

**FACTORS INFLUENCING WORK- LIFE BALANCE AMONG THE  
CIVIL SERVANTS OF BANGLADESH WITH AN EMPHASIS ON  
WOMEN PROFESSIONALS: A STUDY AT THE MINISTRY OF  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Mohammad Rezaul Karim**

Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate School of Public Administration, National Institute of  
Development Administration, Bangkok, Thailand

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**ABSTRACT**

*Traditionally women in Bangladesh are responsible to do household activities. The increasing women's participation in employment demands to enact and practice WLB (Work-Life Balance) policies to balance between two lives. A variety of reasons are found that professionals chose civil service that includes personal, social, organizational issues. Various organizational factors impede their working and personal life. This research attempts to find out the reason for choosing jobs and examine organizational factors that create obstacles for WLB and help balancing. Drawing upon qualitative research the article compares experiences of both male and female. The study finds women emphasize family than work that restricts their professional development. Male professionals encounter challenges. They face difficulty because of financial scarcity that women do not feel.*

Keywords: Professional, WLB, Organizational Factors

**Introduction**

There has been an increase of women participation in employment in the public sector of Bangladesh through competitive examination conducted by different government agencies including Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC). PSC has been recruiting personnel since 1973 where first woman was recruited in 1982 and gradually it increased the number from 2 in 1982 to 3068 in 2008 (Afroza, 2008; Mahtab, 2007). There are 3068 positions of

different ministries, departments, autonomous bodies occupied by women who comprise of 9.35 percent of total employment in class I positions compared to 90.65 positions filled by men (Afroza, 2008). In comparison within the several batches of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) it is found that woman participation has increased to 32.96 percent in the 26<sup>th</sup> BCS as against 10.67 percent in the 5<sup>th</sup> BCS examination in two decades starting from 1984 (MoPA, 2013). Currently 5236 civil servants including 965 women are working in Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA). They are recruited through PSC as the member of BCS (Administration) cadre. MOPA is the ministry of Bangladesh that deals with employment policies related to civil servants.

Civil servants working as the professionals in MOPA characterize as Class I officers holding the managerial positions. They belong to 9<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> grade of national pay scale (GoB, 2009). As this group holds the leading positions, they are responsible for business outputs in the ministry. The socio-economic status depicts that this group belongs to the middle class and is associated with the social norms practiced in Bangladesh. Traditionally it is a duty of woman to do household activities and caring and rearing young children and elderly people in Bangladesh (Rimi, 2014; Jahan, 2010; Zafarullah, 2000). If both of them are service holder, they can appoint domestic servants to take care their children. In that children are badly nourished and maltreated (Alam, Sattar and Chaudhury, 2011:110). The question is how this problem affects women professionals. Family responsibilities and tension about children create psychological pressure on them and affect their work. There are two major dimensions such as work interfering with family and family interfering with work which lead to work-family conflict and family-work conflict (Alam, et al., 2011:108). Increasing women in employment increases the concern for women professionals to achieve work-life balance.

Jobs for women civil servants have become more challenging because of huge workload, citizen demand, vacant posts (580 out of 3477 in the central level and 945 out of 2585 at the field level), fewer number of employees in office, different working culture, leadership style of organization head, male dominated working environment, lack of women-friendly policies and constitutional bindings for 24/7 work (Crompton, 2006:258; GoB, 1996; Hatch, 2013:167; Ittefaq, 2014; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005:143; Zafarullah, 2000).

