

# WOMEN LEADERS IN DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA IN FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN  
POLYTICAL SCIENCE

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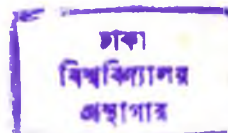


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By

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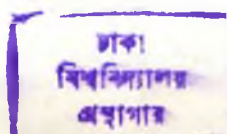
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## ABSTRACT

The study was an attempt to build up knowledge on the role of woman's leadership in development organizations and institutions, as well as to identify key persons in these organizations and assess their potentials to carry out their programmes for the benefit and development of local women. Leaders have been defined in this study as "those women who have some influence on other women in groups or organizations". Specifically, the study tried to find out socio-economic and family background of women leaders, their role, potential and involvement with organisations, the factors that helped them to develop leadership qualities, their motivation towards problems of women and their opinion on certain issues. The sample of the present study consisted of 88 women in two rural and two urban locations.

Socio-economic and family background of women leaders revealed that leaders in the rural areas were relatively younger and less educated than urban women leaders. A large number of respondents had educated fathers, husbands and relatives and it was more evident in the urban areas. Again, various types of non traditional occupation of fathers, husbands helped them to become leaders. Smaller number of children was also a contributing factor. It is found especially in the rural areas that even if they belonged to middle and lower classes, they were emerging as leaders in the local organizations. This was possible with the existence of development organizations and institutions in the localities. All the women leaders in both areas were involved with one or more organizations except in Rupganj where they did not have organizational facilities. It is evident that involvement of women with groups or organizations provide them better chance of becoming leaders. One significant feature was that women in mid-level groups or organizations were emerging as leaders in organizations even if they lacked material possessions. But leaders in rural areas did not have links with other government agencies and organizations. It is observed, if women are given the chance of knowing each other, given opportunities to take part in group activities, associations and organizations, and if they have access to resources and articulate their interests; then they are able to exert their influence in a local situation.

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Generally, ascriptive status helps man and woman to become leaders. In this study, it is found that for middle and upper class women, it may be a helping factor, but for lower or poor women ascription is not helpful; for them it is achievement which seems to be a criterion to be leaders.

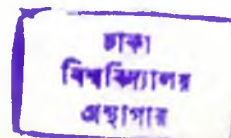
Leaders of both the areas identified the problems of women as poverty, dowry, marriage, violence against women, lack of security, poor educational, health and training facilities, employment, lack of good organization, communication, lack of shelter and social restriction. The factors that helped them to become leaders, as they mentioned, were sincerity, honesty, patience, education, awareness, social work, support from of fathers, husbands, relatives, help from local NGOs and encouragement of local people. In order to solve the problems, women leaders took steps both at personal and organizational level.

According to women leaders of rural areas, the qualities of a good leader were : patience, wisdom, education, confidence, good advice, courage, skill, organizational ability, good character and behaviour, farsightedness, scarificing attitude, good public relations and economic capacity. Urban leaders added other qualities such as liberal attitude, experience, presence of mind, understanding the problems, adjustability, prompt decision, consciousness and economic solvency.

Women leaders of both urban and rural areas considered that women should work outside home to overcome socio-economic hardships and to become self reliant. They argued that if women work outside their mental horizon would widen.

About social, economic and religious conditions of the country, the majority of them stated that social values were deteriorating, administrative policy was not efficient, corruption prevailed and government was not implementing their policies properly and economy of the country was crippled. Religious condition was unhealthy due to misconceptions, superititions and prejudices. Their suggestion was that women should be more cautious about religious supertitions and prejudices. They also mentioned that infiltration of foreign culture has also influenced social values.

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In order to improve the situation, women leaders suggested more organization for women, access to resources, professional training, day care centres, raising of consciousness and more programmes for women and involvement in decision making process.

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This research work on women leaders is a micro level study. The findings are merely indicative of the conditions and problems which women leaders face in social, economic and organizational levels. The concept of leadership is very broad and extensive. In order to investigate the process and trend of leadership in organizations and institutions there is need for further studies to indicate forces that women confront in social, economic and political situations. Finally, the findings of the study may be helpful for concerned agencies, the government and the NGOs in making future plans and policies and also taking up development programmes for women.

Dedicated to my everencouraging husband Late Dr. Syed Abdul Qadir

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Concept and Type of Leadership

The term leadership has been used in many different senses by social scientists. Most social scientists, however, have agreed on a general definition that ascribes leadership to the ability to exercise power or exert influence in social collectivities.

Among social scientists, theoretical formulations of leadership concept have continued to change, focusing first on one aspect and then upon another<sup>1</sup>. In the early stage of leadership research, focus was on the traits of the leader himself, to the virtual exclusion of other variables. Gouldner stated that "there is no reliable evidence concerning the existence of universal leadership traits"<sup>2</sup>.

The "trait" approach was followed by the "situational" approach. The situationalists attempted to look for situations containing common elements. Stogdill examined a large number of leadership studies and concluded that the qualities, characteristics and skills required in a

- 
1. Robert Tannenbaum, I.R. Weschler and Fred Massrik, Leadership and Organization : A Behavioral Science Approach (New York: McGraw Hill, 1961), p. 22.
  2. Alvin W. Goulder (ed.), Studies in Leadership (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp 31-35.

leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of the situation in which he is to function as a leader<sup>3</sup>.

The situational approach was followed by the "follower oriented" approach. These approaches were discussed by a number of authors including Stogdill, Jenkin, Gouldner and Sanford. In the words of Sanford, "any comprehensive theory of leadership will have three delineated facets of leadership phenomena: a) The leader and his psychological attributes; b) the follower with his problems, attitudes and needs; c) the group situation in which the followers and leaders are related with one another"<sup>4</sup>.

Leadership is defined by Tannenbaum as "interpersonal influence, exercised in situations and directed through a communication process toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals"<sup>5</sup>. Thus leadership has been treated as a process rather than an exclusive attribute of a prescribed role.

Research on leadership has been conducted in various part of the world. In the South Asian region, some studies have been done in India. Studies on leadership in Indian villages

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3. Ralph M. Stogdill "Personal Factors Associated with Leadership : A survey of the Literature", Journal of Psychology, (Vol. No. 25, 1948), p. 63.
  4. Fillmore H. Samford, "Research in Military Leadership" Current Trends : Psychology in World Emergency. (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1952), p. 60.
  5. Robert Tannenbaum and Fred Massarik, "Leadership : A Frame of Reference" in Donald E. Porter and Phillip B. Applewhite ed., Organizational Behavior and Management (Scranton, Pa : International Text Book Company, 1986), p. 413.

have attempted to classify leadership into different types by using different criteria or classifications<sup>6</sup>. Dhillon classified leaders in South Indian villages into 'primary or major' who occupied important positions in their respective factions, and 'tertiary or minor' who represented small kinship units of four or five families<sup>7</sup>.

On the basis of sociometric choices, Singh classified the leaders of two Delhi villages into five different types: traditional, political, opinion maker, decision maker and caste leaders<sup>8</sup>.

Orenstein examined both 'formal' and 'informal' leaders in a Bombay village<sup>9</sup>. Bhouraskar classified leadership structure into official and non-official<sup>10</sup> categories, Mulay and others divided it into traditional and emerging type<sup>11</sup>.

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6. Harjinder Singh, Authority and Influence in Two Sikh Villages (New Delhi : Sterling publishers PVT LTD., India, 1976)
  7. H.S. Dhillon, Leadership and Groups in a South Indian Village (Delhi : Planning Commission, PEO, 1955), p. 115-116.
  8. B.N. Singh and H.P. Arya, "Value Orientations of Local Village Leaders" in Udai Pareek ed., Studies in Rural Leadership (Delhi : Behavioral Science Center, 1966), pp. 23-30.
  9. A. Orenstein, "Leadership and Caste in India" in R.L. Park and I. Tinker ed., Leadership and Political Institution in India, (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 415-426.
  10. K.M. Bhouraskar, "Leadership in a Tribal Village", Man in India, (Vol. 44, No. 4, 1964), pp. 23-30.
  11. S. Mulay, et.al., "A Comparative Study of Traditional and Emerging Patterns of Leadership in a North Indian Village," Journal of Extension Education (Vol. I, No. 4, 1966), pp. 303-312.

Various studies concern themselves with the characteristics of leaders in India. Dube, in his study in a south Indian village, found that the characteristics important for leadership were the social status of the family, economic status based on land and wealth, and individual traits of ability to speak, old age, hospitality and humility<sup>12</sup>. In two case studies education, caste and economic status were found important for village leadership<sup>13</sup>.

Udai Pareek and S.K. Reddy, in their study of six villages near Delhi found that among the important characteristics of "effective leaders" were raising contributions and mobilizing people for creating community facilities, helping people in times of critical need, mediating between two disputing parties, giving information on job opportunities and using information to help people to get jobs<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.2 The Bangladesh Perspective

Social research is comparatively a recent phenomenon in Bangladesh, especially in the area of women's leadership roles. In Bangladesh, there have been some studies which have primarily dealt with rural social organisations, power structure, political process, and kinship

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12. S.C. Dube, Indian Village (New York : Harper and Row, 1967), p. 161.
  13. B.M. Pande and P.N. Jain, "Rural Leadership Differentials in Emerging Pattern", Kurukshetra, (Vol. 14, No. 4, 1966), pp. 13-14.
  14. Udai Pareek and S.K. Reddy, "Behavioral Characteristics of Effective Village Leaders as Reported by Non-Leader Farmers", Studies in Rural Leadership, (Behavioral Science Center, New Delhi, 1966), pp. 135-199.

structure<sup>15</sup>.

F.R. Khan in his study of urban elite did not find any woman in the elite group. He argued that women are directly or indirectly discouraged from appearing in public and freely mixing with men or from having occupations and professions that keep them away from their homes for a substantial period of time.

Khan suggested the following criteria of leadership in individuals:

- a) Persons of importance who have high access to economic resources;
- b) Persons having some degree of corporate or group character and who are bound in a network of relationships.
- c) Persons having some consciousness of the position they occupy within the community;  
and
- d) Persons who enjoy high status and privileges<sup>16</sup>.

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15. Qadir (1960), Islam (1974), A. Huq (1976), Zaman (1977), Westergaard (1978), Chowdhury (1979), Van Schendal (1981), Jahangir (1982), Siddiqui (1985) and Atiur Rahman (1986).

16. Fazlur Rashid Khan, "Recruitment of Elites in Bangladesh with reference to a District Town", Rajshahi University Studies, (Vol. VIII, Rajshahi, 1977), p. 470.

Waliullah maintains that leadership refers to "a process in which a relatively small number of individuals in a community behave in such a way that they affect (or effectively present) a significant change in the lives of a relatively large number of people"<sup>17</sup>. There are also several case studies related to leaders and their types in rural areas<sup>18</sup>. One of these examined some characteristics of elected representatives in Union Parishads. The BRAC study on power structure in the villages describes the operation of the local power structure towards distribution of resources<sup>19</sup>.

A review of available literature on leadership reveals that the following attributes are deemed as important leadership qualities: a) control over resources, b) control over jobs, c) control over information, d) good social standing, e) knowledge and expertise, f) popularity and esteem, g) legality, constitutionality and officiality. In the present study we have concentrated on those qualities while identifying women leaders.

While the studies mentioned above are indicative of great interest in the phenomena of leadership to scholars, both in Bangladesh and abroad, they nevertheless reveal that very few

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17. S. Waliullah, "Modernity characteristics of Local Leaders and the Family Planning Programme in Bangladesh", an unpublished Ph. D. Thesis (Ann Arbor: Michigan University, 1974), p. 11.
  18. M.M. Alam, Characteristics of Newly Elected Representatives of Union Parishads of Kotwali Thana, (Comilla, BARD, 1974); M. Solaiman and M.M. Alam, Characteristics of Candidates for Election in Three Union Parishads in Comilla, (BARD, 1977).
  19. BRAC, The Net: Power Structure in Ten Villages, Study Series, (BRAC Printers, 1980).



studies have been undertaken on women leadership, as such.

With the initiation of development programmes by different agencies, the study of leadership has become an issue of critical concern to planners, social scientists and social workers. In other words, the study of women leaders in development has gained importance. These changes call for an analysis of women's position from the development perspective.

Women in Bangladesh, especially rural women, have always constituted a vast, underutilized human resource, comprising ninety percent of the country's total female population. Among all underprivileged groups, women are the most socially depressed and neglected, though they play a substantial role both in the family and national economy. They occupy a secondary position in the social set-up and are totally dependent on their male guardians. Women have a low literacy rate (16% as against 31% for men)<sup>20</sup>. Recent statistics show that in social, economic, political, cultural and psychological aspects, women are at the lowest end on the scale of development.

In the family, women are generally considered as liabilities. Their work, unpaid and unrecognized, does not find a place in the census definition of productive activities. But a large amount of female labour is expended in rural households for the maintenance and upkeep of the

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20. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh, 1989, p.4.

house, as well as in the generation of income<sup>21</sup>.

It has generally been found that women are excluded from the areas of decision making in the family and in community activities. Recognition of their potential and actual contribution often comes about as an after-thought<sup>22</sup>. So far, women's roles and needs have been surveyed, measured and interpreted mainly by men, and only in a few cases by women. It has been found that in the socialization process, they are not encouraged to take any leading role. They are absent in policy making, planning and project activities. They are assigned in some cases in project implementation primarily health and family planning.

In the past, little attention was given to improving the situation of women in Bangladesh. The efforts that were undertaken to raise the socio-economic conditions of women were primarily welfare oriented rather than development oriented. There has, however, been a growing interest to improve and generate awareness about women's needs and issues since the independence of Bangladesh.

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21. Sayeda Rowshan Qadir, "Rural Women and Self Employment for the Rural Poor in Bangladesh" in S. Rahman, K. Siddiqui, and S.R. Qadir ed., Self Employment for the Rural Poor in Bangladesh (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, 1984).
  22. Usha Bambewale, "Women and Politics: Sociology of Non participation" -- a paper presented in a seminar of V.V.A.O., on Impact of Urbanization on Women Welfare, (Netherlands Association of University Women, 1983).

A number of development organisations, national, regional and international, undertook programmes to involve women in development activities. The focus of these organisations shifted from relief and rehabilitation to community development. Many non-governmental organisations have also been functioning with people's participation in various areas of development. The activities of the non-government organisations also cover a wide spectrum, ranging from health and family planning to income generation and non-formal education. These non-governmental organisations fall mainly into three categories: international, national and local. The different types of NGOs follow different orientations as reflected in their strategies and approaches.

There are about thirteen thousand registered women's organisations under social welfare, women's affairs and cooperatives activities with varying degrees of resources, and organisational and programme components. Among them, Bangladesh Rural Development Board and Grameen Bank are the two major organisations sponsored by the government. Most of the other organisations are non-governmental, the major ones are Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Gonoshasthya Kendro, Proshika, Nijera Kori, Concerned Women for Family Planning (CWFP) etc. The international agencies are Commission for Organisation of Relief and Rehabilitation (CORR), Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Save the Children and so on.

With the passage of time, situation has also changed in this country in social, economic and political areas. There has been a significant change in the attitude towards women in view of opening up employment opportunities for women, with the break up of the extended family system and increasing economic hardship. The majority of rural women live under the burden of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. The rural women, mostly from landless and low middle class families feel compelled to defy their traditional barriers of segregation and dependence and come out of their homes. They are now digging canals, removing earth, breaking bricks, participating in field level activities and doing petty business. "They have gone against social prejudice, but many of them have paid a social price for doing this type of work. People talk against them; quarrels result with relatives while the village community often sides with the relatives, who try to dissuade women from work"<sup>23</sup>. Out of necessity, these women engage in any type of income earning activity which is available.

### 1.3 Scope of the study

The present study is an attempt to identify the role of women leaders in development organisations and institutions in Bangladesh. The primary objective of the study is to identify the key persons in these organisations and to assess whether they are able to carry on programmes for the benefit and development of women.

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23. F.E. McCarthy, Rural Women Workers in Bangladesh: A Working Paper, (Women's Section, Planning and Development Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Dhaka, 1979).

Leaders have been defined in this study as those women who have some influence on other women in groups or organisations. Thus, the leader is capable of getting things done through organisations. It is assumed here that women as human resources can only be developed as leaders through organisations and institutions.

The major assumptions of the study are:

- a) Leadership emerges from involvement in socio-economic organisations and institutions.
- b) With the passage of time and with changes in the society, achievements rather than ascription become the main criterion for effective leadership.
- c) Effectiveness of leadership depends on identification of needs of the community arising out of certain situation.

The role of women leaders in development organisations and institutions is a crucial area which demands attention from the planners, researchers and academicians. In general women's participation as leader is restricted in Bangladesh. Theoretically, there is no constitutional barrier for women to participate in different spheres of life, but in reality, the situation is different. Women have inferior status and are discriminated in almost all spheres of life.

Thus the objective of the study is to identify the type of women leadership emerging in local organisations and institutions in both rural and urban situations. All national level politicians or parliamentarians, heads of local bodies, heads of big industrial units etc. are excluded from the study. Leaders in this study are from the middle level or the lower level of society. They have been selected from among extension workers, programme organisers, cooperatives, family planners, school teachers, and Union Parishad members.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- ⊗ to investigate the socio-economic background of women leaders;
- ⊗ to identify factors that help women develop leadership qualities;
- ⊗ to pinpoint elements that hinder women's capabilities and opportunities to be leaders;
- ⊗ to know how leaders motivate and influence local women;
- ⊗ to assess the involvement of leaders with other organisations of the locality and community.

#### 1.4 Methodology of the study

Identification and selection of women leaders in a village in Bangladesh is a difficult task, because very few women leaders are available in the villages and only a limited number of organisations and institutions operate at the village level. For the purpose of the study, women leaders are considered as those who formally or informally are leaders in an institution, group or association, and who influence women of the locality in development activities.

In the study, materials have been gleaned from the relevant literature, reports and reviews. Government documents have also been used. Moreover, data have been collected from field observation, limited field level participation and structured and unstructured interviews with the sample leaders. Saturia Upazila of Manikganj district and Rupganj Upazila of Narayanganj district are the sample locations for the rural aspect of the study. It covers several villages in the two upazilas. For the Urban perspective two wards one each from Wari (old city) and Mohammedpur (new city) in Dhaka city are included in the study.

The study has been completed in stages. At the first stage, relevant literature was approved by the Advisory Committee, a survey questionnaire was formulated and pretested for conducting of interviews.

At the second stage, two locations were selected - Saturia and Rupganj. The researcher and investigators stayed in the locations for some time to interview the respondents. In urban

areas, two municipal wards in Dhaka city were selected. Interviews, conversations, both formal and informal, with the respondents were done by researcher, under the supervision of researcher two investigators worked at the time of interview. The investigators were familiar with the areas. In both of the rural locations, 60 selected women leaders were interviewed. In the urban areas, 28 women leaders were interviewed. The researcher had informal discussions with influential people and womenfolk of the localities.

In the third stage compilation, tabulation and processing of data was done by the researcher. Simple statistical tables have been prepared at this stage.

A number of constraints were encountered while conducting the study. One of these was the difficulty of identifying women leaders and their organisations. Most of the organisations did not have their own offices. Several visits were required to find woman during their free time because they were generally busy with some kind of household work. Travelling was difficult due to bad communication and weather. However, the respondents were enthusiastic, cooperative and friendly.

In this study a reputational approach was followed in the selection of leaders. A number of researchers have followed the approach with good results. In Bangladesh, Khan also used this approach combining it with the positional approach and found that persons who are well



known as well as powerful and influential also have a high reputational status<sup>24</sup>. M. G. Zaman<sup>25</sup> and Z. Karim<sup>26</sup> have also used the villages reputational approach for identifying leaders.

### 1.5 Organisation of the study

Chapter I outlines the concept and type of leadership, the situation of women in Bangladesh, along with the rationale, objective, scope and methodology of the study. Chapter II provides an overview of women in development from both a global and Bangladesh perspective. Chapter III provides information about the location of the study. Chapter IV presents the socio-economic characteristics and some issues relating to women leaders in rural areas. Chapter V describes the socio-economic characteristics of women leaders in urban areas, while chapter VI contains findings and comparison of women leaders in rural and urban situations and conclusion.

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24. F.R. Khan, "District Town Elites in Bangladesh", in Asian Survey (Vol. XXX, No. 5, May 1979).
  25. M.G. Zaman, Social Conflict and Political Process in Rural Bangladesh: A case study, (unpublished M. Phil. Thesis, Rajshahi University, Rajshahi, 1977).
  26. Z. Karim, Socio Economic Background of the Rural Elites: A case Two Selected Villages, (Department of Sociology, Rajshahi University, Rajshahi, 1979).

