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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS IN BANGLADESH

Deborah Rubin

With assistance from

Shammi Ferdousi, Aklima Parvin, S.M. Tahsin Rahaman, Shuchita
Rahman, Waziha Rahman, and Md. Redoy

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Acronyms	3
Background	3
Methodology.....	4
Training	5
Field work.....	6
Cleaning, transcribing, and coding.....	6
Limitations of the data	6
Local Perceptions of Empowerment in Bangladesh	6
The Gendered Dimensions of Agriculture.....	10
Agricultural wage workers	10
Agricultural producers	10
Agricultural entrepreneurs	11
Expanding women’s participation in and benefits from agricultural value chains.....	12
Women’s roles in agriculture.....	12
Barriers to women’s participation	13
Implications of the Qualitative Findings for the Quantitative Study	19
Creating Conducive Environments for Enhancing Women’s Engagement in Agriculture	19
Bibliography	23
Annex 1: Overview of GAAP2 Data Collection Instruments.....	25
Annex 2: Training Workshop Agenda	27
Annex 3: Interview Questions.....	28
A. Producers	28
B. Wage earners.....	29
C. Entrepreneurs	31
D. Market Traders	33
Annex 4: Initial Code Lists (prepared by Field Officers in Bangladesh)	34

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Acronyms

5DE	Five domains of empowerment
A-WEAI	Abbreviated Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index
CP	Cultural Practice
GI	Group Interviews
GPI	Gender Parity Index
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
KII	Key Informant Interviews
Pro-WEAI	Project-level Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index
PRSSP	Policy Research and Strategy Support Program (Bangladesh)
WEAI	Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WEAI4VC	Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index for Value Chains

Background

Since its launch in 2012, the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) has become a frequently referenced tool. The original WEAI was developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to assess levels of women’s empowerment in agriculture at a national or zonal level, based on population-based samples. Several adaptations of the WEAI have been constructed. One modification, requested by USAID to reduce interview time in the Feed the Future Initiative population-based surveys, is the Abbreviated WEAI (A-WEAI). To provide a more rigorous project-level tool, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is supporting IFPRI under the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (Phase 2), or GAAP2 activity, to develop a project-level or Pro-WEAI. The tool will be able to be used to diagnose key areas of women’s (and men’s) disempowerment, design appropriate strategies to address deficiencies, and monitor project outcomes related to women’s empowerment in a project context.¹

IFPRI is currently completing two pilot studies, one in the Philippines and one in Bangladesh, for another WEAI adaption that will look at the influence on women’s empowerment of participation in agricultural value chains (WEAI4VC) not only at the farm level but at all nodes of the agricultural value chain. In Bangladesh, IFPRI has received support from USAID through its Policy Research and Strategy Support Program in Bangladesh (PRSSP) to work in the geographic areas targeted by Feed the Future interventions (known as the Zone of Influence) to construct this new WEAI4VC module. The qualitative research study, conducted by IFPRI field officers, complements a 1,200 household quantitative survey, looking in greater depth at the individual, household, and community level experiences of men and women to understand the consequences of value chain participation on them as producers, entrepreneurs, and wage workers on women’s empowerment. The quantitative study sampled 400 households for each of the three economic activities of interest – (1) agricultural production, (2)

¹ For more information on pro-WEAI and other adaptations, see <http://weai.ifpri.info/>

agricultural entrepreneurship, and (3) agriculture sector employment. It was carried out in ten administrative units (upazilas or sub-districts), and five villages in each upazila to total 50 villages.²

The qualitative research also seeks to understand how existing social values and cultural practices shape participation of men and women in these roles. It is expected that these results will help USAID/Bangladesh design programs that can achieve a higher level of women's empowerment from their engagement in agricultural value chains and food systems.

Methodology

The approach to gender-related data collection and analysis used in this study recognizes that social norms affect men's and women's ability to farm, to lead healthy lives, and to invest in their children and communities, and that to achieve the greatest impact, it is necessary to understand the incentives, motivations, and needs of the individuals, both men and women, as well as to analyze the institutional structures that often shape people's choices. Qualitative research methods are particularly useful at exploring these dimensions of social life in greater depth, and in understanding the meanings that people give to them.

The qualitative methods used in the study are based on the protocol developed by the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP2) (Annex 1).³ The team reviewed the GAAP2 data collection instruments and determined which modules would be most useful for exploring the themes of WEAI4VC and that could be done in the time available for the field work. So as not to duplicate information available in the scholarly or practitioner literature about Bangladesh or other work being done by the quantitative study, the team chose not to do detailed seasonality calendars or community profiles,⁴ although interviews were held with four officials with knowledge of the communities to learn about them. Instead the focus was on collecting information about respondents' different types of engagement with agricultural value chains and their understanding of concepts of empowerment. For the Bangladesh study, the team modified the protocol to ensure coverage of the three categories of respondents that the project was focusing on—producers, wage earners, and entrepreneurs—as well as market traders, and to ensure that representatives of all these categories were interviewed, either in key informant interviews or in group interviews of four to five people. It soon became clear that these categories were not mutually exclusive (Table 1). Most of the interviewees in the sub-sample were also engaged in farming for both home consumption and for sale, even if their main source of income derived from their occupations as entrepreneurs or traders. In these areas, a smart livelihood strategy is a multi-faceted one, and the qualitative interviews illustrated the many ways in which households seek to maintain themselves.

² A. Ahmed et al. 2017. Tracking empowerment along the value chain: Designing and implementing a modified WEAI in the Feed the Future Zone of Influence in Bangladesh. A proposal submitted to USAID/Bangladesh.

³ The original research proposal submitted to USAID identified the use of the GAAP2 qualitative protocol (Ahmed, A., A. Quisumbing, H. Malapit, F. Sufian, S. Tauseef, and J. Ghostlaw, 2017).

⁴ See descriptions of Activities B and C shown in Annex 1.

Table 1: Type and number of interviews conducted

Tool	Types of respondents	Respondents: Minimum Number	Total ⁵
Activity (i). Community profile	KII w/district or upazila officer, gender focal point, or leading community member	1 person per upazila	1 X 4 = 4
Activity (ii) Group interviews: Local understanding of empowerment	Group interviews with: a. Agricultural Producers b. Wage earners c. Agricultural entrepreneurs	In each upazila, one group of 4-5 men and one group of 4-5 women for each of the three categories.	30 X 2 = 60
Activity (iii). Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews with: a. Agricultural Producers b. Wage earners c. Agricultural entrepreneurs	In each upazila, for each of the three economic categories, 2 women and 2 men will be chosen by their empowerment status (one empowered; one disempowered. If this data is not available in time, other variables (e.g., age—1 older women and 1 younger woman; 1 older man and 1 younger man) drawn from the quantitative survey list.	4 X 3 X 2 = 24
Activity (iv). Key informant interview: Market traders	KII with formal sector traders and with informal sector traders dealing with main commodities of the community	In each upazila, 2 interviewees for each – formal and informal sector traders dealing with key commodities in the locality (Ideally, 1 man and 1 woman)	4 X 2 X 2 = 16
Total			102

Training

To become familiar with the GAAP2 methodology and to learn more about the gender dynamics of agricultural value chains, five IFPRI qualitative Field Officers⁶ and their team coordinator⁷ participated in a training workshop in Dhaka and selected field sites from August 21-29, 2017. The training covered basic concepts related to gender, an overview of gender issues in agricultural value chains, the definition of empowerment and its expression in the Bangladesh context, as well as a range of qualitative data collection and analysis approaches (e.g., coding, categorizing, clustering, and building relationships) (Annex 2). Supplementary exercises allowed the team to practice techniques of interviewing and analysis. In addition, the group traveled to two different areas on two different days to conduct practice interviews and to pilot the questionnaires. On return, the team adjusted the interview schedules in preparation for the actual field work, and the revised questions were translated into Bangla (Annex 3). Time was also taken to refine the sampling of participants for the qualitative study.

⁵ These categories may not be mutually exclusive, allowing for interview schedules to be combined.

⁶ Waziha Rahman, Shammi Sultana Ferdousie, Shuchita Rahman, Md. Redoy, and S.M. Tahsim Rahaman

⁷ Aklima Parvin

Field work

The Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Group Interviews (GI) were conducted in September and October 2017. Respondents of each category of value chain actor were identified based on the lists of quantitative survey respondents in Gournadi Upazila, Barisal District and Jhikargacha Upazila, Jessore District. In some cases, either because the quantitative survey list did not yield enough people for entrepreneurs and traders, or because the original quantitative respondents were not available, community members were asked to suggest suitable candidates. In total, 102 people participated in one of the two types of interviews. The total also includes four interviews with government officials or community leaders.

The questions used in each interview were tailored to the respondent's main activity, e.g., as an entrepreneur or an agricultural wage laborer. However, if during the interview, it emerged that the respondent was engaged in more than one income-earning activity, such as farming and daily labor, then the interviewer asked questions about both activities.

Cleaning, transcribing, and coding

Following the completion of the fieldwork, the audio recordings were sent to a local firm in Dhaka for transcription. The transcripts were reviewed by the field team multiple times. The final versions were uploaded into NVivo Pro 11 and coded according to a code list prepared by the field officers (Annex 4) and completed in January 2018.

