

**CHAPTER III**  
**METHODOLOGY**

## CHAPTER-III

### METHODOLOGY

Before proceeding to present the details of how the study was carried out, it is important to state here the relevance of the study to some theoretical points which "may become apparent only as one seeks to understand the findings" (Selltiz, C., et al, 1967, p.444). Therefore, an attempt was made to build up a theoretical framework that would provide necessary guidelines for the study.

#### SOME THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The main concern today of a country in Third World is characterized by an issue 'Women and Development', which calls for an urgency of providing employment for women in general and the rural poor women in particular. This section of population of a country is seriously affected by the lack of their participation in the development process as participants and contributors.

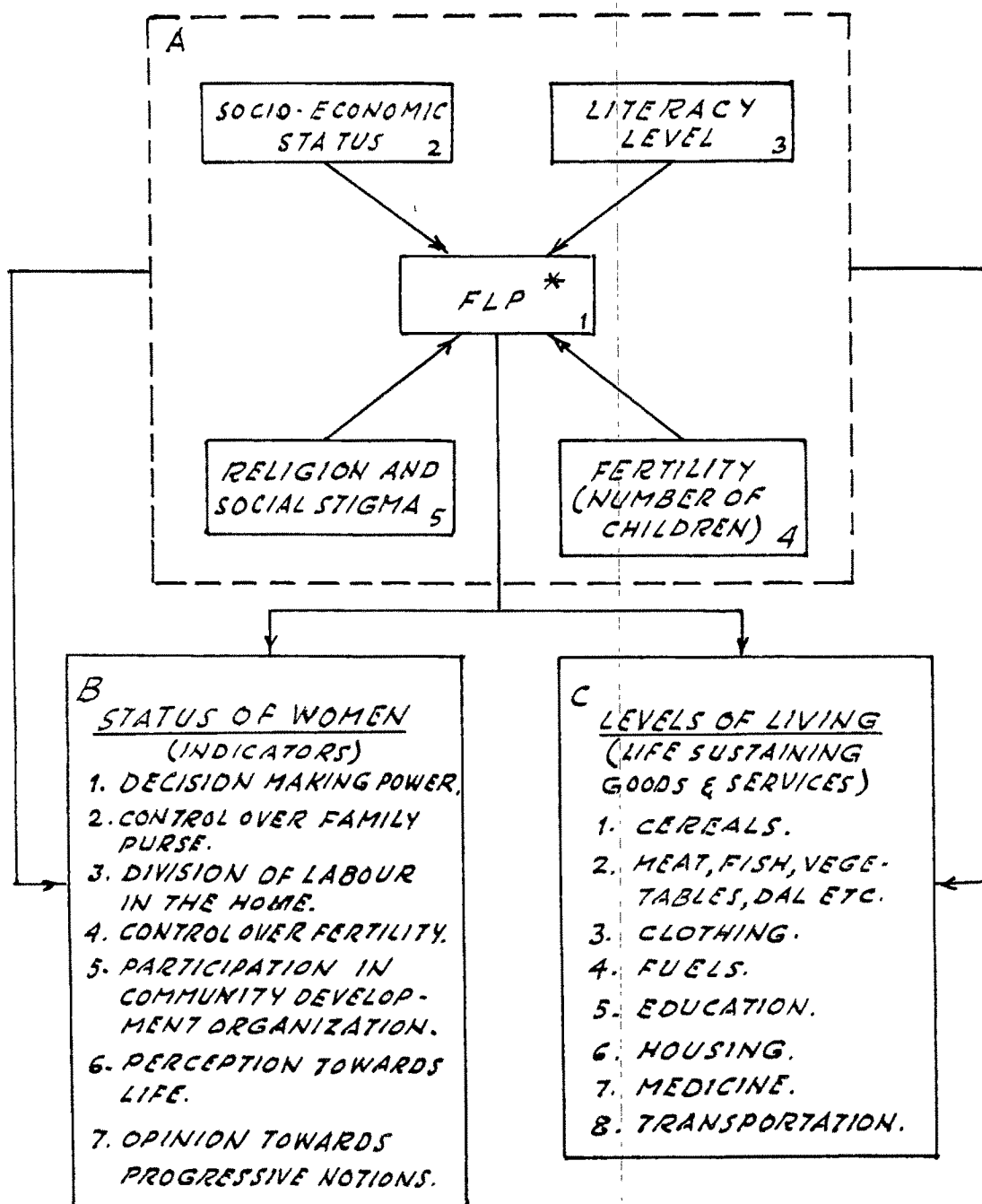
But if women are intended to make positive contribution towards development, the rate of their participation in labour force will certainly have to be raised (Hirway, I, 1980). With this idea in mind, it is essential to understand the various dimensions of the problem relating to the

