

Involvement of Women in Farming System Activities in Sader Upazila of Mymensingh District

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Abstract

The study was mainly designed to determine the extent of involvement of women in activities related to farming system and to explore the relationships between involvement of women to farming system activities and their characteristics. The study was conducted in two unions of sader upazila under Mymensingh district. In all 100 women were randomly selected as sample from a population of 1042. Data were collected from March 01 to April 01, 2009 through personal interviewing. The findings revealed that about three-quarters (70 percent) of the women had medium and high involvement in farming system while 30 percent had low involvement. The coefficient of correlation indicates that level of education, family size, farm size, annual family income, training exposure, knowledge of farming system of the respondents were positively correlated with their involvement in farming system activities while farming experience showed negative relationship with their involvement. The age of the women was not significant relation with their involvement to farming system activities.

Keywords: *Involvement, women, farming system.*

Introduction

About half (48.6%) of the population are women and they are playing different role in economic and non-economic sectors (FAO, 2006). The per capita income is about \$690 and its highly dependant on farming activities (BBS, 2008). Rural women in Bangladesh are intimately involved in all phases of agricultural activities from seed sowing to harvesting and processing of crops. Many women of Bangladesh provide solutions when their cattle suffer from ill digestion, delivery, different types of wounds etc. That is why the indigenous wisdom of women folk is very important for poor households to survive.

Women's role as the principle labour force has the prime importance for the resource poor household to survive. Rural women of Bangladesh are employed in a broad range of agricultural activities such as post harvest

operation, kitchen gardening, caring animals, raising poultry, rice husking etc (Jaim and Rahman, 1988). They are also engaged in agricultural activities in other homestead and help their husband. Women from small farms are found to spend more time in homestead agriculture (Ahsan, 1996). Women have traditionally participated primarily as family labour in preparing fishnets and in some areas, in fish processing. About 60 % to 70% of women from landless and near landless households work as agricultural wage laborers in field activities (Jahan, 1990). In Bangladesh women's contribution to the production of fruits and vegetables in the homestead, along with poultry and livestock rearing, vegetable and fish cultivation, tree plantation and crop processing, brings in a substantial share of the total family income. Women more often than men are involved in

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cultivating vegetables and planting fruit trees (Safilos and Mahmud, 1989).

In developing countries (*e.g.* Bangladesh) most of the farmers including women are involving in farming activities. Farmers those are involved in, traditional farming, integrated farming, now they are converted into farming system for their maximum production. Day by days demand of the food requirements are increasing due to increasing trend of population growth. It is a reality to increase our food production through alternatives way for the fulfillment of the

demand food. It is also necessary to involvement of women in farming system in increasing our food production. Therefore, the researcher has been undertaken a piece of topic entitled “involvement of women in farming system activities in sader upazila of Mymensingh district”. However, specific objectives of the study were to determine the extent of involvement of women in activities related to farming system and explore the relationships between involvement of women in farming system activities and their characteristics.

Methodology

Two unions under Mymensingh sader Upazila of Mymensingh district as considered locale of the study. The rationale behind selection of this Upazila is that it is one of the area of farming system conducted by Bangladesh Agricultural University Extension Centre (BAUEC) and Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and most of the women of that particular areas are engaged with farming activities. Housewives those are engaged with farming activities related to production of crops, livestock, fisheries, agro forestry were the population of the study. Out of 1042 purposively selected women, only 10% were selected as sample of the study through simple random method.

The Research Instrument

A structured interview schedule was prepared carefully keeping the objectives of the study in mind. The schedule contained both open and closed form of questions with a test constructed for measuring involvement of women in farming system activities.

Involvement of a woman to farming system activities was measured by using a 4 point scale was developed for measuring involvement of women. There were 13 statements related to farming system in the scale. Each respondent was asked to give her response as high, moderate, low and not at all. Score assigned to these responses were 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Thus, the involvement of women to farming system activities score could range from 0 to 39, ‘0’ indicating “no involvement” and ‘39’ indicating “very high involvement” respectively

Data Collection Method and Analysis

Data were collected during March 1 to April 01, 2009 through face to face interview method by using structured interview schedule. For measuring relationships between the selected characteristics and involvement of the respondents in farming system, Pearson’s Product Moment correlation co-efficient (r) was computed.

Findings and Discussion

Involvement of Women in Farming System Activities

The observed score of women involvement in farming system activities ranged from 10 to 39 years with an average of 23.65 and standard deviation 7.05. Based on the involvement in farming system women were classified into three categories as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their involvement in farming system activities

Categories	Percentage of women	Mean	Standard deviation
Low involvement (Up to 20)	30	23.65	7.05
Medium involvement (21-29)	45		
High involvement (above 29)	25		
Total	100		

Basically women were involved with different kind of activities related to agriculture and non-agriculture. Data presented in Table 1 revealed that more than half (70 percent) of the women had medium and high involvement in farming system while 30 percent had low involvement respectively. Interventions taken by the different GOs & NGOs especially Bangladesh Agricultural University Extension Centre in the study are the responsible for the same findings.

Selected socioeconomic characteristics of the women

Data were collected from a sample of 100 women. The salient findings of eight selected socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents have been presented in Table 2. Moreover, findings of each of the selected characteristics of the respondents have been shown in separate table along with the interpretation of the findings.

Table 2. Salient features of the selected characteristics of the women (N = 100)

Characteristics	Unit of measurement	Range of scoring		Mean	Standard deviation
		Possible score	Observed score		
Age	Years	Unknown	20-60	38.51	9.86
Level of education	Years of schooling	Unknown	0-14	4.51	4.02
Family size	Number	-	2-30	6.28	3.25
Farm size	Hectares	-	0.04-7.63	0.865	1.17
Annual family income	Taka	-	40000.00-900000.00	139047.95	113953.04
Farming experience	Years	-	2-40	19.81	9.13
Training exposure	Days	-	0-180	13.23	33.23
Knowledge of farming system	Score	0-30	7-30	18.43	5.74

Relationship between the selected characteristics of the women and their involvement in farming system activities

Results of the correlation co-efficient between the selected characteristics and their involvement of farming system are shown in the Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation co-efficient showing relationship between independent and dependent variables (N=100)

Selected characteristics	Correlation Co-efficient (r) with their involvement of farming system (df=99)	Table value significant at	
		0.05 level	0.01 level
Age	-0.188	0.196	0.256
Level of education	0.781**		
Family size	0.201*		
Farm size	0.341**		
Annual family income	0.479**		
Farming experience	-0.207*		
Training exposure	0.211*		
Knowledge of farming system	0.678**		

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability

Eight null hypotheses were tested to find out the relationships of the selected characteristics of the women with their involvement in farming system activities. The coefficient of correlation indicates that level of education, family size, farm size, annual family income, training exposure, knowledge of farming system of the

respondents were positively correlated with their involvement in farming system activities while farming experience showed negative relationship with their involvement. The age of the women was not related with their involvement in farming system activities.

Conclusion

Involvement of women in farming system activities in the study are had satisfactory level. Women become aware by gaining knowledge through education when come in contact with different communication agents. These factors increase skill, awareness, mental alertness, familiarity or acquaintance with facts, objects, practices *etc.* so that women are willing to involve in farming

system. On the other hand, GOs and NGOs in the study area are also has great contribution to motivate the women for the same. Among the socioeconomic characteristics of the women, level of education, farm size and annual family income have highly influenced to involve the women in farming system activities.

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