

Gender, Water and Poverty
Experiences from
Water Resource Management Projects in Bangladesh

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Introduction

Bangladesh is a highly densely populated country. The country has a current population of 129 million. Rural areas appear to have become more densely populated (1,161 persons per km² as of 1999) while the number of people living in urban areas has risen to 19% of the total. In public health terms, poverty has had tangible impacts. In gender terms, almost half of the population is women. Women also constitute a substantial proportion of the rural poor population. The percentage of poor households is higher in the rural area than in the urban area. In addition women headed households (usually regarded as amongst the poorest of the poor) constitute 25% of the landless category. This means that women alone must cope with the burden of poverty in the rural environment without the security of family networks or assets. In all occupation categories and employment status, the number of male labour force is much higher than that of female.

According to the World Bank's Development Indicators 1999 (WB 99), more children remain under-nourished in Bangladesh than anywhere else in the world. This means increased vulnerability to diseases as children grown up, problems which will be exacerbated by limited access to health care and water supply. Poverty alleviation was not in the past a particular aim of water sector development. The number of people in Bangladesh who live below the absolute poverty line has declined from 42.7% to 35.6% over the period 1992 to 1995/96 (WB 1999). Despite efforts at poverty alleviation, 39.8% of the rural populations still live below the poverty line. The incidence of poverty is greater in the case of female-headed households.

In Bangladesh, data from various sources shows that women are the most disadvantaged and vulnerable group of the country. As a result women have less access to the employment, property, food, health facilities, education etc. whether in the family or community. Consequently, women have lack of access to the decision-making process and/or access to and control over the resources. However, government of Bangladesh has taken initiative to improve the situation. Constitution of Bangladesh expressed in many article that men and women are equal, article number 10, 11, 19(2), 27, 28(1), 28(2), 28(3), 28(4), 29(1), 65(3), etc. Bangladesh has given importance to the women development, like any other country in the world. Government of Bangladesh declared National Women Development Policy in 1997, which are a step towards women in development and an evidence of that. National Water Policy was declared in 1999 where women's participation was highlighted. It seems government is very much concern for women development and relevant aspects as women's participation is very important and meaningful. Even than in most cases, women are the most disadvantaged and vulnerable group of the community.

"Though women constitute nearly half of the population of Bangladesh their situation has traditionally been adverse on account of complex cultural factors shaped by historical evolution and traditional societal expectations. However, significant changes have been taken place over the years and the presence of women is being felt more and more in different areas of life. Their increased involvement can be observed in all sectors of the economy. The government of Bangladesh realizes that there is still a big way to go to ensure women's equality in development and empowerment. Government has undertaken measuring relating to women issues in all spheres of life. In order to realize the broad objectives of development and empowerment of women, necessary measures have been taken to strengthen the institutional capacity of various national machinery" (*Reference: Page-3, Gender Dimensions in Development published by BBS in 1999*).

At present women development is an important and identified as one of the most discussed agenda in the world. There are many policies developed on this issue internationally and also nationally. Some declaration also made i.e. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), Beijing Platform of Action, National Women Development Policy, etc. Government has taken many other attempts for this issue such as "quota system" or "reserved seats" are preserved for women in various sectors including National Parliament and also in various services. Many women are established in working life and/or social or politics due to quota system.

During last Union Parishad and Municipal election women were not nominated in the reserved seats instead of the community voters directly elected them. They had to contest with other candidates by casting votes from general people. At present one third of total Union Parishad and Municipal members are women. About 24 women have been elected as chairman from last election of Union Parishad and Municipality who had to contest with other male candidates and cast vote for them to be a chairman. Women's participation in various development fields influences remarkable progress in national development. For example garments where 90% workers are women and this is prominent for earning foreign currency for the country. Women's participation in educational institution as teacher is also remarkable. It seems that woman's active participation in various sectors is a great success for national development. So that government tried to ensure women's participation at all sectors of the development. Women's participation is also worthwhile in the case of operation, maintenance and construction work in addition to planning and implementation of various projects including water resources development projects.

Gender and Water

In Bangladesh, various attempts have been taken to provide adequate supply of drinking water and to improve agriculture production through the implementation of water resources development projects with the assistance of different donors. The main implementing agencies for water sector projects in the country are Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). Water resources development projects may be categorized in two ways, i.e. i) water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion and ii) water resource management that works for improvement of agriculture production.

