



Rural Bangladeshi Women as Entrepreneurs through Formal and Informal Community Support

Lela Lantz

Master's of Arts
Georgia State University

Advisor: Dr. Kathryn A. Kozaitis



Introduction

Focus: Rural Women and Economic Development in Developing Countries

Focus:

Environmental disasters threaten farming and economic roles of men.
Women seek opportunities to support their families financially.

Key Themes in Literature

Women often form support groups to help one another
NGOs give women short courses in business training
Need networks, markets and training to be successful in business

Overview of Bangladesh

- Urban areas: Education up to grade 10 or higher
- Rural areas: Girls' education usually less than grade 10
- Men are farmers and women are housewives



Overview of Sunamgonj

- Extremely remote villages
- Annual inundation is common and good for the rice
- Devastating floods are becoming more common

Female Entrepreneurship New Concept

4 Sources of Community Support

1. Elder family members and local leaders
2. Traditional activity of theater
3. Connecting women to business experts to help with training and mentoring
4. Private companies invest in rural women's business endeavors

Methodology

1. My recollections from Peace Corps and afterwards (2000-2008)
2. Summer 2019 visit
3. Literature review on rural women's economic development
4. Zoom interviews with CARE Bangladesh staff



Government Intervention

Gov. recognizes women in business helps overall economy
Free education for girls
Majority of primary school teaching jobs now reserved for women



Micro Credit is Inaccessible NGOs and Companies to the Rescue



BRAC

1. Teaches awareness of surrounding villages and regions.
2. BRAC works through elders and local leaders.
3. BRAC works through theater.



CARE

SHOUHARDO (started in 2005)

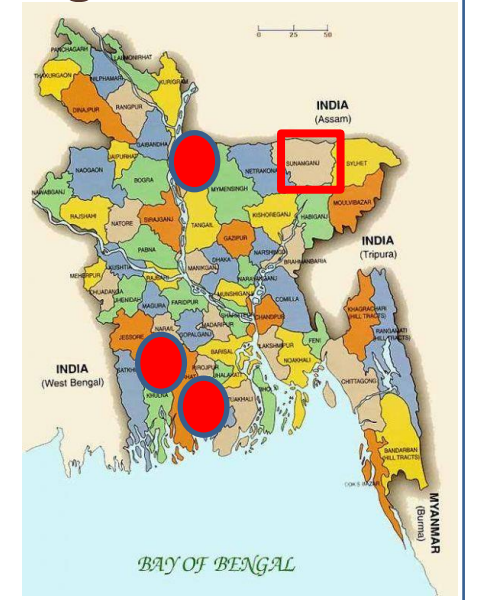
- Economic development
 - Food and nutrition
1. Train rural women in non-farm businesses
 - o Tailoring, handicrafts, nursing, shop keeping
 - 1A. New Pilot (new brides and new mothers)
 - o Make better quality products
 - o Assistant with business plans
 2. Linking women to business experts



Coca-Cola in Bangladesh

5by20 Program Goal: help 5 million women worldwide by 2020
5by20 began in Bangladesh in 2015

- Business skills
 - Market Information
- Mobile banking assistance
Mentoring and networking



Conclusion

Essential for women's motivation and financial success:

- NGOs
- Key family members
- Private Corporations
- Neighbors

NGOs cannot work alone:

Need business planning from experts
NGOs need help in training/linking women to economic opportunities

Like other regions in the world:

Support groups really benefit the women.
Training women in business skills has made a large impact on their economic success and self esteem.

Recommendations

BRAC Theater

- Need more evidence to see how theater helps women in business endeavors.

Local leaders

- Need more ethnographic evidence to see how BRAC engages elders.

CARE's SHOUHARDO project

- Build on successful strategies and modify others.

CARE's pilot project of brides and new mothers

- Now using business plans
- Monitor the women's progress closely and make adjustments.

Coca-Cola

- Need empirical evidence to see if company is meeting women's needs and goals.

Contact

Lela Lantz
lelalantz@yahoo.com
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lelalantz>
Phone:404-309-4833

References

1. Agatha, Kasonde 2019 Functional Literacy-Related Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Lusaka. The University of Zambia.
2. Chowdhury, A. Mushtaque R., and Abbas Bhuiya 2004 The Wider Impacts of BRAC Poverty Alleviation Programme in Bangladesh. Journal of International Development 16: 369-386.
3. Chowdhury, Nasrat Jahan 2008 A Journey towards Development: The Impact of Local NGO Programmes on Women Living in the Char Lands of Bangladesh. Development in Practice 18(1): 117-124.
4. Coca-Cola to Empower 100,000 Women in Bangladesh by 2020. Daily Sun. <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/466645/Coca-Cola-to-Empower-100000-Women-in-Bangladesh-by-2020>, accessed October 21, 2020.
5. Coca-Cola Invests an Additional US \$5 Billion for Long-Term Sustainable Growth in Africa | Press Release N.d. <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/press-releases/coca-cola-invests-an-additional-us-5-billion-for-long-term-sustainable-growth-in-africa>, accessed November 26, 2020.
6. Gil Arroyo, Claudia, Carla Barbieri, Sandra Sotomayor, and Whitney Knollenberg 2019 Cultivating Women's Empowerment through Agritourism: Evidence from Andean Communities. Sustainability 11(11): 3058.
7. Barbieri, Sandra Sotomayor, and Whitney Knollenberg 2019 Cultivating Women's Empowerment through Agritourism: Evidence from Andean Communities. Sustainability 11(11): 3058.
8. Islam, Md Rafiqul 2011. Rural Women's Empowerment through Self-Income Generating Activities: A Study on NGO Development Programs in Bangladesh. Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education 1(1). Gender: 96-123.
9. Islam, Mir Rabul, Valerie Ingham, John Hicks, and Elaine Kelly 2018 From Coping to Adaptation: Flooding and the Role of Local Knowledge in Bangladesh. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 28: 531-538.
10. Sultana, Atiya 2012 Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship through SME: Growth and Development in the Context of Bangladesh. IOSR Journal of Business and Management 4(1): 18-29.