Original Research Article

QUANTIFICATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF RURAL WOMEN IN SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

In Bangladesh, rural women contribute in social development and they are good partners to economic development too. However, their contribution to the socioeconomic development by spending time in various ways has not been quantified yet. The study aimed to quantify the extent of contribution of rural women in socioeconomic development at two villages named Sachibunia and Islamnagar of Batiaghata upazila under Khulna District of Bangladesh. Data were collected from purposively selected 120 respondents using a structured interview schedule on 14 selected characteristics of the respondents which were treated as independent variables. The extent of contribution to socioeconomic development was the dependent variable. Spearman's rank order correlation co-efficient (ρ) was computed to ascertain the relationships between the selected characteristics and dependent variable. Rural women's performed different daily activities and spent time for those activities were converted into money. Through this way, the obtained quantified contribution to family income of the unemployed respondent was 26% and of employed respondent was 50%. Quantified contribution to family income by educated paid respondent was 48% and by highly educated paid respondent was 60%. Quantified contribution to family income by low educated unpaid respondent was 29% and by highly educated unpaid respondent was 23%. The average quantified contribution to family income made by rural women was 53.32% which had been ultimately used for better standards of living. Negative significant relationship was found between the faced problems and their contributions in socioeconomic development. Family is the smallest constituting unit of the society and the country as well. Thus, it could be concluded that the contribution made by women in socioeconomic development is more than its men counterpart at rural level. It might be recommended that, adequate support should be provided to rural women to nurture this contribution by ensuring due acknowledgement and honor for them.

Key words: Contribution, Rural women, Income generating activity, Participation, Socioeconomic development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Bangladesh, women is about half of the total population [1] and have an important role in economic activities [2] which leads to the entire social development of the country. This scenario is same for urban and rural areas. Therefore, in order to achieve rural development, an attention to women that involves economic and other development activities with men is required. Rural women contribute in socioeconomic development as they are involved in different forms of economic activities for their families. Such economic activities include agriculture, trade, gardening, social forestry, food processing, hairdressing, weaving and so on. To explain the important roles played by women, the world conference on the "United Nations Decades for Women" stated that two-third of the total daily life works done by women, especially by the rural women who live in rural communities with poor social amenities [3]. However, still the worth of the economic activities of rural women in the area of sustainable development is not well recognized.

Bangladesh is basically an agricultural country. Agriculture contributes about 14.74% to country's total GDP [4]. Sustainability in agricultural systems center on the need to develop technologies and practices, which do not have adverse effects on environmental goods and services, which are accessible to and effective for farmers, and which lead to improvements in food productivity. Rural women are inherently involved in this sustainable form of agricultural production from the time immemorial [5]. As half of the total population, women's participation and their role in economic structures is an indicator of the modernization of the national economy and economic development [6]. Development strategies should be based on a more active participation of rural women in economic activities. Providing the fact that women make the half of the population in rural communities is considered the vital manufacturers of food and income for rural households which are the important aspects of agricultural production as well as socioeconomic development all over the world. Women in our rural area greatly contribute through their household and agricultural work but their work has hardly been recognized. The women in rural areas of Bangladesh usually start their works before dawn and continue working till dusk, sometimes even late at night. They execute all household works, take care of the children and aged family members, shares homestead-centered agricultural operations (e.g., postharvest activities, homestead gardening, cattle rearing, etc.) with their husbands and so on. They do not care for any monetary return or formal recognition. As a consequence valuation of their works has not been done, even simple appreciation has not been made. However, now it is time for recognition of their immense contribution to every aspects of family life which in the long run profoundly contribute to socioeconomic development of the country. The present socioeconomic characteristics of the rural women also deserve to be described. Considering these facts the researchers persuaded to conduct the present research with the following specific objectives**.**

i. To diagnose and describe the personal socioeconomic characteristics of the rural women.
ii. To quantify the contribution of rural women in socioeconomic development.
iii. To explore the relationships between selected characteristics of rural women with their contribution in socioeconomic development.

2. METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was a descriptive and diagnostic survey research, keeping the vision of ascertaining the relationships between selected characteristics of rural women with their contribution in socioeconomic development. The study was designed to describe the contribution of rural women in socioeconomic development through quantification process by converting time into money. Data were collected by conducting a face-to-face interview with respondents using a structured interview schedule containing quantitative and qualitative questions of both open and close types. The study was conducted in two villages namely Sachibunia and Islamnagar under Batiaghata upazila of Khulna district in Bangladesh. A list of women performing different productive activities related to socioeconomic development were collected with the help of field level officers (Upazila Agriculture Officer (UAO) and the concerned Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers (SAAOs)) of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). The total number of women were considered as the population of the study and among them sample were selected purposively. Irrespective of size of population of the selected two villages, the researcher selected 120 women taking 60 from each of the villages. In order to collect relevant information from respondents, an interview schedule was carefully prepared focusing the objectives of the study. The interview schedule differed from questionnaire as the enumerating researcher directly visited the respondent and wrote the furnished responses and opinions of both quantitative and qualitative types

by himself. Both open and close form as well as simple and direct questions were included in the interview schedule. The questions were systematically arranged to help the respondents to understand the consequence easily. Appropriate scales were used for collecting information required for measuring the selected characteristics. Before finalization, the interview schedule was pre-tested with 10 women of the study area who were excluded from the sample. On the basis of the pre-test experiences, corrections, modifications and alterations were made before finalizing the interview schedule for final data collection. During modification of the schedule, valuable suggestions were received from the relevant experts. Data were collected from the respondents during January to February, 2019. During this time the researcher had to made several visits for collecting valid and reliable data from the respondents. After completion of the data collection, collected data were summarized and inspected thoroughly. A master sheet was prepared to tabulate the data by transferring all the individual variables in order to meet the objectives of the study. During data processing, appropriate scoring technique was followed to convert the data into quantitative form in case of qualitative data. Local units of measurements were converted into standard units. In case of some variables, proper indices and scales were made through the simple accumulation of score assigned to individual attributes. All personal characteristics were categorized and arranged in simple tables for interpretation and discussion. (independent variables) of the respondents were age, educational qualification, family size, farm size, annual family income, organizational participation, extension media contact, training exposure, poverty status, number of performed daily activities, time spent in performed daily activities, involvement in income generating activities, role in decision making and problems faced by respondent for participating in income generating activities. The extent of contribution to socioeconomic development was the dependent variable.

Contribution in terms of money (time spent for performing different daily activities converted into money) constituted dependent variable of the study. Time spent for performing different daily activities was converted into money by using formula. For example, a woman performing different types of daily activities was asked how many hours per day she had spent for those activities. Suppose, she had spent 8 hours. A standard working day = 8 hours, and 8 hours working a day equivalent to 500 BDT (general monetary payment for a worker). For 8 hours per day, earning money = 500 BDT. Women usually perform different types of activities every day without any weekly leave. Thus, monthly earning = (500×30) BDT= 15,000 BDT. Similarly, yearly earning = (500×365) BDT = 1,82,500 BDT. This conversion was established through experts' discussion held in Agrotechnology Discipline of Khulna University, Bangladesh.

Contribution to family income (%) by respondent was quantified by using the following formula:

$$\text{Quantified contribution to family income by respondent (\%)} = \frac{\text{Annual income by respondent}}{\text{Total annual family income}} \times 100$$

Role in decision making regarding different family affairs by women was also measured. Decision score (DS) and Decision Index (DI) were calculated by using the following formulae:

$DS = (N_1 \times 0) + (N_2 \times 1) + (N_3 \times 2) + (N_4 \times 3)$

Where,

DS = Decision Score

N_1= No. of respondents played no role

N_2= No. of respondents played rare role

N_3= No. of respondents played passive role

N_4= No. of respondents played active role

$$\text{Decison Index} = \frac{\text{Observed decision score}}{\text{Possible highest decision score}} \times 100$$

Following the above mentioned similar way, the Problem Score (PS) and Problem Index (PI) was calculated.

Various statistical measures such as number, mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and percentage were used in describing the independent and dependent variables of the study. For clarity of understanding, tables were used to present the data. Spearman's rank order correlation co-efficient (ρ) (a nonparametric measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least on an ordinal type data) was computed for exploring the relationships between the selected characteristics of the respondents and their contribution in socioeconomic development. Data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Selected characteristics of the rural women