Limitations of the data

The analysis of data in this report is based on a translated sub-sample of the total number of interviews that were completed, 37 out of 102. The translated sub-sample was based on the assessment of the field officers that it accurately reflected similar contents to the full sample. There is a possibility that the larger sample of interviews that have not been reviewed for this report contain evidence that may differ or reflect nuances or details not available in the set of interviews that were analyzed.⁸

It is also important to acknowledge limitations arising from a possible lack of precision in the language used in the transcripts. The audio recordings were first transcribed into Bangla and then translated into English. Not only is it likely that some nuance was lost in translation, there are more obvious issues related to some inaccuracies in verb and pronoun usage, e.g., recording "used to" for "usually" or confusion with "he" and "she." While most of these have been addressed during review, it is possible that some confusions remain and have resulted in minor misrepresentation in the analysis.

[Local Perceptions of Empowerment in Bangladesh](#)

The definition of empowerment used in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, as explained by Alkire et al. in an article on the construction of the index, builds on that developed by Naila Kabeer

⁸ The report will be reviewed by the field officers for confirmation of the analysis.

(2001). It defines empowerment as the “expansion of people’s ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in contexts where this ability had been denied to them” (Alkire 2013: 1).

The WEAI measures women’s empowerment in the agriculture sector relative to men on the individual, regional, and country level adding knowledge on the linkages between women’s empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth. The original index has two sub-indices. The first measures five domains of empowerment (5DE) through ten different indicators. 5DE and ten indicators include:

- (1) Production:** (i) input in productive decisions, (ii) autonomy in production;
- (2) Resources:** (iii) ownership of assets, (iv) purchase, sale, or transfer of asset, (v) access to and decision on credit;
- (3) Income:** (vi) Control over use of income;
- (4) Leadership:** (vii) Group member, (viii) speaking in public; and,
- (5) Time:** (ix) workload, (x) leisure.

Each domain contributes to twenty percent of a woman’s empowerment score. Within each domain indicators are weighted equally. Empowerment is achieved with a score of eighty percent through an adequate combination of indicators or when empowerment is achieved in 4 out of the 5 domains. The 5DE also shows when a woman is “sufficiently” empowered in a particular domain, but not “sufficiently” empowered overall (Malapit et al. 2014).

The second sub-index, the Gender Parity Index (GPI), measures the gender parity within the household between the primary adult male and female decision makers. Households without a primary adult male and female decision maker are not included the GPI. The 5DE contributes to ninety percent of the aggregate country- or regional-level WEAI and the mean GPI value contributes to the remaining ten percent. The WEAI was piloted in Bangladesh, Guatemala, and Uganda and large-scale population-based surveys have since been conducted in the Zones of Influence of most of the USAID Feed the Future focus countries (Malapit et al. 2014).

The purpose of the WEAI has been to provide a consistent definition of empowerment across locations and the index, with its carefully constructed measures accomplishes that well. Each indicator measures the same conditions in different countries. Yet as Alkire et al. note in their foundational introduction to the index, each individual understands empowerment in his or her own way, that may or may not refer to the definitional components of the index described above: “each person has a unique definition of what it means to be empowered based on his or her life experiences, personality, and aspirations” (2013: 3).

In developing the questions for this study, the qualitative team discussed the concept of empowerment at length, choosing to construct a question that did not use the term “empowerment” itself. The team asked respondents to discuss the qualities that made a man or a woman be admired in their community, concluding with the question: “How would you describe a woman in your community who is able to make important decisions in her life and to put those into action?” (see Annex 4).

In Bangladesh, however, many of those interviewed did not always see empowerment, defined as the ability to take their own decisions and to act on them, as a positive quality for women. One man, an entrepreneur and a farmer, expressed it in a way that reflected the view of many men and women when he said, “If she takes her own decision without her husband’s consent than other women of this area will not find her [to be] a good woman [even if] she is doing good work..... Men will also not find them good [Interview #2].” The idea that women would be able to act on decisions independently of their husbands was overwhelmingly viewed negatively and characterized as disobeying their husbands. Similarly, another older man of 65 said, “Men are responsible for acting on those decisions. Women can only share their opinions” [Interview #5]. A man in his 40s, a successful businessperson, clarified that women are usually living under supervision. Before marriage, they live “under their parents’ supervision... and after marriage they discuss with their husbands before doing something. They do not walk alone” [Interview #1]

Rather than focusing on the ability to make decisions and act on them, the qualities of character that the respondents linked to empowerment were associated not with power but honor, respect, and good works. For many, a “good” woman is one who obeys her husband, avoids disharmony, is religious, stays at home and prays, and wears the veil. Others added that a good woman worthy of respect talks well, is praised by others, has good manners, takes care of her in-laws, and is a good worker. Good conduct cannot be overestimated and was stated as more important than other aspects of family status or income.

It was acknowledged that women whose husbands are overseas or working elsewhere in Bangladesh may need to take decisions and act on them themselves, but it is still expected that they should either discuss these decisions, preferably in advance. The businessperson quoted above explained, “There’s no problem in it. The woman who has her husband living abroad runs her home according to her wish, takes all the decisions of her children [and] looks after the family. Such women have no one [controlling] their movement. They just inform their husbands over [the] phone” [Interview #1]. In one case, a woman whose husband was sick and unable to work was praised for taking up work outside the home: “Since her husband cannot work, she has to work. It’s a question of survival.... Everyone knows. Everyone understands. This is not something one should spread rumors about. If one’s husband is able, one should not go outside. I don’t go outside, since my husband is able. If he were unable, I [would have] to go” [Interview #37].

Another older man who has worked most of his life as an agricultural laborer made some distinctions about the type of decisions women can make. He said that a married woman “can take decision about the family. She has the ability to take decision about family. But she cannot take other decisions by herself alone” [Interview #11].

Some women and younger men, however, disagreed with this view. One woman of the same age and living in the same area as the man quoted above said, “All women are taking important decisions [on] their own, like in my house, I work [based on] my own decision, like I will do this or that, I will take my own decision about what to do. I will not take anybody’s decision [Interview #3].” Another younger man [Interview #4] reported that there were women in his village who took decisions on their own and were

still considered “good,” but—other than his own wife—they tended to be either widows or those whose husbands were working abroad. A young woman whose husband works abroad supported this view, as she reported making her own decisions about what to plant on the small plot that she had access to, growing vegetables for home consumption and selling to her neighbors when there was surplus. This allowed her to purchase rice for herself and her daughters. She added, “I am capable of doing it [farming, going to the market to shop, getting a loan] myself so far. I do everything on my own will. There is none to stop me or to hold me back from doing what I do.” She said that both men and women supported this freedom: “Husbands don’t mind either. They think it’s better their wives do these things by themselves instead of depending on others. Again, you cannot get complete satisfaction depending on someone else. It’s better doing it yourself” [Interview #6].

The interviews that discussed decisionmaking stress the importance of a married couple agreeing about the decisions they take **as well as in their understanding of who makes which decisions**. The interviews reflect that both men and women have areas in which each could legitimately take decisions and act on them either independently or together. However, across the interviews the areas of decisionmaking were not uniform. In some cases, husbands were said to make most of the decisions around agricultural production or agri-business, while in other cases, the wife (or widow) might have the authority to take decisions in similar areas. What was important is that the couple should agree together on who could decide about what.

Women who are not respected are those who are quarrelsome, either with their husbands, other relatives, or neighbors; who behave badly and spread rumors; and who disobey their husbands.

“Good” men are those who are skilled, who have work and do good work, who pray, who spend time in the mosque, and who are respected by others. They are also those who help others. One respondent commented, “If a man is doing good deeds, good work then he will be a good man. If he is not doing any cheating business, then he is a good man” [Interview # 31]. They do not suffer from “indiscipline” such as taking drugs or becoming an addict or not working hard enough to care for one’s family. Being unable to pay back a debt can also cause one to be considered a bad man.

Other respondents spoke in terms of the strength they get from their religious faith as helping them to succeed in their actions. One woman who farms and runs a home-based business making and selling woven mats says, “You have to do hard work as well as easy work. Allah has sent you on that earth because you commit to do hard work. So, you have to do hard work. You can’t eat if you are not doing hard work..... By the grace of Allah, the power will be mine. If Allah doesn’t bless [me], then how could I?” [Interview #17].

Several respondents spoke about the importance of confidence as the determining factor in women being able to take their own decisions. One woman said, “If woman seriously think ‘I will do this work’ then that woman can go forward and perform this [work]. And if she thinks she cannot do this, then she cannot do that work. This means [that] to perform this work she needs confidence. And for this she has gain her confidence and ability by her own” [Interview #3]. A younger man who farms replied that about

a woman who takes her own decision, “If she thinks it well then it will be easy for her, and if she not think good then it will be not easy for her” [Interview #4].

An older agricultural laborer acknowledged that confidence is not enough; one needs resources to act on your decisions: “He has financial support, wealth, land, and he thought about doing it and [did] it successfully. I cannot do it if I decide to do [only] by my mind. How would I [be able to do it]?” A younger man also connected having financial resources to being able to achieve his goals. He said “there are so many persons who have desires, but they cannot fulfill their desires because of money shortage” [Interview #31]. This linking of assets with the ability to act on one’s decisions was fairly common.

