



Research in

AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK and FISHERIES

ISSN : P-2409-0603, E-2409-9325

An Open Access Peer-Reviewed International Journal

Article Code: 0395/2023/RALF

Article Type: Research Article

Res. Agric. Livest. Fish.

Vol. 10, No. 1, April 2023: 09-19.

EXPLORING THE STRUGGLES OF UNRECOGNIZED FEMALE FARMERS: A GENDER ANALYSIS AT KAUNIA UPAZILA, RANGPUR

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ARTICLE INFO

Received

24 November, 2022

Revised

07 April, 2023

Accepted

20 April, 2023

Online

May, 2023

Key words:

Female Farmers
Resources
Recognition
Gender inequality
Rangpur district

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the gender differences in agriculture in the village of Baje Mazkur in Kaunia Upazila. It demonstrates gender disparities in agriculture and elucidates the factors which prevent female farmers from receiving adequate recognition in a variety of ways in the study region. The study used a qualitative method to collect data and data has been analyzed from gender perspectives. To understand the work nature of female farmers, their struggles, and the reason for unrecognition the Agrarian Ideology and The Longwe Framework have been used. It shows that female farmers in the study area engage themselves in a variety of farming activities but their contribution to agriculture is viewed solely as family responsibilities where women are not recognized for their contribution. Female farmers are often unable to utilize their full potential because they are denied various extension services or support from government and non-government organizations. The findings also show that a lack of access to land, finance, and other resources are the most significant barriers to female farmers. Though the situation is gradually improving, women farmers continue to be paid less than men.

To cite this article: Nishi M. N. S. and K. Chowdhury, 2023. Exploring the struggles of unrecognized female farmers: a gender analysis at Kaunia upazila, Rangpur. Res. Agric. Livest. Fish. 10 (1): 09-19.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3329/ralf.v10i1.66213>



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INTRODUCTION

The bulk of the country's population is involved in agriculture directly or indirectly and women are becoming increasingly important in all these farming activities. They are inlaid in every aspect of agriculture (IFAD, 2021), but the persisting gender disparity in agriculture lowers their efficiency and contributions to the farming industry. Gradually, women become more de facto agricultural leaders and yet are typically alluded to as the 'backer' or 'collaborator' while men are considered as 'farm owners' or 'farmers' for equivalent farm work (Galie et al., 2013). The male-dominated lineage has hindered women's ability to demonstrate their identities as farmers. Sexism in agriculture has existed for a long time, and it has a destabilizing effect on the economy (IFAD, 2021). In the overwhelming majority of instances, women do not own the ground on which they work. Their contribution to farm work, as well as other sectors, is essentially worthless financially (Ahmed, 2020). Female farmers are the unsung heroines who contribute greatly to the partial economy, but at every turn, they tend to be trimmed from decision-making. Farm labor by women is frequently underpaid or undervalued (Ogunlela and Mukhtar, 2009). Till now, women have been overlooked by policymakers. As a result, they are ineligible to obtain government services due to a lack of acknowledgement that they are entitled to them (MJF, 2020). Women farmers in North Bengal, especially in the Rangpur region, are being discriminated in the same way as the rest of the nation. This study focuses on the specific forms of gender discrimination they experience and the degree of inequalities in the agricultural sector and it might serve to reveal the factors that prevent women from being considered farmers. The overall aim of this study is to evaluate gender disparities in farming and to explore the determinants that affect women farmers' recognition and acceptance.

