

National SDG Report (VNR) 2025 Addressing the Concerns of LNOB Communities

Women and the SDGs

A Citizen's Assessment of Progress and Challenges, and the Way Forward

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এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ



Acknowledgement

Anchor Organisations

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP)

Oxfam in Bangladesh

Associate Organisations

ActionAid Bangladesh

Light House Bangladesh

Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD)

Nagorik Uddyog

Bandhu Social Welfare society

Resource Integration Centre (RIC)

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)

Save the Children in Bangladesh

BRAC

Shushilan

Concern Worldwide Bangladesh

UCEP Bangladesh

Good Neighbors Bangladesh

WaterAid Bangladesh

HEKS/EPER Bangladesh

World Vision Bangladesh

Jaago Foundation

Youth for Change Bangladesh Foundation

Jago Nari

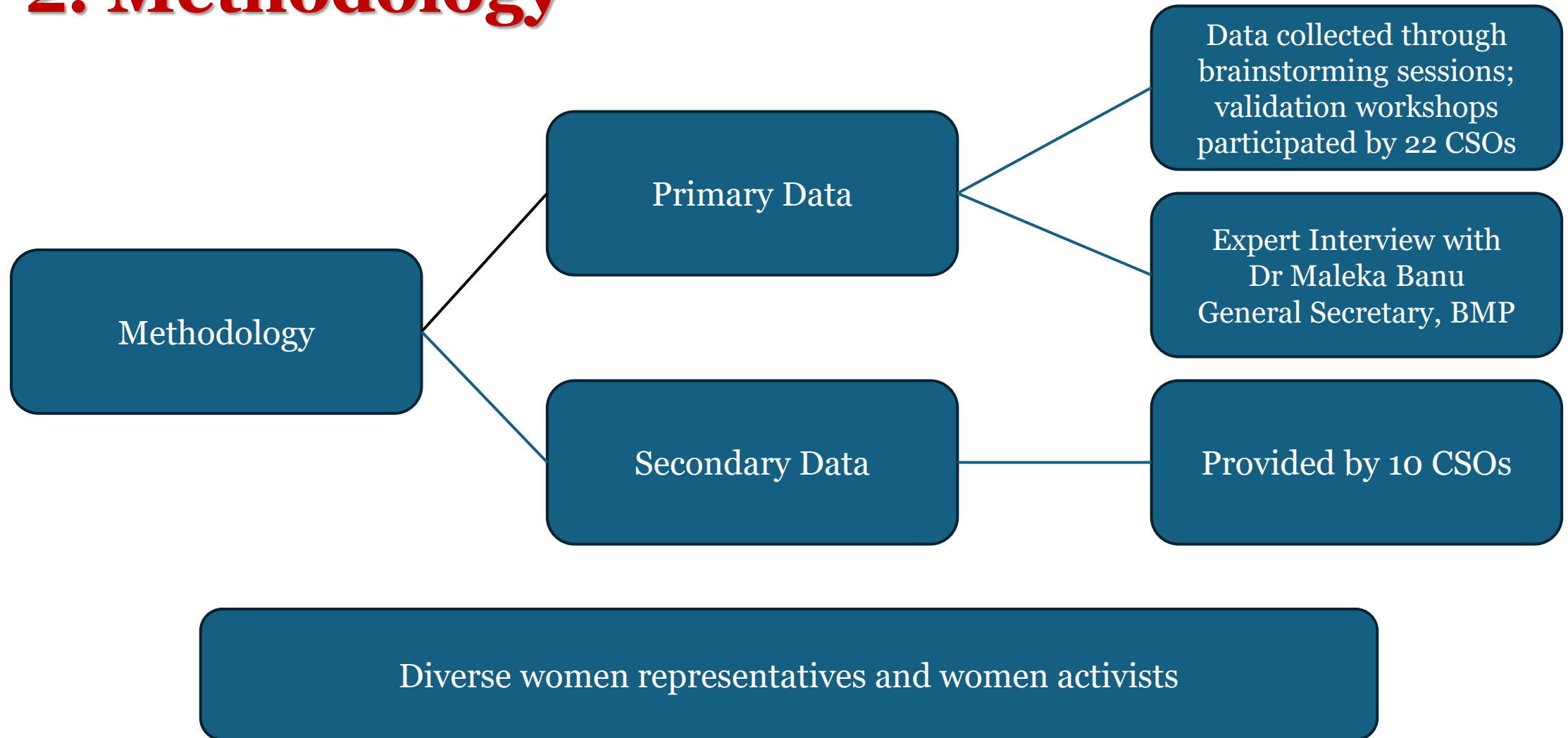
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1. Why is this issue important?

