

Reprint

ISSN 1997-2571 (Web Version)

# Journal of Innovation & Development Strategy (JIDS)

(*J. Innov. Dev. Strategy*)

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**Volume: 9**

**Issue: 1**

**April 2015**

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*J. Innov. Dev. Strategy 9(1): 23-29 (April 2015)*

## THE ROLE OF WORLD VISION BANGLADESH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL POOR IN BANGLADESH

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## THE ROLE OF WORLD VISION BANGLADESH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL POOR IN BANGLADESH

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Accepted for publication on 25 March 2015

### ABSTRACT

Begum S (2015) The role of world vision Bangladesh to economic development of rural poor in Bangladesh. *J. Innov. Dev. Strategy*. 9(1), 23-29.

The purpose of this study is to assess the changing status of the community people in their economic and social life through the intervention of the various programs of World Vision Bangladesh. In order to collect data, both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied. This study was conducted in Kalkini Upazila under Madaripur district of Bangladesh. A total 1,200 households were selected as a sample for the survey through a two-stage cluster sampling design. In addition to survey Focus Group Discussion and Key Informants Interview was conducted for getting qualitative information. The research reports that as regards to farm and non-farm activities, most of the households engaged themselves in crop cultivation (62.1%) and poultry rearing (72.1%). Among the various training programs, the majority of the households received training on crops cultivation (64.6%) and after receiving the crops cultivation training, their agriculture production has been increased which ultimately enhance the quality of their life. However, although most of the households have poultry, the training received by the households on poultry rearing is only 5.4% which is very low. It is also found that 63.8% of households are applying the modern technology in farming. Various activities of World Vision Bangladesh under economic development projects and training programs have become an integral part in the economic development discourse. More training programs should be carried out by the different government and non-government organizations in the study area for accelerating the socio-economic change of the farm families. Alternative income sources like off-farm activities found to be limited in the study area. As a result, small but manageable entrepreneurship development schemes should be initiated for income generation especially for the women.

**Key words:** *World Vision Bangladesh, Income Generating Activities (IGA), Non-government organizations, Community Based Organization (CBO)*

### INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh has made considerable progress in the areas of poverty reduction including net enrollment in primary education, gender parity in primary and secondary education, reducing child mortality and maternal mortality and improving immunization coverage, rolling back malaria and controlling tuberculosis, and improved drinking water supply and sanitation (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2012). However, immediate attention must be taken to improve maternal health, reduce poverty in urban slums, increase employment opportunity, expand credit institutions, mitigate climate change induced- disasters management, and develop local community organization. To take the essential strategic action regarding these issues, both of the government and non-governmental organizations has been running many programs and services including microfinance and capacity building which assists community people to become empowered, and eventually attain livelihood security in the national and rural levels.

Non-government organizations (NGOs) have been playing an essential role in the socio-economic development of rural people. In recent years, the role of NGOs have become important for some especial sectors like advocacy in some emerging issues, women's empowerment, preserve the rights of the ethnic group, peoples participation in rural development etc. As a non-governmental organization, World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) provides various programs as regards to livelihood security projects for the most underprivileged people in Bangladesh. World Vision Bangladesh is well known for its innovative incorporation in many sectors, especially for employment opportunities of rural poor, women enterprise development programs, health programs, and child sponsorship programs (World Vision Bangladesh, 2014). Mainly, the economic development project of World Vision Bangladesh provides diversified supports and training in the field of agricultural activities such as fertilizers, seeds, technologies and training on livestock rearing, fish cultivation, poultry rearing, nursery etc. In addition to the agricultural activities, World Vision Bangladesh tried to generate more income generating sources for the targeted people in the study area through providing income generating activities related training. In the present study, therefore, we aimed to evaluate the various programs of World Vision Bangladesh in promoting the economic development of the community people.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Study sites*

This study was conducted in Kalkini Upazila under Madaripur district of Bangladesh. Kalkini Area Development Program impacted area is located in Kalkini municipality of Kalkini Upazila under Madaripur District which is 210 km to the south of Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. The area of the Upazila is 280.36 square kilometer, which includes 14 unions, one municipality, and 171 villages. Total population in this Upazila is 2,73,258 of where the male are 1,33,714 and female are 1,39,544. Literacy rate in Kalkini Upazila is 49%

(BBS 2011, Population Census). Kalkini Area Development Program facilitates the development initiatives in 6 unions like Shikar Mongol, Baligram, Kazi Bakai, Gopalpur, Dasar, Nabogram and one municipality Kalkini Paurashava. World Vision Bangladesh serves both the direct and indirect beneficiaries of their various programs to the study area. The direct beneficiaries of the World Vision Bangladesh are registered children (RC) and their families, behavioral risk groups (transport workers, intravenous drug users, youths, rickshaw/van pullers, day laborers etc.), poor non-sponsored children and their family members (boys, girls, parents, adolescents), local educational institutions, local government institutions, pregnant and lactating mothers, persons with disability, marginal farmers, physically challenged men and women, adolescents and disaster affected persons. On the other hand, the indirect beneficiaries include the family members of the direct beneficiaries and local community people in the target areas. (World Vision Bangladesh, 2014)

### ***Study design and data collection***

Data was collected by a household survey from the beneficiaries of the project operated by World Vision Bangladesh namely, 'End Phase Evaluation of Kalkini Area Development Program (2015)'. Although the total population in the study area was 1,24,291, the number of beneficiaries the project included was 89,570. Out of these beneficiaries, this study considered the sample size of 1,200 households into 30 clusters, while each cluster comprising 40 households ( $30 \times 40 = 1200$  Households). To ensure the representation of the Kalkini Area Development program impacted areas, the cumulative household numbers of all the villages and wards were calculated. The total households have been divided by the total number of clusters to be selected, i.e. 30, to estimate the range of interval for selecting clusters. From each cluster, the households have been selected following 3 households interval. This procedure reduces the coefficient of variation of the estimates and thus increases the reliability of the estimates. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. To ensure the validation of the collected data, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) were also used for data entry MS Access software and for data tabulation SPSS 17 and Epilinfo software were used.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Household demographic and socio-economic characteristics**

The findings of the study show that 96.3% children aged 6-11 years are enrolled in the primary school of which 97.2 percent was the girl and 94.9 percent was boys. In the case of secondary level education, 83.7% children aged 12-18 years were enrolled in school (boys are 82.6% and girls are 87.6%). The rate of dropout from primary school was 2.1% and the secondary level was 2.5%. The analysis of the reasons of drop out shows that sometimes children work in their own house, take care of siblings, work outside etc. The reasons for the noticeable achievement in education in the study area are a joint effort of community people, parents, teachers, school management committees, government and World Vision Bangladesh. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) reports 100% school management committee is functioning well in the area development program impacted area (86 primary schools and 23 secondary schools). The findings reveal that school management committee and teachers are playing the most active role to improve the quality of education at primary and secondary levels. The school management committee conducts meeting regularly in a transparent way, follow up school activities along with the regular attendance of teachers' and children in school.

The grade completion report of the children also analyzed under this study (especially PSC and SSC level) from their households to evaluate the status of their result. It was found that 100% children passed the primary examination in 2015 and gross PSC pass rate with minimum B grade was 95.8% (both boys and girls are equal). In the case of secondary school completion, 92.3% children passed SSC at appropriate age with minimum B grade.

### **Child life skill**

The study investigates and analyzes child life skill and self-managing capacities of children aged 12-18 years. It shows that as high as 98.6% were cared about healthy habits followed by 97.7% children are aware of their own duties, 94.1% could write a letter to friends, 93.3% care about clean environment and study places, 91.6% feel safe at their living places, 89.5% could resolve conflict as their own, 84.3% feel happy to unknown relatives when someone visit their house, 83.4% could solve problems. Overall, 17.4% children reported all life skills/self-managing capabilities. According to the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), World Vision Bangladesh provided life skill, vocational, and leadership sessions for the children arranged parents gathering to make them attentive about their responsibilities on their children. The key interview informants (KII) showed that these sessions have contributed to the deeper understanding about education among the children and also make the parents more conscious for the schooling of their children. The literacy rate in the study area has been increased than that of previous. In the study area, 73.8% children of age 7 years and above are literate and 66.7% children of age 15 years and above are literate compared to the baseline finding of 35.9% in 2012. It reports that in the secondary level (12-18 years), enrollment rate increased to 83.7% compared to the baseline survey finding of 77% in 2012.