## CHAPTER II

### WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Due to the very nature of the economy and socio-cultural pattern, women's participation in the developmental process is extremely limited in many societies. It is generally held that a major indicator of a society's development is the status of women of that country.

#### 2.1 Overview of Women's Development: Global Concern

Early decades of development efforts brought very uneven progress for women in developing countries. Only in the last decade, women's participation in development has become an issue of major concern. It has been realized that there is an urgent need for socio-economic and political involvement in order to accelerate their participation in development organisations and institutions. It is especially important to ascertain women's role in decision making.

The International Decade for Women (1976-85) emphasized the involvement of women in development<sup>1</sup>. 'Women hold up half the sky' but they receive less than an equal share of what the world has to offer. The World Economic Profile of Women for the International Women's year held in 1980 indicated that women represent fifty percent of the world's official

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1. Decade for Women: World Plan of Action, held in Mexico City in the UN World Conference for International Women's Year, 1975.

labor force, perform sixty percent of all working hours, receive ten percent of the world's income and own less than one percent of the world's property. It has been found that in developing countries, the disparity between women's contribution and returns is the greatest<sup>2</sup>. The Mid-decade World Conference (1980) noted that the status of women had not changed since 1975. In fact, women were in some respects worse off than before. The rate of female illiteracy increased in many countries; employment opportunities for educated women made some gains. Besides, new technology took away jobs from women. There has been, further, a marked reduction in the essential services for women.

The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) in 1979 gave strong support to the integration of women in agrarian reform and rural development. It viewed women not only as contributors but also as beneficiaries and active participants in development efforts<sup>3</sup>. There have been continuous efforts by various agencies to integrate women in rural development.

Various World Conferences during the Women's Decade initiated systematic programs on the role and participation of women in development. The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women Conference emphasized the fact that the role of women in development is directly related to the goal of comprehensive social and economic

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2. UNDP: 1985, And Towards the 1990's, Annual Report of the UN Development Program, p.16.

3. WCARRD: A Turning Point for Rural Women, FAO, Rome, 1980.

development and is fundamental to the development of all societies<sup>4</sup>. Guidelines on Women in Development formulated by various agencies focus on women's issues such as formulating policies and adopting specific programs and projects for women within the broad policy framework. The guidelines also focus on the existing socio-economic, and organisational set up of the governments in the respective countries<sup>5</sup>.

The observations of the Nairobi Conference 1985 were mixed. The Decade (1976-1985) served to stimulate new thinking and action on women's concerns. It was felt that their role in development was now widely recognized. But how far women have really progressed and what their prospects are for the future is a major question. Most of the participants of the conferences agreed that visible gains in the decade have been rather limited. Health services for women have improved resulting in higher average life expectancy, but women still constitute over 60 percent of the world's illiterates. They earned less than men and suffer from higher rates of unemployment. However, women have made noticeable gains in legal and institutional spheres. With few exceptions, governments have enacted or introduced legislation to protect women's rights. Ninety percent of the governments have set up national bodies for the advancement of women, over half of them since 1975. But attitudinal barriers continue to limit women's access to equal shares, opportunity and recognition in national development levels.

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4. Nairobi International Conference for Women held in 1985.

5. A.T.M. Shamsul Haque, Regional Training Session on Women in Development, Guidelines/Checklists, (August, 1986), CIRDAP, Dhaka (Conference Papers).

In a regional seminar held in Dhaka in 1986, it has been stressed that women should be given a core or central role and not a 'peripheral' role in the development process. It has been maintained that women do not get the full benefits of development because they are often by-passed in planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes<sup>6</sup>. With due recognition of women's important role in society and the economy, it would be possible to utilize their contributions and to provide them the full benefits of development. It is in this developmental perspective that the issue of leadership in general and female leadership in particular becomes especially relevant.

## **2.2 Issues and Areas of Interest: Bangladesh Context**

In view of the global concern for women, it is important to review women's condition in Bangladesh. Some general comments on the problem have been made in Chapter I. Further elaborations are made here.

Women constitute half of the total population of Bangladesh. Socially, they are deprived of their rights in spite of constitutional guarantees of equal rights with men. They are the victim of early marriage, frequent childbearing and a high mortality rate. Out of a total civilian labor force of 43.9% only 9.4% are women<sup>7</sup>. They bear the burden of illiteracy, poverty, hunger

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6. Ibid, p. 5.

7. Statistical Product Book of Bangladesh 1991, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka, p. 4.

and malnutrition. The patriarchal-patrilocal social system and institutions of purdah, marriage and religious bindings place them in an unequal and disadvantaged position. This negative attitude towards women leads to cyclical dependence and subjugation<sup>8</sup>.

Women are generally excluded from decision making in the family and in community activities, regarding such matters as family expenditures and investments, schooling of children, female roles outside the home, and the like. They are virtually absent in the policy formulation and planning process. They are assigned in some cases in project implementation, primarily in health and family planning, and lately in some income generating activities. The socialization process in the family does not encourage them to take a leading role. Experience shows that women have been relegated to differential levels in the socialization process within the family and in the society<sup>9</sup>.

Men and women have unequal access to and control over resources in development efforts and programmes. Large scale projects and development policies often fail to meet their stated goals because women's labor contributions at the household and project levels are overlooked and their needs for economic incentives and productive resources not always understood. In the public domain, women have markedly low access to productive resources. Reinforced by traditional notions of sexual division of labor, they are frequently employed in less stable and

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8. Jahanara Huq, "Status of Women as Related to the Socio-Economic Development in Bangladesh", Paper presented at the International Seminar on Women in Development in Asia, Dhaka, 1981.

9. Bambewale, Op. Cit., p. 13.

poorly paid sectors of the economy. Unequal power relations in the family and restrictions on women's mobility vitiate the impact of production centered poverty alleviation policies and programs. Often resources meant for women do not reach them within the confines of the household. Moreover, failure to recognize gender differentials, or a lack of political will to act on this knowledge, results in resources relevant to women's productive works being misdirected to men. In some settings this has led to a marked deterioration of women's income earning and educational prospects, health and nutritional status<sup>10</sup>.

### 2.3 Women's position: A brief historical overview

Since the 19th century there has been considerable transformation of the roles and status of women as well as of their self perception. In the 19th century, some educated women expressed their views on life in writings through contemporary periodicals. This was possibly the first indication of Bengali women starting to think about themselves and in developing their personalities. In some writings they boldly attacked the social customs, including seclusion, which so rigidly curtailed their mobility. But their attempts were limited to the upper educated class, and all of them came from urban backgrounds<sup>11</sup>.

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10. Arunashrce P. Rad, ed., Incorporating Gender Issues in Development Training. The Population Council, Regional Office for South and East Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, 1986.

11. Ghulam Murshid, Reluctant Debutante: Response of Bengali Women to Modernization, (Rajshahi, Shahitya Sangsad, 1983), p. 13.

During the colonial period, women in this region hardly had any organisation of their own. They lived secluded lives at home and very few had the opportunity for formal schooling. A remunerative occupation outside home was not envisaged for them, and only a few prominent women played an active role in attaining franchise and other rights for women. That movement led to reform in family laws, the implementation of which still remains inadequate.

During the Pakistan Period, in 1949, the first Women's Association was organised and named All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA). It had a branch office in Dhaka. The leadership positions of this association were held by the wives of senior bureaucrats, powerful politicians and industrial and commercial magnates. They had no immediate concern for women's issues, nor any close link with their women clientele. The APWA's achievement was limited to the realm of traditional, segregationist beliefs about women<sup>12</sup>. Their welfare activities were mainly directed towards children and their mothers. Although the association was limited to an elite urban group of women, it was the most familiar women's organisation in the cities and in district towns. Their most significant contribution towards women was the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, which was the result of the considerable pressure they brought to bear upon the Government.

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Mahmuda Islam, "Women's Organizations and Programs for Women" Situation of Women in Bangladesh. (Dhaka: Women for Women, 1979), p. 352.



## 2.4 War of Independence and Afterwards

The War of Independence in 1971, famine and floods during the years 1973-74 and 1987-88 together with increasing inflation in Bangladesh have changed the situation rapidly. The war victims and widows of freedom fighters were provided with jobs to rehabilitate them in society. After independence in 1971, various organisations, national and international, undertook programs to involve women in welfare and development activities. They placed emphasis on aspects like organisation, income generation, credit, population, maternity and child-health, formal and nonformal education and professional and legal matters. This concern for women was due to the recognition of their major contribution not only in reproductive activities but also in productive ones. Nevertheless, it is still found that women, in general, are assigned to marginal roles.

It has been noted that while general knowledge and interest about women has increased internationally, the specific political, social and economic dimensions constraining the lives of rural women have yet to be incorporated within legitimate development agenda. It has also been shown that scattered programs, especially in population control, have a long history in the country. But inspite of the growing concern for women, the policy framework likely to integrate women within its major focus is lacking. Feldman's study indicated that a more refined and integrated understanding of women's place in the political economy of Bangladesh is necessary. This aspect is particularly important if programs and policy initiatives are to bring about changes

which would benefit the general condition of rural women<sup>13</sup>. A study of women's leadership should reveal women's perception of the underlying process of change, and their views about the role of women vis-a-vis men pertinent to decision making. Patterns of interdependence constituting the development context include the international, national, village and household levels of organisations and influence. Women as well as men are key factors in their different organisational and institutional contexts<sup>14</sup>.

One study on institutions for rural development described the nature of rural institutions. It was stated that rural life was greatly influenced by rural institutions, whether social, economic, or religious. If one wanted to introduce a new idea, a new program, e.g. cooperatives, new technology, female education, family planning, income generating activities and decision making in related fields, it become easy if these were acceptable to the leaders of village level social institutions. The leaders might act as agents, or intermediaries between the people and the program<sup>15</sup>.

A development program which did not take into account the influence of the existing rural institutions was likely to face problems in gaining acceptance of the rural people. For development purposes, rural leaders should be chosen as decision makers because they are aware

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13 Shelly Feldman and F. E. McCarthy, Rural Women and Development in Bangladesh, Selected Issues, (NORAD, Ministry of Development Cooperation, OSLO, Norway, 1984).

14 Ibid, p. 13.

15 M. Nurul Huq, Institutions for Rural Development in Bangladesh, (Rural Development Academy, Bogra, Undated).

of the priority concerns in their local situations. In the analysis of institutions, it has been found that rural institutions succeed or fail depending on the ability of the leadership in the organisation.

Another study revealed that agricultural villages might be ordered into a cumulative, undimensional sequence<sup>16</sup>. A community is developed or differentiated only when the various sub-systems of the community e.g., family and the economy, develop simultaneously. If one sub-system lags behind, others will not develop. In introducing a change or program, one should look into the levels of development of various organisations and institutions.

## 2.5 Women and Planning Perspective

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted a number of policies and measures to improve the status of women. Development plans initiated by the government always depend on official statistics. The statistics and records, in general, view women only in the role of home management, child bearing and rearing. Women's real concerns and their actual contribution towards family and society are often under-represented.

During the First Five Year Plan (1973-74), the only governmental concern for women was the rehabilitation of war affected women and their children. This was solely on welfare

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16 Sayeda Rowshan Qadir, Differentiation of Agricultural Communities in India and Pakistan, (an unpublished MS Thesis, Cornell University, U.S.A., 1967).

lines; women's role in development was regarded as marginal and their participation in economic activities was addressed merely as a means of reducing the birth rate. This gave rise to programs emphasizing women's domestic and maternal roles such as Integrated Rural Development Program, Mothers Clubs, vocational programs, and the like: a legacy which later plans have inherited to some extent<sup>17</sup>.

The plan placed an emphasis on the education sector, stating that investment in the education of women provided a wide range of private and social benefits, their contribution towards the rearing of children and the management of the household economy was significant. Thus even in the field of education women were assigned a traditional role. They were not considered an integrate part in the overall development process.

In the Two Year Plan (1978-80) Women's development was considered as a separate issue. A Women's Affairs Division was created and separate programs were undertaken for involving women in development. The plan gave a high priority to women's development so that "they can exercise their socio-economic rights and shoulder responsibilities". The emphasis was also given in the field of vocational training, agriculture based rural development programs, creation of organisational network through Bangladesh Jatio Mahila Sangstha and infrastructure building at the District and Thana levels.

During the Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) various development programs were undertaken in such areas as skill development, agriculture, mother and childcare, literacy, hostels for career women, rehabilitation of deserted women, rural credit schemes, etc<sup>18</sup>.

Although in the SFYP, the government of Bangladesh envisaged that inclusion of women in development in a much broader perspective, women's more positive roles were only foreseen in the areas of health, education and family planning with only a small expansion in the female labor force "because of the inertia of a traditional society and gestation lag of education"<sup>19</sup>. It is evident that the coverage of the program undertaken for women's development in the period were inadequate. These efforts could only touch the periphery leaving the basic problems unsolved. As no specific targets were set and strategies were formulated to reach women clients through integrated programs, the participation of women remained marginal as well as difficult to ascertain. As a result it is difficult to measure the participation of women in programs, which would be necessary to give indications for future strategy formulations<sup>20</sup>.

The Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) promises a greater effect and has a more realistic approach to integrating women into the mainstream of development activities, particularly in the rural sector. However, no discernable change in the perception of roles is reflected. The plan

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18 Salma Khan, The Fifty Percent: Women in Development and Policy in Bangladesh, (Dhaka: The University Press Ltd., 1988).

19 The Second Five Year Plan, 1980-85, Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, (Dhaka : 1983) p. 95.

20 Salma Khan, Op. Cit., p. 86.

objectives are echoes of previous plans which also spoke of eliminating prevailing inequalities between men and women through greater participation of women in economic activities<sup>21</sup>.

Generally, women's involvement in the development process as envisaged by planners is only in the area of family planning and population control, with the implicit bias that women's participation in development is marginal and needs only to be accommodated in these areas which can be linked to a greater use of contraceptives, and not to the areas of education and skill development through which women could become more productive members of society.

Though it is a policy requirement that women should play a more critical and important role in the modernization of social and economic changes of the nation, in reality such intervention is lacking, especially in the field of leadership development. It has been found in several studies and programs that women have demonstrated remarkable resilience and enterprise where women are provided with opportunities such as credit, inputs and training. What is needed now is that women should be encouraged to develop qualities as leaders and decision makers if they are to participate in greater numbers in the development of the nation.

## **2.6 Institutions and Organisational Leadership**

In Bangladesh, a number of development organisations have emerged mainly in the cities and later in the villages. The focus of these organisations has shifted from relief and

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21 Simeen Mahmud, Op. Cit., p. 10.

rehabilitation programs to community development and target oriented programs. Many of these organisations have been directed to the socio-economic development of women. There are non-government organisations which are set up with people's participation in various areas of development.

Besides, there are a few research organisations, such as Women for Women, A Research and Study Group, which deal specifically with women's issues. Their main focus has been on Bangladeshi women's lives, and on problems obstructing their integration into the development process. Among the other organisations involved in research, most sponsor and assist efforts on education, health and socio-cultural studies. The Centre for Social Studies, an autonomous research institution, conducts feminist research and at the same time evaluates development efforts of both the government and non-government programs. The Foundation for Research on Educational Planning and Development focuses particularly on the problems and factors impinging on the planning of the qualitative growth of education as an integral part of national development.

There are organisations which deal with the legal aspects of women like Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights. Other professional organisations involved in Women's development are the Bangladesh Business and Professional Women, the Bangladesh Federation of University Women etc.

There are also many local level organisations. They operate within a confined geographical area, such as a village, Union or Upazila. Among them, some have achieved a considerable amount of success, for instance, Bachte Sheka, Provati, Ahsania Mohila Mission etc.

It is worth while to mention that the first attempt towards organising rural women was taken by the Comilla Academy for Rural Development. The Academy sponsored programs to improve the social and economic conditions of rural women. The programs attempted to organise women into cooperatives from the grass root level as early as 1959. It was successful, though in a limited manner, in producing some leaders who were from among the poor women of the society. But the program itself was small in size and scope. Later on, the Comilla model has been taken up by the Bangladesh Rural Development Board.

An analysis of voluntary organisations reveals that all women's organisations suffer from certain limitations. Their members are far from being an articulate group and are unable to create much pressure for their demands.

These organisations seldom reach out to a large number of women, whether rural or urban. Leadership always rests in the hands of specific groups or urban oriented women. The outreach program of most of these organisations suffers from these logistical, organisational and managerial components being extremely limited.



Evaluation studies reveal that development programs undertaken in the rural areas by non-government organisations, actually benefitted only a microscopic portion of the rural population, and women are the group who were least benefitted by those strategies. In general, women's participation as leaders, decision-makers and planners is very restricted in such programs. This appears to be particularly true for a developing country like Bangladesh. To what extent ongoing changes in the field are generating forces that can produce fundamental transformation, remains to be understood, especially the concern for the emerging leadership of women.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STUDY VILLAGES: SATURIA AND RUPGANJ

The roles and characteristics of leaders cannot be meaningfully understood apart from socio-economic context within which the leadership phenomena operates. Chapter III provides the basic information of two locations of the study.

#### 3.1 Saturia

Saturia<sup>1</sup> is an Upazila (sub-district) in the district of Manikganj. There are ten unions and 119 mouzas (revenue villages) in the Upazila. The area is 62 square miles.

The population of this Upazila as per 1981 census is 1,36,611, of which 68,792 are female (male-female ratio is 49.6 : 50.4). The number of households is 20,580. Among these 14,884 are agricultural families, while 7,017 are reported as landless families. The Upazila possesses 30,828 acres of agricultural land and 108 ponds.

The rate of literacy is about 23%. As regards educational institutions, there are 62 primary schools, 11 high schools, one girl's high school, one college and 30 madrashas.

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1 The data of this Upazila were collected from the Upazila office in 1985.

According to Upazila reports, there are 18 post offices, 38 public clubs, one telegraph office, 123 pucca and kacha mosques, 5 mandirs, one rural health centre, one family planning clinic, three charitable hospitals, one telephone exchange. There are about eight hats (weekly bazars) and eleven bazars for day to day business. Two union godowns, one fertilizer godown are situated in this Upazila. The number of banks with its branches is nine for transaction of money. For agriculture, there exists 78 deep tubewells and 38 shallow tubewells. For drinking purposes there are about 576 tubewells with two power pumps. The length of pucca roads is only 3 miles; other kacha roads of about 40 miles are in possession of the Upazila and 60 miles in possession of the Union Parishad.

The organizations that are operating in the area are, Thana Central Cooperative Association (TCCA) (1), Krishi Samabay Samity (KSS) (26), Cooperatives (87), Mohila Cooperative Society (2), OCMPS (9), Fishing Cooperatives (9), Weaver's Society (9), UCCA Societies (63), other societies (32). Significantly, out of 121 societies, only two are known as women's cooperative societies. When asked about females who belong to an organization and are influential, the villages could name only two women. One of them is a family planning worker and the other is a group leader of earth work. However, during visits to 15 villages in this Upazila, it was found that many women's associations and groups are working in this area under different government and non-government organizations.

During field visits, the following information was collected about the area and people:

1. The communication system in the locality is not developed; in the rainy season it is difficult to move from one place to another.
2. The addresses of influential women in the locality were collected through the Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad Chairman and other influential persons of the localities.
3. 'Purdah' of women is not very much a problem in the locality.
4. To interview women leaders, one has to first contact the significant male relatives and in some cases they are present during the interview.

It took a long time to contact the chairman of Sauria Upazila. To reach the headquarters from the main road, one had to cross 3 canals, sometimes one had to go by rickshaw or simply by walk. It took at least 7 days to identify the women leaders and obtain their addresses from the Upazila office. It was also difficult to get them at home because often they had gone to some other place.

The women leaders were found to be very cooperative. They responded openly and frankly without any hesitation. They were not shy before strangers, whether male or female. It was observed that in only 4 families, there was restriction or 'Purdah', but in general there was no restriction of 'Purdah'.

Fifteen villages were included in the study. The average population of the villages under study is about 7000, ratio of male-female being 50:50. Literacy rate of female in these villages, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, is about 13%. The average number of households of these villages is 114. The researcher visited two villages intensively.

One village was taken as the base village. The name of the village is Koita. It belongs to Dhankura Union. In the base village, there are fewer number of women groups/associations. So the surrounding villages have also been included in the study. The villages are located 45 miles northwest of Dhaka city and 5 miles from the Manikganj District head quarters. The villages are within 5 to 7 miles of Saturia Upazila.

The base village Koita is bordered on the north by Paikpara village, on the south by Kazipara village, on the east by Barundi village, and on the west by Golera village. It is situated half a mile from the Dhaka-Aricha highway.

The population of this Union (Dhakura) is about 11,000, about half being female. The Koita village is composed of 600 people. It consists of three neighborhoods. The number of households in the Union is about 750.

