

Training on Market Linkage Development and Women Empowerment

At Patuakhali , Khulna & Satkhira





Background: The international development community has recognized that agriculture is an engine of growth and poverty reduction in countries where it is the main occupation of the poor. Women play a vital role contributing to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries.

Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. However, women in the Blue Gold project area, like many others, are traditionally not being able to properly operate economic activities, and therefore their access to the economy—as decision makers, handler and spending the earned money on their choice and preference- is socially denied



In Bangladesh now women are doing a wide range of activities in agriculture, for example, land preparation, seeding, weeding, harvesting and threshing. But unfortunately, they are not recognized as a farmer by the society but they are working as unpaid family labor in their husband/family lands. When women are working as a laborer for other's lands they often only earn 60% of the wages as compared to men laborers for the same work, occasionally higher up to 70 – 80%. Women as family labor don't have any right to crop selection, selling production, and they are deprived from earning and its use. At the same time they are over-loaded by household work and agriculture activities. The Blue Gold Program undertook the effort to develop a training concept paper for women to competently participate in the whole process of decision making, production and marketing by breaking gender specific stereotypes through a two day training, which was held in Khulna satkhira and patuakhali 2018

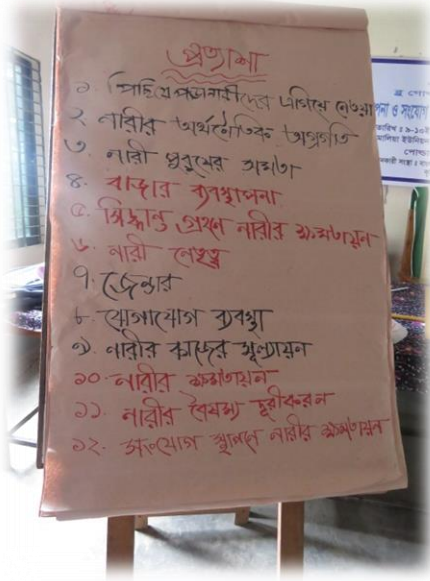
The objective of the training was to increase women's empowerment by promoting access to and control over the entire process of farming—from production to marketing- for the participating women.

About empowerment: Empowerment of women is now a global issue. Women are still often identified with domestic life, lacking opportunities to make meaningful choices about their own life. Empowerment is a process involving three interrelated dimensions: gaining access to resources, increasing participation and influence in decision making, and achieving meaningful improvements in well-being and life outcomes. The result of the process may also be termed empowerment. The outcome of empowerment should manifest itself as a redistribution of power between individuals, genders, groups, classes, castes, races, ethnic groups or nations. Empowerment means the transformation of structures of subordination. Although empowerment is usually used for improving women's condition, in real sense it may be applied to any disadvantaged group of society for bringing them to the same level of advanced section.

Objective of the Training: Economic empowerment of women through agriculture.

Participants: A total of 205 participants (general members of the WMG and CAWM members) took part in the training (33 male and 172 female). They were from different WMG such as Rudaghora, Katinga, Tolna, Pakuria and Chachuri WMGs at Polder 25 Dhamalia , Polder 34/2, Polder 47/4, 47/3 & Polder 2

Expectation from participants:



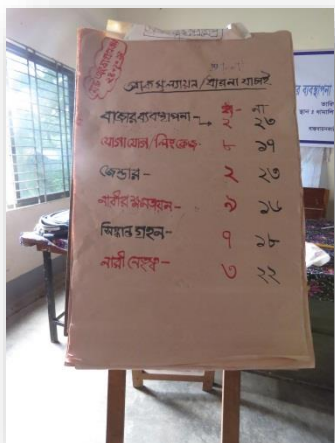
1. Women economic empowerment
2. Gender equity
3. Business management
4. Women empowerment on decision-making process
5. Women leadership
6. Gender
7. Communication
8. Recognition of women domestic work
9. Women empowerment
10. Roll of women to build a linkage development

Pre and post evaluation of the training

Pre and post evaluation were conducted through non formal way. Most of the participants did not take any training earlier and they were unknown with the training subjects.

Of the 205 participants the following numbers of participants had heard about the word:

- business management (only 8 participants)
- linkage development and communication (12)
- decision making (20) and
- women leadership (15)



The key content facilitators and the methodology of the training were as presented in the below table:

| SL | Key content | Facilitators | Methodology |
|----|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 01 | Decisions making process | Roksana Begum | In formal large group discussion |
| 02 | Marketing process | Khairul | large group discussion and group work |
| 03 | Importance of CAWM | Shorab | large group discussion |
| 04 | Importance of women in agriculture | Roksana | large group discussion |
| 05 | Empowerment & women empowerment | Roksana | Participatory |
| 06 | Business management | Roksana | large group discussion |
| 07 | Linkage development | Khairul | large group discussion |
| 08 | Leadership and women leadership | Roksana | large group discussion |

Discussed issues: The main discussed issues were 1) Decision-making; 2) Market linkage and development; 3) Women’s empowerment and market analyses & women importance in agriculture; 4) Women leadership; 5) Linkages with input Suppliers; 6) Horizontal learning and CAWM. All issues were discussed through a participatory approach, non-formal discussions, group work and sharing by the trainers. All participants, especially the women, liked the training very much, in particular the following subjects: joint decision-making; market linkage development; women’s empowerment; market analyses, importance of women in agriculture and recognition of women for their agricultural activities, and importance of CAWM and marketing process.



Training key outcome from participants: All sessions were conducted

through participatory and large group discussion, small group discussion and group work. In country context most of the decisions are taken by male members of the family and women are facing challenge to take decision. Underlying reasons for this: women’s limited involvement in income generating activities, lack of information, lack of communication, and lack of recognition from society. The same applies to women in case of crop selection and the management of agricultural activities.



During the training most of the women realized the importance of women’s involvement in decision making within family and for crop selection, selling the produce and maintaining linkages with market actors.





Conclusion: At the end of the training the women participants realized that they are much involved in domestic work and also in crop production. But if they will not save time from domestic work and not do more productive work, they will not become empowered and they will never become involved in decision making, because money, skill and information is power.

At the end of the training, the training participants made a plan how they can become better involved in decision making about crop selection, selling the crops and building linkages with different market actors. For example, they will select a joined crop in a meeting in which also the input supplier is attending. When there is verbal agreement about the crop and required inputs (including the price), they purchase the inputs collectively. They will follow a similar process when they sell the production, hence they themselves will receive the payments.



Follow up: Polder team, zonal team and Dhaka Team will follow up on the impact this training had on the participants (3 to 6 months after the training), including providing suggestions about how to scale up this initiative to empower women by supporting them in building market linkages (eg by Horizontal Learning).