female labour participation. Also it is important to realize in this context how they can bring about improvement in their family living through their employment.

Some theoretical understanding relating to the condition under which the rural women enter the labour market and how they are benefited by their work is described in the following paragraphs.

The following schematic framework attempts to portray the issue of "Women and Development" in the context of the present study. In the figure three core aspects of the present study — female labour participation (FLP), status of women and levels of living with arrows indicate the general lines of causation. The upper box (broken lined) relating to determinants of female labour participation portrays some characteristics of FLP. The two boxes on the bottom — status of women and levels of living are referred to as two indicators (non-economic and economic respectively) of development. Arrows from upper box to lower two boxes (Band C) indicate all the aspects 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in box A as the intervening variables affecting the status of women and levels of living of their families.

FIG. 1  
WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT:  
A MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCHEMATIC FRAMEWORK



\*  
FLP = DENOTES FEMALE LABOUR PARTICIPATION.

In the context of female labour participation and development, this issue should be viewed from different perspectives. Therefore, the two aspects, namely, the status of women and the levels of living of their families have been taken into account as the two indicators of development on which female labour participation (FLP) has got some positive impact.

The 2nd Five Year Plan in Bangladesh has acknowledged that "the extremely low and declining share of female employment to total employment points to the fact that women are definitely a disadvantaged group in view of the productive work they are doing and can be done by them" (2nd Five Year Plan 1980-85, Bangladesh, p.15). Their participation in labour force is characterized by several outstanding features. This can be explained in the following model:

$$FLP = f(I, Ph, Wf, Ed, C, N).$$

(adopted from the model of fertility and female labour force by Paul, R.G., 1982).

Where, FLP = female labour participation,

I = Income of the family,

Ph = the value of women's time in the home,

Wf = the women's market wage,

Ed = Educational level of women,

C = demographic variable,

N = norms affecting labour force behaviour.

The basic phenomenon of FLP in our country, particularly, in unorganized sector, is a very low wage rate. Therefore, in the context of the family, a rise in the family income with unchanged low earning power of female workers, results in reduction or withdrawal from the labour market. Again it has been observed that with an increase in income, the family becomes status conscious which discourages the women to take up employment (D'Souza, V.S., 1980). Also there is an ideological desire to avoid the impression that women work due to inadequate earning of male (Paul, R.G., 1982).

Apart from their low wage rate, the place of work, working time, and other conditions related to work, often, make them choosy. Another interrelated but equally important factor is the non-availability of varied employment opportunities suitable to them. Thus the lack of suitable employment opportunities rather than the lack of their willingness to work prevents women from taking up employment (Hirway, I., 1980).

Despite this adverse situation, the illiterate and lower income class form the major part of the labour force than women from other classes (Malya, M.M., 1981, Khanna and Verghese, 1981). Thus it clearly indicates that the reasons are mainly economic in nature. Due to inadequacy of income of the principal earners of the family and the

desire for improving the living conditions, the women of this class are unlikely to withdraw from labour force even when income of the family increases. It is pointed out that very high proportion of the population of Bangladesh lives in absolute and extreme poverty (2nd Five Year Plan 1980-85, Bangladesh). Therefore, if these women withdraw from labour force, the poverty would be more pervasive and severe in their households (Patel, B.B., 1979).

