

## Problem confrontation of small and landless female rural youth in vegetable cultivation

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to determine the selected problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation in and around the homestead by female rural youth from small and landless families. The study further explored the relationships between the selected characteristics of female rural youth and their selected problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. Data were collected from a sample of 80 female rural youth from Fakirakanda of sadar upazila, Mymensingh district. Data were collected through an interview schedule during August - September, 2002. To measure problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation, Problem Confrontation Index (PCI) was computed to determine the rank order of 10 items for problem confrontation. The PCI ranged from 0-300. In 10 items of problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation only 2 items had PCI above 200 and the top three in the rank order were: 'unable to undertake activities due to financial inability of parents/husband' (261), 'unable to undertake works for lack of cash' (247), and 'high price of seed, seedling, fertilizer and insecticides' (184). Overall problem confrontation of female rural youth revealed that nearly two-fifths (40%) had low and nearly two-fifths (38%) medium problems. Education and rural mindedness had negative relationships with the problems in vegetable cultivation. Innovation proneness of female rural youth also had positive relationship with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. The study revealed that comparatively low educated, less rural minded and more innovative female youth faced more problems. These factors should be in the minds of planners and extension officials while organizing female youth extension programmes.

## Introduction

Poverty, malnutrition and unemployment are of particular concern among the village females in Bangladesh. The young males and females both are susceptible to diseases and malnutrition. Large numbers of them become dropout at mid-school level and do exploitative works for low wages, especially for girls, whose economic value is often reckoned to be lower. As a result women are poorer than men and the indicators like education, health, nutrition, employment and labour force participation of women reveal that women in Bangladesh are severely disadvantaged (Anonymous, 1990).

Women in Bangladesh spend about 43% of their time in farm production activities (Khair, 1998). In village homes of Bangladesh, young females harvest chillies and potatoes, tend chickens, do activities for home upkeep, repair used floors, fetch water, gather fuels and care younger children. Older girls operate dhecki for husking rice, girls are also active in sweeping, cleaning utensils and food preparation activities. The children or young females from landless rural families can engage in these activities only by being employed for a wage, and wage employment is limited for young females (Cain, 1980). Thus female rural are more unemployed than their male counter parts (Khan, 1983).

In view of the urgent need for developing Female Rural Youth Extension Programmes and to have an

understanding of the female rural youth, the present study was undertaken to determine and describe the problem confrontation of the female rural youth in selected aspects related to vegetable cultivation. And to explore the relationships between the selected characteristics of the female rural youth and problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation.

## Materials and Methods

### Study area

The study was conducted in village Fakirakanda of Boyra Union in Sadar Upazila under Mymensingh district during August -September, 2002.

### Variables and their measurement

Personal (age, education, agricultural knowledge), social (organizational participation, family size, economic, area of homestead (including land) of parents/husband, income of parents/husband, assets owned) and psychological (innovation proneness, rural mindedness) characteristics were considered independent variables in this study.

### Problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation

Problem confrontation of female rural youth in vegetable cultivation was measured by a 4-point rating scale similar to that of willingness, with alike responses related to problem confrontation. Score of problem of a respondent in 10 items could range

from 0 to 30. For clearer understanding of the problem of the female rural youth in selected items, frequency distribution and rank order was done by developing Problem Confrontation Index (PCI). Overall problem confrontation of a respondent was measured in table 1.

### Measurement of independent variables

The independent variable- age, education, agricultural knowledge, organizational participation, family size of parents/husband, area of homestead (including land) of parents/ husband, family income, assets owned, innovation proneness, rural mindedness were measure as described in previous publication (Hoque et al., 2015).

### Data collection and analysis

A carefully designed interview schedule was used in collecting data to determine the willingness of female rural youth for selected agricultural activities and their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation and to determine the ten selected characteristics of the female rural youth. The draft interview schedule was prepared in Bangla in accordance with the objectives of the study. The interview schedule was pre-tested in the study area and necessary corrections, additions and modifications were made in the interview schedule based on the pre-test results. The modified and corrected interview schedules were then printed in final form.

The interview was conducted with each respondent individually. While collecting data the researcher explained the purpose of collecting data to the respondents and also to their parents in a simple and local language. Respondents were categorized on the basis of obtained scores in respect of willingness and problem confrontation. The categories of willingness for selected agricultural activities in income earning were very little, little, moderate and the categories of problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation were low, medium, high. In order to explore the relationships between independent and dependent variables co-efficient of correlation (r) were computed.

**Table 1.** Problem confrontation of female rural youth in vegetable cultivation on 10 items.

Items of problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation	Female Rural Youth (N=80)				Index Number	Rank Order
	High %	Medium %	Low %	No %		
Unable to undertake activities due to financial inability of parents/ husband	75	15	6	4	261	1
Unable to undertake works for lack of cash.	64	20	15	1	247	2
High price of seed, seedling, fertilizer and insecticides	17	55	23	5	184	3
Unavailability of adequate seed dealers	19	31	49	1	168	4
Lack of modern knowledge in vegetable cultivation	9	52	30	9	161	5
No previous experience in agricultural cultivation	6	51	35	8	155	6
No arrangement of agricultural credit in the area for the female rural youth for undertaking agricultural activities	20	21	31	28	133	7
Damage of agricultural produce by natural calamities	5	24	65	6	128	8
Lack of freedom to spend the money gained from vegetable selling	17	10	30	43	101	9
Lack of freedom while doing vegetable cultivation	16	7	23	54	85	10

## Results and Discussion

For determining problem confrontation of the female rural youth, the data have been presented with frequency distribution of selected items related to agricultural activities and vegetable cultivation. For clearer understanding of problem confrontation, index for each item along with rank order was computed by using the following formula:

$$\text{Problem Confrontation Index (PCI): } Cnc \times 0 + C1c \times 1 + Cmc \times 2 + Cvmc \times 3$$

Cnc = Percentage of female rural youth with no problem confrontation; C1c = Percentage of female rural youth with low problem confrontation; Cmc = Percentage of female rural youth with medium problem confrontation; Cvmc = Percentage of female rural youth with high problem confrontation.

### Problem confrontation of female rural youth in vegetable cultivation on 10 items

Problem Confrontation Index (PCI) of ten items related to vegetable cultivation ranged from 85 to 261 against a possible range of 0 to 300. Only two problem items namely, 'unable to undertake activities due to financial inability of parents/ husband' (261) and 'unable to undertaking works for lack of cash' (247) had PCI over 200, four items over 150, three over 100 and one below 100 (Table 1). PCI was the lowest in 'lack of freedom while doing vegetable cultivation' (85).

For dissemination of agricultural technology female youth can play vital role in the rural social system. Besides, they are the most deprived group as many of them live in abject poverty having illiteracy or low-literacy. Their parents have been living in economic hardships.

Considering this bleak picture, the planner of female youth extension programmes need to be aware of funding and small credit for the female youth to be aided by international or national donor agencies. Financial assistance would be the key factor in executing Female Youth Extension Programme and should be arranged ahead of the programme.

### Overall problem confrontation of female rural youth in vegetable cultivation

Over one-fifth (22%) female rural youth had high problem confrontation because they have not undertaken homestead vegetable cultivation to a significant extent and to develop entrepreneurship (Table 2).

Female rural youth from small and landless families live within abject poverty-parents have little resource or no resource, cannot continue education

for their children and the youth often are victims of malnutrition and diseases, The agencies who would undertake agricultural extension programmes for improved vegetable cultivation for gaining an income, should not expect any tangible help from the youth or parents. On the contrary, considering their acute poverty, the agencies need to have major requisites like small credit, funding for training, cash for purchasing, agricultural inputs, conveyance and other related matters, long before they launch the agricultural extension programme in the rural areas.

**Table 2.** Classification of female rural youth according to their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation.

Category	Number	Percent	Mean	SD	Range	
					Expected	Observed
Low (6-13)	32	40	16.15	5.49	0-30	6-28
Medium (14-21)	30	38				
High (22 and above)	18	22				
Total	80	100				

### Relationship between independent and dependent variables

The relationships between the selected characteristics of female rural youth and their selected problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation are presented in table 3. Innovation proneness was positive and education, rural mindedness had negative relationship with the problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. However, results of each of the correlations have been discussed in the following 10 subsections.

#### *Age of the female rural youth*

Age of the female rural youth had no relationship ( $r$  value 0.005) with their willingness for selected agricultural activities in income earning. Willingness of female rural youth for selected agricultural activities perhaps exists among them irrespective of their age. Willingness for agricultural activities will be alike as all of them live within acute poverty.

When some people are doing a work in their daily life can perceive both advantages and difficulties. Almost all homesteads in the locale of research, female rural youth do some kind of vegetable cultivation for their family consumption and it saves some amount of family marketing expenses. But problem will arise if they go for larger cultivation for commercial sale. Most of the female youth perceive problems irrespective of their age.

#### *Education of the female rural youth*

Education of the female rural youth had negative significant relationship ( $r$  value -0.268) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. The female rural youth belong to landless and small farm families generally do various kinds of housefly activities including homestead gardening and they do not have significant educational level because of their poverty. But the female rural youth will better education level with their parents higher income, do not spend much time in household activities or in agricultural activities. It is hence, anticipated that the female rural youth with poor education or no

education will be more available in agricultural extension programme as they need some income earning for their parents and themselves.

