



Participation of rural youth in rural development activities in Bangladesh

Md. Rafiqueel Islam, Mirza Mobashwerul Haque*, Md. Bayzid Bostami

Department Agricultural Extension and Information System, Sher-E-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

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*Corresponding Author

Mirza Mobashwerul Haque

✉ mirzamobashweru
lhaque@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The main purposes of this study were to determine the participation of the rural youth in selected rural development activities in Bangladesh. The selected characteristics were age, education, family farm size, family annual income, training experience, cosmopolitaness, organizational participation, communication exposure and family size were considered as factors which might influence the participation in these developmental activities. The study was conducted in Sarishabari Upazila under Jamalpur district. Data were collected from 80 rural youths by using interview schedule during 10 to 30th May, 2008. Appropriate scales were developed in order to measure the concerned variables. Participation Index (PAI) was also computed to explain the dependent variable. Out of the 24 items of participation by rural youth in rural development activities, the top 5 were: i. inspire people to send their children to school, ii. advise parents, relatives and neighbor to adopt high yielding variety (HYV) iii. minimize local conflict, iv. advise parents, relatives and neighbor to maintain soil fertility, v. advise parents, relatives and neighbor about fertilizer management. However, in respect of overall participation by rural youth, 50% was in low category and 38.8% was in medium category. Among the rural youths minor school education were 71.3% and 25% high school education only. The highest proportion (65%) had small farm size, 40% had very low to low annual income, 57.5% had low training exposure and 42.5% had medium training exposure, 45% had low organizational participation and 48.8% had no organizational participation, 51.3% had low communication exposure quality, 47.5% had low cosmopolitaness quality.

INTRODUCTION

The place of development in any country largely depends upon the participation and commitment of all the rural youth concerned with development activities. This has been emphatically stated by the development experts and policy makers. Participation of rural youth in NGO's activities is expected to bring about positive impact on the lives of the participants (Anwar, 1993). But, it is undoubtedly a complex task to achieve all the expected impacts. It is now clear that efforts devoted to the rural youth through meaningful work experience organized and carried on by the extension services (Saha, 1997). Using educational techniques has a very favorable and long range effect on rural development programmes which

render best possible courses of action and can provide guidance, counseling, education, and training to rural youth to make them healthy citizens.

But the major extension organizations of the government and non-government organizations of Bangladesh country has given very poor attention to the rural youth as a potential client group or partner of development (Anwar, 1993). But realizing the importance of rural youth, pragmatic community development programmes, both of agricultural and non-agricultural are urgently be undertaken. In recent years programmes for development of rural youths are highly demanding the increased attention among the national planners, thinkers and intellectuals and the

extension administrators of Bangladesh. In order to provide viable self-employment opportunities particularly to the rural youth, it is very important to know the present condition of them in Bangladesh. Their opportunities for education, their preferences towards rural development activities, their felt-problems and other related matters are to be viewed carefully. This will help the planners to make appropriate plans and strategies for the development of rural youths and the nation as a whole. The present research was undertaken with a view to have an understanding of rural development activities done by youth in their environment and training programmes for their development.

The need for out-of-school organizations for the youth is even greater in Bangladesh in view of the fact that their opportunity for education in school is very limited. Moreover, significant contribution towards rural development activities, a burning question of the day. Attempts were made in the past to organize youth programmes but with little success. There were various reasons for this, among which an important one was the non-availability of relevant information for planning and conducting the youth programmes. Such information need to come out of systematic study of the local situations.

Considering the above fact the present study was investigated the participation of rural youth in rural development activities with the aims to determine the the areas of rural development in which rural youth participate and to determine the personal characteristics of the rural youth who are involved with rural development activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area and sampling

Sarishabari Upazila under Jamalpur District was purposely selected as the locale of this study. Sarishabariupazila consists of 8 unions namely; Satpoa, Kamrabad, Vatara, Mahadan, Pogaldigha, Doyael, Aouna and Pigna. This upazila is situated in the eastern side of Jamuna river. All the youths

who obtained training during 2006-2008 were selected for the study.

Data collection

Data were collected by the researcher himself through personal interview schedule from the youth of Sarishabariupazila. The interview was conducted with each respondent individually, while starting interview, the researcher took all possible care to establish rapport with him so that they do not feel any hesitation. Wherever any respondent felt any difficulty in understanding any questions, the researcher took utmost care to explain and clarify them properly. Repeated visit was made if necessary.

