Extent of Empowerment of Rural Women Beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II Programme

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Abstract:

The main purpose of the study was to determine the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II programme. Sixty rural women beneficiaries were selected using random sampling method who involved in the SHOUHARDO II programme from 381 rural women beneficiaries and another sixty women were selected who were not involved in the SHOUHARDO II programme (control group). Doribhabkhali village of Bhabkhali Union Parisad of Mymensingh Sadar Upazila under Mymensingh district was the locale of the study. Data were collected from 01 April to 30 April, 2015 with the help of structured interview schedule, which prepared carefully after conducting two FGD sessions. Majority rural women beneficiaries (66.7 percent) had medium empowerment while 10 percent and 23.3 percent had low and high empowerment respectively. In control group, majority (68.3 percent) had low empowerment while 18.3 percent and 13.3 percent had very low and medium empowerment respectively. It was found that significant differences existed in overall empowerment between rural women beneficiaries and control group women. Among eleven variables age, individual contribution to the annual family income, training experience, extension media contact and knowledge on training activities had significant positive relationship with the empowerment

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of rural women beneficiaries while household size had significant negative relationship. Results of multiple regression analysis revealed that the influential factors on the extent of empowerment were age, household size and knowledge on training activities. The R² value indicated that, three explanatory variables all together explained 50.7 percent variance of the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries.

Key words: Empowerment, rural women beneficiaries, SHOUHARDO II programme, and training

Bangladesh is a densely populated country and the rate of population growth is increasing day by day. The growth rate of population is 1.3 per annum. This agricultural based country having total population approximately 147.57 million (male population is 71.2 million and female population is 71.1 million). Thus women constitute about half (49.4 percent) of the total population (BBS, 2012). Developing countries like Bangladesh agriculture plays a vital role to keep active the wheel of our national economy. It is the women who have started the agricultural activities first in the ancient time. Women today are ruling over the world and making their mark in various fields with the dedication and hard work shown by them to excel in their area of expertise. Today around one crore sixty eight lakh women engage in agriculture, industry and different sectors (Shah, 2015). According to Bangladesh Labor Force Survey 2010, there were 2.27 lakh women construction workers and 2.57 crore agricultural labors in which 64 percent are women in our country. Seventy two percent women construction workers are paid less than the male ones (Hosen, 2015). In our society women's are in a disadvantageous position. In secondary and higher secondary education the participation of women is equal with men but in higher education and government job sector participation is still limited (women 24 percent and male 76 percent). Different

specialist works with this issue and showed that this occurred due to 66 percent girls got married before becoming 18 years (Ahmed, 2015).

Study shows that they have 47 percent education facilities (BBS, 2009), 53 percent have moderate to high decision making ability about family planning, 42 percent social mobility (visiting clinic, friends, relatives) (Mahmud, 2002), 93 percent have low ownership of assets etc. (Parveen, 2004). Beside this, 4,654 women suffered oppression while 939 rapes took place in 2014 (Anonymous, 2015). This indicates less empowerment of women. To empower rural women many GOs and NGOs working in our country. They conduct a number of programs and projects for rural women empowerment. Like these SHOUHARDO II program (Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities II) is undertaken to empower rural women. SHOUHARDO II program funded by USAID, partnership with CARE Bangladesh and Bangladesh Government. This program has made a great stride in the fight against poverty. This program is an integrated initiative that improves livelihood, empowering rural women, increases local knowledge of and access to quality basic health and nutrition. SHOUHARDO II program implementation started on March, 2011 and ended in February, 2015. SHOURDO II program works for rural women to improve their situation that leads to women empowerment. To know the extent of empowerment through this program following specific objectives were formulated:

1. To describe the socio-economic characteristics of the rural women beneficiaries;
2. To determine the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II program;
3. To determine the factors influencing the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II program.

METHODOLOGY

Study area

Doribhabkhali village of Bhabkhali Union Parisad of Mymensingh Sadar Upazila under Mymensingh district were the locale of the study. The upazila where SHOUHARDO II program are getting popularity among rural women was a major criteria for selecting the study location.

