

Women Empowerment through Participation in Income Generation Activities in Slum Area: A case study of Rajshahi City

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Abstract

Women empowerment is an important factor to develop any developing country like Bangladesh. Though the half of the population of our country is female, it is impossible for us to develop our country without giving any consideration to this section. Nowadays, women are not only involved in household chores but also they are involved in outside works. But, the rate of women empowerment in the slum is literally low than the other educated women in the city. The aim of this study is to identify the existing condition of women's participation in income generation activities and to compare their income generation activities with men. For this study, Vodra rail slum area in Rajshahi has been selected as study area. Vodra rail slum area is not very far away from the city center but the life of people in this area is totally different from the people just of the opposite of the road. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is used as a method where cause-effect diagram and pair-wise matrix are used to find out the actual causes of their unemployment. Many causes have found why they have a problem and the effects of this problem. Finally, some recommendations are provided that why women empowerment is important to change the present condition of this slum. The result of this study will show the exact scenario of slums in Bangladesh.

Keyword: Women Empowerment, Income Generation Activities, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Daily Activity Schedule, Cause-effect Diagram, Pair-wise Matrix and Service and Opportunity Map.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study:

Our study area is Railgate slum area. It is situated in the Vodra and between word no: 19 and 26 in Rajshahi City Corporation. The conditions of the people in this area are very poor. They lead a very complex life. Both the husband and wife are engaged in employment sector but the level of income is very low. The employment source is very common in this area. More than 70% women collect vangri, polythene, papers and begging, others are involved others household work (Field survey, 2017). Some of them are rickshaw puller and engaged as a maid in others household. As our study is on the women empowerment, the women are engaged in employment sector than a man in large number in this slum. It is heard that they also do needle work and the most attractive matter is that women also pull rickshaw and van here. Most of the people are illiterate. Only a few are able to sign their name. They do not get help from any NGOs except an NGO named "Shakti" who give a small amount of loan. But they have own "Mohila Somiti" running by them, aunty Janet an American lady is running a Morning star school which has both educational and tanning facilities. Co-operation with NGOs and Social Organizations in Women Development. Work Plan and

Program Strategy, Women Development Training Institute, Institutional Framework and Strategy are some recommendation to increase awareness for women empowerment.

1.2 Objectives:

- To identify the existing condition of women's participation in income generation activities.
- To compare their income generation activities with men.

2. Methodology

Different steps of the methodologies are described below :

2.1 Study area selection:

For our study, it was important for us to find an area where women participation in income generation activities is large. So we had to make a survey in many areas. But from our survey, we have found that women participation in income generation activity in Vodra rail Slum area is larger than other. So we decided to choose this area for our PRA survey.



Figure 01: Vodra rail slum

(Source: Google Earth Image ,2017)

2.2 Literature review:

Different types of literature, papers, policies, definitions that was relevant to this study had been reviewed.

2.3 Methods (PRA tools):

In order to identify the existing condition of women's participation in income generation activities, a variety of PRA tools such as Daily activity schedule, Cause-Effect Diagram, Pair-Wise Ranking Method, and Service and opportunity map have been used with ensuring the active participation of the slum women.

2.3.1 Daily activity schedule:

Daily activity schedule means daily schedule, daily activity profile, daily routine and 24 hours method is a popular PRA method. It is used to explore the activities of an individual, group or community on a daily basis. It increases gender sensitization and create and awareness about who is responsible for what activities in the community (Kumar S, 2002).

2.3.2 Cause Effect Diagram:

Cause and effect diagram is a popular PRA method which is also known as fishbone or Ishikawa diagram. It is the method which falls under the larger family of flow and linkage diagram methods. It also helps to find out the actual causal factors of a phenomenon, activity, event or problem and the effects thereof (Kumar S, 2002).

2.3.3 Pair-Wise Ranking Method:

Pair wise ranking is based on a history of wide application in market research which helps to determine people's priorities and preferences. It also leads to developing insights into people's decisions-making processes and the criteria used by them to arrive at their preferences (Kumar S, 2002).