Variables

The relevant available literature, discussions with teachers, experts and research fellows in the relevant field and considering the time and resources available to the researcher were the primary basis for selecting the variables. Nine characteristics of the rural youth as independent variables were selected. The selected characteristics included age, education, family, farm size, family annual income, training exposure, cosmopolitaness, organizational participation, communication exposure, family size and rural development activities were measured as described in table 1 and by using prevailing standard methods.

Cosmopolitaness

Cosmopolitaness of a respondent was measured in terms of his/her nature of visits to the ten different places external to his own social system. The scale used for computing the cosmopolitaness score is presented below.

The cosmopolitaness score of a respondent was determined by adding together the scores obtained from visit to each of the ten (10) types of places. The cosmopolitaness score of the respondents could range from 0 to 40, where, 0 indicating no cosmopolitaness and 40 indicating high cosmopolitaness.

Place of visit	Nature of visit with score assigned
Visit to other villages	never (0 times/ month), rarely (1-4 times/ month), occasionally (5-8 times/ month), often (9-12 times/ month), regularly (>12 times/ month)
Visit to upazila sadar & upazila agriculture office	never (0 times/ month), rarely (1-3 times/ month), occasionally (4-6 times/ month), often (7-9 times/ month), regularly (>9 times/ month)
Visit to the other upazila & others commercial center	never (0 times/ month), rarely (1-3 times/ month), occasionally (4-6 times/ month), often (7-9 times/ month), regularly (>9 times/ month)
Visit agricultural fair & exhibition	never (0 times/ year), rarely (1 times/ year), occasionally (2 times/ year), often (3 times/ year), regularly (>3 times/ year)
Visit own district town	never (0 times/ year), rarely (1-2 times/ year), occasionally (3-4 times/ year), often (5-6 times/ year), regularly (>6 times/ year)
Visit capital & other big cities	never (0 times/ year), rarely (1-2 times/ year), occasionally (3-4 times/ year), often (4-5 times/ year), regularly (>5 times/ year)
Visit farm exhibition	never (0 times/ year), rarely (1 times/ year), occasionally (2 times/ year), often (3 times/ year), regularly (>3 times/ year)
Join different meeting	never (0 times/ year) rarely (1 -3 times/ year) occasionally (4-5 times/ year) often (6-8 times/ year) regularly (>8 times/ year)
Visit to sporting clubs	never (0 times/ month) rarely (1 times/ month) occasionally (2 times/ month) often (3 times/ month) regularly (4 times/ month)
See village games	never (0 times/ month) rarely (1 times/ month) occasionally (2 times/ month) often (3 times/ month) regularly (4 times/ month)
Cosmopolitaness	Ranged from 0 to 40, where, 0 indicating no cosmopolitaness and 40 indicating high cosmopolitaness.
Organizational participation	No participation-0, General member-1, Executive member-2, President/secretary-3
Family size	Family size of a youth family was measured on the basis of total number of family members and assigned scored one for each member of the family. For example, if a respondent has 6 members in his family, then his family size score was 6.

Organizational participation

Organizational participation score of a respondent was computed on the basis of his participation in different organizations. Scores were assigned for participation of a respondent in an organization as 0- No participation, 1- General member, 2- Executive member, 3- President/secretary. Organizational participation score of respondent was obtained by adding his scores for participation in all the organizations. The score of organizational participation was ranged from 0-30.

Communication exposure

Communication exposure score of a respondent was determined by adding his obtained scores for contact with all the media according to the above mentioned assigned score. Thus, the score of a respondent could range from 0 to 36, 0 indicating no extension contact and 36 indicating very high communication exposure.

Nature of media	Communication media	Extent of communication	Scores assigned
Personal contact	Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO)	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
	Agriculture Extension Officer	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
	Opinion leader	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
Input dealer	Often	3	
	Occasionally	2	
	Rarely	1	
	Not at all	0	
NGO worker	Often	3	
	Occasionally	2	
	Rarely	1	
	Not at all	0	
Group contact	Result demonstration	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
	Group discussion	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
	Group meeting	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
Mass contact	Radio	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
	Television	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
	Daily newspaper	Often	3
		Occasionally	2
		Rarely	1
		Not at all	0
Agril related newspaper	Often	3	
	Occasionally	2	
	Rarely	1	
	Not at all	0	

Measurement of dependent variable

Participation in rural development activities was the dependent variable of this study. Rural development activities were divided into four dimensions containing six activities. Thus 24 rural development activities were identified and assigned as score 3-. Large participation, 2- Moderate participation, 1- Little participation and 0- No participation. Weights for responses against all the 24 activities of rural development of a youth was added together to obtain his participation score. This score could range from 0 to 72; where zero (0) indicated no participation in rural development activities and 72 indicated participation to the highest extent.

