

## TRAINING NEED OF RURAL WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES OF SUS

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### ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study were to determine the extent of training need of rural women participating in IGAs supported by SUS (Sabalamby Unnayan Samity) and to relate the training need with their selected characteristics. Data were collected from 105 respondents of ten villages of Sadar Upazila of Netrokona district through interview schedule in April 2007. Most of the respondents were in high need of training for their better performance and participation in IGAs of SUS. The relationships between their characteristics and training need were tested by computing the co-efficient of correlation. Education, farm size, participation in IGAs and credit received were found positively correlated with their training need whereas age of the respondents showed negative significant relationship with their extent of training need.

**Key Words :** Rural women, Training needs, IGAs, SUS

### INTRODUCTION

Women play a significant role in agricultural development including crop production, horticulture, post-harvest operations, agro-social forestry and fisheries. Lovell (1991) mentioned that poverty particularly affected women. Traditionally poor women in rural areas of Bangladesh have few rights, little choice about the courses to change their situations. They have little or no access to people or positions of influence as most of them are illiterate and they eat the least. They are often deserted when husbands cannot find income in the villages and move away to pursue work.

The activities of women are mainly restricted within the household especially in taking care of children and other family members, preparing and serving food to family members and maintaining houses. In addition, the rural women also engage themselves in agricultural and non-agricultural productive activities within the homestead (Halim and McCarthy, 1985). The agricultural activities of rural women include production of homestead vegetables and post-harvest operation of crops. Livestock production is also applicable for them. Aside from agricultural production (vegetables, fruits, field crops and livestock production), they have the opportunities for carrying out some non-agricultural income generating activities (IGAs). The domestic activities performed by women are seldom being considered as generating income for the household. But women play significant and crucial role in agricultural development and its allied fields (Samanta, 2005).

During mid 1970s, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Bangladesh started massive activities oriented with relief and charity aims, devoted to women development programmes with various sectoral activities such as agriculture, fisheries, livestock, health and family planning, credit and input delivery, cooperatives etc. The NGOs in Bangladesh played and is playing a vital role in the process of empowering womenfolk of the country by creating awareness of their rights and providing economic opportunities through involvement in a wide range of income generating activities (Rahman, 2005).

SUS (Sabalamby Unnayan Samity) is an NGO working mostly in the Netrokona district. It mainly deals with landless women, disadvantaged class of the society. Many activities like livestock, fisheries, poultry, vegetable cultivation, education, farming, planning for extreme poor women development and training programs etc. are being operated by SUS for the women. Among these activities, different income generating activities have been considered for the women in order to earn income and achieve empowerment. The purpose of the training programs of SUS is to improve the economic status of group members by promoting agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, handicrafts production and micro enterprise activities.

However, the selected objectives of this study were (a) To determine the extent of training needs of rural women participating in IGAs supported by SUS and (b) To relate the training needs of rural women and their ten selected personal characteristics.

## METHODOLOGY

The study area was confined to the Sadar upazila of Netrokona district where the SUS headquarter is located. Among the 54 groups of women in Amtala union (19 percent of these groups were randomly selected) 10 groups were selected for the study by double stage sampling followed by proportionate stratified random sampling method. Ten personal characteristics of the respondents were selected as independent variables for the study. These were their age, education, family size, farm size, annual family income, training experience, credit received, exposure to information, perception of IGAs and participation in IGAs.

Extent of training need of rural women in carrying out income generating activities was the dependent variable of this study. This variable was measured by the training need sub-scores based on the four major areas of IGAs namely homestead vegetable production, nursery establishment, livestock and poultry rearing and others. Data were collected from the sampled rural women by using structured interview schedule during 04 to 30 April 2007. Descriptive statistical tests such as number, percentage distribution, range, and standard deviation were used. Correlation analysis was computed to explore the relationships between dependent and independent variables (Ray and Mondal, 2004).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Profile of the rural women's characteristics*

Most of the respondents were middle aged (57%) and 37% were young having an age range of 20 to 55 years. Thus, the involvement in IGAs of SUS was in the hands of young and middle-aged women. About 66% respondents were illiterate and 8% had secondary level of education. The number of family members of the respondents ranged from 1-11 while about half of them (44.7%) were medium sized family. Farm size of the women ranged from 0.01 to 2.23 hectares having an average of 0.27 hectares and 42% were small farmers. The findings show that none of the respondents was in the large farm size category. Most of the respondents (96.2 %) had low to medium annual family income. The main reason of this result might be family members having high family income were not involved in SUS, because they were involved in other diversified income sources like business, service etc.