2.3.4 Service and Opportunity Map:

Services and opportunities map is another PRA method which helps to explore the spatial realities of the local people with specific reference to the local people's perceptions of the services and opportunities available (Kumar S, 2002).

3. Data Analysis

In the data analysis part, we have analyzed our collected data with the help of different PRA tools. We have arranged this chapter according to our objectives. For our first objective which was to identify the existing condition of women's participation in income generation activities; we have used three different types of tools such as pair wise ranking, cause effect diagram and activity schedule mapping and for our second objectives which were to compare their (women) income generation activities with men; we have collected survey data through household survey from the slum people.

3.1 Daily Activity Schedule:

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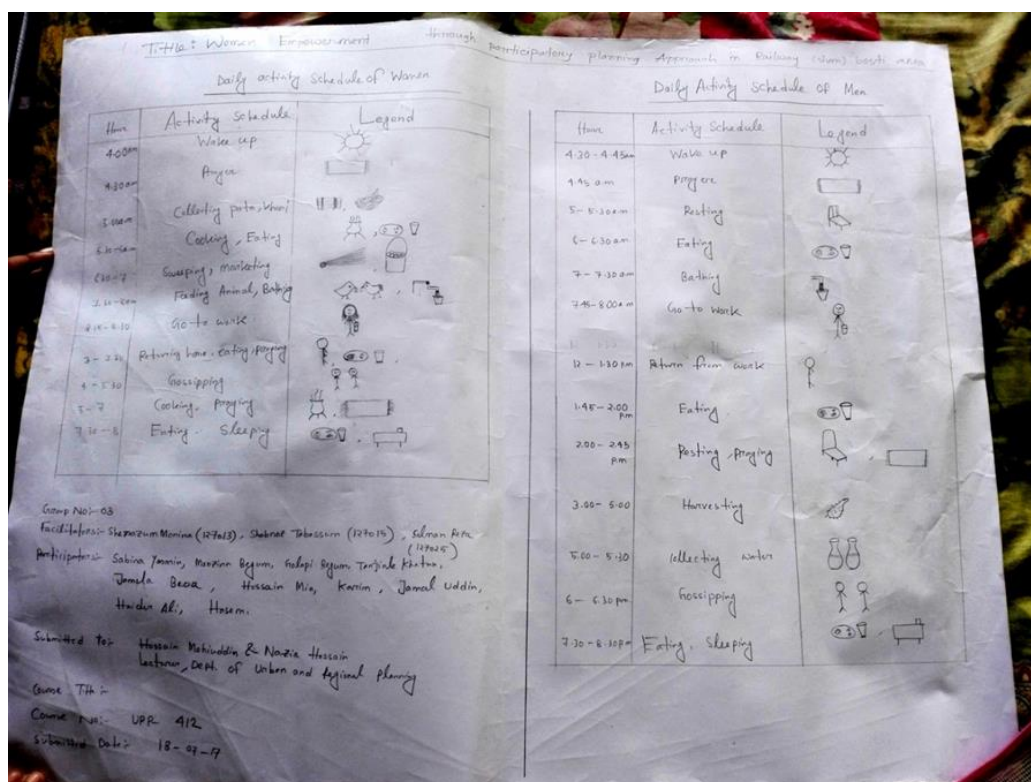


Figure 02: Daily activity schedule of rail bosti

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Both men and women wake up early in the morning and start their daily chores. Women start their day with working and they have no fixed time limitation of their work. In some family, women have to do both men and women duties. They have to work hard both inside and outside of the house. They are fully dedicated to their family and also work hard to maintain their family. Their outside work is to collect vangri, work in others house, pulling a van and working in husband's shop. From this diagram, it is also visible that men get some time to take their food where as women have to prepare it then if they get some time, they take their meal.