Women professionals have a vital role in both family and office which is hampered by the multiple roles as a mother, professional and social members. Lack of supports from the both sides creates work-family conflict that impedes from doing justice to their talent utilization and leading a blissful happy life (Alam, et al., 2011). The demands from both sides create role conflict among women professionals and collide personal and professional life. Social institutions, values, norms encourage women to be economically empowered being engaged in formal employment sectors. Employment sectors provide the financial benefits and non-financial benefits with conditions to be followed. When these conditions of these areas are mismatched for the demand of two sides, or one area exploits another, it creates the pressure on women, creates conflict. This conflict brings myriad consequences that should be addressed. Researches indicate that work-life conflict has increased in recent times among the women professionals at managerial level. Multidimensional problems created due to organizational issues and family issues bring multiplier effects on them particularly on their career. After all, a discontinuity exists between organizational policy and practices in this regard that creates negative effect on professionals (Allison, 1999). Researches indicate that women at the managerial level face a number of barriers within the organization such as structural, cultural that affect their career progression which can easily be identified from the lower number of women professionals in the top level positions (Jahan, 2006; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2010). At this dilemma it is necessary to know obstacles in the service life and the way-out from this dilemma for making better service life. It is also urgent to know the views of male professionals and provide a comparative analysis in terms of work-life balance (WLB) of professionals at MOPA.

WLB is a balancing issue that concerns how effectively an employee can utilize his/her life with the family members after their office work. It has been a great concern when organizational benefits and issues of work permeate one's personal life. They are also affected by the social norms and family issues. It has become more difficult when they have to manage both lives smoothly. This paper has an attempt to analyze the organizational factors how these affect one's work and personal life.

### **Research Questions**

This research has been designed to explore answers of following questions:

- a. What are reasons for choosing civil service among the professionals?
- b. What are the impediments that professionals face in their service life?
- c. How do the organizational factors affect the professional's life and who leads a work-family balanced life?

### **Literature review and factors influencing WLB**

Employment policies and practices, organizational culture, benefits and opportunities, working environment, personal relations dictate professionals how well s/he can lead her or his life.

Government policies formulated for public servants entail various kinds of financial and non-financial benefits, working procedures, working environment and personal well-being of employees. Family-friendly policies (FFP) are defined as the provisions of traditional benefits such as maternity leave, paternity leave, dependent care benefits, medical leave benefits, time-off and flexible work schedule benefits, pension benefits, posting of spouses in the same office or area which assure professionals a secured life and adequate pay to lead a better life (Kingston, 1990).

Financial facility may come first. Salary that is paid to employees is not sufficient to live a live in the society. In government organisations there are some fringe benefits like housing allowance, housing facilities, transport facilities, medical allowance, pension etc. are provided.

Different types of leave are the most significant non-financial facility in the public organisations. Six-month maternity leave for women is a vital WLB policy creates the belongings to the organization (GoB, 2003; GOB, 2009). It is also found that absence of public performance of work at the office creates bad impression about the mothers among the male colleagues they are less dedicated and male colleagues have to take extra burden of work (D'Agostino and Levine, 2011:59).

Flexible working arrangements (FWA) provide opportunities to utilize time with family member. Flexibility brings job satisfaction, happiness, better performance and also more autonomy over their job that helps creating WLB and reduces WLC (D'Agostino and Levine,

2011:48; Rainey, 2014). Flexibility sometimes bars personal development as they keep them away work. Informal flexibility is also practiced keeping with the good relation with colleagues and supervising officer which is found in public sector in Bangladesh (Zafarullah, 2000). In the public organisations employees can enjoy informal flexibility with the permission of senior colleagues which facility is frequently taken by male employees whereas women professionals do not take this advantage (Zafarullah, 2000). In BD traditional working culture i.e. 9-5 working hour is maintained in most public offices. Some organisations providing emergency services have to create pressure on employees to maintain longer, stressful hour. It is extremely difficult for women professionals to maintain their family lives after this long stressful work (Kabear, 1997). Some jobs demand more time. So, staying longer at office just shows loyalty and commitment to organisation which women cannot do like their male counterparts because family activities. This provides advantage to men over women.