In addition to such factors, demographic variable such as their fertility behaviour also influences FLP. Large family raises the value of women's time in the home. The presence of more children in the home retards female labour supply. In many cases their lack of education, training and skill discourage them from joining the labour force. These factors jointly influence women's decision in their participation in labour market. Ultimately, however, their participation is motivated by a simple decision rule, namely, that a woman will enter the labour force if her market wage exceeds the opportunity cost of her time in the home. Factors that raise the value of women's time in the home reduce female labour supply; factors that raise women's market wage, on the contrary, will increase it. However, fertility, labour participation and education are interrelated as, for instance, the number of deliveries or children affects the value of women's time in home and market

wage. Thus in the absence of alternative economic roles outside familiar or domestic duties, "women will find no disincentives for having more children since domestic work is not incompatible with that of raising children" (Chaudhury and Raihan, 1980, p.135).

On the other hand, as Chaudhury has argued, it is not always possible to distinguish cause from effect when female employment and fertility are considered. In any given situation, the question arises as to whether women who work outside the home are deliberately keeping their family size small, or whether women who have smaller families or no children, for a variety of reasons, are more free to take outside employment (Chaudhury, R.H., 1979).

However, in the context of Bangladesh society, the decision to take up employment can not be isolated from the existing socio-religious norms. In rural Bangladesh, women belonging to relatively better off families observe purdah more than those from the lower strata, and are likely to be reluctant to enter the labour force. Due to fear of losing their standing in society they withdraw from the labour market. Their non-participation in economic activity strongly reflects the limitation imposed by the strictures of Purdah. For women the appropriateness of a particular occupation category is often determined by how



much contact it necessitates with members of the opposite sex and only secondarily by whether it is commensurate with traditional images (Smock, C.A., 1977). Thus, the norms relating to the seclusion of women combined with other factors undermine the participation of women in the labour force.

However, as the box A in the diagram shows one way to induce FLP is to raise the cost of child rearing, and reduce the value of women's time in the home by providing greater educational and training opportunities which help them to change in attitude as well as to accept new challenges, and a wide range of employment opportunities with reasonable wage rates for young women.

The important point to remember from the diagram is that the female participation in economic activities and its outstanding characteristics are mutually reinforcing phenomena which have impact on the status of women and the levels of living of their families.

The Committee on the Status of Women in India argues that "the status of any section of population in a society is intimately connected with its economic position, which (itself) depends upon rights, roles and opportunities for participation in economic activities" (Government of India, 1974, p.148). But in a society where women are dependent

upon their male counterparts for social and economic security and lack economic emancipation, subordination of women to men will be higher. Due to their suppression in a male dominated society, they fail to identify themselves as separate individuals having some rights to exercise as well as roles to play in the family and the society. The status of women, it is true, can be identified through several indicators as shown in box B . . . The arrow from the box A (FLP) to box B (status of women) suggests that if the women are provided with employment opportunities and given economic emancipation, they will be able to enjoy relatively higher status. Thus the issues of women's status are intimately linked with women's access to employment and earning income, or in other words, to female labour force participation.

On the other hand, the additional income earned by women will enable the family to consume more goods and services. The consumption of goods and services which is a measure of level of living (Marull Jose, 1966) is basically related to the income level of the household (Todaro, M.P., 1977). Therefore, low levels of living (insufficiency of life sustaining goods and services) are related to low incomes which result from low labour force productivity, un/underemployment, low literacy and larger number of

children. However, it can be concluded that the levels of living of masses particularly the rural poor can be raised through providing employment to females with better wage rate, because the level of living is nothing but another name for purchasing power (Doraiswamy, P.K., 1981).