3.2 Cause-effect diagram & Pair-wise matrix:

From the field survey, according to our topic, it has found that the main problem is lack of women's employment opportunities. We have found nine main causes that are responsible behind this problem such as lack of entrepreneurship within community, illiteracy, poverty, migrated people, lack of skill, problems in family life, lack of own land ownership, lack of resources, no bank loan etc. For this problem, there are a lot of effects on slum people. The effects are lack of social recognition, no savings, low income, low lifestyle, malnutrition, lack of shelter, child labor etc.

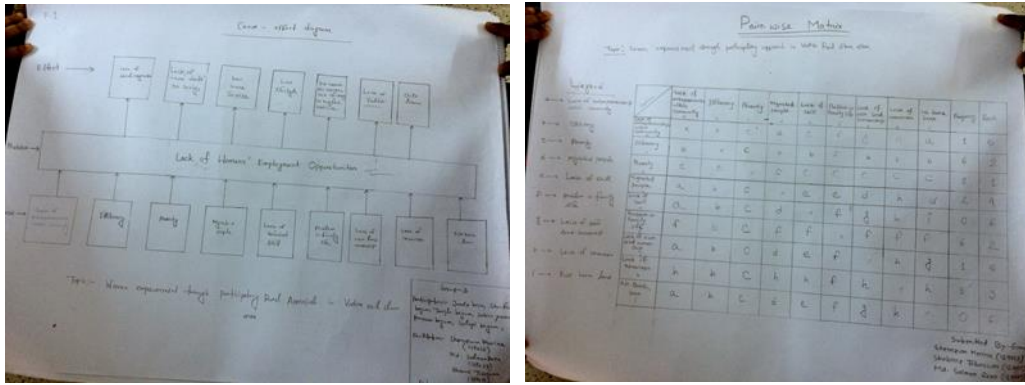


Figure 03: Cause effect diagram and Pair wise matrix of the study area

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

A pair-wise matrix has conducted to sort out the top ranked causes which are the most responsible for the problem. After conducting pair-wise matrix among nine causes, four top ranked causes are found and these causes are poverty, illiteracy, problems in family life and lack of resources. Again it is conducted cause-effect diagram for these sorted top ranked causes considering each of the causes itself a problem.

Firstly, to consider poverty itself a problem, from the field survey we found three causes behind this problem and they are illiteracy, lack of resources and lack of land ownership. Poverty has a various disastrous effect on social life such as low lifestyle, family problem, the rise of social crime, lack of social recognition and so on.

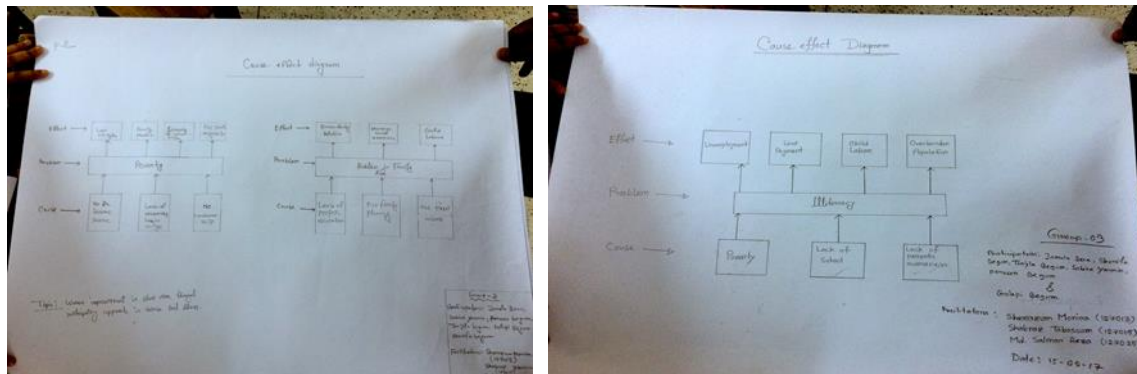


Figure 04: Cause effect diagram of the study area

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

And for illiteracy, causes are poverty, lack of school, lack of parent’s awareness etc. Illiteracy creates many negative effects such as unemployment, low payment, child labor, overburden population etc.

