

## CARE

### Can Dairy Value Chain Projects Change Gender Norms in Rural Bangladesh? Impacts on Assets, Gender Norms, and Time Use

**COUNTRY:** BANGLADESH

**YEARS OF PROJECT STUDY:** 2008-2012

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#### BACKGROUND

The goal of CARE-Bangladesh's Strengthening the Dairy Value Chain Project (SDVCP) is to improve the dairy-related incomes of 35,000 households in northwest Bangladesh. To achieve its goal, SDVCP addresses the major challenges to improving smallholder participation in the value chain, namely farmer mobilization and education, access to markets for their milk, and access to productivity-enhancing inputs. The project assists in the formation of dairy farmer groups as well as increasing women's participation in the dairy value chain, particularly in such nontraditional occupations as milk collectors and livestock health workers. The SDVCP evaluation looks at how both tangible and intangible assets may have changed, particularly for women, as an outcome of the intervention.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study included both qualitative and quantitative components. The quantitative component drew from longitudinal survey data taken from a baseline (2008) and endline (2012) collected from beneficiary households and control groups. The surveys collected data on land and assets, and included several questions on the number and kind of livestock owned and livestock and dairy care practices. The qualitative component included 11 focus group discussions (FGDs) composed of purposively selected project beneficiaries in 10 subdistricts of Rangpur and Bogra Districts. The groups ranged in size from 14-30 participants and included 7 female-only groups and 4 mixed-sex groups. The three primary topics of discussion were asset ownership, access to resources, and decisionmaking about dairy production and dairy-related income.

#### FINDINGS

- Impacts on Asset Ownership:** Project participation did not seem to change the overall value of household asset portfolios, but it did seem to have significant impacts on a particular assets' value. For example, the value of households' livestock increased, as did the value of agricultural and nonagricultural productive assets. While land ownership did not change significantly, households did expand their land under cultivation through rent and mortgage and thus the amount of land in use increased in both treatment and control groups. Participation increased the value of men's assets and jointly held agricultural assets, but had no impact on women's assets. Though joint ownership cannot be assumed to be the same as joint control over assets, the increase in joint ownership among a sample where most assets were owned by men does seem to point to an increase in gender equality.
- Impacts on Women's Access to Credit, Mobility, and Human Capital:** Project participation seemed to result in a lower percentage of women taking NGO loans, with FGDs explaining that this stemmed from the source of credit shifting to alternative sources and also a preference for saving money rather than borrowing and paying interest. Women stated that men would go through them to access NGO credit. Project participation resulted in a higher proportion of husbands and wives jointly deciding whether wives could go by themselves to a variety of places. Participants also reported no objections to a woman going to various places to visit friends or family if she could cover her own expenses. Project participation also seemed to result in increases in women's mobility because it made it necessary to travel for training and participation in the project, and because it changed social norms. There are also spill-over effects on human capital that can be attributed to increased mobility.

3. **Impacts on Decisionmaking:** It still remains to be seen whether project participation changed decisionmaking around dairy production, use, and sale. Quantitative results suggest that the program had negligible impacts on decisionmaking related to the buying, selling and leasing of cows and dairy-related expenses. At both baseline and endline men dominated decisionmaking within the household. Women's decisionmaking, even in areas on which the program trained them, was unaffected. Qualitative results find more nuance: while women were the primary marketers of milk, it was still men who made the decision to sell milk, though women did make decisions on whether and how to allocate milk for home consumption.

The project also seemed to impact household time and labor allocation. Adult women increased their time spent on dairy-related activities within the household and adult men increased their time on dairy-related activities outside the household. The increase in adult women's time spent on dairy activities came at the expense of spending time on other household activities, thus resulting in young girls taking on this work. This demonstrates an unexpected and unintended consequence of the project.

