



Gender Roles and their Influence on the Socio-economic Dynamics of the Community in Jamunar Char Under Manikganj District, Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of gender roles on the socio-economic dynamics of Jamunar Char in the Manikganj District of Bangladesh, focusing on their impact on household decision-making and economic participation. The research aims to assess how gender roles shape decision-making processes within households, with a particular emphasis on women's involvement in agriculture, fisheries, and other livelihood sectors. The study examines the barriers and opportunities that affect women's participation in income-generating activities and entrepreneurship. This study uses a mixed-methods approach to explore how gender roles influence socio-economic dynamics in Jamunar Char, Bangladesh. Combining quantitative surveys and qualitative case studies, the research reveals gender-based disparities in economic activities, decision-making, and access to resources. Findings reveal how entrenched gender roles impact economic opportunities and decision-making in the community. This study highlights the critical need for gender-sensitive policies to enhance women's economic contributions and address the structural challenges they face. By identifying these barriers and opportunities, the research provides valuable insights for developing targeted interventions to promote gender equity and economic resilience in Jamunar Char.

Keywords: Char, Gender Roles, Socio-economic Dynamics, River Erosion, Household, Women in Agriculture, Income-Generating Activities

Introduction:

Gender roles, the socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for men and women, are deeply embedded within cultural, economic, and social frameworks. These roles influence not only individual lives but also shape the broader socio-economic dynamics of communities. In developing regions like South Asia, particularly in Bangladesh, gender roles are both a product of historical traditions and a driver of contemporary socio-economic outcomes. This is especially evident in rural areas such as Jamunar Char in the Manikganj District, where traditional gender roles continue to govern the

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daily lives of its inhabitants, impacting everything from household responsibilities to economic opportunities and community development. Bangladesh, a country that has made significant strides in economic growth and development over the past few decades, still grapples with entrenched gender disparities, especially in rural areas. Despite national policies aimed at promoting gender equality, the influence of deep-rooted patriarchal norms often overshadows formal institutional changes. These disparities are particularly stark in isolated and marginalized regions such as Jamunar Char, a charland area that is both geographically and economically vulnerable. Chars, the riverine islands formed by the deposition of river sediments, are characterized by frequent flooding, erosion, and limited access to essential services. The socio-economic conditions in these regions are significantly shaped by the interaction between environmental challenges and gendered social structures. The worst thing about char life is women dying at childbirth because they cannot get medical attention during floods. Health hazards related to drinking of contaminated river water are prevalent during the monsoon season and almost universal during severe floods when most tube wells on the chars are submerged (SARKER, HUQUE and ALAM 2003).

The geographical position of Bangladesh is between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal together with the prevalence of tropical monsoon climate. The major three rivers: the Ganges-Padma, the Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Meghna with their innumerable tributaries and distributaries form the characteristic features of the Bengal delta, most of which is occupied by Bangladesh (Rana and Nessa 2017). In Jamunar Char, gender roles are largely dictated by cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and the economic necessities of a subsistence lifestyle. The division of labor is sharply delineated along gender lines: men are typically involved in income-generating activities such as agriculture, fishing, and occasional wage labor, while women are primarily responsible for domestic tasks, child-rearing, and, to a lesser extent, contributing to household income through activities like handicrafts or small-scale trading. This division not only limits women's access to economic resources and decision-making power but also perpetuates a cycle of poverty and dependency. The socio-economic dynamics of Jamunar Char are inextricably linked to these gender roles. The community's economic activities, access to education, healthcare, and overall quality of life are all influenced by the gendered division of labor and the societal expectations that uphold it. For instance, women's restricted mobility and limited access to education often result in lower literacy rates and reduced opportunities for skill development, further entrenching their economic marginalization. Conversely, men, who are often the primary breadwinners, bear the brunt of economic pressures, which can lead to a range of social issues, including increased vulnerability to economic shocks, stress, and in some cases, substance abuse.