Literature review

Rural women play multiple roles as wage laborers, agricultural processors, market women, and entrepreneurs, as well as producers (Cloud and Overholt, 1983). Yet the literature on-farm work gives the conviction that men are virtually entirely responsible for agricultural productivity. Women in Latin America, confront barriers to financial services, a lack of appropriate technology and instruments, low amounts of extension and training, and limited decision-making capacity (FAO, 2016). In Sub-Saharan Africa, gender-based labor division is a frequent model of productivity (Mehra and Esim, 1998). A Nepalese study discovered that women were traditionally accountable for the majority production of greenery and processing tasks, but men dominated land preparation activities (Shortall et al., 2017). Women are paid significantly less than men in South Asian nations; Pakistan has the largest gender wage disparity (Niimi, 2009). In India, women are under-recognized as farmers despite their recognized contribution to farming. Nevertheless, gender differentiation was determined to be connected to both economic and socio-cultural aspects in Bangladesh, including minimum wages and accessibility to savings and microfinance (Tama et al., 2018). Although women farmers make up 72.6% of all working women in remote areas in Bangladesh (BBS, 2018), they are generally referred to as "wives of farmers" or "housewives" (Rahman, 2000; Trauger et al., 2008). Their involvement in taking out a loan, obtaining or renting land, training programs, making crop choices, or dealing with the marketplace to acquire inputs is limited (Rao, 2012). Women are discouraged from participating in male-dominated outdoor or larger-scale farming operations due to a lack of access to land and restricted social mobility (Arafat, 2020). In addition, lack of access to production factors severely restricts their potential to enhance productivity. These restrictions impede their propensity to achieve efficiencies (Vidyakala, 2018).

In rural Bangladesh, the atmosphere between men and women differs for a variety of reasons, such as the country's rigid male supremacy social order, customs and religious convictions, and superstitions and the requirement that women must follow purdah confines their valid scope of movement to the home, renders their efforts invisible, and therefore inhibits their access to adequate job prospects (Komatsu et al., 2018 and Naved et al., 2011). Alongside household chores, family commitments and child-rearing consume the bulk of women's waking hours and are recognized as the most significant lifelong duty for them (MJF, 2020). Women's participation in agricultural training is significantly lower than that of male farmers (Dar et al, 2020). Operating modern farm machinery appears to be a masculine ability, so women get a lower opportunity to learn these skills (Arafat, 2020). Meanwhile, women earn significantly less than men do for similar jobs (MJF, 2020). However, women's active participation in decision-making is very low (Chayal et al., 2013). According to a study of North Indian women, hardly 10% perceive they have a say regarding production-related issues (Rao, 2012). In Bangladesh, neither society nor the state has accorded female farmers sufficient respect and importance (Ahmed, 2018; Tarek, 2019). Since farm women are not given proper recognition, they are not receiving adequate and appropriate

facilities provided by the government and non-governmental agencies (Rao, 2012). Notwithstanding, unless women farmers' unique requirements are taken into account in the policy and program design phase, women in farming will continue to be completely overlooked by every sector of agriculture (Kristjanson et al., 2017). Therefore, gender disparity must be considered seriously for agricultural growth to produce the desired results (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011).

Theoretical overview

Agrarian ideology

According to agrarian ideology, there could be four main difficulties that prevent women from working in agriculture and getting proper recognition as farmers. First, patriarchal farm beliefs and practices that preserve obstacles for women are seen in agricultural areas, where the man is the head of the family and also the farmer (Sachs et al., 2016). Second, financial hurdles. Due to their lower likelihood of inheriting, women particularly face barriers to owning land and finance (Sachs et al., 2016). Third, growing usage of expensive equipment and technology in agriculture. Farm equipment typically separates the jobs of men and women (Beach, 2013). And finally, agricultural institutions' pervasive sexism. Institutions of the agriculture industry seem reluctant to involve women farmers in their projects (Sachs et al., 2016). Thus, each of these four problems leads to a sexist farming ideology.

Women's empowerment framework/ Longwe framework

This framework established five primary degrees of inequality in the study and set the stage for the examination of gender inequalities. These are welfare, access, consciousness, participation, and control (Longwe, 1990). The welfare of women is defined as their access to material resources such as food, income, and medical care. Access indicates that women should have equal access to production factors as men. Consciousness refers to a conscious grasp of sex and gender distinctions, as well as a realization that gender norms are social and may be adjusted. Longwe (1990) divides the participation of women into five categories: decision-making, policy-forming, organizing, and execution. And finally, control entails women's ability to exert influence over decision-making mechanisms.