Sampling procedure and sample size

The total number of rural women beneficiaries of the village was 381, out of which 16 percent (60) were selected as sample and 60 women were selected as control group, who were not part of this program. For selecting sample number of the study random sampling method was used.

Data collection

The data was collected with the help of structured interview schedule from 01 April to 30 April, 2015. Two FGDs was conducted to construct interview schedule carefully keeping the objectives of the study in mind.

Measurement of variables

Empowerment of rural women beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II program was the focus variable of the study while characteristics such as age, formal education, household size, farm size, annual family income (a. Total income b. Individual contribution to annual family income), training experience, credit facility, extension media contact, knowledge on training activities, participation in income generating activities were the independent variables of the study. An overall empowerment score was computed for each rural woman respondent by compiling scores obtained from four dimensions such as (i) Participation in household decision making, (ii) control over capital, (iii) participation in social and

political activities and (iv) social mobility. In total 28 statements were used in four dimensions (seven statements in each dimension) to measure the extent of empowerment. For each dimension, 4-point rating scale was used. Respondents rural women were asked to provide their responses against 4-point scale those weightages were 3, 2, 1 and 0. Thus, the empowerment scores of a respondent could range from 0 to 84. Here, 84 indicating "high empowerment" and 0 indicating "no empowerment".

1. Participation in household decision making

To measure the extent of participation in household decision making, the respondents were asked to indicate her decision against 7 statements using 4-point rating scale: fully own decision, decision mainly taken by discussing with husband, joint decision (all family members) and no power of decision while weightages assigned to these responses were 3, 2, 1 and 0, respectively. Thus, the extent of participation score of a respondent rural woman for household decision making ranged from 0 to 21. Here, 0 indicating "no participation" and 21 indicating "highest participation" in household decision making. In order to determine the extent of participation of a specific statement under the dimension of participation in household decision making total observed score of that statement was determined by the following formula:

Total observed score of a statement

$$= (DM_o \times 3) + (DM_h \times 2) + (DM_j \times 1) + (DM_n \times 0)$$

Where,

DM$_o$ = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating fully own decision for a statement

DM$_h$ = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating decision mainly taken by discussing with husband for a statement

DM$_j$ = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating joint decision for a statement

DM_n = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating no power of decision for a statement

Total number of rural women beneficiaries: 60

Thus, total observed score of a statement under the dimension of participation in household decision making could be ranged from 0 to 180 while 0 indicating "no participation" and 180 indicating "highest participation" for household decision making.

2. Control over capital

To measure the extent of control over capital, the respondents were asked to indicate her response against 7 statements using 4-point rating scale: high, medium, low and not at all while weightages assigned to these responses were 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Thus, the extent of control score of a respondent rural woman for control over capital ranged from 0 to 21. Here, 0 indicating "no control" and 21 indicating "highest control" in control over capital.

In order to determine the extent of control of a specific statement under the dimension of control over capital total observed score of that statement was determined by the following formula:

Total observed score of a statement

$$= (CO_h \times 3) + (CO_m \times 2) + (CO_l \times 1) + (CO_n \times 0)$$

Where,

CO_h = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating high for a statement

CO_m = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating medium for a statement

CO_l = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating low for a statement

CO_n = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating not at all for a statement

Total number of rural women beneficiaries: 60

Thus, total observed score of a statement under the dimension of control over capital could be ranged from 0 to 180 while 0 indicating "no control" and 180 indicating "highest control" for control over capital.

3. Participation in social and political activities

To measure the extent of participation in social and political activities, the respondents were asked to indicate her response against 7 statements using 4-point rating scale: frequently, occasionally, seldom and not at all while weightages assigned to these responses were 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Thus, the extent of participation score of a respondent rural woman for social and political activities ranged from 0 to 21. Here, 0 indicating "no participation" and 21 indicating "highest participation" in social and political activities.