Water Supply, Sanitation & Hygiene Promotion

The projects provide drinking water supply and sanitation facilities need to consult stakeholders. In this case water users are mainly considered women, as they are main responsible for water use at homestead level. Women are involved in care taking of hand tube well, sanitary latrine, family health, vegetable production, and all sorts of water uses at household works. Women consider that lack of sanitation facility is also effects on their reproductive health but men are usually not much concerned about the sanitation and hygiene status of the household. Usually both men and women ignore own health status though they are in anxiety for husband and children's sickness. So lack of sanitation affects them differently. In hygiene concept male do not have any concern how their wives are maintaining it in everyday life and reproductive health. The message is absent in the rural area that ***Vision 21 envisages a world with adequate safe water and sanitation for all by 2025.*** Improving sanitation need to be identified as a priority that demands water, sanitation and hygiene improvement programs to be the core of human development and poverty alleviation.

Bangladesh had achieved a remarkable success in the water supply sector. It is reported that over 97% of the population has access to tube-wells/hand-pumps, taps or ring-wells. A favorable geological condition, support from government and development partners, and a vibrant private sector ensured installation of millions of hand pumps supplying bacteriological safe drinking water to the entire country. However, the discovery of widespread arsenic contamination of groundwater has undermined this commendable success. Sanitation coverage has been very low in contrast to the high water supply coverage. At present only 43% urban and 10% rural households have water seal latrines; if simple pit latrines are included, the figures increase to about 61% and 41% respectively. However, in many areas the coverage is much below the national average. The low figures indicate that the vast majority of the population still practices open defecation. This practice, in combination with high population density and a wet climate, renders the surface water bodies loaded with pathogen. Despite almost universal use of hand pumps for drinking, people use open waters frequently for bathing and domestic purpose – thus keeping the fecal-oral transmission routes open. Although mortality due to water-borne diseases has been greatly reduced, the morbidity due to these diseases is still high. This exacts a terrible toll on health care cost (estimated at over US\$ 80 million per annum), lost

productivity and ill effect on child development. The level of knowledge on health and hygiene among the people of Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas, is quite low. As a result, hygiene practice is also low. Only about 23% of the rural population practice hand washing with soap or ash after defecation. Even for urban areas the figure is only 54%. Also, a significant number of people (21%) still use surface water for domestic purposes other than drinking. The water supply and sanitation sector has largely been unregulated. A thriving private sector installed over 80% of the manually operated tube-wells. Operations and maintenance were generally the responsibility of the users and women are taking active role in this regard.

The National Water Policy 1998 recognizes the economic value of water, and envisions eventual recovery of the cost of supply. It stated, “*To accelerate the development of sustainable public and private water delivery systems with appropriate legal and financial measures and incentives, including delineation of water rights and water pricing*”. It particularly emphasizes the needs of women and poor in the sector, and encourages active participation of women, “*To ensure the availability of water to all elements of the society including poor and the underprivileged, and to take into account the particular needs of women and children*”. It also recognized that “*lack of access to safe water supply in the rural areas is a special hardship for women who have to carry water over long distances, with significant impact on their health and productivity*”. The National Annual Development Plan (ADP) allocated about 2.9% of the total development funds to the water supply and sanitation sector in 2002-2003. As water and sanitation is not expressed as a separate sector in the ADP documents, planning and resource allocation in this area are not fully transparent.

Water Resources Management

Gender reflects a major level of differentiation that cuts across lines of class, age, ethnicity and other social categories. Poor women, for example, have less access to water than poor men do. And current studies show that women -as a social category- is among the poorest of the poor in most parts of the world. However, the issue of gender in the water sector does not simply involve access to water. It involves questions of rights, responsibilities and participation (equal participation by men and women both) at all levels. When women are not encouraged to participate in water management, they are simultaneously de-linked from the urgent effort to protect these vital natural resources. However, as a major group of stakeholders, women are unable to effectively participate in these processes due to certain widespread constraints. These include: culturally determined inhibitions to their participation in public activities; their resulting lack of skills and experience in public participation and in leadership and management activities; a widespread lack of recognition of their activities in the productive and economic spheres -particularly in the field of agriculture. There is a need to provide *extra effort* to ensure adequate and active participation of women at all level of project activities.