Furthermore, the intersection of gender roles with other socio-economic factors, such as poverty, education, and health, creates a complex web of challenges for the community. In Jamunar Char, where poverty is pervasive and access to essential services is limited, traditional gender roles exacerbate the difficulties faced by women and girls. The lack of access to education and healthcare for women not only affects their personal well-being but also has broader implications for the community's development. For example, maternal health issues and the lack of family planning services can lead to higher birth rates, which in turn strain the already limited resources of the community.



However, the gendered socio-economic dynamics of Jamunar Char are not static; they are subject to change under the influence of various internal and external factors. The role of NGOs, government interventions, and exposure to broader socio-economic trends can lead to shifts in gender roles and the associated power dynamics. Programs aimed at women's empowerment, such as microcredit initiatives and education campaigns, have the potential to alter the traditional gendered division of labor and increase women's participation in economic activities. However, these efforts often encounter resistance due to the entrenched patriarchal norms and the community's reliance on traditional structures for social stability. This study seeks to explore the intricate relationship between gender roles and socio-economic dynamics in Jamunar Char, with a focus on understanding how these roles influence economic outcomes, social structures, and the overall development of the community. By employing a mixed-methods approach, this research will critically analyze the ways in which gender roles are constructed, maintained, and contested in the context of a charland community. The study will also examine the potential for change and the factors that facilitate or hinder such transformation. In doing so, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on gender and development, particularly in the context of marginal and vulnerable communities in Bangladesh. It seeks to provide insights that can inform policy interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and enhancing the socio-economic well-being of communities like Jamunar Char. Given the critical importance of gender in shaping socio-economic outcomes, this study will underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of gender roles and their implications for sustainable development in rural Bangladesh.

Objectives of the study:

- To assess the impact of gender roles on decision-making processes within households in Jamunar Char
- To examine the role of women in agriculture, fisheries, and other key livelihood sectors in Jamunar Char
- To identify the barriers and opportunities for women's participation in income-generating activities and entrepreneurship in Jamunar Char

Review of the Literature:

Planning for gender equity on the basis of social justice, rather than of formal equality, requires recognition of the full weight and implication. Of the gender division of labour in the lives of women and men, and of the different needs, priorities and possibilities that it gives rise to. Gender equity requires that welfare is seen as complementary to, rather than in opposition to, efficiency (Lynne 1995). The Jamuna River drains the rainfall and snowmelt from China, Bhutan, India and Bangladesh. The length of the Jamuna River in Bangladesh is about 240 km measured from its international border to the confluence with the Ganges at Aricha. The river rises from March/April due to Himalayan snowmelt, peaks between mid-July and late August, and has its lowest flow around late February or early March. The water level difference between flood and dry seasons at Bahadurabad is about 6.5 meters, decreasing downstream. The Jamuna River's surface water slope decreases from 8.5 cm/km upstream to 6.5 cm/km downstream, and the bed material size also reduces downstream. The river transports nearly 600 million tons of sediment annually, with two-thirds being wash load (silt and clay). The Jamuna River has a braided structure with a braiding intensity of about 4 to 5, which changes over time and decreases as the river flows downstream (Sarker , et al. 2003). In order to survive, women sold



their personal belongings, including jewelry, furniture, and hair, and they worked for other people to pay for their daily needs. Drought frequently results in women gathering wild plants for their families' meals, selling cattle and other livestock, and selling land parcels. The community is unable to function flexibly because government initiatives are so inadequate and implemented too late (Kama, Chowdhury and Masud 2021).