The Gendered Dimensions of Agriculture

The 37 translated interviews reveal a wide range of livelihood strategies in use by Bangladeshi households in Jessore and Barisal Districts. Based on statements in the transcripts, producers were engaged in farming of staples including rice (paddy), beans, and lentils; many types of vegetables; and fruit trees such as papaya and mango. They also raised poultry and livestock. Some with larger plots cultivated non-food crops for sale including betel leaf and jute. In addition to farming, respondents were involved in a range of agribusinesses, including running agro-input shops and warehouses for agricultural products, owning, and managing small shops of dry goods and sundries, making organic fertilizer through composting, and managing a flower nursery. Those respondents who were landless or sharecroppers also engaged in different forms of labor including working in other farmers fields throughout the agricultural cycle, either as daily laborers or on longer contracts. A few worked in shops owned by their spouses or others in the community or in transporting goods. One woman had a paid position doing road work. Their income-generating activities were consistent with what has been documented in larger studies about livelihoods in rural Bangladesh.

Agricultural wage workers

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, approximately 34% of rural households in Bangladesh include agricultural laborers based on the 2008 agricultural census (Government of the Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh 2017: 455). Nationally, day labor from agricultural work was reported to provide 26% of income for rural households, second to agricultural self-employment at 31% (Ullah 2016). The categorizations of agricultural laborers are many and complex, without clear distinctions among types described in the literature, such as agricultural workers, laborers, farmers, tenants, and sharecroppers. In addition, a farmer who owns his/her own land may also turn to daily wage labor to supplement his/her income for short periods. Any one person may thus inhabit multiple categories (Ullah 2016).

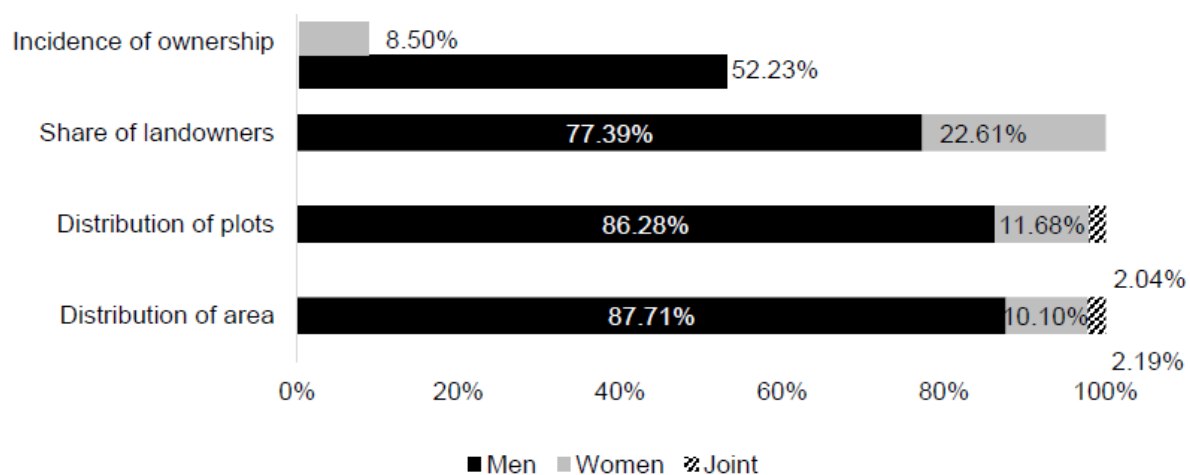
Agricultural producers

Farming is the primary livelihood of rural Bangladeshi people. Agriculture provides over 15% of the national GDP and employs 43% of the labor force (Government of the Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh 2017). Although crop production has been on an upward trend in recent years, including not only the staple rice crop but also high-value vegetables and fruits, 40% of the population remains below the poverty line. Agricultural potential is also limited by “gender-related factors—women are heavily engaged in agriculture but are largely unrecognized, have very low levels of land and asset ownership,

and do not have access to extension services or other inputs, such as seeds and fertilizer” (Malapit et al. 2014: 8). Nearly half (49.4%) of the farms in rural Bangladesh are classified as “small” (0.05 to 2.49 acre) by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, with the level of 54.4% in Jessore District and 60% in Barisal District (Government of the Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh 2017:453-5).

Women’s rights to land are complicated in Bangladesh, varying in practice by religion and location. Data from 2005 found that only 3% of women were holders of agricultural land according to official statistics in Bangladesh (Kieran et al. 2015: 11). An additional analysis of the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2011-12 (Figure 1) shows a further breakout of the situation (Kieran et al. 2015: 14).

Figure 1: Bangladesh Official Land Ownership



Source: Authors’ calculations based on data from the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (2011-12)

These figures on land ownership may have increased since 2011-2012; however, interview data confirms that women farmers managing their “own” plots, often do so on land that is legally owned either jointly or by others [e.g. Interview #32].

Agricultural entrepreneurs

Many of the respondents are engaged in small home-based agricultural enterprises. Some rely only on their own or other family labor, while others hire occasional daily or seasonal laborers. Larger enterprises rely on wage labor as well and may have physical structures such as shops or warehouses as their place of work.

Entrepreneurial activities described by the interviewees included the production and sale of agricultural products in raw and semi-processed states, including food crops and livestock, flowers, and other nursery plants such as fruit tree seedlings, jute fibers, mats and other products woven from local grasses and fibers (e.g., *hogla* and jute). The group also included agricultural input suppliers selling seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides and shopkeepers selling a range of dry goods and sundries.

Expanding women's participation in and benefits from agricultural value chains⁹

Women's roles in agriculture

In 2010, the FAO's compilation of statistics found that the agricultural share of the economically active population was 45.4% in Bangladesh. Women's share of that was 51% (FAO 2012: 113). As noted above, however, women's participation in agriculture remains less recognized than these numbers would suggest. The review of the interview transcripts revealed some who claimed that no women do agricultural labor or sell in markets. Most agreed that there are at least a few women who work as hired agricultural labor, and many more who work as unpaid labor on their family farms. Fewer women are involved in marketing agricultural products or manage their own farms. A successful businessperson who purchases farm produce described the situation this way:

Female farmers come too [to sell to me]. Yesterday a woman sold her products to me. She doesn't have a husband or couldn't find a van driver, maybe. This [women selling] is rare in our country. They come if they find no other way. Especially in our area very rarely women work in the fields. Although our prime minister is a woman, still female farmers who work in the field [are] rarely seen. [Interview #1].

Another trader, a man, similarly remarked: "There are female farmers also. Those women [who] usually come to us directly have no guardians in their household (family)... the husband usually lives abroad, and they [the women] usually come to us for selling their products. This is completely a matter of trust" [Interview #17].

Interviews with women themselves provided a somewhat different picture, with all noting that they do contribute to various agricultural tasks for their own households. There is also variation from one location to another. One woman, a farmer, explained that in the village she grew up in Jessore District, "women usually do not do work in the field because there they only cultivate paddy, and men from that area didn't allow women to go to the field." Furthermore, she said, women do not even know the location of their family's fields. However, in her in-law's village elsewhere, "you have to go to the field to feed your goats... and we grow papaya, balsam apple, pointed gourd, bottle gourd, and pumpkin, eggplant—I mean all type of vegetables. So, women have to go to their cultivated land for work. Like [the] day before yesterday I picked the pointed gourd from the field. We, husband and wife, woke up early morning and prayed our mornings prayer together and then picked the pointed gourd from the field [Interview # 3].

Many of them, as noted above, do not work in the fields, but carry out agricultural work in home gardens or perform tasks such within the confines of their home compounds including crop sorting, cleaning, and grading, jute fiber extraction, or the manufacture of products such as mats. Although members of the household may be aware of these tasks, both because they are done by women and

⁹ Words in brackets reflect edits made by the author to improve readability in English but which do not change the meaning of the utterances.

because they are doing it indoors or within the walls of the compound, they are not always recognized as “agricultural” tasks but instead are categorized as “women’s work.”

One woman farmer paints a harmonious image of this practice: “Men and women have different things to do. [Men] plant the seedlings and take care of the field. They bring the [harvest] to the house and take the [products] to the market. These are men’s work. They do all the outside works and we do inside works. We have divided the labor” [Interview #37]. This contributes to the perception that women are not “farmers” or seriously involved in agricultural work.

Analytically, however, this accepted portrayal of the division of labor downplays women’s important contributions to agriculture and their many activities throughout the agricultural value chain. As described elsewhere in the paper, women who are poor, widows, or who are managing their families while their husbands work elsewhere often must work not only outside the home and but also in the fields to help support their families.

Barriers to women’s participation

Gaining a better understanding of what people think about women’s work in agricultural value chains and barriers to their participation was a key part of the research. This section identifies the main reasons given by respondents. These responses should be read as their perceptions and beliefs, rather than as actual or immutable barriers. The gender and agricultural value chain analysis process helps to distinguish the reasons that people offer to explain their circumstance from practical options that might address them (Rubin, Manfre, and Nichols-Barrett 2009). Recommendations for overcoming these barriers in future agricultural programming are discussed in the final section of the report.

