet, though currently the government has taken some efforts in support of free education for daughters at both primary and secondary levels of school, appearing mosques for religious educations is frequently all the education that a rustic female child accepts. In the issue of female MPs who were housewives with slight schooling were assigned to standing committees for finance, science and technology, foreign affairs, fisheries. In comparing, male MPs had a university degree which percentage is over 90 (Halder, 2004).

### **The Double Liability**

In most states, females convey an unequal share of home effort. Their involvement in politics is more inhibited by poverty and deficiency of education and lack of access to information. It is essential acknowledged that it is challenging for females to contribute in political life when their key apprehension is existence and they have no option but to devote ample of their time wearisome to encounter the elementary requirements of families. This is emphasized by the surge in the quantity of woman-headed families, principally in developing states, where this is fairly a consequence of continuing clashes. Along with that, yet, some females might have full-time works as spouses and mothers in addition to other full-time jobs (for instance as lawyers, teachers or doctors). Becoming an MP in these circumstances may then be reflected a third full-time work (Shvedova, 2005).

### **IDEOLOGICAL REASONS**

#### **Traditional Roles**

This is the atmosphere, in which a definite combined appearance of females in outmoded, apolitical characters remains to govern, which many females face. The appearance of a female leader necessitates that she is somatic in her speaking and behaviors, somebody who can be recognized as a female simply through non-sexual features. The dispensed key role for females is child bearing, nurturing and homemaking. These traditional approaches and traditional prospects from females is a blockade to their political demonstration. Added, females face obstructions in the integration of their domestic and community life.

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### **The View of Politics as ‘Filthy’**

The existence of females in state parliament does not actually reveal the level of political awareness of the females of the state. The household, principally the husbands do not take it easily about the involvement of females in political events; the general public does not take it for instance an encouraging sensation in definite circumstances. There is a lack of safety. Throughout the election, the contenders are to be nominated seeing their excellence, behavior, decency and the wish to work for societies, however, essentially it does not materialize (Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, 2013). Political turbulence circumstances are continuously presented in Bangladesh. Entirely these matters are liable for the view of politics as ‘Filthy’.

### **Lack of Motivation and Confidence**

Lack of confidence is one of the key causes for females’ under-representation in proper political organizations, whether ministries, political parties or parliaments. Women are not stimulated to contribute in politics rather pressed into apolitical events. In key circumstances there is a principle that enforces on females a role diverse from the one that is reserved for males. Females are identical to and have the similar prospective as males, however, simply they can contest for their privileges. Females are very worthy activists, managers and support-mobilizers; however distress occasionally averts females from challenging elections and from partaking in political events.

### **The Job of the Mass Media**

The mass media is worthy to be termed the fourth outlet of power as their effect on public attitude and public awareness. In any social order, the media have as a minimum two roles to play: as a speaker of present proceedings; and as an informant of public view, thereby encouragement diverse opinions of understanding. Frequently, the mass media incline to minimalize reportage of proceedings and groups of interest to females. The media do not sufficiently advise the community about the rights and functions of females in society; nor do they frequently involve in events to encourage or progress females’ situation. Most of the sphere’s media have so far to contend with the fact that females, as an imperative, are the first to be shackled by political, societal and financial modifications and reorganizations happening in a state—for instance,

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they are amongst the leading to lose their work. The point that females are principally isolated from the political policy making procedure is overlooked as well by the media (Shvedova, 2005).

## **POLITICAL REASONS**

### **Political Culture**

Usually, in our philosophy, politics is observed as a male-controlled movement which is characteristically male indeed. Thus, women are not stimulated to contribute in politics somewhat pressed into apolitical events (Kabir & Jahan, 2007). Males principally control the political field; mostly frame the directions of the political game; and repeatedly describe the principles of assessment. Moreover, political life is systematized conferring to masculine standards and values and in particular circumstances even masculine way of life. Politics are frequently grounded in the knowledge of 'champions and failures', rivalry and hostility, instead of organized teamwork and consent, particularly across party positions. It might frequently outcome in females either discarding politics in total or discarding masculine-style politics. Therefore, when females do contribute in politics, they incline to do this in lesser numbers. Several women MPs fight for equilibrium family life with the stresses of effort that frequently comprise late hours, plentiful travelling and insufficient conveniences.

### **Working Atmosphere**

In Parliaments of Bangladesh, women MPs have practiced more antagonistic and anti-women atmosphere. Working extents in the House, in the Districts and in the area, in the MP Hostel, are patriarchal, and this control has expanded their adversity (Firoj, 2007). As per Firoj (2007) 89.48% of respondents responded positively about to get necessary transformations in the working and the events of the Secretariat of Parliament and then they were demanded to elucidate what type of restructurings they required. 54.90% required modifications in the process for raising different queries in the House. They clarified, 'It is just difficult and unquestionably embarrassing for a female to stand in a line ahead of the associated room sharp at 5 a.m. to raise a demand. Facilities to the female MPs are very scanty. One female

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Member of the Seventh Parliament elucidated: 'The female MPs do not have separate rooms. They took sit in a shared room collectively. They do not have the facility of subordinates, no physical, internet or computer facility, therefore that they can go fortified in the Parliament before the session of debate'.

### **Corruption**

Unlimited expenditure in the political procedure boosts corrupt politicians impact and averts honest, devoted and capable politicians from contributing in politics. Moreover, corruption hinders women's lively involvement in politics. Illegitimate and unaccounted money is termed black money and at the present time, in elections in Bangladesh are entirely reliant on black money. Usually women have no right to use black money (Chowdhury, 2013). In the male-controlled people of Bangladesh females do not have a mechanism over commercial where the prospects for corruption are existent. Contenders who have the capability to use extra money can success in the election. In our state contenders can purchase votes because of the deficiency of political understanding of the constituents. At this point honesty and trustworthiness are not cherished and this is the key problematic issue for women.

### **Electoral System**

The contention and selection process within political parties is discriminating and contrary to women as well in that male control are emphasized and continually become the standards in selecting candidates. This consecutively affects on the reflection of women as real contenders as those who stream money for the campaigns of the election. To complement more, Best of the time females are not assumed in winning point on party leans. Bangladesh is a one of the South Asian country, where a male-controlled system enhances force to females' dependence on males and males have solid authority concerning females in leadership and administrative points. In the face of this, for more than two decades, two female leaders have governed the state currently. Inadequate party backing, for instance, inadequate financial help for female contenders, lack of female entrance to political linkages, and the strictest principles and qualifications applied to females (Rahman, 2014).

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## Reservation Policy

The Constitution rendered parity of position concerning those elected to the Parliament, both in reserved and general seats. Article 65 delivered that thus for instance the facility for reservation was operative; elected members from regional voters accompanied by members elected in reserved seats shall be labeled as Parliament's members. Yet the procedure of election to the reserved seats has been named by its critics as 'selection', since their selection as contenders by the popular party confirmed to these seats their election and no voting fight took place for the opposition party never accommodates contenders for these reserved seats. This directed to devaluate the political position of these seats. Those who designated to these chairs got a political liability and were perceived for instance, attending as a 'vote bank', of the governing party (Chowdhury, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

In a state like Bangladesh, with male-controlled societal structure covered by religious, communal, financial, cultural and political standards, it is puzzling to advance the source of women's poor representation. At this point the leaders of political parties are necessary to play a serious role in pushing onward the program of women's demonstration. Yet, any considerable intensification in the extent and excellence of women's depiction in Parliament is contingent mostly on the solid political assurance of the key political parties. Political willpower can lessen the difficulties and generate space for females. The most contemporary picture of women's progress is seen in "The Global Gender Gap Report, 2017" were Bangladesh ranked 47 which is very good in South Asia. The present Tenth parliament of Bangladesh represents 69 women were 19 from elected and 50 from reserved seats.

Women are proficient of functioning persistently. A 'woman responsive' electoral procedure should be formed by taking constructive events to confirm gender equilibrium in the arrangement of election management organizations and the employment of senior staff. To escalation women's involvement all political parties should recommend as a minimum a positive quantity of women contestants throughout the elections. Simultaneously the voters were better made attentive of

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their privileges to select their legislatures (MPs) who are remunerated from public exchequer and who must be responsible to them openly. Therefore, with inspiring, dynamic action packages and sensible discussions, women could be effectively carried to the Bangladesh Parliament, where they can perform a vigorous role for the attention of social progression and make them completely responsible to their constituency and encourage their confidence and superiority (Tawheed, 2000). Women are surfacing of their solitude and contributing to the financial and societal life. They still can carry out better with an organized legal and jurisdictional backings from the regime. Politics can play an essential role to significantly add to women enablement in Bangladesh, however paradoxically such organizational moves appear not to be approached spontaneously. Different women activists, embedded female leadership, confrontational NGOs organized by women, woman intellectuals connected with teaching, exploring and fourth estate, and such other welfares should press hard to create extensive places for them in the proper political procedure.

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