

## Women's Participation in Household Activities in Gazipur District of Bangladesh

A.N. Tuli<sup>1</sup>, M.S.I. Afrad<sup>2</sup>, M.E.Haque<sup>3</sup> and D.Bhattacharjee<sup>4</sup>

1. PG Student, 2&3. Professor, 4. PhD Scholar, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU), Gazipur, Bangladesh.

Corresponding author e-mail: [ddipa21@rediffmail.com](mailto:ddipa21@rediffmail.com)

Paper Received on July 06, 2015, Accepted on August 05, 2015 and Published Online on August 10, 2015

### ABSTRACT

The main objective guided the present study was to determine the extent of women's participation in household activities. Three villages of Gazipur Sadar upazila were purposively selected for the study. Ninety women were drawn as sample using proportionate random sampling technique. Statistical measures such as range, mean, number, percentage, standard deviation; and correlation co-efficient were administered to express result. It was concluded that a big mass (91%) of the respondents had educational literacy. Almost all (92%) of them belonged to housewives category. Almost all (98%) the respondents maintained well relationships with their husbands. About four-fifth (79%) of the respondents had low to medium financial contribution to their family. More than three-fourth (76%) of the respondents had scanty participation in social activities. Respondents' participation was higher in indoor activities than their husband. But decisions related to educational activities are mainly taken by respondents' husband. Shock reduction ability, contribution to purchase, and participation in social development activities had positive significant relationships with their participation in household activities but husband-wife relation showed negative significant relationship. Arrangement of vocational training on income generating activities, programs for increasing women's knowledge on post harvest activities and increasing awareness among the people on the importance of women's contribution to household works are suggested.

**Keywords:** Women; Participation; Household activities;

Women are the key operator of the house. They play an important role in domestic duties such as washing utensils, cleaning house compounds. Macroeconomic policy sets as its objective the achievement of high and sustained economic growth, with low inflation and an "acceptable" deficit in the government budget and the trade balance; the presence of a large and non-transient informal economy is not normally explicitly factored into macro economic analysis; with the focus on production and growth, employment becomes an input or a necessary counterpart (Ahmed, N., M.Z. Rahman and M.A. Kashem, 2009). According to the WBB (2008) study, 81 per cent women are directly involved in household activities and only 60 per cent men assist them in doing their works. The study also revealed that a housewife spends 16 to 20 hours a

day for household works on an average by engaging herself in 45 types of work. If the professionals would have done the works, its monthly economic values could be Tk 10,000 and if we consider the household activities as a whole, it would stand at \$ 91 billion a year. Women have no holiday and even no leisure time. Many activities performed by them are not considered as the productive ones and hence not reflected in national census. Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon (2009) says that women's unpaid work at household level, including care giving, remains "invisible and unmeasured". Rather they take care of both the children and elderly people of the family whenever they get time to take little rest. But it is interested to note that independent decision making by women on all home and family related practices is very marginal (6.9-13.1%) even though family and home is

essentially a women's domain (Anon., 2005). In Bangladesh, the discrimination between men and women in household work is greater. Seventy-seven per cent of women as housewives spend 200 days a year in family. On the other hand, other members of the family spend only 100 days. A woman's contribution to domestic work is 64 per cent while a man's contribution is 36 per cent are produced by women through domestic work. But, this value is not calculated (Roy, B.S., M.Z. Rahman and M.A. Kashem, 2009).