METHODOLOGY

This study included a qualitative research approach in addition to some quantitative data presentation. The research region was chosen at a village named Bajemazkur in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur district. In this study, we employed the snowball sampling approach. The overall sample size was 20 people. There were 10 female and 10 male respondents from different male headed households. There were both farmers and wage laborers. In terms of selecting study subjects, we established first contact with some female farmers with the assistance of a local resident who was the gatekeepers¹ of this study. They assisted in communicating with and building rapport with possible male and female participants. For this study, however, we chose female farmers who met the following requirements: working on family farms, small farms, and large farms; devoting at least a couple of hours per day to agriculture work; and working on the farm as wage labor. The study gathered data by conducting in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and unstructured observations. An equal number of respondents from both males and females were drawn for in-depth interviews. Seven key informant interviews were carried out with different sorts of informants. We conducted interviews among agriculture officials, teachers, NGO workers, community leaders, and local citizens. At random, with the help of our gatekeeper, we pick important informants who have direct knowledge of the agricultural sector. Three distinct semi-structured questionnaires were designed for interview purposes. Some secondary data has also been collected from various sources. We tried to triangulate our research results where possible. All of the transcripts in this study were coded. These codes include gender division of labor, unequal access to resources, recognition as farmers and gender wage gaps following feminist epistemological approach. Considering the nature of study we followed qualitative methodology. The acquired data then tabulated and were evaluated at the end of data collection by computerized software.

¹ A gatekeeper is someone who acts as a vehicle between the researcher and the possible respondents.

Gender gap in agriculture

Gender division of work in agriculture

In the research area, men are more likely to work on vast farms that are located away from home. They are more prone to cultivate commercial crops. Women, in contrast, participate less in farm work in the field directly but they handle almost all post-harvest operations. A man explained:

"Most women do not work in large-scale agriculture because they lack the same understanding as men. They do not know much about seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery and cannot work in the field all day long, as we are"

It has been observed that, men carry on the commercialized aspects of farming, such as cultivating and trading crops, employing machinery, applying fertilizers and insecticides, and hiring labor. And they are in charge of agricultural activities that have more economic value.

Access to land

For farming, the majority of the female respondents in the study depended on the land owned by their husbands. A study by Arafat (2020) found that among thirty-eight respondents, only six of them owned land and only two of those six jointly cultivate their fields with their husbands. This study, in contrast, found that only two women out of ten have access to arable lands.

Table 1. Accessibility rates of men and women to arable land

Have access to arable land(Men)	Frequency	Have access to arable land(Women)	Frequency
Yes	07	Yes	02
No	03	No	08

According to the table 1, seven out of 10 male respondents have access to arable lands where only two out of 10 female respondents says that they have access to arable land though the amount of the land is very little. However, landowners are not willing to lease their land to women. A woman who was a widow stated:

"A few months after my husband's death I wanted to take lease a man's land and he refused me. People think that I am a guardian-less woman and I am not as capable as male farmers."

It has been discovered that one of the main challenges for the women farmers in the study area is lack of land ownership (Rashid et al., 2018).

Finance

Typically, the majority of the jobs that women do remain unpaid. As a result, they must find additional sources of funding for their agricultural activities. Meanwhile, getting a substantial loan is also challenging for women in the study area. A government agriculture officer (KII no. 3) explained:

"In addition to land deeds, to obtain loans from government/ non-government banks, women farmers must hold a certificate issued by the government (Farmers Card). And since relatively few women farmers possess farmer's cards, they naturally have less access to loans."

Additionally, substantial loans cannot be received from NGOs if someone does not have significant savings in them. As women farmers have small savings or limited access to bank loans, they are frequently unable to engage in agriculture in a broader way.

Access to farm equipment

The majority of male respondents in this area have been discovered to be capable of operating at least one type of agricultural machinery. Women are less adept at using heavy instruments. This study found only one woman who could operate a tiller. Another woman has been identified as having handled an irrigation pump. She stated:

"After my husband's relocation to Saudi Arabia, I would have to learn how to operate this machine because there was never anyone to assist me. I can now water my lands on my own."

The study observed that, the lack of access to technology and machinery reduced female farmers' efficiency and undervalued their labor.

Access to markets

Women farmers in this area face numerous challenges in agricultural production because of their restricted right of entry to public spaces. Women have less market knowledge than men. A local residence (KII no. 5) stated:

“Women have no idea how much seeds, fertilizer, insecticides, or machinery cost. They are unaware of the regular market price of a given crop. They are often unable to sell their products in markets due to a lack of negotiation power.”