Thirdly, we consider lack of resources as a problem and causes behind this problem are a seasonal storm, unconsciousness about family planning and little amount of inherited land etc. And the effects are unemployment, lack of savings, poor lifestyle, migration etc.

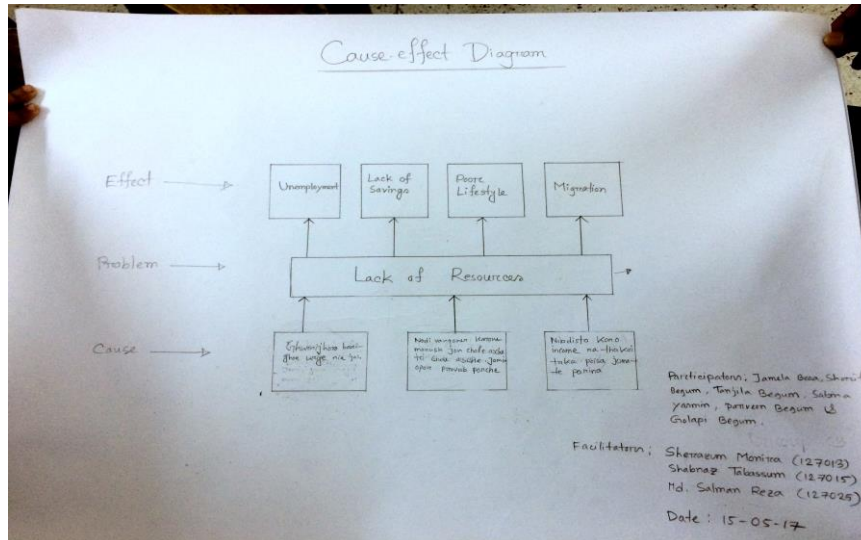


Figure 05: Cause effect diagram of the study area

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

And finally, the cause-effect diagram is drawn for problems in family life. From the field survey, we found the causes behind this problem and they are illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment rate. And the effects caused by the problem, are broken family relation, decrease social awareness, child labor etc.

3.3 Service and Opportunity Map:

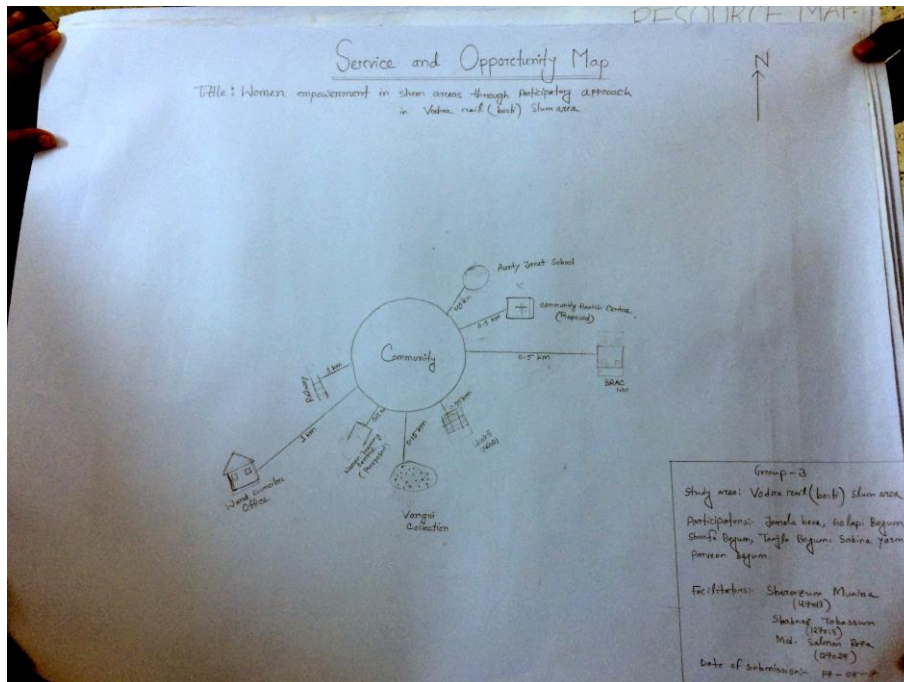


Figure 06: Service and opportunity analysis of Rail slum

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

From field survey, we have found that there exists many services and potential opportunities relating to women empowerment in slum areas through participating approach in Vodra rail (bosti) slum area. Vangi Collection activities has strong influence on the community and it

