



USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity

Study on Gender Impact

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Project Implementation: Dhaka Ahsania Mission, CARE Bangladesh and mPower

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3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study had followed a mixed method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. While the quantitative survey unfolded the current status of gender awareness in different value chains from a “static” view point, the qualitative part revealed the “dynamics” of those static pictures.

Major Findings

The study found that the project till date have completed several of its planned activities successfully and the result in terms of decision making, access to resources, control over income, leadership and work load were found positive. Female farmer’s participation in the respective value chains was also found noteworthy across the regions.

- **Decision making (production):** The project’s female farmers are taking more active part in making decisions of household activities, agriculture production, purchasing of inputs (for production), managing assets, children’s education and overall welfare amongst others. The study found that decision making in terms of production related issues across the value chains and usage of ICT services for acquiring market information to take informed decisions were evident. Decision is being taken jointly with husbands which is also being valued by the husbands.
- **Access to resources (assets& finance):** Women were found to be able to better access finance i.e. women can avail money if they require and women can manage assets for production. It was found that financial products available from the Micro finance institutions are not that agriculture friendly thus investments in agriculture were found to be low. The group members as per focus group discussion findings further revealed that the accessibility was higher in the sense of increased trust is given to the group members. Also in terms of acquiring assets it was found that female farmers are able to manage the requirement, either directly or indirectly through the help of the group members.
- **Control over use of income:** Female farmers are now more aware of the income and expenditure of the family issues and can use the income for necessary purposes having a discussion with their husbands. Husbands were found to be more comfortable in terms of keeping money with their wives.
- **Leadership:** It was found that in terms of leadership, female farmers have advanced due to the facilitation of the project. It was found that they are now disseminating acquired information to their neighbors and also other women of the community as and when necessary. Female farmer’s dignity in the community has also been increased as some of them have close interaction with local power structure (e.g. Union Parishad). Also women’s communication skill increased and voice has been raised and overall, they seemed to be more confident at the time of conversation.

Female farmers were found to be more comfortable to interact with extension agents and market actors for having knowledge on improved agricultural technology. They now know where, when and how such services are found. They are in a practice to get access to services (Govt & Private). This was evident in the regions as well as across the value chains.

- **Work Load:** Daily time use tool usage activity had led to a greater appreciation of women's (female farmers) involvement in every day work. Men (husbands) had realized the load of work the women undertake on a regular basis, this increased understanding has resulted in sharing of work load amongst the household. Female members of the Farmers Producer Group who had received orientation on the Daily Time Use Tool were found to be have approximately 1-2 hours of leisure time. This leisure time was used mainly for interacting with extension agents and market actors as well as for pursuing productive undertakings such as learning sharing. The female farmers who had not received the orientation were found to not have this additional time. Similarly, the distribution of work load amongst the husband and wife were notably different from the ones who had received such trainings (daily time use tool).

The study also was able to find the increased involvement of women in the respective value chains, the presence and participation was predominantly visible in dairy, chili and beef fattening. Trainings related to the specific value chains were also able to build capacity of the members in terms of better production. In terms of engaging with extension agents it was found that the project beneficiaries were at this stage more interactive in terms of sourcing information. This sourcing of information was done via different mediums such as ICT leaders, FPG leaders, market leaders and even in certain cases directly. Extension agents were also found to be appreciative of the new developments and increased interactions with the project beneficiary base. Women's participation in the value chains were also found to have increased and participants acknowledged greater confidence in terms of technical knowhow of the sectors they were involved in. Comparison between members having received daily time use tool and non-recipients revealed that the work load had reduced for the ones having received the orientation, whilst the non-recipients were still not enjoying increased leisure time to rest or interact socially for linkages and seeking services from the extension service providers.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been sequenced in line with decision making, access to financial services and other assets, access to input and output markets: control over use of income, access to agriculture extension services through developing leadership, recognition of women's role in agriculture: time allocation.

- ✔ In order to further strengthen the decision making aspects of women, the project may arrange for separate sessions with Father and Mother in laws. This is from the perspective that the in-laws tend to influence the family dynamics as well. This can be done within the reminder of the project timeframe as an added activity to test if this yields results.
- ✔ Local government representative awareness about the project activities may be strengthened as step to ensure greater and wider support for the reminder of the project timeframe.
- ✔ DAE (especially Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers), DLS and different market actors should be provided with refreshers and more extensive training on gender awareness for female farmer's greater access to resources.

- ✔ Strengthen the involvement of the Department of the Livestock Department in the project activities. This may be done by following the same model of sharing cost and certain assets such as smart phones and motorcycles.
- ✔ The project may pursue comprehensive training on leadership which will further help the female farmers building their capacities; this should have options for refresher at least twice a year in the remainder of the project timeframe.
- ✔ The daily time use tool clearly identifies the activities undertaken by males and females, however the Economic valuation of the work undertaken by women are not sketched out in practice that clearly. If this component is clarified further the project may benefit further in portraying roles and depth of contribution by women further there by increasing overall gender awareness.
- ✔ In terms of the daily time use session a separate session involving the males to clearly identify the parameters of the time engagement of the females may be undertaken. This is being suggested as this will allow for a more detailed understanding of the males concerned about the work load of the females. A greater understanding by the males is likely to create greater impact of gender awareness. In this session, husbands can be motivated regarding wives' access to and control over income.
- ✔ Greater collaboration with other USAID projects, DAM is also implementing the project Women Empowerment Activity Project in collaboration with Winrock, thus CARE may delve into discussions with the project capitalizing on shared interest and are of work for further strengthening the project gender awareness activities.
- ✔ Given gender awareness creation is a vast undertaking an extension should be pursued to continue and expand the activities benefitting the farmer base.