

## Attitude of Extreme Poor Rural Women towards NGOs in Sreebordi Upazila of Sherpur District

M. Sakhawat Hosen<sup>1</sup> and M. Hammadur Rahman<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to determine the attitude of the extreme poor rural women towards NGOs. The study was conducted in two unions namely Tatihati and Singabaruna of Sreebordi upazila under Sherpur District. Rural women working under four GOs (PDBF, BRDB) and NGOs (BRAC, World Vision) in the selected area were the population of the study. Data were collected from randomly selected 200 extreme poor women who were the members of the selected GOs and NGOs, using a pre-tested structured interview schedule during 15 November to 31 December, 2013. Attitude of the extreme poor women towards NGOs was the dependent variable of the study. Fifteen selected individual characteristics of the extreme poor women were considered as the independent variables of the study. It was found that the highest proportion (54.50%) of the extreme poor women had favorable attitude while 7.00% and 38.50% women showed neutral and unfavorable attitude, respectively, towards NGOs. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) test was used to ascertain the relationships between the concerned dependent and independent variables of the study. Out of 15 selected characteristics of women, nine (family annual income, training exposure, social participation, role in family decision making, aspiration, cosmopolitaness, extension media contact, self-confidence, and participation in IGAs) of the extreme poor women had positive and significant relationship with their attitude towards NGOs. The other variables did not show any significant relationship.

*Keywords: Extreme poor, women, attitude, rural, Sherpur*

### Introduction

Bangladesh, being home to some of the largest NGOs in the world, can be an excellent place to look at people's attitude towards NGOs. It is the ninth most populous country and the most densely populated of the world's larger states (CIA world fact book, 2014). It is 150<sup>th</sup> among all countries in world on the basis of GDP per capita (World Bank, 2013). Most of the people live in rural areas. A lot of them are poor and cannot fulfill their basic needs. The poor people are afflicted by poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, helplessness and lack of empowerment etc.

Extreme poor women of Bangladesh in general have a mixed feeling toward the NGOs working with them. A lot of them have changed their economic condition by taking microfinance from the NGOs or by coming under some other income generating activities of NGOs. Still some of the beneficiary women think that NGOs don't serve the purpose of those women, rather they serve the purpose of the NGO management. In addition, there have been allegations that NGOs are trying to influence change of religion, and are causing disruption in family and social structure. On the other hand, a good portion

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<sup>1</sup>PhD Fellow, <sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, Bangladesh

of the women have the notion that those NGOs did change their life positively, whether through their income generation projects or any other project. Also, most of the women have a quite positive feeling toward the education programs of the NGOs.

The study sought to examine the extreme poor women attitude towards NGOs in

Sreebordi upazila. The specific objectives of the study were to (i) determine the attitude of extreme poor women towards NGOs and the ranking of different statements by the respondents and (ii) investigate the relationship between the selected characteristics of the extreme poor rural women and their attitude towards activities of NGOs.

## Methodology

### Location, population, and sample of the study:

The study was conducted in an area, where there are a good number of extreme poor households and different NGO activities are available for them. Considering these criteria, Sreebordi upazila under Sherpur district were purposively selected as the study area. Following the CARE's (2000) definition, the extreme poor women was defined as the women belonging to the households having up to 50 decimals land and having no regular sources of income except than selling of physical labour and involving in some kinds of self-income generating activities. The targeted population of the study was the women members of extreme poor household, who

was involved in different development activities of BRDB, PDBF, BRAC, and WVB. Simple random sampling procedure was followed to obtain the desired sample. Firstly, Sreebordi upazila was selected purposively from Sherpur district. Then two unions were selected purposively out of ten unions. A list of the extreme poor women under aforesaid organizations was prepared. Then 30 per cent of the beneficiaries were selected randomly from the list; thus the sample size was 200. A reserve list of respondents (10 per cent of the original population) from the selected unions was prepared for substitution in case of absence of any selected respondents.

Table 1 Distribution of population and sample of the respondents

Name of Union	Name of Organization	Population	Sample size	Reserve list
Tatihat	PDBF	156	50	16
	BRDB	128	38	13
	BRAC	46	12	5
Singaboruna	WVB	167	50	17
	BRAC	143	38	14
	BRDB	35	12	4
Total		675	200	69

**Variables and their measurement:** Rural women's attitude towards NGO was the major focus of the study. The variable was

measured by using 13 different statements. The statements were selected based on perception about NGO activities by the

general people in area. The selected statements are either positive or negative view. The respondents expressed their opinion against 5- point rating scale as “strongly agree”, “agree”, “no opinion”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. The scores were assigned as 4,3,2,1, and 0, respectively for a positive statement and reverse score was given for all negative statements. The possible score could range from 0 to 52, where 0 indicates strongly disagree or unfavourable attitude and 52 indicates strongly agree or highly favourable attitude towards NGOs.