#### *Agricultural knowledge of the female rural youth*

The agricultural knowledge of female rural youth had no relationship ( $r$  value 0.003) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. Female rural youth included in this study have similar background and face similar problems. Their agricultural knowledge does not differ very much with one another.

#### *Organizational participation of female rural youth*

The organizational participation of the female rural youth had no significant relationship ( $r$  value -0.058) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. There has been hardly any agricultural extension organization where the female rural youth have some access, especially those who belong to poor families. Even in recent time, in villages, there has been conscious endeavour to develop organizations and programmes for the participation of female rural youth.

#### *Family size of female rural youth*

Family size of female rural youth had no relationship ( $r$  value 0.035) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. Female rural youth are surrounded by many problems, their own problems and problems of their parents. Most of them belong to disadvantaged group. Almost all the female rural youth families have similar proportion of problems.

#### *Area of homestead of the female rural youth*

Area of homestead of the female rural youth had no significant relationship ( $r$  value -0.014) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. The female rural youth at the moment might do some kind of vegetable gardening without giving much thought. It is only for domestic consumption and no other thinking arises in the minds of female rural youth.

#### *Income of family of female rural youth*

Income of family of female rural youth had no relationship ('r' value -0.075) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. Most of the female rural youth have alike problems and alike family situations. Hence, in most of the events female rural youth would say similar opinion especially in undertaking income earning vegetable cultivation.

#### *Assets owned of the female rural youth*

Assets owned of the female rural youth had no relationship ('r' value -0.146) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. The female youth might do some kind of vegetable gardening, if they have more or less family assts.

#### *Innovation proneness of the female rural youth*

Innovation proneness of the female rural youth had significant relationship ('r' value 0.533) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. Those who work face problems and those do not face problems. Female rural youth with more innovation proneness to go for work or innovative activities and face problems. Innovative minded youth do more work and face more problems, and there they would know how to tackle them.

#### *Rural mindedness of the female rural youth*

Rural mindedness of the female rural youth had negative significant relationship ('r' value -0.384) with their problem confrontation in vegetable cultivation. Those who do not live or do not want to live in the rural areas face many problems and do not know how to solve those. They are not much involved in agriculture or rural development activities and can not anticipate what kind of problems might arise. On the contrary, rural minded youth would face problems, they are aware of it and can solve some problems as they have a rural mindedness. They very much belong rural social systems, desire for welfare activities, in their area and can solve problems.

**Table 3.** Summary of correlations between independent and dependent variables.

Independent variables	Problem confrontation of female rural youth in vegetable cultivation
Age	0.005
Education	-0.268*
Agricultural knowledge	0.003
Organizational participation	-0.058
Family size of parents/ husband	0.035
Area of homestead (including land) of parents/ husband	-0.014
Income of family	-0.075
Assets owned	-0.146
Innovation proneness	0.533***
Rural mindedness	-0.384***

## Conclusions

The important indicators in connection with the problem confrontation of female rural youth revealed that comparatively low educated, less rural minded and more innovative female youth faced more problems. These factors should be in the minds of planners and extension officials while organizing female youth extension programmes. Willingness and problem confrontation of female rural youth in selected aspects have been investigated in this study. In order to formulated policies and procedures for effective youth work, there is also needed for understanding for the male rural youth who constitute almost 50% of the rural young individuals and their development is very important. Studies should be undertaken to investigate the willingness and problem confrontation and other related aspects of the male rural youth.

## Recommendation

The following recommendations should consider the policy maker and workers in this field:

i) Female Rural Youth Extension Programme should be organized along with proper financial assistance to rural female youth as these youth and their parents belong to landless and small families and hardly own any extra cash or asset. A management of small credit would be the main requisite to begin Female Youth Extension Programme. The major objective of Female Youth Extension Programme should be also to earn cash by undertaking low cost and quick growing summer and winter vegetable cultivation in and around the homestead.

ii) Female youth from less educated, asset less and poor families should have preference over others in the participation of Female Youth Extension Programme as they live in abject poverty and can hardly do activities beyond agriculture. They and their families should be the target group of Female Youth Extension Programme.

iii) Modern vegetable cultivation and related practices would obviously need training to the client groups like female rural youth as they lack knowledge and experience. Training in modern vegetable cultivation should be arranged in different times of the year and training should be the root of all activities of rural female youth. Without intensive training on improved vegetable cultivation they cannot get good yield, good profit and cash.

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