Table 1. Profile of the rural women's characteristics (n = 105)

Characteristics (measurement units)	Range		Respondents			Mean	Std. Dev.
	Possible	Observed	Categories	No.	%		
Age (year)	-	20-55	Young ( $\leq 30$ )	39	37.1	34.71	7.676
			Middle-aged (31-45)	60	57.2		
			Old ( $> 45$ )	6	5.7		
Education (year of schooling)	-	0-10	Illiterate (0)	69	65.7	1.89	2.768
			Primary (1-5)	28	26.7		
			Secondary (6-10)	8	7.6		
Family size (number)	-	1-11	Small ( $\leq 4$ )	36	34.3	5.20	1.978
			Medium (5-6)	47	44.7		
			Large ( $> 6$ )	22	21.0		
Farm size (hectare)	-	0.01-2.23	Landless ( $\leq 0.02$ )	17	16.2	0.27	0.317
			Marginal (0.021-0.2)	43	40.9		
			Small (0.21-1.0)	44	41.9		
			Medium (1.1-3)	1	1.0		
Annual family income (‘000’ tk)	-	12-190	Low ( $\leq 50$ )	59	56.2	53.79	24.273
			Medium (51-100)	42	40.0		
			High ( $> 100$ )	4	3.8		
Training experience (day)	-	0-10	Short-term ( $\leq 5$ )	101	96.2	0.74	1.798
			Mid-term (6-10)	4	3.8		
			Long-term ( $> 10$ )	0	0		
Credit received (‘000’ tk)	-	4-84	Small ( $\leq 10$ )	38	36.2	22.48	18.847
			Medium (11-20)	25	23.8		
			High ( $> 20$ )	42	40.0		
Exposure to information (score)	0-39	3-24	Less ( $\leq 13$ )	89	84.8	9.13	3.846
			Moderate (14-26)	16	15.2		
			Great ( $> 26$ )	0	0		
Perception of IGAs (score)	0-30	16-30	Unfavorable ( $\leq 10$ )	0	0	27.52	2.602
			Moderately fav. (11-20)	5	4.8		
			Favorable ( $> 20$ )	100	95.2		
Participation in IGAs (score)	-	1.5-69.0	Low ( $\leq 10$ )	29	27.6	21.23	14.353
			Medium (10-20)	31	29.5		
			High ( $> 20$ )	45	42.9		

Almost all (96%) of the women had short-term training experience while 3.8 percent of them had mid-term training experience and none of them had long-term training experience. Similarly, the highest (40%) proportion of the women had high credit received while 24% had medium credit received and the rest 36% percent of them had small credit received. The major proportion (84%) of the respondents had less exposure, while the rest 15% had moderate exposure and none of them had exposure to information sources to a great extent. In case of perception of IGAs almost all (95%) of the respondents had favorable perception. Finally, less than half 43% of the respondents had high participation in IGAs.

#### *Training need of the rural women*

In the present study, the term 'training need' referred to the need which can be minimized by imparting training towards participating in IGAs of SUS. Training need of the rural women was the main focus of the present research work. Four aspects of training needs were selected to measure the extent of training needs of the rural women participating in income generating activities of SUS. The total score of training need could range from 0 to 60. The observed training need scores ranged from 18 to 60 with an average of 50.83 and standard deviation 6.73. Based on their training need scores the respondents were classified into three categories as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of women according to their overall training needs (n = 105)

