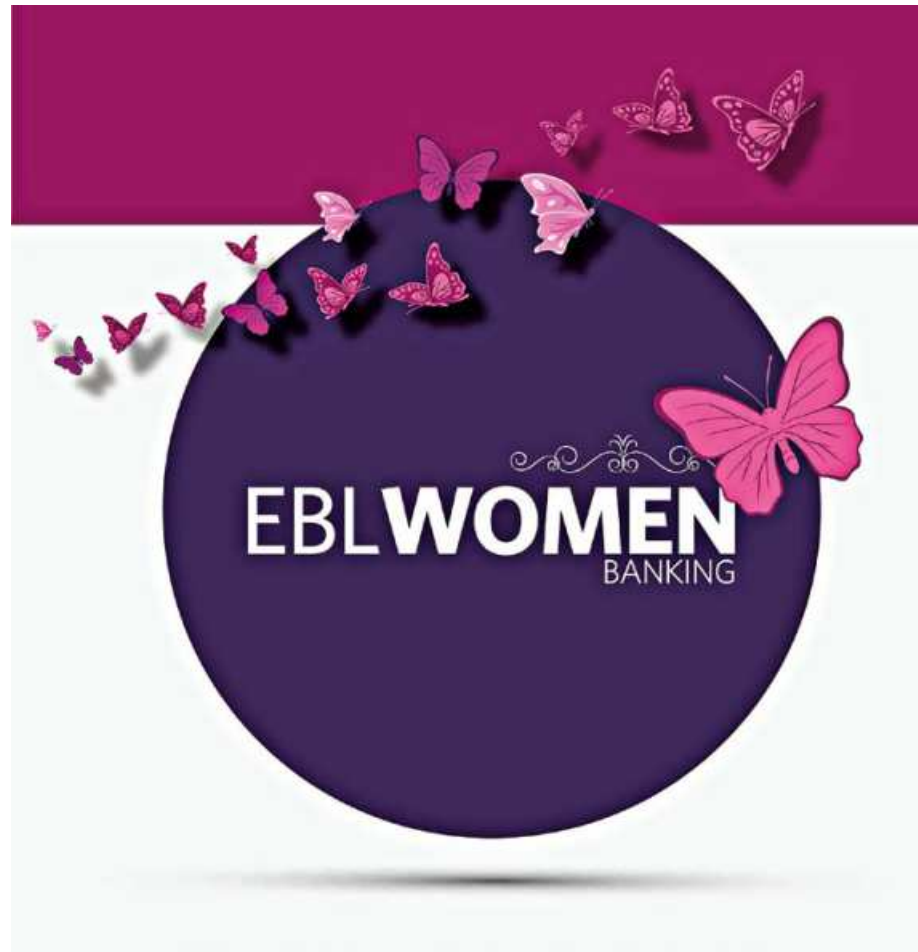


Breaking gender stereotypes

This year, as we celebrate the golden jubilee of our victory, we do not just celebrate our independence from suppression and subjugation by the Pakistani junta, but also celebrate the progress Bangladesh has made over the past 50 years.

What is significant to this remarkable economic and social transformational growth is engagement and active participation of women impacting almost every sector ranging from education, healthcare, social work, science, business, sports, politics, journalism, arts, and entertainment.



A clear indication of women's contribution towards economic development can be seen in the RMG sector where over 50 percent of the workforce constitutes women. Being a major driving force of the economy, this was vastly responsible for our graduation from the "least developed country" category. Furthermore, the literacy rate of women continues to grow year-on-year, currently standing at over 70

percent.

Over time, women have been exemplary in paving the path towards a better, more inclusive world. In the past, when achieving basic rights such as education for women was a challenge, thought leaders such as Begum Rokeya shone the way forward.

In today's contemporary world, it is often difficult to climb the corporate

ladder, but women have proven their potential time and again by acquiring leadership roles. A recent example of this is the achievement of Humaira Azam on becoming the first female managing director of a Bangladeshi commercial bank. Likewise, Rubaba Dowla is an established woman to whom many young female aspirants look up to.

For time immemorial, the role of women has been associated with the kitchen and household chores. Luminaries like Siddika Kabir and Kishwar Chowdhury have shown how magnificently success can be attained in this area too at both local and global levels. On the contrary, women are presumed to lag in areas of sports and science, another stereotype that has been shattered.

Highlighting examples from the pandemic, Sadia Khanom invented an effective COVID-19 fighting device, whereas Senjuti Saha led the genome sequencing procedure of the coronavirus – both fighting the deadly virus using intellect as their weapon. On the other hand, Bangladesh national women's cricket team has consistently achieved milestones, the latest of which is qualifying for the ICC Women's ODI Cricket World Cup for the first time.

The success of women over the years and the stature they have achieved was not an easy process, nevertheless a synergistic one. Bangladesh is thriving as a country and with all aspects considered; it is progressing every day through the provision of better facilities, policies, education, and rights to women.

Women have come a long way, and there is still a long way to go. As Bangladesh evolves as a country, so does its people, its women, who have played the role of trailblazers in the path towards progress.

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