

Need for Capacity Strengthening of Women Members of BAUEC for Homestead Gardening

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to determine the extent of need for capacity strengthening of the women for homestead gardening and to explore the relationship of women's characteristics. Data were obtained from a random sample of 100 women members of BAUEC in 2 selected villages of Mymensingh Sadar upazila of Mymensingh district during September to October 2010. Pre-tested interview schedule was used for collection of data. Appropriate scales were developed and used in order to measure the concerned variables. Correlation test was used to ascertain the relationships between each of the concerned variables and extent of need for capacity strengthening of women for homestead gardening. The highest proportion (55 percent) of the respondents had high extent of need while 41 percent of the respondents had medium and only 4 percent had low extent of need for capacity strengthening for homestead gardening. Six characteristics of the women namely family income, organizational participation, training exposure, credit received, communication exposure and knowledge on homestead gardening had significant and positive relationships with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. The family income of the women had significant but negative relationship with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. It can be concluded that almost all the respondents (96 percent) had high to medium extent of need for their capacity strengthening. Thus, it could be said that the above factors should be considered for making developmental programme in order to strengthen the capacity of the women members of BAUEC.

Keywords: *Need, capacity strengthening, women, homestead gardening, BAUEC.*

Introduction

Homestead is the dwelling place and is the center where all vegetables and quick growing fruits are cultivated. Women are performing better than men especially in homestead gardening. Women's productive hour ranged from 10 to 14 per day compared to men having 9 to 12 hours. Bangladesh Agricultural University Extension Center (BAUEC) was established in 1976 with intention to disseminate new technologies found from researches conducted in BAU. Moreover; BAUEC diffuses various agricultural information among the rural people to ensure the effectiveness of new technologies. The BAUEC arranges different

farmers' groups in the selected areas. At present many farmers' groups are existed in BAUEC such as rice farmers' group, vegetable growers' group, women group etc. For effective use of disseminated technologies BAUEC usually arranges different capacity building training programme with intention to increase the farmers' group especially women groups. The broad fields on which these training programmes were conducted include: fruits and vegetables cultivation, fish culture, poultry rearing, cattle rearing, goat and beef fattening, fodder preparation, tree plantation and intensive vegetable cultivation especially

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with the women participants. Recently, BAUEC started homestead gardening activities through rural women. Women's groups of the BAUEC produce many products but due to lack of required capacity they are not able to produce quality products from the homestead gardening. The reason of poor capacity of rural women might be the failure of identifying the appropriate training needs. So, there is a crucial need to conduct training through identifying appropriate training needs. In view of the foregoing

discussion, the study aimed (i) to determine the extent of need for capacity strengthening of women (ii) to determine and describe some of the selected characteristics of the women members of BAUEC (iii) to explore the relationship between the selected characteristics of women members of BAUEC and their extent of need for capacity strengthening for homestead gardening; and (iv) to identify the problems faced by the women in utilizing the homestead area for gardening.

Methodology

The study was conducted in two villages namely Baera and Sutiakhali under Sadar Upazila of Mymensingh district. These two villages under Mymensingh Sadar Upazila were selected purposively as compare to the other villages the women member of Bangladesh Agricultural University Extension Center (BAUEC) in the selected two villages were higher in number. The women members (total 438) of BAUEC of Baera and Sutiakhali under Mymensingh district was the population of the study. In order to select a representative sample 100 members were randomly selected for this study. A pre-tested structured interview schedule containing direct questions and some scales was prepared for collection of valid and reliable data. Data were collected during 17 September to 20 October, 2010. 'Need for Capacity Strengthening of Women for Homestead Gardening' was selected as the dependent variable of the study. Selected ten characteristics were considered as independent variables. The selected characteristics were age, level of education, family size, farm size, family income, organizational participation, training exposure, credit received, communication exposure, knowledge on homestead gardening. Need for capacity strengthening

of women for homestead gardening was the dependent variable of the present study.

To measure the extent of need for capacity strengthening of women five dimensions of capacity strengthening were included. These were: a) need for increasing resource availability (cash, seeds, fertilizer, labor and land), b) need for strengthening decision making ability on cultivation techniques (selection of components of homestead gardening, fertilizer application, time for harvesting, storing, consumption, free distribution among the relatives, selling), c) need for access to support services (access to help from family members, access to extension services, marketing facilities), d) need for improving management skills (operational ability, ability for searching better market facilities, capacity on identifying and overcoming the problems), e) need for good physical facilities (place for keeping equipments, harvesting equipments, store house). The dimensions were measured on a four-point rating scale. Scores were assigned as 3, 2, 1 and 0 for 'high', 'medium', 'low', and 'no' need, respectively. The scores of all items of each dimension were added to obtain the total score of a single dimension. Finally, scores of all the five dimensions formed the total score of the

extent of need for capacity strengthening of women for a respondent. Thus, total score of a subject for this variable could range from 0 to 63, where 0 indicated 'no need' and 63 indicated 'high need' of women for capacity strengthening. The need index for capacity strengthening (NICS) was also measured

mathematically and expressed in the following ways:

$$NICS = N_a/N_p \times 100$$

Where,
 NICS = Need Index for capacity strengthening
 N_a = Actual need
 N_p = Possible need