Working as the head of the organization provides more autonomy to exercise the power and take decision independently. Leading organization not only shows the effectiveness of performance but also encounters more challenges, responsibilities that reduce the time for family (Fieldler, 1995; Jago, 1982). Politics also remains in the organization that women are frequently experienced in isolation in organization, in decision making process, limited organizational relationship, exercising positional power, keeping in dark about career progression, low opportunity, subordinate jobs (D'Agostino and Levine, 2011:273). Women leaders are found friendlier, emphasized on quality of life as they believe as the feminine factor is there which are found more different under the male leadership. They do not understand the female problems, rather female issue takes as the matter of opportunity. In some jobs female employees are discouraged that indicates the inferiority of women professionals. In the organizations women managers are given differential treatment at work which embodies men's belief in the superiority of men that leads to the treatment of women as inferior and less important (Naqvi, 2011). This signifies undermining the ability of women professionals, although they have the same quality and experiences. Stereotype believes of supervisors and male colleague are that they cannot tackle challenges of organizations, crucial issues of organizational changes. On the other hand, women professionals are good in set team building, caring, displaying empathy, collaborating and have developed the

understanding that their suggestions are not given importance. However, scholars have different views for women that they are can also adopt the masculine leadership style and can do better in the management particular those who can break the glass ceiling (Baumgartner and Schneider, 2010).

There are many seen and unseen issues related to two domains i.e. workplace and home, cultural issues that influence on each other. This borders can be categorized into physical borders defining where domain-relevant behaviour can take place, such as the location of paid employment; temporal borders which divide when tasks can be done, for example set working hours, and psychological borders defining which is related to thinking patterns, behaviour and emotion (Clark, 2000; Gurney, 2010). Creating work-like balance depends on how employees can negotiate and handle the borders. The necessity of economic empowerment, higher level of human capital, social culture, individual strengths, negotiation techniques, and socio-economic resources shape their domains and borders. This theory helps employees internalize various domain's culture, attain experience, know responsibilities well so that employees can understand their central role empowering them to utilize tools to increase WLB. There is another dimension of this theory is that utilizing individual tools for balancing which can be done through sharing with family members, talking to colleagues and supervisors about family events, stresses of jobs. The other issue of individual tool for balancing is to develop better understanding with family members, colleagues, supervisors, become expert on home and office activities and making work and home more integral parts of employee's indemnity (Clark, 2000: 767; Gurney, 2010).

Working environment is influenced by culture of individualism, collectivism, feminism and masculinity. Bangladesh working culture is dominated by masculinity that emphasizes assertiveness, work goals where feminism emphasizes quality of life that lacks in organizations in Bangladesh including MoPA (Hatch, 2013:167; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005:143;). Male prefers male association and ignores women issues as the absence of women professionals during the maternal leave is taken as negative issue and pregnancy or lactating mothers are bypassed strategically (Crompton, 2006; D'Agostino and Levine, 2011:48)

Because of harsh and manual working condition, lack of social safety net particularly for female employees, limited facility of family friendly policies, limited arrangements of flexible working , bureaucratic management in the procedures, employees working in public sector cannot make balance between work and life (Mohiuddin, 2007; Zafarullah, 2000).

### **Research methodology**

This study utilized qualitative research approach within the context of socio-economic and organizational context of professionals particularly women (Creswell, 2013). It was conducted among the civil servants of MOPA following an in-depth interview. Data triangulation was maintained following the primary and secondary source (patton, 1978; Creswell, 2013).

Thirty-one civil servants including 17 women were interviewed on open-ended questionnaire. The main question were ‘what are obstacles professionals face due to organizational issues that affect their personal life and how?’ and ‘how do the impediments vary across the gender?’ and where are ways to overcome those obstacles to lead a happier life?’ Respondents were selected purposively and snowball technique was followed to select the respondents (Babbie, 2013). It has merit in this research that qualitative sampling is “very different from conventional sampling. It is based on informational, not statistical, considerations. Its purpose is to maximize information, not facilitate generalization.” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 in Eliason, 2006:10). The sampling covered all ranks i.e. Assistant Secretary, Senior Assistant Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Joint Secretary, Additional Secretary. Access to the respondents was gained through the gate-keeper i.e. Senior Secretary of MOPA.