Taken together, the three boxes (A, B, C) in the diagram, present a concise portrait of the relationship of FLP, the status of women and the levels of living. Thus, there is a clear indication that women's employment has implications for poverty removal (raising the levels of living), population control and higher status of women, which are in the present time essentials for a country's development.

#### HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED

Prior to carrying out the study, certain hypotheses were postulated.

The socio-economic as well as demographic characteristics of the households in general and of women in particular were hypothesized as the key determinants for testing the hypotheses and for interpretation of findings of the present data.

Presented below is the schematic description of hypotheses along with variables of the present investigation.

<u>Explanatory variables</u>		<u>Explained variables</u>
Socio-economic status of households,	)	
Religion,	)	
Fertility (number of Children),	)	
Amount of agricultural land,	)	
Literacy level of women.	)	Female Labour force participation
Female labour force participation,	)	
Religion,	)	
Literacy level of women,	)	
Socio-economic status of households.	)	Fertility behaviour
Female labour force participation,	)	
Religion,	)	
Socio-economic status of households,	)	
Family size,	)	
Literacy level of women.	)	Status of women
Income of the family,	)	
Religion,	)	
Family size,	)	
Female labour force participation.	)	Consumption expenditure pattern of the households.

The above schematic figure generates following hypotheses that guided the analyses of the data of present investigation. They are organized according to the key objectives of this research.

- I) To analyze the female labour participation the following hypotheses were formulated.

#### Hypotheses

1. Socio-economic status of households is negatively related to the participation of women in gainful employment;
2. Religion is an influential factor for the employment of women;
3. Amount of land holding of the household has significant effect on labour participation of female;
4. Female labour participation is influenced by the number of children in the family. These are inversely related.
5. Literacy level of women is related to their participation in labour force in a positive way.

- II) To analyze the fertility behaviour of the respondents the following hypotheses were formulated.

#### Hypotheses

1. Female labour participation has significant negative effect on fertility behaviour.

2. Literacy level of women is negatively related to their fertility control.
3. Socio-economic status of households has negative effect on fertility behaviour of women.
4. Religion has got impact on fertility of women.

III) To analyze the status of women the following hypotheses were formulated.

#### Hypotheses

1. Female labour participation provides a woman with the opportunity for higher status.
2. Status of women is positively related to literacy level of women.
3. Religion is an influential factor for variation in women's status.
4. The family size also affects the status of women negatively.
5. Socio-economic status of households is a positive determinant of women's status.

IV) To analyze the consumption expenditure pattern of the households the following hypotheses were formulated.

#### Hypotheses

1. Income of the household is the strongest determinant affecting consumption expenditure pattern of households.

2. Religion is related to variation in different expenditures of households.
3. Female labour participation has positive significant effect on consumption expenditure pattern of households.
4. Family size has negative effect on consumption expenditure pattern of the households.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of a research, usually, depends upon the purpose of the research. A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data that has close relevance to research purpose. On the basis of the major concerns of the present study, that is, the labour force participation of rural women and its impact, the present investigation was mainly descriptive in nature. A descriptive study, according to Selltitz, C., et al, (1967) "aims (1) to portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individual, situation, or group (with or without specific initial hypotheses about the nature of these characteristics); (2) to determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else (usually, but not always, with a specific initial hypothesis)" (p.50). The present study is also concerned with describing the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the rural women and their households, the

beliefs, and views they hold. It is also concerned with discovering or testing whether certain variables are associated. The present study, with its major concerns and the procedures, accordingly falls within the category of descriptive research.