The results of selected characteristics have been shown in Table 1. It is observed in this Table that, middle aged women (44.2%) were highly involved in socioeconomic development followed by young aged (40%) and old aged (15.8%) women. About half (46.7%) of the respondents had secondary level of education followed by primary level (30.8%), and illiterate (11.7%). 3.3% of the respondents had above higher secondary level of education. Half (50.8%) of the respondents had medium sized family followed by small sized family (35.8%) and large sized family (13.3%). About half (45.8%) of the respondents had small sized farm and only 3.3% had large sized farm. However, 7.5% of the respondents had medium sized farm and 30.8% of the respondents had marginal sized farm and only 12.5% of the respondents were landless. Highest proportion (45.8%) of the respondents had medium family income followed by low income (31.7%) extremely low income (11.7%), and high income (10.8%). 58.3% of the respondents had medium participation, 30% had low participation and 3.3%high participation in any social organization. Very few (8.3%) of the respondents had no participation in any social organization. Half of the rural women (49.2%) had low extension contact followed by medium extension contact (47.5%). There were so small amount of women (3.3%) who had higher extension contact. Most of the respondents (85.8%) had attended low number of training followed by no training (8.3%). 4.2% of the respondents had attended medium number of training opportunity followed by high number of training (1.7%). Most (81.7%) of the respondents had low status in terms of poverty profile. About half (52.5%) of the respondents were involved in medium number of daily activities followed by high number of daily activities (41.75), and 5.8% were involved in low number of daily activities. About four-fifth (78.3%) of the respondents spent moderate time in performing different types of daily activities whereas one-fifth (20%) of the respondents spent long time. 43.8% of the respondents were involved in moderate number of days per month for performing different types of income generating activities whereas 29.8% were involved in short number of days and 25.6% were involved long number of days. About half of women (47.5%) had medium role in decision making for different activities whereas 45.8% had low role and only 6.7% of had high role in decision making for different activities. More than half of the respondents (54.2%) faced low problem in taking part in income generating activities compared to high problem (27.5%) and medium problem (18.3%). (Table 1)

Table 1. Distribution of rural women according to their selected characteristics (N= 120)

Parameter	Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Mean	SD(±)	Min.	Max.
			Number	Percentage				
Age (Years)	Young	≤35	48	40	40.29	10.59	20	62
	Middle	36-50	53	44.2				
	Old	>50	19	15.8				
Education (Schooling years)	Illiterate	0	14	11.7	6.37	3.97	00	17
	Primary	1-5	37	30.8				
	SSC	6-10	56	46.7				
	HSC	11-12	9	7.5				
	Above HSC	Above 12	4	3.3				
Family size (No. of members)	Small	≤4	43	35.8	5.32	1.66	3	10
	Medium	5-7	61	50.8				
	Large	>7	16	13.3				
Farm size (Hectare)	Landless	< 0.02	15	12.5	0.65	0.79	0.01	4
	Marginal	0.02-0.20	37	30.8				
	Small	0.21-1.0	55	45.8				
	Medium	1.01-3.0	9	7.5				
	Large	>3	4	3.3				
Annual income (BDT)	Extreme	≤ 1,20,000	14	11.7	2,49,475	82151.21	1,12,000	3,90,0000
	Low	1,20,001-2,40,000	38	31.7				
	Medium	2,40,001- 3,60,000	55	45.8				
	High	>3.60,000	13	10.8				
Organizational Participation (Score)	No	0	10	8.3	9.13	4.8	00	19
	Low	1-8	36	30				
	Medium	9-16	70	58.3				
	High	>16	4	3.3				
Extension contact (Score)	Low	≤ 20	59	49.2	22.74	8.62	6	42
	Medium	21-40	57	47.5				
	High	> 41	4	3.3				
Training exposure (Number)	No	0	10	8.3	2.33	1.21	0	6
	Low	1-4	103	85.8				
	Medium	5-8	5	4.2				
	High	>8	2	1.7				

Table 1. Continue…

Parameter	Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Mean	SD(±)	Min.	Max.
			Number	Percentage				
Poverty status (Score)	No	0	9	7.5	6.19	4.91	00	25
	Low	1-10	98	81.7				
	Medium	11-20	9	7.5				
	High	21-30	4	3.3				
Number of performed daily activity	Low	<4	7	5.8	6.67	1.93	3	10
	Medium	4-7	63	52.5				
	High	>7	50	41.7				
Time spent in performed	Short time	< 6	2	1.7	7.25	1.31	5	11

daily activities (Hours per day)	Moderate	6-8	94	78.3				
	Long time	> 8	24	20				
Involved in income-earning activity (Days per month)	Short	<15	36	29.8				
	Moderate	15-20	53	43.8	17.67	4.24	12	30
	Long	>20	31	25.6				
Role in decision making (Score)	Low	1-10	55	45.8				
	Medium	11-20	57	47.5	11.35	6.08	1	30
	High	21-30	8	6.7				
Problem faced (Score)	Low	0-28	65	54.2				
	Medium	29-39	22	18.3	28.48	11.67	4	50
	High	40-50	33	27.5				