All Interviews took place between August and October, 2014 and lasted minimum 15 minutes to maximum one hour. Interview took place in MOPA. I noted down points while I was conducting interview. Interview was also recorded which later transcribed verbatim. Relevant quotes were written down and marked important matched with objectives. Interview was on bilingual preferably on mother tongue and later translated to English which I took quite much time to make it free from distortion. Data analysis consisted of examining the responses of civil servants with the intention of identifying common themes suitable for this research. I

provided the summarization and interpretation of responses connection to relevant theories. It followed the inductive methods scaled down few themes from variety of information. Analysis adopts the social constructivism approach (Cresweel, 2013).

The age of Interviews was between 28 and 58 years with an average of 49 years for male and 41 for female. Men were more experienced as they had average 22 years of service whereas women had average 14 years. All respondents were highly educated having a Master degree

Respondents were managed through various techniques to find organizational obstacles that hampered their personal and official life. This is excerpt of a PhD dissertation on WLB in MOPA which dealt with personal, social, familial and organizational factors. This article will be limited to organizational factors only. I disclosed my identity and built rapport following the research protocol. I also assured them that confidentiality would be maintained and pseudo name would be used in the analysis. After the interviews, they were briefed with the summary information and they were checked second time through personal meeting, or other internet applications such as Skype, Viber, Whatsapp, Line.

### **Discussion and findings**

There are a variety of factors that civil servant chose this jobs. An MP had previously been a banker that being a civil servant brings WLB because of job security, power and authority:

It is secured, it has good salary, pension and other benefits, some positions have fulltime vehicle etc. Above all, it has the magistracy power, that we have the power to practice the judiciary. It is highly honored. People respect us a lot.

A WP had also the experience in banking sector who had changed to this job because of long working hour and stressful job and she could not spend more time with family members. An MP's comment supported her:

When joined banking sector, that was private job, salary was handsome, but working hour was longer, stressful, insecure. There was possibility to be fired at any time. And I had to be very busy whole day.



Diversity of Work and placement served as the selection criteria as civil service has the opportunity to work in ministries, field administration, other autonomous organizations, corporations, philanthropic bodies, UN organizations, Embassies of Bangladesh in abroad etc.

An MP who had the experience of 14 working places in 29 years told:

As member of administration cadre, I was posted in different ministries, departments, autonomous organization, in different type of jobs, in different positions; even I worked in UNESCO. I had the opportunity to study to develop myself. These advantages are not normally available in other jobs.

As the diversity is absent in other cadres or service in terms of nature and place of working, lateral entry has become a popular issue among the other officials who opted to be members of MOPA. A WP told:

I changed my cadre and switched over as DS to the government. Administration cadre or after DS, it has the greater scope and opportunity to work in any ministry, diversity of posting, variation of job, and also promotion scope.

This signifies the issue of WLB as a professional can change her/his nature of job and place which brings the job satisfaction and reduce workplace boredom (Eliason, 2006).

Another most important reason for choosing the civil service that it has good promotion prospect and there is a frequent and timely promotion, either vertical or horizontal. All respondents mentioned this benefit. Promotion carries financial and non-financial benefits suitable for WLB.

Respondents identified number of organizational factors that impede professionals' life and created hindrance to WLB. These factors helped them to balance between and life as well.

### **Transferable job**

If both are service holders and transfer brings closer. It has positive effect. However, frequent promotion can create obstacles to WLB that twelve respondents agreed. A WP expressed her sufferings,

We lived in different places: Dhaka and Pabna. He is also a civil servant working as doctor in different district. After two years of my marriage, we tried to get baby, but could not.

It might have other reasons for miscarriage. They could not live together in one particular place for the stipulated time according to doctor's advice.