The study found another reason why women do not go to the local market is that the buyers do not want to give them a fair price as women have less negotiation power and they have less option to choose because of their lack of mobility in a conservative country like Bangladesh. Additionally, men who are engaged in large markets often underestimate and avoid female farmers.

Wage and income gap

It has been discovered that there is a significant income disparity between male and female farmers in the study area, when we asked respondents about their yearly total income from all sectors of agriculture production. It has been found that, male farmers earn minimum 50,000 and maximum 3,50,000 takas per year, while female farmers earn maximum 1,00,000 takas only in a given year. The majority of them are forced to sell their production behind their husbands' backs. One of the female farmers said:

“After the threshing, dehulling, and winnowing processes, I set aside some paddy to sell separately. I also save some wheat and sell it to local businessmen in secret. I frequently earn money by selling chicken, eggs, milk, vegetables, fruits, and cassia leaves to our neighbors.”

Additionally, it has also been observed that women are not paid the same as men if they perform the same tasks or work even longer hours. In this study, we conducted study among female farmers those who are engaged in agriculture sometimes in their paternal land and sometimes as wage laborer. To diversify their livelihood, sometimes they work as day laborer or work in their family agricultural land. A study titled “Recognition of Women’s Role in Agriculture” also showed that there is a sharp discrimination against female farmers (MJF, 2020). One of the female wage laborers in the study area reported:

“If we ask for the same pay as male labor, the landlord will not respond because they do not believe that we can perform the same work as men. They think that men are better able to do more labor.”

In the study area, women laborers' daily wages are only between 280 and 300 takas, a maximum of 350 takas, whereas male laborers' daily wages are a minimum of 500 taka. People believe that as women are not as capable as men at doing certain things in a short period of time, their wages naturally remain lower than men's.

Government and non-government assistance

The majority of the female respondents in the study seem to have never received any government assistance or subsidies. Furthermore, due to bureaucratic complexity and corruption, obtaining government services remains a highly difficult process for female farmers. It has also been observed that women farmers in this area are less likely to receive NGOs' assistance because most NGOs require farmers to have their own lands, farms, livestock, or some savings to access their assistance.

Farmers' card

Female farmers are often deprived of getting the farmer's card because of their lack of decision-making and lack of accessibility to land. When we asked the agricultural officer how many men and women had the farmers' cards in the BajeMazkur area, she did not provide us with the exact information. She (KII no. 3) explained:

“Many new farmers, especially female farmers, lack a farmers' card because these cards were issued many years ago (maybe 10) and have not been updated. We do not know how many women or men have farmers' cards in the BajeMazkur area at the moment, but there is a very slim chance of many women having the cards because farmers' cards are primarily issued by the government based on land ownership.”

However, it was very concerning when we discovered that none of our study's female participants possessed a farmer identification card whereas six male respondents did. The study discovered a woman whose husband is a drug addict and unconcerned about anything related to the family. As a result, that woman is responsible for all agricultural work, everything from purchasing seeds to selling crops. She still does not have the farmer's card, but her husband does.

Information and training

It was found that most of the women respondents did not receive much information from the extension agencies regarding new methods and technology, though women's participations rates in training programs are increasing. An agriculture officer (KII no. 4) said:

"Previously, women could only be found in training programs that provided food and financial assistance. Now, we need 30% of our training participants to be women. And it has been observed that many training programs have 50% or more female participants."

Table 2. Men's and women's participation in agricultural training programs

Have participated in at least one agriculture training program (Men)	Number of the respondents	Have participated in at least one agriculture training program (Women)	Number of the respondents
Yes	10	Yes	06
No	00	No	04

According to the table 2, ten out of ten male farmers participated in at least one training program, while six out of ten female respondents participated in at least one training program. To integrate women into agriculture-related training programs, the government has implemented quotas for female farmers.