Findings and Discussion

Extent of Need for Capacity Strengthening

Data presented in the Table 1. shows that the highest proportion (55 percent) of the respondents had high extent of need while the rest 41 percent of them had medium and only 4 percent had low extent of need for capacity strengthening of women. Similar results were found by Ahmed (2007). About 96 percent of the respondents had medium to high need for capacity strengthening for homestead gardening. It was observed in the

study area while collecting the data that there was scarcity of homestead gardening and even a little facilities was available but those were not in accessible form for the women. Also almost same trainings were provided by BAUEC and same trainees were participated in the training programme. Thus, the respondents logically felt high need for their capacity strengthening for homestead gardening.

Table 1 Categorization of women based on their capacity strengthening of women (n = 100)

Range		Respondents		Mean	SD
Possible	Observed	Categories	Respondents percent (n=100)		
0 to 63	20 to 55	Low (up to 20)	4	50.22	1.99
		Medium (21 to 40)	41		
		High (> 41)	55		

Mean Score of Extent of Need for Capacity Strengthening of Women

Data in Table 2.2 indicated that among the different aspects of needs (twenty one), eleven aspects such as cash, time of harvesting, storing, seeds, selection of components of homestead gardening, access to help from family member, store house, selling, operational ability, capacity on identifying and overcoming the problem, marketing facilities showed highest mean value and ranged from 2.82 to 3.00 which indicates highest extent of need of women to

strengthen their capacity on homestead gardening. Among these important aspects need for cash, time of harvesting and storing prioritized first, second and third position, respectively.

Thus, based on the findings it can be concluded that capacity strengthening of the women under BAUEC mostly depends on supplying cash. The reason behind was the women under BAUEC possessed poor economic condition as more than 85 percent of the women had low to medium annual income.

Table 2 Mean score of extent of need for capacity strengthening of women (n = 100)

Sl. No.	Items	Extent of need (per person)				TS	Mean	Priority
		H	M	L	N			
1.	Cash	100	0	0	0	300	3.00	1
2.	Seeds	90	10	0	0	290	2.90	4
3.	Fertilizer	1	15	66	18	99	0.99	18
4.	Labor	11	4	20	65	61	0.61	20
5.	Land	39	10	29	22	66	1.66	17
6.	Selection of components of homestead gardening	89	11	0	0	289	2.89	5
7.	Fertilizer application	1	15	65	19	98	0.98	19
8.	Time of harvesting	95	5	0	0	295	2.95	2
9.	Storing	91	9	0	0	291	2.91	3
10.	Consumption	81	4	0	15	251	2.51	13
11.	Free distribution among the relatives	17	66	17	0	200	2.00	15
12.	Selling	84	16	0	0	284	2.84	8
13.	Access to help from family member	87	13	0	0	287	2.87	6
14.	Access to extension services from extension worker	84	10	6	0	278	2.78	11
15.	Marketing facilities	82	18	0	0	282	2.82	10
16.	Operational ability	84	16	0	0	284	2.84	8
17.	Ability for searching better market facilities	12	47	41	0	171	1.71	16
18.	Capacity on identifying and overcoming the problem	83	17	0	0	283	2.83	9
19.	Place for keeping equipments	71	29	0	0	271	2.71	12
20.	Harvesting equipments	49	51	0	0	249	2.49	14
21.	Store house	86	14	0	0	286	2.86	7

Note: H = High (score: 3), M = medium (score: 2), L =Low (score: 1), N =Not at all (score: 0), TS = Total score

Selected Characteristics of the Women

A summary of ten selected characteristics of the farmers has been presented in Table 3. Data in the Table indicated that among the respondents 61 percent of the women were middle aged; thirty eight percent of the women had secondary level of education. Forty seven percent of the respondents felt into medium sized family category, the largest proportion (57 percent) of the women belonged to the small farm size category.

Table 4 revealed that 52 percent having medium income, fifty three percent had moderate participation. Fifty one percent having mid-term training exposure, the highest (60 percent) proportion of the women received medium amount of credit. Seventy percent of the women had low communication exposure compared, ninety nine percent of the women had high knowledge on homestead gardening.