National Water Policy (1998) stated that, “*to develop a state of knowledge and capability that will enable the country to design future water resources management plans by itself with economic efficiency, gender equity, social justice and environmental awareness to facilitate achievement to the water management objectives through broad public participation*”. The Policy gives emphasis on low-income people and women in particular while stated that, “*interests of low-income water users, and that of women, are adequately protected in water resource management*”. Further mentioned that, “*Enabling environment will be created for women to play a key role in local community organizations for management of water resources*”. The policy recognized that women have a particular stake in water management because they are principal providers and carriers of water, main caretaker of the family's health, and participants in many stages of pre and post harvest activities.

Previously lots of projects had been implemented for water management, which could not be sustained after project period. One of the main reasons for failure was lack of people's participation during project implementation. As people were not concerned for implementation they did not feel any responsible for sustainability of the project later on. Lesson learned from the previous

experiences; *people's participation approach* was introduced from the beginning stage of the project. Though the people's participation is not a new concept but it has a specialty in this type of project. The specialty of people's participation is that it has to be ensured from the identification to the implementation of the project. The people also have to be trained for operation and maintenance of the project, as they have to take the responsibility in future. Flood control, drainage and improved irrigation are the main area of implementation of the projects to improve agriculture production and other related activities. In this case water management means mainly open water like water from Canal, Beel, River, Rain, etc. Increase of agriculture production also increases the workload for the men and women from farming family. This may create employment opportunity for destitute women as well as men as agriculture labour and also as domestic labour. The projects are helpful to improve long-term socio-economic condition of the area, as these are multilateral and multidisciplinary processes. This process is helpful to build-up institutional set-up between implementing agency and beneficiaries.

Integrated water resources management refers to the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources for optimizing economic and social welfare. Various good examples exist on how to incorporate gender equity into legislation, policies and programs and integrated water management at local level. Because women's participation in the water sector project is not a very new concept in Bangladesh. For example Compartmentalization Pilot Project (CPP), Tangail and Char Development & Settlement Project (CDSP), Noakhali both the projects ensured women's participation in the local level people's institutions and created various opportunity for the employment of women, i.e. Labour Contracting Society (LCS), Embankment Maintenance Group (EMG), Tree Plantation Caretaker, Hand Tube-well Caretaker, On-farm training & demonstration, Pond fish culture, Catfish culture (Chary in the Bari), Kitchen Gardening, Compost making by water hyacinth, etc. Some other projects also did some similar works, i.e. Early Implementation Project (EIP), System Rehabilitation Project (SRP), etc.

Water and Poverty

In the rural community generally women and men describe poverty mainly in economic terms and then consider their assets, for example; land, housing. They also give priority to income, occupation and dependent, for example; living from hand to mouth, dependence on daily labor for survival, few earners to feed many while employment is a big crisis. The most rigorous forms of poverty are those when economic hardship is aggravated by lack of household members, and unskilled women have to take responsibility without prior preparation. This actually shows that lack of access to and control over the resources for achieving a minimum level of living. Women are aware of availability of domestic water, sanitation and health, and consider as important issues, and referring one of the cause of poverty. It is a multidimensional issue involving income, consumption, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, education, housing, crisis coping capacity, access to credit and other aspects of living. Highly unequal social structure is a cause of widespread poverty, that is increasing while limited access to labour markets, and lack of scope for proper employment those are literate but poor. This is a big frustration of the people living in rural Bangladesh.

There are many ways to think poverty from expert opinion and peoples' perceptions those are living with poverty. Anyway hardcore poverty is defined on the basis of direct calorie intake (1,800 kcal/day/person) and income (\$1/day/person). For 2000, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics estimates 25.0% urban and 18.7% rural population were the below the calorie intake poverty line. UNDP Human Development Report 2002 estimates that 29.1% people in Bangladesh are living on US\$1 or less a day (in 1985 international prices, adjusted for purchasing power parity). According to these estimates, it may be concluded that 25-30 million people in Bangladesh are suffering from abject poverty. Poverty remains substantial in Bangladesh. Over 25 million of Bangladesh's 130 million people live in abject poverty, surviving on less than a dollar in a day.