- Lack of physical strength or stamina

The perception that women lack strength compared to men was repeatedly identified by both women and men as a primary reason that women did not participate in agricultural work in production or in other nodes of the value chain. One man who worked in fisheries responded to a question about why he hired only men as laborers with the following response, “Can [women] pull the net in the water? We do not have such women here who can do fishermen’s work. It requires a lot of strength” [Interview #1]. The same respondent noted, “The work needed here is for male workers. Like a woman cannot carry a sack of good and load it in the vehicle. We hire male workers for the works like carrying and other heavy works.” Another man who drives tractors for his work stated, “Iron tools are not meant for women to use, it’s hard work” [Interview #30].

A woman who helps her husband to manufacture a fried snack food also commented on strength as a restriction on women’s work in their factors. She said, “Could [women] be able to do [the frying work]? Women don’t have such strength. For that reason, men are doing this work. We all work together, you know. Men are doing the hard work and we are doing the labeling, weight measurement, [and packing into the plastic bags]..... [There is] much I can do but frying the [snack] in the oil or making them from dough ... is something that requires more muscle power. Women do not have that much strength” [Interview #19].

Not all agreed, however. One woman who worked for many years as an agricultural laborer on others' farms stated that in her youth she was equal in strength to many men and could perform the same tasks as well as they could [Interview #22]. Others, as discussed below, suggest that necessity and the needs of survival can provide the strength needed to work long hours in difficult, physical tasks.

- Lack of access to resources

In Bangladesh, women are more constrained than men in access to many productive resources used in agriculture, including land, farm equipment, large amounts of credit, and/or inputs. They are affected by both legal discrimination as well as social pressures. As already noted above, they have more limited ownership of and access to agricultural land. A single woman faces real barriers to enter some nodes of the agricultural value chain if she has no land and little money.

However, other women do have means to access resources, some more than others. For example, women whose husbands are working overseas may have permission to use their land for sharecropping. A trader explains that the sharecropping systems gives the owner a portion, one-third to one-half of the farm yield. With the proceeds from selling this portion, a woman could finance other enterprises.

Access to credit in Bangladesh can differ for men and women. Microcredit options for women are many and offer a relatively simple way to access small funds, often as benefit of group membership. Women respondents reported using funds for a variety of reasons including financing their children's education and weddings, in addition to farming or other businesses for themselves and their families. One woman explains that to get a loan she must have her husband's signature: "Grameen Bank would not give me [a loan]. I am involved with Grameen Bank, but if my husband would not go there with me, then anybody even if my mother were there, they [would] not give [the loan]. I will do business and I need money, but I need the signature of my husband." She added it would be the same for her husband at the Grameen Bank, but not everywhere. In some places, he could get a loan without her signature [Interview #28].

Access to the credit through banks, however, is more difficult for women to obtain. A warehouse operator, a man, said:

I have [to] open an account first, I have opened an account under the name of this organization. After that I [usually conduct] transactions from that account for one year. After that they have given me two lakh [200,000] taka loans, and after [that] then they have given me three lakh [300,000] taka loans.... After that in this year the bank has given me five lakh [500,000] taka loans, this is a one-year loan. In a year after every three months I have to pay them their bank interest. And after ending of one year I have to deposit that five lakh taka into their account. They will give me approval for taking loan once again after depositing or repaying the previous loan. I used to take loan and repay it timely [Interview #16].

The requirements of the one-year wait, the loan repayment schedules, and the number of repeated loans needed to work up to the half-million taka loan are difficult or most rural

borrowers to manage, but women experience additional barriers because of their lack of knowledge of the bank's procedures and lower levels of collateral.

- Lack of knowledge, skill, or experience

Women also face the paradox of being kept out of some types of agricultural work because they have no experience with it. One respondent described that women may be given weeding work but not spraying of pesticides. Safety was not an issue for this man; rather, his concern was that she would not perform the job properly. He said, "I mean the farmer wanted to engage women worker[s] for this work but cannot be sure that these women worker[s] can do this properly or not." This response contrasted with his view of women's ability to pick peas, which he said they were "used to" doing [Interview #2].

The husband of one of the respondents also commented on women's lack of knowledge about farming as hampering their efforts. He said, "...they [farmers who are men] are involved with farming in the field from long time; from their forefathers' time, man is working in the field--that is why they are skilled" [Interview #28]. He also acknowledged, however, that in the face of necessity, women can and do learn: "They do not have any other options for survival. To survive they (women farmers) need to do this work and come to the market" [Interview #27].

In a similar vein, a man with a tractor hire business did not dispute that a woman might be able to drive a tractor, especially if she had grown up in a family that had tractors and had a chance to learn: "I haven't seen it ever, however, ... I cannot say is it possible or not. If they think it is possible then it is possible, women can do many things. They usually drive a private car, microbus.... They might able to drive tractor." However he expressed doubt that a woman would be able to drive successfully in a field and manage the uneven conditions terrain there [Interview #31].

There is also a downside to having only limited knowledge or skills, because it tends to keep you in that one occupation. Because you are earning some income, it is difficult to find an opportunity to learn a new skill. As one women who works as a worker on a betel leaf plantation describes it, "If you have to plant rice in a paddy field, you have to work bending down all day long. It will tax your waist heavily. Whoever learned to do this work is doomed. It has become a liability since I have learned this skill I cannot go do something else" [Interview #18].

Women who do have the knowledge, skill, and/or experience of farming or other work repeatedly express their comfort with doing the job at hand. While acknowledging that farming is hard work, they are realistic, even fatalistic about their ability to get the work done. At the same time, several women, when reflecting on their work, would prefer being able to have different jobs and hoped for their daughters to work outside of the sector. Teaching, especially as a job for women, was noted most often one that offered stability and gained respect from others.

- Lack of mobility

A few respondents remarked that women, unlike men, are constrained from taking up agricultural work outside their own villages. Although the reasons for this are multiple, one of them is the limitation on women's mobility. One man spoke about how limited mobility worked as a restriction on women to do their banking and could make it difficult or riskier for them to travel about with large sums of cash. He said, "As a man, I can travel by rented motor bike with five lakh taka, which is not possible for a woman. I can run to catch a bus with the money, which a woman cannot do" [Interview #28]. The implication of his statement was both that it was not appropriate for women to be running after a bus, but also that a travel to more distant villages to carry out a business was similarly viewed as inappropriate. A tractor driver also commented on the limitations of women to get around independently. He said, "One has to [travel] a lot from fields to fields. Sometimes I have to travel to the places like Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Tangail, Lohagora, Norail, Teker Haat, Madaripur, Shaem Nagar, Titurkhali, which is not at all convenient for women" [Interview #30]. An older man who sells vegetables at the market commented that it was harder for women than for men to travel around to different farms to buy vegetables and to bring them to market. He said, "It is something you will find in Jessore area. Women are selling and buying there with ease. But in our area it is not a natural thing" [Interview #14]. Women's lack of discretionary income also acts as a constraint on her mobility, if she needs to travel by public transport to other locations, especially outside of the village in which she lives.

- Social norms around time and place

BOX 1: PERCEPTIONS OF "MEN'S WORK" AND "WOMEN'S WORK" IN RICE GROWING

Interviewer: So, do you hire men or women to sow rice seed?

Interviewee (a woman): This is work for men.

Interviewer: For men?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. If it is a woman then?

Interviewee: Probably a woman cannot to do this [sowing].

Interviewer: A woman cannot do it? But you can, isn't it?

Interviewee: Yes, I usually do.

Interviewer: Yes, you can do that, then why cannot other women do it?

Interviewee: Other women don't do it [work in agriculture land], so they are not used to such work.

Interviewer: So, you tell me about some work that is usually done by your brother-in-law.

She had said the brother-in-law organizes the plowing, harrowing, and the irrigation.

Interviewer: Why you don't do that work by yourself?

Interviewee: Why I don't I do that? That [work] has been done by my brother in law; he is a man. He can do everything. Women are not able to do men's work.

The constraints on women's mobility are hard to disentangle from other social proscriptions on women's behavior, particularly about when and where people can appropriately go. One successful, married businessperson who operates her own plant nursery explained that although she goes to the market by day with other women to shop, she does not feel that she can go to the market herself to talk with and hire men who might want to work for her as daily labor. She says it is not appropriate to talk with men she doesn't know or to go alone to places where men congregate, especially in the evening:

Here in our area you have to go to the market in the evening in order to [hire agricultural laborers, *zone*]. You need to talk to them and ask them will they do our work tomorrow or not and then they are hired. My husband used to do [it]... Though I am a hard-working lady in the nursery I can't [hire labor] through going to the market... Now, if all the women here go to the market, and talk alike, then I could also go [Interview #20].

If her husband is unable to go, another male relative will go for her instead. Another woman who operates an agricultural supply shop with her husband responded similarly, stating that she does not personally go to organize for the transportation of supplies to the shop: "I have not gone. This is the problem of woman that she is a woman. My husband goes; women do not go in front of them [men]" [Interview #28]. She continued with a similar comment about the difference between women going alone or in groups, "The reason [that women do not come to buy fertilizer at the shop] is men are forward in every place (work). Women are not forward. If there were ten women in Bazaar in this area, if ten women did business, then women would not face such problems."