School dropout rate reduced to 2.1% in primary level and 2.5% in secondary level compared to the baseline survey finding of 11% in 2012 of children age 6-15 years. The achievement in education is a joint effort of community people, parents, teachers, school management committees, government and World Vision Bangladesh. Furthermore, among 1,200 surveyed households, 94.5% are male headed households. In the case of primary occupation of the households, 50.2% household heads work in the non-farm agricultural sector, while, in agriculture farm sector, it is recorded 42.3%. As regards to marital status, it has been observed that 58.5% population aged 10 years and above is married and 2.6% are widow/divorced.

**Farm and non-farm activities for economic development**

The research also indicates that the rapid growth of non-farm economy become the most important sources of income and employment for the people in rural areas. Quite a number of scholars have meantime eloquently exposed the role of the rural non-farm activities in increasing growth and reducing poverty in rural areas (Shand 1986; Chuta and Liedholm, 1979). It was also observed that because of the role of non-farm activities, the poor people in rural society were able to raise per-capita income by engaging themselves in rural non-farm activities. Hossain (2003) also gives emphasize on the rural non-farm activities. He also reported that the agricultural wage has also increased following the transfer of labor from agricultural to non-agricultural sector. According to him, the overall expansion of rural non-farm activities is reviewed as friendly to the poor or deemed to be pro-poor.

In this study, out of the total 1200 households, 62.1% are involved with crops cultivation, 39.1% rare livestock, 72.1% have poultry at their home and 20.8% engaged themselves in fish cultivation as economic activities to maintain their livelihood. From FGD the study reports, it is notable that World Vision Bangladesh beneficiary families are more involved in the farm and non-farm activities as compared to general households. The basic reasons for less involvement in the agriculture sector by the indirect beneficiary households are mainly - there is no scope to expand the land which has been decreasing over time due to the various demands of land. On the other hand, the crops cultivation now heavily depends on modern technology, training, and others supports, which are not available for non- beneficiary households.

**Agriculture related training**

In order to increase the participation of rural poor in different farm and non-farm economic activities for increasing their income through employment creation, non-governmental organizations have been taken diversified strategic programs and projects and attracted the concentration of foreign development agencies. Non-governmental organizations provide loan and management assistance to individuals that create new scope to find jobs. Besides, non-governmental organizations are providing multi-sectoral training to men and women on crops cultivation, poultry rearing, vegetable gardening, vaccination and treatment of domestic animals and poultry, tailoring, mobile servicing etc. Training in diverse fields which can be applied to farm and non-farm production is a significant source of rural livelihoods strategy. It is evident from various empirical research findings that both men and women farmers can be benefited from training in agricultural techniques, as well as business management and marketing skills (World Bank and IBRD, 2009 and Danida 2004). Apart from these, agriculture remains one of the main economic activities of the households and the households received various training on improved farming practices provided by World Vision Bangladesh and others organizations. It is evident that, of the total 1,200 households, only 12.2% households received agriculture related training. It is mentionable that proportionately World Vision Bangladesh direct beneficiary families received more training (21.6%) than that of indirect beneficiary families (12.2%). Table 1 shows the different agriculture related training received by the households. Households received training on crops cultivation are (64.6%) followed by vegetable gardening (20.4%), fish cultivation (13.6%), livestock rearing (9.5%), poultry rearing (5.4%) and nursery running (5.4%).