Participation Index

For clear understanding of participation of farmers, index for each item along with rank order was computed by using following formula: Participation Index (PI) = $\sum P_h \times 3 + P_m \times 2 + P_l \times 1 + P_n \times 0$

Where,

P_h = Number of respondents with high participation

P_m = Number of respondents with medium participation

P_l = Number of respondents with low participation

P_n = Number of respondents with no participation
Participation Index (PI) related to rural youth development could range from 0 to 240, 0 indicating no participation and 240 very high participation. Based on the participation indices, rank order was computed for each selected rural development activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of participation of rural youth in selected rural development activities

The overall participation scores of the rural youth ranged from 3 to 37 against a possible range of 0 to 72 with an average being 14.85 and standard deviation 7.45. Data in Table 1 indicate that 50% of the rural youth were in low participation category. However rest of the 50% had medium (38.8%) to high (11.2%) participation category.

The participation scores ranged from 03 to 37 with an average of 14.85 and SD 7.45. On the participation scores, the rural youth were classified into four categories namely, no participation (0), low participation (1-12), medium participation (13-24) and high participation (above 24).

Participation index

This section deals with the findings of the participation of rural youth on selected four dimensions containing 24 rural development activities that shown in Table 2. Participation index (PI) of rural youth on twenty four (24) rural development activities ranged from 03-37. PAI of four items exceeded 100. However, based on PI the top five activities were: i. Inspire people to send their children to school (186), ii. Advise parents, relatives and neighbor to adopt HYV (155), iii. Minimize local conflict (128). iv. Advise parents, relatives & neighbor to maintain soil fertility (102), v. Advise parents, relatives & neighbor about fertilizer management (92). PI of 20 items was below 100.

Table 1

Classification of the respondents according to their rural development activities.

Categories (score)	Respondents		Mean	Standard deviation
	Number	Percent		
low (up to 12)	40	50	14.85	7.45
Medium (13-24)	31	38.8		
high (above 24)	9	11.2		

Table 2
Participation of rural youth in rural development activities on 24 items with participation index and rank order.

Participation in rural development activities	Youth N = 80				Participation index (PI)	Rank order
	High	Medium	Low	Np		
Inspire people to send their children to school	33	40	7	0	186	1
Advise parents, relatives & neighbor to adopt HYV	19	43	12	6	155	2
Minimize local conflict	2	44	28	6	128	3
Advise parents, relatives & neighbor to maintain soil fertility	6	32	20	22	102	4
Advise parents, relatives & neighbor about fertilizer management	2	27	32	19	92	5
Poultry farm	1	24	34	21	85	6
Advise to prepare and use compost	1	10	37	32	60	7
Fisheries	2	19	15	44	59	8
Advise parents, relatives & neighbor about IPM, ICM	0	12	26	42	50	9
Stock-business	6	8	10	56	44	10
Dairy farm	0	7	20	53	34	11
Arrange football match /cricket match /other local games	4	6	5	65	29	12
Distribution of relief/loan to the distressed people	1	4	17	58	28	13
Organizing youth club	2	9	2	67	26	14
Involvement with youth club	3	7	2	68	25	15
Participation in irrigation water management	0	5	12	63	22	16
Arrange national days	0	5	9	66	19	17
Arrange village fair	0	1	15	64	17	18
shopkeeper	0	3	8	69	14	19
Job/service	1	4	2	73	13	20
Advise to adopt inter crop cultivation	0	2	3	75	07	21
Participation in construction of embankment/dam	0	0	0	80	0	23
Participation in canal digging	0	0	0	80	0	23
Arrange village theatre	0	0	0	80	0	23

Table 3
Classification of the respondents according to their age.

Categories	Respondents		Mean	Standard deviation	
	Number	Percent			
Age (years)	Early Youth (15-25)	55	68.8	23.3	4.85
	Late Youth (26-35)	25	31.2		
Education (Scale score)	Minor school education (5-8)	57	71.3	8.38	1.48
	High school education (9-10)	20	25		
	Intermediate & above education	3	3.7		
Family farm size categories (ha)	Marginal farmer (up to 0.50 ha)	27	33.75	0.68	0.39
	Small farmer (0.5 1-1. 50)	52	65		
	Medium farmer (1.51-2.95)	1	1.25		
Annual Income	Very low income (up to 60)	9	11.3	126.63	64.88
	Low income (61-100)	23	28.7		
	Medium income (101-150)	24	30		
	High income (151- above)	24	30		
Training exposure (day)	Low training exposure (up to 1 0)	46	57.5	11.26	2.57
	Medium training exposure (11-15)	34	42.5		
Cosmopoliteness (score)	Low cosmopoliteness (up to 10)	38	47.5	12.64	6.59
	Medium cosmopoliteness (11-20)	30	37.5		
	High cosmopoliteness (>20)	12	15		
Organizational Participation (Score)	No participation	39	48.8	1.35	2.16
	Very low participation (1-5)	36	45		
	Low participation (6-12)	05	6.2		
Communication exposure (Score)	Low communication (up to 8)	41	51.3	9.35	5.63
	Medium communication (9-16)	29	36.2		
	High communication (above 16)	10	12.5		
Family size (Number)	Small family (3-4)	31	38.8	5.03	1.11
	Medium family (5-6)	38	47.5		
	Large family (above 6)	11	13.7		