The village has two rice mills, one weekly bazar, 3 big shops and 40 small shops, one tea stall, one primary school, one mosque and one bank. According to Union Parishad reports, the village has one women cooperative society and one boys club. There is a brick road, about

a mile long, linking the bank, bazar and Aricha highway. The chief means of communication for this area is by boat in the rainy season, but at other times one has to walk. For going outside the village, one can use rickshaws. Females generally use rickshaws for going outside on visits to relatives houses. The village has one training institution run by an NGO located in the centre. The village has no post office, clinic or hospital. In case of emergency, people go to the clinic in a nearby village. One medical doctor, one Kabiraj and one homeopath are available in the village.

The main occupation of the villagers is agriculture, service, business and rickshaw pulling are the secondary occupations for men. About 50% household are said to be landless.

It takes about two hours from Dhaka City to reach Nayadingi bus station. It takes another 8-10 minutes to reach the middle of the village by rickshaw. On two sides of the road are a few carpentry shops, a rice mill, and several other shops such as tea stalls.

### **3.2 Rugganj**

Rugganj is an Upazila (sub-district) in the district of Narayanganj. It is about 14 miles from the Narayanganj district headquarters. Also, it is 15 miles from Dhaka City. Traditionally this area has been known for its handloom products. One of the principal markets for handloom products is Badurhat situated within the Upazilla. The base village in this study was Bhulta but two other adjacent villages, Balaikhan and Mortazabad are also included in the study.

The Dhaka-Sylhet highway passes through the villages. While only Balaikhan stands on the eastern side of the highway, the two other villages are located western side.

This Upazila is situated in one of the low lying areas of the district. As a result, during the rainy season lowlands around the villages are submerged under water. During this time, the means of transport of these villages is only by boat.

One distinctive feature of village Bhulta is the presence of a big rectangular tank consisting of about 8 acres of land. About 85% of the households are built on its four banks. One high school and a charitable dispensary stand on the eastern side of the tank. Bhulta bazar is situated on the north east, and towards the west, on the right hand side is the Bhulta Union Parishad office. A brick road, which starts from the Dhaka-Sylhet highway and runs west through the bazar, connects the village with Rupganj Upazila headquarters.

To the north west of Bhulta is the village Mortujabad. At the entrance of the village, there are a few concrete buildings. The number of households in this villages is 291.

Balaikhan village stands on the eastern side of the Dhaka-sylhet highway. In this village there are 72 households. Only Muslims live in this village. Balaikhan is not densely populated. The majority of the people of Bhulta are Muslims with some Hindu households. The population structure of the villages under study shows that the number of males is higher than females.

## Population structure in Bhulta, Balaikhan and Mortuzabad of Rupganj Upazila, 1985.

Village	Male	Female	Total	No. of households
Bhulta	195	181	376	65
Balaikhan	130	112	242	72
Mortuzabad	860	813	1673	272

Source : S.A. Qadir; A report of BIRDEM, Anthropological study of social course of Diabetes in Bangladesh (Dhaka, 1985).

The overall literacy rate is 48%. Among these villages Bhulta has the highest number of literate people, while Balaikhan and Mortujabad have literacy rates of 39% and 48% respectively. But the number of people with higher education is very low.

A large number of households in these villages are landless. Occupational patterns of these villages show that non-farm activities dominate. In Bhulta village, only 4% of the male households heads pursue agriculture as their main occupation, 19% in Balaikhan and 5% in Mortujabad. Occupations like weaving (Business), business, wage labour, service and shopkeeping predominate over agriculture.

This chapter represents socio-economic and demographic profile of the villages under study. Although in respect of population, education and occupation and organisations two locations vary in some respects but there is similarities in respect of landless and poorer section



of people. In Sauria, there exists a number of organisations while in Rugganj there are a few of them. Attempts should be made to see that women leadership characteristics is the same or different in two locations.

## CHAPTER IV

## WOMEN LEADERS IN RURAL AREAS

The information on rural women leaders from the two locations - Saturia Upazila and Rupganj Upazila was gathered on the basis of the objectives of the study. Interviews and discussions were held with local elite and knowledgeable persons. The questionnaire was formulated with a view to getting information about women leaders' socio-economic characteristics, their organisational involvement in projects, their leadership role and family, and their comments and opinions on some issues relating to women.

#### 4.1 Socio Economic Characteristics of Women Leaders in Saturia and Rupganj Upazila

##### Age, Marital Status and Religion

Table 1: Distribution of age of Women Leaders

Age	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Below 20 years	2	6.67	7	23.33
20-29	16	53.33	12	40.00
30-39	3	10.00	4	13.33
40-49	5	16.67	6	20.00
50 & above	4	13.33	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00
	Average = 31.83		Average = 29.66	

The age of the women leaders ranged from 20 to 59 years, the average being 32 years. Out of 30 women leaders in Saturia, only 2(7%) were in the age category below 20 years, a majority of them - 24(80%) belonged to 20-49 age group and the age of only 4(13%) was 50 years and above.

In Rupganj, the age ranged from 18 to 59 years, the average being 30 years. Seven women leaders (23%) were in the age category below 20 years, 22(73%) in the middle group, 20 to 49 and only one was 50 years old.

### Marital Status

Table 2: Marital Status of Women Leaders

Marital Status	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Unmarried	3	10.00	1	3.33
Married	20	66.67	28	93.33
Divorced	2	6.67	1	3.33
Widow	5	16.67	-	-
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

As regards the marital status of the women leaders in Saturia, 3(10%) were unmarried, 20(67%) were married, 2(7%) were divorced, and 5(17%) were widowed. In Rupganj, one woman leader was unmarried, 28(93%) were married, and one was divorced.

The overall pattern, as seen in the age distribution of women leaders, was that of a relatively young leadership. Generally speaking, most of them were in then productive and reproductive age. In the case of Saturia, seven of them were divorced and widows.

All the women leaders in the two locations were Muslims, except 6 in Rupganj, who were Hindus, and the large majority of women were married.

### Education

Table 3: Educational Status of Women Leaders

Educational Status	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	-	-	7	23.33
Can sign name	9	30.00	7	23.33
Read upto V	3	10.00	5	16.67
VI - X	4	13.33	8	26.67
S.S.C. passed	10	33.33	2	6.67
H.S.C. passed	3	10.00	-	-
Bachelor Degree	1	3.33	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Education is considered to be an essential factor in the development of human qualities. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, in 1986, the percentage of literacy of males and females 5 years and above was respectively 31.00 and 16.00. For rural areas, the literacy rate for females is less than this, about 10-13%.

As regards the educational status of women leaders in Saturia, 9(30%) could sign their names, 7(23%) read upto class X, 10(33%) passed S.S.C., 3(10%) passed H.S.C. and only one (3%) had a graduation degree.

In case of Rupganj, 7(23%) were illiterate, 7(23%) could only sign their names, 13(43%) read upto class X, 2(7%) passed S.S.C. and only one had a graduation degree.

A comparison of the educational status of women leaders in Saturia and Rupganj reveals that those of Saturia were in a slightly better position with regard to mid-level education than those of Rupganj. The number of those who read upto H.S.C. in Saturia was twenty.

Occupation

Table 4: Occupation of the Women Leaders

Occupation	Saturia		Rupganj	
	Present	Past	Present	Past
Teaching	4 (13.33)	-	(10.00)	-
Service F.P.	3 (10.00)	-	3	-
Member of Union Parishad	12 (40.00)	-	1 (3.33)	-
Field Organizer	3 (10.00)	1 ( 3.33)	-	-
Health Coordinator	3 (10.00)	-	-	-
Sericulture	1 ( 3.33)	-	-	-
Chairman of Landless Samity	1 ( 3.33)	-	-	-
Earth work/ Road Construction	2 ( 6.67)	2 ( 6.67)	-	-
House Work	-	20 (66.67)	22 (73.33)	14 (46.67)
Student	-	5 (16.67)	-	-
Spinning	-	-	2 ( 6.67)	3 (10.00)
Grameen Bank	-	-	2 ( 6.67)	3 (10.00)
Unemployed	1 ( 3.33)	-	-	-
No Response	-	2 ( 6.67)	-	10 (33.33)
Total	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)

Occupation of Saturia women leaders varied in nature. In the descending order, 12 of them stated that they were Union Parishad members (nominated Women Representatives), 12 respondents mentioned membership in Union Parishad as their occupation but obviously it is not their means of livelihood. Four of them were in teaching, 3 were in service in family planning, 3 were field organizers of non- government organisations, 3 were health coordinators, one was engaged in earth work, and another engaged in road maintenance work. Again, only one was

involved in sericulture and another was chairman of a landless society. Only one mentioned that she was executive member of an organisation but was unemployed for the time being. Out of 30 women leaders, 20(67%) were stated that they were housewives before but 5(17%) were involved in some type of occupation. Another 5(17%) of them were students.

A majority of women leaders in Rupganj, i.e. 22(73%) stated that they were housewives. Ten percent were in family planning service, one (3.3%) was a member of Union Parishad, 2(7%) were involved in Grameen Bank and another 2(7%) were involved in spinning. As regards their past involvement, they stated that they were primarily housewives before.

The occupational pattern shows that women leaders of Sauria were in different types of occupation. But Rupganj women leaders were primarily housewives. It might be possible that women leaders of Sauria simply took advantage of the existence of a number of organisations. Since there were fewer organisations in Rupganj, the women there did not have the opportunity for such organisational involvement.

Property of Women Leaders

Table 5: Property of Women Leaders

Properties	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Land	-	-	-	-
House	7	23.3	9	30.0
Land & House	11	36.7	9	30.0
House & Others (machine, tools)	-	-	8	26.67
No property	12	40.0	4	13.3
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Women leaders were asked about their own property. This included land, house and other possessions such as machine and tools, etc. It is observed from the data that 12(40%) women leaders in Saturia and 4(13%) in Rupganj did not have any property of their own; 7(23%) in Saturia and 9(30%) in Rupganj only had house. Again, 11(37%) in Saturia and 9(30%) in Rupganj had land and houses; only 8(27%) women leaders in Rupganj had house and other property (sewing machine and weaving tools).

As regards possession of personal property, women leaders in Rupganj were in a better position than their counterparts in Saturia.



Income of Women Leaders

Table 6: Monthly Income of Women Leaders

Income (In Taka)	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Upto Tk. 200	17	56.67	3	10.00
201-400	2	6.67	6	20.00
401-600	1	3.33	5	16.67
601-800	1	3.33	2	6.67
801-1000	1	3.33	-	-
1001 & above	4	13.33	5	16.67
No Response	4	13.33	9	30.00
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Generally, in the tradition bound society of Bangladesh, women are not considered bread winners for the family. Their income, whatever the amount or size, does not carry the same value as that of their male partners-guardians. In this background, let us see the situation of income of women leaders in the two locations. The income level of women leaders in Saturia showed that a majority of them, i.e. 17(57%) earned upto Tk. 200 per month, 2(7%) earned in the range of Tk. 401-600, 2(7%) in the range of Tk. 801-1000, only 4(13%) above Tk. 1000. Four respondents were silent about their income.

In case of Rupganj, out of 30 women leaders, 9 did not respond to the question. Three (10%) earned income upto Tk. 200, 6(20%) earned Tk. 201 to 400, and 5(17%) between Tk. 401- 600. Only two of them earned in the range of Tk. 601-800, and 5(17%) fell in the income range of Tk. 1000 and above.

It is interesting to note that although most of the women in Rupganj stated that they were housewives, their earning was better than the Saturia women leaders. It seems possible that Rupganj women had some other source of income which they preferred not to disclose.

#### 4.2 Family Background of Women Leaders

Family background may be said to provide the infrastructure for building leadership qualities of an individual. Thus, the background information of father/husband and other relatives has also been collected.

##### Education of Fathers

Table 7: Educational status of the Father of Women Leaders

Educational Status	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	10	33.33	10	33.33
Can sign name	2	6.67	6	20.00
Read & Write only	2	6.67	-	-
Read upto V	-	-	4	13.33
VI - X	3	10.00	2	6.67
S.S.C. passed	10	33.33	6	20.00
H.S.C. passed	-	-	1	3.33
Bachelor Degree	2	6.67	-	-
Madrasa	1	3.33	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

As regards the educational level of fathers of women leaders of Saturia, about 40% were illiterate, only 7% could sign their names, 7% could read and write only, 10% read upto class X, 33% passed S.S.C., 7% had graduation degrees and only 3% had Madrasha educations.

In the case of Rupganj, among fathers of women leaders about 53% were illiterate, only 18% could sign their names, 13% read upto class V, 7% read upto class X, 20% passed S.S.C., only one passed H.S.C. and only one had a Madrasha education.

Data on their educational attainment reveal that the fathers of women leaders in Saturia had slightly better educational levels than the fathers of women leaders in Rupganj.

### Income

Table 8: Income of Fathers of Women Leaders

Income (In Taka)	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Upto Tk. 200	8	26.67	-	-
201-400	1	3.33	-	-
401-600	1	3.33	-	-
601-800	-	-	1	3.33
801-1000	1	3.33	4	13.33
1001 & above	5	16.67	6	20.00
Can maintain family	-	-	4	13.33
No Response	14	46.67	15	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Monthly income range of the fathers of women leaders of Sauria varied from Tk. 200 to Tk. 2000. About 47% of them could not estimate their father's income; 27% earned incomes of Tk. 200, 7% earned upto Tk. 600 and 20% earned Tk. 1000 and above.

For the fathers of women leaders in Rupganj, the lower limit of income was upto Tk. 600, 13% earned between Tk. 800 to Tk. 1000, and 20% earned Tk. 1000 and above. The economic condition of the fathers of women leaders of Rupganj was comparatively better than in Sauria.

### Occupation

Table 9: Occupation of the Fathers of the Women Leaders

Occupation	Sauria		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	9	30.00	12	40.00
Business	4	13.33	7	23.33
General Services	6	20.00	1	3.33
Technical Services	2	6.67	-	-
Teacher	2	10.00	-	-
Labour	2	6.67	2	6.67
Tahsildar	1	3.33	-	-
Union Parishad Chairman	1	3.33	-	-
Weaver	-	-	3	10.00
Old/Retired	2	6.67	5	16.67
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Father's occupation and income are important factors which provide opportunities for one's advancement towards higher levels of status in the society. It will, therefore, be worthwhile to make an attempt to get a comparative picture of the leaders and their fathers. The occupation of the fathers of women leaders in Saturia varied in nature. About 30% of them were agriculturists, 27% were in general or technical service, 13% were in business, 10% were teachers, 3% were chairman of Union Parishads, 3% were Tahsilders, 7% were labourers, and 7% reported that they had retired from service.

In Rupganj, 40% of the fathers of respondents were agriculturists, 23% were in business, 10% were weavers, 7% were labourers, and 17% did not have any occupation due to old age and retirement.

It is observed that of the total number of fathers of Saturia women leaders, about 53% were in service, were chairman of Union Parishads, teachers and Tahsilders; while 33% of Rupganj women leaders' fathers were in business.

It may be concluded that Saturia women leaders have some orientation towards leadership as their fathers were chairman and teachers.

Socio-Economic Background of Husbands of Women LeadersEducation

Table 10: Educational status of the Husbands of Women Leaders

Educational Status	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	4	16.00	3	10.70
Can sign name	2	8.00	6	21.40
Read upto V	1	4.00	1	3.60
VI - X	3	12.00	11	39.30
S.S.C. passed	1	4.00	2	7.10
H.S.C. passed	5	20.00	2	7.10
Bachelor Degree	6	24.00	1	3.60
Master's Degree	1	4.00	1	3.60
No response	2	8.00	1	3.60
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

As regards the educational qualifications of the husbands of these women leaders (except unmarried and divorced) of Saturia, 16% were illiterate, 8% could only sign their names 16% read upto class X, 4% passed S.S.C, 20% passed H.S.C, 24% had graduation degrees, and 4% had obtained Master's degree.

Among the husbands of women leaders of Rupganj, 10% were illiterate, 21% could only sign their names, 43% read upto class X, 7% passed S.S.C, 7% passed H.S.C, one each had obtained a graduation and a Master's degree.

A comparison of the educational levels of the husbands of women leaders of Saturia and Rugganj shows that more than 50% of the husbands of Saturia women passed S.S.C and higher degree, while only 21% of the husbands of women leaders of Rugganj passed S.S.C and higher degrees. Husbands of women leaders of Saturia seemed to have higher educational attainments compared to husbands of women leaders of Rugganj.

Table 11: Occupation of the Husbands of the Women Leaders

Occupation	Saturia		Rugganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
General Services	10	33.33	5	16.67
Business	3	10.00	13	43.33
Teacher	2	6.67	-	-
Agriculture	7	23.33	-	-
Labour	1	3.33	1	3.33
Carpenter	-	-	1	3.33
Weaver	-	-	6	20.00
Rickshaw Pullar	-	-	1	3.33
No response	7	23.33	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

The husbands of women leaders of Saturia belonged to such occupations as general service (33%), followed by agriculture (23%), business (10%), teaching (7%), and labour (3%). Seven respondents did not reply to the question.

In case of Rupganj, about 43% of the husbands of Women leaders were in business, 17% in service and 20% in weaving. Others were married to a labourer, a carpenter, and a rickshawpuller. Three respondents did not reply.

### Income

Table 12: Income of the husbands of Women Leaders

Income (In Taka)	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Upto Tk. 500	13	52.00	-	-
501-1000	-	-	5	17.86
1001-2000	4	16.00	8	28.57
2001-3000	1	4.00	4	14.24
3001-4000	-	-	3	10.71
4001-5000	-	-	-	-
Above 5000	-	-	3	10.71
No Response	7	28.00	5	17.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As regards the income of the women leaders' husbands, thirteen (52%) of the respondents of Saturia stated that their husbands earned Tk. 500 or less, 4(16%) earned Tk. 1001 to Tk. 2000, and only 1(4%) earned Tk. 2001 to Tk. 3000. In Rupganj, 22 out of 30 respondents reported their husbands' incomes. Among these husbands, 5(18%) had income between Tk. 501 to Tk. 1000, 8(29%) fell in the income group of Tk. 1001-2000, 4(14%) had incomes between Tk. 2001-3000, 3(11%) had incomes between Tk. 3001 to 4000, and 3(11%) had incomes above Tk. 5000.



It is observed that the husbands of women leaders of Satura had better educational levels, but their income levels was on the lower side compared to husbands of Rupganj women leaders. This fact can be explained from the occupational variation of the two locations. The major occupations of husbands of the Rupganj women leaders was business. Educational indicators were not significantly related to their incomes, while type of occupation was strongly related to their incomes.

It is difficult to assess income in rural areas. There is a tendency to conceal one's real income for fear of taxes or imposition of a levy by the government. Sometimes, it is difficult to estimate, as when the income is not based on salary or wages.

### Family Status

Families in Bangladesh are patrilineal and households are patrilocal. The wife usually comes to live with husband's family after marriage. Only under special circumstances does the husband reside in the wife's parental household.

Table 13: Number of Family members in the household

Family member	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
2-3	5	16.67	3	10.00
4-6	17	56.67	13	43.33
7-9	5	16.67	9	30.00
10-12	3	10.00	4	13.33
Above 12	-	-	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

As regards the composition of the households of women leaders in Saturia, about 17(57%) had households with 4 to 6 members, 5(16%) had 2 to 3 members, 5(16%) had 7 to 9 members, and only 3(10%) had 10 to 12 members. The average number of family members in a household was 5.3.

In Rupganj, 13(43%) had households with 4 to 6 members, 9(30%) had 7 to 9 members, 4(13%) had 10 to 12 members, 3(10%) had 2 to 3 members, and only one (10%) had more than 12 members. It is found that household size of women leaders of Rupganj was larger than that of the women leaders of Saturia.

The size of the family may be an important factor for women leaders. Large families may obstruct women in coming out of the household and participate in development organisations. Fewer children may also be a factor encouraging these women to enter into

occupations or work-spheres outside the home.

Table 14: Number of Children of Women Leaders

Area	Saturia		Rupganj		Total	
	Number	Average	Number	Average	Number	Average
Son	32	1.78	53	1.89	85	1.84
Daughter	25	1.39	36	1.28	61	1.33
Total	57	3.17	89	3.18	146	3.17

Note: Saturia -- 9 women have no children; 3 unmarried  
Rupganj -- 1 woman has no children; 1 unmarried

As regards their number of children in Saturia, 9 out of 30 women leaders did not have any children. Only 18 stated having children and 3 women leaders were unmarried. The total number of children of the 18 women leaders was 57; 32 were male and 25 female. The average number of children was 3 per family. Among the 57 children of women leaders in Saturia, 37 were below 15 years of age and 20 above the age of 15. Other dependents included brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, uncles, daughters -in-laws, etc. In order to find out their linkage with others in the locality, the information about women leaders' relatives was collected. In Saturia, about 37% of women leaders mentioned their uncles (both paternal and maternal) ; others mentioned, in a descending order, brothers-in-law, brothers, cousins, nephews/nieces, fathers, fathers-in-law, sons-in-law, and neighbours. As regards their relatives' educational status, 22 were illiterate; a few had graduation degree in Saturia.

The occupations of the relatives of Sauria women leaders was first agriculture (at about 37%) while the next was service and business. As far as the linkage of women leaders with influential persons of the locality is concerned, 16 respondents of Sauria stated that they had close association with their neighbours; 12 stated that they had linkage with relatives, such as uncles, fathers, brothers-in-law, members of Union Parishads and teachers etc., who were influential. The educational status of the influential people mentioned by the women leaders of Sauria, the majority of them had passed S.S.C while some of them had obtained graduation and Masters degrees. The influential people, whose reference were given by women leaders of Sauria, occupied important positions in the locality. The women leaders were asked to mention two influential persons of the locality. Those mentioned in Sauria included agriculturists 8(27%), teachers 6(20%), businessmen 5(17%), contractors and Union Parishad members. The other influential persons with whom women leaders had close connection were teachers (3), agriculturists (11), businessmen (5) and Union Parishad members (4). The next were a retired military officer (1), a doctor (1), and a ration shop dealer (1).

In Rupganj, out of 30 women leaders, only one was unmarried. Twenty nine women leaders had 89 children; 53 were male and 36 female. The average number of children was also 3 per family. In Rupganj, the 30 women leaders have a total of 137 family members living with them. Out of 89 children, 69 were below 15 years of age and 20 were above 15. Other dependents included fathers, mothers, brothers, grandsons, grandfathers, fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, daughters-in-law, nephews, etc. One respondent had a co-wife. In Rupganj, half of the women leaders mentioned fathers-in-law and brothers-in-law, 17% uncles,

13% fathers, others mentioned relatives like brothers, sisters-in-law, sons-in-law and neighbours. In Rupganj, the pattern of occupations was different. The relatives of 12 women leaders were in business; next came in order service (7) and agriculture (3). About 11 of their relatives were in the weaving business. In the case of Rupganj, about 19(63%) of the women leaders had close linkage with local influential people who were neighbours, 11(37%). Relatives such as uncles, fathers, brothers-in-law, and chairmen and members of Union Parishad were also mentioned. The education of the influential people in Rupganj, 22 read upto class X, 3 passed S.S.C., and only one had a graduation degree. Among women leaders of Rupganj, 15(83%) stated that they had close connections with local influential people who were in business. Some mentioned Union Parishad Chairmen (3), a teacher (1) and an agriculturist (1). Again, the majority of women leaders stated that the other influential people were in business and next in orders were in service, agriculture, weaver etc.

#### Involvement of Women Leaders with Socio-Economic organisations

Out of 30 women leaders in Saturia, only 14 had connections with socio-economic organisations. These organisations were Jatio Mahila Sangstha, Landless Society, Samaj Sheba Samiti, Proshika Samiti, Teachers Association, and other village level organisations. Some of them held executive positions. They had been members of these organisations for the past two to ten years.

### 4.3 Project Involvement

The women leaders were asked whether they had taken up any projects for women in the locality. Twenty one (70%) of women in Saturia stated that they had undertaken projects for women in the locality, but all of the women leaders of Rupganj answered in the negative.

Table 15: Future programme planned by Women Leaders

Name of Project	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Mohila Samity	8	26.67	4	13.33
Landless Society	6	20.00	-	-
Proshika	5	16.67	-	-
Credit Union (Weaver)	-	-	-	-
Livestock/Tubewell	1	3.33	-	-
Grameen Bank	-	-	25	83.33
Family Planning	-	-	1	3.33
Fisheries	1	3.33	-	-
No response	9	30.00	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

In answering the question, whether they had been thinking about taking up any project for women, 7 out of 21 women leaders in Saturia said that they were thinking about organising Mohila Samity, 6 were thinking of a project for landless women, 5 suggested projects with PROSHIKA. The remaining expressed a desire for projects of tubewells, and livestock and fisheries, etc.

Since Rupganj women leaders were not involved in any such organisations, only 25(83%) of them mentioned Grameen Bank; 4 cited Mahila Samity; and one mentioned family planning activities.

Table 16: Responsibilities of Women Leaders for their members

Responsibilities	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Job opportunities, Medical facilities, F.P., Children's welfare	8	26.67	3	10.00
Discussion about wheat distribution, Personal matters, Eradication of illiteracy	5	16.67	3	10.00
Dowry, Violence against Women, Vocational education	5	16.67	-	-
Education, Health, Balanced diet, Baby food, Nutrition	4	13.34	-	-
Recovery of land and savings, Capital formation	4	13.34	-	-
Society's organizational activities	2	6.67	-	-
Family problems, Exploitation	2	6.67	6	20.00
Loan repayment of Grameen Bank/Savings	-	-	16	53.33
Distribution of Relief materials	-	-	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

"What responsibilities have you shouldered with respect to your role as a woman leader?"

In Sauria 27% of the women leaders answered the question by stating that they had the responsibility of providing job opportunities, medical facilities, family planning, and children's welfare for the members of their organisations; 17% of them mentioned dowry, violence against women, and vocational education; 17% mentioned wheat distribution, family problems, and eradication of illiteracy; and 13% mentioned activities such as recovery of land, savings, and capital formation. Another 13% mentioned education, balanced diet, baby food and nutrition; the remaining talked about organisational activities, family problems and exploitation of women.

In Rupganj, in order of preference, women leaders mentioned repayment of loan (53%) family problems, torture by husbands, wheat distribution (20%); job opportunities, medical facilities, eradication of illiteracy, children's health (20%), and distribution of relief material (7%).



#### 4.4 Views on Selected Issues

##### Major problems of women of the locality and efforts to solve the problems

Table 17: Major problems of women of the locality as perceived by the Women Leaders

Problems	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Poverty, Economic	3	10.00	6	20.00
Health, Education and Communication	6	20.00	11	36.66
Dowry, Marriage problems, Violence, Lack of security	12	40.00	7	23.33
Lack of organisation, Lack of job opportunities	5	16.67	3	10.00
Equal rights of men and women	1	3.33	-	-
Social problems	3	10.00	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Regarding what the women leaders believe to be the major problems of local women, 12(40%) women leaders in Saturia mentioned dowry, marriage, violence against women and lack of security; 6 (20%) stated poor education, health, and communication facilities 5(17%) mentioned lack of organisations and job opportunities; and the remaining respondents (23%)

emphasized problems such as poverty, social and economic problems, and inequality between men and women, etc.

Amongst women leaders in Rupganj, about 11(37%) mentioned lack of education, lack of health and communication facilities 7(23%) cited dowry, marriage, lack of security, and violence against women; 6(20%) cited poverty and economic problems 6(20%) said lack of organisations, job opportunities.

Although the problems of both the areas seemed to be the same in various degrees, women leaders of Saturaia referred to broader problems probably because the fact that they were members of organisations, and as such were able to view things in a wider perspective. They seemed to be more conscious and aware of their positions and realized that they were getting unequal treatment from menfolk and society. It may be concluded that women leaders of Saturaia were more conscious and aware of women's problems than were Rupganj women leaders.

Table 18: Steps taken by the Women Leaders to solve the problems

Efforts to Solve the Problems	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Through local women, organisation and school committee	6	20.00	1	3.33
Financial help through loan	2	6.67	-	-
Family matters	3	10.00	5	6.67
Inform Union Parishad Chairman	-	-	8	26.67
Giving advice to women	10	33.33	3	10.00
Discuss problems with members	7	23.33	-	-
Problem of irrigation	1	3.33	-	-
Proper training and good environment, need capital	2	6.67	-	-
Through Grameen Bank	-	-	13	43.33
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Women leaders pointed out various steps for the solution of these problems. Those in Saturia tried to solve the problems in various ways, generally through their organisations, and school committee, through discussion with members, giving advice to the women, providing loans from the relevant organisation, and through NGO's like Proshika.

The women leaders of Rupganj tried to solve problems through school committees, by providing loans, through family level discussion, through Union Parisad Chairmen, giving advice to women, and through the Grameen Bank.

### Availability of Local Resources for Women

Table 19: Use of Resources by Women's organisations

Resource Used	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Relief	7	23.33	-	-
Loan through Proshika	6	20.00	-	-
Shallow tubewell	1	3.33	-	-
Advice	1	3.33	-	-
Family planning pill distribution	5	16.67	5	16.67
Help from Grameen Bank	-	-	25	83.33
No response	10	33.33	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Women leaders were asked about the resources the women of the locality received from the organisation. Resources like housing, education and job conditions for women were considered. In Saturia, out of 30 respondents, 10 did not answer. Among the 20 respondents, 20% stated that they received loan from Proshika, 23% said that they got relief, 17% said that they obtained family planning contraceptives and others mentioned shallow tubewell, and advice, etc.

A majority of women leaders (83%) from Rugganj mentioned loans from Grameen Bank.

Only five (17%) mentioned activities like family planning contraceptives for distribution.

Women Leaders' opinion on accommodation, education, health, and job opportunities

Table 20: Women Leaders opinion on housing, education, health and job opportunities in the area (Saturia)

-----		
A. Housing	No.	%
-----		
Need for shelter, no initiative	24	80.00
Need for organisation	3	10.00
Loan for house from Proshika,	2	6.67
Need for training		
Repair roads by Union Parishad	1	3.33
-----		
Total	30	100.00
-----		
-----		
B. Education	No.	%
-----		
No girls' school	19	63.33
Education through organisation	4	13.33
Adult education centre	2	6.67
Trying to make arrangement for schools	2	6.67
No Response	3	10.00
-----		
Total	30	100.00
-----		

C. Job opportunities	No.	%
No job opportunities	12	40.00
Training needed	4	13.33
Provided with job	3	10.00
No initiative	7	23.33
No response	4	13.33
Total	30	100.00

D. Health	No.	%
No arrangement for medical centre/ clinic/no medicine, no doctor	18	60.00
No initiative	4	13.33
Treatment through organisation	3	10.00
Trying to do something	3	10.00
No Response	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

Women leaders were asked about the condition of housing, education, health and job opportunities for women in the locality. With regard to housing conditions in Sauria 24(40%) of women, leaders said that there was no provision or arrangement for shelter/housing for poorer people, 10% talked about organisational help, while others cited the lack of training facilities and poor repair of roads provided by the Union Parishad. As regards the education of girls in the locality, two women mentioned the two adult educational centre but 19(63%) stated that there were no girls' schools in the area, two women said they were trying to establish girls' schools and 3 of them did not respond. About 63% of the women leaders stated that women in the locality were in need of job opportunities, and 13% indicated that they were in need of training

in order to get jobs. Only 10% said they had somehow managed to get job, and 2 did not respond. Sixty seven percent of the women leaders said that there were no medical centres/clinics/medicine/doctors within their reach, but only 20% tried to do something through organisations. They thought that the overall condition of the locality was unsatisfactory. The basic necessities of life such as health , education, housing and job opportunities were not available to women in the locality. Some of those who belonged to organisations were thinking of taking some initiative for starting schools and health clinics, etc.

Table 21: Women Leaders opinion on housing, education, health and job opportunities (Rupganj)

-----		
A. Housing	No.	%
-----		
Loan from Grameen Bank	12	40.00
No organisation for help	3	10.00
No shelter, no relief	2	6.67
No response	13	43.33
-----		
Total	30	100.00
-----		
-----		
B. Education	No.	%
-----		
No girls' school in the village	9	30.00
Primary school (Coeducation)	9	30.00
High School	2	6.67
Don't send girls to school	2	6.67
No Response	8	26.67
-----		
Total	30	100.00
-----		

C. Job opportunities	No.	%
No job opportunities	3	10.00
No response	27	90.00
Total	30	100.00

D. Health	No.	%
Family Planning Centre	13	43.33
Hospital	9	30.00
No medical facilities	8	26.67
Total	30	100.00

As regards women leaders' opinions about the Rupganj women's condition in the locality, out of 30 women leaders 12(40%) said that some members of Grameen Bank had taken loans for houses, and 5(13%) stated that they needed some kind of shelter, but 13 leaders did not respond. About girls' education in the area, 37% said that there were schools (primary and secondary) but in these schools male and female students study together i.e. the system was coeducational. About 30% said that they did not send their girls to school for fear of accident. About 73% of the women said that they had health facilities like hospitals and family planning centres, but 27% said that they lacked health and medical facilities. Except for three respondents, others did not express any opinion about job opportunities in the locality.



In Saturaia, women leaders were asked about such local resources as land, office space and schools for the use of women. Twenty eight out of 30 said that they did not have any facilities or land in the locality. Only 2 said they had bank accounts. Ninety seven percent of the women said that they did not have any office facilities for their organisations, while 3% mentioned the family planning office. About girls' education, only 10% said that they had some school facilities, but 90% said that they did not have educational facilities for their children in the locality.

#### Factors helped women to achieve leadership position

Respondents were asked what factors had helped them to come to their present positions.

Table 22: Factors that helped women leaders to achieve leadership positions

Factors	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Cooperation of husband, father etc.	4	13.33	4	13.33
Education	2	6.67	5	16.67
Good financial position	-	-	2	6.67
Sincerely patience and honesty	14	46.66	-	-
Ability to do work	5	16.67	9	29.97
Help from NGO	3	10.00	4	13.33
Have time & positive attitude towards women	-	-	4	13.33
No response	2	6.67	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Table 22 indicates that 50% of the women leaders of Saturia said that they were sincere in their work, patient, and honest, and that these qualities helped them to come to their present positions. Seventeen percent said that they worked hard; 13% said that they got help from their fathers, husbands, brothers, and relatives; 10% said that they got help from NGOs like Prosika; 7% said that they were educated and also teaching in the local school; and 7% did not reply.

On the same issue 30% of the Rupganj women leaders said that they were in leading position due to their ability to do work. Seventeen percent were in their positions because of their education, 13% for cooperation of husband, 7% for good financial position, 13% for repayment of loan to Grameen Bank, and others (13%) opined that they had time and they have positive attitude towards women and 7% did not reply.

Table 23: Decision making of women members in family matters

Decision making in family matters	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Take decision in all matters	19	63.33	5	16.67
Both by husband and wife	3	10.00	19	63.33
Advice in essential matters like childrens education and marriage	8	26.67	2	6.67
No role in decision making	-	-	4	13.34
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

As regards decision making in family matters, 63% of Saturia women leaders reported they took decision in all matters. Twenty seven percent gave advice in essential matters such as education of children and marriage. Only in 10% of the cases did husband and wife take decisions jointly.

In the case of Rupganj, however, 63% of the women leaders took decisions in family matters, in conjunction with their husbands, 17% took decisions by themselves, 13% had no role in decision making. Seven percent said that they had some say in the case of the marriage of the children.

Table 24: Organisational decisions of Women Leaders

Decisions	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Decision taken by committee or in a meeting	5	16.67	-	-
As chairman through discussion	2	6.67	-	-
Discussion with influential people on financial matters	5	16.67	2	6.67
Decision taken by herself	2	6.67	2	6.67
No involvement at present	2	6.67	-	-
Decision taken as suggested by organisation	4	13.33	-	-
Family Planning Associations	1	3.33	1	3.33
No response	9	30.00	25	73.23
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

In the case of organisational decision making, 17% women leaders in Saturia said that they took decisions upon discussion with influential people. Seventeen percent said that they took decisions in meetings/committees after discussion with other members. Only 7% said that they took decisions by themselves, while 13% took suggestions from the organisation. Others only gave advice on family planning, and 30% did not respond to the question.

Among women leaders (73%) in Rugganj did not respond, only 7% indicated that they took decisions by themselves. Seven percent of the women leaders discussed with the influential person, one leaders discussed with the Family Planning Association. The majority of the respondents did not reply.

#### Subjects for discussion with women in the locality

Table 25: Subject for discussion of Women Leaders

Subject	Saturia		Rugganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Education / School fees	18	56.67	-	-
Organisation of groups	9	30.00	6	20.00
Family Planning & Health	22	73.33	4	13.33
Employment / Work	4	13.33	-	-
Financial matters	7	23.33	-	-
Improvement of Samity coordination	5	16.67	-	-
Childs care, Nutritious food, Agriculture	3	10.00	1	3.33
Family matters / Social problem / Second marriage	6	20.00	15	50.00
Use of money / Savings	2	6.67	11	26.67
Grameen Bank rules & Regulations	-	-	5	16.67
Lack of facilities	-	-	3	10.00

"What are the subjects women leaders generally discuss with the members of their organisations?" In response to this question, 14(37%) of Saturia women leaders said they discussed the organisation and its improvement with other members, 18(57%) of them discussed education and reducing school fees, and 25(83%) of them discussed health, the care of children, family planning and nutrition, and agriculture. Others discussed employment (13%), family matters (20%), socio-cultural problems and financial problems (23%) and savings (7%) etc. Women leaders of Rupganj discussed the following subjects in order of importance: Grameen Bank rules and regulations (17%), family matters and second marriage of husband (50%), proper utilization of money (27%), and the organisation of new groups (20%). Others discussed health, family planning, and lack of opportunities (23%).

#### Socio-economic Status to which Women Leaders belong

Table 26: Social and Economic status of Women leaders

Social Status	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Upper	2	6.67	6	20.00
Middle	10	33.33	10	33.33
Lower	18	60.00	14	46.67
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Women leaders were asked to place themselves into socio-economic categories: upper, middle or lower class. In Saturia, 60% placed themselves in the lower class, 39% in middle status, and only 7% in upper status.

In Rupganj, only 47% placed themselves in the lower category, 33% in middle category and 20% in upper category.

It was observed that in Saturia women leaders were in lower economic and social positions than those of Rupganj. Having good financial backgrounds, the majority of Rupganj women leaders said that they belonged to either middle or upper categories.

Opinions of Women Leaders with regard to the social positions of Women of the locality

Table 27: Opinion of Women Leaders about the positions of Women in the area

Opinion	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very poor/landless & destitute	16	53.33	21	70.00
Lack of job opportunities	11	36.67	2	6.67
No opportunity for education	15	50.00	6	20.00
Torture by husband/dowry	9	30.00	9	30.00
Training needed	9	30.00	-	-
Social Restrictions/difficulty in marriage/Men's opposition in family planning	-	-	3	10.00
More or less good jobs provided	3	10.00	-	-
Suffering of middle class families	2	6.67	-	-
No concern for women	3	10.00	-	-

Opinions were sought about the position of women in general in the society. In Saturia, 16(53%) of the women leaders pointed out that women in the locality in general lived in a very poor condition, 26(87%) said that women in the locality lacked educational and job opportunities, 9(30%) indicated that dowry in marriage was a problem in the area, while 9(30%) said that women were in need of training facilities, 2(7%) referred to suffering of middle class

families, and 3(10%) thought that people in general did not think about women's condition.

In case of Rupganj, 21(70%) of the women leaders said that most women in the locality were landless, destitute and poor, 9(30%) mentioned torture by the husbands, 6(20%) mentioned the absence of educational opportunities and 3(10%) spoke about the difficulty in arranging marriage for daughters due to dowry and social problem.

### Opinion of Women Leaders on the Development Issues of Women

Table 28: Opinion of Women Leaders on the development of Women

Opinion	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Women to be organized/ Project for women	14	46.67	22	73.43
School to be established for girls/women	15	50.00	22	73.43
Work opportunities to be provided	13	44.33	5	16.67
Adult education, training, Cottage industry	18	56.67	-	-
Capital/Loan to be provided	3	10.00	4	13.33
Road Construction work/ Food for works programme	9	30.00	-	-
Strength for work discipline, intelligence needed/ consciousness Rights of women	3	10.00	21	70.00
Family planning/Medical facilities	6	20.00	-	-

In Saturia, 15(50%) women leaders expressed the opinion that education/school for girls was needed; 13(43%) said that women's condition could be developed if they were provided with the jobs; 18(57%) thought that women should be provided with cottage industries, adult education, and training; 9(30%) said they should be provided with jobs in Food for Works Programme; 6(20%) were for better health facilities; 14(47%) emphasized the need for women's organisations and projects; while others said that women should be provided with capital, loans and they should be made conscious about their rights.

In Rupganj, 22(73%) advocated improvement of the educational system for girls in the locality, 21(70%) emphasized on their presence of mind, intelligence and discipline in work, 22(73%) favoured organisations like Grameen Bank, 5(17%) said women should be provided with job opportunities and only 4(13%) suggested loans/capital for women.

It may, therefore be noted that while 73% of the women leaders in Rupganj stressed forming women's organisations in the area, only 47% of Saturia women leaders mentioned that issue. Other elements like schools for girls, loan/capital, and job opportunities were mentioned in the same way in both the areas.



Qualities of Good Leaders

Table 29: Qualities of good leaders

Qualities	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Patience	22	73.43	24	80.00
Education	9	20.00	26	86.67
Organisational ability/skill/ Farsightedness/discipline	10	23.33	16	53.34
Good advisor	18	60.00	-	-
Wise and truthful	12	40.00	-	-
Good character & behavior	6	20.00	9	30.00
Sacrificing attitude	2	6.67	-	-
Confident/courageous/intelligent	9	30.00	5	16.67
Good public relations/good understanding	-	-	9	30.00
Have economic resource	-	-	2	6.67

Women leaders were asked about the qualities of good leadership. In response to this, those in Saturia mentioned the following qualities in the descending order: patience (73%), good advisor (60%) wise and truthful (40%), educated (20%), confident, courageous (30%), skilled in work and organisational ability (23%) good character and behaviour (20%), skill, farsightedness and disciplined (23%) and sacrificing attitude (7%).

In Rupganj, most of the women leaders placed emphasis on education (86%), patience (80%), organisational ability (53%), and understanding people and public relations (30%). Others referred to intelligence (17%), good character (30%), and economic capacity of leaders (7%).

Respect for Women Leaders

Table 30: Why women leaders are respected ?

Why respected	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Educated / Teacher / Doctor	5	16.67	2	6.67
Has confidence	5	16.67	-	-
Good behavior	5	16.67	2	6.67
Good advice / Provided employment	6	20.00	5	16.67
U. P. Member / group chairman	3	10.00	3	10.00
Encourage people	2	6.67	-	-
Social work	2	6.67	3	10.00
Help from Grameen Bank	-	-	2	6.67
Old age	-	-	3	10.00
Understand work/people	-	-	5	16.67
Member of group	-	-	3	10.00
No response	2	6.67	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

"Why are women leaders respected ?" In response to this question, women leaders of Saturia said that they were respected because they were educated, confident, well behaved, gave good advice, were members of the Union Parishad, encouraged people, and provided services, and did social work in the locality.

Their Rupganj counterparts said that they were respected for old age, for understanding the work of the people, as members of the group, as chairmen of the group, as Union Parishad members, for good behaviour and for education.

Opinion of Women Leaders on Some Issues Relating to Women

Table 31: Opinion of Women Leaders about women's work outside home

Opinion	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
If women work outside they can understand what is good on bad/ have idea about outside world and struggle for the cause	13	43.33	13	43.33
Work outside for economic reason/ for survival	7	23.34	7	23.34
Educated women should have job so that they can work side by side with men for national prosperity	3	10.00	-	-
Women should be at home for rearing children/ for security/ for observing purdah	5	16.67	9	30.00
Education needed to have a job	1	3.33	-	-
Social restriction	-	-	1	3.33
No response	1	3.33	-	-
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

There are some stereotyped notions about women and their work in the society-such as "Women are lazy", "It is not possible for women to work outside the home", "Women can not take care of the house hold and their children if they work outside", "Their meagre income is not enough to support the family" -- women leaders were asked to comment on these notions.

Thirteen (43%) of the women leaders of Saturia held that when women worked outside the house they formed a better understanding of the world, and they could struggle for their cause. Seven (23%) said that women should work outside for economic reasons and for survival; 3(10%) said that educated women should have jobs so that they could work side by side with men for national prosperity; 5(17%) expressed the opinion that women should be at home to take care of their children, for security, for observing purdah; and one held the opinion that for education was needed for a good job. One did not express her opinion.

In Rupganj, 13(43%) women leaders expressed the opinion that women should work outside; 7(23%) said that they should work for economic reasons; and 9(30%) were of the opinion that women should stay at home to take care of their children. Only one said, women could not work because of social restrictions.

Table 32: Are Women Lazy?

	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
If women are given work they can work hard with sincerity	12	40.00	-	-
Women want to work, but there is lack of opportunity	6	20.00	-	-
Women are hard working	5	16.67	20	67.67
Work wold hard at home but without recognition	5	16.67	10	33.33
Women work harder than men	2	6.67	-	-
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

While responding to the notion that "Women are generally lazy", except for two who did not respond, 28 of Saturia women leaders said that the statement was not true. In order of sequence, their views were: women can work hard if they are provided with the job/ opportunity and they work with sincerity (60%); women are hard working, they work hard at home but without any recognition (33%), women work harder than men, and they can work if they have the desire (7%). All the Rupganj women leaders said that women were hard working and they work hard at home.

Table 33: Possibility of work in addition to looking after the house

Possibility of work in addition to looking after the house	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Possible	10	33.33	4	13.33
Poor economic condition/ joint income needed	6	20.00	4	13.33
If there is time	2	6.67	2	6.67
Want to work at home	6	20.00	12	40.00
Inconvenience	2	6.67	8	26.67
No opportunities for earning	4	13.33	-	-
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

"Is it possible to work outside after taking care of their children and the house?" is another issue on which views were sought. About 33% of Saturia women leaders said that it was possible to work and at the same time look after the house and children; 20% women needed work because of poor economic conditions and for supplementing their husbands' incomes; 13% said they did not have any opportunity for work; 7% said if women had time, they should work; 7% said it depended on women's psychological readiness for work; 20% said that it would not be possible for them to work outside due to certain inconveniences at home.

Table 34: Opinion of male about women's earning

Opinion	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Don't want/not good/bad	7	23.34	1	3.33
Joint income is good for family	8	26.67	5	16.67
Those who understand the problems, think positively about wemens work	7	23.33	22	73.33
Mixed opinion	4	13.33	2	6.67
Did not like women working outside the home	2	6.67	-	-
No response	2	6.67	-	-
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

They were asked about the attitude of men towards women's earning. In response to this question, 27% of Saturia women leaders expressed the opinion that menfolk thought joint income

by husband and wife was good for the family; 23% of them said that men who understood women's problems appreciated women's earning; 13% stated that men's attitude about earning of women was mixed; 23% said, men did not like women working outside the home; 7% said men's attitudes were negative due to the non-observance of purdah and because they thought that women took away men's work; Two women did not respond.

According to Rupganj women leaders, men's attitudes towards women's earning were as follows: about 17% were of the opinion that men thought that a joint income was good for the family, 73% of them said that men displayed a positive attitude if they understood their problems; 7% of them said men had mixed attitudes; and only 3% said men did not like women to work outside the home.

#### Opinion of Women Leaders on the situation of the Country

Table 35: Situation of country

##### A. Social

Opinion	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very bad	6	20.00	10	33.33
Developing	6	20.00	9	30.00
Average	4	13.33	2	6.67
Deteriorating social condition	5	16.67	4	13.33
Deteriorating values	5	16.67	-	-
No response	4	13.33	5	16.67
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

## B. Economic

Opinion	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very poor	17	56.67	18	59.99
Rise of prices/average/developing	5	16.67	3	10.00
Need job opportunities	4	13.33	13	43.33
Gap between rich and poor	1	3.33	-	-
No response	3	10.00	9	30.00
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

## C. Religious

Opinion	Saturia		Rupganj	
	No.	%	No.	%
Religious fanaticism/Superstitions	15	50.00	1	3.33
All right	8	26.67	5	16.67
Mixed	1	3.33	1	3.33
No response	6	20.00	23	76.67
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Women leaders were asked about the situation of the country. This was to explore their thought about the social, economic and cultural condition of the country as a whole.

Regarding the social condition, about 53% of Saturia women leaders thought that it was very bad and deteriorating; alongwith social values. Twenty percent of them thought that the social conditions were improving and another 13% said that condition was the same as before.



Four women did not respond.

In Rupganj, 14(47%) women leaders thought that the social conditions were bad and values were deteriorating, 9(20%) said conditions were improving, 2(7%) thought that they had remained the same, and 5(17%) did not answer the question.

### Summary

The above chapter represents socio-economic and family characteristics of rural women leaders, their organisational involvement, factors that help or hinder than to be a leader and qualities they possess and lastly their opinion on some selected issues.

It has been found that women leaders in two rural areas were relatively younger, their average ages were 30 - 32 years, almost all of them were married. There were divorced and widowed also. More than half of them had education upto grade ten and above. Occupation of Saturia women leaders was varied in nature but women leaders in Rupganj were mainly house wives. Most of the women leaders in Saturia belonged to different types of organisations and were involved in project activities. Majority of women leaders in both areas had a piece of land or house or shop etc. Income of women leaders of Saturia was comparatively lower than the women leaders of Rupganj. The fathers, husbands and other relatives of Saturia women leaders were more educated than the women leaders of Rupganj. Income of fathers and husbands of Rupganj women leaders were comparatively higher in Rupganj than Saturia. Family size of

Rupganj women leaders were larger than the women leaders of Saturia but the average number of children was three in both areas.

It is noticeable that the majority of respondents of Saturia were involved in project activities while respondents of Rupganj were involved in only one organisation. Leaders of both areas mentioned problems of women such as poverty, dowry, marriage, violence against women, lack of security, poor educational and health facilities, employment, lack of good organisation, communication and food scarcity. The factors that help them to become a leader were sincerity, honesty, patience, education, support of fathers, husbands and relatives, help from local NGOs, and encouragement of local people. As regards the quality of a good leader, respondents of Saturia mentioned, patience, good advice, wisdom, education, confidence, courage, skill, organisational ability, good character and behaviour, farsightedness and sacrificing attitude. The respondents of Rupganj placed emphasis on education, patience, organisational ability, public relations and economic capacity.

Respondents of both areas opined that there were some misconceptions about women. They considered that women were not lazy, they were doing double work, both at home and outside. Women were deprived of proper training facilities, adequate fund and opportunities, otherwise they could work outdoor side by side with man for survival and economic need. Only a few stated that they should take care of their children and family. The respondents of both areas thought that attitude of man towards the earning of women was positive and joint income by husband and wife was good for the family. The respondents of both areas were of the opinion that socio-economic and religious condition of the country was deteriorating. Social values were

not maintained. Only a few thought that socio-economic conditions was improving.

It may be concluded that women's organizational involvement, support from the family members, their individual qualities and education helped them to be a leader. Leaders knew the problems of women and the locality but they lacked organisational and financial opportunities to use their potentials.

## CHAPTER V

## WOMEN LEADERS IN URBAN AREA

The information on urban women leaders has been collected from two locations of Dhaka City - Wari (old Dhaka) and Mohammedpur (new Dhaka). The number of women leaders interviewed were 28. The questions regarding women leaders were divided into four basic groups viz, socio-economic characteristics, organization/ projects, leadership and finally their opinions about some important issues relating to women. Pertinent deliberations on the rural leaders was addressed in chapter IV. The focus of the present chapter is on their urban counterparts, covered from Dhaka city.

### 5.1 Socio-economic characteristics of Women Leaders from Dhaka City

#### Age, Marital Status and Religion

Table 36: Age distribution of Women Leaders

Age groups	No.	%
Below 20 years	-	-
20-29 years	1	3.57
30-39 years	9	32.14
40-49 years	15	53.57
50 and above	3	10.72
Total	28	100.00

Table 36: Marital status of Women Leaders

Marital Status	No.	%
Single/Unmarried	2	7.14
Married	23	82.14
Separated	1	3.57
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	2	7.14
Total	28	100.00

A total of 28 women leaders were considered from Dhaka city. All belonged to the Muslim community. About 86% of the women leaders were in the age range of 30-49 years, and none was below 20 years of age. Out of 28 women leaders, 15(54%) were in the group of 40-49, 9(32%) in the age group of 30-39, three (11%) were in the age group of 50 and above, and 1(4%) was in the age group of 20-29 years.

Among the 28 women leaders, 23(82%) were married, 2(7%) were widowed, another 2(7%) were single/unmarried, while 1(4%) was separated.

Education

Table 38: Educational status of Women Leaders

----- Educational Status -----	No.	%
Illiterate	-	-
Upto Class V	-	-
Class VI-X	2	7.14
S.S.C.	3	10.72
H.S.C.	2	7.14
B.A.	6	21.43
M.A.	15	53.57
----- Total -----	28	100.00

The majority of urban women leaders were fairly highly educated and none was illiterate. Among 28 women leaders 15(54%) and 6(21%) held Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts Degree respectively, 3(11%) passed Secondary School Certificate, 2(7%) passed Higher Secondary Certificate, and 2(7%) had educational qualifications ranging from class VI to class X.

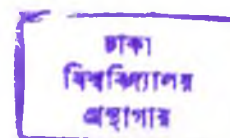
Occupation

Table 39: Occupational Status of Women Leaders

Occupational Status	Present		Past	
	No.	%	No.	%
Teacher	8	28.57	8	28.57
Social worker	4	14.29	5	17.86
Service	4	14.29	-	-
Business	4	14.29	-	-
Supervisor	2	7.14	1	3.57
Housewife	2	7.14	1	3.57
Artist	1	3.57	1	3.57
Lawyer	1	3.57	-	-
Journalist	1	3.57	-	-
Chairperson of Samity	1	3.57	-	-
Student	-	-	3	10.71
Cottage Craft	-	-	2	7.14
Work in NGO	-	-	1	3.57
Writer	-	-	1	3.57
No response	-	-	5	17.86
Total	28	100.00	28	100.00

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Information regarding the occupations of women leaders was secured on present and past basis. Except for 2(7%), who were simply housewives, all the other urban women leaders were engaged in some occupation outside the home. The largest number, 8(29%) were in the teaching profession; while 4(14%) each were occupied in service, business and social work; 2(7%) were supervisors, and of the remaining 4 women leaders, 1(4%) was a journalist, 1(4%) was a lawyer, 1(4%) was a chairperson of a Samity, and 1(4%) was an artist.



In response to their past occupations, out of 28 women leaders, 5(18%) did not mention their past occupations and only 1(4%) stated that she was a house wife. Of the remaining 22 women, 8(29%) were teacher, 5(18%) social workers, 3(11%) students, 2(7%) engaged in cottage craft and the remaining 4 included a writer, an artist, a supervisor, and a producer. On the whole, there was no sharp difference between the present and past occupations of the women leaders.

### Ownership of Properties

Table 40: Properties owned by Women Leaders

Properties	No.	%
Land	5	17.86
House	4	14.29
Others*	4	14.29
Land + House	5	17.86
House + Others	1	3.57
Land + Others	1	3.57
No property	6	21.43
No response	2	7.14
Total	28	100.00

\* Others (Shops, Factories etc.)

In the properties category, land, house and other permanent structures (shops, factories etc.) were considered. It is evident that not all of the 28 women leaders had their own property, and of those who had, 32% had only one type of property (either land or house). Thus 6(21%) women leaders had no property of their own, 5(18%), 4(14%) and 2(7%) women leaders had



land, house and shop/ factory respectively as their own property. On the whole, among the 28 women leaders, 13(40%) had only one type of property, 7(25%) had more than one type of property, 6(21%) had no property and 2(7%) did not respond to the question.

### Monthly Income

Table 41: Monthly income of Women Leaders

Income Range (In Taka)	No.	%
Below 1000	3	10.71
1001 - 2000	7	25.00
2001 - 3000	3	10.71
3001 - 4000	2	7.14
4001 - 5000	6	21.43
5001 - 6000	-	-
6001 - 7000	-	-
7001 - 8000	1	3.57
Above 8000	2	7.14
No Income	1	3.57
No response	3	10.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As table 41 above indicates, almost all of the 28 women leaders had some source of income of their own. Seven (25%) of them had income in the range of Tk. 1001-2000 and next to this 6(21%) had incomes in the ranges of Tk. 4001-5000, 3(11%) had income in the ranges of Tk. 2001-3000, 3(11%) had income below Tk. 1000. Two (7%) fell in between Tk. 3001-4000, and 2(7%) had income above Tk. 8000 while only 1(4%) had an income between Tk. 7001 to Tk. 8000. Finally, 1(4%) had no monthly income and 3(11%) said nothing about their incomes.

## 5.2 Family Background of Women Leaders

Table 42: Educational status of Fathers of Women Leaders

----- Educational Status -----	No.	%
Below S.S.C.	2	7.14
H.S.C.	6	21.43
B.A.	10	35.71
M.A.	5	17.86
Others*	5	17.86
----- Total -----	28	100.00

\* Others include: Madrashas - 1, Doctor/Engineer - 3, Other Higher Degree -1; Total - 5

In order to focus on the socio-economic background of women leaders, information regarding the education and occupation of their fathers was also collected. As portrayed in table 42, the fathers of women leaders were more or less educated. Ten (36%) of the fathers of women leaders obtained Bachelor Degree, 6(21%) passed Higher Secondary Certificate, 5(18%) obtained Masters Degree and only 2(7%) had educational qualification below Secondary School Certificate. The remaining 5(18%) had other educational qualifications of whom 3(11%) were doctors/ engineers and 1(4%) had educational achievements higher than Masters degree.

Occupation of Fathers

Table 43: Occupational status of Fathers of Women Leaders

Occupations	No.	%
Service Holder	10	35.71
Magistrate	3	10.72
Businessman	3	10.72
Engineer	2	7.14
Teacher	2	7.14
Lawyer	2	7.14
Landlord	2	7.14
Journalist	1	3.57
Politician	1	3.57
Doctor	1	3.57
No response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

As regards occupation of fathers, 10(36%) were service holders, 3(11%) were magistrates, 3(11%) were businessmen, 2(7%) each were lawyer, teacher, engineer and landlord respectively. One (4%) was a politician, 1(4%) was a journalist and another 1(4%) was a doctor; while 1(4%) woman leader did not mention her father's occupation.

Income of Fathers

Table 44: Income of Fathers of Women Leaders

Income Range (In Taka)	No.	%
Below 500	2	13.33
501 - 1500	2	13.33
1501 - 2500	1	6.67
2501 - 3500	-	-
3501 - 4500	3	20.00
4501 - and above	7	46.67
Total	15	100.00

Note: 13 (46%) made no response.

Out of 28 women leaders, 13(46%) did not mention the income of their fathers. Among the 15 fathers, 7(47%) had income of Tk.4501 and above, 3(20%) earned income of Tk.3501 - 4500, 2(13%) had income in the ranges of Tk.501 - 1500, 2(13%) had income below Tk.500. Only one (7%) had income of Tk.1501 - 2500.

Education of Husbands

Table 45: Educational status of Husbands of Women Leaders

Educational Status	No.	%
Upto Class VI	1	3.57
B.A.	6	21.43
M.A.	10	35.71
Engineer/Doctor	8	28.57
No response	3	10.72
Total	28	100.00

The husbands of almost all women leaders seemed to be educated, but 3 of them did not reply. Of the 28, 10(36%) husbands held Master's degrees, 8(29%) were either doctors or engineers and 6(21%) were graduates. One (4%) said that her husband had read upto class VI.

### Occupation of Husbands

Table 46: Occupational status of Husbands of Women Leaders

Occupations	No.	%
Engineer/Doctor	7	25.00
Lawyer	5	17.86
Service Holder	6	21.44
Journalist	2	7.14
Businessman	2	7.14
Teacher	1	3.57
Air Force Officer	1	3.57
Social Worker	1	3.57
No response	3	10.72
Total	28	100.00

The largest number of husbands, 7(28%) were either doctors or engineers by profession, 5(18%) were lawyers, 6(21%) were service holders. Two (7%) were journalists, 1(4%) was a social worker, 1(4%) was an Air Force Officer, and another 1(4%) was a teacher. Finally, 3(11%) women leaders did not mention their husband's occupation. Thus, judging from the above, it can be said that women leaders were married to persons who possessed a good educational and occupational background.

Property of Husbands

Table 47: Properties owned by the Husbands of Women Leaders

Properties	No.	%
Land	8	28.57
House	5	17.86
Land + House	6	21.43
None	9	32.14
Total	28	100.00

Out of the 28 women leaders, 19(68%) women leaders' husbands had some kind of property and 9(32%) did not mention about their property. The husbands of 8(29%) had a house, 5(18%) had a land and 6(21%) had house plus land.

Income of Husbands

Table 48: Monthly income of Husbands of Women Leaders

Income Range (In Taka)	No.	%
2001 - 3000	2	7.14
3001 - 4000	2	7.14
4001 - 5000	3	10.72
5001 - 6000	2	7.14
6001 - 7000	2	7.14
7001 - 8000	1	3.57
8001 - 9000	-	-
9001 - 10000	5	17.86
Above 10000	5	17.86
No response	6	21.43
Total	28	100.00

As regards the income of husbands of the women leaders, 6 did not give their husbands income. Out of 22, 12(43%) husbands income fell in the income group of Tk. 2001 to Tk. 8000. Five (18%) had income between Tk. 9001 to Tk. 10,000. Another 5(18%) had income above Tk. 10,000.

### Education and Occupation of Fathers-in-law

Table 49: Educational Status of Father-in-law of Women Leaders

Educational Status	No.	%
Upto class X	8	28.57
S.S.C.	6	21.43
H.S.C.	-	-
B.A.	10	35.71
M.A.	3	10.72
Alim/Fazil	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Table 50: Occupational Status of Fathers-in-law of Women Leaders

Occupations	No.	%
Service Holder	5	17.86
Lawyer	5	17.86
Social Worker	4	14.28
Teacher	3	10.72
Union Parisad President	1	3.57
Businessman	2	7.14
Politician	1	3.57
Agriculture	3	10.72
No response	4	14.28
Total	28	100.00

Since a woman's socio-economic condition largely depends on the status of the family in which she is married, and as the majority of women leaders under consideration are married, the educational and occupational background of their fathers-in-law are of great importance. As can be seen from table 49, among the 28 women leaders, the fathers-in-law of 10(36%) were graduates, 6(21%) were Secondary School Certificate holders, 3(11%) were Masters degree holders, 1(4%) was Alim/Fazil passed and 8(29%) had studied upto class X. Thus, none among the fathers-in-law of women leaders was illiterate.

Occupationally, among the fathers-in-law, 5(18%) were lawyers, another 5(18%) were Service holders, 4(14%) were social workers, 3(11%) were teachers, 3(11%) look after the cultivable lands, 2(7%) were businessmen, 1(4%) was an Upazila Chairman and another 1(4%) was a politician; and 4(14%) did not respond to the question regarding the occupation of their fathers-in-law. Thus, like their husbands, fathers-in-laws of the women leaders had a good educational and occupational background.

#### Property and Monthly Income of Fathers-in-law

Table 51: Properties owned by the Fathers-in-law of Women Leaders

Properties	No.	%
Land	9	32.14
House	4	14.28
Land + House	5	17.86
Shop/Factory	1	3.57
No response	9	32.14
Total	28	100.00



Regarding property of fathers-in-law of women leaders, 9(32%) had only landed property, 4(14%) had only houses, and 1(4%) had a shop/factory. Again 5(18%) fathers-in-law had land plus house. Finally, 9(32%) could not say anything about the property of their fathers-in-law.

Among fathers-in-law, only 9 women leaders could say about their income. Five had income more than Taka 5000, 3 had income between Taka 3501 and Taka 4500, and one had income below Taka 500.

#### Two Nearest Relatives of the Women Leaders in the Locality, their Educational and Occupational Status

While mentioning two nearest relatives, 15 women leaders mentioned uncle, sister, brother-in-law, paternal/ maternal aunt, father-in-law as their nearest relatives. Again, 5 women leaders mentioned father, brother and nephew/ niece respectively as their closest relatives.

Out of 20 closest relatives, 11(55%) were graduates, 2(10%) were doctors, 1(5%) was engineer, 1(5%) had Master's degree holder, and another 1(5%) passed Secondary School Certificate. Among the second closest relatives of women leaders 8(44%) were graduates, 5(29%) were Masters degree holders, 2(12%) were engineers, and 1(9%) passed Secondary School Certificate.

As regards their occupational status, among the relatives, 8(40%) were service holders, 4(20%) were housewives, 2(10%) were engineers, another 2(10%) were lawyers, while 1(5%) each of the remaining 4 relatives were teacher, doctor, businessman and social worker.

### Number of Family Members of Women Leaders

Table 52: Number of Members in the Family of Women Leaders

Family members	No.	%
Below 3 years	2	7.14
3 - 6 years	12	42.86
6 - 9 years	7	25.00
9 - 12 years	6	21.43
Above 12 years	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Out of the 28 women leaders in Dhaka city, 2 were unmarried and one married woman was childless. Twenty five women leaders offered information about their children. The total number of children was 72. Among those 36 were male and 36 female. The average number of children was 3.

The sons and daughters of urban women leaders were students of schools, colleges and Universities. More than half of them passed bachelor and masters degrees and obtained degrees in engineering, medical and law.

### 5.3 Organisational Involvement and Awareness regarding Projects

Table 53: Projects in the Area as Mentioned by the Women Leaders

Name of Projects	First Project		Second Project	
	No.	%	No.	%
Family Planning Project	3	12.00	-	-
Women Cooperative Association	6	24.00	4	16.00
Women Welfare Organisation	6	24.00	3	12.00
Muslim Women Welfare Organisation	3	12.00	-	-
Child Care & Maternity Centre/ Women Health Council	1	4.00	2	8.00
Development Organisations for under-privileged	1	4.00	1	4.00
Law & Order Organisation	1	4.00	-	-
Professional Training Centre	1	4.00	2	8.00
Don't know	3	12.00	13	52.00
Total	25	100.00	25	100.00

Out of 28 women leaders, twenty five (89%) mentioned the existence of projects, and 3(11%) said that did not have such projects. Six (24%) women leaders named women co-operative societies, another 6(24%) named Women Welfare Organisations, 3(12%) named Family Planning Projects, and 3(12%) named Muslim Women's Welfare Organisations. Other organisations such as, Child Care & Maternity Centre/ Women Health Council, Development Organisation for Under-privileged Women, Law and Order Organisation and Professional Training Centres were mentioned by 5 of them.

In second reference, 4(16%) and 3(12%) women leaders noted Women Co-operative Societies and Women Welfare Organisations, 1(5%), 2(8%) and 2(8%) mentioned Development

Organisation for under-privileged Women, Child Care and Maternity Centre, and Professional Training Centre respectively.

Table 54: Subjects of Discussions of Women Leaders with Local Women

Subject of Discussion	First Subject		Second Subject	
	No.	%	No.	%
Social/Religious/Family matters/ Victims against women	10	35.71	8	28.57
Economic Problems	5	17.86	6	21.43
Education (including adult Education)	5	17.86	1	3.57
Project Implementation	1	3.57	-	-
Child Health	1	3.57	-	-
Divorce	-	-	1	3.57
Family Planning	-	-	3	10.72
Problems of Professional Training	1	3.57	1	3.57
Development of Women Organisation	1	3.57	2	7.14
Marketing Problems	1	3.57	-	-
No response	3	10.72	6	21.43
Total	28	100.00	28	100.00

Among 28 women leaders, 25(89%) said that they discussed problems with local women, only 3(11%) replied in the negative. Each of the 25 listed out two subjects for discussion. Eighteen (64%) women leaders mentioned social (marriage, family matters, violence against women and religion), economic and educational problems as their first reference for discussion. In addition to these , 7 women leaders referred to project implementation, problems of professional training, development of Women's Organisation, child health, and marketing problems for produced goods. Again, in the second place, 12 women leaders mentioned

economic, social and religious problems, family affairs, family planning, education as subjects for discussion.

### Major Problems of Local Women

Table 55: Major Problems of Women of the Locality

Problem	No.	%
Economic Problems due to lack of job opportunity	5	17.86
Housing /Water/ Communication	5	17.86
Lack of Security, absence of Women's organisation and services	7	25.00
Dowry Problems	2	7.14
Lack of Educational Institution/Library	2	7.14
Lack of Training / Day Care Centre	2	7.14
Torture by Husband	2	7.14
Women do not want to work for Social restrictions	3	10.71
Total	28	100.00

Regarding the major problems of the local women, 7(25%) of the women leaders mentioned lack of security/absence of women's organisation and services, 5(18%) referred to housing, water and communication, 5(18%) pointed out economic problems. Besides these, dowry problems, problems of educational institutions and library, lack of training facilities, lack

of day care centres, torture by husband were also mentioned by 8 women leaders. Three (11%) women leaders mentioned social restrictions as their problems in going to work.

Table 56: Steps undertaken by the Women Leaders

Steps	No.	%
Discussed with others to solve problems	3	10.71
Discussed with women at personal level regarding problems	2	7.14
Discussed with higher authority	5	17.86
Managed to provide training	2	7.14
Started training schools for removing illiteracy	1	3.57
Relevant Ministry helped to solve the problem	1	3.57
Trying to solve problems by means of organisation/by encouraging children's organisation	7	25.00
Provided knowledge of Family Planning	1	3.57
No efforts made due to non-cooperation	5	17.86
No response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Women leaders pointed out the various steps taken in order to solve these problems of women of the locality. Some of them were still at the discussion level and some had been

implemented to some extent. Three (11%) women leaders discussed the problems with others in a group, and 2(7%) discussed them with local women at a personal level. Besides, 1(4%) said that she discussed family planning with local women in order to solve problems in the area. Again, 5(18%), 2(7%), 1(4%) and another 1(4%) women leaders tried to solve the problems in conjunction with higher level authorities, managed to provide training and jobs, started training school to eradicate illiteracy, and got help from the concerned Ministries to solve the problems of local women respectively. Seven (25%) women leaders said that they were trying to solve problems through organisational efforts by encouraging them to start children's organisations and 5(18%) mentioned that they were not successful in solving the problems due to lack of co-operation from others. Finally, 1(4%) women leader did not make any attempt to solve the problems, and 1(4%) did not respond.

How the Women Leader became influential/known in the locality ?

Table 57: How the Women Leaders became influential in the area

Reasons of Becoming Influential	No.	%
For their work, as they provide good advice to others/earned confidence to others	7	25.00
As they listen to the problems of others and help them/in difficulties	6	21.43
For their religious discussions	3	10.72
For formation of cooperative organisations	6	21.43
For the reputation of husband being a teacher	1	3.57
Being a social worker	3	10.72
No response	2	7.14
Total	28	100.00

In becoming influential, the majority of women leaders had closer connection with other local women. Among those who became influential in their locality, 7(25%) thought that they had come to this position through their own contribution to work, as they provided good advice to others, and earned confidence of others; while 6(21%) women leaders thought that they listened to the problems of others and tried to help them in difficulties. Again 3(11%) became influential for religious discussions and 6(21%) for formation of cooperative societies or institutions, 3(11%) for social work, and one (4%) for reputation of her husband. 2(7%) did not respond.



How the Women Leaders are involved with the Women of the Locality

Table 58: Involvement of Women Leaders in local matters in their area

Involvement	No.	%
At personal level	4	14.29
Through the organisation	12	42.86
Through the Educational Institutions	3	10.72
As a Chairman	2	7.14
As women come to discuss their problems and seek advice	5	17.86
At job level	1	3.57
No response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Twelve (43%) women leaders claimed their involvement with the local women through organisation, while 4(14%) said that they were involved at a personal level, 3(11%) mentioned their involvement through educational institutions, and another 1(4%) pointed out the involvement at job level. Again, two (7%) women leaders were involved with women of their locality as chairman, 5(18%) women leaders were involved in matters of local women as they came to discuss their problems, and seek advice.

Type of Local Resources Available for Women in the Locality

Table 59: Local resources available for women in the area

Resources	Land		Office		School	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	-	-	9	32.14	14*	50.00
No	6	21.43	16	57.14	14	50.00
No response	21	75.00	3	10.72	-	-
Total	28	100.00	28	100.00	28	100.00

\*Out of 14 schools, only one rendered free education

Resources like land, office, and school for women were considered. Out of 28 women leaders, 6(21%) said that there was no land for the use of the womenfolk, 22 did not reply. Again, 16(57%) women leaders said that there was no office, 9(32%) said they had office accommodation and 3(11%) did not reply. Regarding school, 14(50%) women leaders said that there was a school and another 14(50%) leaders mentioned that there was no schooling for girls/women in their locality.

Use of Resources by Women's Organisation

Table 60: Use of Resources by Women's Organisation

Use of Resources	No.	%
Provide facilities for work	13	46.43
Loan provided	6	21.43
Create Resources by themselves	1	3.57
Do not get any grant	3	10.72
Give Books and medicines free of cost	1	3.57
No office of their own	1	3.57
Do not know	3	10.72
Total	28	100.00

Women leaders were asked to mention the use of resources by women organisations in respect of job opportunities available to them, including loan/ credit and other facilities. As evident from table 60, 13(46%) women leaders said that they had some opportunities for work, 6(21%) said that they were provided with loan 3(11%) did not get any grant, and another 3(11%) knew nothing about the matter.

Whether Women Leaders took Steps With Regard to The Problems of Accommodation,  
Education, Treatment and Job Opportunities of Local Women

Table 61.1: Housing

Housing	No.	%
Housing problem is under consideration	2	7.14
Land has been taken for implementing the housing projects	1	3.57
Discussion with influentials people for constructing rehabilitation centres	2	7.14
No scope for implementation of ideas	8	28.58
No step is usually taken in this regard	2	7.14
Apartment system may be useful for solving the housing problems	2	7.14
Steps are being taken at personal level	2	7.14
No response	9	32.14
Total	28	100.00

Table 61.2: Education

Education	No.	%
There are facilities for adult & children education	2	7.14
There are schools for females	2	7.14
Need for professional training centres	1	3.57
Need for education Institutions	7	25.00
Steps are being taken at personal level	2	7.14
Steps are being taken by Masjid Committee	1	3.57
The problems is under consideration	4	14.29
Actually no step is being taken	3	10.72
No response	6	21.43
Total	28	100.00

Table 61.3: Health Facilities

Health Facilities	No.	%
There are facilities for health care	4	14.29
There are no facilities for health care	5	17.86
Steps are being taken for solving the problems	7	25.00
Steps are being taken at personal level	2	7.14
The problems is under consideration	1	3.57
No response	9	32.14
Total	28	100.00

Table 61.4: Job opportunities

Job opportunities	No.	%
Jobs provided by the Government	1	3.57
Jobs provided by women's associations	2	7.14
Professional training centre is required	4	14.29
Women are being encouraged to take jobs	1	7.14
The problem is under consideration	5	17.86
No step is being taken	3	10.72
There are no facilities of work for women	8	28.57
No response	4	14.29
Total	28	100.00

Regarding housing problems, 8(29%) women leaders thought that there was no scope for implementation of their ideas and another 5(18%) women leaders said that housing problem was under their consideration; 2(7%) discussed the problem with influential people in their locality for constructing rehabilitation centres, 2(7%) said that apartment type of housing might be useful for solving the housing problem, 2(7%) stated that some steps had been taken at a personal level, and 9(32%) women leaders did not respond.

As regards educational facilities, 4(14%) said that there were schools for girls, or facilities for adult and children's educational centres, 8(29%) expressed the need for educational institutions and need for professional training centres, 2(7%) said that some efforts were made at personal level, 1(4%) mentioned that Masjid committee of the locality had taken some steps for the education of children, 4(14%) said that the problem of education was under consideration, 3(11%) said steps were not taken as required by the locality, and 6(21%) did not respond to the issue.

Women leaders were asked about health facilities of women of the area. Nine (32%) did not mention anything about health facilities. Out of the remaining 19 women leaders, 4(14%) said that there were some facilities for the health care of women, 5(18%) said that women of the localities did not enjoy any health care facility, 8(29%) said that this problem was under their consideration, and 2(7%) women leaders tried to provide facilities at a personal level.

In answering the question about job opportunities in the area, 8(29%) women leaders said that women in the locality did not have any opportunities for jobs, 3(10%) said that very few jobs were provided by the government and women's associations, 6(21%) said that the matter was under their consideration and women were encouraged to take up jobs, 3(11%) said that steps had not been taken as required, and 4(14%) did not respond to the question.

#### Factors that Helped The Women Leaders to Achieve Leadership Role

Table 62: Factors which helped the women leaders to achieve leadership role

Factors	No.	%
Inspiration from family members (Father, mother, brother, sister etc)	16	57.14
Consciousness of responsibility to society	3	10.71
Involvement in co-operative organisations	4	14.29
Firm personal effort along with the co-operation from local people	4	14.29
Economic Solvency	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Women leaders were asked about the factors that helped them to come to this position. The majority of them 16(57%) said that they had been encouraged by their family members i.e., their father, mother, brother and sister. Four (14%) women leaders stated that they came to this position through their own effort and cooperation of local people. Four (14%) women leaders stated that involvement with cooperative societies helped them to come to this position. Only 3(11%) women leaders said that they had reached the position because they were concerned to do something for the society.

Table 63: Obstacles faced by the women leaders

Social/Religious Obstacles	No.	%
Criticism	4	14.29
Social Hindrance	5	17.86
Religious	1	3.57
No obstacles	17	57.72
No response	1	3.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Economic Obstacles	No.	%
Faced economic problems	9	32.14
Problems for marketing the raw materials	1	3.57
No obstacles	13	46.43
No response	5	17.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00</b>



While identifying the obstacles faced by them in the course of their advance toward the leadership position which they now hold, women leaders mentioned social/religious and economic problems. Thirteen (46%) women leaders did not face any social and religious problems. Ten (36%) women leaders were faced with economic problems about the marketing of raw materials. Thirteen (44%) women leaders stated that they did not face economic problems. Five women leaders did not reply.

Table 64: Role of women leaders in taking decisions

Decision making roles	No.	%
Decision taken by herself	24	85.71
Decision undertaken discussing with other family members	4	14.29
Total	28	100.00

Regarding decision making role of women leaders in family matters, 24(86%) of them took decision in all the important family matters, 4(14%) took part in decision by discussing with other family members.

Table 65: Subjects to which the women leaders provide decision or help

Subjects	No.	%
Administrative, training and development	4	14.29
Implementation of plans	8	28.57
In all organisation matters	6	21.43
Provide suggestions as a Union Parishad member, help in political, social and economic matters	2	7.14
Provide decision unitedly (through the committee) with other members of the organisation	5	17.86
Accomplish the given responsibility according to rules	3	10.71
Total	28	100.00

With regard to organisational decision making 8(29%) women leaders said that they took decisions in the implementation of plans, 6(21%) said that they decided in all organisational matters, 5(18%) took decisions jointly through committee and after discussion with other members, 3(11%) took decisions according to rules, another 4(14%) decided only on administrative, training and development and the remaining 2(7%) women leaders said that they provided suggestion as a member of Union Parishad, helped in political, social and economic matters.

Table 66: Subjects discussed by women leaders with local women

Subjects for discussion	No.	%
Family affairs	12	42.85
Economic problems	11	39.29
Education (mainly admission)	10	35.71
Job opportunities	8	28.57
Social problems	7	25.00
Social security	6	21.43
Health facilities	6	21.43
Political/Organisation/Savings	3	10.72
Family planning	2	7.14
Housing/Accommodation	2	7.14
Total	28	100.00

\*Each respondent gave more than one preference on the subject for discussion.

Women leaders were asked about the subjects they generally discussed with members or other women in the locality. In response to this question, 12(43%) mentioned family matters, 11(39%) said that the women came to discuss their economic problems, 10(36%) mentioned educational problems, 8(29%) mentioned job opportunities. Others, in order of sequence, mentioned subjects like social problems (25%), security (21%), health facilities (21%), housing problems (7%), organisation/ savings (11%), and family planning (11%).

Table 67: Social Status of Women Leaders

Status	No.	%
Upper class	10	35.72
Middle class	16	57.14
Lower class	1	3.57
No response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Women leaders were asked to place themselves in socio-economic categories to which they thought they belonged. Ten (36%) women leaders placed themselves in the upper class category, 16(57%) placed themselves in the middle class, only one (4%) placed herself in the lower class, and one did not respond. Thus, it has been observed that the majority of the women leaders in urban areas placed themselves either in upper or middle class category.

Table 68: Comments of the Women Leaders regarding the situation of Women in their Locality

Comments	No.	%
Not in good condition, economic problem, dowry problem, lack of security & housing problems	12	42.85
Self-centered and indifferent to the distress of neighbouring people	3	10.72
On the whole in a good condition	7	25.00
Lack of educational facilities & job opportunities	6	21.43
Total	28	100.00

Women leaders were asked to express their opinion about the social situation of women of the locality. Twelve women leaders (43%) said that the condition of women of the locality was not good because they suffered from economic hardships, dowry problems, lack of security, as well as housing problems, six (21%) said, women of the locality were deprived of proper educational facilities and job opportunities. Seven (25%) said that women's condition of the locality was good. Three (11%) said, women in the locality were self-centered and indifferent to their distressed neighbours.

Table 69: Opinions of Women Leaders regarding the Development of Women in the Locality

Opinion	First Opinion		Second Opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%
By organising the women	7	25.00	1	3.57
Providing economic help	3	10.72	3	10.72
Providing educational facilities	4	14.29	1	3.57
Giving job facilities	4	14.29	1	3.57
Giving professional training	3	10.72	4	14.29
Providing good medical facilities	-	-	1	3.57
Developing consciousness	1	3.57	2	7.14
Creating day care centres	1	3.57	1	3.57
Providing adult education programme	1	3.57	2	7.14
Providing skill training	1	3.57	2	7.14
Encouraging women to participate in development	1	3.57	2	7.14
Providing family planning facilities-	-	-	2	7.14
Providing recreational facilities	1	3.57	2	7.14
No response	1	3.57	4	14.29
Total	28	100.00	28	100.00

Suggestions were sought from the women leaders about the development of women in the locality. 21 women leaders suggested the organisation of women, provision for economic help, provision of professional training. The remaining 6 women leaders mentioned the development of consciousness, provision of day care centres, providing adult education centres, providing skill training and encouraging women to participate in development programmes. Their second suggestion regarding methods of development of women included, in order of importance, economic help, making them aware about their situation, adult education centres, encouraging women to participate in development activities, family planning and recreation facilities.

Table 70: Qualities of a Leader

Qualities	No.	%
Honesty, good character, liberal attitude	26	92.9
Patience, forbearance	23	82.1
Active	13	46.4
Understanding of problems	11	39.3
Ability to adjust at all situation/ taking prompt decisions	11	39.3
Education and experience	7	25.0
Courage, presence of mind, farsightedness	6	21.4
Less emotional	5	17.9
Ability to keep words/promises	4	14.3
Social Consciousness	4	14.3
Economic Solvency	2	7.1

\*Each respondent gave more than one preference on quality traits.

Women leaders were asked about the qualities of good leadership. In response to this, out of 28 women leaders, 26(93%) mentioned that the qualities of good leadership were honesty, good character, liberal attitude; 23(82%) mentioned patience and forbearance; 13(46%) said leaders should be active; 11(39%) said a good leader should listen to problems of people and try to understand them and 11(39%) mentioned that a leader should have the ability to adjust to all situations and take prompt decisions; 7(25%) said that a leader should have education and experience; 6(21%) mentioned courage, presence of mind and farsightedness; 5(18%) thought

that a leader should be less emotional; 4(14%) mentioned social consciousness; and 2(7%) emphasised economic solvency.

Table 71: Why Women Leaders are Respected ?

Reasons	No.	%
Try to solve problems, listen to them, give advice	7	25.00
Sympathy for women, kindness, help when they are in need	5	17.86
Responsibility, hard work, good behaviour	4	14.29
Educated	4	14.29
Responsible, honest, sympathetic	3	10.71
Mixes with all categories people	2	7.14
Has connection with influential people of the society	2	7.14
No response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Seven (25%) women leaders said that they were respected because they tried to solve the problems, listened to them, and gave advice. Five (18%) women leaders stressed kindness, and helping people in need; 4(14%) maintained that they were respected for their hard work, responsible nature, and good behaviour, 4(14%) emphasised education, 3(11%) women leaders said they were respected for their faithfulness, honesty and sympathy; two (7%) mixed with all



categories of people and 2(7%) had connection influential people of the society.

#### 5.4 Opinion of Women Leaders on Certain Issues

Table 72: Opinion about women's work outside the home

Opinion	No.	%
Women should work outside the home	8	28.57
To overcome socio-economic hardship, women should be self reliant	5	17.86
Widen one's mental horizon	5	17.86
To maintain family both husband and wife have to work	5	17.86
Women should participate in work outside because they constitute half of the country's population	2	7.14
Women should work outside after attending household chores	2	7.14
Women should not work outside if they are not forced by economic crisis	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Eight (29%) women leaders expressed that women should work outside the home, 5(18%) said that women should work outside to overcome socio-economic hardships and to be self reliant. Five (18%) women leaders said that if women work outside, their mental horizon would widen, 5(18%) women leaders expressed that both husband and wife should work outside to maintain the family, 2(7%) women leaders said that women should work outside because they

constitute half of the country's population. Another two said, women should work outside only after attending the household chores; only one woman leader said that women should not work outside if they were not faced with financial crisis.

Table 73: "Women are Lazy". Is it true ?

Opinion	No.	%
Women are not idle, they can do all land work but their scope of work is limited	17	60.72
Women are more active then men, women have to do the major portion of work in the family but their work is not recognized, they do not have proper training facilities, required money & other facilities	7	25.00
Women are idle in the sense that they do not read newspapers, are not aware about politics, they are not aware of their rights	3	10.71
People should change their outlook and should recognize women work	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Opinion was sought on the view that "women are generally lazy". In the opinion of 17(61%) women leaders, this was not true; women were not idle or lazy, they could do any type of work but their scope of work was limited; they were deprived of opportunities. Seven (25%) expressed the opinion that women were more active than men; they did the major portion of work in the family but their work was not recognized; they did not have proper training

facilities, and required money and other facilities. Three (11%) said that women were idle in the sense that they did not read newspapers, were not aware of politics, and their rights. One women leader thought that people should change their outlook and should recognise women's work.

Table 74: Whether it is possible for women to work outside after attending household chores

Opinion	No.	%
It is possible to work outside, if they are encouraged to do work	8	28.57
Establishment of day care centre/ lack of faithful servant/maid	6	21.43
If husband co-operates if someone takes care of the family	8	28.57
Possible, if there is planning, they are disciplined in work	3	10.71
Women may work & earn money being at home	2	7.14
Prepare for sacrifice and have awareness	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Eight (29%) were of the opinion that it was possible to work outside if they were encouraged to do so, another 8(29%) thought it was feasible if the husband cooperated, if there was somebody to take care of the family. Six (21%) opined that it would be possible with the establishment of day care centres and availability of faithful servants/maids, 3(11%) expressed

that it was possible if there was planning, and if women were disciplined in work, 2(7%) said that women could work and earn money being at home, and only one leader said that it was possible if women were aware of the situation and prepared for making sacrifice.

Table 75: Opinion of men about women's work outside the home

Opinion	No.	%
Good impression	8	28.57
Mixed impression	5	17.86
If women work outside they become uncontrollable, and they loose authority at home	4	14.28
Do not want women to work, women are less capable	4	14.28
Accept it even if they do not like it	2	7.14
Men torture women if they work outside	2	7.14
Men criticise their work but remain silent being unable to solve the problem	2	7.14
Women should work if they are educated	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Eight (29%) women leaders said that men had a good impression, 3(18%) said that men had mixed impressions, 4(14%) said that if women worked outside men thought that they become uncontrollable and that men lose authority at home, 4(14%) said that men tortured women if they worked outside, 2(7%) said that men criticised their work but remained silent

being unable to solve the economic problem and one leader said that men thought women should work if they were educated.

Table 76: Women leader's opinion about the condition of the country

Social condition	No.	%
Good/improving	9	32.14
Very bad, dowry problem/severe/hopeless/lack of security/inefficient administrative policy, corruption, government does not implement policy properly	8	28.57
Social values deteriorating	6	21.43
Moral character deteriorating	4	14.29
No response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00
Economic condition	No.	%
Economic condition crippled, economic crisis	9	32.14
Situation is hopeless, gradually deteriorating	7	25.00
Good / improving	7	25.00
Inflation/rise of prices	2	7.14
Will improve if government plans are implemented	2	7.14
No response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00

Religious condition	No.	%
On the whole good, improving	11	39.28
It is going backward	4	14.28
Religious bigotry/blindness in religiosity	5	17.86
Women should be more aware of religion	3	10.71
Religious prejudice and superstition, infiltration of foreign culture	3	10.71
Women are suffering due to confusion	2	7.14
Total	28	100.00

Nine (32%) women leaders said that the social condition in the country was good and gradually improving, 8(29%) said that the social condition was very bad and hopeless because of dowry problem, lack of security, inefficient administrative policy, corruption and government's failure to implement policy properly, 6(21%) were of opinion that social values were deteriorating, 4(14%) said that moral character was deteriorating and one leader did not respond to the question.

About the economic condition, 9(32%) of the women leaders said that the economic condition was crippled, and was in crisis; 7(25%) said the economic condition was not very hopeful, and was gradually deteriorating; 7(25%) said that it was good and improving; 2(7%) thought that the economic condition was bad due to inflation; and 2(7%) expressed that the condition would improve if programmes taken by the government were implemented properly.

About religious and cultural conditions, 11(39%) said that the condition on the whole was improving, 5(18%) said that religious condition was unhealthy due to misconceptions and blindness in religiosity, 4(14%) said that it was going backwards, 3(11%) said that women should be more aware of religion, another 3(11%) said that religious prejudice and superstition, foreign infiltration should be removed, and 2(7%) said that women are suffering due to confusion about religious matters.

### Summary

The socio economic profile of women leaders in rural areas was briefly discussed in the proceeding chapter. This chapter analyses the socio-economic and family background of women leaders in urban areas, their organisational involvement, leadership qualities and their opinion on some selected issues.

The majority of women leaders in urban areas fell in the age category of 30-49 years, the average being 40 years. They were fairly highly educated, majority of them were graduates and Master degree holders. Occupationally, they belonged to teaching, service, social work, and business. Twenty of them possessed land and house or both, shop and factory etc. Almost all of them had some source of income.

The educational level of the majority of fathers of women leaders was fairly high, most of them were graduates and Masters degree holders. Occupationally, fathers of the respondents were in the following professions :- service holders, teachers, doctors, engineers, magistrates, businessmen and land holders. The husbands of the respondents were also highly educated. They were engineers, doctors, lawyers, service holders, teachers, and businessmen by profession. The majority of the respondents' husbands had some kind of property, i.e. land, house etc. Educational level of the respondent's fathers-in-law were also high; most of them were graduates. Occupationally, they were in service, teaching, law and business. Social and economic status of fathers, husbands and fathers-in-law of the respondents was high. The total number of children of the respondents was 72, average being 3. More than half of their children passed Bachelors and Masters degrees.

About the project involvement, they mentioned projects such as women's cooperative society, family planning, Muslim Women's welfare organisation, childcare and maternity, Women Health Council Centre, law and order organisation, organisation for underprivileged women, professional training centre etc.

Women leaders in urban areas identified major problems of women, such as lack of security, absence of women's organisation and services, lack of shelter, pure water, communication and economic problems. They also mentioned dowry problems, lack of education and training, library facilities, social restrictions and humiliation by husband. In order to solve the problems, they took initiative at personal and organisational level.



The factors that help them to be a leader in the locality were: contribution to work, confidence, awareness of problems, help in time of difficulties, religious discussions, good advice, formation of cooperative societies, social work and cooperation of husbands.

As regards the availability of resources, i.e. housing, education, training and job opportunities, they stated that there was no land for the use of women folk, no office for their organisation, no schooling for girls in their locality. Regarding housing problems, they thought that there was no scope for implementation of their ideas, i.e. for constructing rehabilitation centres, educational and professional training centres. Regarding health facilities they viewed that majority of women of the localities did not enjoy health care facilities, though there were some facilities. Job opportunities were not also available in the locality.

The factors that helped women leaders to come to this position, the majority of them stated that they had been encouraged by their family members. Others stated that involvement with organisations helped them to become leader.

The matters that the women leaders discussed with the women in their locality were : family matters, economic and education problems, social security, health and family planning facilities, housing problems, organisational problems etc. According to the opinion of respondents about the social situation of women, they said that the condition of women was not good because of economic hardship, dowry problem, lack of security, education and job opportunity.

In order to improve the situation of women in the locality, they suggested the organisation of women, provision for economic support and professional training, day care centre, conscious raising and development projects for women.

As regards qualities of good leadership, the majority of women leaders mentioned the following qualities : good character, honesty, liberal attitude, patience, forbearance, active, understanding of problems, adjustability, prompt decisions, education, experience, presence of mind, farsightedness, social consciousness and economic solvency. They were respected for hardwork, responsibility, education, faithfulness and honesty in their work.

About certain issues regarding women, the women leaders expressed that women should work outside home to overcome socio-economic hardships and to be self reliant. They argued that if women work outside, their mental horizon would widen. They opined that it was possible to work outside, if the husband cooperated, if there was day care centre, if there was planning, if they were disciplined in the work. They thought men had good impression about women's work. Some held that men had mixed attitude. The majority opined that women were not lazy, they could do any type of work but scope of work was limited and they were deprived of opportunities.

A section of women leaders said that the social condition of the country was good and it was gradually improving while others said that the social condition was very bad because of dowry problem, lack of security, inefficient administrative policy, corruption and government's

failure to implement the policy properly. About economic condition, they said the economy was crippled and was in crisis. About religious and cultural situation their opinion was that the situation on the whole was improving, but they held that religious situation was unhealthy due to misconceptions, women should be more aware of religion; religious prejudice and superstition should be removed.

## CHAPTER VI

### FINDINGS

#### 6.1 COMPARISON BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN WOMEN LEADERS

Having examined the socio-economic background of women leaders, their involvement with organisations, qualities as a leader and opinion on selected issues, it is opportune to view the emergent features of the rural and urban leaders.

##### Socio-Economic Characteristics of Women Leaders

Women leaders in rural areas belonged to the middle age category, the average age was 31 years while in the urban areas, the average was 40 years. It was found that women leaders in rural areas were comparatively younger than those of urban areas. As regards their marital status, there were fewer unmarried women leaders in rural areas than urban areas, but divorced, widowed and separated women leaders were more common in the rural areas.

Education is considered to be a helpful factor in acquiring or developing human qualities. In the rural areas 54% to 70% had education upto grade ten and above. In each case only one women had a graduation degree. In the urban areas, 75% of women leaders had Bachelor and Masters degree in Arts or Social Sciences. Urban women leaders were in far better position regarding educational status. This indicates that urban women have more opportunities in

education.

Occupationally, the majority of the women leaders in Saturia were teachers, service holders, chairmen of organisations. It is to be noted that 40% of them stated that they were members of Union Parishads while only 27% of women leaders of Rupganj were involved in family planning and Grameen Bank. Organizational involvement was less in Rupganj than Saturia. This may be due to the absence of women's organization in Rupganj. Women leaders of Saturia were involved in some kind of work from before. It may be concluded that women leaders of Saturia were engaged in work outside home and almost all of them belonged to different types of organisations. In the urban areas, the majority of the women leaders were engaged in occupations such as teaching, service, business, development projects, journalism and legal profession; only two of them stated that they were social workers.

It may be concluded that urban women leaders were extensively involved in some kind of occupation than rural leaders. But within the two groups of leaders in the rural areas, Saturia women leaders were more or less involved in work outside the home. Therefore it may be pointed out that some kind of organizational involvement is essential in order to become a leader in a group, society or community. The more women are involved in organizations, the more there is the possibility of becoming leaders. As regards to ownership of property, 60% in Saturia and 87% in Rupganj women leaders had some kind of material possessions in the form of land, house and shop. Between the two groups of women leaders in rural areas, women leaders of Rupganj were in a better position than in Saturia regarding property ownership. In the urban

areas, the majority of them had property in the form of land, house, shop and factory. In both rural and urban areas, the majority of women leaders had some kind of material possessions. Ownership of land, business and house are generally found to be associated with male leadership. (Alam, Manjurul, Roy, Pradipto; Karim, Zehadul; Ahmed, Sharfuddin, Barman, Dalim; Pareek, Udai etc). But in case of women leaders, especially in rural areas the possession of small property may not be a helpful factor to be a leader. The income level of both rural areas ranged between Tk.200 to Tk.1000. Women leaders of Rupganj were slightly better in respect of their income. Though the majority of Rupganj women leaders were mainly housewives, but they had access to some sources of income. It is to be noted that Rupganj was an area where business, especially (weaving factory) was prominent. All the women leaders in urban areas, except four, had monthly income ranging between Tk.1001 and Tk.8000. Comparing the income level of rural and urban women leaders, it can be safely concluded that the income of urban respondents was definitely higher than that of rural respondents. They seemed to be more solvent than their rural sisters. Their income started at higher level than that of rural respondents' income level.

#### Family Background of Women Leaders

Family background is an important factor for providing social infrastructure for building leadership qualities of an individual. Fathers' education and occupation might be an indicator which encourages women to become a leader in an organization. The educational level of fathers (33% of Saturia, 24% of Rupganj) of rural respondents had education upto S.S.C and Degree

courses. The occupation of the fathers in rural areas were agriculture, technical service, business, trade, service, chairmen of local bodies etc. Fathers of Saturia respondents (53%) were in service and chairmen of Union Parishads, teachers and Tahsilders. But in the case of Rupganj they were more in business than in other profession. These were significant indicators that educational progress of respondents was largely influenced by the parental home, especially the father. The patterns of thought and behaviour of women leaders which be reflected in the quality of women's participation on local organizations. It may be pointed out that role of education enabled women leaders to play a dynamic role in helping local women to find opportunities for their development and to attend to the needs in the community. Husbands of the women leaders of both Saturia and Rupganj had education of S.S.C and higher level. Husbands of the women leaders of Saturia had higher educational attainments that the husbands of women leaders of Rupganj. The income level of the majority of husbands of the respondents of Saturia fell in the range between Tk.501 to Tk.3000 and in Rupganj they were in the range of Tk.501 to above Tk.5000; variation of income in the two rural areas may be due to the nature of occupation. The major income of the husbands of Saturia respondents was service but in Rupganj it was business. It is nature of occupation that helped women leaders to be in the leadership position.

With regard to the urban women leaders fathers' education and occupational status, it was found that all fathers were educated. The educational attainment varied from S.S.C. to higher degrees such as Bachelor and Masters. Some of them were doctors, engineers and religious leaders. Fathers of urban women leaders were in service, magistrates, businessmen, teachers, lawyers, engineers, doctors, politicians and landlords.

Data on the educational level of husbands of women leaders in urban areas revealed that the majority were Bachelors or Masters degree holders. Occupationally their husbands were doctors, engineers, lawyers, service holders (both private and public sectors), journalists, social workers, air force officers and teachers. Majority of the husbands of women leaders had either land or house or both house and land. It can be observed from the data that urban women leaders were married to the persons who possessed good educational, and occupational, and good financial status. These factors helped urban women to become leaders.

### **Size of the Family and Children**

The average size of the family of Sauria women leaders was 5.3 whereas it was 7.1 in the case of Rupganj women leaders. The family size of women leaders of Rupganj was larger than the women leaders of Sauria. The dependents included brother, sister, father, mother, uncle, nephew, niece, fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, sons-in-law etc. As to their number of children in both cases the average member of children was 3 per family. In the urban areas, the average number of children of women leaders was also 3. But 75% of their children were above 14 years and their children were older in age in comparison to the children of women leaders in rural areas. Many of them were students reading in schools and colleges; 17 of them had passed B.A. and M.A., and 4 of them were already engineer, lawyer and doctors.



Among the relatives of the Saturia women leaders, 22 were illiterate but in Rugganj the was 18. Occupationally they were agriculturists, service holders and businessman in Saturia. They were businessmen, service holders and agricultural in Rugganj.

As to their association with influential persons in the rural areas, the women leaders mentioned neighbours, relatives and members of Union Parishad and local school teachers. The influential people associated with hold important positions in the locality. They were mainly agriculturists, teachers, businessman, Union Parishad chairman and members, contractors, retired military officer, doctor, ration dealers etc. The urban women leaders mentioned father, uncle, father-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, nephew/nice as their closest relatives. They were doctors, engineers, lawyers, service holders, businessman and social worker.

### **Organisational and Project Involvements**

Organisational involvement is an indicator where leaders play their roles. About 70% of the women leaders in Saturia were involved in project activities in the locality. while women leaders of Rugganj were not. But all of them expressed a desire have some sort of organisation of landless women, cooperatives, and other activities. As a leader of a group, women leaders of Saturia had to shoulder many responsibilities, such as looking for job opportunities, medical facilities, family planning, child welfare, etc. for members of their respective organisations. Some dealt with vocational education and family welfare. Others were involved in organisational activities, capital formation, savings, wheat distribution and recovery of land.

Many of them were involved with health, balanced diet and nutrition and livestock rearing. They also dealt with violence against women. In Rupganj, women leaders had to deal with family problems, torture by husbands, repayment of loan, capital formation, wheat distribution, job opportunities, education, savings, children's health, distribution of relief materials etc.

A large number of respondents in the urban areas were involved as the at least one organisation. They were members of cooperative societies, women's welfare organisations, family planning associations, and Muslim women welfare organisations. Others mentioned projects such as children and maternity homes, women health councils, organisations for underprivileged women, legal organisations, professional training centres etc. The women leaders discussed topics with other members of the organisations in the following order of importance; education, family matters, divorce, violence against women, social and economic problems, child health, professional training, marketing of goods, development of womens' organisations and job opportunities, etc.

As regards the major problems of the areas, the majority of women leaders in Sauria mentioned poverty, dowry, marriage, violence against women, lack of security, poor educational, economical and health condition and unemployment. Others mentioned lack of good organisation, communication, food scarcity and inequality between men and women. In Rupganj, the problems were more or less the same but in varying degree. The women leaders of Sauria referred to broader areas of problems than Rupganj women leaders. This might be due to the fact that they were members of the organisations for a longer period. Women leaders

of Saturia were more conscious and aware about women's problems than the Rupganj leaders. The women leaders of Saturia tried to solve the problems through organisational effort, discussions with members, giving advice to women, providing loan through relevant organisations and NGO's. Women leaders of Rupganj tried to solve the problems through school committees, family level discussion, providing loans, through Union Parishad chairmen and giving advice to women, by forming new societies and through Grameen Bank.