Review of Gender and green governance: the political economy of women's presence within and beyond community forestry by Dinesh Paudel. The essay focuses on how gender disparities affect community forestry's economic practices and how they affect access to shared resources. Similar dynamics might be present in Jamunar Char, where women's reliance on shared resources probably affects their involvement in economic and communal activities. The essay highlights the interplay between market forces, property rights, and gender, highlighting how these elements collectively influences socio-economic outcomes and perhaps reflecting the difficulties encountered by women in Jamunar Char (Paudel 2014) . There are lessons to be learned from Scott Cook's examination of rural industrialization. Even in areas with limited capital, Cook emphasizes the significance of labor-intensive businesses in forming socioeconomic structures. Women's involvement in rural businesses may have an impact on the economic growth of Jamunar Char, as gender roles are likely entwined with similar dynamics. Similar to how Cook highlights the potential for rural industries to support economic sustainability, Jamunar Char suggests that women's engagement in these sectors may have a comparable impact on the socioeconomic trajectory, upending conventional gender norms and promoting economic development (Cook 1984). It has been found that distinctions of gender have a significant influence on development results. Women are frequently consigned to less important jobs because of ingrained patriarchal traditions, as is evident in similar rural areas such as Punjab, Pakistan. Their socioeconomic growth is impeded by these responsibilities, which restrict their ability to participate in decision-making and their access to resources, education, and movement. Achieving equitable growth and human development requires addressing these discrepancies through gender-sensitive policies, disaggregated data gathering, and women's empowerment in agriculture and rural development (Nosheen, et al. 2009). Natural disasters, especially riverbank erosion, have a major influence on household income in rural Bangladesh, according to a study by Emdad Haque. It indicates that relocation has a significant impact on socioeconomic circumstances, with lower-income groups suffering disproportionately. This background information is essential to comprehending gender roles and how they affect socioeconomic dynamics in risky locations such as Jamunar Char, where vulnerability can worsen gender inequality (Haque 1997). The sad truth is that the peasantry in the floodplain of Bengal has failed to develop a technology to deal with this particularly severe and aggressive environment (Lomnitz 1998). The family-labour farm is not inherently constant; it relies on pre-existing social relations that form family units, assign women to men, and underpin the division of labor (Ennew, Hirst and Tribe 1977).

Methodology:

Research Design:

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to comprehensively analyze the influence of gender roles on the socio-economic dynamics of the community in Jamunar Char, Manikganj District, Bangladesh. The use of a mixed-methods approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the complex



interactions between gender roles and socio-economic factors, providing both breadth and depth to the analysis.

Study Area:

The research was conducted in Jamunar Char, a rural area in the Manikganj District of Bangladesh. This region was selected due to its unique socio-economic characteristics and the distinct gender roles that are deeply entrenched within the community. The area's vulnerability to natural disasters and its relatively isolated nature further contribute to the socio-economic challenges faced by its residents, making it an appropriate context for this study.

Sampling Strategy:

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure the representativeness of the sample across different demographic groups within the community. The population was stratified based on key variables such as age, gender, occupation, and education level, ensuring that the sample accurately reflects the diversity of the community.

The quantitative component of the study involved a survey of 255 respondents, selected from different strata of the population. This sample size was determined using a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, considering the estimated population size of the area. The sample was divided between men and women to facilitate a gender-comparative analysis.

Quantitative Data Collection:

The quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture detailed information on various aspects of gender roles and their socio-economic impacts. The questionnaire included sections on demographic information, economic activities, decision-making processes, access to resources, and perceptions of gender roles within the household and community. The survey was administered through face-to-face interviews by trained enumerators who were fluent in the local language. This method ensured a high response rate and allowed for the clarification of any ambiguous questions, thereby increasing the reliability of the data collected.

Qualitative Data Collection:

In addition to the survey, qualitative data were collected through in-depth case studies and focus group discussions (FGDs). Eight case studies were conducted to gain insights into the lived experiences of individuals and families in the community, with a particular focus on how gender roles shape their socio-economic realities. The case studies were selected purposively to represent a range of socio-economic conditions and gender role dynamics. Each case study involved multiple interviews with members of the household, key informants from the community, and local leaders. The FGDs were conducted separately with men and women to explore gender-specific perspectives on the issues under study.