In order to determine the extent of participation of a specific statement under the dimension of participation in social and political activities total observed score of that statement was determined by the following formula:

Total observed score of a statement

$$= (SPP_f \times 3) + (SPP_o \times 2) + (SPP_s \times 1) + (SPP_n \times 0)$$

Where,

SPP_f = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating frequently for a statement

SPP_o = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating occasionally for a statement

SPP_s = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating seldom for a statement

SPP_n = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating not at all for a statement

Total number of rural women beneficiaries: 60

Thus, total observed score of a statement under the dimension of participation in social and political activities could be ranged from 0 to 180 while 0 indicating "no participation" and 180 indicating "highest participation" for participation in social and political activities.

4. Social mobility

To measure the extent of social mobility, the respondents were asked to indicate her response against 7 statements using 4-point rating scale: frequently, occasionally, seldom and not at all while weightages assigned to these responses were 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Thus, the extent of mobility score of a respondent rural woman for social mobility ranged from 0 to 21. Here, 0 indicating "no mobility" and 21 indicating "highest mobility" for social mobility.

In order to determine the extent of mobility of a specific statement under the dimension of social mobility total observed score of that statement was determined by the following formula:

Total observed score of a statement

$$= (SM_f \times 3) + (SM_o \times 2) + (SM_s \times 1) + (SM_n \times 0)$$

Where,

SM_f = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating frequently for a statement

SM_o = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating occasionally for a statement

SM_s = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating seldom for a statement

SM_n = Total number of rural women beneficiaries indicating not at all for a statement

Total number of respondent rural women beneficiaries: 60

Thus, total observed score of a statement under the dimension of social mobility could be ranged from 0 to 180 while 0

indicating "no mobility" and 180 indicating "highest mobility" for social mobility.

Data analysis

Some statistical measures such as mean, range, number and percentage and standard deviation were used whenever necessary. The inferential statistics such as independent samples t-test, pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r), multiple regression analysis were conducted to interpret the findings.

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \beta_{10} X_{10} + \beta_{11} X_{11} + \epsilon_i$$

Where, β_0: Constant, X_1 : Age, X_2: Formal education, X_3: Household size, X_4 : Farm size, X_5: Total income, X_6: Individual contribution to annual family income, X_7: Training experience, X_8: Credit facility, X_9: Extension media contact, X_{10}: Knowledge on training activities, X_{11}: Participation in income generating activities and ϵ_i: Error term.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The empowerment score in respect of different dimensions such as participation in household decision making, control over capital, participation in social and political activities and social mobility ranged from 8 to 21, 7 to 21, 6 to 21 and 0 to 21 respectively for rural women beneficiaries and 4 to 16, 4 to 18, 2 to 16 and 1 to 11 respectively for control group women. The overall empowerment score of the rural women beneficiaries range from 32 to 84 with a mean of 54.48 and SD of 12.40. In control group, total empowerment score ranged from 17 to 49 with a mean of 28.31 and SD of 8.50 against the possible of 0 to 84. The women were classified into 3 categories on the basis of their empowerment score and presented in Table 1.

Table. 1 Comparative distribution of rural women beneficiaries and control group according to extent of empowerment (n=60)

