

Functional participation of landless women in income generating activities

M. Aktaruzzaman, M.Z. Rahman¹, M.E. Haque, M.K. Dey and M.D. Amin²

Department of Agricultural Extension, Khamarbari, Dhaka, ¹Department of Extension Education, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh and ²Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, Dhaka.

Abstract: The study was conducted with the landless women of two unions under Nakla upazila of Sherpur district to explore the relationships of the women's individual characteristics with their functional participation in IGAs. Data were collected from a sample of randomly selected 120 landless women from a total of 153 with a pre-tested interview schedule during March to April, 2010. Functional participation of a respondent in each of the IGAs was measured by considering two dimensions of participation: (i) pattern of participation (i.e., how regularly a respondent participated in a particular IGA) and (ii) extent of time use (i.e., how long a respondent participated in a particular IGA). The total functional participation score of landless women was obtained by summing her scores for 12 selected IGAs. The selected traits were age, education, family size, homestead size, family income, agricultural knowledge, daily time use, credit received, husband's cooperation and social participation. Pearson's product correlation coefficient (r) was computed to explore relationship of the women's individual characteristics with their functional participation in IGAs. Findings indicated that almost equal proportion (50.8 percent & 49.2 percent) of the respondents had less and moderate functional participation, while none was found under no or much functional participation category. Out of 12 selected IGAs, 'poultry rearing' had highest standard activity functional participation score where rickshaw purchase and handicraft were in last position. Individual characteristics of the landless women as age, homestead size, agricultural knowledge, daily time use, credit received, husband's cooperation, and social participation had significant positive relationship with their functional participation in IGAs.

Key words: Functional participation, landless women, income generating activities.

Introduction

Women are the most important sequent of human resources who need attention for their development. About 44% of population of the country is female (BBS, 2004). The actual target of economic development of a country is to increase the income and quality of life of its population. Rural development, particularly agricultural development in Bangladesh, is of no exception to this and it is an important issue that development activities should be equally participated by women and men. The overall development of the country cannot take place without massive involvement of women in income generating activities (IGAs). Empirical evidences show that the women have little access to employment and income generating opportunities, leadership and decision making role in household and health care. Along with these, social customs, traditions and norms and other handicaps like illiteracy, lack of institutional supports and skill training have kept down women's involvement in the main stream of rural development process (Islam, 2002). The landless and rural women from poorer household are the worst of in the society. They are not organized; hardly possess any power and the victims of various kinds of exploitation, deprivation and injustice. During mid 1970s, Non-government organization (NGO) in Bangladesh started massive activities oriented with relief and charity aims, devoted to women development program with various sectional activities such as Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock, Health and Family Planning, Credit and Input delivery, Cooperatives etc. (Sharmin, 2005). The NGOs play a vital role in creating awareness for productive involvement of women in IGAs. Seeing the success of different NGOs, recently different Government organizations (GOs) are working with the collaboration of NGOs for the betterment of women through different projects. The survival in extreme poverty depends not only on one's efforts but also on cooperation and assistance from others. The complex interaction of these ties result in various forms of economic transaction and development support viz. credit support, training support, technical support, creation of awareness and so on. But a very few or

no study has been done to identify how far stated objectives have been achieved. However, the study attempted to find out the answer of the following question that to what extent landless women functionally participate in IGAs and their characteristics that influence them to functional participation in IGAs.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted with the landless women of two unions under Nakla upazila of Sherpur district to explore the relationships of the women's individual characteristics with their functional participation in IGAs. Data were collected from a sample of randomly selected 120 landless women from a total of 153 with a pre-tested interview schedule during March to 6 April, 2010. Functional participation of a respondent in each of the IGAs was measured by considering two dimensions of participation: (i) pattern of participation (i.e., how regularly a respondent participated in a particular IGA) and (ii) extent of time use (i.e., how long a respondent participated in a particular IGA). The total functional participation score of landless women was obtained by summing her scores for 12 selected IGAs. The selected independent variables were age, education, family size, homestead size, family income, agricultural knowledge, daily time use, credit received, husband's cooperation and social participation and it was measured with the score. The extent of functional participation of landless women in IGAs was the dependent variable of the study. Functional participation of a respondent in each of the IGAs was measured by considering two dimensions of participation: (i) pattern of participation (i.e., how regularly a respondent participated in a particular IGA) and (ii) extent of time use (i.e., how long a respondent participated in a particular IGA). The total functional participation score of landless women was obtained by summing her scores for 12 selected IGAs. It was done by responding to any one of the three responses namely-regularly, occasionally and not at all against each activity. Again the respondent was asked to respond in the extent of time use in her participation i.e. each of the 12 items of IGAs. It was done