SD= Standard deviation, Min.= Minimum, Max.= Maximum; BDT= TK= Bangladeshi Taka; Source: Field survey, 2019

3.2 Relative position (rank order) of the selected 15- decision making issues in socioeconomic development

Role in decision making regarding different family affairs by women is an important consideration for measuring their contribution in socioeconomic improvement of a nation. Data represented in Table 2 showed that among 15- decision making issues "rearing of poultry, goat and cattle ranked 1st, followed by "marriage of sons / daughters" (2nd) and "vaccinations of children" (3rd). On the contrary "marketing of farm products" and "buying or selling lands" ranked 15th and 14th respectively.

3.3 Relative position (rank order) of the selected 15- problems faced by rural women during participation in income generating activities

There are different types of problems which are faced by rural women during participation in income generating activities. Among the 15- problems faced by women regarding participation in income generating activities, "lack of education" ranked 1st, followed by "lack of capital" (2nd) and "shortage of knowledge" (3rd). The lowest ranked problems were "religious" (15th), "superstition" (14th) and "social problem" (13th). Actually lack of proper and adequate education might be the center of all problems (Table 3).

Table 2. Rank order of the selected 15- decision making issues in socioeconomic development based on decision score (DS) and decision index (DI) (N=120)

Nature of decision	Extent of role in decision making						
	Active role (3)	Passive role (2)	Rare role (1)	No role (0)	DS	DI	Rank (15-issues)
1. Buying or selling lands	5×(3)	6×(2)	9×(1)	100×(0)	36	10	14th

2.	Taking or giving lands on lease	7×(3)	5×(2)	10×(1)	98×(0)	43	11.94	13th
3.	Receiving credit	20×(3)	30×(2)	10×(1)	60×(0)	130	36.12	6th
4.	House construction	5×(3)	20×(2)	10×(1)	94×(0)	55	15.27	10th
5.	Vaccinations of children	40×(3)	40×(2)	20×(1)	20×(0)	220	61.11	3rd
6.	Education of children	50×(3)	20×(2)	20×(1)	30×(0)	210	58.33	4th
7.	Participation in ceremonies	20×(3)	20×(2)	10×(1)	70×(0)	110	30.55	8th
8.	Cultivation of crops	8×(3)	12×(2)	20×(1)	80×(0)	68	18.88	9th
9.	Rearing of poultry, goat and cattle	80×(3)	20×(2)	15×(1)	5×(0)	295	45	1st
10.	Marriage of sons / daughters	70×(3)	30×(2)	15×(1)	5×(0)	285	79.16	2nd
11.	Adoption of high yielding varieties	10×(3)	5×(2)	5×(1)	100×(0)	45	12.5	12th
12.	Agricultural farm activities	20×(3)	30×(2)	10×(1)	60×(0)	130	36.11	5th
13.	Buying of agricultural inputs	10×(3)	5×(2)	5×(1)	100×(0)	50	13.88	11th
14.	Processing of farm products	30×(3)	20×(2)	10×(1)	60×(0)	120	33.33	7th
15.	Marketing of farm products	5×(3)	5×(2)	8×(1)	102×(0)	33	9.1	15th

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 3. Rank order of the selected 15- problems faced by rural women during participation in income generating activities based on problem score (PS) and problem index (PI) (N=120)

Problem	Extent of problem				PS	PI	Rank (15-issues)
	Extreme (3)	Moderate (2)	Rarely (1)	Not at all (0)			
1. Lack of education	106×(3)	10×(2)	0×(1)	4×(0)	338	93.88	1st
2. Lack of awareness	39×(3)	68×(2)	3×(1)	10×(0)	256	70.48	4th
3. Lack of family support	15×(3)	24×(2)	8×(1)	73×(0)	101	28.05	12th
4. Lack of training	65×(3)	20×(2)	4×(1)	31×(0)	249	66.38	5th
5. Gender discrimination	34×(3)	44×(2)	20×(1)	22×(0)	210	58.38	6th
6. Shortage of knowledge	79×(3)	15×(2)	4×(1)	22×(0)	271	75.27	3th
7. Lack of extension contact	20×(3)	48×(2)	17×(1)	35×(0)	173	48.05	8th
8. Low wage	10×(3)	74×(2)	27×(1)	11×(0)	205	54	7th