Range		Respondents			Mean	Std. Dev.
Possible	Observed	Categories	No.	%		
0-60	18-60	Less need ( $\leq 20$ )	1	1.0	50.83	6.725
		Medium need (21-40)	7	6.6		
		High need ( $> 40$ )	97	92.4		

Data presented in the Table 2 show that the highest proportion (92%) of the respondents had high training need while about 7% of them had medium training need for income generation activities of SUS. The findings clearly indicate that most of the respondents were in high need of training for their performance and participation of IGAs of SUS. This might be due to inadequate training offered by SUS to run the IGAs. Most of the respondents had short-term training experience as stated earlier. The rural women in the study area had desire to participate in income generating activities but they could not do due to lack of knowledge and sufficient information of the expected activities. Thus, majority of the respondents fell in the high training need category.

The computed scores of training needs of all the aspects of training needs have been shown in Table 3. Data indicate that in all the components of training need, most of the respondents were in high need category. Besides, the women were homogenously distributed in the high need category as the variation signified by the small standard deviation for all of the components. This entails that rural women wanted to participate in homestead vegetable production, nursery establishment, livestock and poultry rearing,

and cottage and handicraft production could not be involved due to lack of due knowledge and skill. It indicates that, they felt their training need very much in the above aspects of income generation.

Table 3. Component-wise training needs of the rural women (n = 105)

Components of training needs	Range of score		Respondents			Mean	Std. Dev.
	Possible	Observed	Categories	No.	%		
Homestead vegetable production	0-33	11-33	Less need ( $\leq 11$ )	1	1.0	27.70	4.160
			Medium need (12-22)	9	8.5		
			High need ( $> 22$ )	95	90.5		
Nursery establishment	0-9	0-9	Less need ( $\leq 3$ )	3	2.9	7.70	1.539
			Medium need (4-6)	14	13.3		
			High need ( $> 6$ )	88	83.8		
Livestock and poultry rearing	0-12	0-12	Less need ( $\leq 4$ )	7	6.7	9.61	2.911
			Medium need (5-8)	11	10.4		
			High need ( $> 8$ )	87	82.9		
Cottage and handicraft	0-6	1-6	Less need ( $\leq 2$ )	3	2.9	5.82	0.794
			Medium need (3-4)	3	2.8		
			High need ( $> 4$ )	99	94.3		

However, for clear understanding and contrast among the components of training needs, a bar diagram has been presented in Fig. 1.

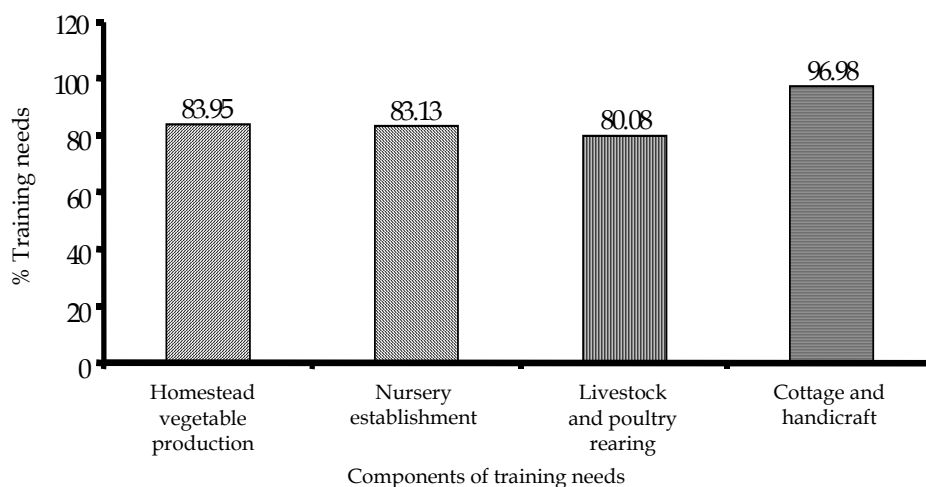


Fig. 1. Component-wise training needs of the rural women

Fig. 1 clearly expresses the percentage of training needs of different components in reference to the maximum possible scores of four components of training needs. Most of the (97%) training needs were in cottage and handicraft and the rest three components namely homestead vegetable production, nursery establishment, and livestock and poultry rearing activities claimed more or less similar proportion of training needs. Based on this, it could be said that the rural women had the desire to participate in cottage and