An MP mentioned his daughter's education was hampered and his wife had to leave her job because of his transfer. MOPA did not favor. Transfer dislocates family and hampers taking care of children. A WP told:

I had a breast feeding baby, nine month baby. When I was transferred to Chittagong, no relatives were in that place, all relatives were in Dhaka and they couldn't go with me. My husband's job was fixed in Dhaka. I felt problem to be alone with the small baby.

Because of transfer from one place to another place, male professionals had to face financial crisis as most of them were the single earners whereas all WPs had their service holder spouses.

### **Assigning tasks**

Assigning tasks to someone depends on the capacity, competency, knowledge on work, legal authority to perform the particular job. Some jobs need some expertise. When a person is recruited for a job, he fulfills the basic criteria. The issue is whether someone is favored because of gender. A WP told that she was ignored assigning job raising the issue of challenges:

I was posted as OC (education), when there was a job for collecting questions from Dhaka, I was supposed to this job as the officer in charge of this post and I proposed my name. I was denied as woman. We were frequently told that this job would not be performed well by female.

Another WP who was cohort of previous commentator remarked,

When I preferred posting as SAS in Jessore city, I was told that DC Jessore would not accept any lady officer.

It depends on the person rather organizational issue. A WP told that she was assigned some challenging jobs such as Evaluation, Finance and HR which was usually performed by men and avoided by women. She further added that women are not discriminated in assigning jobs in MOPA. The reason is it has less challenging jobs like field administration. Tasks are traditional and followed the structured systems.

From her remarks it is evident that women do not want accept some jobs like HR, accounts which need special skills and attention. This is also supported by a young WP.

I believe women cannot take much pressure for which they can't do better in personnel management, accounting. These jobs are avoided by them and assigned to male officials.

Whatever the reason is, WPs are avoided in some highly powerful positions which are usually favored to men because male preference (Crompton, 2006). Only one DC out of 64 is woman and nobody became Divisional Commissioner and no woman was ever posted as JS (APD). Only four women are working as Secretary in four less powerful ministries (PACC, 2014).

### **Working hour (fixed, flexible and extended)**

There was no formal FWA in MOPA. It is fixed from 9am to 5pm formally, informally extended when the work pressure is high. Here flexibility means informally taken advantage

keeping with the good relation with supervising officer (Zafarullah, 2000). A WP who needed informal flexibility utilized:

I try to stay inside the office all time and finish work as I need to go out during the office time for my baby (with disability), for her schooling, feeding.

Informal flexibility is utilized by women because social security, family problem, hazardous communication at night. It was found that women were given informal flexibility which contradicts with the findings of Zafarullah (2000).

### **Annual confidential report (ACR)**

ACR is the instrument used for evaluating performance and for promotion with higher salary. A minimum good score is needed to maintain. ACR based performance evaluation system is severely criticized because this system does not provide the rational judgment of performance of an individual rather it is highly subjective and based on personal relation. Haque (2012) identifies some disadvantages of ACR such as likelihood of bossism, flattering tendency among ratees and highly susceptible to rater's (initiating or counter signing officer) biases for which it does not reflect the real performance of professionals. Excessive power of initiating officer may bring harm to professionals and create psychological pressure. A WP who was threatened because absence in one social program due to her child's illness saying that:

I will write 'unsocial' in her ACR.

All respondents told that ACR worked as the most important issue for his or her promotion which is also important at the time of retirement.

### **Physical environment of workplace**

A good physical working environment helps professionals performing well. It is supportive issue to work in the office. Although supports come with the rank where higher rank officials have the more supports than the lower ranks, it lacked of some basic supports like separate toilets for women. A WP told:

When we joined we had to use the same toilets men used. You may find still.