Water projects seem directly not aimed for poverty alleviation. It is necessary to give emphasis from the beginning stage, if recognized during project design, social and cultural constraints to poverty alleviation can be addressed more effectively. Women need to get priority as they are living with poverty in case of rural and urban. Surface salinisation and saline intrusion into freshwater aquifers are the causes of poverty while small/marginal land holder could not afford high price irrigation water or change the land use for shrimp culture due to lack of cash capital. This is a big problem of coastal zone in Bangladesh. Poor management of ground or surface water and poor sanitation is also the cause of poverty as these affect people's health and may reduce employment opportunity gradually. Flood, Cyclone, Drought all are causes of poverty either due to over water or lack of water, it causes lost of crops, households and even life. River erosion is a big concern to make people landless and resource-less without any prior notice.

Why Gender Concern

Gender is an old word using with new meaning while it refers to power relationship between men and women. But Gender is not an isolated issue- it is an integral part of all relationships, i.e. family systems, social or economic systems. It does not mean only women- it means men and women both, so women should not be treated as an isolated or separate interest group. Women should be treated as development partner of the development project activities and they should be involved at all level of project activities as much as possible considering as a human being. The goal of development could not be achieved if specific plan and expertise do not work to improve women's position and condition. It is needed to think what approach could be initiated for having a balanced community where men and women will not be unequal partner.

“Gender And Development (GAD)” is an important issue and chosen approach for any development activity or project, now a day. The Gender and Development approach focuses on women in terms of their gender relationships with men. GAD addresses the question of power relation between men and women and raise question about relevancy of traditional roles of men and women in different societies. Such as: the gender division of labour, and women's relative access to and control over the resources and their products and/or by-products, choice, status and decision making process. The GAD approach acknowledges all three roles (productive, reproductive & community), even when the focus is on one, and seeks to meet both practical and strategic gender needs. On the other hand, “Women In Development (WID)” focuses on women as biological group and seeks to meet women's problem as females. WID emphasizes on productive capabilities of women and innovation of strategies to remove women's backwardness in productive sectors. WID says that women are disadvantaged in respect of socio-economic condition though in number they are almost fifty-fifty. It is also supported by statistics that women are in lower position than men are, such as: life expectancy, education, nutritional status, etc. So steps should be taken for women development specifically. The strategies are involving women in economic activities, increasing efficiency of women in economic activities and ensuring productive roles of women. It seeks to meet mainly Practical Gender Needs.

Considering practical situation of the different projects area and beneficiaries the approach has to be identified accordingly. It may be WID specific approach or GAD approach or combined approach of WID and GAD. From my practical field experiences I realized that combined approach of WID and GAD is needed to follow in most cases of the development projects working in Bangladesh. I tried to incorporate both WID & GAD as combined approach the projects I worked for. I was working as Gender and Development Specialist for DPHE-DANIDA Water Supply & Sanitation Project, Compartmentalization Pilot Project (CPP), Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP), and Small Scale Water resources Development Sector Project (SSWRDSP) to ensure women's adequate participation in all activities of the projects. In all cases, beneficiaries' forum is must. In some cases this forum formed as temporary committee or for limited time, in other cases government registered cooperative association. Whatever it is a committee or a cooperative society, it should be involved in all phases of work mainly implementation. With the assistance of project staff this forum should be formed with all kinds of beneficiaries i.e. farmer, landless, fisher-folk and

women from all types of families. To ensure women's adequate participation the methodologies were followed are: Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), In-depth interview and allocation of percentage (%) or Quota System, i.e. 30% women membership at the grass root institutions, 30% women membership in the Executive Committee, a minimum of one female office bearer, 30-50% participants for each training must be women, etc.

Examples of Water Resources management Projects

Compartmentalization pilot Project (CPP), Tangail, Bangladesh

CPP was one of the pilot projects implemented under *Flood Action Plan* while it was called FAP-20 also. Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) implemented this project with the assistance of government of Netherlands and Germany. During the implementation period (project already completed on June 30, 2000), *women's participation at all stages of project activities* was one of the main issues of the project. Women were actively participated in the *three tire institutions* of the water users and *holding office bearer positions* as a part of *decision-making process*. Women were trained to be involved with operation and maintenance of the project interventions and there were number of women who actively participated in the process. Women took part of construction and maintenance of embankment, re-excavation of canal, sluice-gate operation, and measurement/reading of water level at the sluice-gate site during flood, as paid staff or volunteer. *Employment opportunity* was created through the mentioned activities while poor women were benefited directly and able to increased their income level. The women involve for *embankment maintenance* for few years as a regular maintenance worker were able to buy land and build houses. Previously they had to stay with the neighbors or relatives (in their kitchen or veranda), it was a great achievement for the poor and destitute women and most of them were divorce or widow or separated. They were able to send their children to the school and provide them sufficient food and clothes.