Table 1. Types of agriculture related trainings received by the households

Training issues	Types of Household				Total	
	Direct Beneficiary		In direct Beneficiary		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Crops cultivation	51	58.0	44	74.6	95	64.6
Fish cultivation	8	9.1	12	20.3	20	13.6
Poultry rearing	5	5.7	3	5.1	8	5.4
Vegetables gardening	19	21.6	2	18.6	30	20.4
Livestock rearing	7	8.0	7	11.9	14	9.5
Nursery running	5	5.7	3	5.1	8	5.4
Total	88	100.0	59	100.0	147	100.0

The training program by World Vision, which elevated expertise of the rural households to apply their knowledge practically in above mentioned sectors, contributed in increasing their earning capabilities. In the study area, direct beneficiaries particularly women of World Vision Bangladesh already run multiple small scale

enterprise after receiving the training. Therefore, this entrepreneurship training helps women to increase their incomes and achieve greater control over their self-earnings. Stevenson and St-Onge (2005) found that entrepreneurship training was important in allowing producers in growth industries (including agriculture) to access more of the value chain associated with their product. Women demanded a range of enterprise skills including account keeping, entrepreneurship, and business management skills. Likewise, Kantor (2001) reviewed a large number of entrepreneurship projects and identified that providing business skills to the rural poor allows them to improve the quality of their goods and gain higher prices in the market. This achieved skill helps them move out of the low quality, low price sector where it is difficult for small enterprises to compete. Understanding the market, acquiring certified seeds and getting fair prices allowed smallholders to make significant gains in their productivity and income. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (2003) “unless local agriculture is developed and/or other income earning opportunities open up, the food security determined by limited production potential will persist”. The direct beneficiaries of the study area are very conscious for utilizing their expertise. It appears that out of 147 direct beneficiary household’s who received training, 76.2% are utilizing their knowledge to enhance the farm-related economic activities and 40.2% of them reported that they are utilizing their earned knowledge fully, 47.3% are using the achieved knowledge partially and 12.5% utilizing their knowledge poorly. The findings of focus group discussion and key informant interviews indicate that the reasons for not using the gained knowledge fully or partially are they don’t have required land and capital to apply their knowledge. It is noted that, those who have received training, their income level has already increased. As high as 96.5% CBO leaders reported that they deposit savings regularly and now the average savings of each CBO members are Tk 5009.83.

### Using modern agricultural technology to increase production

In order to increase the agricultural production and commercialization, adaptability to climate change, emphasize has been given by the government to crop production, seeds, fertilizer, small irrigation, pest management, mechanization of agriculture, agricultural marketing, use of land, agricultural education and training, credit support, women participation in the agriculture sector and research. (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2012). Moreover, for the sustainable development of the agriculture sector, the government has adopted various policies, like National Seeds Policy-1998, Integrated Pest Management Policy-2002, Fertilizer Regulation Act-1999, Fertilizer Management Rules (Revised)-2009, Seed Rules (Revised)-1997 and Minor Irrigation Policy, etc. Additionally, keeping in consideration, the Government’s Vision-2021, Millennium Development Goals and Sixth Five Year Plan, the main targets of the draft agriculture policy are to make Bangladesh self-reliant, ensure food security, and increase purchasing power of the farmers by increasing their real income, generating employment for all in the agriculture sector, and improving their quality of life. As a result, during the last decade, significant changes took place in agriculture sector which includes, new production structure, use of high yielding varieties supported by mechanized cultivation, irrigation, fertilizer, pesticides etc. All of these changes have contributed much to increase the production of food grains.

Table 2 presents that in the Joypurhat Upazila, the amount of agricultural production was increased due to the application of modern technology especially in farming sector (63.8%), applying pest management knowledge (22.3%), using improved quality seeds (48.9%) and other knowledge which they learned through training. It is noted that after receiving agriculture related training, beneficiaries of the World Vision Bangladesh applied modern technology (65.5%) to a more extent compared to the general households (61.1%) for increasing the production.

