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# Role and Status of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh: Patterns and Changes

Islam, Md. Aminul

University of Rajshahi

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**Role and Status of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh:  
Patterns and Changes**



*PhD Dissertation*

*By*

*Md. Aminul Islam*

A Dissertation Submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
(IBS), University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS)**

**University of Rajshahi**

**Rajshahi 6205, Bangladesh**

**May 2014**

**Role and Status of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh:  
Patterns and Changes**



*PhD Dissertation*

**By**

**Md. Aminul Islam**

**PhD Fellow**

**Session: 2009 – 2010**

**Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS)**

**University of Rajshahi**

**Supervisor**

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**Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS)**

**University of Rajshahi**

**Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

**May 2014**

# Declaration

I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Role and Status of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh: Patterns and Changes”, submitted to the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology is a completely new and original work of done by me. No part of it, in any form has been submitted to any university or institute for any degree or diploma.

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PhD Fellow

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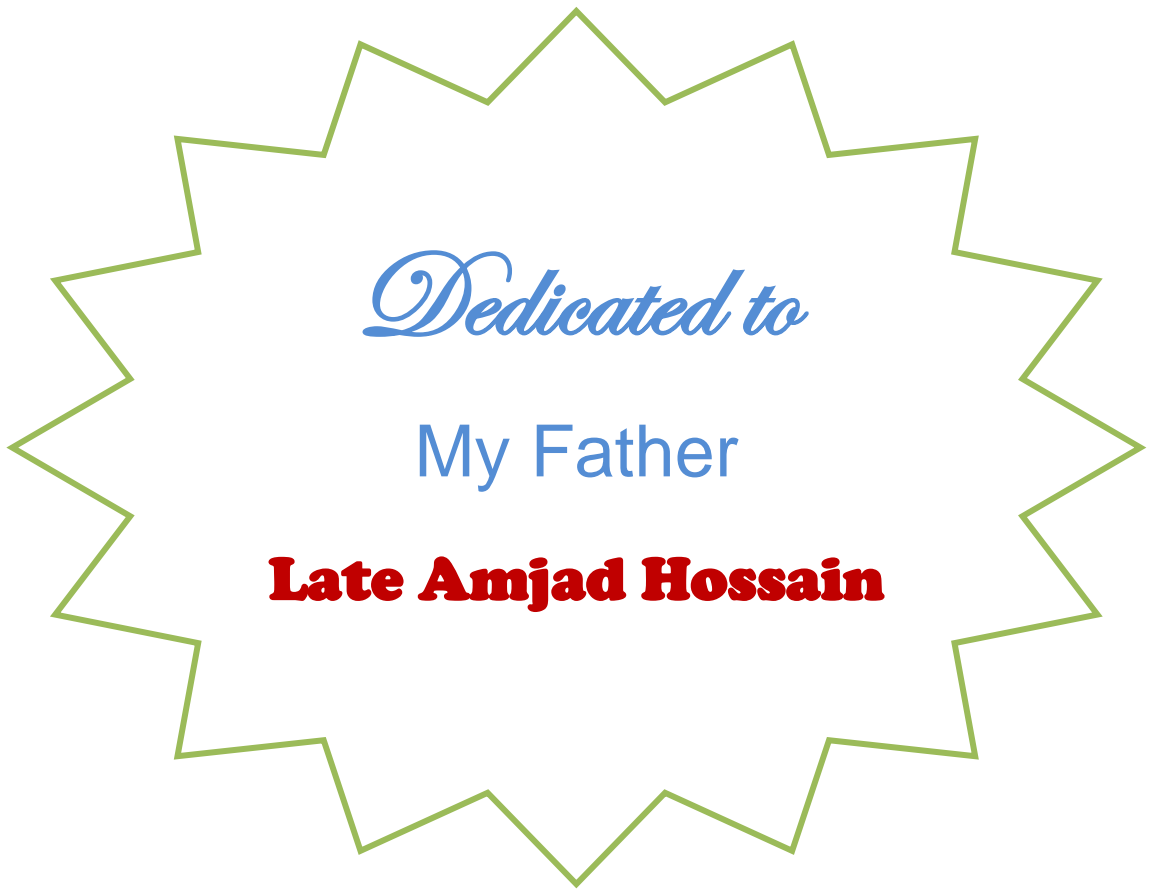
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# Certificate

With reference to this thesis entitled “Role and Status of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh: Patterns and Changes” submitted by Md. Aminul Islam to the Rajshahi University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. I certify that he has carried out his research work under my direct supervision and guidance and the manuscript of this thesis has been scrutinized and carefully checked by me. The entire thesis comprises the candidate’s own work and personal achievement and that is an important work done by him. This thesis does not contain any conjoint research work either by me or with any one else. The final copy of this thesis which is being submitted to the university of Rajshahi, Bangladesh, has been carefully and thoroughly read and verified by me for its material and language; and it is hence a piece of work to my entire satisfaction.