An assistant secretary or senior assistant secretary (SAS) is not entitled to have office room with attached toilet facility in the ministry whereas officials in the rank of deputy secretary and above have that facility. If SAS works as the office head outside the ministry, s/he can enjoy that facility. Joint secretary (JS) and above professionals are entitled to enjoy the air-conditioned office rooms which is irrational in the context of hot temperature in Bangladesh. This entitlement is so unjustified that irregularities are found as most of the rooms of even SAS are air-conditioned. Comfortability<sup>1</sup> is ignored at the workplace. Comfortable environment and productivity have positive relationship (Haynes, 2008).

### **Malpractice of Policy Options**

Rest and recreation facility is one of the important WLB policies. It is never practiced according to the condition specified. Everybody showed their bad experience that they never got the leave. However they got financial benefit. It was told them to get the salary and enjoy in pen and paper but come to office. In most cases, they were not given the leave showing the reason of workload in the office. It was also found that traditional system went on and it was followed by the senior officials. Although it was their right, they could not protest thinking the negative comments in the ACR. Hierarchical structure is also strong; officials never dare to speak even for their rights. In that what they did, they placed the familial urgent issue for which they could get leave at least few days. JS said he was going to enjoy the rest and recreation for the first time in his 26 years in service. Practice of irregular culture has become a precedent and has been followed for years of years. A WP put comments,

Even you can find that many of us did not enjoy rest and recreation although they are entitled to get 15 days leave with one month salary to enjoy family association. In most cases, they are given the financial facility but not leave. Rather they are asked to work. Ridiculous!

The main essence of rest and recreation is ignored by the senior officials and sufferer professionals can't protest for their rights because of strong administrative hierarchy. It was not found that anybody protested for it.

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<sup>1</sup>Comfort indicates ventilation, heating, natural lighting, artificial lighting, decor, cleanliness, overall comfort, physical security

### **Field level and central level job**

It is evident that field level jobs are more challenging because external issues. They can hardly manage their office time within the specified schedule. On the other hand, working time in MOPA is fixed and flexible and less challenging. Working in MOPA brings the benefit of staying in the Capital and enjoy the civic benefits. They are closer to the central power. It is found that about 45 per cent posts in MOPA are occupied by women comparing to the 55 percent of male professionals whereas the male-female ratio in the civil service is 10-90 (MOPA, 2013). This finding contradicts with the male preference concept that men were not favored rather they have the underrepresentation in this ministry (Crompton, 2006; Hofstede, 2005). Over representation indicates women professionals are closer to the central power and their working life is encircled with less challenges. There are some reasons for this over representation. Family backgrounds, status of spouse are the key issues for their concentration. Facilities of children's education, abundance of modern facilities in the capital also serve as the top prioritized living place. The challenges of living in rural area, challenges in jobs force them to rush to Dhaka city.

Male professionals prefer challenges, positional benefit in the field level administration and their spouses can easily accompany them as most of them were not service holder and women professionals want to avoid the challenges, uncertainties at the field level (Hofstede, 2005). It is also evident that professionals try to avoid field level posting even being posted in the lower position in Dhaka city. If they are posted, after few years of service at field level, a good number of professionals try to move to Dhaka by managing their posting, their spouses' posting or they send their family members particularly male officials. A WP mentioned:

After my first baby and some experience as AC(L), I managed to be posted in one autonomous organization because my husband and family members live in Dhaka.

A good number of posts at the field level are vacant whereas MOPA and other ministry positions are rarely remain vacant. This crisis forced MOPA to formulate new policy regarding the posting leading to promotion that a professional should have at least ten years of service at the field level to be promoted to the higher posts. Officials of MOPA working at the field level are the key persons to service the people who pay salary to paid employees of

the country. So, vacant posts at the field level hampers providing services (Sharifuzzaman, 2014).

### **Volume of Work**

Volume of works of this administrative service is another issue that creates extra pressure on professionals. Number of vacant posts adds the pressure on this job. That's why professionals have to spend more time or critically look into matter. Voluminous creates fatigue and boredom that reduces the scope of quality time with family members.

