



Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

SDG Activity Report on

SDG 5: Gender Equality

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Livestock farming and women empowerment in rural Bangladesh: a mixed method approach

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Abstract:

In Bangladesh, livestock farming is not only a major source of animal protein, but it also provides opportunities for women to contribute to household income. Therefore, this study was undertaken to identify the empowerment status of women livestock farmers, factors influencing women's participation in livestock farming and its impact on women's empowerment.

The study was conducted in the Mymensingh district (administrative unit) of Bangladesh, due to the active participation of women in livestock farming activities. A total of 200 women were surveyed between May to November 2018. Additionally, prior to the final survey, 02 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were performed to gain insight into the context of the study areas. Furthermore, a total of 12 semi-structured in-depth interviews were performed with 12 experienced women livestock farmers to collect data regarding the challenges they encounter in livestock farming. Women empowerment was measured using four domains: decision-making process, ownership of assets, social and political awareness, and freedom of mobility. Descriptive statistics, and Heckman's endogenous treatment effect model were applied to analyze the data.

The results revealed that majority (75%) of women who are involved in livestock farming had a medium level of empowerment. Women's decision to participate in livestock farming was positively influenced by farm size, knowledge, extension contact, and training. According to the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) value, the empowerment status of women is 16 points higher among participants in livestock farming compared to non-participants. Furthermore, women in rural areas face several obstacles such as economic issues and inadequate marketing facilities, which may prevent them from engaging in livestock farming.

Educating women through raising awareness and providing training is warranted because there is a notable disparity in the empowerment status of women who are and are not involved in livestock farming. This will help women improve their social awareness, decision-making capacity, and mobility. Livestock initiatives that encourage women's involvement could be generated by various rural-focused organizations.