The procedures followed in the present investigation are described in the following paragraphs:

#### PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION

In the present study data were collected through an intensive field survey. A survey to a social scientist, may have a purely descriptive purpose, as a way of studying social conditions, relationships and behaviour. As Moser, C.A., (1967) puts it, "the sort of information needed may be how families of different size, composition and social status spend their incomes; how people are reacting to the latest productivity drive; what relation there appears to be between education and the possibility of moving up the social ladder... there is virtually no limit to the range of topics covered by surveys" (p.2). It is also concerned with the demographic characteristics, the activities, or opinions and attitudes of people. Therefore, keeping in view the subject matter of the present study, an intensive survey was carried out for data collection.



In order to obtain responses from the individual respondent, two methods — personal interview and observation were adopted. To have safeguards against bias and unreliability the investigator herself took interview from the sample respondents. In different situations of the survey these two different methods were employed. For instance, in some situations, it was felt necessary to compare what they said and what they actually did and believed. In such cases only the interview method was found to be inadequate to elicit real information from the respondents. Obviously, here, both interview and observation were employed. However, in the present study, major portion of data collection was covered by interview and only in a few situations observation method was followed.

The following kinds of problems were faced by the investigator in undertaking the present field survey of rural women in the context of Bangladesh.

The approach here was different from what a researcher would consider appropriate for educated women in urban areas. To obtain the appropriate answers or responses from the interviewees (the rural women), both formal and informal interviewings, were employed. With respect to many questions to which some respondents were reluctant to respond, the approach of informal or casual interviewing created an atmosphere that allowed the respondents to express their

feelings, views and behaviours. In addition, such a method also helped to ascertain the validity of a response, that is, its closeness to the truth which one is trying to attain (Moser, C.A., 1967).

For the questions on types of income, agricultural landed properties, saving, credit, investment, expenditures etc., it was essential to include the male person in the survey as a resource person. Most of the women respondents were illiterate and consequently had no knowledge about such information. So, it was found helpful to interpret some data using the information obtained from the male person in the household. Special care, however, was taken in asking questions to the male respondents. They were asked only the relevant questions. For instance, they were not asked anything about the activities usually performed by the female members in the house. Neither were they asked to express their own views about such matters as family planning and other affairs relating to female responsibilities.

Questions relating to women's life were put exclusively to women. It was experienced that some of the young respondents were hesitant to answer the question of such issue in front of in-laws or elder persons. In such cases, responses, however, were obtained confidentially from the young respondents.

Some questions regarding the age of spouses, children and age at marriage and their marriage practices, were sometimes required to be asked in different ways because the respondents were not able to furnish the exact information. For example, many respondents were found not to be aware of their actual age. They could not tell the date and year of their birth. However, they could give some clue about their age by connecting their birth with certain special historical event, natural calamity that took place around the same time. For example, most of the respondents who could not tell the year in which they were born, could, however, tell, whether they were born before or after the partition of India and other important events. From such answers tentative conclusions about their age were reached.

Assuming that consciously or unconsciously much misinformation about women's dependent condition is perpetuated and all the economic activities and productivity are geared to the male if men are asked (Nadia Youssef et al, 1979), information about such aspects were necessarily to be obtained from females themselves.

In looking for the information the investigator was keen on ensuring, as far as possible, the reliability of the information to be gathered. With this intention, a three way relationship between researcher, local leaders

and respondents was established. Such a relationship was essential because reliability of responses depended first, on the nature of the relationship between researcher and respondent and second, on whether that relationship assisted or deterred respondents in reporting the experience to which they alone had direct access (Sajogyo, P., et al, 1979),

For most of the respondents the interview with the investigator was the first of its kind. In other words, that was the first time the respondents were exposed to a lady who was not only an outsider, but also a city dweller and with whom they, for hours together, talked about their problems. It is worthwhile mentioning here, however, that some of the respondents became annoyed at the sight of the investigator mistaking her for a family planning advisor or worker. Such a reaction revealed two important facts. The first was that they were visited by family planning workers and the second was that they did not like to give audience to family planning worker. However, when such respondents came to know about the real academic interest of the researcher they changed their attitude and extended co-operation.

Another point that deserves to be mentioned here is that the investigator, in some areas, was introduced by the local family planning workers and the ongoing project director to some local women. This helped to establish a

sort of familiarity which facilitated, to a great extent, collecting the data with relative convenience.

#### SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The present study covered 200 rural married women, both working and non-working, and their respective households. Though the target sample was females, the household as a whole was taken as unit towards obtaining full information.

The study was carried out in Bangladesh during August-October, 1982. The particular area included two villages under the union of Loukathi in the district Patuakhali. The union is located near the district town. It has nine villages with population of 20783 of which 10456 are males and 10327 are females (source = District Census Office).

The principal occupation of most of the village families is agriculture. Since the location of the surveyed villages was near the town, a wide range of occupational diversities among the samples were observed. The sample comprised employees, factory workers, day labourers, small traders, rickshaw pullers and boatmen.

A detailed sampling procedure adopted in the study is outlined below.

In order to select the sample households, a three stage sampling procedure was adopted. The selection of the union and the village were the first and the second stages

respectively. In selecting the union and the village the main consideration was to choose the village covered by any development organization which is working for the women. The selection of the households, i.e., the third stage, was done by stratified and proportionate random sampling process.

It was found that in Patuakhali district, only three unions had undertaken any developmental programme for women. The activities of these three programmes, were, to some extent, similar. Out of the three unions, Laukathi union was selected by lottery method. Having selected the union, the investigator worked out a series of steps leading to the selection of villages and households.

There were nine villages in Laukhathi union of which 6 villages were covered by the ongoing development organization. Out of these six villages, two villages, namely, Laukathi and Telikhali were selected again by lottery method. The selection of the villages was followed by the selection of households through stratified random sampling process. The total numbers of the households of the two selected villages were collected from the ongoing development project namely Rural Development Academy (RDA) in Laukathi union. The households were classified into four categories and these categories were constructed by the project according to the socio-economic condition of the households (see operational

definition for classification). The number of households for the present sample, then, was drawn out from each category proportionately. Thus a proportionate random sample consisting of 200 households was selected finally (distribution of sample drawn from each category of households is given in Appendix II).

#### INSTRUMENT

An interview schedule was used as an instrument for data collection. It consisted of three sections.

Section one contained the questions relating to the demographic and socio-economic background of the respondents and their respective households.

Questions regarding the female labour participation, their working conditions, their job satisfaction, their knowledge, beliefs, opinions, management practices, involvement in community development organization and awareness of family planning constituted the second section.

Most of the questions of second section were structured in which the responses of the subjects were limited to the stated alternatives. For example,

Do you believe in small family norm?      Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, mention the reasons from any of the following:

1. Small family is economical.
2. Children can be given proper education.
3. Health of mother and children remains good.
4. Any other, specify

(For details, see the Interview schedule in Appendix I)

Some of the questions related to the seven indicators of status so that on the basis of the responses the status of the women respondents could be ascertained (For details, see chapter IV, Section II).

Section three included questions relating to the consumption expenditure pattern of the households which indicated the levels of living of the sample households.

#### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The process of data analysis of the present study included: coding the replies of the subjects and observations made; tabulating the data; performing statistical computation.

Coding was done by putting raw data in different categories and transforming into symbols that were counted and tabulated for statistical computation.

After coding of responses of each subject, tabulation - a part of the technical process in the statistical analysis



of data was done. For many categories of responses, the data particularly the responses on consumption expenditure were placed on punched cards that were used for machine computation.

The most important step in the analysis of data is the statistical computation. After summarizing the responses of each individual through coding and tabulating, statistical methods were used to derive the reliability of generalization from the obtained data to the total population.

The elementary statistics such as frequency, percentage, measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion were used. To characterize that is 'typical' in the group, the arithmetic mean or average was used as suitable point around which the cases balance (Dixon, W.J., et al, 1969). The median also implies a concept of balance, but it takes account only of the ordinal position of scores rather than their absolute values.