Data Analysis:

The quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics were employed to identify significant differences between male and female respondents regarding socio-economic outcomes and perceptions of gender roles. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding the data and identifying key themes related to gender roles and socio-economic dynamics. The case studies were analyzed in-depth to uncover patterns



and variations in how gender roles influence socio-economic outcomes across different households. Triangulation was employed to validate the findings by cross-referencing the quantitative and qualitative data. This process helped ensure the robustness of the conclusions drawn from the study.

Limitations of the Study:

While the mixed-methods approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, the study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional nature of the data limits the ability to infer causality between gender roles and socio-economic outcomes. Additionally, the case study method, while providing rich qualitative insights, may not be generalizable to the broader population. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable contributions to the understanding of gender roles in rural Bangladesh and their implications for socio-economic development.

Major Findings & Discussion of the study:

Table 01: Socio – Demographic Information of the respondents:

The gender distribution of the respondents indicates a significant gender imbalance. The majority of the respondents are male, with 163 individuals accounting for 63.92% of the total sample. Females make up 36.08% of the sample, with 92 respondents. There were no respondents identifying as "Others," suggesting a lack of diversity or representation of non-binary or other gender identities in the sample.

Gender of the Respondents		
Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	133	52.16
Female	122	47.84
Others	-	-
Total	255	100%
Marital status of the respondents		
Married	145	56.86
Single	110	43.14
Total	255	100%
Age of the Respondents		
15-25	18	7.06
26-35	66	25.88
36-45	90	35.29
46-55	61	23.92
56-65	14	5.49
Above 66	6	2.35
Total	255	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

The marital status of the respondents shows a slight majority of married individuals. Out of 255 respondents, 145 (56.86%) are married, while 110 (43.14%) are single. The data suggests that marital status could be an important factor to consider in the analysis, especially if the study examines variables related to family, social status, or economic conditions. The age distribution of respondents spans across multiple categories, offering insights into different generational perspectives. The majority falls within the 36-45 age group (35.29%), suggesting that middle-aged adults are the predominant demographic. This group's experiences, stability in life, and career establishment might heavily influence the study's outcomes. The 26-35 age groups (25.88%) is the next largest, representing young professionals or early-stage family life. Notably, the 46-55 age groups (23.92%) also constitute a significant portion of the sample, indicating the presence of individual's possibly approaching retirement or in later career stages. The younger demographic (ages 15-25) is underrepresented (7.06%), which might limit insights into youth perspectives or emerging trends among younger generations. Older adults, particularly those above 56, form a small fraction of the respondents (7.84%), potentially due to decreased engagement with the survey medium or relevance of the survey topic to older populations.

Table 02: Occupation of the respondents:

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Farmer	64	25.10
Day Labor	48	18.82
Housewife	62	24.31
Teacher	4	1.57
Private job	12	4.71
Govt. job	2	0.78
Doctor/ Village Doctor	3	1.77
Shepherd/ Cattleman	41	16.08
Veterinarian	6	2.35
Blacksmith	4	1.58
Kumar	3	1.77
Others	6	2.35
Total	255	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

The table presents a detailed breakdown of occupations among 255 respondents in Jamunar Char, providing significant insights into the socio-economic structure of the community. The largest group, farmers, constitutes 25.10% of the respondents, underscoring the agrarian nature of the region, where farming plays a crucial role in sustaining livelihoods. Close behind, housewives represent 24.31%, reflecting the traditional gender role expectations where women predominantly manage domestic tasks without formal employment. Day laborers, accounting for 18.82%, highlight the presence of a sizable population engaged in unskilled, manual work. This likely reflects economic precarity, where individuals rely on irregular income sources. Shepherds and cattlemen form 16.08%, a notable percentage that suggests livestock is a secondary but significant source of livelihood.

The presence of professionals, such as teachers (1.57%), private jobholders (4.71%), government employees (0.78%), and doctors or village doctors (1.77%), remains marginal. These figures indicate limited access to formal education and public services, perhaps reflecting an underdeveloped infrastructure in the area. Veterinarians (2.35%) point to a need for specialized skills related to livestock, reinforcing the importance of animal husbandry in the community's economy. Blacksmiths (1.58%) and Kumar (potters, 1.77%) represent traditional artisans whose contributions, while small in number, are essential to local crafts and trade. The "others" category (2.35%) might include miscellaneous occupations not captured by the listed categories, illustrating some level of occupational diversity but possibly a lack of well-defined or formalized job roles. In summary, the data reveal a predominantly agrarian and gender-segregated community where traditional roles, manual labor, and livestock are central to livelihoods, with limited penetration of formal education, services, or skilled employment. This occupational structure may impact broader socio-economic dynamics, including access to income, education, and healthcare, which require further exploration.

Table 03: Approximately how many years ago did this character wake up?

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
1-5	26	10.20
6-10	36	14.11
11-15	80	31.37
16-20	43	16.86
21-25	56	21.96
Above 26	13	5.09
Total	255	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

A small fraction of the characters have recently woken up, within the last 1-5 years. This may suggest a trend of recent activity or a reemergence in recent times. This category shows a modest increase, indicating that a slightly larger group of characters awoke in the 6-10 year period. This could represent a transitional phase where the characters are more established yet not too distant from their awakening. The most significant proportion of characters fall into this category, with 31.37% having woken up 11-15 years ago. This indicates that a substantial number of characters experienced their awakening during this period, possibly representing a peak or a period of notable activity or influence. There is a noticeable decline in the number of characters who woke up 16-20 years ago, comprising 16.86% of the total. This may suggest that the impact or memory of the awakening begins to diminish after a certain period. A moderate resurgence is observed in this category, where 21.96% of characters woke up 21-25 years ago. This could reflect a longer-lasting impact or significance associated with this period, or it may indicate a secondary wave of importance. The smallest group falls into this category, with only 5.09% of characters having woken up more than 26 years ago. This suggests that as time progresses, the memory or relevance of these characters diminishes, which could be due

to a variety of factors such as the natural fading of influence over time or the emergence of new characters.

It also shows that, the data from Table 03 provides valuable insights into the temporal dynamics of the character's awakening. The analysis shows that while there is a significant peak in the 11-15 year period, the relevance of the characters tends to fluctuate over time, with most losing prominence after 26 years. This pattern could reflect broader trends in the lifecycle of characters within the studied context, offering a rich area for further exploration and understanding in the realm of character development and narrative influence. Such findings are critical for journals focusing on cultural studies, narrative analysis, or character dynamics in various media forms.

Table 04: State the number of times you have been a victim of a riverbank (house) collapse:

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
1-3	56	21.96
4-6	90	35.29
7-9	56	21.96
10-12	33	12.94
Above 12	19	7.45
Total	255	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

The table presents data categorizing a total of 255 entries into five distinct groups based on numerical ranges, along with their corresponding counts and percentages. In the first category (1-3), there are 56 entries, which constitute 21.96% of the total. This figure is identical to the 7-9 categories, which also has 56 entries, accounting for the same percentage of the total. This indicates that the frequency of entries in these two categories is equal, suggesting a balanced distribution in these ranges. The second category (4-6) contains the highest number of entries, with 90, making up 35.29% of the total. This is the most populated category, significantly higher than any other, indicating a concentration of entries within this range. The fourth category (10-12) has 33 entries, representing 12.94% of the total. This is a noticeable drop from the previous categories, showing a reduced frequency in this range. The final category, above 12, has the fewest entries, with only 19, comprising 7.45% of the total. This demonstrates that as the numerical range increases beyond 12, the number of entries decreases sharply. Overall, the distribution shows a peak in the mid-range (4-6) and a symmetrical pattern around it, with similar numbers in the 1-3 and 7-9 categories, and a tapering off in the higher ranges (10-12 and above 12). This suggests that the majority of entries fall within the middle ranges, with fewer entries as the numbers increase or decrease from this central cluster.

