

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The five best countries in which a female can be born, reared, educated, employed, married and spend her life are: 1) Sweden, 2) Finland, 3) the U.S., 4) East Germany, and 5) Norway.

The five worst, in order of unfavorability: 1) Bangladesh, 2) Mali, 3) Afghanistan, 4) North Yemen, and 5) Pakistan.

These are some findings of a major study that ranks the status of women in 99 countries, representing 2.3 billion women (92% of all the world's females). Titled "Country Rankings of the Status of Women: Poor, Powerless, and Pregnant," it was conducted by the Population Crisis Committee, a private, Washington-based organization.

Statistical extracts comparing the status of women in the highest and lowest ranked countries and the U.S. are on the following page (I-H-34)

Some things to consider about these statistics:

1. What implications does this study have for women?
2. Why do you think that women live longer in the U.S. than in Bangladesh?
3. What opportunities would women have in the U.S. that they may not have in countries such as Bangladesh?
4. Why is the mortality rate lower in Sweden and the U.S. than in Bangladesh?
5. How can women make the best of the opportunities that they have in the U.S.?
6. How do you think the role of women in each country would relate to social position?
7. How do you think the role of men in each country would relate to social position?

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Women's status in:

Sweden	U.S.A.	Bangladesh
Female life expectancy: 81 years	79 years for females	49 years for females
One in 167 girls dies before her 5th birthday	One in 91 dies	One in 5 dies
One in 53 now age 15 won't survive child bearing years (1% of these deaths relate to pregnancy /childbirth)	One in 38 (1% of deaths due to pregnancy/ childbirth)	One in 6 (33% due to pregnancy/childbirth)
Fewer than 1% of women 15-19 already have married	8% already have married	69% already have married
Women bear 1 or 2 children on the average	Less than 2 children	5 or 6 children
Virtually all school-aged girls are in school	Virtually all in school	1 in 3 in school
Female college enrollment is 37% of women age 20-24	Enrollment 59% of women 20-24	Enrollment less than 2%
3 of 5 women 15 or over are in paid work force	Half of women 15 or over	1 in 15 women
49% of paid work force is female	45% of paid work force	14% of paid work force
2 of 5 women are professionals	1 in 7 women	3 in 1000 women
Women live an average of seven years longer than men	Seven years longer than men	Two years less than men
Women and men have similar literacy rates	Slightly higher rates than men	24% fewer men are illiterate
Held 113 seats in 349- member parliament	Held 24 seats in 535- member congress	Held 4 seats in 302- member parliament

1988 - Parade Magazine

How do these statistics reflect the attitudes toward women and of women?