A total number of 15 characteristics of the respondents were also included in the study. These characteristics were: age, education, household size, family farm size, family annual income, training exposure, organizational participation, social participation, role in family decision making, aspiration, cosmopolitaness,

extension media contact, self-confidence, household food security, and participation in income generating activities.

**Data collection and analysis:** A structured questionnaire was prepared to collect data for the study. All the variables were included in the questionnaire, while mostly closed forms of questions were set to elicit information in regards with the variables. The questionnaire was pre-tested among 20 women in the study area and it was improved on the basis of the observation made during pre-testing. Data were collected by the researcher himself from the selected rural women by using the questionnaire in face to face situation during 15 November to 31 December 2013. The collected data were coded, compiled and analyzed by using SPSS statistical package. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to determine relationship between the concerned variables.

## **Results and Discussion**

**Characteristics of the extreme poor women:** Fifteen selected individual characteristics of the respondents were selected as the independent variables of the study. The individual characteristics included: age, education, household size, family farm size, family annual income, training exposure, organizational participation, social participation, role in family decision making, aspiration, cosmopolitaness, extension media contact, self-confidence, household food security, and participation in IGAs. In addition, salient features of the characteristics and basic statistical value of respondents have been presented in Table 2 which is self-explanatory.

**Attitude of extreme poor women towards NGOs:** Attitude towards NGO of the respondents varied from 15 to 41 against the possible range of 0 to 52. The mean and standard deviation were 29.62 and 5.16, respectively. On the basis of attitude scores the respondents were categorized into three categories as shown in Table 3.

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that an overwhelming majority (54.5 per cent) of the extreme poor women possessed a favourable attitude towards NGOs and also 38.5 per cent of them possessed an unfavourable attitude. Only few respondents were found having neutral attitude towards NGOs. It means that most of the extreme poor rural women have liked the NGO programmes.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics and salient features of extreme poor women

Characteristics	Measuring Unit	Range		Mean	Standard deviation
		Possible	Observed		
Age	Actual Years	Unknown	18-60	34.40	9.25
Education	Years of Schooling	Unknown	0-11	2.02	2.88
Household size	Number	Unknown	2-8	4.08	1.18
Family farm size	Decimal	0-50	0-50	32.32	17.32
Family annual income	Taka in thousand	Unknown	25.4-194.7	78.07	26.21
Training exposure	Number of days	Unknown	0-106	2.62	10.40
Organizational participation	Score	Unknown	0-80	9.67	7.80
Social participation	Score	0-21	0-16	7.60	3.57
Role in family decision making	Score	0-42	4-42	24.94	6.48
Aspiration	Score	0-32	0-28	13.04	5.79
Cosmopolitaness	Score	0-18	0-13	3.78	2.09
Extension media contact	Score	0-30	0-18	5.33	3.09
Self confidence	Score	0-30	3-29	17.32	4.06
Household food security	Score	0-24	0-24	16.59	5.62
Participation in IGAs	Score	0-66	0-12	4.90	2.49

Table 3 Distribution of the respondents according to attitude towards NGOs score

Category	Respondent (n=200)		Mean	Standard deviation
	Number	%		
Unfavourable attitude (17- 25 )	77	38.5	29.62	5.16
Neutral attitude (26)	14	7		
Favourable attitude (27-41)	109	54.5		

BRAC has been working in this area for more than two decades. Along with its micro-credit programme, it undertook a number of other programmes too, such as organization building among poor, adult education, health, infrastructure buildings, seed production programme, ecological agriculture programme, etc. It might be possible that people's involvement in these

wide-ranged and diversified programmes helped them form a relatively favourable attitude towards the organization. Another NGO, World Vision Bangladesh, has introduced programs for health, education, sponsorship and economic development programs in the region. People directly connected with WVB in these efforts normally have a favourable attitude.