Social norms about place circumscribe other types of agricultural tasks that are seen as appropriate for women. One man, although aware that women are engaged in many activities in the country, including working in the military and at high levels of government, nonetheless said, "Women do agricultural works that are done inside the house like, winnowing and boiling of rice, pouring into the sack, sweeping and cleaning, all these are done by women" [Interview #1].

- Social norms about appearance

Several men also commented that women's physical appearance, particularly the clothes that they wear, restrict their ability to work. Only one of the women made the same type of statement, "Women have work inside the house. It would be very inconvenient for them to work in the paddy field wearing a saree" [Interview #37]. One interviewee [Interview #11], a man, commented that women were unable to collect fruits from trees not because of their lack of strength, but because they would be unable to climb trees wearing sarees; and, in a circular argument, that the practice of wearing sarees meant they didn't learn how to climb trees. Another man explained that hard work produced perspiration and that women would not be able to manage it well:

[Manufacturing fertilizer] is not the job to work by sitting on chair and table. You need to walk, bend, pulling and many more activities. You have lots of sweating. Girls' clothes become wet. [While] men can easily put off their cloths when they sweat, [this] is totally impossible for women. Women became wet and attacked by cold, but she

could not say [so] to others. Men can go beside the shop for urination, but woman has to go [to a] far place for that purpose. There is no option for a girls' toilet here.

Elsewhere, men have reported that women do not do the work of extracting jute fibers while standing a river or pond as men do because the water would soak their sarees and inappropriately reveal the shape of their bodies.¹⁰ Instead, the wet stalks are brought to them by the side of the road or near to their compounds to be extracted there.

- Other domestic responsibilities

Men who were interviewed often cited the lack of women's engagement in the type of work they themselves are doing in agriculture as caused by the burden of women's domestic responsibilities. One man spoke about how there are no women working in fisheries, saying, "Can [women] pull the net in water? Women around here don't do it. And why would they? They have other things to do. They take care of the home" [Interview #1].

Interestingly, among the respondents interviewed, the women themselves rarely cite their domestic responsibilities as a reason to avoid working in agriculturally-related businesses. Rather, women in home-based businesses report that they do their work as an important aspect of caring for their families. A woman who makes and sells *hoglai* mats, e.g., says: "I have my own work [weaving]. It helps their [my daughters'] education" [Interview #17].

- Risk of dishonor or disrespect

Both men and women report that when women work in the fields, it is often seen as lowering the family's prestige in the community. One man, an entrepreneur, said it was considered "disgraceful" [Interview #1]. One woman who does "help out" on the farm stated, "It's a matter of prestige for them. Housewives working in the paddy fields is something not to be proud of" [Interview #37]. One respondent explained that she could be subjected to foul language, directed either at her or those around her. Several interviewees reported that when a woman works outside the home it makes it seem as if her husband is unable to support her or their family, and that can be shameful.

Women are at risk both inside and outside the home for physical and sexual violence. The reasons that field work might be considered dishonorable include both the reality of physical violence in Bangladesh as well as perceptions based on social norms. Trafficking, rape, and other forms of physical and sexual assault including domestic violence are unfortunately not uncommon in rural Bangladesh. A survey of over 22,000 households conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics found that nearly half (49.6%) of married women had experienced physical violence from their current or former husbands and 27.3% had experienced sexual violence.

The number of women, not only married women, experiencing physical violence from people other than partners were also significant, if a lower percentage:

¹⁰ Interviews conducted in conjunction with the GAAP2 qualitative research on the jute value chain.

More than one quarter (27.8%) of women reported lifetime physical violence by someone other than the husband (non-partner) and 6.2% reported experiencing such violence during the last 12 months. Rates of physical violence from non-partners were highest among adolescents for both lifetime (30.9%) and over the previous 12 months (11.2%) (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2016: xxviii).

The respondents were not asked about violence against women within the home in the current study, but they did speak about concerns for physical safety as well as social reputation when working outside the home as a constraint on women's increased participation in work in agricultural value chains. The exception, as already discussed, was in cases of women who did not have husbands at home.

Implications of the Qualitative Findings for the Quantitative Study

The qualitative study raises some interesting questions and suggestions for the quantitative value chain studies.

- Respondents provided a rich and heterogeneous view of men's and women's empowerment, that did not always align with the categories measured by the quantitative categories. These local or emic concepts of empowerment can inform the design of development interventions oriented towards strengthening the dimensions of empowerment measured in the quantitative survey. The sensitivity about women's participation in agricultural field work, for example, suggests that efforts encouraging women to engage in other nodes of the chain such as processing might be more acceptable.
- The multiplicity of respondents' livelihood strategies calls for more precise definitions of the different types of economic actors. For example, if the household head is an entrepreneur, it does not necessarily mean that his wife was also an entrepreneur. She could be a producer, e.g., hiring labor to cultivate crops for household consumption. Are certain combinations of spousal occupations more supportive of women's empowerment?
- Social norms are powerful influencers of behavior. While respondents spoke positively about connections between economic success and empowerment, gender-based constraints on women's mobility, access to assets, and domestic responsibilities limit many women's abilities to attain that economic success.

Creating Conducive Environments for Enhancing Women's Engagement in Agriculture

Based on the interviews in villages in Jessore and Barisal Districts, women are already engaged in many ways in agriculture. The constraints that they face result from both formal discrimination and the pressure of discriminatory social norms. Nonetheless, some opportunities exist to enhance women's participation and benefits from working in agricultural value chains. This section identifies some possible steps to take to reduce the barriers detailed above.

- **Strengthening men's support for women's participation in agricultural value chains**

Respondents acknowledged, in various ways, that women are engaged in agriculture and capable of managing value chain activities and their households. But they were divided as to whether this was appropriate, for example, for a widow or a wife whose husband is a migrant worker, or undesirable and disrespectful of her husband. There are some indications that training programs for women or workshops bring husbands and wives together can encourage joint decisionmaking and women's empowerment. A study supporting women's home gardens in Bangladesh found that

home garden training is popular and widely accepted by both men and women largely because it does not contest existing socially constructed gender roles. Nevertheless, we find clear signs of increased control by women over food supplies and income, and gains in women's self-confidence and role in the community—as husbands and outsiders [gradually] begin to recognize their agricultural skills. ... Many men and women appreciated the new opportunity to work together on something of common interest that advanced their quality of life (Patalagsa et al. 2017)

The “Agriculture, Nutrition and Gender Linkages (ANGeL)” project also conducted in Bangladesh offered interactive trainings for men and women that have helped to promote improved agricultural production practices, healthier food consumption patterns, and stronger family relationships.

The benefits of intrahousehold agreement about women's participation in agriculture may have the greater economic benefit for households composed of producers and/or wage laborers, by increasing agricultural productivity as well as strengthening the income pathway to women's empowerment.

Using agricultural technologies to women's advantage

The perception that physical strength is necessary to perform agricultural tasks well is strong; this perception might change as agricultural technologies become easier to use, less expensive to buy, and more easily available. Recently, several publications have addressed the gender dimensions of agricultural technology design, use, and dissemination in agriculture, including crop and livestock production, food processing, and irrigation (see e.g., Manfre, Rubin, and Nordehn 2017; Theis, Lefore, Meinen-Dick and Bryan 2018). There is some logic to starting with technologies that can reduce the burden of work that women already do in production, such as peeling fibers from jute in the extraction process, or tasks such as weeding in vegetable gardens.

A second step involves taking advantage of technology to upgrade services in which women are already investing. For example, women farmers now have to hire manual labor for many aspects of production and marketing. Upgrading labor services with technology would involve mechanizing tasks such as plowing, harrowing, and harvesting at prices women can afford. Nigeria and India have begun this process, through services offering tractors through an UBER™ model. In Nigeria, the “Hello Tractor” (www.hellotractor.com) enterprise uses a mobile app, to connect tractor owners with nearby farmers who request tractor service via SMS text messaging. Hello Tractor, which recently received USAID funding, also coordinates low-cost financing to help facilitate the tractor purchase for the drivers, who, in the future are expected to include large numbers of women. In Bangladesh, the CSISA-MI project also facilitates rental services for various types of agricultural equipment such as reaper-harvester, seeders,

and pumps. Researchers found that “women benefit from managing and sometimes owning machinery services, as well as from the direct and indirect consequences of hiring such services to harvest their crops.” Women form about 10% of the number of reapers registered by the project, but others are important assets in their husbands’ business, providing accounting and other services. However, the researchers found women experienced gender-based constraints as those described in this paper that limited their ability to purchase and manage technology businesses, including lack of knowledge, access to credit, and restrictions on their mobility (Theis, Sultana, and Krupnik 2018).

A third step is helping women use technology to upgrade their own positions in the chain. In Bangladesh, this is most likely to be possible in areas such as crop processing and product development. Technologies can produce new, more nutritious processed foods reduce time and labor in preparing staple grains (Manfre, Rubin, and Nordehn 2017). Dissemination of technologies—by making it easier to hire or purchase equipment—may also be a way to get more women into other nodes of the chain by mechanizing processes for bulking, sorting, and grading or manufacturing packing materials (Theis, Sultana, and Krupnik 2018).