- Gender equality is **not only a fundamental human right** but also a **necessary foundation for a peaceful sustainable world.**
 - Despite women and girls representing half of the population, **inequality continues to persist everywhere.**
- No development can truly be long-lasting or sustainable if **half of the population is left behind.**

2. Methodology



3. Progress

Gender equality and empowerment of women

➤ Legal framework

- In January 2023, as per the High Court Division’s verdict, **a mother's name would be taken into account as a guardian on all educational documents.**
- In November 2022, the 'Evidence Act' was amended, resulting in the **repeal of Section 155(4) and amendment to Section 146.**
- In 2020, the government **amended the “Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 (WCRPA)”**, and added an additional provision (section 32A) that **requires DNA testing in all offences.**

3. Progress

Gender equality and empowerment of women

➤ Economic and Political Empowerment:

- In 2024, **21% of members in parliament were women**, and **one-third of seats are reserved** for women in all tiers of local government.
- Bangladesh has been **preparing a gender budget since 2009**.
 - Initially covering only four ministries, it has now **expanded to 44 ministries**.
 - In FY 2019-20, the **gender budget accounted for 30.82% of total budget** and 5.5% of GDP.
 - By FY 2024-25, the **gender budget increased to 34.11% of the total budget**, though its share of GDP slightly decreased to 4.86%.
- In 2023, **female labor force participation** rate in Bangladesh was around **43.7%**
- In 2022, 68% of women owned a mobile phone up from 60% in 2017-18.

3. Progress

- The number of **female migrant workers increased** from **21,934 in 2020 to 54,696 in 2024** (Source: BMET).
- Young women from the student movement are expressing interest in participating in the political process.

➤ Education

- **Primary Education Enrollment (Female):** 61.35% (2024) up from 51% (2023)
- **Secondary level (Female):** 55% (2024) up from 51.83% (2023) (Source: DPE, Government of Bangladesh).
- **University Level (Female):** 37% (2024) down from 47% (2023) (Source: Prothom Alo, March 2024)

➤ Health

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** declined from **163 in 2020 to 136 in 2023** (Source: SVRS 2023; 2024).
- In **2023**, approximately **40% of pregnant women** received **antenatal care** (Source: WHO)

4.Challenges

➤ Legal framework

- Existing **personal laws** governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody and adoption **remain discriminatory against women of all religions.**
 - These laws perpetuate gender inequality, discrimination and violence against women and girls.
- There are no **visible initiatives to enact a Uniform Family Code (UFC).**
- The **Bangladesh labor Act 2006** (amended in 2018) still **does not fully align with ILO standards** in several areas.
 - Gender pay gap continues to widen.
- There is a **lack of proper implementation** of existing laws.
- There is a **lack of inheritance rights** to property and resources.

4.Challenges

➤ Underrepresentation of women in political processes:

- There is a **lack of full and effective participation** of women in reserved seats in Parliament.
- The environment within political parties is **not women-friendly**.
- **No effective initiatives** have been observed from political parties **to fulfil Representation of the People Order (RPO)**.

➤ Others:

- **Gender-based violence** is on the rise.
- **Child marriage rate remains alarmingly high at 51.40%**, according to reports by BBS and UNICEF.
- **Women's contribution** to the agriculture sector **remain largely invisible** due to not being the landowners.

4.Challenges

➤Others

- There is a **lack of gender-disaggregated remittance reports**.
- Overall, **gender-disaggregated data** is still lacking.
- There is **no recognition or valuation of unpaid household and care work** performed by women.
- There are still **significant gender gaps in access to services and support for all marginalised women**, including indigenous women, women with disabilities, Dalit women, tea garden workers and elderly women among others.
- **Transgender women** face various types of **abuse and discrimination**.
- **Hate speech against women** is increasing at all levels of society.
- There is a **patriarchal mindset** that **continues to persist**.
- **Religious extremism and fundamentalism** further exacerbates gender issues.

5. Recommendations

➤ Legal framework

- Ensure **proper implementation of existing laws**.
- Ensure **equal inheritance rights** for all citizens, irrespective of religion, race, cast, and sex.
- **Introduce the Uniform Family Code (UFC)** to uphold gender equality in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance and child custody.
- Implement **effective initiatives to increase gender sensitivity** across law enforcing agencies, the judiciary and the media.
- **Repeal the special provision in the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017** and ensure its implementation.
- Enact a **separate law to prevent sexual violence** against women and girls in line with the verdict of the High Court Division.
- **Update the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010** and ensure its wide circulation and awareness.

5. Recommendations

➤ Economic and Political Empowerment:

- **Continue and effectively prepare the gender-responsive budget** as well as ensure its monitoring.
- **Amend the 17th Amendment of the Constitution** to include a provision to **reserve at least one-third parliamentary seats** for women and **introduce direct elections** for those seats.
- **Recognise and value women's contribution** to domestic work and care work.
 - Measures should be taken to **incorporate economic value of women's unpaid work** into the GDP.
 - **Redistribute gender role and responsibilities** related to unpaid domestic and care work.
- Political parties should **follow the provision of RPO** by the Election Commission and **ensure that at least 33% of leadership positions** at all levels are **occupied by women**.
- **Strictly monitor** the implementation of **fair wages for women RMG workers**, and ensure they **meet the minimum standard of livelihoods**.

5. Recommendations

➤ Others :

- Ensure the **full ratification of UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**.
- Effectively **address social barriers** that hinder gender equality.
- **Strengthen institutional mechanisms**, such as the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) and other related institutions, **by providing adequate financial and logistic support**.
- **Strengthen government and non-government (GO-NGO) collaboration**.

Thank You



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