Dimensions of empowerment	Observed Score	Category of women	Percent	Mean	SD	t-value
Participation in household decision making	8-21	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		13.03	3.23	9.707**
		Low (0-8)	3.3			
		Medium (9-15)	85			
		High (>15)	11.7			
	4-16	**Women under control group (n=60)**		7.86	2.55	
		Low (0-8)	71.7			
		Medium (9-15)	26.7			
		High (>15)	1.7			
Control over capital	7-21	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		14.6	3.27	12.211**
		Low (0-7)	1.7			
		Medium (8-15)	60			
		High (>15)	38.3			
	4-18	**Women under control group (n=60)**		7.63	2.96	
		Low (0-7)	60			
		Medium (8-15)	36.7			
		High (>15)	3.3			
Participation in social and political activities	6-21	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		14.7	3.69	13.153**
		Low (0-7)	3.3			
		Medium (8-15)	43.3			
		High (>15)	53.3			
	2-16	**Women under control group (n=60)**		7.13	2.48	
		Low (0-7)	65			
		Medium (8-15)	33.3			
		High (>15)	1.7			
Social mobility	3-21	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		12.15	4.42	10.222**
		Low (0-6)	15			
		Medium (7-12)	31.7			
		High (>12)	53.3			
	1-11	**Women under control group (n=60)**		5.68	2.10	
		Low (0-6)	68.3			
		Medium (7-12)	31.7			
		High (>12)	0			
Overall empowerment	32-84	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		54.48	12.40	
		Very low (0-20)	0			
		Low (21-40)	10			
		Medium (41-60)	66.7			
		High (61-84)	23.3			
	17-49	**Women under control group (n=60)**		28.31	8.50	13.48**
		Very low (0-20)	18.3			
		Low (21-40)	68.3			
		Medium (41-60)	13.3			
		High (61-84)	0			

Table 1 indicated that majority of the rural women beneficiaries had medium participation in household decision making and

control over capital. Majority of the rural women beneficiaries had high participation in social and political activities and high social mobility. In control group, majority women had low participation in household decision making, control over capital, participation in social and political activities and social mobility. However, from t-value it was found that a significant difference existed in different dimensions of empowerment and overall empowerment between rural women beneficiaries and control group women.

The empowerment status for majority rural women beneficiaries is medium because training on different aspects such as agriculture, health, nutrition, women rights and different laws helps women beneficiaries raise their voice against injustice and increase their mobility, ability to take decision on different issues and increase contribution in family income due to participation in income generating activities through applying the knowledge received from training. Contribution in annual family income helps improve women beneficiaries' status in the family. In previous time, women were restricted to go outside from the house and kept in veil. But with the improvement of their knowledge level and financial contribution reduce restrictions on their social mobility, permit them to participate in different social and political activities ultimately make them empowered.

Characteristics of the Rural Women

Social and Economic characteristics of the rural women have influenced on rural women empowerment. Some selected characteristics of the rural women were determined and presented in Table 2.

Table. 2 Distribution of rural women beneficiaries and control group according to their characteristics (n=60)

Silent features	Observed score range	Category of women	Percent	Mean	SD
	22-68	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**	48.3		
		Young (up to 35)			

Age		Middle age (36-55)	45	37.48	10.66
		Old (>55)	6.7		
	19-62	**Women under control group (n=60)**	75	32.73	8.73
		Young (up to 35)			
		Middle age (36-55)	21.7		
		Old (>55)	3.3		
Formal education	0-10	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**	3.3	3.35	3.15
		No schooling (0)			
		Can sign only (0.5)	45		
		Primary (1-5)	28.3		
		Secondary (6-10)	23.3		
	0-8	**Women under control group (n=60)**	13.3	0.66	1.06
		No schooling (0)			
		Can sign only (0.5)	73.3		
		Primary (1-5)	11.7		
		Secondary (6-10)	1.7		
Household size	1-11	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**	40	5.28	2.02
		Small (1-4)			
		Medium (5-8)	45		
		Large (>8)	15		
	2-9	**Women under control group (n=60)**	33.3	5.45	1.67
		Small (1-4)			
		Medium (5-8)	61.7		
		Large (>8)	5		
Farm size	0.01-0.36	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**	6.7	0.18	0.11
		Landless (<0.02 ha)			
		Marginal (.02-0.2 ha)	45		
		Small (0.21-1 ha)	48.3		
		Medium (1.01-3 ha)	0		
		Large (>3.0 ha)	0		
	0-0.8	**Women under control group (n=60)**	1.7	0.12	0.11
		Landless (<0.02 ha)			
		Marginal (.02-0.2 ha)	83.3		
		Small (0.21-1 ha)	15		
		Medium (1.01-3 ha)	0		
		Large (>3.0 ha)	0		
Total income	3-154	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**	71.7	41.04	37.35
		Low (<50)			
		Medium (51-100)	20		
		High (>100)	8.3		
	3-113.5	**Women under control group (n=60)**	88.3	17.46	28.74
		Low (<50)			
		Medium (51-100)	10		
		High (>100)	1.7		
Individual contribution to the annual family income	0-48	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**	100	4.66	7.83
		Low (<50)			
		Medium (51-100)	0		
		High (>100)	0		