According to women leaders of urban areas, the major problems of the locality were lack of security, educational opportunities, communication, organisational, job facilities, housing, water, economic problem, lack of interest of women's problems, torture by husband, dowry problem, problems of educational institutions, lack of proper training, and lack of day care centre.

The way they attempted to solve these problems were: they discussed the problems with other members of the group and also with higher level authorities. Some of them managed to provide training and jobs for members. Some started training centres and school to eradicate illiteracy, poverty and get help from concerned ministries. Some of them tried to solve the problems through organisational efforts, by encouraging women to start children's organisations. Others were not successful in solving the problems due to lack of cooperation of others.

In order to develop an individual or an organisation, availability of resources has to be taken into account. Here, resource means housing, education, training and job facilities for

women. In Sauria, women leaders stated that 17% of women availed of the training facilities, 23% got relief and 7%, a negligible number, got loans from Proshika; majority of them said that they could avail family planning contraceptives and advice. About housing, almost all the women leaders stated that there was no shelter or housing for poorer people. Others said that organisation and training were not available. Majority of them said that they were in need of job opportunities and training, medical centre, clinic and doctor. According to women leaders the overall condition of the locality was not satisfactory. The need for basic amenities of life such as health, education, shelter and job opportunities are not available. Rupganj women leaders mentioned availability of small amounts of loan from the Grameen Bank. Others talked about the distribution of contraceptives.

Many of the women leaders of urban areas stated that use of local resources, (such as loan, credit and other facilities) were available to some extent through organisations but others felt deprived. The majority of them said that they had no office for organisation, others mentioned. The need for schooling for girls, and housing facilities. They discussed seek matters with influential people of the locality. Construction of rehabilitation centres was also one of their concern. Many of them felt the need for educational and professional training centres. Health facilities were also not very satisfactory. Regarding job opportunities, a few mentioned that some women were had jobs through government agencies and women's association but many more were in need of jobs.

### Factors that helped Women to become a Leader

Among the factors that helped women to become a leaders majority of rural leaders said that sincerity, honesty, patience and education helped them to achieve this position. The next most important factor was help from family members; fathers, husbands, and relatives. Some referred to the help of local NGO's, encouragement from the people of the locality. The majority of the women leaders in urban areas said that they got inspiration from the family members i.e., fathers, mothers, brothers etc. Some said that they had achieved this position by that their own efforts, consciousness and with the cooperation of local people. Some said <sup>that</sup> their achievements ~~possible~~ <sup>possible because of</sup> were made <sup>economic solvency</sup>, and by rendering services in time of emergency to ~~became~~ local women.

The data presented in chapter 4 indicate that in urban areas, women leaders were able to attain the positions through ascription i.e., through their family status. In rural areas it was mainly their own effort and hard work which had brought the women to their present position. So, the situation in rural areas, obviously it was the necessity which made women to be leaders through their own efforts.

As regards decision making in the family, in Sauria more than half of the women took decisions in all matters. Specially in the case of education and marriage of children, they decided jointly with their husbands. In Rupganj, the majority took decisions in family matters with their husbands, while others consulted their family members Some had no role in decision making.

It may be said that since they were not members of any organisations, they only gave advice or discussed with influential members of their locality.

In urban areas, the majority of women leaders took decisions in all family matters but in some important matters they reached their decisions after discussing with other family members. In organisational matters they took decisions regarding implementation of plans through committees according to rules and regulations, training and development of the organisation. The women leaders of Sauria discussed a wide variety of subjects with other members in their organisation. These were related to matters of organisational improvement, education of children and reducing school fees, health, family planning, nutrition, employment, family matters, financial problems, savings, socio-cultural problems and poverty etc. The women leaders of Rupganj discussed subjects such as Grameen Bank, family matters, second marriage of husband, proper use of funds in organisation of new groups, health, family planning, relief, savings and job opportunities.

Subjects that were discussed by urban leaders with other women related to family matters, economic and educational problems, job opportunities, social problems, security, medical facilities, housing problem, organisation, savings, political matters, etc. The areas of discussion were common in urban and rural areas. However political matters were discussed only by urban women leaders.

### Social Category of Women Leaders

The majority of the women leaders of Saturia placed themselves in the lower social category, others in the middle and a few in the upper social category, while in Rupganj less than half placed themselves at the lower category, others placed themselves in the middle and upper social category. Majority of women leaders of Rupganj were socially and economically either middle or upper social category. In contrast to the rural leaders' social category, the majority of urban leaders placed themselves in the middle and upper class while only one described herself as coming from well off family background and as having a good financial position.

In general, women in the rural areas, according to the women leaders of Saturia, lived in very poor conditions, and lacked educational, training and job opportunities. Dowry and marriage were problems. Middle class families suffered most and people of the locality were not concerned about women's problems. Women leaders of Rupganj said that most of the women in their locality were landless, destitute or poor. They were victims of torture by husbands, lacked educational opportunities and faced great problems in arranging marriage for girls due to dowry and other social inhibitions.

The opinion of urban women leaders was not very different from their rural sisters. Most of them held that women of the locality suffered financially. They had problems of dowry, security, educational and job facilities. They also mentioned housing problems.

The suggestions forwarded by the women leaders of Sauria regarding ~~absent~~<sup>var</sup> problems were schools for girls, provision for jobs, cottage crafts, jobs in food for works programme, health facilities, setting up of women organisations and projects, provision for capital/ fund and consciousness raising programmes for women.

Besides emphasizing organisation of women, educational and job opportunities, professional training, urban women leaders added more suggestions. These included raising of consciousness, establishment of day care centres, adult education centre, skill training etc. They also emphasised on unity of people of the locality, recreational and communication facilities and also family planning centres. The women leaders were much concerned about the women's problems. Urban leaders in some ways were well informed about the prevailing social situation and suggested more modern ideas for their solution such as day care centres and recreational facilities etc.

### Qualities of a Leader

According to women leaders of Sauria a good leader should have the qualities such as patience, advisory capacity, wise, educated, confidence, skilful, good character, truthfulness, belief in unity, good behaviour, farsightedness, discipline, courage, sacrificing attitude towards community and people. Rugganj women leaders added qualities such as organisational ability, understanding, knowledge, intelligence, ability to work and to keep good public relations. The urban women leaders viewed qualities of a good leader to be in the following order of emphasis,



- honesty, good character, liberal attitude, benevolence, patience, forbearance. They should be active, listen to people and try to understand them. They have the ability to adjust in any situation and take prompt decisions. They should be educated, experienced, courageous have presence of mind, farsightedness, less emotional, keep their word, be socially conscious and economically solvent.

The women leaders of Sauria said they were respected by the people because they were educated and confident. Their membership<sup>in</sup> the Union Parishad was also an important factor, in gaining respect of the people of their locality. They tried to give good advise and encouragement, provide loan and services to women when needed and maintained good relations with all. These also accounted for the respect which they enjoyed in the community. Rupganj leaders mentioned the reasons for respect as social work, good advice, old age, being a member of the Union Parishad, good behaviour, education, being a member and chairman of the group, etc. Urban women leaders were respected because they tried to solve problems, listen to women and give advice. They were sympathetic, kind and helpful. They worked hard and shoulder responsibilities, good behaviour, educated, faithful, honest, had connection with upper level people of the society etc.

Analysis of the above qualities of leadership indicated that the leaders are respected for their ascriptive and also achieved status. In case of urban leaders, the ascriptive elements are more prominent than the achievement elements.

### Opinion of Women Leaders on certain Issues

In our society, people have some misconceptions about women's work outside the home, women's laziness, and the dilemma of doing double work-both at home and outside. The opinion expressed by women leaders of urban areas in this regard were: women should work outside the home to improve their socio-economic condition and to become self reliant; they should work outside to widen their mental horizon; both men and women work outside to maintain the family; they should work because they constitute half of the country's population, etc. Only a few were of opinion that only if women could make good arrangement of the house or if they were in financial crisis, then women should work outside.

Women leaders rejected the idea that women are, in general, lazy. They thought that women were not lazy, they could do any type of work. Some said that women were more active than men because they did the major portion of work in the family which went unrecognized; they were deprived of proper training facilities, adequate fund and other basic facilities. A few of them said women were not knowledgeable in the sense that they did not read newspapers, and were not aware of politics and not conscious of their rights. One leader expressed the opinion that people should change their outlook about women's work.

As to whether women are able to look after the household and also work outside home, the leaders expressed the opinion that it was possible if they were encouraged, if the husband cooperates, if somebody takes care of the family, if there is planning, if they are disciplined at

work, if they had a sacrificing attitude. Others were in favour of establishment of day care centres, availability of faithful servant/maid.

As to the opinion of men about women's work, the women leaders expressed a mixed response. Some said that men thought well of women's work. Others said that men thought women became uncontrollable if they worked outside the home and that men were critical about women's earnings.

Rural women leaders were of the opinion that women's work outside the house was positive. Majority of them stated that women should work; if women worked outside they could understand what was good or bad, could struggle for their causes, work outside home when essential for their survival, educated women should work and work side by side with man for national prosperity. Only a few stated that women should stay at home and take care of children and observe purdah. Rupganj leaders expressed the same views on this aspect. A number of leaders were in favour of women's staying at home for social restrictions. All the women leaders of Sauria stated that women were not lazy. They could work hard and with sincerity, they could work harder than men if they wanted but they worked without recognition, Rupganj women leaders expressed the same views. Some of the rural women leaders expressed the view that it was possible for women to work and take care of children at the same time; others said due to economic pressure they had to work and that, with proper organisation, they could manage both aspect of their lives well.

Regarding the attitude of men towards women's earning, rural women leaders stated that a wife supplementing the income of her husband was good for the family. Some thought that men understood and appreciated their earnings. A few of them said women became perverted if they work outside and men have a negative attitude due to non-observance of purdah, they thought that women took away the job of man.

Regarding the social condition prevailing in the country, the majority of the rural women leaders thought that social values were deteriorating. Only a few said it was improving or that the conditions remained the same. According to them, economic conditions were very bad due to high rise of prices of essential commodities, deterioration of financial condition and lack of purchasing capacity. Others felt that there was need for more job opportunities. As to religious condition, majority of rural women leaders viewed that religious fanaticism, superstition and mis-interpretation were existing in the society, others felt it was alright.

About the situation of the country, more than half of urban women leaders hold the opinion that social conditions were not hopeful because there were problems like dowry, lack of security, inefficient administrative policies, corruption, non implementation of government policies. Social values and moral character were deteriorating. A few stated that social condition of the country was gradually improving. Majority of them were of opinion that economy of the country was in crisis. The economic condition was gradually deteriorating due to inflation and high rise of price etc. With regard to the religious condition of the country, the majority of them thought that there were some misconceptions about religion, women should be

conscious about religious prejudices and superstitions few stated that conditions were improving. The opinion about cultural condition was mixed. Some held that it was improving, others said they did not have such cultural activities, and that there was infiltration of foreign culture, etc.

## 6.2 CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt to build up a body of knowledge on the role of leadership of women in development organizations and institutions at the local level. The main objective was to investigate social, economic and family background of women leaders, their potential as leaders, identification of factors that helped them to develop leadership qualities, their role and involvement with organizations, their motivation towards the problems of local women and their opinion on certain issues of women. Leaders have been defined here as those women who have some influence on other women in groups or organizations.

The sample chosen for the study consisted of 88 women leaders in rural and urban areas. The interview was conducted personally by the researcher.

It is revealed from the data that women leaders of rural areas were younger than the leaders of urban areas. Urban women leaders were fairly highly educated i.e. with graduate and Masters degrees, while the majority of the rural leaders were educated at least upto class X. A large number of respondents had educated fathers, husbands and relatives, and this was more evident in the urban areas. It is further found that non-traditional occupations of fathers and husbands helped them to become leaders. It may be pointed out that education and various types of occupation were found to influence the respondents in involving them with organizations. The number of children of the respondents in both urban and rural areas was smaller. This may be a contributing factor in involving them with the organizations. As regards their social category,

urban leaders placed themselves in upper middle class while rural leaders placed them in the middle and lower category.

The women leaders of urban and rural areas were involved at least with one organization or institution, except in Rupganj, where they did not have organizational facilities. The type of organizations they were associated with were : cooperative societies, family planning centres, welfare centres, childrens' organization, training centres, educational institutions, local government institutions and NGOs. It is evident that women are generally taking the chance where there is opportunities of organizations.

The first assumption, noted at the beginning of the study, was that "women who are involved with groups or associations have a better chance of becoming a leader". This assumption is supported by the data. It is observed that leaders of mid-level groups, generally in non-government organizations, are now emerging as leaders in rural organizations. They have the basic qualities of a leader but many of them lack the material possessions which are the main assets of male leaders. The group leaders in rural areas work in a local situation, they do not have links with other government organizations. In a rural situation, it is seen that mobility of women is restricted due to traditional and religious barriers. But if women are given the chance of knowing each other, given opportunities to take part in group activities and have access to certain facilities, if they become members of associations and organizations, and if they can articulate their interests, then they will be able to exert their influence in a local situation. As a small group, they can exert a limited influence over the members. However, because of other

forces in the social system they face obstacles from male influential people and also due to lack of awareness of their own rights. The means of women, their resources and support base are very much limited, as it is found in the study that they did not have offices, funds or other essential infrastructure. Yet they have the basic qualities to become leaders. They are able to organise a programme for women. What they need is the motivation, intervention or a push to involve them in a group and engage in development activities.

The second assumption, as stated earlier, is that ascriptive status help women and men to become leaders. In the study, it is found that for middle class women, it may be a helping factor, but for lower or poor women ascription is not helpful in any way. In spite of the various steps taken by the government and non-government organizations, ascription still dominates over achievement in becoming leader in both rural and urban areas. Poor women have to work hard to achieve a leading position. It is because of their needs and necessities that they form the organization. Since society is in a phase of transition, many poor women come out from their homes to work for their survival. They have to do something for themselves and then try to do something for others. It is evident from the data that women in the rural areas were trying to use their potentials even if their financial condition do not support them. For them, achievement is the criteria that helps them to be leaders of a group.

The third assumption was that 'women leaders are aware of the felt needs of the localities'. It is found that women leaders of both urban and rural areas knew the immediate problems of their respective localities and the problems of womenfolk in general. They were



well aware that they have been exploited by the society and are deprived of their basic rights. They mentioned that problems of lack of security, absence of women's organizations and institutions, services, marriage, dowry, violence against women, poor educational, training and health facilities, lack of job opportunities, communication, shelter, pure water, library facilities, economic problems and social restriction and humiliation by husbands as the major problems. In order to solve these problems, they took steps both at personal and organizational levels. Urban leaders discussed problems with relevant agencies and ministries.

The factors that help women to achieve leadership position in the locality were : sincerity, honesty, patience, education, wisdom, awareness of problems, help in time of difficulties, good advice, social work, support from fathers, husbands and relatives, help from local NGOs, and encouragement from local people.

As regards the qualities of a good leader, they pointed out the following : education, honesty, patience, confidence, skill, courage, organizational ability, good character, good behaviour, farsightedness, presence of mind, social consciousness, liberal and sacrificing attitude, good public relations and good economic standing.

According to the opinion of the respondents, social situation of women in the locality was not good because of economic hardship, dowry problem, lack of security, education and job opportunity. In order to improve the situation they suggested the need of organization for women, provision for economic support and professional training, day care centre, increase awareness and development projects.

About certain issues regarding women, the respondents expressed the opinion that women should work outside home to overcome socio-economic hardships and to be self reliant. They argued that if women work outside, their mental horizon would widen. They stated that it was possible to work outside, if the husband cooperated, if there were day care centres, if there was planning, if they were disciplined in their work. The majority of women leaders viewed that women could do any type of work if they were given the opportunity.

Regarding the social, economic and religious conditions of the country, the majority of them noted that the social condition was very bad because of deterioration of social values, dowry problem, lack of security, inefficient administrative policy, corruption and government's failure to implement the policy properly. They viewed that economy was crippled and it was in crisis too. About religious and cultural situation their opinion was that the religious situation was unhealthy due to misconceptions; women should be more aware of religious superstitions and prejudices. They also mentioned that infiltration of foreign culture has influenced the society.

The findings and information in the study may be helpful for the concerned agencies, the government and the NGOs in making plans and policies for future programme activities for women. The indicators that are helping or hindering the participation of women in development organizations and institutions have been identified. It is revealed from the data, especially of the rural areas that if opportunities for education and employment and projects for basic needs and income generation are created, women will be more active in pursuing their leadership role.

It has been mentioned in a study<sup>1</sup> that it is the women who can inspire the confidence and the stimulus for social change, especially among their sisters in rural and urban areas. Hence effective leadership among women must come from the ranks of women themselves.

Lastly, it is important to state that this research work on women leaders is a micro level study. The findings may not be generalized for all areas in Bangladesh. Conditions that prevailed in the study areas may not be the same in other areas. But the over-all trends may be similar. However, the findings are merely indicative and only some general parameters of conditions and problems which a women leader faces at the social, economic and organizational level.

The leadership role of women is important for changing the situation of the country. The concept of leadership is generally very broad and extensive. In order to investigate the process and trend of leadership in organizations and institutions, there is need for further studies to indicate the forces that women confront in social, economic and political situations.

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Appendices

Questionnaire for Women Leaders

A. Socio Economic Condition

1. Village:
2. Union:
3. Upazila:
4. Father's village:
5. Union:
6. Upazila:
7. Leader's name:
8. Age:
9. Marital Status:
10. Religion:
11. Education:
12. Occupation: (a) Present:  
(b) Past:
13. Property:
  - a) Land (in acre):
  - b) Homestead:
  - c) Others:
14. Monthly income (in Taka):
15. Organisation: a) Do you belong to any organisation? (Yes/No)
  - b) If yes,
    1. Name of the organisation:
    2. Designation:
    3. How many years:
16. Father's name:
17. Occupation:
18. Education:

19. Property: 20. Income:
21. a) Organisational involvement : (Yes/No)  
b) If yes, name of the organization/Member/Executive member for how many years:
22. Husband's name:  
(Alive/Dead)
23. Occupation: 24. Education:
25. Property: 26. Monthly income:
27. a) Organisational involvement (Yes/No)  
b) If yes, 1. Name of the organisation:  
2. Designation: 3. How many years:
28. Father-in-law's name:  
(Alive/Dead)
29. Occupation: 30. Education:
31. Property: 32. Monthly income:  
a) Land:  
b) Description of possession :
33. a) Organisational involvement (Yes/No)  
b) If yes, 1. Name of the organisation:  
2. Designation: 3. How many years:

B) Organisations/Projects

34. Members of Family (Single Burner) :

- a) Total family member :
- b) Description of member :

Sl. No.	Relationship	Male/ Female	Age	Marital Status	Education	Training	Occupation			Comments
							1	2	3	
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

35. Is there any project for women: (Yes/No)

36. If yes, mention name of projects:

37. Do you discuss problems with local women: (Yes/No)

38. If yes, mention it popics of discussion (Elaborate):

39. In your opinion, what are the problems of women in the area:

40. Do you discuss about these problems and take steps to solve them?

C) Leadership

41. How you have become influential in the area?

42. Do you discuss with chairman of Union Parishad/ Member/ or any influential people?

43. a) Mention two near relatives in this area:

Sl no.	Name	Relation	Education	Occupation
1				
2				

b) Mention the name of two influential people of the area:

Sl no.	Name	Relation	Education	Occupation
1				
2				

44. Do you participate in planning/implementation in your organisations? (Yes/No) How?

45. Do you have any project or participate in project for assestless/destitute women in your area?
46. How are you involved with women in your area?
47. Do you have any local resources i.e. land/office/school for women in your locality?
48. What resources do you use in women's organisation - loan, opportunity for training, others.
49. Do you think about the housing, education, health and job opportunities for women in your locality?
50. What difficulties you face to come to this position?

Social :

Economic :

Others :

51. What are the factors that help to come to this position?
52. What are the areas you take decisions in your family?
53. What are the areas you take decisions in your organisation?
54. What are the subjects that women like to discuss with you?

D. Opinion :

55. In what category do you belong in your society?  
Upper/Middle/Lower.

56. Your opinion about the position of women in your loacality?

57. What steps do you consider to improve the condition of women?
58. What qualities a leader should have?
59. Why are you respected in the area?
60. Do you think that women should work outside?
61. Are women lazy?
62. Is it possible to work outside after taking care of their children and the house?
63. Attitudes of men towards women's earning?
64. Opinion of women on the situation of the country.

Social -

Economic -

Religious/Cultural -

65. Comments :