

The Unsettling Contrast Between Purple Promises And Real Progress

At the time of writing this article, the headlines are breaking with news of the [death of an 8-year-old girl](#). She was [brutally raped](#) by her sister's father-in-law in Magura. After battling for her life for 6 days, she suffered three cardiac arrests and finally passed away in CMH on March 13th.

The streets are rife with [outraged protestors](#) seeking justice for what seems to be an endless cycle of abuse, discrimination, and violence against women.

We are only 2 and a half months into 2025, and already [224 cases of violence against women](#) have been reported. 107 of these were rape cases, over 50% of which were involving minors.

There are many more cases that go unreported, as women often feel pressured to stay silent due to familial and social stigma or due to fear of repercussions for speaking out.

Then, of course, there are countless incidents at home that fail to even be recognized as abuse and get labelled as 'family matters'. The Violence Against Women Survey reported that [64% of women never speak up](#) when faced with abuse.

It is difficult not to feel either violently angry or to feel utterly defeated when discussing women's rights in this country. It doesn't help when we see images of eve-teasers and harassers being celebrated with floral garlands and accolades, and yet again, we see women continuing to be shamed and silenced.

We just celebrated International Women's Day last week on the 8th of March. On this day, you will go on social media to see a deluge of posts celebrating women in all hues of purple.

Restaurants offer women free milkshakes, online businesses roll out special discounts, and corporate brands produce poignant advertisements pledging their commitment to the cause of women's empowerment.

While many companies launch new programs and initiatives to uplift women, many of these feel superficial at best.

Why Is It Important To Empower Women?

So what does it truly mean to empower women? And why is it even important?

Women are the backbone of society. They are nurturers, educators, and contributors to the economy. A society cannot progress if it ignores the well-being and advancement of half its population.

Empowerment means equipping women with knowledge about their rights, providing them with the skills to be financially independent, and fostering the confidence to stand up for themselves. It means creating an environment where women are not only allowed but encouraged to take up space, speak out, and pursue their ambitions without fear of judgment or harm.

Many organizations are currently working in Bangladesh to advance women's education and skill development so that they are able to empower themselves, break free from societal constraints, and take control of their lives. One such commendable and inspiring initiative has been taken by Smoothly, a women's depilatory brand.

Smoothly Confidence Academy: A Step Towards Real Change

[Smoothly Confidence Academy](#), launched by Smoothly on March 7th, is a free education platform geared towards building confidence in women through digital learning. The platform offers 50+ courses taught by experts in their respective fields.

The courses span a diverse range of topics, including women's mental and menstrual health, hygiene, confidence building, and professional upskilling. Some of the courses teach women how to start their own businesses and how to manage finances.

What's more, upon completing two courses, women will gain access to exclusive Masterclasses that will enable women to develop more specialized skills.

These Masterclasses will be offered both online and offline to maximize accessibility for women from diverse backgrounds. The Masterclasses will be offered in acclaimed institutions of various fields such as baking, cooking, photography, makeup, news presentation, yoga, etc.

In the future, Smoothly also plans to choose students who excel in the Masterclasses to give them further 6 months of training.

Through the knowledge, training, and certificates from these courses, women will have a real opportunity to make personal and professional progress in their lives.

Since the launch, over 800 women have already signed up for Smoothly's self-defense classes, showcasing a strong demand for practical skills that can help women feel safer and more independent.

The Long-Term Impact of Smoothly's Initiative

Smoothly's mission is not just about offering courses. It is about instilling confidence and independence in women. By equipping them with skills that are directly linked to survival and economic self-sufficiency, Smoothly is taking a concrete step toward reducing gender inequality and improving women's prospects in the job market and beyond.

This initiative goes beyond mere words or gestures; it is a real investment in the future of women in Bangladesh. Unlike many corporate initiatives that aim to check a box, Smoothly Confidence Academy provides tangible resources that can create lasting change.

A Future Where Women Take Up Space

At times like these – when women feel afraid to speak up, afraid to walk the streets alone in fear of moral policing and harassment, afraid to pursue their goals, afraid to take up space – it is our responsibility as a society to remind women that their place is under the bright shining light in the foreground.

For too long, women in Bangladesh have been pushed into the shadows, whether through violence, societal norms, or microaggressions that chip away at their confidence. But change is happening. Women are refusing to be silent, and initiatives like Smoothly Confidence Academy are ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills to stand their ground.

It is time to move past token gestures and truly commit to women's empowerment. Because when women are empowered, society as a whole progresses. And we are not going back into the shadows. We are here to stay.