## METHODOLOGY

Three villages namely Nilerpara, Chakuli of Gazipur Sadar upazila were selected as the locale for this piece of the study. All the housewives of the selected three villages were the population of the study. A total of 215 housewives (Nilerpara 105, and Chakuli 110) were considered as the population of the present study believing that each family contained only one housewife. And from them ninety housewives were selected as sample using stratified proportionate random sampling. In order to stockpile pertinent information, an interview schedule was prepared carefully with due patience keeping the objective of the researcher in view. The questions and statements contained in the schedule were simple, direct, and easily understandable to the rural community. The schedule contained both open and closed form questions. Appropriate scales and techniques of measurement were applied to ensure correct responses of the variable concerned. Data were collected personally by the researcher herself through face to face interview. The entire process of data collection took 30 ranging days from February to March 2011. To measure this, each respondent was asked to indicate her extent of participation in each activity which was calculated in per cent. Thus, a respondent's involvement could range from 0-100% where '0' indicating no participant and 100% indicating full participation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Selected characteristics of respondents:* Data contained in the Table 1 show that more than three-fifths of the respondents (62%) were young aged while 36 per cent belong to the medium and old aged. It is evinced from the table that about 91 per cent of the respondents had literacy. About 30 per cent of the respondent can sign and 20 per cent were belonging to

the group of primary level of education, while 41 per cent were belonging to the group of secondary level of education. Only 9 per cent of the respondents were illiterate. Findings displayed in table depict that about three-fourth of the family belonged to medium size, 21 per cent of the respondents had small family, while only 8 per cent were large family. Almost all (92%) of the respondents were housewives and 6 per cent were involved in service and the rest very tiny portion of them belonged to day laborer and other occupations.

**Table 1. Categories and silent features of the selected characteristics of respondents**

Characteristics	No.	%	Mean	SD
<i>Age</i>				
Yong (up to 35years)	56	62	35.48	9.24
Middle (36 to 50 years)	32	36		
Old (Above 50 years)	2	2		
<i>Education</i>				
Illiterate	8	9	4.88	4.22
Signature ability	27	30		
Primary education	18	20		
Secondary	37	41		
<i>Family size</i>				
Small (up to 4 members)	19	21	4.5	1.5
Medium(5 to 7members)	64	71		
Large (above7members)	7	8		
<i>Exposure to info. media</i>				
Low (scores up to 8)	47	52	8.77	5.6
Medium(scores 9 to 17)	37	41		
High (above18)	6	7		
<i>Capacity to cope with house hold</i>				
Low (scores up to 8)	62	68	5.7	6.06
Medium(scores 9 to 17)	24	27		
High (above18)	19	5		
<i>Financial contribution</i>				
Low (scores up to 8)	49	55	7.5	8.16
Medium(scores 9 to 17)	22	24		
High (above18)	19	4		
<i>Involvement in social program</i>				
Low (scores up to 12)	68	76	9.0	5.54
Medium(scores 13 to 25)	20	22		
High (above26)	2	2		

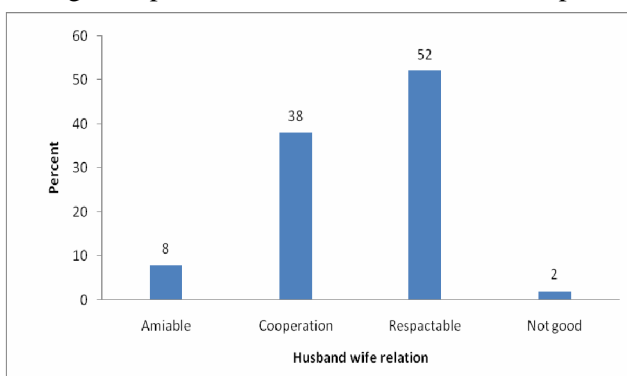
The exposure of rural women to 10 different information media namely, health worker, nutrition worker, NGOs worker, SAAO, fisheries assistant, group meeting, listening radio, watching television, and reading newspaper by the respondents. It is evinced that more than half (52%) had low exposure to information media, about two-fifth (41%) showed

medium exposure while only 7 per cent respondents were evidenced for high exposure. Therefore, a very big mass (93%) of the respondents demonstrated low to medium exposure to information media. Most of the respondents (68%) had low shock reduction ability, about one-fourth (27%) had medium shock reduction ability and only very negligible part of them (5%) had high ability to cope with household shock.

Findings displayed in Table 1 illustrate the distribution of rural women according to their extent of financial contribution to the family. More than half (55%) of the respondents had little financial contribution followed by 24 per cent medium contribution and 21 per cent high contribution in maintaining family cost.