- **The benefits of integrated training programs**

One of the key constraints facing women producers was the idea that they lacked knowledge, skills, and experience. Programming that provides additional training in concert with other services such as credit could help to overcome this gap, especially for (though not only) women who are facing the need to work in agriculture on their own and who will be relegated to poorly remunerated and low skill work otherwise. Women who work with their husbands can also benefit from integrated training and could become role models for other households. Research on “what works” for entrepreneurs has shown that credit programs alone are necessary but not sufficient to strengthen women’s business practices, but that credit combined with the provision of targeted trainings had greater success (Buvinic and O’Donnell 2016). Integrated programs that jointly provide credit, training, technical assistance, and that also help to link entrepreneurs to market opportunities appear to have better economic outcomes (World Bank 2016).

The importance of training to address lack of knowledge as well as to encourage networking among women was raised in several interviews, both among women producers and entrepreneurs [Interviews #2, #3, 12, 28]. Designers of programs need to take into account the importance of provide safe transport and secure arrangements for the training venues, whether in the participants’ home villages or farther away. Respondents reported appreciating receiving trainings tone of the benefits of group membership.

- **Linking buyers and sellers of both products and services**

Many respondents spoke about difficulties that women face hiring labor, visiting shops independently to purchase agricultural supplies, and selling their produce themselves because of limits on their mobility. Other respondents mentioned the need for trust when dealing with women who are selling their produce. These types of constraints can be partly overcome by finding other ways to link different types of buyers and sellers.

One option is to encourage the type of market linkage program that has already been established in Bangladesh under the Digital Green LOOP activity.¹¹ The project works with extensionists who serve as aggregators to bulk produce and secure transport to market, manage the sales, and provide payment to the producers. The program is working with both women and men, and participants have reported higher earnings from the services. Because the program is village-based and involves people who are known in the community, it overcomes problems related to trust and communication. Similar programs could be developed to provide services to ease other constraints of access and infrastructure.

Increasing women's access to mobile phones and strengthening their ability to use them to gain information about prices and suppliers, whether for materials or for labor, could also help to overcome difficulties with face to face transactions that are hard for some women to manage. In Bangladesh as a whole, more men than women own mobile phones: 66% to 32%. And rural ownership rates (47%) are lower than urban (54%) (FAO 2016). By extension, ownership among rural women is likely to be lower than that of men. Expanding the use of mobile money platforms while safeguarding women's access to their personal accounts could also help to ensure that the benefits of women's labor were retained by them.

¹¹ <https://www.digitalgreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Digital-Green-Loop-brief-June2017.pdf>

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Annex 1: Overview of GAAP2 Data Collection Instruments

Tool	Purpose	Respondents: Minimum number recommended per site selected for qualitative work
Activity A. Review of background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather relevant background material on the project area and relevant statistics or background on previous activities in the area and their gender dimensions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Investigator
Activity B. Community profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide social, economic, and agricultural, and background information about the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - 2 men and women in each community
Activity C. Seasonality patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a production calendar which shows how responsibilities are distributed by gender, and how seasonal variations affect time use for women and men; important for pro-WEAI to identify whether the time use survey data is from a peak or slack season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 group of 4-5 knowledgeable individuals involved in agriculture. Include both men and women.

<p>Activity D.</p> <p>Focus</p> <p>Group: Local understanding of empowerment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicit local understanding of empowerment, and to validate the pro-WEAI, especially for the new domains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 FGD of 8 to 12 adult women • 1 FGD of 8 to 12 adult men <p><i>If there is considerable ethnic, livelihood, income, or other heterogeneity within the sample site, then additional focus groups should be done by ethnic/income/livelihood group</i></p>
<p>Activity E.</p> <p>Semi-structured interview: Life histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life stories of men and women of different empowerment status to understand perceptions and experiences of women’s empowerment within the context of agricultural intervention projects and to validate elements within the pro-WEAI survey tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 empowered women • 2 disempowered women (Ideally, these should be chosen to be “typical” of that category, not outliers) <p>In addition, it would be useful to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 empowered men • 2 disempowered men
<p>Activity F.</p> <p>Key informant interview of actors at each node of the value chain¹²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide context related to operation of value chain, especially linked to assets being studied. Are there particular gender-related barriers to engaging at each stage of the value chain? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 men and 3 women producers in each site • 2 input suppliers • 1-2 formal sector traders • 1-2 informal sector traders dealing with identified commodities • 1-2 transporters • 1-2 processors • 1-2 exporters • 1-2 consumers

¹² These categories may not be mutually exclusive, allowing for interview schedules to be combined.

Annex 2: Training Workshop Agenda

Women's Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains (WEAI4VC): Qualitative Methods Training Workshop Agenda

August 21-29, 2017, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Day	Session	Topics
Monday Aug 21	AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome and Introductions ▪ Key gender concepts ▪ Overview of gender issues in agricultural development ▪ Gender dimensions of agricultural value chains ▪ Mapping key value chains in Bangladesh - Exercise
	PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation: Gender Dimensions Framework ▪ Overview of WEAI Domains ▪ Case study exercise ▪ Mapping gender in the agricultural value chain
Tuesday Aug 22	AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding Gender-Based Constraints ▪ Review of case study exercises
	PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principles of qualitative data collection and analysis ▪ Facilitation Techniques ▪ Selection of sample ▪ Empowerment & Disempowerment: Definitions
Wednesday Aug 23	AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender and Value Chain Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participation, Performance, and Benefits ○ Reach, Benefit, Empower
	PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation for field visits: Review of themes and questions
Thursday Aug 24	All day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exploratory interviews ○ Group Interviews
Sunday Aug 27	All day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Debrief of field visits ▪ Guided analysis: Part 1 – Identification of themes ▪ Guided analysis: Part 2 - Gender-based Constraints, Empowerment, and Disempowerment
Monday Aug 28	All day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exploratory interviews ○ Group Interviews
Tuesday Aug 29	All day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of field techniques ▪ Refinement of interview schedules ▪ Finalization of number of interview ▪ Wrap up

Annex 3: Interview Questions¹³

A. Producers

1. Tell me about yourself:
 - a. What is your name?
 - b. How old are you?
 - c. How long did you study?
2. What do you do? (Occupation?)
 - a. Is there anything else? (Other occupations?)
3. Describe the ownership system of land in this area (land tenure system). How did you get your farm land? Is there a difference in how men and women obtain (get) their land (e.g., sharecrop or lease or..?)?
4. Who makes the decisions about the use of land? And why?
 - a. [If the respondent does not make the decisions, ask:] Do you provide any suggestions? How are those suggestions accepted by other members of your family?
5. What crops do you grow? What animals do you raise?
6. Describe to me a typical day (e.g., yesterday) you worked on the farm and at home (men and women).
7. What do you do when you need help in your farm activities? Do you hire labor? From where? How many? Whom do you prefer as labor, men or women? Why? How much do you have to pay for labor? Do you pay different wages to men/women? Why? How do they come to the farm?
8. Are there any types of work that are hard for you, because you are a woman/man? Why?
9. Are there any types of work that you are discouraged from doing?
10. How do you get your product to the market? Who are your buyers? What activities do you do to get the products ready for sale? Who does it (men/women)? Why? Do you have to take any additional labor in doing that? How much do you pay (men/women)?
11. How do you get/manage cash for production?
12. Specify the conditions to receive credit. What types of credit are you getting? Do the conditions differ for men/women?
13. How do you get market prices of the produces? Are you facing any challenges to get the information?
14. How do you get information about new technologies (management practices, tangible products)?
15. Who makes decisions on marketing of your products (how much, when, and who markets)?
16. Who receives income from the sale? Who decides on how the money is used?
17. What are the associations or groups in this area? Are you a member?

¹³ The interview schedules were first prepared in English, then translated in Bangla, and then retranslated back into English by the field team. The version presented here has been only minimally edited from the last version done by the field team. The informed consent text is not included here.

18. What are the requirements for participating in the association/groups? What benefits do you expect to receive from your participation in the association/group? As a woman, can you participate in all of the activities of the association/group, including leadership of the association?
19. Do you feel that you have the ability to do what you wish to do (with or in your life)?
20. Is there a word you would use to describe a person who can do this?
21. In the last 10 years, do you observe any changes because of application new technologies? Please explain?
22. What types of women are admired in your village/community?
 - a) Who is considered a good woman and why? What types of women are admired, have high status/reputation and why? By men, and by women?
23. What types of men are admired in your village/community?
 - a) Who is considered a good man and why? What types of men are admired, have high status/reputation and why? By men, and by women?
 - b) How would you describe a woman in your community who is able to make important decisions in her life and to put those into action?
 - c) What is this woman like? What is her life like?
 - d) How is this different than a man?
24. How would you describe a woman in your community who is able to make important decisions in her life and to put those into action?
 - a) What is this woman like? What is her life like?
 - a. How is this different than a man?
25. Are there many women like that in your community? Why/why not?
26. How are these women regarded: By other women? By other men?
27. What do you think a husband would think if his wife was like this?
28. Is it harder or easier for women to make important decisions and act upon them at different points in their lives?
29. Do you think it is easier for women to make important decisions in her life and to put those into actions if she is a farmer, a wage worker, or owns a shop or other business? Why do you think so? Explain.