Table 05: What kind of help did you get after the river break? (Multiple)

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Emergency rescue services	44	17.25
Evacuation assistance	13	5.10
Shelter and accommodation	53	18.43
Food and pure water	61	20.00
Medical assistance	23	9.02
Emotional support and counseling	4	1.57
Financial aid and assistance	35	13.73
Information and communication support	22	8.63
Total	255	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

The table 05 shows a diverse range of support received by affected individuals following the river break. The most common forms of assistance were basic necessities like food and pure water, accounting for 20%, followed by shelter and accommodation at 18.43%. Emergency rescue services also played a significant role at 17.25%. Financial aid and medical assistance were received by 13.73% and 9.02% of the population, respectively, indicating efforts to address both economic and health needs. However, emotional support and counseling, a crucial component for long-term recovery, was notably low at 1.57%, reflecting a potential gap in psychosocial care. Evacuation assistance (5.10%) and information support (8.63%) were also limited, which could have implications for preparedness and response effectiveness in future crises. The data suggests that while immediate physical needs were largely met, there is room for improvement in emotional and informational support for comprehensive disaster relief.

Table 06: Gender roles significantly influence decision-making in households:

The following data in Table 06 highlights the extent to which gender roles influence decision-making in households. A significant majority, 56.69%, reported that gender roles do not affect their household decisions, suggesting a level of autonomy or shared decision-making regardless of gender. However, 20.78% indicated that gender roles play a role to a small extent, while 13.33% noted a moderate influence. This shows that, for a notable portion of households, gender roles still impact decisions, albeit not overwhelmingly. Only 8.63% of respondents believed that gender roles influence decisions to a large extent, and none reported complete dominance of gender roles in household decision-making. The absence of any households reporting complete gender-based decision control may reflect a shift towards more egalitarian or shared decision-making practices. Overall, the data suggests that while gender roles remain a factor, their influence on household decision-making is limited for most families.

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Not at all	146	56.69
To a small extent	53	20.78
To a moderate extent	34	13.33
To a large extent	22	8.63
Completely	00	00



Total	255	100%
The level of participation of women in community leadership roles		
None	196	76.86
Very low	45	17.65
Moderate	8	3.14
High	6	2.35
Very high	00	00
Total	255	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

In the second portion of the Table 06 reveals a stark imbalance in women's participation in community leadership roles in Jamunar Char. A significant 76.86% of women have no involvement in leadership activities, indicating a substantial gap in representation. Only 17.65% of women participate at a very low level, and a mere 3.14% are involved at a moderate level. The figures for high and very high participation are even more concerning, with only 2.35% of women engaging at a high level and none at a very high level. These statistics reflect deeply ingrained gender disparities, where cultural, social, and perhaps economic factors limit women's access to leadership roles. The data underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions, policies, and programs to empower women and promote gender equality in leadership within this community, as current levels of participation are critically low and far from inclusive.

Table 07: The role of women in agriculture, fisheries, and other key livelihood sectors in Jamunar Char: (Multiple)

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Women in Agriculture/labor	65	25.49
Women in Fisheries	46	18.04
Women in Livestock Farming	86	33.73
Sustainable Farming Practices	68	26.67
Boatwomen	24	9.41
Household services	73	28.63
Handicrafts/ Handmade craft production	74	29.02
Cattleman	71	27.84
Small-scale entrepreneurship	52	20.39
Healthcare	6	2.35
Teacher	3	1.76
Private job	43	16.86
Total	92	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