9. Low efficiency	10×(3)	50×(2)	32×(1)	28×(0)	162	45	10th
10. Physical weakness	45×(3)	13×(2)	10×(1)	52×(0)	171	47.5	9th
11. Lack of capital	101×(3)	4×(2)	0×(1)	15×(0)	311	86.38	2nd
12. Social problem	4×(3)	27×(2)	17×(1)	72×(0)	83	23.05	13th
13. Political problem	13×(3)	18×(2)	35×(1)	54×(0)	110	30.55	11th
14. Superstition	3×(3)	11×(2)	15×(1)	91×(0)	46	12.77	14th
15. Religious	0×(3)	3×(2)	22×(1)	95×(0)	28	7.77	15th

Source: Field survey, 2019

3.4 Quantification of contribution to socioeconomic development in terms of earning money (yearly) by converting the spent time for performing different daily activities

Contribution to socioeconomic development in terms of earning money (yearly) as the money supposed to be gained rural women by converting the spent time for performing different daily activities ranged from 1,00,000 BDT to 2,60,000 BDT with a mean of 1,33,033 BDT and standard deviation of 36,730.10 (Table 4). On the basis of contribution to socioeconomic development in this way, the respondents were classified into three groups. Majority of the women (66.7%) was in low earning money group followed by 25.5% in medium earning money group and 7.5% in higher earning money group (Table 4). The average quantified contribution to family income made by rural women was 53.32% which had been ultimately used for better standards of living (comparing between Table 1 and 4).Unemployed women had performed so many daily activities. Their contribution to family income was measured directly in terms of money as their passing time to different activities, not only household activities but also other income generating activities were converted into money. Annual quantified contribution of unemployed women to family income was 1,05,000 BDT whereas annual family income was 2,94,475 BDT and total income would be 3,99,475 BDT (Figure 1). Quantified contribution to family income of unemployed respondent was 26% (Figure 1).

Employed women had performed their activities and earned money to contribute in family income. Annual quantified contribution of women to family income was 2,50,000 BDT whereas annual family income was 5,00,000 BDT and total income was also 5,00,000 BDT, because, as they had earned money directly their income was previously added with annual family income (Figure 1). Quantified contribution to family income of employed respondent was (50%) (Figure 1).

Low educated respondent (paid) had performed their activities and had earned money to contribute in family income. Annual quantified contribution of women to family income was 1,20,000 BDT whereas annual family income was 2,50,000 BDT and total income was also 2,50,000 BDT, because, as they had earned money directly their income was previously added with annual family income (Figure 1). Quantified contribution to family income of low educated respondent (paid) was 48% (Figure 1).

Highly educated respondent (paid) had performed their activities and had earned money to contribute in family income. Annual quantified contribution of women to family income was 3,00,000 BDT whereas annual family income was 5,00,000 BDT, and total income was also 5,00,000 BDT (the same reason as stated earlier in two cases) (Figure 1). Quantified contribution to family income of highly educated respondent (paid) was 60% and contribution by other members of the family was 40% (Figure 1).

Low educated respondents (unpaid) women had performed so many daily activities. Their contribution to family income was measured directly in terms of money as their passing time to different activities, not only household activities but also other income generating activities, converted into money. Quantified contribution of women to family income was 1,00,000 BDT, whereas annual family income was 2,50,000 BDT and total income was 3,50,000 BDT (Figure 1). Quantified contribution to family income of low educated respondent was 29% whereas contribution by other member of the family was 71% (Figure 1).

Highly educated respondents (unpaid) women had also performed so many daily activities. Their contribution to family income was measured directly in terms of money on the basis of their passing time to different activities, including other income generating activities, converted into money. Annual quantified contribution of women to family income was 1,50,000 BDT, whereas annual family income was 5,00,000 BDT and total income was 6,50,000 BDT (Figure 1). Quantified contribution to family income of highly educated respondent (unpaid) was 23%, whereas contribution by other members of the family was 77% (Figure 1).

