

PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN HOMESTEAD VEGETABLE PRODUCTION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

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The focus of the study was to observe the participation of rural women in homestead vegetable production program in Sadar Upazilla of Gazipur District. The specific objective of the study was to find out the extent of participation of rural women in homestead vegetable production program and to explore the relationship between their participation and selected characteristics. Mirzapur Union of Gazipur Sadar Upazilla was selected as the study area. Data were collected from the respondents in two villages namely Taltoli and Painshail. A randomly selected sample size of 75 respondents was interviewed by face to face interview. Majority of the respondents belonged to the young aged having primary level of education with small farm size and low income and high organizational participation and high extension contact. Sixty percent of the respondents had medium and high participation in homestead vegetable production program. Rural women faced acute shortage of irrigation water for homestead vegetable production.

Key Words: Rural women, participation, homestead, vegetable production

INTRODUCTION

Women's participation in rural development, more particularly in agricultural development in Bangladesh, is the most important strategy designed to improve the social and economic life of specific group of farming community. Undoubtedly, participation provides various benefits of development to target groups who seeks a livelihood in rural areas. The basic aim of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) is to raise farm productivity and family income for the socio-economic welfare of the society for which it is intended to do. Women constitutes about 48% of the total population in Bangladesh and majority of them living in rural areas can play a vital role if they are properly involved in agricultural production and other income generating activities as well as decision making processes (Anonymous, 2000). Homestead vegetable production has manifold advantages. It provides nutritious food to the dwellers, generate income, employment and goods to trade. In a poor society household food production is essential in providing high quality carbohydrates and micronutrients which cannot be purchased by low income families. Improved production technologies for field crops is not of value to them as they have neither enough land nor access to high cost inputs. Homestead vegetable production may be a lifeboat for their survival and existence because of secured supply of food, petty cash etc. (Chowdhury and Hossain, 1992).

The specific objectives of the study were: i) to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the rural women participating in homestead vegetable production program, ii) to measure the extent of participation in homestead vegetable production and iii) to explore the relationship between rural women's participation in the homestead vegetables production program and their selected characteristics

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two villages of Mirzapur Union under Gazipur Sadar upazila of Gazipur district. Out of 5 unions of Sadar Upazila, Mirzapur Union was selected deliberately. An updated list of 200 homestead vegetables growing households of the rural women was prepared with the help of Block Supervisors currently known as Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAOs). Using this updated list, 75 respondents (35%) were selected using simple random sampling technique, representing all categories of farmers, namely landless, marginal, small, medium and large. The entire process of data collection took 30 days from January to February 2005.

The independent variables of the study were age, education, family size, farm size, annual income, organizational participation, training program received, contact with extension personnel and respondents husband attitude towards their wives' participation in homestead vegetable production. The dependent variable of the study was participation of rural women in homestead vegetable production program.

Measurement of the dependent variable

This variable was calculated by adding the scores of homestead area ownership in vegetable production, the extent of training received on homestead vegetable production and husbands' attitude towards their wife's

participation in homestead vegetable production. For convenience, the ownership in homestead vegetable production was further categorized and score one was assigned to those respondents' who utilized less than 8 decimals of land, score two for 8-30 decimals and score three was assigned to those who utilized 31 decimals and above decimals of land for vegetable production. The respondents were again categorized based on the duration of training received on homestead vegetable production and score zero was assigned to those respondents who did not receive any training on homestead vegetable production, score one for up to 3 days training on homestead vegetable production within a year and score two for training of 4 days and above. Based on participation in decision making score 0 was given for non participation and 1 for participation. Finally all the scores were added and participation of the rural women in homestead vegetable production was calculated.