by responding any one of the three-response namely-sufficient, less and not at all against each activity. Weights assigned to both type of responses were 2, 1 and 0 respectively. The score of extent of time use was multiplied by pattern of participation score of a respondent for corresponding activity. The scores obtained by the individual respondent in different IGAs were added together to constitute personal functional participation score which could range from 0 to 48. The scores obtained by all the respondents on a particular IGA were added together to constitute activity functional score which could range from 0 to 480. To facilitate meaningful comparison of data, standard activity functional participation score (SAFPS) for a particular IGA was computed by using the following formula, SAFPS = Observed activity functional participation score/Possible activity functional participation score x 100 (Hossain, 2002). The score could range from 0 to 100 where '0' indicating no functional participation and '100' indicating more functional participation. In order to understand the comparative activity functional participation in the different IGAs, the 12 items of IGAs have been arranged in rank order according to their SAFPS. Pearson's product correlation coefficient (r) was computed to explore relationship of the women's individual characteristics with their functional participation in IGAs.

Results and Discussion

Extent of functional participation of the respondents:

The respondent landless woman's score for functional participation in IGAs could range from 0 to 48. The computed functional participation score ranged from 2-22 with an average of 11.99 and standard deviation of 3.54. Based on their possible functional participation scores the respondents were classified into four categories as shown in Table 1 which show that the highest proportion (50.8 percent) of the respondents had less functional participation in IGAs compared to 49.2 percent moderate functional participation. Data revealed that all (100 percent) of the respondents had less to moderate functional participation. This is an unsatisfactory issue of IGAs regarding the gender issue. It could be said that the present scenario is not as encouraging as involvement of the landless women in IGAs. The average functional participation score (11.99) is also low. It requires careful consideration of the total context of the landless women members of the families in the study area. The landless women are busy individuals at home. Social system and our tradition encourage women especially wives to undertake the responsibilities of kitchen, child rearing, entertaining guests and other homestead activities like cleaning, washing etc. These huge workload in and around homestead keep them away from participating in IGAs.

Table 1. Salient features of extent of functional participation of the respondent

Categories (rated score)	Frequency	Percent	Ranges (score)		Mean	SD
			Possible	Observed		
Not functional (0)	0	0				
Less functional (1-12)	61	50.8	0-48	2-22	11.99	3.54
Moderately functional (13-24)	59	49.2				
Much functional (25-48)	0	0				

Table 2. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their IGA-wise functional participation

IGAs	Number of respondents	Respondents in functional participation (%)			
		Much	Moderately	Less	No
Agriculture crop production	103	82.52	4.85	12.63	0
Fruit and vegetables production	103	42.72	8.74	48.54	0
Rice husking	11	54.55	27.27	18.18	0
Fried rice	7	85.71	14.29	0	0
Poultry rearing	117	96.58	0.85	2.56	0
Fish culture	18	5.56	66.67	27.77	0
Livestock	79	75.95	5.06	18.99	0
Rickshaw purchase	13	0	0	0	100
Flying business	31	22.58	3.23	74.19	0
Grocery shop	5	20.00	20.00	60.00	0
Tailoring	6	16.67	16.67	66.66	0
Handicraft	-	-	-	-	-

Percent distribution of the respondents according to their functional participation in IGA: Data presented in Table 2 indicated that 82.52 percent of the respondents involved in agriculture crop production had much functional participation, 4.85 percent had moderate functional participation, 12.63 percent had less functional participation and none was found in category of no functional participation. Respondent involved in fruit and vegetables production, 42.72 percent had much functional participation, 8.74 percent had moderately functional

participation, 48.54 percent had less functional participation and none was found in no functional participation category. Beneficiaries involved in poultry rearing 96.58 percent had much functional participation while 0.85 percent had moderate and 2.56 percent had less functional participation.

About 85.71 percent of the respondents involved in fried rice had much functional participation, 14.29 percent had moderately functional and none was found less or no functional participation. Respondent involved in flying

business about 22.58 had much functional participation, 3.23 percent had moderately functional participation, while 74.19 percent had less functional participation. All the beneficiaries were involved in rickshaw purchase but 100 percent of them were found in category of no functional participation. Probably poultry rearing, agriculture crop production, livestock are much profitable. Hence, the participants felt interest to participate functionally in these activities. On the other hand, lack of adequate size of homestead, unavailability of tenure land for fruit and vegetables production discouraged them to spent sufficient time in fruit and vegetables production. The landless women participated in purchase of rickshaw but they did not functionally participate in it because they did not pull the rickshaw, their husbands or others paddled it.

Comparative standard activity functional participation of the respondents: In order to make comparison among the selected IGAs, a standard activity functional participation score (SAFPS) was calculated for each IGA.

The computed SAFPS and concerned rank order have been presented in Table 3 which revealed that there was wide variation in the extent of functional participation in the different IGAs. This is evident from the fact that the highest SAFPS was '100' and the lowest was '0'. In terms of functional participation, poultry rearing was by far the most important and it ranked 1st with SAFPS of 97.65 where rickshaw purchase (SAFPS 0) and handicraft (SAFPS 0) were in last position.