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to quantification of contribution to socioeconomic development in terms of earning money (yearly) supposed to be gained by converting the spent time for performing different daily activities

Categories	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Mean	SD(±)	Min.	Max.
		Number	Percentage				
Low earning money	<1,20,000	80	66.7	1,33,033	36730.10	1,00000	2,60,000
Medium earning money	1,20,000-2,40,000	31	25.8				
Higher earning money	>2,40,000	9	7.5				
Total		120	100				

Source: Field survey, 2019

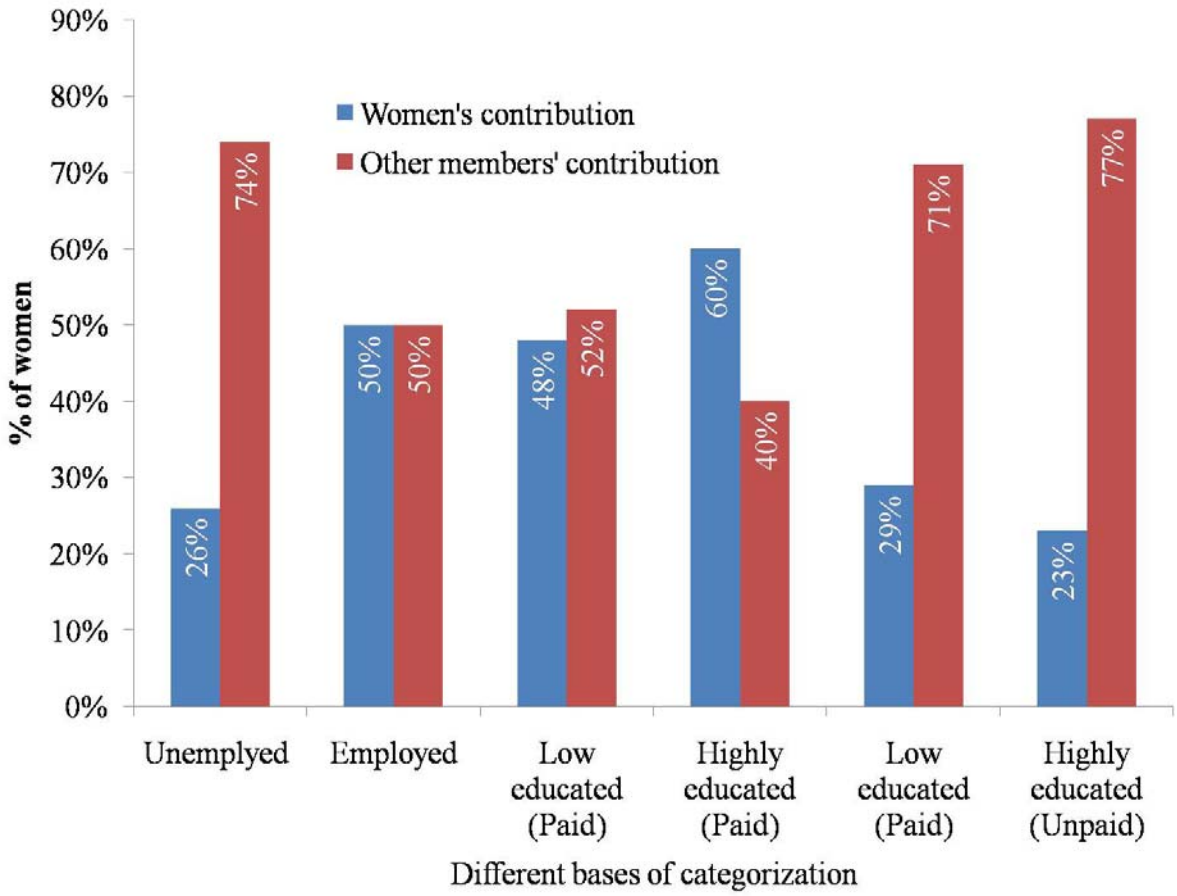

Figure 1. Contribution (%) of women in family income on different bases

3.5 Relationship between the selected characteristics of rural women and the extent of women contribution in socioeconomic development

This correlation coefficient had been calculated by using the Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient (ρ). The computed value of coefficient of correlation ρ (-0.066) showed a negative and non- significant relationship between the age of the respondents and their contributions in terms of money to socioeconomic development. The observed value of coefficient of correlation ρ (0.166) displayed a positive and non-significant relationship between the family size of the respondents and their contributions in socioeconomic development. The calculated value of coefficient of correlation ρ (0.358**) showed a positive and significant relationship between the annual family income of the respondents and their contributions in socioeconomic development. The calculated value of coefficient of correlation ρ (0.451**) showed a positive and significant relationship between involved in income generating activities at how many days per month of the respondents and their contributions in socioeconomic development. The calculated value of coefficient of correlation ρ (-0.268**) showed a negative and significant relationship between the problem faced by the respondents and their contributions to socioeconomic development.