is located within the community which distance is only 0.15 km. Most of the women involve in vangri collection activity. Shakti NGO also has strong influence on the community which is only 0.25 km far away from the community. There is potentialities for a women training centre on south-western part of the study area and a community health care centre on the north-eastern zone, both will be located within 0.5 km from the community.

Though Morning star children care school established by an American women named Zanet is located 1.25 km away from the community but it has the strongest influence on the community's women as it provides sewing training for the slum women and provides education facilities for the unprivileged children of the slum area. An NGO named BRAC is located only 0.5 km away from the community but it has no influence on the community as community people don't get any help from this NGO. Railway and ward councilor office both are located within 1 km from the community but have very little influence on the community.

3.4 Survey data analysis:

After completing this analysis of the existing condition of women and the reason behind their condition; we have compared their role with their spouse and find some interesting result.

Table 01: Comparison between men and women involvement in income generation activities

Year	% of women involvement in income generation activities	% of men involvement in income generation activities
1968	5	95
1980	15	85
1987	45	45
2015	50	50
2017	60	40

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

According to the survey, this sum was established in 1968. There was a less number of houses in this slum. For this reason, women involvement was only 5% of income generation activities because there was limited work for women. From Figure 07, it is shown that the percentage of women involvement has been increased with the passing of time and now-a-days more than half of the women involve in income generation activities to support their family.

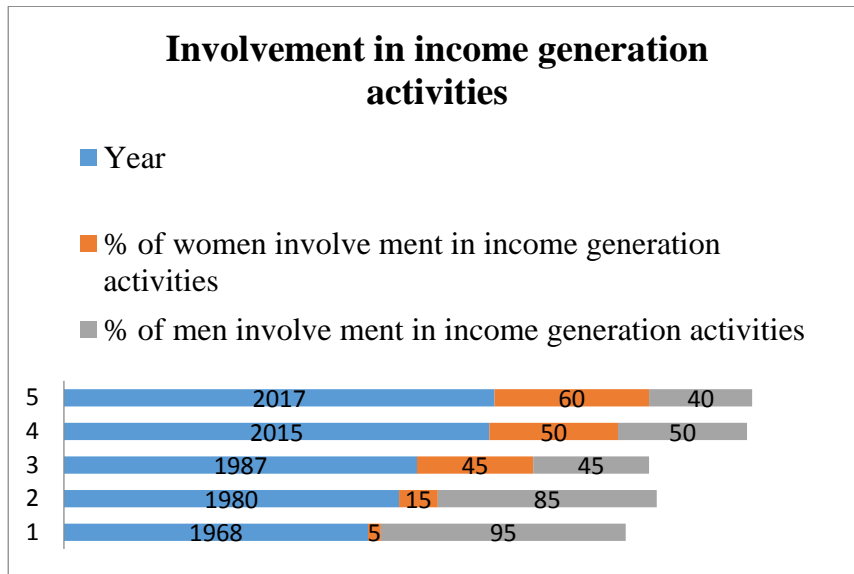


Figure 07: Involvement in income generation activities

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

From the Figure 07 it has been found that there is both increase and decrease of men involvement in income generation. That means in that year where men participation was less; the women of their house support their family most than them. In 1968 when the people came to live in this slum most of the men go another place to find some work. But when the participation of women increases in income generation sector men found competitors in this sector so their participation has been decreased.