Sometimes officials bring files to home if they can't finish at office that creates another problem in the family. Family members, especially spouses do not like to bring office at home and it creates work-life conflict.

An MP had to manage his wife showing many reasons for which he was saved because of his vital reasoning. However, it created the issue for worsening the relation. He told:

One day I brought files to my home as it was important. Seeing those files, she became angry as she did not get time. She scolded me why I brought office to home.

Diversity of work creates familial and social problem for women. The society does not permit women to stay outside the home after the sunset or at night.

When I started to conduct cognizance court, I would come late, even at night, may be at 10pm or 10:30pm. Sister in law (husband's sister) did not take it easily. She remarked in the family that I do a bad job I come late night, that's disgraceful for a sister in law (wife of brother).

### **Superseding Culture**

Here superseding means to ignore the senior persons either in the merit list of the same batch or previous batch and to promote from the bottom of the list or immediate newer batches. Superseding also happens in terms of placement. Practicing this system has become so frequent that it can be termed as culture. Rationally it may happen due to some practical reasons. Lack of required marks in ACR, charged with corruption cases or departmental

procedures, staying outside the service for lien or studying can be treated as practical reasons. However, a significant number of officers are superseded because of ‘invisible’ hand. Professionals who are superseded are humiliated in the family, society and office as well. They are treated as bad officers.

Superseding has severe social, psychological effect on professionals. Society judges them as corrupt, politically bias, incompetent officials. First blood relatives can understand them, can realize the real issue which may not be possible to make understood by the people surrounding them. Officially they are not posted in the regular post, or in the powerful positions. Superseded officers also try to be aloof and avoid social gathering to avoid unnecessary queries of people. Sometimes they are posted in the lower positions or under a person who was junior to him.

Superseded professionals are not mentally motivated to work rather they avoid to work just to continue the job or wait for a change of administration or government. It is also blamed that they have link with the opposite political ideology. If they are found, they are sent to compulsory retirement according to the existing law. If they are not found practically and are superseded, they are kept without work. There is a possibility to try to communicate with the opposite ideology of political parties. So superseding leads to create an antagonistic group and one kind of mistrust prevails in the administration which ultimately affects the regular function.

It is also deemed that there is a possibility of being superseded because of later entry. Three out four of such professionals had the experience of getting promotion late. No visible reasons other than the above mentioned were found. An WP shared her experience,

It was late. You may know, ... (a woman ), she is junior to me, she got promotion before me though she joined in 1986 and I joined in 1984. It is because of I came from other cadre. And because of this I may not be promoted as secretary. But I am satisfied. My children are well educated. I will retire next year.

Although she showed her satisfaction, it touched heart from her breathing that could be realized. She tried to find the condolence from the success of children.



If a professional is superseded, family members become frustrated and dishonored as well. An MP shared his family experience,

When I was superseded my told ‘you leave the job now, I will work, and you don’t need to work now. You don’t need to do job where there is no justice’.

Superseding culture does not create only socio-psychological problem for person, it also restricts utilization of potential human resource for which government has already spent a lot and continues. The consequence comes out the internal conflict, groupings as well as mistrust among them.

### **Utilization of information technology (IT)**

Utilization of IT has made professional smart, brought benefit to them as they can keep communicating with the family members. IT has numerous positive impacts. It brought negative consequence for them as their personal lives are severely hampered. They are now recalled at any time for official purpose even when they were on leave. This IT has made them 24 hour professional. Primarily professionals were happy to utilize the IT and later realized the negative effects. An MP discussed the positive sides of IT:

I can be communicated at any time even when I was in abroad, I could do office work. I can do from home.

Although he expressed positively, it entered personal life and reduced quality time with family members. Sometimes utilization of IT ignores the human part of the organization, contact among the officials which has great impact in materializing the decisions. Because of IT, professional’s problems are not heard and considered.

