



Develop a concept note and policy brief on “Recognition of women’s role in agriculture”

Manusher Jonno Foundation

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Background:

Agriculture is still main driving force in the rural economy. It is well known that rural women are silent workers and fundamental contributors to rural economy. Their economic contributions are often gratifying but not widely recognized. Women’s participation in agriculture has grown exponentially during the last few years in Bangladesh. Now a days, rural women in Bangladesh play a vital role in a wide range of income-generating activities through agriculture, which include post-harvesting, cow fattening and milking, goat farming, poultry rearing etc. Women also play a key role in home gardening and vegetable growing.

Strong existence of gender role compelled women to do household activity, child caring, and old age caring. Despite all of their responsibility most rural women in Bangladesh are performing an active role in ensuring household food security for their family. They not only ensure protein supply of the family by rearing livestock or poultry but also contribute to household diet by growing various vegetables and fruits in homestead garden. Farm activities in the homesteads, ranging from selection of seed to harvesting and storing of crops, are predominantly managed by women.

A large majority of households in Bangladesh depend upon agriculture and women are now becoming a vital part of these agricultural activities. So the role of women in agriculture should be recognized properly in GDP for enhancing agricultural and rural development and improving food security in Bangladesh. So that women’s status raise at family and society level.

Manusher Jonno Foundation is running a campaign named “Equality through Dignity” by highlighting women’s contribution both paid and unpaid work. As a part of this campaign Manusher Jonno foundation is started an advocacy initiative to “recognize women’s unaccounted work in GDP”. Recognition of women’s role in agriculture is one of major area of work.

Rational:

Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in Bangladesh. Women roles vary considerably between and within area to area and are changing rapidly based on present country and global warming priority, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector.

Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are not defined as “economically active employment” in national accounts but they are essential to the well-being of households. MJF wants to bring the issue in front of policy maker’s attentions –why it is important to recognize and reflect in GDP. It is true women are highly engaged in feeding and collecting grass and fodder for domestic animals, putting to and taking out of shelter, cleaning sheds, offering water to animals and selling eggs and milk, but men are engaged in selling and marketing.

The status of women in Bangladesh is still not fair and equitable. According to a research conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) commissioned by MJF that women spend 16 hours on an average per day in household chores, including informal agricultural work. Apart from that Bangladesh National Women Development Policy 2011, called for properly recognizing works of women in social and economic field for their development, but women agriculture workers are yet to get any legal identity.

Objectives:

Develop a concept note on collected evidence and data which will lead to prepare a policy brief to introduce advocacy initiatives.

The concept note should cover women’s labour in agriculture, work burden, gender discrimination, and comprehensive analysis on context, women’s role and contribution in greater agriculture.

Scope of work:

Agriculture development is directly linked to poverty alleviation, living standard of the people, employment generation, and agro- based industrial growth in Bangladesh. Most rural women are playing a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy, face constraints that reduce their productivity. Women are generally less able than men to participate in economic opportunities because they face a work burden that men do not. In most societies, women are responsible for most of the household and child-caring -rearing activities as well rearing of small livestock, although norms differ by culture and over time. This additional work burden is unpaid and limits women’s capacity to engage in income generating activities, which often require a minimum fixed time before being profitable. Furthermore, the nature of tasks, such as caring for children and elderly household members, requires women to stay near the home, thus limiting options to work for a wage. Time scarcity forces many women to start-up cottage industries, such as handicrafts, which are often characterized by low returns and limited potential for expansion.

1. Analyze context socially and economically where women make essential contributions to agriculture and rural enterprises across the country. But there is much diversity in women’s roles and over-generalization undermines policy relevance and planning.

2. How much of the agricultural labour in Bangladesh is performed by women? (Like rice production, poultry, livestock, forestry, fisheries)
3. What share of the family food is produced by women? Please try to draw on the available empirical evidence to study in which areas and to what degree women participate in agriculture
4. Do women face discrimination in rural labour markets? How BBS has shown that female timeuse in agriculture varies also by crop, production cycle, age and ethnic group.
5. To what extent BBS Time use surveys covers women's contribution to agriculture. Did BBS have data by agricultural activity and these show that in general weeding and harvesting were predominantly female activities?
6. How MJF can make recommendations on women's participation in rural labour markets, women are only represented in unpaid seasonal and part time work –which are unrecognized.
7. How women are active population in rural agricultural economy. How much women spend time in agriculture work?
8. Is there any evident study that males are now leaving agricultural profession and joining other professions finding it more profitable? Hence, women are taking agri-management ahead.
9. Recommendations for improving the status of women in agriculture work. What policy changes is needed? Or what government can do to reduce discrimination and uphold women's dignity.

Methodology: Please add (How you want to work/ your own plan)

Deliverables:

1. Share inception report with detail work plan by 1st week after contract.
2. 1st draft report by 3rd week of contract
3. Final report by the end of contract

Time frame: 15th October 2019-15 November 2019

Budget: Detail financial proposal