The item analysis of rural development activities reflects that except few activities the rural youth participation in rural development activities are poor in general and their participation becomes intensive in activities which are favorable to their environment

Selected characteristics of rural youth

Age

Age of the respondent rural youth ranged from 15-35 year with a mean of 23.30 and standard deviation of 4.85. The findings in the table 3 indicate that the highest proportion (68.8%) of the farmers felt into the early young aged group.

Education

A large proportion (71.3%) of rural youths had only minor school education, 25% and only 3.7% had high school education and the intermediate & above level of education respectively (Table 3). Government has been emphasizing on mass literacy at the grass root levels, for a long time. This has caused a significant progress of level of literacy of the rural youth in general.

Family farm size

The farm size of the respondent family varied from (0.16-2.95) hectares with an average of 0.68 hectares. The largest proportion (65%) of the farmers had small farm size ranged from 0.51-1.50 hector, while 33.75% had marginal farm size of 0.16-0.50 hectares of land. However about 1.25% of rural youth family had medium family farm size of 1.50-2.95 ha of land (Table 3).

Family annual income

The score of annual income of the rural youth family varied from 34.90 to 454.1 with the mean and standard deviation of 126.63 and 64.88 respectively. The rural youth families of the study area were poor might be due to 70% of them had low to medium income throughout the year (Table 3). It is observed that traditional farming will not be sufficient to raise income. However new income avenues could be identified and utilized through youth development training (Table 3).

Training experience

The training exposure score of the rural youth ranged from 05-15 with an average of 11.26 and standard deviation 2.57. The highest proportion (57.5%) of the rural youth had low training experience (Table 3). Training exposure would be an important factor for the skill development of the youth. But no such training programme exists in the study area. The overwhelming proportions of rural youths do not get opportunity to have effective training on modern income generation practices. In future everyone should emphasize for training to the youth on development activities.

Cosmopolitaness

Comopoliteness scores of the rural youth in the study area ranged from 03-33, the expected range being 0-40, the average was 12.64.

Every rural youth of the study area had more or less cosmopolitaness quality. Near 50% of the rural youth had low cosmopolitaness, but more than half of the respondent had medium (37.5%) to high (15%) cosmopolitaness quality (Table 3). Cosmopolitaness quality of the rural youth could be utilized for rural development activities.

Organizational participation

The results showed that an overwhelming majority i.e. more than nine-tenth of the rural youth had no organizational participation (48.8%) or very low organizational participation (45%). Whereas only 6.2% of rural youth had low organizational participation. Compared to cosmopolitaness quality of the rural youth the findings of their organizational participation is distinctly contradictory. It is expected that more the cosmopolite more the organizational participation. Participation in any organization brings an individual in contract with others where rural youth can exchange ideas, experience and information with other people. It also helps him to know the modern crop cultivation practices and other new idea for development.

Communication exposure

The Communication exposure score of the respondents ranged from 0-25. The mean value and standard deviation were 9.35 and 5.63 respectively. Present study indicated that more than half of the rural youth fell into low Communication exposure category. While a few numbers (12.5%) fell under the high communication exposure category and 36.2% fell in medium communication exposure category. This means that the rural youths have inadequate communication exposure towards various information sources, which keep them unknowledgeable or poorly knowledgeable about improved development activities.

Family Size

The number of family members of the rural youth ranged from 3 to 7 and the mean was 5.03 with a standard deviation 1.11 (Table 3). The highest proportion (47.5%) of the rural youth had their medium families not exceeding 6 members, while 38.8% of the respondent had small families consisting of 3 to 4 members. Only 13.7% had large family. Thus, more than 86% of the respondent had either small or medium families. So, they have every chance to involve in the rural development activities.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study indicate that first half of the rural youths belonged to the low participation category while the next half belong to medium to high participation category.

Observing the trend of participation, it may be concluded that all the rural youth had low or medium positive attitude towards participation in rural development activities.

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