Table 02: Activity of women

Name of activity	% of activity
swing	3
Pulling van	2
Vangri collection	50
Household worker	15
Begging	10
Helping husband in their work	20

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

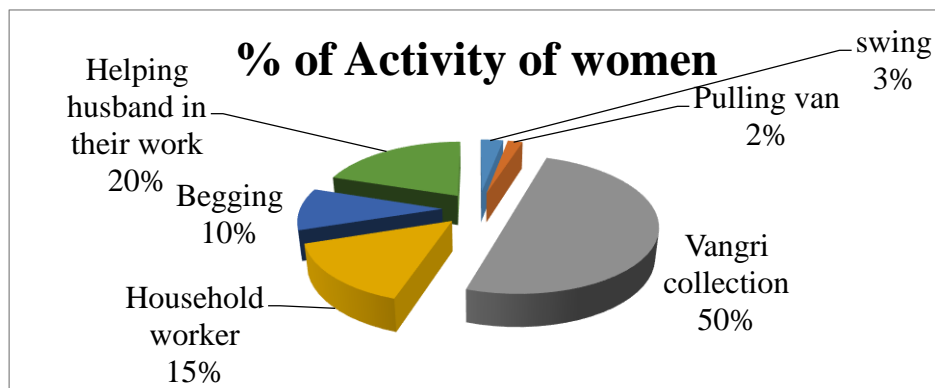


Fig 08: Activity of women

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

From the chart, it has been found that 50 % that means almost half of the women involved in the vangri collection that means in income generation activity and second large portion involve in another working sector that is work in others household. Almost 20% women help their husband in their work. With the help of foreign lady janet some women start to do swing work but this portion is very small. There are some disabled people in the slum. Their wife or daughter have no work in spite of begging. About 10% women beg for their family. Most interesting fact is that women pull van in this area to maintain her family.

Table 03: Activity of men in slum area

Name of activity	% of activity
Pulling van	5
Pulling rickshaw	30
Vangri collection	25
Begging	25
Working in stall	15

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

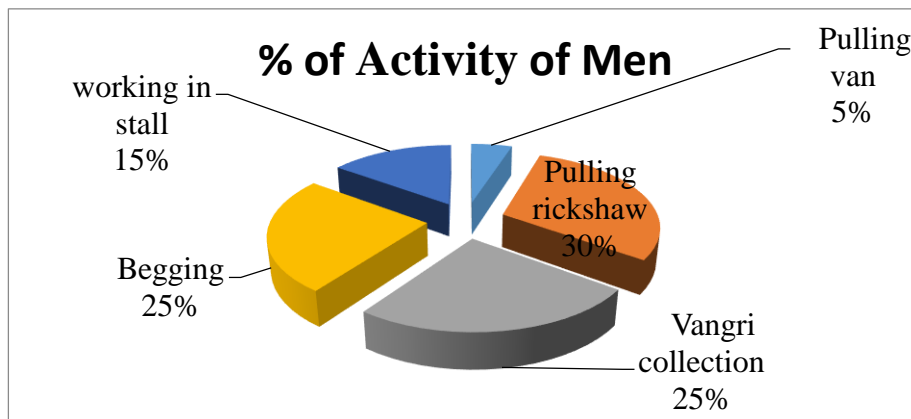


Figure 09: Activity of Men in slum area

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

From the figure 09, it has been found that men activity is very in this slum area. They pull rickshaw or van, work in the stall, and collect vangri or begging. But it is fact that 25 % that means one fourth people (men specially) involve in begging. The disable and old men in this area start begging very early in the morning in different part of Rajshahi city. About 25% men also collect family with their family member. Some of them work in stall and pull van. Though this portion is very small, a large number of people pull rickshaw which is 30 %.