B. Wage earners

1. Tell me about yourself:
 - a. What is your name?
 - b. How old are you?
 - c. How long did you study?
2. What do you do? (occupation?)
 - a. Is there anything else? (other occupations?)
3. What are your main activities/jobs?
 - a. Where do you work?
 - b. How does your work change over the different seasons (men/women)?
4. How did you hear about the job?
5. When did you start?

6. What are the qualifications you need to do your job?
7. Are men and women paid the same for the same job?
8. Can you negotiate for better pay? Is this different for men and women?
9. Are there types of work that are hard for you because you are a woman/man? What is an example of such a task?
10. Are there types of work that you are discouraged from doing because you are a woman/man? What is an example of such a task?
11. How do you receive your wages? E.g., in cash, mobile money, direct deposit
12. How often are you paid? Who decides on how the money is used?
13. If in a company, since you started, have you received a promotion or other change in job responsibilities?
14. In the company, how many (approx.) people in your position are men/women?
15. What do you think about that?
16. How do you receive your wages? E.g., in cash, mobile money, direct deposit
17. How often are you paid? Who decides on how the money is used?
18. Are there any legal restrictions on your ability to do other work (besides the job that you have) in your company?
19. Do you feel that you have the ability to do what you wish to do (with or in your life)?
20. Is there a word you would use to describe a person who can do this?
21. From now onward 5 years, what type of changes do you like to bring on in your business? Please explain. In which professions do like most to be engaged of your sons/daughters, when they are grown up, and why?
22. What types of women are admired in your village/community?
 - b) Who is considered a good woman and why? What types of women are admired, have high status/reputation and why? By men, and by women?
23. What types of men are admired in your village/community?
 - e) Who is considered a good man and why? What types of men are admired, have high status/reputation and why? By men, and by women?
 - f) How would you describe a woman in your community who is able to make important decisions in her life and to put those into action?
 - g) What is this woman like? What is her life like?
 - h) How is this different than a man?
24. How would you describe a woman in your community who is able to make important decisions in her life and to put those into action?
 - b. What is this woman like? What is her life like? How is this different than a man?
25. Are there many women like that in your community? Why/why not?
26. How are these women regarded: By other women? By other men?
27. What do you think a husband would think if his wife was like this?
28. Is it harder or easier for women to make important decisions and act upon them at different points in their lives?
29. Do you think it is easier for women to make important decisions in her life and to put those into actions if she is a farmer, a wage worker, or owns a shop or other business? Why do you think so? Explain.

C. Entrepreneurs

Background:

1. What is your occupation? What types of work do you do? How long have you been engaging in these activities?
2. What types of enterprises do you own? Jointly or singly? If joint, is it with a spouse or other relative? If not, how did you decide to partner with that person?
3. How large is your enterprise in terms of volume of sales and number of employees?
4. Why did you choose this occupation?
5. Did you face any problems/challenge in choosing this occupation? Explain.
6. In your area, who are the people who are generally engaged with this type of occupation/business/enterprise? Women or men? According to you, what are the reasons that these people engage in these types of businesses?
7. How do you run your business/organization/enterprise? Does anyone help you? How?

Capital:

8. How did you raise the initial funds to purchase/obtain the business?
9. Did you face any problems t in raising these funds? (Family/ social/ other)
10. In your opinion, is there any difference in men's and women's ability to find funding?

Labor:

11. How many people are there working in your business? (Please mention the numbers of men and women, in terms of full-time, part-time, seasonal and contractual workers).
12. Who takes the decision to employ labor? Why?
13. What are the roles and responsibilities of men and women engaged? Please explain why? Is there any difference for men and women in terms of working hour, position, and wage?
14. What characteristics do you look for in a woman employee? In a man employee?
15. What type of work might be considered hard for men or for women? Why?

Customers:

16. Who are the customers of your enterprise?
17. Are there more men or more women? Why do you think that is the case?
18. Who decides the prices and value of the products and why? Who does the bargaining in selling the products? Men/women? Do you find any different style in negotiating the product selling prices with women or women?
19. Who sells the product? Why?
20. Do you sell your products on credit? To whom you prefer to sell on credit, men or women Why?

Purchasing:

21. Who takes the decision to purchase the inputs? Why
22. Who are engaged with purchasing process? From where do you buy the inputs? Are you faced with any problems? What solutions have you found?
23. Do you purchase anything by credit? Do you face any problems to purchase items on credit? Do you find any difference with men or women?

Sales:

24. Who takes the decision to sell inputs? Why? Who is engaged in selling inputs?
25. Do you sell anything on credit? Do you face any problems selling inputs? Are there differences in the purchases made by men and women producers?
26. With whom are you dealing for buying and selling? What is your relationship with them? Do you find any difference working with men or women?

Income

27. Are you able to utilize your income as per your choice? In your opinion, are there any distinctions/differences in the utilization of the income in case of men and women?
28. Are you reinvesting your income? Who takes the decision to reinvest?
29. In your opinion, do men and women business owners make different choices about investing in their business?
30. What do you need to do to expand your enterprise? Is there any challenge in growing your business? How can you overcome these challenges?

Organizations /cooperatives/groups

31. Are you involved /connected with other organizations? How are you involved in that? Do you find that you benefit from that relationship?
32. What are the rule and regulations in joining the organization? Are fees/service charges required?
33. Do you need to communicate with other organizations in managing your organization? Explain.

Concepts of Empowerment

34. What types of women are admired in your village/community?
35. Who is considered a good woman and why? What types of women are admired, have high status/reputation and why? By men, and by women?
36. What types of men are admired in your village/community?
37. Who is considered a good man and why? What types of men are admired, have high status/reputation and why? By men, and by women?
38. How would you describe a woman in your community who is able to make important decisions in her life and to put those into action?
39. What is this woman like? What is her life like?
40. How is this different than a man?
41. How would you describe a woman in your community who is able to make important decisions in her life and to put those into action?
42. What is this woman like? What is her life like? How is this different than a man?
43. Are there many women like that in your community? Why/why not?
44. How are these women regarded: By other women? By other men?
45. What do you think a husband would think if his wife was like this?
46. Is it harder or easier for women to make important decisions and act upon them at different points in their lives?

47. Do you think it is easier for women to make important decisions in her life and to put those into actions if she is a farmer, a wage worker, or owns a shop or other business? Why do you think so? Explain.

D. Market Traders

Location of sales and physical access to market

1. From whom do you buy XXX product – directly from farmers, wholesalers, intermediaries?
2. Where do you buy XXXX product? (at the farm gate, in town, from another trader, etc.)
3. (if not at farm gate) Do small farmers have difficulty getting produce to you? Is it harder or easier for men or for women to bring their crops/livestock or other products to you?

Seasonality and price considerations

4. When do you buy XXX? (E.g., right after harvest, daily, weekly, etc.)
5. Do men and women sell at different times? If so, why do you think that is?
6. Does anyone wait to sell at a different time to get a higher price?
7. Does the product quality decline if the farmers don't sell right away?
8. Do you believe that there are differences in the volume or quality of the product that you receive from men or women? Do you have to worry about the product quality going bad after you have bought it?

Gender barriers

9. Do you have regular suppliers? If so, is there a contract with them?
10. Does it vary by commodity?
11. Are more of your suppliers men or women?
12. Do women suppliers face challenges selling directly to you? What kinds of problems (e.g. transport, knowledge, etc.)?
13. Have you noticed any differences in buying from men or from women?

Payment methods

14. How do you pay people for the produce (e.g. cash, bKash/mobile banking or other form of mobile money, bank transfer, in kind, etc.)?
15. Is there a difference between how you pay men and women for their products?
16. How long does it take to pay them?
17. Do you provide advance payment (or a down payment) to your suppliers? Under what conditions? How is that deducted from the final amount?
18. How do you decide who you provide advance payments to? Do you offer it to both men and women? Do you offer the same conditions for the advance?
19. Are there differences in how men and women manage the advance payment?

Price determination

20. How are prices determined? Are there higher prices for better quality?
21. Is there bargaining? Fixed price? Better prices to favored suppliers? Is there a link between different markets?