### **Fixed Income from Structured Salary**

All MPs who are the only breadwinners strongly emphasized the structured salary that did not provide the exact support they need. No woman professional mentioned that they have financial crisis or limited salary served as hindrance to lead a life. An MP shared his experience:

In every month I had to loan and that had spillover effect. I could not meet children's demand with the salary. That's why I saved a very little in GPF whereas many save a lot as it provide highest interest rate. However, sometimes friends and family helped giving loan.

Being a DS to the government an MP showed his helplessness to manage the family:

I rented a small house at Dhaka. I normally don't invite friends except those who know me from childhood. Even I don't provide them address. And for that reason, I can't maintain social gathering, like wedding ceremony. I have to give them gifts. I don't have enough money to spend to maintain the social status.

Government formulates the pay scale and fixes the salary structure considering the socio-economic issues of the country. However, there is a huge difference between the reality and existing pay scale. However, less amount of money received from the salary did not create financial problem for women as they were not the only breadwinners of the family like men and their husbands were also service holders (Zafarullah, 2000).

### **Personal development through training and education**

WPs emphasized on compulsory training and avoided foreign trainings for their family members. A WP

I was nominated for Masters in the UK. But I did not attend because of kids and my husband's private job. I forewent FTC three times due to my baby.

It is also found that four women and eight men had their second Masters and PhD from foreign university.

### **Conclusion**

This research finds a variety of reasons that professionals choose civil service that includes job security, inherent power and authority of civil service, long working hour and stressful job of previous private job, diversity of work in nature and placement, promotion prospect with vertical and horizontal enhancement.

Transfer of professionals dislocates family, reduces time for family members. It brings opportunity to live family members. Women are less affected from the regular transfer as the frequency of transfer is less than that of male. It is found favorable for women at every rank. They have the social connection, their husbands are working professionals and the less number of women are working in administration. These are the favorable factors for their less movement. Women are closer to the central power as 45 per cent posts in MOPA are occupied by them being about 9 percent in total employment in MOPA. This finding contradicts with the male preference concept that men were not favored rather they have the underrepresentation in this ministry (Crompton, 2006; Hofstede, 2005). Family backgrounds, status of spouse, children's education are the key issues for their concentration. The challenges at field level jobs force them to rush to Dhaka city. Most WPs are 'home-centred' as they avoid training for personal development emphasizing their family members (Hakim, 2000). This makes them less competent and confident about professional performance.

WPs were given less challenging jobs as organizational leaders are male and they favor male that the findings are consistent with Crompton (2000), Hofstede and Hofstede (2005). Powerful positions are usually occupied by men. This restricts women to show the performance. Women have to prove their capability. They avoid some jobs for some practical reasons as well. The natures of jobs, infrastructure of the country, supports of organizations do not allow them to perform any job. Although the total environment is much supportive now, that was not at the time of starting of women's involvement in the service. As FWAs are absent in MOPA, the urgency creates irrational practice of informal flexibility which depends on the good relation between colleagues. This research finds WPs enjoys informal flexibility that contradicts with Zafarullah (2000).

Although rest and recreation facility is one of the important WLB policies, professionals hardly can utilize it because of negligence of sanctioning authority. The essence of rest and recreation leave is ignored.

Volume of works creates extra pressure on professionals that permeates in family activities. Both practical and unseen reason is found to discriminate in terms of promotion. As the reasons are 'invisible', there is a scope to discriminate in this regard. The political interference or connection of professionals with political parties exaggerates this problem

more critical. This bad practice leads to mistrust among the professionals, keep them without work and ultimately result in loss of public money without the work. This culture affects professional's personal life, family life and performance in work.

Although IT brings effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery, utilization of IT ignores the human part of the organization and reduces the personal time for family members including their weekends and leave.

All MPs are the only breadwinners and manage their family with one person's income. They find the difficulty to lead a life which WPs do not feel as their husbands are service holders. The financial scarcity restricts the movement in public domain, social gathering, and fulfilling children's needs.

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