



# Bangladeshi Women in dried fish processing: Negotiating and bargaining with patriarchy

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# Fields in Bangladesh

SAYEDPUR



SHINGRA & NINGUIR



ATRAI, Naogaon



SHUNAMGANJ





# Why this paper

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- Most of the relevant literature argue that women's income generating activities in the fisheries and dried fish processing and their leadership in managing the entrepreneurship will change the gender relationship of the community (Ahmed and Solaiman 2014, Sarma et al. 2010, Rabbanee and Yasmin 2011).
- Studies on garments and other income-generating activities in Bangladesh show that only women's participation in the economy did not change their subordinated gender status in society, nor it ensures the empowerment of women; economic empowerment brings changes in lifestyle, education of their children and sometimes challenge the gender norms too (Karim 2014, Karim 2011, White 1992).

# We differ because

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In our study areas neither the income generating activities of the women in dried fish nor the entrepreneurship/leadership of the women change the gender relationship.

**Patriarchy**



However, patriarchy is reified,  
portrayed as fixed.

It needs to be unpacked



# Patriarchal norms are Internalized

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*"this is a good job for me because I can stay at my house. My husband and other family members do not object to this work, which they may, if I work other places outside our village...I give it [earning] to my husband, he remains happy."-Asma; Atrai, Naogaon.*



*"It is my father's village, we shifted here and bought land to stay...no this is my husband's house, he bought it. He died, now I have a son." Mashiya Begum, Shunamganj.*

# Navigating patriarchy

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Women seller at Dhaka

*"I have to give my earned money to my husband for spending family expenses, but we [she and her daughter] also have some wishes to fill up. So I bring my daughter here and meet our expenses with her income."* Chhaya, Atrai

*"My mother didn't tell anyone that I work in Chatal. My mother thinks I would not be married off if everyone finds out I do this job rather than study."* Ritu 13, Atrai.

*"Females of these villages do not come here. Either they work in their cultivable land or they have husband or son who can earn on daily basis."* Rahima 85, Syedpur.

# Bargaining



“Only I have the in-house information of the business. I have no idea about the import, export, sale, and purchase of the dried fish for which I work hard all day. My husband does not discuss these things when he comes home from Bazar. Because it is not good for a woman to have so much business knowledge. Basically, my husband accepted me as the owner because I got this land by birth. Since he is the one who does all the buying and selling, he is the genuine owner.” Jamila, Atrai

# Bargaining

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*“Whatever my Bhabi (sister-in-law) said that she had given ownership to my brother, but she always wanted the main claim of the business.” –Jamila’s brother-in-law.*



# We Argue



We Argue

Therefore, we argue that Patriarchy is not fixed because, gender relationship is negotiated and challenged and consequently, the patriarchy has been shaping and reshaping.



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Thank you.