It is evinced from Table 1 the more than three-fourth (76%) of the respondents had little participation in social development programs, followed by 22 per cent medium participation while 2 per cent had high participation. Hence, almost all (98%) of the respondents maintained low to medium participation in social development.

*Distribution of rural women according to their relationships with their husband* :Findings pointed out in Figure 1 describe the distribution of rural women according to their relationships with their husbands. The respondents were asked to indicate the level of relationships that exist with their husbands regarding feelings, cooperation, coordination, love and respect.



**Fig. 1. Distribution of rural women based on husband-wife relationship**

It is evidence from figure 1 more than half (52%) of the respondents noted that they had respectable relation with their husbands, 38 per cent of the respondents mentioned co-operative relation with their husbands, 8 per cent pointed out that, they had amiable relation with their whereas only 2 per cent of them indicated that, they had no good relation with their

husbands at all. The respondents felt somewhat hesitated and shy to express this issue. Thus, a gigantic portion of the respondents (90%) indicated cooperative and respectable relationships with their husbands who are very worthwhile for lasting family bond and social peace.

*Participation in household activities*: In most of the house, women prepare the daily food items. Sometimes their husband and children help them. Available findings in Table 2 represent that women mostly participate in cooking food (97%), washing dish (96%) and selection of daily menu (89%) whereas men participation is mentionable in budgeting for food items (73%) and buying of food items (61%) against 24 per cent and 31 per cent women’s participation, respectively. It is worthwhile to mention here that men’s participation is totally absent in cooking food and washing dish. Children’s participation is very low in all food preparation activities except buying of food item (8%). Therefore, respondent women are mainly responsible for preparation of food stuffs for the family members.

Results available in Table 2 show that more than half of the respondents (51%) buy cloth for themselves, about half (48%) of them have freedom of choosing dress followed by 43 per cent buy cloth for children, 40 per cent buy cloth for relatives, 39 per cent buy cloth for husband and only 27 per cent respondents participate in allocating budget for buying cloth. On the other hand, a lion part of men (64%) participate in allocating budget for buying cloth followed by buying cloth for relatives (49%) and buying cloth for themselves (47%), choice of dress (39%), buying cloth for children (39%) and buying cloth for wives (30%). Children also mentionably participate in buying cloth for their mother and other female family members (19%), buying cloth for themselves (18%) and buying cloths for their fathers and other male family members (14%).

Findings shown in Table 2 indicate that more than one-third women (34%) participate in children’s education through taking care them at home, followed by selection of private tutor (24%), choice of school (21%) and spending money for education (18%). On the contrary, men’s participation regarding children’s education highest in spending money for education (79%) followed by choice of school (67%) and selection of private tutor (47%). More than half of the children (52%) help themselves in going school and selection of their private tutor (28%). Hence, respondents’ husband

**Table 2. Participation of respondent women, men and children in household activities (%)**

Activities	Man	Woman	Children
Selection of daily menu	89	7	4
Budgeting for food item	24	73	3
Buying food item	31	61	8
Cooking food	97	0	3
Washing dish	96	0	4
Budgeting for buying cloth	27	64	9
Choice of dress	48	39	13
Buying cloth for children	43	39	18
Buying cloth for husband	39	47	14
Buying cloth for respondent	51	30	19
Buying cloth for relatives	40	49	11
Choice of school	21	67	12
Spend money for education	18	79	3
Assisting in going school	11	37	52
Selection of private tutor	24	47	29
Taking care at home	34	36	30
Choice of house	2	96	2
Cleaning of house	91	0	9
Building home	9	91	0
Selection of household furniture	50	48	2
Purchasing land for building home	4	95	1
Repairing house	14	80	6
Repairing household essentials	13	80	7
Selection of family planning method	74	26	-
Determine time of reproduction	34	66	-
Number of children to be taken	40	60	-
Naming of children	50	50	-
Collection of water	82	8	10
Payment of electricity bill	35	56	9
Collection of fuel wood	51	40	9
Selling household produce	31	62	7
Managing household budget	20	72	8
Washing /drying children cloth	62	10	28
Bathing children	52	9	39
Feeding children	72	45	23
Visiting relatives and friends	8	65	27
Supporting relatives	23	75	2
Entertaining guest	90	0	10
Purchase of technology	15	79	6
Entertainment cost	20	75	5
Celebrating family events	23	49	28
Marriage of sons and girls	16	67	17
Inviting guest	35	62	3
Financial investment	5	93	2
Preparation of handicraft	100	0	0
Tailoring	100	0	0