Table 2. The processes for increasing production by the households

Various process for increasing production	Types of households				Total	
	Direct Beneficiary		In direct Beneficiary		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Applying modern technology in farming	38	65.5	22	61.1	60	63.8
Applying pest management capacity	12	20.7	9	25.0	21	22.3
Using improved quality seeds	25	43.1	21	58.3	46	48.9
Others	5	8.6	1	2.8	6	6.4
Total	58	100.0	36	100.0	94	100.0

### Income generating activities of the rural poor people

Mainly household’s income level depends on the availability of employment opportunities of the adult members of that household. Recently, due to the direct and indirect credit support, training and others material support from various non-government organizations like, Grameen Bank (GB), Association for Social Advancement (ASA), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Caritas, the capabilities of the rural poor women are increasing gradually and motivating them to take part in various income generating activities. On the other hand, the empowerment potential of paid employment not only depends on the quantity of jobs for rural women but also on the quality of those jobs in terms of whether workers’ rights and standards are upheld and the voices

of women and men are respected in their work (Fontana and Paciello, 2010). World Vision Bangladesh also provides various income generating activities related training aiming at increasing the sources of income. Field level data indicated that a total of (8.6%) household members received Income Generating Activities (IGA) training on different aspects of where the percentage of direct beneficiary households (10%) is higher than that of non- beneficiary households (7.8%). The diverse aspects of IGA training received by the households include handicrafts (43.7%), tailoring (27.2%), small business (18.4%), vocational training (14.6%) and block boutique (3.9%). World Vision Bangladesh also provides various IGA training to the family members of the Registered Children (RC) for enhancing their income level. It is found that of the total 200 RC families, 26 (13%) members received IGA training like handicrafts (42.3%), small business (38.5%), tailoring (23.1%) and vocational training (19.2%).

Since the beneficiary households have been keen to apply their expertise, so their average monthly income gets higher than that of indirect beneficiary households. The monthly income from IGA sources of the beneficiary households is Tk. 4,508.42 and the average monthly income of indirect beneficiary households from IGA sources are Tk. 4,128.57. In the case of the RC families, it is found that training was more effective for them as they were found to earn, on average Tk. 4,904.76 per month. Moreover, 72.8% families have only one regular earning member followed by 20.6% households have two earning members and 6.5% households have three or more earning members. In the case of earning members in the household's level, no significant difference is found between the beneficiary and indirect beneficiary families.

Table 3 presents household's wise monthly income and the result shows that households earn a monthly average income of Tk. 10,354.07 of where monthly average income for direct beneficiary households is Tk. 9962.83 and for the indirect beneficiary households are Tk. 10, 555.62. Among the total earnings of Tk. 10,354.07, the average monthly income of the households from agriculture is Tk. 35,640.00, from business, is Tk. 17,750, from services, is Tk. 10,743.34, from labor wages, is Tk.21,218.83 and from other sources is Tk. 38,896.67.

Table 3. Average monthly income of the households and its composition

Income sources	Types of Households					
	Direct Beneficiary		In direct Beneficiary		Total	
	Mean (in taka)	N	Mean (in taka)	N	Mean (in taka)	N
Agriculture	36,134.80	408	35,385.10	792	35,640.00	1200
Business	16,026.96	408	18,637.63	792	17,750.00	1200
Services	12,502.45	408	9,837.13	792	10,743.34	1200
Labor wages	18,475.49	408	22,632.07	792	21,218.83	1200
Other sources	36,414.22	408	40,175.51	792	38,896.67	1200
Households total annual average income	1,19,553.92	408	1,26,667.43	792	1,24,248.84	1200
Monthly average income	9,962.83	408	10,555.62	792	10,354.07	1200

### Role of NGOs: Theory and Practices

The theoretical lens through which this study has been conducted is mostly various local development theories in conjunction with the own perception of the community people. These theories are discussed on the basis of various case studies, empirical research and the household's survey data of World Vision Bangladesh.

### Development theory

The concept 'development' has carried multiple approaches. Todaro (1990) stated that it can be defined as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions as well as acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. In the study area, the various farm and non-farm activity related training, loan programs and material supports provided by World Vision Bangladesh have given the community people strong determination to earn relatively better livelihoods. Female members are right now engaged in a number of IGA programs in addition to their household's duty and thus serve as a financial catalyst to their own families.