Measurement of the independent variable

Age of a respondent was measured in terms of actual years on the basis of his statement. A score of one (1) was assigned for each years of his age. For measuring education, a score of 1 was assigned to a respondent for each year of schooling. A respondent who could not read and write falls under illiteracy criteria with a score of 0. Family size was operationally measured by assigning a score of one (1) for each member of the family who jointly lived and ate together. Farm size referred to the hectare of land area devoted to the maintenance of farming enterprise(s) by a respondent. Annual income of a respondent was determined on the basis of his total earnings from agriculture, service, business and other sources. Organizational participation of a farmer was measured by the position held in different organizations, duration and extent of participation in different organization. Weights assigned as 0 for no participation, 1 for general member, 2 for executive member, and 3 for officer like chairperson or secretary. And finally the participation score was calculated. Training received by the respondents was measured by the number of days that a respondent had received training during their participation in homestead vegetable production. It was calculated by the total number of days of training received by a respondent under different training programs. Contact of the respondents with extension personnel was computed on the basis of their extension contact with sources of information namely SAAOs, AEOs, ideal farmers, field days, watching TV, hearing Radio etc. Respondents were asked whether they contacted with those extension activities never, rarely, occasionally and frequently and were given a score of 0, 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Respondents' husband attitude towards their wives' participation in homestead vegetable production was measured by asking respondents about their husband attitudinal statements. Score 4 was given for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for neutral, 1 for disagree and score 0 was given for strongly disagree statements. In case of negative statements reverse score was given to the respondents. Finally the attitudinal scores of the respondents were added for measurement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Selected characteristics of the respondents

Majority (57.3%) of the rural women were young followed by middle and old with an average of 31.21 years (Table 1). Most of the respondents (61.4%) had primary level education followed by illiterate. According to Table 1, 72% of the respondents had small family size ranging from a number of 1 to 4 followed by medium and large family. From the table 1 it was shown that percent distribution of landless, marginal, small, medium and large farmers were 6.67%, 18.67%, 57.33%, 9.33% and 8% respectively. Majority of the respondents (86.67%) fell in the low income group (Table 1). About half (50.67%) of the respondents had medium participation with different organization followed by high and low participation. Table 1 indicated that about 13% of the respondents did not receive any training. But about 61% of the respondents received training on homestead vegetable production. A higher proportion (69.33%) of the respondents of the study area had high contact with extension personnel. It was shown from the Table 1 that most of the husband's (62%) attitude was found favorable towards their wife's participation in homestead vegetable production program.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics profile

Variables	Measurement	Range	Categories	Respondent (%)	Mean	S.D.
Age	Years	20-30	Young	57.3	31.21	7.77
			Middle	42.7		
			Old	0		
Education	Rated score	0-13	Illiterate	30.7	1.84	2.79
			Primary	61.4		
			Secondary and above	7.9		
Family size	Rated score	2-9	Small	72	4.02	1.56
			Medium	26.7		
			Large	1.3		
Farm size	Hectares	0.02-3.0	Landless	6.67	0.64	1.27
			Marginal	18.67		
			Small	57.33		
Annual income	Raw data	10000-95000	Medium	9.33	24500	16054
			Large	8.00		
			Low	86.67		
Organizational participation	Rated score	0-13	High	2.66	10.45	6.25
			Low	16.00		
			Medium	50.67		
Training	Rated score	0-5	High	33.33	3.15	2.28
			No training	13.33		
			Homestead vegetable production	61.34		
Contact with BS	Rated score	2-20	IPM	25.33	12.25	1.51
			Low	30.67		
			High	69.33		
Respondent's husband attitude	Rated score	20-39	Strongly agree	31.11	31	5
			Agree	31.11		
			Neutral	6.68		
			Disagree	25.62		
			Strongly disagree	5.48		

Participation of women in homestead vegetable production program

The dependent variable i.e., "participation" was measured by adding the individual score of land utilization under homestead area for vegetable production, the extent of training received on homestead vegetable production and the extent of participation in decision making for homestead vegetable production. It was found from Figure 1 that, majority of the respondents (60%) had medium and high participation and 40% of the respondents had low participation in homestead vegetable production program.