showed dominancy over their counterpart women rather children themselves demonstrated more involvement with their educational activities than their mothers. However, findings collected in Table 2 present that a very gigantic portion of the respondent women (91%) involve in cleaning their houses and a mentionable part of them (13%) take part both in repairing house and repairing household essentials. In other housing activities their participation is claimed no description. On the other hand, men show their dominancy in choosing house (96%), purchasing land for building house (95%), building house (91%), repairing house and household essentials (80%).

In selection of household furniture, both respondent women and their husbands participate more or less equally with 50 per cent and 48 per cent participation, respectively. Children rarely participate in housing related activities except to some extent in cleaning house (9%) and each of repairing house and household essentials (7%). Therefore, respondents' husbands prove their supremacy in housing related activities except a few.

Findings compiled in Table 2 indicate that respondent women (74%) dominant over their husband (27%) in choice of family planning method but in selection of reproduction time respondents' husband (66%) remain dominant over the respondents women (34%) and in case of deciding the number of children to be taken, the situation remains same, i.e., respondents' husband (60%) and respondents women (40%). Respondent women and their husbands equally take part in deciding the name of their new born baby. Thus, male and female jointly and evenly involve in family planning related activities.

Results displayed in Table 2 show that respondent women by themselves complete cent per cent of tailoring and preparation of handicraft for their family.

On the other hand, respondents' husbands are involved with some of the household activities dominantly like, financial investment (93%), purchase of technology (79%), entertainment cost (75%), supporting relatives (75%), managing household budget (72%), marriage of sons and girls (67%), selling of household produces (62%), visiting relatives and friends (65%), inviting guest (62%), payment of electricity bill (56%) and celebrating family events (49%). Children are playing mentionable role in the family. Elder children engage themselves in

the family in bathing junior children (39%), washing /drying children cloth (28%), celebrating family events (28%), visiting relatives and friends (27%) and marriage of sons and girls (17%), feeding children (23%) and so on.

Therefore, it can be concluded from this table that respondents women are mostly engaged in in-house activities and their husbands are mainly involved in out-house activities and that need financial connection.

**Table 3. Relationship between the women and their participation in household activities**

Selected personal attribute	(r)
Age	0.38 <sup>NS</sup>
Education	0.153 <sup>NS</sup>
Family size	-0.043 <sup>NS</sup>
Media exposure	0.229*
Shock reduction ability	0.510**
Husband wife relation	-0.214*
Contribution to purchase	0.491**
Participation in social development activities	0.448**

\* Significant at 0.05 level of probability, \*\* Significant at 0.01 level of probability, NS = Non significant

*Relationship between the selected characteristics of the respondents and their participation in household activities:* Coefficients of correlation were computed in order to explore the relationship between selected characteristics of the respondents and their participation in household activities. The null hypothesis was “There is no significant relationship between the selected characteristics of rural women and their participation in household activities.” Relationships between the selected characteristics of the respondents and their participation in household activities are given in Table 3. It is evinced from the Table 3 that media exposure, shock reduction ability, contribution to purchase and participation in social development activities had positive significant relations with their participation in household activities. It indicates that if there is any increase in the above mentioned selected characteristics of the respondents, there would be an augmentation in their participation in household activities. On the other hand, husband wife relation showed negative significant relation with their participation in household activities. It indicates that if there is any increase in husband wife relation, there would be a decrease in their participation in household activities.