Gender inequality in decision-making power

A study (Farnworth et al., 2021) showed that, female farmers claimed their decision-making capacity doubled over the past decade. However, we have found a different scenario in the study area. In mostcases, female farmers cannot make a decision alone without men's interference. When we asked the female respondent who makes the final decisions in agriculture, they attempted to enlighten us. Their roles in decision-making and the findings are illustrated here.

Table 3. The authority of taking final decisions in agricultural activities

Activities	Final authority of decision-making (Women)	Final authority of decision-making (Men)	Making decisions Jointly
Preparation of field	02	05	03
Sowing method	02	06	02
Selection of crop	02	03	05
Seed selection	01	08	01
Choosing/ usingFertilizer	01	08	01
Borrowing money	01	03	06
Buying/ selling land	00	01	09
Irrigation	03	04	03
Weeding	03	05	02
Storage	01	05	04
Marketing	01	06	03

According to Table 3, in terms of land preparation, sowing method, seed selection, crop selection, fertilizer selection, irrigation, weeding, storage, and marketing, female farmers have very limited decision-making power. They lack the authority to make independent decisions when it comes to purchasing or selling land. Most of the time, men appear to have the authority to make final agricultural decisions. However, men and women tend to make joint decisions when it comes to borrowing money and purchasing or selling land.

Although some female respondents state that they and their spouses make final agricultural choices together, this is not always the case. It has been observed that the husbands just inform their wives about their choice, but the husbands make the final decision the majority of the time. One of the male farmers said:

"Women do not understand about right choices. They do not have enough brains or experience to take a final decision in the agriculture field. They frequently make terrible decisions."

It has also been seen that women have little control over the products they grow. Only women who have no spouses or whose husbands have relocated for work have primary decision-making authority and control over their produced crops.

Factors affect unrecognition of female farmers

Prioritizing male farmers and the stereotype of the “Guys World”

The vast majority of respondents indicated that males are stronger and sturdier than women and that they can perform any sort of difficult task that a woman cannot. Almost all of the respondents feel that men are the primary farmers. According to an NGO employee (KII no. 02):

“People believe that “farmer” is the only identity that males can have. They assume that men will work, earn money, and feed the family.”

It has been noted that people believe farming is a man's world since men grow in large areas and have control over all agricultural resources.

Restricted mobility of women

In the study region, a lack of mobility prevents women from identifying as farmers. As per Khatun (2002), early marriage in rural areas restricts women's mobility at their spouse's residences. Almost a similar scenario has been also seen in the study area. A woman farmer stated:

“My father-in-law feels that a woman from any reputable family cannot work in the fields like men. He believes that women should do whatever agricultural work that is feasible within their home boundaries.”

Mobility restrictions reduce women's social and political capital, making it difficult for them to gain recognition as farmers from society and the state.

Society's attitude toward women farmers

Still, when people hear the word “farmer,” they imagine a man's visage rather than a woman. An NGO official (KII no. 01) said:

“The majority of people in this society do not appreciate a woman making her own decisions, voicing her thoughts about farming, working in the field, or going to the market. Those women who are working as farm laborers are frequently stereotyped as impolite.”

Aside from these, it has been observed that women who can work as hard as men in the field are criticized for becoming macho. People attempt to embarrass these women by referring to them as “masculine².”

Income disparities

Women are discouraged from working in agriculture as a result of the discriminatory wage structure. Even women farmers do not get the market price of their produces in local markets. A woman farmer said:

“Since I have to sell vegetables, milk or eggs to the villagers, they rarely pay the market price. In comparison to the effort, income is quite low in farming for women.”

It has been observed that, women's interest in agriculture is frequently diminished by income disparities or wage gaps. If women are paid equally to men, they may be able to perform far better in this field.

Lack of control over resources

Women farmers, as previously noted, do not receive adequate attention since they have less access to property, cash, machinery, knowledge, and technology. A woman stated:

“If I have some property, or if I possessed several cattle, I could be able to call myself a farmer. How can I call myself a farmer when I do not own any property?”

Lack of family support

Family support is one of the most important things a woman needs to start farming. The majority of female respondents mentioned throughout the interviews that they would not have enough assistance from their family members if they wished to conduct large-scale farming on their own because they feel women will fail miserably in this sector.

²people who have characteristics that are commonly attached to men.

