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Extension Program Impacts on Women's Empowerment via Improving Social Capital

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Women's Empowerment & Social Capital

Women's Empowerment:

- Is key to sustained economic growth and social transformation
- Improves the quality of life of their families and communities

Social Capital:

- Measures participation in social groups
- Has long-term impacts on individuals and communities
- Improves horizontal and vertical networks in groups
- Enhances the effectiveness of a program

Extension Program in Bangladesh

Characteristics of the study area

The study was conducted in two rural districts with mostly low income families. The area has a patriarchal social structure.

Extension Program, 2013-2016: was implemented at the village-level by *Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services* (INGENAES) in partnership with *Caritas Bangladesh* (CB) and *Catholic Relief Services* (CRS).

The primary purpose was to improve household food security by assisting in the production, marketing and financial aspects of farming.

Study Objective

Measure the impacts of the extension projects, *Egiye Jai & Nijera Gori*, on social capital.

Data & Methods

Data: Cross-sectional data collected from two surveys in 2016.

Method: Propensity Score Matching (PSM), a quasi-experimental, method is used to address endogeneity bias.

Logit models are also run to understand the differences in association of social capital and covariates between the treatment and control groups.

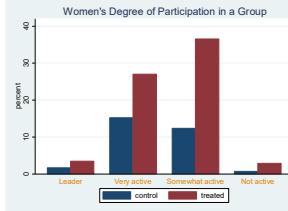


Figure 1 shows that women in the treated group were more active in social groups

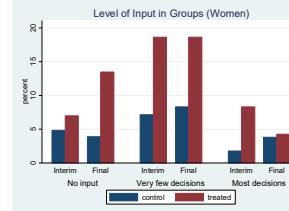


Figure 2 shows that women's level of input in decisions within social groups remained high but declined between the interim and final year.

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Social Capital Indicators	
• Level of community group participation:	a higher value indicates more active group participation
• Level of control over group decision-making:	a lower value indicates more control over group decisions
• Crop disease:	if entire crop in the neighborhood is affected, responsibility owned by: individual (score 1) to owned by entire neighborhood (score 5)
• Dispute between individuals:	is resolved by: individual themselves (score 1) to collectively by the neighborhood (score 5)
• If children are disrespectful to elders:	who corrects them: no one (score 1) to anyone in the neighborhood (score 5)
• Social Capital index:	was created using response to 6 questions on neighborhood - trustworthiness, honesty, willingness to help, availability to help, safety, and prosperity.



Results: Logit Model

- Individuals in treated villages were more likely to be active in a social group.
- Women in treated villages were twice as likely than men to become more active members of a group they belong to.
- However, women, compared to men, were less likely to take up leadership roles in social groups.

Table 1. A Comparison of Matching Quality Results of Before and After Kernel Matching.

	Egiye Jai		Nijera Gori	
	Before matching	After matching	Before matching	After matching
Pseudo R ²	0.32	0.01	0.27	0.01
LR chi-square	772.34	18.14	683.52	20.66
(p > chi-square)	(0.00)	(0.510)	(0.00)	(0.36)
Mean standardized bias	22.80	3.30	22.60	16.90
Median standardized bias	10.50	2.10	4.00	4.00

Table 2: Impact of Egiye Jai and Nijera Gori Project on the Social Capital Indicators using PSM¹ method

	Egiye Jai	Nijera Gori
WOMEN in community groups		
No. of groups they belong to [c]	0.488*** (0.133)	1.112*** (0.104)
Level of group participation [c]	0.049 (0.114)	-0.162*** (0.055)
Level of control in decision-making [c]	0.070 (0.131)	0.080 (0.086)
MEN in community groups		
No. of groups they belong to [c]	0.001 (0.022)	0.002 (0.061)
Level of group participation [c]	0.107 (0.206)	-0.314** (0.142)
Level of control in decision-making [c]	0.003 (0.173)	0.272 (0.173)
Crop disease [o]	3.458*** (0.607)	2.486*** (0.650)
Dispute [o]	1.829*** (0.240)	0.925*** (0.250)
Disrespectful to elders [o]	1.280*** (0.203)	1.753*** (0.275)
Social capital index [c]	0.443*** (0.133)	0.394*** (0.068)

Note: Robust SE are reported in parenthesis.

‡ PSM: Propensity Score Matching

* significant at 10 %, ** at 5 %, and *** at 1 % level.

[c]: continuous dependent variable.

[o]: ordered categorical dependent variable

Results: Matching Method

- Women in treatment villages belonged to more social groups than men in treatment villages and women in control villages.
- Villagers in treatment villages worked together to resolve issues around crop disease, disputes between neighborhoods, and child's disrespect to elderly issues.
- Beneficiaries of the two extension project experienced an increase in the social capital index score by 0.44 (or 0.44/6) and 0.39 (or 0.39/6)

Implications

Findings are in concordance with the conservative belief system prevalent in villages where the program was implemented.

In a conservative patriarchal society, women empowerment could be better achieved by a gradual transition from active participation to taking up leadership roles. This would help build up society and garner more support.

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