### Community development theory

Cook (1994) points out that "in the context of community development, development is a concept associated with improvement and it is a certain type of change in a positive direction". Gilchrist (2004) stated that community development is primarily concerned with meeting the needs and aspirations of community members whose circumstances have left them poorly provided for, often without adequate services, with limited means to organize and exclusion from mainstream opportunities to participate in activities or decision making. Green and Haines (2002) refer community development as a planned effort to produce assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life. According to them, the focusing areas of community development are human capital, social capital, physical capital, financial capital and environmental capital. In relation to the

effectiveness of the various programs of the World Vision Bangladesh, the research suggests that the activities of all projects have brought about positive outcomes for almost all the cases. The positive changes of the community are obvious in terms of higher income, increased assets, achieved food security, motivation towards educational issues, improvement of nutrition, immunization and women empowerment, safe water and sanitation etc. Additionally, formation on Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and supports being provided to its members received significant attention of the local elites, policy makers and other non- governmental organizations, and this has been considered to be a new approach of rural community development. The CBO members in the study area received training on various issues such as; sewing, cow fattening, beautification, leadership development, packaging, vegetable cultivation, block batik, disaster preparedness, accounts keeping, child rights and child protection, mobile repairing, driving, computer operating, poultry rearing, primary health care, nutrition training, fast food processing etc. CBO members received most of the training from World Vision and also from government organizations and other institutions. Through the diversified training, CBO members become aware, run the small business, able to bear educational expenses of their children and create the opportunity for women employment and develop women leadership.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

It is obvious from the findings that, for the well- being of the underprivileged segment of the society, the crucial role of World Vision Bangladesh are well recognized. The community people of Kalkini area regularly participate in the various planning sessions, awareness raising meetings/seminar/workshop conducted by World Vision Bangladesh on different issues. Local government representatives, teachers, religious leaders also participate in these meetings. Before starting any new programs and projects, field staff of World Vision Bangladesh discuss with the community people through the meetings, gatherings and various training session on the activity. Local elites and influential persons are invited in these meetings and training. The economic development programs of World Vision Bangladesh have been found diversified and focused on development through creating IGA. On the basis of field level information, it appears that the contribution of this research is important for further studies in the present community as well as research within the similar discipline of development studies. This study has introduced an innovative type of economic development approach in the development paradigm.

Furthermore, based on the findings of the household survey, FGDs and KIIs conducted in the field as well as discussions with the ADP management team in the project intervention area, it is found that training related to farm and non-farm activities, as well as vocational, health, nutrition and education are very useful but the coverage is very low especially in the area of poultry rearing and livestock. Therefore, these training should be heightened up and after the phase out of World Vision Bangladesh from Kalkini the Community Based Organizations should give efforts to continue this through networking with government and other non-government agencies.

The FGD suggests that because of daily needs, the children of the poor, ultra poor and marginalized households have to go work instead of going to school. So, further initiatives should take to create additional sources of income to increase the household's income level which will be useful to support the children's schooling. In this context, Area Development Programs staff can link the poor and vulnerable families with Union Parishad and government bodies (Women and Child welfare, Department of youth and sports, Department of cooperatives) for addressing their needs.

Under the economic development project, Kalkini Area Development Program of World Vision Bangladesh provided supports and training to the target people on non-farm income generating activities. Thus, the farmers are provided fertilizers, seeds, technologies and training on livestock rearing, fish cultivation, poultry rearing, tree nursery etc. Currently, the female members are much trained and skilled to launch small- scale enterprise but, due to the shortage of money and the land they can't properly apply their expertise. So ensuring more credit transfer among the beneficiaries and CBO is essential.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The author would like to extend her gratitude to the all senior Area Development, project manager, project officers and the support staff of World Vision Bangladesh who cooperated with the researcher by providing necessary information. The project namely 'End Phase Evaluation Report of Kalkini ADP' was supported by a grant from World Vision Bangladesh.

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