

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Bangladesh is predominantly an agrarian country. A large number of rural people are absolutely or functionally land less and remain unemployed throughout the year. These landless and marginal farmers have very limited resources to invest future production. For this reason, there is a need to organize the people of the society through various productive and of farm activities. Government undertakens National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP) and create Common Interest Group (CIG) for making available benefit to the rural farmers so that they can gain larger benefits.

Different activities under Common Interest Group (CIG) are aimed to increase production and ultimately improve nutritional status, generate income and employment of the group members, introduce modern cultivation techniques among the farmers and promote the effective utilization of loan and labor. All these activities seek to contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic status of the farmers by generating food, income, employment. Participation of the rural farmers has a crucial importance for the success of any development program. Their participation has to be encouraged and obtained. Through this process the farmers will learn to change their behavior for their own development. Participation of rural farmers in CIG program is expected to affect their lives in personal social and economic dimension by increasing their access and to control over available resources. There is need to know how and to what extent these activities are being implemented.

1.1.1 Concept of CIG

Common Interest Group (CIG) was evolving extension activities of various upazila in Bangladesh by organizing the government. The main activities of CIG are a) development of field and horticultural crops including fruits and vegetables, b) development of domestic animals and birds, c) homestead gardening, d) development of fisheries, health and family welfare, e) vermi-compost, f) seed storage, g) HYVs variety cultivation, h) use of sex pheromone tripe, i) minimum use of pesticide, j) eco-friendly cultivation, k) identification and transfer of appropriate technologies, l) organize training program for the farmers etc.

Each of these interventions is expected to have different kinds of impacts on farmers socio-economic status. Participation of farmers in CIG activities is expected to bring about positive impact on the status of the farmers. But it is undoubtedly a complex task to determine all the expected impacts, because the developmental goals of CIG are multi-dimensional. Besides, impact evaluation is comprehensive in nature, and it requires information on the situation at the beginning of the project and also during its execution.

To bring desirable development of the country each and every farmers should participate actively in various developmental activities. It is extremely important to be acquainted with different aspects of farmers with references to participation in the developmental process. The thrust of the study is to find out the improvement of socio-economic status among the farmers of CIG.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The major objective of the CIG is to improvement of socio-economic status through income generation. To address this issue, the smallholder's i.e. landless, marginal farmers are being given technical support through CIGs. Under the program, farmers are also receive training on various subjects like various type of income generating activities includes, vegetable production, poultry and livestock development, fish culture, etc. They are also expected to utilize their knowledge and skills in order to increase their income and there by improve their socio-economic status. The project focus on alleviating poverty and improve socio-economic status, diversification of high value non-cereal crops such as fruit and vegetables, and development of non agriculture crop such as fishery, poultry and livestock. Therefore, the present study was undertakens to find out the followings research questions.

- i) What is the present level of improvement of socio-economic status of the farmers through participation in CIGs?
- ii) What relationships exist between selected characteristics of the CIG farmers and their improvement of socio-economic status?

1.3 Specific Objectives of the Study

The main focus of the present study is to improvement of socio-economic status of the farmers. In view of the above discussion and in order to give proper direction to the study, the researcher undertook the present research with the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the extent of improvement of socio-economic status of the farmers through participation in CIGs.
2. To determine and describe the selected characteristics of CIG farmers. The characteristics are:
 - i. Age,
 - ii. Education,
 - iii. Family size,
 - iv. Farm size,
 - v. Farming experience,
 - vi. Annual income,
 - vii. Training experience,
 - viii. Organizational participation,
 - ix. Desirability, and
 - x. Use of information sources.
3. To explore the relationships between the improvement of socio economic status of the CIG farmers with their selected characteristics.

1.4 Justification of the Study

Now-a-days, not only the government sector but also most of the non-government sectors are increasingly aware that they have a major responsibility for rural development and betterment of the livelihood of farmers to improvement of their socio-economic status. They are mainly launching different projects to eradicate poverty and trying to improve socio-economic status. As village people have no sufficient employment opportunities and income earning sources to improve their socio-economic status, they are the vulnerable class of the society and they are expected to uplift their personal, social and economic dimensions by increasing their access and control over resources. For understanding any meaningful socio-economic status improvement program, if the main target is to involve the poorer section of rural people in development activities, it needs to know the 4 specific problem issues. The issues on socio-economic improvement need more attention and thus it deserves a specific investigation. It is necessary to conduct study regarding to the performance of different socio-economic status improvement program activities. Considering the present socio-economic condition, the Common Interest Group (CIG) is selected for this piece of research. The findings of the study are expected to be of great value to the researchers, extension service providers, students and

particularly planners in formulating and designing for future socio-economic improvement program.

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

An assumption is the supposition that an apparent fact or principle is true in the light of available evidence (Good, 1945). The researchers had the following assumptions in mind while undertaking this study:

1. The respondents were capable of furnishing proper responses to the questions contained in the interview schedule.
2. The responses furnished by the respondent were valid and reliable.
3. Information furnished by the beneficiaries, included in the sample, were the representative of the whole population of the study.
4. The researcher who personally collected data well-adjusted himself to the social environment of the study area. Hence, the data collected from the respondents were free from the interviewer bias.
5. The findings of the study are expected to be useful for planning and execution of various programs in connection with the improvement of socio-economic status of the farmers.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

In order to complete the study in a meaningful and manageable way with the available fund, time, and resources the following limitations were taken into consideration:

1. The study was confined to the three union of Biral upazila under Dinajpur district.
2. There were many people in the study area but only the CIG beneficiaries were selected for the study.
3. Characteristics of the rural people were many and varied. But only ten characteristics were considered for this study.
4. For information of the study, the researchers had to depend on data as furnished by the selected CIG beneficiaries during data collection.
5. When the researcher was a female and a respondent is male, some difficulties were arising during interview, but this subsequent problem was discarded by establishing proper rapport.
6. The findings of the study were particularly applicable to the study area.

1.7 Definition of the Terms

The terms which have been frequently used throughout the thesis are defined bellow:

Age: Age of a respondent defined as the span of her life and is measured by the number of years from her birth to the time of interviewing.

Educational qualification: Referred to the development of desirable knowledge skill attitudes etc. of an individual through the experiences of reading, writing, observation and related matters.

Family size: It referred to actual number of permanent members in a subject's family who live in a fixed dwelling unit and eat from the same cooking arrangement.

Farm size: It refers to the total area on which a farmer's family carries on farming operations, the area being estimated in terms of full benefit to the farmer's family.

Annual income: Referred to the total annual earnings of all the family members of a respondent from agriculture, livestock, fisheries and other accessible sources (business, service, daily working etc.).

Training: Training refers to organized instruction aimed at improving knowledge, skill, and attitude of an individual so that he/she can perform his/her functions and responsibility more effectively. It referred to the number of days that a respondent had received training.

Organizational participation: Organizational participation of an individual referred to his contact with the participation in various organizations.

Use of Information Sources: The term expressed an individual' use of the different information sources for the dissemination of information related to new technologies.

CIG: Common Interest Group (CIG) is a program under National Agriculture Technology Project for transferring farm technology to the farmers for improvement of their life.

Improvement: Improvement is the process of a thing moving from one state to a state considered to be better, usually through some action intended to bring about that better state. The concept of improvement is important to governments and businesses, as well as to individuals.

Socio-economic status: Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation.