

Income Generating Programs for the Learners of Community Learning Centers in Bangladesh: An Evaluative Study

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to explore the present status of income generating programs in Bangladesh, to find out how those programs can be more effective to earn livelihood of the people, make them self-sufficient. This study suggests what will be the future of these programs. The study is conducted in Narsingdi and Gazipur District of Dhaka divisional region. Two NGOs Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and Population Services & Training Center (PSTC)-local partner of ActionAid Bangladesh have been selected. From the two NGOs four Community Learning Centers (CLCs) have been selected for this study, Six NGO personnel, four facilitators, twenty participants who are currently enrolled in income generating programs and twenty participants who have completed the training are the sample of this study. Interview schedule, FGD guidelines and questionnaire have been selected as tools for this study. Two interview schedules have been used for NGO personnel and CLC facilitators, questionnaire is used for the learners currently enrolled in this program and FGD guidelines is used for learners who have completed this program. Result of this study showed that, most of the participants who have completed this training program are now earning effectively. Because of the community learning centers community development can also be seen in the areas. In future the nature of income generating program will be more technology based; like-computer related training.

Key words: Continuing Education, CLCs (Community Learning Centers), IGPs (Income Generation Programs)

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Introduction

Bangladesh is a country where poverty is the main barrier for education and so many people live here below the poverty line. A recent study in Bangladesh by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the World Food Program gave an estimate of 42% of the population living below the upper poverty line (defined in monetary terms as an income less than will provide for 2212 calories per day) and about half of that number live in extreme poverty (defined as income less than will provide for 1800 calories per day) (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and United Nations World Food Program, 2004; BBS, 2004).

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are-

- To explore the current status of Income generating programs in Bangladesh.
- To find out the strengths & weaknesses of the programs.
- To explore the status of the learners who have completed these programs.
- To find out what will be done for the future developments of these programs.

Rationale of the study

Bangladesh is a country where most of the people are not skilled & self-sufficient. IGPs are designed to make the people skilled, self-sufficient and develop knowledge, habit, and attitude among them. This study will be conducted to learn about perspectives, present status of IGPs in Bangladesh & find out how these programs will be more effective in future and which else programs can be added in future IGP programs for further development. In Bangladesh so many people live below the poverty line and couldn't generate income. The income generating programs help them to generate income. This study will help the people for alleviating poverty through effective income generating programs. We generally think the motto of education is only generation of knowledge. But education also means to earn effectively. This study will show the relation between education and income. This study may be useful both at micro and macro levels. Wrong selection of IGPs entails losses that are very important to the ultra-poor. The target group members and their advisers (mainly NGOs) may, therefore, use the results of the present study in making right decision to the selection of

the profitable IGPs, which will contribute most to increasing society's welfare. The study will be helpful for policy makers and donor agencies reviewing policy options for reducing poverty of the ultra-poor of Bangladesh through IGPs.

Methodology of the study

Research Approach

Mixed research has played a prominent role by contributing to the understanding of the educational process and its context (Edward Vockell). The researcher applied a mixed approach when conducting this study. In that study it is applicable because the study is not concentrated only in a single factor but also in multi factors of community education. This type of research approach made it easier for the researcher to engage the respondent effectively in the study.

Sampling of the Study

In this study the researcher has focused upon those people who were engaged themselves into income generating program of community learning centers and for this purpose community people has been considered prime sample area of the study. Therefore, In this study a purposive sampling technique was followed to select community learning center personnel, participant of the community learning center and community education experts due the time constraint and limited resources of the study. The study was conducted in Dhaka region from where two non-government organizations had been selected purposively. Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Population Services and Training Center (PSTC) who are local partner of ActionAid Bangladesh were the selective NGOs for this study as they have community learning center where income generating program adopted for the community people.

Sample Area and Sample Size

Four community learning centers were selected from the representative community learning center for the present study. It may be added that these centers selected from two different areas of Bangladesh, Narsingdi and Gazipur district in Dhaka division. It might be added that in these areas several Community centers have been working from at least the last five years. Community learning centers were selected from two different kind of types of non-government organization one was very renowned in national and international level Dhaka Ahsania Mission and other was non-government organization Population Services and Training Center.

Participants of the study had been selected purposively from different community learning centers for the study. In this respect community learning personnel played a role to arrange this selection. As the researcher informed the community learning personnel earlier about his visit and discuss the purpose of the visit therefore, they had arranged the population of the study to be the participant of the study. In this regard the researcher selected the participant of the study from the members of the community learning center who were engaged in income generating program before or at that period. It may be mentioned that for this purposive selection researcher were very aware about the gender balanced of the participant but all the time it was not possible to follow these techniques because the maximum members of these centers were female. In that circumstance the researcher selected twenty participants for questionnaire and twenty participants for total two FGDs of the study.

For this study the researcher selected four Community learning personnel from selected four community learning centers. They were the supervisor and the community worker for that respected community learning centers. As they have been playing a role between the community and the non-government organization as a bridge to running a community learning center and making linkage between the community and centers effectively therefore they were selected purposively for this study to enrich this study.

At last stage of the sample selection, in this study six NGO personnel took part individually in an open-ended interview to enrich the data of the study. On the basis of the accessibility and the relevancy with the study area these experts were selected.

Sampling of the study

Sample type	Sample size	Sampling method	Tools used
Facilitators	4	Purposive Sampling	Interview
NGO personnel	6	Purposive Sampling	Interview
Participants who are currently enrolled in the program	20	Simple Random sampling	Questionnaire
Participants who've completed the program	20	Purposive Sampling	Focus Group Discussion
	Total=50		

Data analysis and findings of the study

Current status of the Income Generating Programs

Marital status of the participants

From the questionnaire we found that, 80% of the respondents are married, 15% of the respondents are widowed and 5% are divorced.

Level of education of the participants

From the questionnaire we found that most of the participants are now-literate or having no education at all, Among the participants, 85% of the respondents are neo-literate or never attended in school, 10% are having primary education and 5% are having secondary education.

The persons the participants living with

80% of the respondents live with their spouse, 5% live with their parents and 15% live with their children.

Financial support of the respondents

80% of the respondents financially supported by them, 15% are supported by their husband and 5% by their children.

Number of people dependent to them in the family

1-3 family members are dependent to the respondents in 25% area, 4-6 family members are dependent to them in 60% area, and 7-10 family members are dependent to them in 15% area.

Income sources before coming to IGP

85% people have other income sources before coming to IGP while 15% have no income sources before IGP.

Nature of the program

Nature of the program is- sewing 35%, food gardening 40%, livestock 20%, others 5%

Before IGP employment of the respondents

Before IGP 30% were employed and 70% was self-employed.

90% of the respondents are involved in IGP to earn money while 10% are involved to learn new skill.

Income of the respondents:

100% of the respondents are now earning from IGP.

5% of the respondents earn less than 500 taka, 15% of the respondents earn taka 500-1000 and 80% of the respondents earn more than 1000 taka.

Respondents effort IGP to buy clothes moderate extent (80%), to buy foods moderate extent (60%), to pay educational fees moderate extent (60%), to pay accommodation moderate extent(65%), to save money no extent(70%).

Fulfillment of needs of the respondents

The program helped 60% respondents financially, to fulfill social needs to 80% respondents.

Strengths of IGP

Women empowerment

From the interview of the facilitators it has been easily recognized that women empowerment is the main strength of the IGP programs because in the rural areas, women are the most deprived commonly. With the help of the IGP programs, the disadvantaged women can generate income and thus take part in the development process. This is the example of their empowerment.

Women in income generation

In Bangladesh, women are generally seen serving home. But through IGP women in rural areas are now generating income by doing various kinds of income generating activities; such as-sewing, food gardening etc. So, income generation by women is one of the biggest strengths of IGP.

Community development

Income generating programs are running in the community learning centers where many people of the community are taking training and participating in income generation. Because of financial development of the community the community development occurs in the community where CLC is running by.

Self-employment

Another strength of IGP is self-employment of the people. Most of the people who received training of IGP are now self-employed and generating income quite effectively. With their income they are serving their family quite well.

Weaknesses of IGP

Lack of male participation

In the CLCs, the participation of male is almost zero. The male generally thinks the training of IGP is wastage of time. So, they didn't take part in the training program. Lack of male participation is the biggest weakness of IGP.

Insufficient teaching aids in the training program

In the CLCs, the facilitators don't use sufficient teaching aids in the training program. Because of insufficient teaching aids sometimes it is very hard to run the training program properly.

Constrain by local leaders

Sometimes the local leaders especially the religious leaders hamper the IGP program. Because in the CLC the facilitator and most of the participants are female and the religious leaders in the rural areas are against female education & female movement in general. So, they didn't allow the females to participate in the IGP program.

Status of the participants who have completed the program

Type of Program & duration

From the FGDs we found that, they have participated in income generating program. The duration of the program is six months. Training duration is 2 hours each day and twice in a week. Type of training is practical. Method of training is learning by doing, mostly group activities have been used. Selection of the training method is dependent to the participants.

Trainer of the participants

There was a facilitator in each CLC who trained the participants. The facilitator was selected from the community.

Reasons behind participating the program

From the FGD, we found that the participants have participated in the program because of earning effectively. They did not have enough income before the training program. After receiving the training, all of them are earning effectively.

Income of the participants

After taking training participants are generating income effectively. For present income of the participants the training is mostly liable. Because of the training participants can now earn effectively and their monthly income is 4000-6000 taka per month. With the income the participants can serve their families quite well.

Income generating program in development

Income generating programs have been contributing in the development process by making people self-employed. The participants who have received training are now earning on their own. They are seen generating income from various sources; such as- poultry farming, food gardening, sewing etc. Because of their self-employment, they have contributed in economic development of their own and their society.

In future-type of program

In future, the nature of income generating program will be more technology based; like-computer related training. More training based on agriculture and technology should be included in the training program.

What will be done for the future development of IGP

From the interview of NGO personnel & from the FGD we have found what will be done for the future development of IGP. This is the era of science and technology. So, in future the nature of income generating program will be more technology based; like-computer related training. More training based on agriculture and technology should be included in the training program. For example, Mobile and computer servicing will be a very important training program in future. Training on agriculture will be done by modern method and instruments for more production. At present, male are not willing to attend in the IGP training because the training program generally run in the afternoon when they are busy in farming their lands. So, in future more programs will be launched to attract the male people in the IGP training program. If more programs are included in IGP, then the possibility of income generation will be more. And in this way income generating program will be more fruitful in future.

Major Findings of the Study

Deprived people of the community basically women (100%) who are disadvantaged from socio economy prospective of the community has been prioritized for as a target group of the income generating program of community learning centers.

From the questionnaire of the participants we found that, Majority portion of the program (40%) are still agriculture based and the other is sewing (35%)

From the questionnaire of the participants we found that, 100% of the respondents who are currently enrolled in IGP are now earning. Reason behind participating in the training program of the participants is to earn effectively. After taking training participants are generating income effectively. With the money people earn family can be served quite well.

Income generating programs have been contributing in the development process by making people self-employed. 70% of the people who are currently enrolled in this program are self-employed and people who have completed this program are also self-employed. People in the community are generating income and thus community development occurs.

In future the nature of income generating program will be more technology based; like-computer related training. More training based on agriculture and technology should be included in the training program.

From the interview of the NGO personnel, we have found that the income generating programs are not executed by the guidelines of UNESCO. They have shown the reason behind not following UNESCO guidelines is the context of our country is different and for this reason it is hard to follow the guidelines

Major Recommendations of the Study

Firstly, CLC will be executed according to UNESCO guidelines for getting the utmost effect from the income generating programs. Because the main mechanism of implementing continuing education is CLC. Income generating program is a part of continuing education is declared by UNESCO and they have made the guidelines in 1993. So, in order to run CLC properly NGOs should follow the UNESCO guidelines in future.

Secondly, One CLC is maintained by one facilitator. Most of the times, it is hard for a facilitator to run a CLC by his/her own according to them. So, if a CLC is run by two facilitators it will be easy for them to maintain the CLC. It will be better if a CLC is run by two facilitators in future.

Thirdly, Lack of male participation has been seen in the CLCs. Male are not interested in the training program because they thought that this is a wastage of time. So, to attract male members of the society more training based on agriculture and vocational training should be included.

Fourthly, Adequate teaching aids should be used during the training program. Currently only poster papers and drawings have been used as materials. So, in future more materials especially agricultural tools will be used as teaching aids in the training program for more effective training.

Conclusion

This is the 21st century but Bangladesh is still lagging behind due to lack of skilled manpower and generation of income by people. So, this is very important to engage our manpower in income generating activities as much as possible. Without skilled, self-sufficient manpower we can never think about further development. NFE is trying to eradicate illiteracy and continuing education is trying to sustain their learning and develop their skills. We have enough human resources. But for our economic development, we have to turn our human product first in human resource then in human capital. To produce human capital, income generating program is mandatory. Therefore, from the study people can identify the strengths and weaknesses of Income Generating Program and in future they can use this program more effectively.

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