Relationship between characteristics of landless women and their functional participation in IGAs: Based on the computed 'r' value, the relationship between age and functional participation in IGAs was significant and followed a positive trend. Thus, it could be said that, for the present study, age of the landless women play a significant role in their functional participation in IGAs. Asaduzzaman (2002) also concluded in his study that the age of the rural women had positive significant relationship with their adoption of selected homestead agricultural practices.

Table 3. Comparative standard activity functional participation of the respondents

IGAs	Number of respondents	Activity score			Rank order
		Observed	Probable	Standard	
Poultry rearing	117	457	468	97.65	1
Fried rice	7	25	28	89.29	2
Agriculture crop production	103	363	412	88.11	3
Livestock	79	264	316	83.44	4
Rice husking	11	32	44	72.73	5
Fruit and vegetables production	103	244	412	59.22	6
Grocery shop	5	9	20	45	7
Fish culture	18	33	72	44.44	8
Flying business	31	53	124	42.74	9
Tailoring	6	10	24	41.67	10
Rickshaw purchase	13	-	-	-	11
Handicraft	-	-	-	-	11

Table 4. Relationship between characteristics of landless women and their functional participation in IGAs

Sl. No.	Selected characteristics	Correlation co-efficient (r) value
1.	Age	0.306**
2.	Education	-0.003
3.	Family size	0.068
4.	Homestead size	0.350**
5.	Family income	-0.011
6.	Agricultural knowledge	0.501**
7.	Daily time use	0.648**
8.	Credit received	0.303**
9.	Husband's co-operation	0.343**
10.	Social participation	0.214*

**Significant at 0.01 level, * Significant at 0.05 level

The correlation coefficient between education of the landless women and their functional participation in IGAs was insignificant (-0.003) and followed a negative trend. The finding is interesting, but quite logical. Generally, the NGOs do not include the highly educated persons as their beneficiaries. Deprived, low literate to illiterate and vulnerable community are the target of NGOs. It was observed during collection of data that the recommended IGAs were directly correlated with physical labour. On the other hand, the beneficiaries who were relatively more educated showed tendency of avoiding physical labour and

taken up more prestigious occupation. Moreover, there existed a very small variation among the landless women in respect of education. The present finding was however, supported by Kabir (2001) in which it was mentioned that the education of the rural women had no significant relationship with impact of their participation in development activities.

Like education, the relationship between family size of the landless women and their functional participation in IGAs was non significant and the finding was in agreement with

the study of Akter (2003) that there was no relationship between family size and participation in IGAs.

Homestead size has been one of the most crucial variables in the activities of a rural family that influences all the variables and also very important determinants of social status of a rural family. It is clear that the families with bigger homestead size have more participation in IGAs. In this study, homestead size of the landless women and their functional participation in IGAs showed a significant (0.350) relation and followed a positive trend. In support of this Akter (2003) mentioned that the rural women had significant relationship between homestead size and their participation in IGAs.

But in case of family income of the landless women and their functional participation in IGAs was non significant (-0.011) which indicated that family income of the landless women did not influence their functional participation in IGAs. The present finding was supported by Amin (2004) in which it was expressed that annual family income of the rural women had no significant relationship with their participation in aquaculture activities.

The agricultural knowledge of the landless women showed a significant positive influence on their functional participation in IGAs. This finding indicated that the landless women, who were more knowledgeable in agriculture, had a tendency toward more functional participation in IGAs. Thus, their higher agricultural knowledge played a positive role in their greater functional participation in IGAs. This finding was also supported by Amin (2004) in which it was concluded that knowledge in aquaculture of the rural women had a significant positive relationship with their participation in aquaculture activities.

The results of the study supported by the findings of Akter (2003) in respects of daily time use, credit received and husband's cooperation of the landless women to their functional participation in IGAs indicated that there was significant relationship between daily time use and the participation in IGAs of SUS. The functional participation of the landless women increased with the increase of credit availability. This seems to be logical, because high amount of credit leads to high amount of investment and subsequently high functional participation. It seems to be logical that when IGA participating women received substantial encouragement, cooperation and recognition from any family member including husband, their functional participation must be increased. Because encouragement and active cooperation would help landless

women to participate more functionally keeping the house works away from them.

Social participation of the landless women and their functional participation was significantly positive indicated that high social participation leads to high functional participation in IGAs. It seems logical because through social participation, the landless women be able to exchange their knowledge, idea, information and experience with each other. Thus, it could be said that social participation of the landless women can played a significant role in their functional participation in IGAs. This finding was also supported by Sharmin (2005) that social participation had significant positive relationship with their perception in benefits of involvement of IGAs.

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