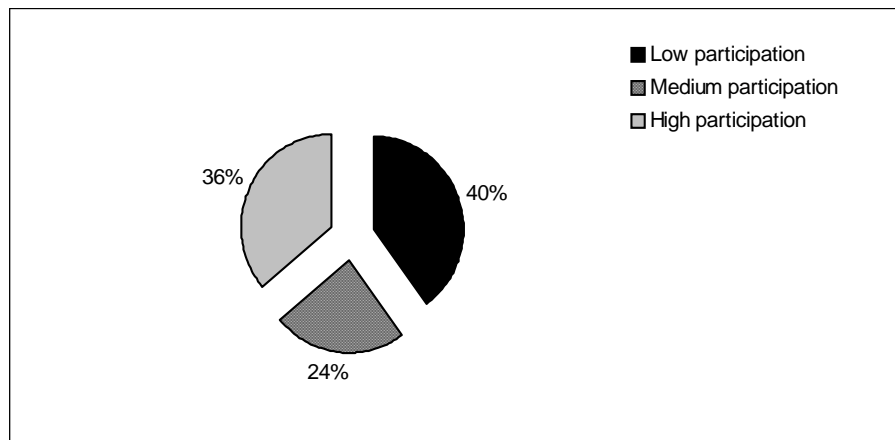


Figure 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their participation

Relationship between selected characteristics of rural women and their participation in homestead vegetable production program

To find out the relationship of women's characteristics with their participation in homestead vegetable production program, coefficient correlation analysis was used. Various relationships regarding the above aspects were depicted in Table 2:

According to Table 2, farm size was found to have significant and positive relationship at 5% level with participation in homestead vegetable production program of women as the correlated value of 'r' was 0.231. So the null hypothesis was rejected and it could be concluded that farm size played an important role in homestead vegetable production program. Similar types of results were also found by Hooda (1989), Bhuiyan (1988) and Isvilanonda and Wattanulcharia (1994).

The relationship between training facilities of the respondents and their participation in homestead vegetable production was found to be significant and positive at 5% level of probability when the value of 'r' was 0.218. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and it could be concluded that the respondents received more and more training; more was the participation in homestead vegetable production program. Bhuiyan (1988) also found similar type of result.

A positive and significant relationship was found between organizational participation of the respondents and their participation in homestead vegetable production as the value of 'r' was 0.152 according to Table 2. So it could be concluded that participation in different organizations helped increase vegetable production among the women.

When the respondent's husband attitude and their participation in homestead vegetable production was encountered, then it was clear from Table 2 that, the value of 'r' was 0.167 indicating a significant and positive relationship. This finding thus supported that the husband had more favorable attitude towards their wives participation in homestead vegetable production program. Khan (1983) was found similar results.

Table 2. Correlation co-efficient of the respondent's participation in homestead vegetable production and some selected variables

Variables	Coefficient value (r)
Age	.009
Education	-.115
Family size	-.206
Farm size	.231*
Annual income	.027
Training	.218*
Organizational participation	.152*
Contact with extension personnel	.078
Respondents husband's attitude	.167*

* Significant at 5% level

CONCLUSION

1. A large portion of the respondents (86%) received training on homestead vegetable production and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training program and majority (69.33%) had contact with extension personnel. These two things played very important role to participate the women in homestead vegetable production program.
2. In the study area a large portion (62%) husband of the respondents had favorable attitude towards the participation of homestead vegetable production program. This thing played a very important role to participate of the women in homestead vegetable production program. As because in our social system, women's participation in outside household activities is largely dependent on the husband's or parent's attitude.
3. In the study area 60% of the respondents had medium and high participation in homestead vegetable production program. Whenever they got training on vegetable production and made favorable attitude on homestead vegetable production and whenever their husband's attitude was favorable towards homestead vegetable production program then they participated in higher percentage in homestead vegetable production program.

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