handicraft production may be due to lack of homestead and farm land. To participate in other components, it would need some homestead farm land but most of the respondent women had not required area of homestead farm land. So, they would feel less training needs in comparison to cottage and handicraft production. But still the extent of training needs in homestead vegetable production, nursery establishment and livestock and poultry rearing were high. On the other hand, cottage and handicraft production does not require any farm land, it just demands some free time. Hence, the rural women felt that they had the highest training needs in cottage and handicraft production.

***Relationships between the selected characteristics of the Rural women and their extent of training needs***

Coefficient of Correlation (r) was computed in order to explore the relationships between the selected characteristics of the rural women and their extent of training needs in IGAs. Among ten characteristics of the respondents only four namely education, farm size, participation in IGAs and credit received showed significant and positive relationship with their extent of training needs. But age of the respondents was negatively and significantly correlated with their extent of training needs and the rest of the characteristics *viz.* family size, annual family income, training experience, exposure to information and perception of IGAs did not show any significant relationship with their extent of training needs.

Table 4. Relationship between dependent and independent variables

Characteristics (Independent variables)	The 'r' value
Age	-0.423**
Education	0.209*
Family size	0.092
Farm size	0.201*
Annual family income	0.169
Training experience	-0.007
Credit received	0.366**
Exposure to information	0.131
Perception of IGAs	0.182
Participation in IGAs	0.348**

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level \* Significant at 0.05 level

The relationship between age and extent of training need in conducting IGAs was significant and negative. Such relation seems logical because, with the increase of age the training needs of the respondents tended to decrease. The main reason might be that the older respondents did not want to participate in any kind of IGAs. Therefore, their training needs were also decreased in comparison to the younger ones. The relationship between education and extent of training need was positively significant. This indicates that more a woman is educated, the more training need she felt. Fatema (1995) also

showed similar finding. This is also reasonable as who are more educated could realize the importance of training to successful conduction of IGAs.

Similarly, the relationship between farm size and extent of training needs in conducting IGAs was significant and followed a positive trend. It means that larger the farm size of the respondents, greater was their training need. Homestead vegetable production, nursery establishment and livestock and poultry rearing (these three components of IGAs) need at least some homestead farm land. When the farm size of the respondent's increases, their tendency to participate in IGAs would be increased and accordingly they felt increased need of training in conducting IGAs.

The significant positive relationship between credit received and extent of training need in conducting IGAs was positively significant. It indicates that training need in conducting IGAs increased with the increase of credit availability. This seems rational, because higher amount of credit leads to higher amount of investment and subsequently triggers to higher participation in IGAs. Consequently, they felt higher training needs in conducting IGAs.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the major findings of the study and their logical interpretations, the following conclusions were drawn :

- ◆ Most of the respondents (92 %) had high training need for income generation activities of SUS and the highest training need of the respondents were in the area of cottage and handicraft production. So, there remained greater scope to provide training programs concerning IGAs with special emphasis on cottage and handicraft production. SUS may arrange more IGA-based training immediately
- ◆ Among the respondents 37% were young. Finding shows that the younger women needed more training regarding IGAs than that of older ones. SUS may take care of age of their beneficiaries in designing the training program.
- ◆ Majority of the respondents were illiterate and had marginal to small farm size. Training need had positive significant relationships with the level of education and farm size of the women. So, education and farm size were highly influential to the extent of training needs of the rural women participating in IGAs. SUS, along with other NGOs, can provide formal or informal literacy programs before going for implementing IGA-based training.
- ◆ Majority of the respondents (43%) had high participation in IGAs. Correlation indicates that the women participated in more IGAs needed more training facilities regarding IGAs. Hence, there should have substantial and continuous training support for the SUS beneficiaries in order to harvest proper benefit out of further participation in IGAs.

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