

Women in Rural Economy In The Light Of Poverty: Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract: *In case of women participation, it is a process whereby women influence and share control & responsibility over decisions plans and resources that affect them. More than 60 million people of Bangladesh live below the poverty line among them 74% are women. Most of the rural women are deprived to fulfill their basic needs. They become the victims of high mortality, malnutrition, higher illiteracy, sex discrimination, deprivation from getting jobs etc. Through participation of women they can enhance their economic independence leading to their self-esteem and status. This study focused to analysis of women's economic participation in the context of poverty eradication in rural economy. The objectives of this study are to examine effects of women's changing role on poverty eradication, in the economic sphere, facing against the socio-economic and cultural difficulty to participate in economic affairs and to recognize how women have to respond to poverty conditions in the rural sector.*

Keywords: *Participation, Women, Poverty, Rural Economy.*

I. Introduction:

Bangladesh economy is characterized by unfavorable per capita land, low per capita income, glaring and accentuating income disparity, high level of unemployment, low productivity and persisting high levels of poverty and deprivation (Dhanonjoy Kumar; Afjal Hossain; & Monto Chandra Gope, 2013). There are about 86 thousand villages in Bangladesh. More than 70% people are living in those villages. Bangladesh is running mainly on the basis of rural economy. Among rural people about 50% are women. Income earners are mainly male. Female are mostly perform household chores. In Bangladesh like many other developing countries women's access to positions of influence and power is restricted. Their involvement in occupation is in a very small scale and their earnings are lower than those of male. They have to struggle to put to rights outside the home with their traditional roles. So rural economy becomes lag behind because of non participation in economic activities of women. Most of the village people are poor. So, effective participation of rural women is essential to eradicate poverty. Now a day's consciousness has been grown up. Female are taking participation in rural economy in a small sphere. But to change the rural economy a large scale of women participation is necessary. The major focus of this investigation is to determine the changing role of women in the rural sector, by especially showing the way they combine the two functions effectively, and to determine how far their economic contribution is important in economic activities (Wicramagamage 1992). It is clear then that an organized and planned women's contribution in the economic sphere is a need. In order to make women's participation in to the economic activities proper gender planning strategies are required subordination (Hiruni Rathnayake & Pradeep Uluwaduge, 2013). According to Caroline, "The goal of gender planning is the emancipation of women from their and their achievement of equality, equity and empowerment" (Caroline 1993: 1). There is a need to develop technological and educational opportunities as well as infrastructure in order to uplift their economic contribution. The issue of women economic contribution has also been addressed at the level of the institution such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) etc.

II. Objectives:

The objectives of this study are:

- To identify the role of rural women to eradicate poverty.
- Working sphere for the women to take participation in rural sector to overcome poverty.
- Socio-economic and cultural barriers to the economic participation of women.

III. Methodology Of The Study:

This study is used both qualitative and quantitative methods and different data collection instruments. This research is a survey based exploratory research which is conducted mainly from secondary data. Secondary

sources were from published books and articles by scholars. Most of all data are used from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Measurement And Analysis Of The Study:

Poverty situation in Bangladesh can be shown in table as:

Table-1: Head Count Rates of Incidence of Poverty (CBN Method), 1991-92 to 2010

Year	Upper Poverty Line			Lower Poverty Line		
	National	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban
1991-92	56.70	58.80	42.80	41.10	43.80	24.00
1995-96	50.10	54.50	27.80	35.20	39.50	13.70
2000	48.90	52.30	35.20	34.30	37.90	20.00
2005	40.00	43.80	28.40	25.10	28.60	14.60
2010	31.50	35.20	21.30	17.60	21.10	7.70

Source: Household Income Expenditure Survey-2010, BBS

From Table-1, we see that from 1991-92 to 2010 the overall poverty rate is falling. The rate of poverty in rural sector is more than that of urban sector. Gender wise the poverty situation of Bangladesh can be seen from the table-2 as:

Table-2 : Incidence of Poverty by Selected Household Characteristics by CBN Method

Poverty line		2005			2010		
		Rural	Urban	Urban	National	Rural	Urban
Using lower poverty line	Male	14.50	21.50	7.90	17.90	25.40	29.00
	Female	16.20	17.30	5.50	14.60	21.90	23.60
Using Upper poverty line	Male	28.70	35.90	21.70	32.10	40.80	44.90
	Female	24.40	29.30	17.50	26.60	29.50	31.00

Source: Household Income Expenditure Survey-2010, BBS

Here female labors are poorer than that of male in both rural and urban case. Comparing two years in 2010 the poverty rate is lower than that of 2005. In 2010 the economic independence of women becomes wider. Their participation in economic activity becomes easier. So, the poverty of women becomes less in percentage in the year 2010 compare to year 2005. The female labor force is increasing remarkably over the years from 2002-03 to 2010. Compare of rural to urban women- rural women are seen more participated in number. The number of female labor increasing can be seen in following table as:

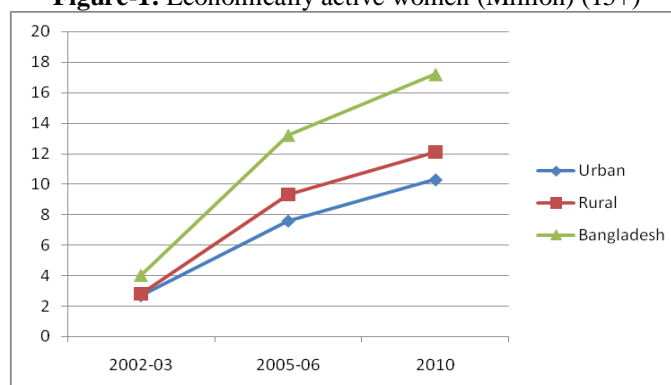
Table-3: (Number in Million)

Place	2002-03	2005-06	2010
Urban	2.70	2.80	4.00
Rural	7.60	9.30	13.20
Bangladesh	10.30	12.10	17.20

Source: Labor Force Survey Report-2010, BBS

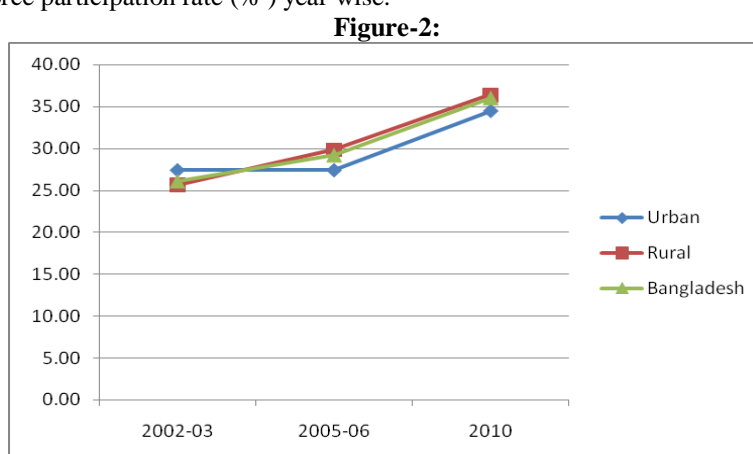
In Bangladesh economically active women are increasing. In comparison to rural and urban- rural active women are greater than that of urban. So, rural women are playing a vital role in rural economy. The following chart shows that the activity rate of women is increasing over the year. Their economic independence can play an important role to eradicate poverty.

Figure-1: Economically active women (Million) (15+)



Source: Labor Force Survey Report-2010, BBS

- Female labor force participation rate (%) year wise:



Source: Labor Force Survey Report-2010, BBS

From chart we see that labor force participation rate is increasing over the year. Participation of rural women is greater than that of urban women.

- Youth labor force (aged 15-29 years) participation rate of women:

Table-4 (Fig in million)

Age Group	Population (15-29 Years)			Economically active youths			Participation rate (%)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Rural									
15-19	10.612	5.764	4.848	4.294	2.861	1.433	40.46	49.64	29.56
20-24	9.716	4.414	5.302	5.633	3.406	2.227	57.08	77.16	42.00
25-29	8.85	4.069	4.781	5.918	3.767	2.151	66.87	92.58	44.99
Total	29.178	14.247	14.931	15.845	10.034	5.811	54.3	70.43	38.92
Urban									
15-19	3.851	1.811	2.04	1.401	0.806	0.595	36.38	44.51	29.17
20-24	3.47	1.515	1.956	1.842	1.096	0.746	53.08	72.34	38.14
25-29	2.754	1.284	1.469	1.812	1.168	0.644	65.8	90.97	43.84
Total	10.075	4.61	5.465	5.055	3.07	1.985	50.17	66.59	36.32
Bangladesh									
15-19	14.463	7.575	6.888	5.695	3.667	2.028	39.4	48.4	29.44
20-24	13.186	5.929	7.258	7.475	4.502	2.973	56.7	75.95	40.97
25-29	11.604	5.353	6.25	7.73	4.935	2.795	66.61	92.19	44.71
Total	39.253	18.857	20.396	20.9	13.104	7.796	53.24	69.5	38.22

Source: Labor Force Survey Report-2010, BBS

Here is shown that aged of 25-29 group is more active than that of other age groups. In case of gender female are lag behind than that of male but improving the scenario. The Participation rate of female in different age groups in 2010- 15-19 is low, 20-24 is increasing and 25-29 is peak.