	0-5	**Women under control group (n=60)**	100	0.98	1.12
		Low (<50)			
		Medium (51-100)	0		
		High (>100)	0		
Training experience	0-14	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		3.36	2.36
		Short (0-4)	81.7		
		Medium (5-9)	15		
		Long (>9)	3.3		
	0-1	**Women under control group (n=60)**		0.1	0.30
		Short (0-4)	100		
		Medium (5-9)	0		
		Long (>9)	0		
Credit facility	0-70	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**	66.7	20.83	18.53
		Low (0-20)			
		Medium (21-45)	18.3		
		High (>45)	15		
	0-41	**Women under control group (n=60)**	91.7	9.9	7.91
		Low (0-20)			
		Medium (21-45)	8.3		
		High (>45)	0		
Extension media contact	4-25	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		17.2	4.28
		Low (0-10)	5		
		Medium (11-20)	78.3		
		High (>20)	16.7		
	0-9	**Women under control group (n=60)**		4.6	2.01
		Low (0-10)	100		
		Medium (11-20)	0		
		High (>20)	0		
Knowledge on training activities	12-36	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		26.64	6.59
		Low (0-13)	5		
		Medium (14-26)	33.3		
		High (>26)	61.7		
	4-26	**Women under control group (n=60)**		12.51	4.73
		Low (0-13)	60		
		Medium (14-26)	40		
		High (>26)	0		
Participation in income generating activities	0-11	**Rural women beneficiaries (n=60)**		6.93	3.06
		Low (0-4)	21.7		
		Medium (5-8)	43.3		
		High (>8)	35		
	0-11	**Women under control group (n=60)**		3.90	2.59
		Low (0-4)	66.7		
		Medium (5-8)	30		
		High (>8)	3.3		

Table 2 indicted that rural women beneficiaries of the study area were young to middle aged having average formal education 3.35. Majority (48.3 percent) of the rural women

beneficiaries having small farm size (0.21 to 1ha) and had low total household income with an average value Tk. 41.04 thousand. Their individual contribution in annual family income an average Tk. 4.66 thousand. Most of the training receiver women having short duration training with a mean value of 3.36 days. They took loan from different NGOs with an average Tk. 20.83 thousand. They posses medium extension media contact status with an average score 17.2. As a result of training received majority of the rural women beneficiaries had medium to high knowledge on training activities . Most (43.3 percent) of the rural women beneficiaries had medium participation in income generating activities with average score 6.93.

In control group, majority of the women of the study area were young aged and majority (73.3 percent) can sign their name only having mean 0.66. They had marginal farm size (0.02 to 0.2ha) and had low total household income with an average value Tk. 17.46 thousand. Their individual contribution in annual family income is low. Majority (100 percent) of the respondents not received training facility and very few of Most of training receiver women having short duration training with a mean value of 0.1 days. They took loan from different NGOs with an average Tk. 9.9 thousand. They have been maintaining low extension media contact status with average score 4.6. Lack of training facility majority of the women beneficiaries had low knowledge on training activities and low participation in income generating activities.