Standard deviation and co-efficient of variation were used to indicate how widely the cases in the group vary with respect to a given characteristic. Non parametric test, namely, Chi-square and analysis of variance (F-test and t-test) were worked out to show the relationship as well as differences between different variables. But the point is that the findings of such relationship or difference between two groups

or variables "do not constitute evidence of the reason for the relationship" (Selltitz, et al., 1955, p.421). Therefore, some data were analyzed in finding out the causal relationships rather than the simple fact of association between the variables. For this, simple as well as multiple regression models were fitted to the consumption expenditure data and status scores by introducing more variables than two into the analysis. These variables were income, family size, socio-economic status of households, female labour participation, religion, literacy level of respondents which were considered as independent variables. Regarding models fitted in the analysis, details are given in Chapter IV, Sections II and III.

#### OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF SOME CONCEPTS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Household : In the context of the present investigation, a household was defined as an independent family consisting of a group of persons living together and usually taking food from the same kitchen.

Solvent household : A household which depended on land only or on a combination of farming and other sources of income which was able to sustain a relatively high standard of living was termed solvent household. The family's general needs, such as, clothing, health, education etc. were met in

a solvent family. In addition, enough grain was grown to cover family consumption needs while the remainder was sold. Such a family operated with a margin of security.

Subsistence household : A subsistence household could manage to meet basic family expenses for a year either by producing enough or by depending on non household sources of income, which constituted approximately half of the income. In either case, family income was sufficient to get by on, but offered no additional security. Education in a subsistence family, might be limited to sons only, or upto primary school for all children.

Poor household : A household was poor when it owned or sharecropped some land. However, it had to buy paddy or rice from the market and its income came from wage earning occupations serving as rickshaw pullers, day labourers and small traders. The major focus of activity of a poor household was only to secure food for the day.

Extreme Poor household : A household without land or without any regular source of income was considered extreme poor. Education, health-care, and even food were luxuries to such a household. To put more clearly, even the bare necessities of life were beyond the means of such a family. An extreme poor household could not provide two times meal or in most cases, even one time meal to its members.

Family size : The size of the family was measured in terms of the number of children. Thus the spouses and children were counted in assessing the household size.

A family consisting of 3 children was considered small while a family consisting of more than three children was considered big. For the purpose of quantification a child upto 14 years was considered as equivalent to half an adult.

Family type : In the classification of family type - a family was considered nuclear only when a married couple and their unmarried children lived together sometimes with husband's parents, and unmarried brother and sister, if any. A joint family consisted of married couple, their married son and his unmarried children, husband's parents or husband's married brother and his unmarried children.

Labour force : A person was considered a member of labour force who furnished the supply of labour for the production of goods and services in exchange of reward (wage or salary). He/She could be either self-employed or employed by others.

Consumption expenditure : In the present study consumption expenditure comprised all the expenditures incurred by the households on different selected goods and services. (For selected goods and services refer chapter IV, Section III).

Status of women : In macro level, the most frequently used indicator of the status of women to that of men are the proportion of women to the total population, to total

membership in the labour force and to total enrollment at different educational levels, with a superficial reference to political right and social participation. But, in micro level, that is, in a particular society or in family context, they are of limited usefulness to indicate the status (Irene, T., et al, 1976). The point is that employment and education might influence the status of women in the family. For instance, an educated women, may or may not have freedom to exercise some rights and roles in the family. This means education may influence her power but by itself may not be the indicator of her status. Therefore, the status of women was taken to mean, in the present study, the 'power' to exercise her rights and roles in the family or in the society. Thus, the income earning and educational level of women might raise the power in terms of participation in all types of decision making in household affairs including choosing the number of children, control of family finance, sharing household chores and so forth in the family.

Literacy : In the context of the present study, literacy was defined as the ability to both read and write in mother tongue (Bengali).