The situation regarding attitude towards NGOs score of the respondents (extreme poor women) in all individual statements has been presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Attitude of extreme poor rural women towards NGOs

Sl. No	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
1	I think that NGO activities really help the extreme poor women to improve their livelihood status.	2.57	1.23
2	Most of the NGOs facilitate women mobility and involvement in jobs that are generally against the norms of our religion.	1.72	1.04
3	NGOs have a contribution to increase the adult literacy especially for the women.	2.01	1.06
4	Most of the NGOs come with high expectations but eventually they cannot make any significant contribution to livelihood improvement of the extreme poor.	1.73	1.09
5	Through NGOs activities, ultra poor women can earn money that helps them to alleviate poverty situation.	2.16	1.05
6	I think the poor people are becoming bad to worse due to their repayment of huge interest as charged by NGOs.	1.61	0.95
7	Awareness on social and human rights are increasing due to various programs of NGOs.	2.41	0.94
8	I think that involvement in NGOs creates quarrel among the group members for money that is not good for our rural society.	1.73	0.91
9	I think that women participation is increased in different social activities due to NGO activities.	2.78	0.95
10	Most of the women rely on the NGO workers than their neighbours and close relatives that are not good for rural society.	1.76	1.02
11	In many cases women empowerment status increased through involving in NGOs activities.	2.27	1.12
12	I believe that NGOs do not really work to eradicate poverty but their main aim is to make profit.	1.75	1.19
13	I think dignity of poor and helpless women in family and society enhanced by involving NGO activities.	2.46	1.19

From the above table, it has been found that female participation is increasing in different social activities due to NGO's activities. This is partly because group meetings, training, and orientation increase social participation. On the other hand, "the poor people are becoming poorer due to their repayment of huge interest as charged by NGOs" ranked the lowest because in reality, most of the beneficiaries uplifted their economic condition by the NGOs involvement.

**Relationship of selected characteristics of the extreme poor women and their attitude towards NGOs:** A total of 15 selected characteristics of the extreme poor women were considered for understanding relationships between those characteristics and rural women's attitude towards NGOs. To test the relationship, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed as the results have been presented in Table 5.

Selected individual characteristics	Correlation coefficient (r)
Age	-0.036 <sup>NS</sup>
Education	0.006 <sup>NS</sup>
Household size	0.075 <sup>NS</sup>
Family farm size	0.066 <sup>NS</sup>
Family annual income	0.157*
Training exposure	0.162*
Organizational participation	0.027 <sup>NS</sup>
Social participation	0.351**
Role in family decision making	0.141*
Aspiration	0.167*
Cosmopolitaness	0.251**
Extension media contact	0.388**
Self confidence	0.473**
Household food security	0.019 <sup>NS</sup>
Participation in IGAs	0.292**

Out of 15 independent variables, family annual income, training exposure, social participation, role in family decision making, aspiration, cosmopolitanness, extension media contact, self-confidence and participation in IGAs correlated positively with the attitude towards NGOS.

Table 6 Regression coefficient of attitude the extreme poor women with their selected characteristics

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t values	Significance level
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Attitude towards NGOs	Age	-0.032	0.037	-0.057	-0.854	0.394
	Education	-0.146	0.115	-0.081	-1.271	0.205
	Household size	0.083	0.3	0.019	0.277	0.782
	Family farm size	0.005	0.02	0.017	0.249	0.803
	Family annual income	-0.008	0.015	-0.041	-0.553	0.581
	Training exposure	0.062	0.038	0.125	1.646	0.101
	Organizational participation	-0.033	0.053	-0.05	-0.631	0.529
	Social participation	0.134	0.165	0.093	0.811	0.418
	Role in family decision making	-0.025	0.056	-0.031	-0.443	0.658
	Aspiration	-0.024	0.068	-0.027	-0.355	0.723
	Cosmopoliteness	-0.642	0.27	-0.26	-2.374	0.019
	Extension media contact	0.712	0.183	0.427	3.89	0.00
	Self confidence	0.644	0.094	0.508	6.854	0.00
	Household food security	-0.204	0.064	-0.222	-3.183	0.002
Participation in IGAs	0.013	0.177	0.006	0.072	0.943	
Multiple R=0.615, R square= 0.379, Adjusted R square=0.328, F value = 7.471 P=0.000						

This final analysis indicated that 37.9 % of the total variation in their attitude was explained by these three variables namely, extension media contact, self -confidence, and household food security and the remaining 62.1% remain unexplained.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings and their logical description it was explored that majority of the extreme poor rural women had favorable attitude towards the NGOs while others had neutral and unfavorable attitude. Nine characteristics among the selected characteristics of the rural women had significant positive relationship with their attitude towards NGOs. These are: family annual income, training exposure, social participation, role in family decision making, aspiration, cosmopolitaness,

extension `media contact, self-confidence, and participation in IGAs. It indicates that positive attitude helps them to work with the NGOs. As a result they are attending more training for IGAs, their family income increased, and these increased their social activities, self-confidence, and aspiration. Other characteristics such as age, education, household size, family farm size, organizational participation, and household food security had no relationship with attitude towards NGOs.

### **Reference**

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