- Employed female in rural area: The number of employed labor is increasing in both rural and urban area. But the rural employed is greater than that of urban.

Table-5 (Fig. in Million)

Place	2002-03	2005-06	2010
Urban	2.5	2.7	3.6
Rural	7.3	8.6	12.6
Bangladesh	9.8	11.3	16.2

Source: Labor Force Survey Report-2010, BBS

- Unpaid family worker: There are many unpaid female worker in our country. The number in rural area is more than that of urban. Most of the women active in this sector work as “contributing family worker” and

are thus unpaid. But, the proportion of employed women classified as “contributing family workers” has fallen. The following table shows this scenario:

Table-6 (Fig in millions)

Place	2002-03	2005-06	2010
Urban	1.00	0.60	1.80
Rural	3.70	6.20	7.40
Bangladesh	4.70	6.80	9.20

Source: Labor Force Survey Report-2010, BBS

Table-7 (Fig. in Millions)

Characteristics	Urban		Rural		Bangladesh	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Educated labour force	9.51	2.73	24.48	7.29	33.99	10.02
Educated employed persons	8.78	2.45	23.25	6.87	32.04	9.31
Educated unemployed persons	0.73	0.28	1.22	0.42	1.95	0.70
Educated unemployment rate	7.63%	10.24%	5.00%	5.82%	5.74%	7.02%

- Educated Female labor force aged 15 years and over and educated unemployment rate: Number of educated female labor is small. But their employment status is increasing. And unemployment of them is decreasing.

Source: Labor Force Survey Report-2010, BBS

IV. Limitations Of Policy Implementation:

1. Most of the cases policy makers do not consider the involvement of women for making right policies for them. As a result, women get sufferers in establishing their participation in economic activities. The rural women become more sufferers here.
2. In general it is believed that women have to perform easy and near placed jobs. As a result availability of such types of jobs and managing family becomes difficult for running their jobs.
3. Women have to perform household chores and run family smoothly. Here she performs the manager of a family. Most of the works are done by her solely. In this case she gets help little from her family. Most of the cases she had to quit jobs for the service of the family. In rural area this problem is acute.

V. Recommendations:

Major Recommendations to promote women participation are:

1. Promote equal rights of women and men in all spheres of development including access to information, skills, resources and opportunities.
2. Promote economic self-reliance for women and generate economic policies that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both formal and informal sectors.
3. Formulate and implement specific economic, social, agricultural and related policies and programs in support of poor female-headed households.
4. Adopt appropriate measures toward the reduction of insecurity faced by women and girls, toward elimination of all sorts of violence against women and for the treatment and rehabilitation of victims of violence and violence survivors.
5. Support rural women willing to increase the level of their economic activity through capacity development and network building;
6. Strengthen the role of rural women in community based decision-making through capacity development and network building;
7. Sensitize private sector (banks, non-banking credit units and private companies) to gender needs and interests of women in rural areas;

VI. Conclusion:

Human beings are born with potential capabilities. The purpose of development is to create an environment in which all people can expand their capabilities and opportunities. In this regard, women consisting half part of world population still remain largely inactive which means a part of world human resources remains unutilized and hence the maximum potential world output is not being realized. Since this study was an attempt to understand women’s changing role and their contribution to the rural economy. A larger portion of the country (more than 76% of the population) lives in rural areas. Therefore, the central attention of policy planners focused on rural development in order to reach national economic and social objectives. In this case, women received vital consideration as active participants in rural development. In our study, we’ve tried to highlight the meaning, dimensions and frameworks and significance of women’s participation to the way of eradicating rural poverty. We’ve also evaluated the trend of increasing economic participation of women in Bangladesh and its consequences. The major constraints to accomplish this

development precondition and possible solution method setting appropriate and essential priorities are affirmed finally.

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