Table 3 Salient features of the selected characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics (Measurement units)	Scoring system	Range		Respondents		Mean	SD
		Possible	Observed	Category	Percent (N=100)		
Age	Actual year	Unknown	22-50	Young (up to 30)	29	34.8	6.81
				Middle aged (31-45)	61		
				Old (> 45)	10		
Level of education	Year of schooling	Unknown	0-10	Illiterate (0)	7	5.17	3.48
				Sign only (.5)	19		
				Primary (1-5)	36		
				Secondary (6-10)	38		
Family size	No. of members	Unknown	2-10	Small (up to 4)	32	5.3	1.57
				Medium (5-6)	47		
				Larger (> 6)	21		
Farm size	Hectares	Unknown	0.06-0.89	Landless (< 0.02)	0	0.26	0.14
				Marginal (.021-.2)	43		
				Small (0.21-1.0)	57		
Family income	'000' Tk.	Unknown	38-250	Low (up to 50)	31	79.97	35.86
				Medium (51-100)	52		
				High (>100)	17		
Organizational participation	Scale score	Unknown	1-6	Low (up to 2)	44	2.26	1.17
				Moderate (3-4)	53		
				High (>4)	3		
Training exposure	No. of days	Unknown	1-12	Short-term (up to 5)	45	5.0	2.98
				Mid-term (6-10)	51		
				Long-term (>10)	4		
Credit received	'000' Tk	Unknown	0-100	Small (up to 30)	17	46.9	21.15
				Medium (31-60)	60		
				High (>60)	23		
Communication exposure	Scale score	0-33	6-21	Low (up to 12)	70	11.17	2.79
				Medium (13-25)	30		
				High (>26)	0		
Knowledge on homestead gardening	Scale score	0-20	13-18	Low (up to 7)	0	16.03	1.35
				Medium (8-13)	1		
				High (> 14)	99		

Relationship between the Selected Characteristics of the Women and their Extent of Need for Capacity Strengthening

The relationship between the dependent and independent variables has been presented in Table 4.

The coefficient of correlation (r) was computed in order to explore the relationships between the selected characteristics of women and their extent of need for capacity strengthening for homestead gardening. Family income (negatively significant), organizational

participation, training exposure, credit received, communication exposure, and knowledge on homestead gardening of the women had significant relationships with their extent of need for capacity strengthening for homestead gardening. The families having higher income might felt less need for capacity strengthening in homestead gardening. They look for other profitable business. Similar findings were obtained by Rahman (2008) and Ahmed (2007).

Table 4 Relationship between the dependent and independent variables

Independent variable	'r' value
Age	0.130
Level of education	0.095
Family size	-0.034
Farm size	-0.098
Family income	-0.367**
Organizational participation	0.800**
Training exposure	0.665**
Credit received	0.332**
Communication exposure	0.713**
Knowledge on homestead gardening	0.872**

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability

Dependent variable: Need for capacity strengthening of women for homestead gardening.

The women were affiliated with different organizations which deal with micro-credit programs. They become more aware about their livelihood needs. Accordingly, with the increase of their organizational participation of the women their need for capacity strengthening for homestead gardening also increases. Thus, it could be said that organizational participation of the respondents could play a significant role in capacity strengthening. Similar findings were obtained by Gazi (2009) and Afique (2006). Attending in the training programme through BAUEC on homestead gardening, women can gain knowledge and improve their skills on homestead gardening. Thus, it could be said that training exposure of the respondents

could play a significant role in capacity strengthening. A similar finding was obtained by Alam (2004).

The higher amount of credit received leads to higher amount of investment in farming and subsequently triggers to higher return from farming in general and homestead gardening in particular. Thus, it could be said that credit received of the respondents could play a significant role in capacity strengthening for homestead gardening. A similar finding was obtained by Yesmin (2007). It is assumed that communication exposure of the women changes their attitude towards the adoption of improved farming practices. Thus, it could be said that communication exposure of the respondents could play a significant role in capacity strengthening. Similar findings were obtained by Hossain (2007), Sharmin (2005) and Sarker (2004).

The level of education of the women of the study area is comparatively better and this might influence better utilization of homestead area for gardening. The more learning and more experiences in homestead gardening might lead them to identify their needs for capacity strengthening in homestead gardening. Thus, it could be said that knowledge on homestead gardening of the respondents could play a significant role in capacity strengthening. Similar findings were obtained by Hossain (2007), Alam (2004) and Sarker (2004).

Conclusions

The findings indicate that 52 percent of the women had medium family income and was negatively correlated with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. Most of the women had medium organizational participation which was significantly related with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. About half of the respondents

had medium training exposure and training exposure of the women had significant relationship with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. About two-thirds of the women received medium amount credit. Credit received by the women had significant relationship with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. The highest

proportion had low communication exposure and communication exposure of the women had significant relationship with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. Almost all the respondents had high knowledge on homestead gardening and knowledge on homestead gardening of the women had significant relationship with their extent of need for capacity strengthening. The findings clearly indicate that more than half of the respondents had high need for capacity strengthening for homestead gardening. Women should have to better utilize their homestead for gardening and to be made accessible form for the women to improve

their capacity through need based training on homestead gardening. Thus, it could be said that to strengthen the women for homestead gardening it should be provided need based training on homestead gardening by the DAE as they can improve their livelihood. Market facilities should be improved by the government and private organizations. Simultaneously, communication exposure has to be increased as the women depend on it for collecting information relevant to homestead gardening. It should be done through involving women in different organizations to reduce gender discrimination.

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