Table 5. Relationships between the contributions to socioeconomic development (time spent for performing different daily activities converted into money) by women and their selected characteristics

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Co-efficient of correlation "ρ"
Contribution in terms of money to socioeconomic development. (Time spent for performing different daily activities converted into money)	Age	-0.066^{NS}
	Educational qualification	0.214*
	Family size	0.166^{NS}
	Farm size	0.438**
	Annual family income	0.358**
	Organizational participation	0.364**
	Extension media contact	0.400**
	Training exposure	0.258**
	Poverty status	0.245**
	Number of performed daily activities	0.419**
	Time spent in performed daily activities	0.463**
	Involvement in income generating activities	0.451**
	Role in decision making for different activities	0.453**
	Problem faced	-0.268**

****** Significant at the 0.01 level, ***** Significant at the 0.05 level, ^{NS} Non-significant

4. DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic activities are gaining prominence in Bangladesh and in other developing countries in the world. Rural women potentially contribute in social development and they might be good partners to economic development of every society. Women are also engage in domestic chores such as home management. This study actually focused on quantification of contribution made by rural women to socioeconomic development which might be helpful for the researchers, planners, educators and other agencies to uphold the women empowerment goal.

[7] found that after joining into different IGAs, the women became more triggered to earn money to help to boost up their current situation into a more positive direction. Most of the respondents had higher participation in income generating activities. Most of the women were engaged in seasonal vegetable cultivation, nursery management, rice husking and selling, small business related to agriculture, milk cow rearing, goat raising etc. [8] observed that women earned not only money but also respect by participating in income generating activities. Majority of the women were engaged in homestead gardening, field crop cultivation, postharvest activities, poultry rearing, goat rearing, cattle rearing, fish culture and collecting fuel wood. Little number of women were engaged in services and labor selling. Women took major decision about their children welfare, homestead gardening and daily diet but they had little decision making power on economic issues. Women had little authority to take any economic decision. Authors suggested that without economic solvency it was not possible to uplift their position both in family and society.

[9] observed that more than three-fourth portion of the respondents belonged to low to moderate categories of change in livelihood status. Formulation of gender specific and pragmatic program related with IGAs viz. postharvest activities, cow fattening and milking, goat farming, backyard poultry rearing, pisciculture, agriculture, horticulture, food processing, cane and bamboo works, silk reeling, handloom, garment making, fishnet making, coir production, and handicrafts etc. which had enough potentiality to increase their socioeconomic conditions leading towards improving livelihood status was necessary.

[10] stated that about 48% of rural women faced medium level of problem followed by 35% as low problem, 11% as high problem and 6% as very low problem in livestock rearing at Masundia Union under Pabna District. [11] found strong negative relationship between the education of male Garo youth and their participation in agricultural activities while [12] found it positively related with participation of school dropout teenage rural youth in selected agricultural activities.

[13] found that women in households were economically active and had a great contribution in various activities related to homestead agricultural production. But these contributions were not duly considered in national income accounting because of faulty national statistical procedures. The socioeconomic backwardness and women illiteracy were also responsible for underestimation of their contribution. The areas of women contribution were identified as livestock production, duck and poultry production, horticultural crops poultry and livestock rearing and diseased management. The study also revealed that to increase women's participation in economic activities, their skills must be improved.

5. CONCLUSION

Women have been playing many roles in the society and contributing continuously in the aspect of socioeconomic development where their involvement is considerable. In general, women have become important agents of socioeconomic development. Majority of the women (66.7%) was found in low earning money group followed by 25.5% in medium earning money group and 7.5% in higher earning money group. The average quantified contribution to family income made by rural women was 53.32% which had been ultimately used for better standards of living. Family is the smallest constituting unit of the society and the country as well. The contribution of women in family is mostly used for the improvement of child education, family health, and asset developments, and so on. Thus, it could be concluded that the contribution made by women in socioeconomic development is more than its men counterpart at rural level. It might be recommended that, adequate support should be provided to rural women to nurture this contribution by ensuring due acknowledgement and honor for them.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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