22. Have you noticed any differences in negotiating prices between men and women suppliers? (Provide an example)

Price information sources

23. How do you find out about market prices? (e.g., radio/TV, neighbor/relative, mobile phone, etc.)

24. Are there sources that farmers rely on to know about market prices?

Credit access

25. Where do you go to obtain credit for your trading business?

26. Is it easier or harder for men or women to get access to credit? If so, how?

Sales and value added

27. Who do you sell XXX to? Do you or your organization process it in any way before selling it?

Market structure

28. What does it take to become a trader (resources, training, transport)?

29. Is it harder for women to become buyers than it is for men?

30. What are the characteristics that make a successful buyer/trader?

31. Is this market dominated by large or small traders/suppliers/buyers?

[Annex 4: Initial Code Lists \(prepared by Field Officers in Bangladesh\)](#)

A. Producer and Producer Wage Earners

1. বেসিক ইনফর্মেশন (Basic information)(It includes respondent's name, education, present and previous working status age, marital status, religion, family size, asset, livestock, ponds, and others)

1.1. পেশা (Occupation)[Present working status/ main occupation]

1.2. অন্য পেশা (Other occupation) [Except main occupation]

2. মালিকানার ধরন (Type of owner ship) [Agricultural and nonagricultural assets, livestock, ponds, enterprise]

2.1 জমি (Land)

2.1.1 নিজে (Own) [Inherit, purchase]

2.1.2 বর্গা (Share cropping)

2.1.3. লিজ (Lease)

3. পুঁজি (Capital)

3.1. নিজে (By own)

3.2. পারিবারিক বা যৌথ (By family or jointly)

3.3. ঋণ (Credit)

3.3.1. ব্যক্তি (From person)

3.3.2. দল, সংগঠন, ব্যাংক, এনজিও এবং অন্যান্য উৎস (From group, organization, Bank, NGO and other sources)

4. সিদ্ধান্ত (পরিবার, পুঁজি বিনিয়োগ, কাজ বন্টন, শ্রমিক নিয়োগ, বাজারজাত করন। আয়ের অর্থ ব্যবহার , পুনঃ বিনিয়োগ, অন্যান্য) [Decision (Making decision on family, Capital investment, work distribution, hiring labor, marketing, use of income, reinvestment of income, others)]

4.1. নারী (By woman)

4.2. পুরুষ (By man)

- 4.3. পারিবারিক বা যৌথ (By family or jointly)
5. কাজ (চাষাবাদ ও অন্যান্য) [Work distribution (Agriculture and others)]
 - 5.1. পুরুষ (Role of man)
 - 5.2. নারী (Role of woman)
 - 5.3. শ্রমিক (Labor)
 - 5.3.1. নারী শ্রমিক (Woman Labor)
 - 5.3.1.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 5.4.1.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (Fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 5.4.1.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
 - 5.4.2. পুরুষ শ্রমিক (Man Labor)
 - 5.4.2.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 5.4.2.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (Fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 5.4.2.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
 6. কঠিন কাজ (Hard work)
 - 6.1. নারী (For woman)
 - 6.2. পুরুষ (For man)
 7. নিরুৎসাহ (Discouraged work) [Any kind of factor that discourage someone to do the work]
 - 7.1. নারী (For woman)
 - 7.2. পুরুষ (For man)
 8. পন্য প্রক্রিয়াজাতকরণ (Processing)
 - 8.1. পুরুষ (Role of man)
 - 8.2. নারী (Role of woman)
 - 8.3. শ্রমিক (Labor)
 - 8.3.1. নারী শ্রমিক (Woman Labor)
 - 8.3.1.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 8.3.1.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 8.3.1.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
 - 8.3.2. পুরুষ শ্রমিক (Man Labor)
 - 8.3.2.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 8.3.2.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 8.3.2.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
 9. নিজেসব সন্তানের জন্য পেশা নির্বাচন (Occupation selection for child of the wage earner)
 10. টেকনোলজি (Technology) [Introduce, access, availability, benefits]
 11. বাজারমূল্য (Market Price of product) [Source of information, how to fix it and by whom]
 12. ইনপুট- ক্রেতা (Input- buyer) [Types, source, availability, quality, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]
 13. ইনপুট- বিক্রেতা (Input- Seller) [Types, source, availability, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]

14. আউটপুট- ভোক্তা (Output-Consumer)
 - 14.1. ক্রেতা (Buyer) [Types, source, availability, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]
 - 14.2. নিজস্ব ও অন্যান্য (Own and Others) [Consume by producer family, neighbor and relatives]
15. আউটপুট- বিক্রেতা (Output- Seller) [Types, source, availability, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]
16. পরিবহন (Transport)
17. সংগঠন/ দল (Organization/ Group) [Types of group, access, rules, regulations, activities, position, benefits, time period]
18. স্বক্ষমতা যাচাই (Assessment of capability) [Question no 19 of producer questionnaire]
19. ক্ষমতার সমার্থক শব্দ (Synonyms of empowerment) [Question no 20 of producer questionnaire]
20. কমিউনিটির সমাদৃত / ভাল নারী [Honorable/ Good woman of the community (Question no 22 of producer questionnaire)]
21. কমিউনিটির সমাদৃত / ভাল পুরুষ [Honorable/ Good man of the community (Question no 23-a of producer questionnaire)]
22. ক্ষমতাবান নারী ও বিভিন্ন পর্যায়ে নারীদের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের সক্ষমতা, (Empowered woman, Capability of decision making in different stages) (Question no 23-b, c, d ,24 to29 of producer questionnaire)
24. বাঁধা (Barrier) (Social, religious, domestic)
 - 24.1. নারী (For woman)
 - 24.2. পুরুষ (For man)

B. For Entrepreneurs and the Wage Workers they employ

1. বেসিক ইনফর্মেশন (Basic information)(It includes respondent's name, education, present and previous working status age, marital status, religion, family size, asset, livestock, ponds, and others)
 - 1.1. পেশা (Occupation)[Present working status/ main occupation]
 - 1.2. অন্য পেশা (Other occupation) [Except main occupation]
2. মালিকানাধার ধরন (Type of owner ship) [Agricultural and nonagricultural assets, livestock, ponds, enterprise]
 - 2.1 জমি (Land)
 - 2.1.1 নিজের (Own) [Inherit, purchase]
 - 2.1.2 বর্গা (Share cropping)
 - 2.1.3. লিজ (Lease)
3. পুঁজি (Capital)
 - 3.1. নিজে (By own)
 - 3.2. পারিবারিক বা যৌথ (By family or jointly)
 - 3.3. ঋণ (Credit)
 - 3.3.1. ব্যক্তি (From person)
 - 3.3.2. দল, সংগঠন, ব্যাংক, এনজিও এবং অন্যান্য উৎস (From group, organization, Bank, NGO and other sources)
4. সিদ্ধান্ত (পরিবার, পুঁজি বিনিয়োগ, কাজ বন্টন, শ্রমিক নিয়োগ, বাজারজাত করণ। আয়ের অর্থ ব্যবহার , পুনঃ বিনিয়োগ, অন্যান্য) [Decision (Making decision on family, Capital investment, work distribution, hiring labor, marketing, use of income, reinvestment of income, others)]
 - 4.1. নারী (By woman)
 - 4.2. পুরুষ (By man)
 - 4.3. পারিবারিক বা যৌথ (By family or jointly)
5. কাজ (চাষাবাদ ও অন্যান্য) [Work distribution (Agriculture and others)]

- 5.1. পুরুষ (Role of man)
- 5.2. নারী (Role of woman)
- 5.3. শ্রমিক (Labor)
 - 5.3.1. নারী শ্রমিক (Woman Labor)
 - 5.3.1.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 5.3.1.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (Fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 5.3.1.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
 - 5.3.2. পুরুষ শ্রমিক (Man Labor)
 - 5.3.2.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 5.3.2.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (Fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 5.3.2.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
6. কঠিন কাজ (Hard work)
 - 6.1. নারী (For woman)
 - 6.2. পুরুষ (For man)
7. নিরুৎসাহ (Discouraged work) [Any kind of factor which discourage to do the work]
 - 7.1. নারী (For woman)
 - 7.2. পুরুষ (For man)
8. পন্য প্রক্রিয়াজাতকরণ (Processing)
 - 8.1. পুরুষ (Role of man)
 - 8.2. নারী (Role of woman)
 - 8.3. শ্রমিক (Labor)
 - 8.3.1. নারী শ্রমিক (Woman Labor)
 - 8.3.1.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 8.3.1.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 8.3.1.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
 - 8.3.2. পুরুষ শ্রমিক (Man Labor)
 - 8.3.2.1. দক্ষতা (Skill)
 - 8.3.2.2. শ্রমের ধরন (ফুল টাইম, পার্ট টাইম, সিজনাল ও কন্ট্রাকচুয়াল) কর্মঘণ্টা, মজুরি [Work type of labor (fulltime, part time, seasonal, and contractual) working hour, wage]
 - 8.3.2.3. পদমর্যাদা (Designation)
9. নিজেদের সন্তানের জন্য পেশা নির্বাচন (Occupation selection for child of the wage earner)
10. টেকনোলজি (Technology) [Introduce, access, availability, benefits]
11. বাজারমূল্য (Market Price of product) [Source of information, how to fix it and by whom]
12. ইনপুট- ক্রেতা (Input- buyer) [Types, source, availability, quality, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]
13. ইনপুট- বিক্রেতা (Input- Seller) [Types, source, availability, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]
14. আউটপুট- ভোক্তা (Output-Consumer)
 - 14.1. ক্রেতা (Buyer) [Types, source, availability, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]

- 14.2. নিজস্ব ও অন্যান্য (Own and Others) [Consume by producer family, neighbor and relatives]
15. আউটপুট- বিক্রেতা (Output- Seller) [Types, source, availability, who purchase, distance, transport, price, bargaining]
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 - 24.1. নারী (For woman)
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