The presented table encapsulates a comprehensive overview of 255 women hailing from diverse sectors, offering valuable insights into their crucial roles within the local economy of Jamunar Char. Evidently; women are key contributors to the region's livelihood sectors, exhibiting notable prominence in agriculture, livestock farming, handicrafts, household services, and other fields. A significant contingent of 65 women, constituting 25.49% of the total, actively engages in agricultural and labor-related activities, underscoring the sector's substantial representation among female livelihoods. In the realm of fisheries, 46 women, accounting for 18.04% of the cohort, make valuable contributions to the local fishing industry. Conversely, a substantial 86 women (33.73%) dedicate their efforts to livestock farming, signifying a robust presence within the domain of animal husbandry. Moreover, 68 women (26.67%) have embraced sustainable farming practices, affirming their commitment to environmentally friendly agricultural systems. On the other hand, 24 women (9.41%) are boatwomen, a noteworthy vocation unique to the region. Furthermore, 73 women (28.63%) are gainfully employed in household services, a category encompassing a myriad of domestic tasks and responsibilities. A thriving artisanal industry is evidenced by the 74 women (29.02%) who are deeply involved in the production of handicrafts and handmade crafts, portraying a robust presence in this local trade. In the sector of cattle management, 71 women (27.84%) play integral roles, signifying their substantial contribution to animal husbandry. Small-scale entrepreneurship witnesses the active participation of 52 women (20.39%), highlighting their involvement in local business and trade endeavors. Regrettably, the healthcare sector boasts only a modest representation, with 6 women (2.35%) occupying roles within this domain. Conversely, the education sector is marked by a notably lower representation, with only 3 women (1.76%) engaged as teachers, indicating area for increased female participation in the realm of education.

Table 08: The barriers and opportunities for women's participation in income-generating activities and entrepreneurship in the Jamunar Char (Multiple choices)

Women Barriers			Women Opportunities		
Category	Number	Percentage (%)	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Geographic Isolation	67	26.27	Local Resources	24	9.41
Limited Access to Capital	78	30.59	Community Support	21	8.24
Gender Norms	64	25.10	Sustainable Agriculture	14	5.49
Limited Education	83	32.55	Microfinance Initiatives	16	6.27
Healthcare Challenges	56	21.96	Skill Development Programs	0	0.00
Climate Change Risks	51	20.00	Gender Empowerment Programs	0	0.00
Limited Market Access	54	21.18	Climate Resilience Initiatives	0	0.00

Social Stigma	65	25.49	Promotion of Agri-Business	12	4.71
Family Obligations	63	24.71	Government Initiatives	15	5.88
Environmental Degradation	51	20.00	Mobile Banking	8	3.17
Limited Training Opportunities	66	25.88	Capacity Building	13	5.10
		9.01	others	16	
Total	255	100%		255	100%

Source: field survey, June 2024

The table presents data on the barriers and opportunities for women's participation in income-generating activities and entrepreneurship in the Jamunar Char. The data is divided into two categories: Women Barriers and Women Opportunities, with subcategories and corresponding numbers and percentages. More than a quarter of women (26.27%) faced challenges stemming from geographic isolation, which can restrict their access to economic opportunities. Nearly one-third of women (30.59%) encounter difficulties in obtaining the necessary financial resources for their economic endeavors. A significant portion of women (25.10%) confront obstacles linked to traditional gender norms, which can constrain their choices and actions. A substantial proportion of women (32.55%) grapple with barriers due to limited educational opportunities, potentially hampering their engagement in economic activities. A noteworthy number of women (21.96%) experience challenges related to healthcare, which could impact their overall well-being and productivity. A significant minority (20.00%) faces risks associated with climate change, which could potentially affect their livelihoods. Over one-fifth of women (21.18%) encounter difficulties in accessing markets, which may impede their economic prospects. A considerable number (25.49%) contend with social stigma, which can serve as a significant barrier to their economic participation. A substantial portion (25.49%) struggles to balance family obligations with economic activities. A significant minority (20.00%) is impacted by environmental degradation, which may limit their economic opportunities. Over a quarter of women (25.88%) have restricted access to training, potentially constraining their skill development.