Media exposure had positive significant relationship

with their participation in household activities. It means that the higher the media exposure of the respondents, the higher their participation in household activities. Roy *et al.* (2009) found different result in the study on “Farmers Perception of the Effect of IPM towards Sustainable Crop Production”. Shock reduction ability had positive significant relationship with their participation in household activities. It means that the higher the shock reduction ability of the respondents, the higher their participation in household activities.

Ahmed *et al.* (2009) found opposite result. Husband wife relation had negative significant relationship with their participation in household activities. It means that with the decrease in husband wife relationship. There is increase in their participation in household activities. This might be due to when husband wife relationship is in bad relationship is in bad condition wives try to be sincere in their household activities to avoid any further unwanted and worsening situation. Contribution to purchase had positive significant relationship with their participation in household activities. It means that the higher contribution to purchase of the respondents, the higher their participation in household activities. Participation in social development activities had positive significant relationship with their participation in household activities. It means that the higher the participation in social development activities of the respondents, the higher their participation in household activities.

*Problem faced by respondent women in participation at different household level activities:* In practical everyday life women confront some problems both at house and in the field. However, major five problems mentioned by majority of the respondent women are lack of enough resources; negligence by the family member; lack of knowledge on improved crop production; age difference between spouse; and lack of control over the family members

**Table 4. Problem faced by the respondent at household**

Problems	No.	%	Rank
Lack of enough resources	70	77	1
Negligence by the family member	52	57	2
Lack of knowledge for improved crop production	42	46	3
Age difference between spouse	35	38	4
Lack of control over the family members	31	34	5

In Bangladesh, most of the communities are patriarchal and in male has power over all resources, therefore, women having no or less possession over the resources both at father's and husband's houses get less scope to control over any resource. As women are physically weak and thereby mentally too, and so are neglected by the other members of the family. In the same way, women exert lack of control over the family members. Again women are traditionally engaged with agriculture without sufficient knowledge on crop production, protection and storage.

Therefore, they face manifested problems especially in agriculture. It is said that like born and death, forming couple as husband and wife is the desire of the Almighty. But there are lot of activities including reproduction of children influenced to a great extent by the compatibility of husband and wife. If the wife is too much junior to her counterpart husband then there exists incompatibilities in sharing ideas, understanding each other, therefore, creates disequilibrium in their couple life.

Surprisingly, no respondent indicated any problem related to agricultural activities. It might be due to their realization as agriculture is their secondary working field. And they with their scanty knowledge on agriculture did not dare to indicate any problems as well as suggest any solution.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher, in her research, studied the women participation in household activities attentively and put forward the following conclusions on the basis of following major findings. A big mass (91%) of the respondents had educational literacy. Almost all (92%) of the respondents belonged to housewives category. A very big mass (93%) of the respondents demonstrated low to medium exposure to information media. Almost all (98%) the respondents maintained well relationships with their husbands. About four-fifth (79%) of the respondent had low to medium financial contribution to family. Bigger than three-fourth (76%) of the respondent had little participation in social activities. Their participation was higher in child care than husband. But decisions related educational activities are mainly taken by respondents' husband. Occupation, shock reduction ability, contribution to purchase, and participation in social development activities had positive relationships with their participation in household activities but husband-wife relation showed negative relationship. Major five problems mentioned by majority of the respondent women were lack of enough resources; neglect by the family member; lack of knowledge on improved crop production technologies; age difference between spouse; and lack of control over the family members.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmed, N., M.Z. Rahman and M.A. Kashem. 2009. Need Assessment Capacity Building of Women in Practicing Post Harvest Activities of Vegetables. *Bangladesh J. of Ext. Edu.* 21(1&2): 97 -105.
- Anonymous. 2005. Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
- Ban Ki-moon. 2009. The Two-week Session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).
- Roy, B.S., M.Z. Rahman and M.A. Kashem. 2009. Farmers' Perception of the Effect of IPM towards Sustainable Crop Production. *Bangladesh J. of Ext. Edu.* 21(1&2): 35-41.
- Wikipedia. 2011. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Bangladesh).
- WBB (Work for Better Bangladesh) (2008). An Online Magazine.