Relationship between the Variables

The relationship between empowerment of rural women beneficiaries and their selected characteristics was explored and presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Relationship between empowerment of rural women beneficiaries and their selected characteristics (n= 60)

Focus variable	Selected personal socioeconomic characteristics	Correlation co-efficient (r) with 58 df	Tabulated values of r with 58 df	
			0.05	0.01
Extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II program	Age (X_1)	0.506**		
	Formal education (X_2)	-0.159		
	Household size (X_3)	-0.312*		
	Farm size (X_4)	0.052		
	Total income (X_5)	0.093		
	Individual contribution to the annual family income (X_6)	0.301*	0.25	0.324
	Training experience (X_7)	0.280*		
	Credit facility (X_8)	-0.073		
	Extension media contact (X_9)	0.420**		
	Knowledge on training activities (X_{10})	0.406**		
	Participation in income generating activities (X_{11})	0.047		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The information of Table 3 depicted that age, individual contribution to the annual family income, training experience, extension media contact and knowledge on training activities had significant positive relationship with empowerment of rural women beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II program. On the other hand household size was negatively related with empowerment. Sarker (2005), Rahman (2006) found training experience, extension media contact and knowledge had significant positive relationship with empowerment. Rural women beneficiaries having more age made them more empower because with their increasing age they become more experienced, bear children, family responsibility and able to manage different faced problems. Rural women beneficiaries had received training on different aspects (agriculture, homestead gardening, income generating activities, fisheries). Training helps them to increase their knowledge level, economic contribution in family etc. Beside these, women having more extension media contact may get useful necessary information related to agriculture, health, nutrition etc. As a result, they can improve their earning capability and take part in annual family income.

In order to determine the socio-economic factors influencing on the extent of empowerment of the rural women beneficiaries of the study area multiple regression analysis was used.

Table 4 Summery of the multiple regression analysis showing contribution of the explanatory variables on focus variable

Explanatory variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	23.283	7.375		3.157	.003
Age	.433	.129	.372	3.354	.001
Household size	-1.700	.619	-.278	-2.746	.008
Individual contribution to the annual family income	.243	.160	.153	1.520	.134
Training experience	-.074	.576	-.014	-.128	.899
Extension media contact	.590	.330	.204	1.788	.079
Knowledge on training activities	.485	.212	.258	2.293	.026
n = 60, R^2 = 0.507, F-value = 9.087					

The findings from Table 4 indicated that the determinant factors of empowerment were age (X_1), household size (X_3) and knowledge on training activities (X_{10}). This R^2 value indicated that, three explanatory variables all together explained 50.7 percent variance of the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries.

Regression analysis revealed that age of the rural women beneficiaries had significant positive (0.433) contribution to the rural women empowerment. With the increase of age women bear children, hold family responsibility, work for the welfare of the family, able to solve faced problems and get opportunity to participate in different training program. As a result of these women posses more experience, knowledge and increase right decision taking ability. So, age had positive influence on women empowerment. Naher (2011) found in her study that age was the influential factor to the women empowerment.

The regression coefficient for household size (-1.70) showed a significant negative contribution to the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries through SHOUHARDO II program. In small household size, husband and wife are the main decision maker. For their family welfare

they take all decisions and women opinions also considered due to small family size. But in large household size, the opinions of all family members are taken into accounts to reach a final decision. In this case, with the increase of household size women decisions, rights in different aspects were underestimated and suppressed by the other family members.

Rural women having higher knowledge have more empowerment because through training their knowledge level increased. As a result, they can take part in different income generating activities through using knowledge, their contribution in annual family income has increased. Through economic contribution their position in family and society gets higher and opinions in decision making get value. So, high knowledge on training activities have positive influence on women empowerment. Naher (2011) found in her study that knowledge was the influential factor to the women empowerment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that majority of the rural women beneficiaries had medium level of empowerment. The age, household size, individual contribution to the annual family income, training experience, extension media contact and knowledge on training activities had significant relationships to the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries. However, the strength of the relationship was more or less average. Age, household size and knowledge on training activities were influential variables on the extent of empowerment of rural women beneficiaries. So, there is an ample scope of increasing women empowerment in the study area because empowerment of women can not be achieved in a single step. CARE Bangladesh worked with women empowerment through SHOUHARDO II program. The participants women able to increase their empowerment up to

medium level through this program. So, to increase women empowerment to the highest level a number of necessary steps need to be taken by GOs and NGOs such as selection of aged participants, decreasing family members and providing more opportunities to attend training program so that they can take part in annual family income etc.

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