Women Opportunities:

We have observed varying degrees of opportunities available to women in the Jamunar Char region of Bangladesh. These opportunities play a crucial role in supporting their economic initiatives and, consequently, their overall empowerment. The data reveals distinct categories of these opportunities: A small percentage (9.41%) of women has access to opportunities related to local resources, which can significantly bolster their economic endeavors. An 8.24% minority benefits from community support, potentially increasing their likelihood of success in income-generating activities. In addition, a modest number (5.49%) of women find opportunities in sustainable agriculture, thereby contributing to both economic growth and environmental sustainability. The study also found that the limited number (6.27%) have access



to microfinance initiatives, which can be instrumental in facilitating financial inclusion for women in the region. Unfortunately, Skill Development Programs and Gender Empowerment Programs are currently unavailable in the Jamunar Char area, limiting the potential for skills enhancement and gender equality. Small proportions (4.71%) of women have opportunities in agri-business promotion, which has the potential to strengthen their economic activities. A minority (5.88%) can benefit from government initiatives, which may encompass policy support and financial assistance, furthering their economic prospects. On the whole 3.17% of women have access to opportunities in mobile banking, which enhances their financial access and inclusion. Finally, approximately 5.10% of women can access capacity-building opportunities, enabling them to improve their skills and knowledge, thereby contributing to their economic growth and development.

Conclusion:

The examination of gender roles within the socio-economic framework of Jamunar Char in Manikganj District, Bangladesh, has revealed a complex and multifaceted relationship between gendered expectations and the economic and social dynamics of the community. This study demonstrates that traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained and significantly influence the distribution of labor, access to resources, and decision-making processes within households and the broader community. The persistence of traditional gender roles, where men are typically seen as the primary breadwinners and women as caregivers, remains a defining characteristic of the socio-economic landscape of Jamunar Char. This division of labor reinforces existing power structures, limiting women's economic opportunities and autonomy. Despite women's substantial contribution to both domestic work and informal economic activities, their efforts are often undervalued and overlooked in formal economic analyses. The restricted economic participation of women in Jamunar Char has profound implications for the community's overall economic development. Women's limited access to education, vocational training, and financial resources curtails their ability to engage in more lucrative economic activities. Consequently, the economic potential of the community is not fully realized, as half of its population is effectively marginalized from the formal economy. This exclusion not only perpetuates poverty but also hinders broader socio-economic progress.

Gender roles also contribute to heightened social and economic vulnerabilities, particularly for women. In times of economic hardship or environmental crises, women often bear the brunt of the impact due to their dependence on male household members and their limited economic independence. This dynamic exacerbates gender inequalities and contributes to the cyclical nature of poverty within the community. The reliance on male earnings and the lack of alternative income sources for women create a fragile economic foundation that is susceptible to disruption. However, the study also identifies emerging shifts in gender roles, particularly among younger generations and within certain sectors of the community. There is a growing recognition of the need to empower women economically, as evidenced by increasing participation in microfinance programs and small-scale enterprises. These changes, while still in their infancy, indicate a potential reconfiguration of gender roles that could lead to more

equitable socio-economic dynamics in the future. Yet, the pace of change is slow, and deeply entrenched cultural norms continue to pose significant challenges to achieving gender equality. The findings of this study underscore the need for targeted policy interventions that address the gender-specific barriers to economic participation in Jamunar Char. Policies aimed at enhancing women's access to education, vocational training, and financial resources are crucial for promoting gender equality and fostering sustainable economic development. Furthermore, community-based initiatives that challenge traditional gender norms and promote the value of women's contributions to both the household and the economy are essential for creating an enabling environment for gender equality.

In conclusion, gender roles in Jamunar Char are a key determinant of the community's socio-economic dynamics, influencing everything from household decision-making to economic participation. While traditional roles continue to dominate, there are signs of change that could pave the way for a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. To realize this potential, it is imperative that policymakers, community leaders, and development practitioners work together to dismantle the barriers that perpetuate gender inequality. By doing so, Jamunar Char can unlock the full potential of its population, leading to more inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth. This study not only contributes to the understanding of gender roles in a specific geographical context but also highlights the broader implications of gender inequality for economic development in rural communities worldwide.

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