Table 04: Women involvement is some savings works

Doing some saving works	% of Women
Doing mohila somiti	80
Take loan from NGO	20

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

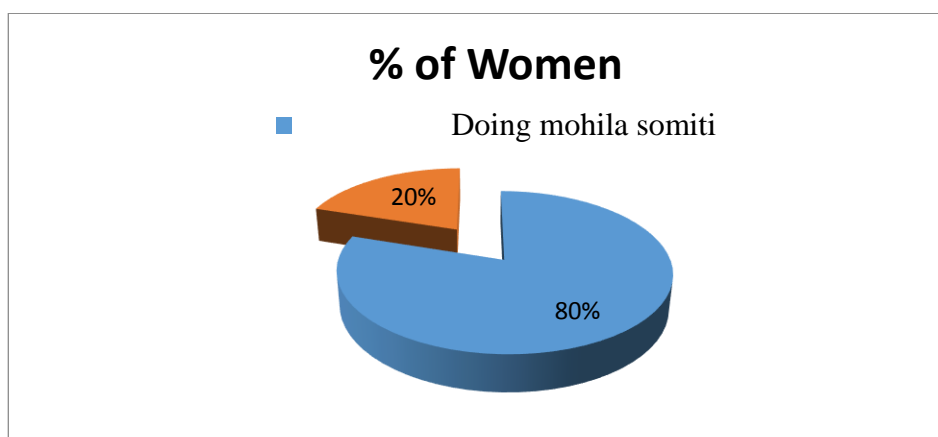


Figure 10: Women involvement in some saving works

(Source: Field survey, 2017)

From the Figure 10 it has been found that a huge number of women involve in somiti to make an amount of money to support their family. Almost 80% women involve in somiti and they do this somiti with themselves. There is a woman whose name is golapi, her house is used as the center for this somiti. Though the NGO's support is not maximum, sometimes they take a loan, arrange some money and then help their family at different times.

4. Findings & Recommendation

The study was conducted for two purposes. One is to identify the existing condition of women's participation in income generation activities. Another is to compare their income generation activities with men. Under the first objective, we have found some major findings. They are given the following:

- i. Most of the people are illiterate. Only a few are able to sign their name.
- ii. They do not get help from any NGOs except an NGO named "Shakti" who give a small amount of loan. But they have own "Mohila Somiti" running by them.
- iii. More than 70% women collect vangri, polythene, papers and begging, others are involved others household work.
- iv. There has a school named "Morning star" running by an American lady, provide free facilities to literate bosti children and women. She also teaches sewing work to the poor people but bosti people do not interested to go there.
- v. Also some students from "Biddanondo foundation" came in the slum in 2016. They taught the children three days in a week. People are not aware to educate their children.
- vi. Most of the women are engaged in begging and they go for a long distance to beg every day. That also a reason not to build up socially and economically their status.

To recommend some strategies for women contribution to their family we have made some policy review and have found the following to suggest. The things should be done is given in the following:

- i. To ensure full and equal participation of women in the mainstream socio-economic development.

- ii. To bring up women as educated and skilled human resources.
- iii. To establish gender equality in politics, administration, other areas of activity, socio-economic activity, education, culture, sports and in all areas of family life.
- iv. To provide overall assistance in ensuring the growth of women entrepreneurs
- v. To give appropriate recognition to women's contribution in socio-economic areas.

According to National Women Development Policy, 2011, some programs need to be established:

Programs such as co-operation with NGOs and social organizations in women development, work plan and program strategy, women development training institute and institutional framework and strategy etc. need to be held for an effective solution for women participation in income generation activities to support their family in slum areas (NWDP, 2011).

5. Conclusion

By using different PRA tools (such as Activity Schedule map, Pair wise ranking, Cause effect diagram, Service and opportunity map etc) we know about their existing condition. From Pair, wise ranking method and cause effect diagram we have found the main causes for the lack of employment opportunities problem and thereafter what its effect would occur. Poverty, lack of resource, illiteracy, and problem in family life etc. are the main problems that the slum women have faced in their life. Low income, low savings, an increase of child labor etc are main effects of the lack of women employment opportunities. Most of the slum women of our study area are engaged in paper or vangri collection, begging or served as a maid servant or domestic worker. Concerned authority such as government and different NGOs have to play a key role to help the slum women by providing them proper employment opportunities, educational facilities, different training programs on sewing work etc and thus women participation in income generation activities can be ensured.

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