Rahela Khatun, a divorcee, lives in the village named Gala-Rasulpur of Tangail Sadar Upazila who said, "Only because of my own income- I bought 3-decimal of land and built a house there, I brought my old father to a hospital and bought all his medicine as per prescriptions for the first time in his life, I paid a private tutor to learn how to read and write, I now have access to the Union Parishad Chairman/member who listen to me, and local people now respect me- these all happened due to my job as group leader of the embankment maintenance work provided by the CPP. CPP gave us equal pay for similar work done by male labour. CPP introduced force savings system (initially we did not like it and we could not trust them that we will get our money back) by which I had Tk.10,000/ savings like other members of my group by three years, this is simply unbelievable for the women in our class."

Rina Begum lives in the village of Bhurbhuria of Tangail who expressed her feelings by saying, "When my husband became sick/paralyzed and could not earn money I was in a terrible situation with two young daughters and a boy as this was happened suddenly. I moved from Dhaka to my home village in Tangail but there was no scope for women for having an honorable work, rather than earthwork that even with half wages of a male labour. I felt helpless then I tried to be a member of a NGO and getting some loan but that was a long process. I borrowed some money from local moneylender then bought some chicken, most of those died due to diseases and I became frustrated. I was always keen to know if there is any job opportunity. Once some officers came in our village and held a meeting with the villagers. They were talking something different from NGO that made me interested to know what actually they want to do with the villagers. I was told that there will be a sluice gate on the Khal near to my house, an embankment will be constructed and some more interventions they mentioned. I became hopeless and thought that I have no business with them and it is just waste of my time. But I continued joining the meetings as those are held at my own village. Once I became a member of a committee by the local peoples' vote but I did not know what to do when I raised that I was told I would be trained by the project. That was my entry point.

Afterwards I got different types of training on roles and responsibilities of a committee member, what is meant by water resources management, why women involvement is needed, when a sluice gate must be opened and when to be closed, what will be the outcome of these intervention, on-farm testing and demonstration, pond fish culture, poultry rearing and vaccination, etc. There was a network (**SCWMC women network**) between women members of the different committees those were called Sub-compartment water management committee (SCWMC) where we shared our experiences, discussed the problems and solutions, making plan for future activities and what sorts of work could be identified for the women. We were trained by the network meeting **how to speak publicly**, how to raise hand again and again if I need to speak but chairperson has no attention to me (ignorance because of a woman), why women must get extra attention, etc. At the beginning it was like a little funny game to me- but **when I started work with my male colleagues, I realized the need of those training**. Women network meeting explored a scope to bring the issues of ignorance of our presence in a committee meeting, and we tried to find out more options to make us (women) not only visible but also active in participation in the meeting and showed interest of having responsibility. Now I am happy to say that I am one of the **direct beneficiaries** of the project- we get **three crops** from the land we use to get one crop only, I have **water for whole year in my pond** having a channel with the khal where I do fish cultivation and duck farming, I finally succeeded to establish a **poultry farm**, my homestead land is full of vegetables and fruits plants, I am happy for my husband's treatment who is better now, my son become an electrical mechanic with proper training, I could wear golden ornaments and I have a well-furnished house with pacca floor- **these all are more than my dream**.

What did CPP gives me? Money? I must say no. What else then? I should say, a way to forward in the right direction. How? CPP provided me some practical training on different aspects, water management interventions for my village for which I could **utilize my local resources** like land, pond, homestead land and above all assisted to build my **mental strength** to cope with the change environment and **willingness to take part in leadership** process. I am very happy that in my village and also surroundings, now people know me and **respect me** even people ask me for **mediation** (Shalish) of complicated situation of families in particular women issue.”