### FEEDBACK ON STUDY BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH SHALINI ROY (IFPRI), NURUL AMIN SIDDIQUEE (CARE), AND KAKULY TANVIN (CARE):

1. Are there any particularities about the region or country of implementation which you think are important to recognize? Did any of these context – or country – specific factors influence your GAAP case study or M&E implementation methodology, and how?
  1. **Nurul and Kakuly:** SDVC is operating interventions in dairy zones of the country. Therefore, cattle ownership is higher in these zones than in other parts of the country and it would thus be unwise to generalize the findings of the studies to all findings on asset ownership. In addition, men usually own productive and other assets in rural Bangladesh while women rarely do. In a study such as ours, when women are asked about their ownership of assets, this could make people in the community uncomfortable. So, rapport building with the community was essential before doing any study on women's empowerment.
  2. **Shalini:** In rural South Asia more broadly, female seclusion tends to be a sociocultural norm. The project itself was very cognizant of these norms and of women's roles – knowing that women perform a lot of dairy activities but that steps in the value chain needed to be brought nearer to women. We took these factors into account when designing the evaluation of the project, as well. We designed a questionnaire that specifically addressed mobility and ensured that we had female enumerators so that women could be interviewed alone. We also made sure that we collected information on some assets that we found from the qualitative work are among the few items that women are perceived to own and are therefore considered important assets for women in rural South Asia. These included items like jewelry, cooking utensils, and clothing – which might not have been considered particularly important assets in other contexts.
2. What was the source of your interviewers for the quantitative work? For the qualitative work? Was it challenging to find enough skilled enumerators or field workers for the collection?
  - **Nurul and Kakuly:** Project staff were the main interviewers for the qualitative work and both project and casual staff were engaged for the quantitative studythe project's internal M&E. It is always difficult to hire qualified workers for the field work and this was no exception, especially for the qualitative enumerators. High-quality individual workers are most often engaged with regular jobs, while specialists or consultancy firms are expensive and it requires more time to hire them for any study. Therefore, SDVC worked with casual surveyors that have been engaged with the M&E work of SDVC for a long time, and they are now well trained on different study methods and processes in the context of rural Bangladesh.
  - **Shalini:** The quantitative data collection for the external evaluation was collected by Data Analysis and Technical Assistance, Ltd. (DATA), a highly-regarded independent survey firm, and supervised by IFPRI. The baseline and endline surveys were conducted by experienced and qualified enumerators, whom DATA has on call for large surveys. DATA had no trouble finding qualified enumerators, but they are paid more than typical interviewers hired on a casual basis.
3. What kinds of tools did you use for data collection? Had you ever used these tools before?
  - **Nurul and Kakuly:** For data collection in the qualitative study we used focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KII), and case analysis, while for the quantitative study we used a survey and participatory performance

tracking by group members. We also used some tools to raise awareness, which we had not used before joining GAAP but that we designed from the preliminary findings of the GAAP studies. These included the access control matrix that looks at ownership over assets by men and women; the barrier tree that we used to identify different obstacles for women in participating in the dairy value chain; the daily time use tool to track men's and women's roles and time allocation in dairying and other household chores; pairwise ranking to understand gendered needs; and a barrier checklist to identify obstacles of individual project participants. We used FGDs and KIIs to gather data for project operations but not exclusively for the gender study. In a different survey we had collected data for monitoring on women's empowerment but added more indicators in the project M&E tools after joining the GAAP initiative.

- **Shalini:** There is growing interest in value chains, but relatively little data collected to evaluate their impacts, and even less to evaluate sex-disaggregated impacts. The tools we used in the quantitative impact evaluation included a baseline survey conducted in 2008 and an endline survey conducted in 2012 on beneficiary households and control groups. We collected sex-disaggregated data on asset ownership and control, as well as nearly all aspects of the dairy value chain – who takes milk to delivery points, who collects the payments, etc. We also measured disaggregated time allocation not only for dairy maintenance but also for other household activities. Collecting this allowed us to understand whether there was a time burden involved with participating in the program, whether this meant reallocating time from other activities, and how this impacted not only women but also other household members including men and children.

4. If you had not used these tools before, what led you to use them now? What were they based off of?

- **Nurul and Kakuly:** From the beginning, the project noticed some obstacles for women during field visits, and field staff also reported some challenges in engaging women participants in the dairy value chain. After that, the barrier checklist was developed and project staff started to report on different barriers they noticed in the project area. Through this process we were able to get a sense of the overall barriers for women, but not particularly with regards to the dairy value chain. After joining GAAP, as a part of the study, SDVC planned to further investigate these obstacles to get a better understanding of different barriers for women in value chains. So the project designed the barrier tree tool, administered it in the field, and explored different barriers for women farmers and women service providers. The project got a more complete view of women's barriers through this process and it influenced us to design more tools/interventions that might address some of these obstacles.
- Preliminary findings also showed that women rarely join in any income-generating activities as they are always overloaded with household chores, and because the labor allocation for men and women is not equitable. Extensive awareness is also required for asset acquisition and for women to have ownership over assets. Following different obstacles, the project also designed a package program with these tools and administrated a pilot among 20 farmer groups in the SDVC operating area. However, GAAP endowed us with the space to look back on these issues for further research.

5. What are the unique gender-asset questions and indicators you collected in your survey instrument that were particularly valuable or reflective of methodologies you would like to see replicated in future work and why?

- **Nurul/Kakuly:** Control over income has been a vital finding from the qualitative works that we have incorporated in our regular M&E system since then. From the FGDs it emerged that women who are engaged with income generation can hardly manage the income. From this finding we conducted some awareness interventions in groups and now we are monitoring their progress.

6. Did you have to change any of your tools to adapt to different contexts and situations? If so, please give us an example of this, and how it worked out.

- **Nurul/Kakuly:** We did not need to change the tools but we did need to change the administration process. For example, in some communities we did mixed-sex FGDs while in other communities we found that the community was quite conservative and women were dominated during FGDs so we did FGDs with only women participants.

7. What qualitative tools do you wish you had used in your research? Why did you not use them? Do you plan to use them in future research?

- **Shalini:** We know quite a bit about what the project did or did not change for men and women. But we know less about how men and women perceived these changes. For the purposes of interpretation, it would have been very useful to

have explored more which roles and rights women actually want. For example, we find that women's individual asset ownership does not increase, while their joint ownership does. But we do not know whether they would prefer individual ownership or joint ownership. We also do not know which assets they would actually want ownership or control over, or which mobility rights they would want. How do they feel about the rights that they have gained? Do they want those rights? Do they get the rights that they do want? Perhaps what matters is not that women increase individual ownership over exactly the same types of assets that men individually own, but that they increase whatever rights they actually want over whatever assets they actually want. One way to help interpret the quantitative impacts would have been to include some questions in the qualitative work on what dimensions men and women valued their roles and rights. We could have then followed up those specific dimensions in the quantitative work.

8. Were there any times that problems arose and you had to adapt quickly? If so, can you explain the problem and what you did to resolve it?

- **Nurul and Kakuly:** Sometimes we needed to interview only women participants but one or two men were present observing the interview. Sometimes they also tried to dominate the participants and we had to directly tell them to leave the discussion. In that instance we started some internal discussions on women's issues so that the women felt encouraged before the main discussion and the men either got bored or felt too shy to be there

9. Anything else you would like to share about the GAAP project and your involvement with it?

- **Nurul/Kakuly:** GAAP is more concerned with and experts on research on women's empowerment issues, but at the same time it needs to design some interventions/tools that can be implemented to address some common findings from the research.
- **Shalini:** In this phase of GAAP, we focused on studying how agricultural projects affected the overall gender asset gap and found some very striking patterns across projects. Moving forward, it could be useful to explore what dimensions of the gender asset gap matter most to project participants and focus on studying impacts on those dimensions, to provide more nuance and depth in interpreting these changes. For example, in the CARE quantitative work, we did not focus on impacts on intimate partner violence, but later felt this might have been an area where the project caused changes that mattered to participants although we did not pick it up. Relatedly, it is useful to think about how projects work within gender norms. Some projects aim to improve people's well-being while accommodating the existing norms, whereas others aim to transform the norms themselves.

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**For more information about the CARE project please see:** Quisumbing, A.R., Roy, S., Njuki, J., Tanvin, K., Waithanji, E. 2013. Can Dairy Value-Chain Projects Change Gender Norms in Rural Bangladesh? Impacts on Assets, Gender Norms, and Time Use. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01311. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute. <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp01311.pdf>

**For questionnaire(s) and survey instrument(s), please visit:** <http://gaap.ifpri.info/tools-used-by-gaap/care-tools/>

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