Lack of social and political capital

Most female farmers in this area are unable to communicate information on farming methods and security nets that they can utilize in times of adversity due to a lack of access to social capital. Similarly, due to a lack of political capital, female farmers in the study area are unable to band together to protect or manage local resources.

Biasness of state

Women farmers continue to be deprived of equitable access to government support. When we asked an agricultural officer about the government's distribution of "farmers' identification cards" to women farmers, she said:

"We do not typically give the identity card of farmers to women because a household is only eligible for one card and often the men in the family receive it"

On the other hand, one of the female respondents stated:

"If the government provides us with adequate recognition and extension services as male farmers, we would be driven to conduct farming in a broader way and build an identity as farmers."

It has been observed that since most women farmers do not own property, government agencies are unwilling to mark them as "farmers". There is still some reluctance on the part of the government to recognize women farmers. And the biasness of the state contributes to women not identifying as farmers. However, it has also been discovered that because there are fewer female employees in the agriculture department, women farmers are sometimes apprehensive to speak with male officers.

Burden of domestic work

Housework inhibits rural women from engaging in strenuous agricultural work. A teacher (KII no. 07) from an agriculture institute explained:

"Female farmers are responsible for a variety of domestic chores in addition to farm work. Thus, they often are unable to devote the essential time and effort to farming. Men, on the other hand, face no familial work pressure. They can be involved in farming all day. As a result, women farmers' efforts do not receive the same attention as men's efforts."

The obligations of child care and domestic activities prevent women from visiting marketplaces. As a result, women continue to lag behind males in developing a farmer identity.

Subordinate role in decision-making

Access to and control over resources is a prerequisite for empowerment since it allows someone to make choices autonomously (Kabeer, 2005) and most of the time, an individual's capacity to generate money can assist them to have more influence in decision-making. Since women farmers in the study region have relatively limited access to land, resources, and revenue, males make practically all the choices. The lack of decision-making capacity prevents women from being accepted as farmers.

Physical weakness

Women frequently struggle to move large water drums, repositories, or heavy sacks of harvest. One of the female farmers claimed that:

"Sometimes I have to rely on male family members or hired labor to do tasks. I can't move a heavy sack by myself. I'm frequently unable to handle livestock on my own but a man can accomplish these things by himself."

However, it has been found that menstruation, physical issues during pregnancy, the chance of miscarriage, and other health conditions also diminish female farmers' acceptance. Though not all men have the same physical capabilities, and some men are physically less capable than female laborers, the majority of people believe that women are weaker than men.

Lack of confidence and awareness

Another major hindrance to women farmers embracing the agricultural sector and forging their identities as farmers is a lack of self-esteem. A woman farmer reported in this regard:

"An NGO officer offered me a massive loan with cheap interest rates for larger-scale goat farming, but I (she) refused. I was worried about whether or not I would be capable of repaying the money"

Women in the study area lack confidence in their ability to cultivate big tracts of land and to be farmers by profession like males. They are unaware that they have the right to claim proper recognition and financial aid from the government as farmers.

DISCUSSION

From the beginning of the interviews, no woman defines herself as a farmer. The men in the family are mostly known as farmers. They are expected to work away from home and must grow lucrative crops, according to patriarchal expectations. Women, on the other hand, do less farm work on a broad scale, but they manage practically all post-harvest activities. Thus, the patriarchal agricultural traditions form a sexist legacy in farming. Although certain advances occur gradually, most of the women farmers in the study area do not always have equal access to food or money, which are prerequisites for equality. The study wanted to discover if women farmers had equal access to land or savings, and the majority of the women said no. Since large-scale farm production requires a big capital investment (Earles and Williams, 2005), financial incapacity frequently inhibits women from pursuing conventional commercial agriculture. Additionally, women in this region generally do not receive actual market prices for their proactivity or labor. They faced obstacles to purchase farm equipment. Like the rest of the world, the majority of female respondents of this study are unable to operate modern agricultural technology or machinery. They can only utilize archaic tools such as a scythe, spading fork, or hoe. It creates difficulty for numerous women, preventing them from becoming effective farmers (Sachs et al., 2016). Except for a few, almost all respondents believe that since women are often incapable of doing certain types of work as men, income disparities between the sexes are natural. None of them have awareness gender roles are cultural rather than biological. Despite the fact that the majority of female respondents who were wage laborers wanted their salaries to be raised, they do not demand the same high wages as men due to a lack of conscientiousness³.

Additionally, women's lack of decision-making authority has also been identified as a hindrance to receiving full recognition as farmers. Women have minimal engagement in our country's policymaking. It was observed in the research region that no woman could make final decisions like taking loans, hiring labor, watering in the field, fertilizing, purchasing equipment, or selling crops alone. They have less confidence to decide on anything linked to agriculture. Due to women's limited participation and lack of decision-making authority, there are not enough policies or initiatives supporting women farmers' growth, and women farmers do not receive equal access to government aid (seeds, manure, identity card or cash), since decision-making ability as a critical component of women's development. However, men, according to the majority of respondents, control choices about selling agricultural products. They defined who and where the transactions should be made. Furthermore, women farmers' limited access to the market prevents them from participating in agricultural activities as main farmers, rather than as helping hands. The majority of female farmers are unable to sell a large portion of their produce. They frequently desire a better price, but it is difficult to haggle with such a tiny number.

Despite significant adjustments, the dominance of males remains a major element of traditional agriculture (Sachs et al., 2016). Agriculture institutions in this region appear to be apathetic towards involving female farmers in all of their programs. They feel that women cannot be ideal or primary farmers. As a result of these male-chauvinist⁴ sentiments, female farmers are frequently denied entry into the sexist agriculture sector which was also agreed by Sachs et al (2016). However, according to the study, both male and female farmers have various socially or culturally formed roles which impact their socioeconomic standing, decision-making manners, resource allocations, and recognition. And these issues contribute to a sexist agricultural philosophy that minimizes the importance of female farmers and promotes males as the ideal farmers (Beach, 2013).

RECOMMENDATIONS

To eliminate gender inequalities in agriculture, and obtain proper recognition of women farmers, women farmers must first be aware of their rights, and government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should take some initiatives. Some recommendations on what efforts should be made to improve the condition of Bangladeshi women farmers are offered below:

- The government should take steps to incorporate new farmers' names into their departments and assign farmers' cards to them as soon as possible.
- The GOs and NGOs should organize more training courses for female farmers.

³ Concept that the sexual distribution of work should be equal and pleasant to both sexes (Longwe, 1990)

⁴ a view that women are innately less valuable, intellectual, or capable than males, resulting in unequal treatment of men and women

- After talking with the respondents, we believe our Government should employ more female officials in the agriculture department so that women farmers are not hesitant to speak with them.
- NGOs can also play an important role by providing low-cost microcredit to female farmers.
- Women farmers should keep up-to-date information on new crops, methods, fertilizers, breeds, or governmental and non-governmental assistance.
- Women must collectively claim their identity as farmers.
- Women have to form their own distinct organizational networks.

CONCLUSION

Women take part in different agricultural cycles like weeding, harvesting, threshing, drying, vegetable growing, and livestock keeping. They are more likely to produce vegetables, milk, eggs, poultry, and so on, whereas males are more likely to perform machine operations, value addition, and selling. Despite the government's efforts to support women and farmers more than ever before by providing services, the study found that women did not have equal access to agricultural resources or product variables because of the patriarchal restricted access of women to the land and decision making. Although female involvement in agricultural training programs are expanding, it has been observed that most female farmers lack the skills required to operate complex equipment. According to the study, stereotypes of men's world, restricted mobility of women, stereotypes of physical ability, income disparities, and a lack of social and political capital are the factors that prevent women from becoming so-called "perfect farmers". As women are the primary producers of food, gender equality in agriculture must be ensured for the greater good. Women farmers must be valued in the same way that men are. Furthermore, the government should recognize them as farmers if they can receive government assistance to farm on a large scale. If more women enter large-scale farming, the country's GDP will rise quickly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The gatekeepers, first-hand informants, and research participants are all acknowledged by the authors for providing invaluable insight into their innermost thoughts and actions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors affirm that they do not have any conflicting interests.

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