Small Scale Water Resources Development Sector Project (SSWRDSP)

Small Scale Water Resources Development Sector Project (SSWRDSP) is one of the biggest projects working in the water sector in Bangladesh. This is called small scale because each project (subproject) is covered not more than 1000ha of agriculture land. A total of 280 subprojects under SSWRDSP-1 already implemented by 30 June 2002 and SSWRDSP-2 is started from 1 July 2002. SSWRDSP is implemented by Local Government Engineering Department of Bangladesh with the financial assistance from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Government of Netherlands (GON) including Beneficiary contribution. Beneficiary Participation and Project Management (BPPM) has been assisted as advisory technical assistance team for SSWRDSP-1 and Advisory Technical Assistance team (ADTA) is assisting for SSWRDSP-2 while both the team consist a national gender specialist as full time consultant. For SSWRDSP-2, gender issues get more preference, as a result an expatriate Gender Expert also on board in ADTA team.

What are the achievements of SSWRDSP-1 regarding gender? These may consider as an attempt to reach women- ensured easy access to the institutional process by the women from farming, fishing and landless family and extended opportunity for women to be the member of the Water Management Cooperative Association (WMCA). **Allocation of a quota to ensure women participation**, a minimum of 30% membership in a WMCA and 30% membership of First Management Committee (FMC) were reserved for female. Though there is only one **female chairperson of WMCA** at Charmonai FCD subproject of Barishal, she is a woman who has been discharging her responsibilities efficiently. **Capacity building and awareness raising** training for staff and beneficiaries to build awareness of men and women on importance of women participation in the project interventions was an important event and that was ensured through adding the **gender session in the different modules of training** for staff and beneficiaries as well. Arranged some **special**

training to train WMCA women member for the development of their skill on various IGA related to project interventions- training on cooperative management, **Exposure visit** to BARD & RDA groups, participation in the weekly meeting, participation in the folk drama and songs with project concept, participation in the MC/O&M Committee meeting, agriculture/environment training for the women members of WMCA. **Creation of Employment** for destitute women by the project through LCS, Tree Plantation Caretaker, etc., **access to micro credit** for increasing income through IGA. Attempt has been taken to **involve women in livelihood activities**, for example; Seasonal Vegetable Production & Seed Processing, Pond fish culture and Fingerling production. Other **local partners were also trained**, for example; Training workshop on Water Resources Management for Union Parishad representative. Orientation on **MIS Data Collection Procedures** for the project staff was arranged for having adequate gender disaggregated data. Some **field studies** have been conducted to observe women's involvement in LCS work, payment to LCS, etc. Arranged a few video show, **documentary film** prepared on gender perspective highlighting gender role and gender division of labor, for familiarization with gender perspective for senior/midlevel/field staff of LGED, and beneficiaries as well. Actively participated to prepare a "**LGED Gender Equity Strategy**" and "**Gender Action Plan for Rural, urban and Water Sector of LGED**" and assisted for "**Gender based Training of trainers (TOT)**" for senior and mid-level managers of LGED. Assisted for formation of **LGED Gender and Development Forum**.

Rima Begum, middle age housewife, resident of Ichali village of Sadar Upazila of Jessore district, a member of WMCA received training on pond fisheries and fingerlings collection for a week from Mymensingh Fisheries Research Institute with the assistance of SSWRDSP. She became a **local trainer of the pond fish cultivation** though she is not literate. She is a member of Operation & Maintenance sub-committee and she prefer to collect peoples' contribution after harvesting season and in kind instead of cash. She said, "Village people are **reluctant to pay cash money** rather they are glad to pay in kinds, if you visit them immediately after harvesting season, when they have paddy or fish or jute or wheat at home."

Hosnara Begum, a member of WMCA of Haridhara Sub-project of Domar Upazila of Nilphamari district. She attended in a workshop while she raised the issue of equal pay for earthwork done by labor Contracting Society for construction of embankment or re-excavation of khal. She was told that men cut/bring more earth and women cut/bring less than men, that's why women are paid less. She was not satisfied with the explanation while her argument was, "**are all men cut/bring same amount of earth? Why all men are paid same amount?** Do all men have equal strength? Why women should not be paid as equal of men's wages while they are in the same group? Isn't it unfair and injustice? I think women do more work because they do not waste their time for smoking or gossiping in a tea stall during work. A woman is always in tension for the kids and family, and she wants to go back there as early as possible. So she wants to complete her task without any disturbance. I believe **a woman has the right to get equal wages as a man**, because she uses her money for her family, not only for herself and many cases poor women are the **head of households** though it is not well recognized by the community but that is true".

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