Dr. A. K. M. Shafiul Islam  
Professor  
Department of Sociology  
University of Rajshahi  
and  
Supervisor



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**Md. Aminul Islam**

# Abstract

The issue of aging is now an emerging aspect of all over the world. Both the rural and urban societies of our country are not also immune from this problem. This study mainly explored the role and status of the elderly in rural Bangladesh. It is based on empirical findings from the four villages of Gopalnagar union of Dhunat upazila of Bogra district. Besides, the study also depicted the socio-economic conditions of the elderly, their position in decision making process, the influence of wealth on the enjoyment of role and status, and their role and status in the family and the rural community. Mixed approach has been given priority in this study. Survey, observation, case study and life history methods and focus group discussion technique have also been used in this study. Data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data have been collected from August 2009 to August 2010. The primary data have been collected from January 2011 to January 2012. Simple random sampling procedure followed in this study. The study analyzed that the socio-economic conditions of the rural elderly are not good. That is, low rate of literacy, male headed family, living below the poverty line, limited sources of income, spending lives without sanitary latrine, taking bath without bathroom etc. are significantly existed among the elderly. The position of elderly in decision making process is also vulnerable. The element which helps to take part in decision making process is not sufficient for them. It has also found out that the wealth has greater influence on the enjoyment of role and status. This study has also found the declined role and status of the elderly in the family and the society as well. The study has also identified that the elderly are engaging various unpaid and invisible household activities which are not taken into consideration by the people of family and society as well. Considering this, the researcher made an attempt to develop a theory as a byproduct which he entitled as the slighted/ ignored/ disregarded engagement theory.

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# Chapter - 1

## 1.1 Introduction

The role and status of the elderly in the context of rural society have become a multidimensional topic of discussion and a serious academic discourse for both the developing and developed countries of the world with due importance and precise attention. Attempts have been made by several medical experts, biologists, social scientists and policy makers to handle this issue in its biological, sociological, psychological, epidemiological and other points of view. Sociology is a scientific study of social relations among humans in the society. The social relation of elderly with society has gone changed. Economists think that if the number of elderly increased rapidly, they will be a threat to national income. Social workers and development activists are anxious about the policy implementation for the elderly. Demographers are also thoughtful for the increasing number of elderly. Gerontology, the study of ageing and the elderly, concerns itself not only with the physical process of growing old, but also with social and cultural factors connected to ageing.<sup>1</sup> Aged people are considered as natural outcome of demographic transition. That is, they are the result of high fertility and mortality to low one. The numerical growth of elderly persons is an eloquent testimony not only of reductions in fertility but also of reduction in infant and maternal mortality, improved nutrition, reduction in infectious and parasitic diseases, as well as improvement in healthcare, education and income. Their number is emerging gradually as an issue which is not separated from social integration, gender advancement, economic stability or poverty. Demographically, population ageing is a global phenomenon and Bangladesh is also not left untouched by this demographic reality.<sup>2</sup> Sociologists, social workers, economists, demographers and development planners almost agree that until the year 1961, both the birth and

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<sup>1</sup> Wan He, Kinsella Kevin, "An Aging World: 2008" International Population Reports, U.S. Census Bureau (U.S.: Washington, DC, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> K.M Mustafizur, Rahman. *Present Social Context and Elderly Population in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Unnayan Onneshan, 2010).

death rates were high. With this, the proportion of aged population was at a low level. But at present their number is increasing rapidly. The global population aged 65 and over was estimated to be 70 crore.<sup>3</sup> In the developing country the average percentage of elderly is 15% of the total population. In South Asian countries, the total population is about 200 crore. Among them 14 crore is elderly. It is estimated that in 2025 it will be 277 crore and 32 crore.<sup>4</sup> In Bangladesh, the percentage of elderly population is about 8.56.<sup>5</sup> In 2025, it will be about 9% and in 2050 it will be about 17%. Bangladesh, the eighth largest (147.3 million in 2008) and one of the most densely populated countries (966 persons per sq. km. in 2007) in the world has started to experience another emerging issue of population ageing in its highly vulnerable population and development context.<sup>6</sup> In 2007, the number of the elderly people aged 60 and over in this country was 9.41 million and it has increased from 1.94 million in 1951 which is quite phenomenal. The trend of increasing the percentage of elderly stated above is shown in a table:

**Table 1.1**  
**The Percentage of Elderly (1951-2025)**

Year	1951	1961	1974	1981	1991	2001	2007	2012	2025	2035	2050
Percent	4.4	5.2	5.7	5.5	5.4	6.2.	6.6	8.56	9.9	11.9	17.0

Source: Data from BBS 2011, 2008, Help Age International 2006.

Bangladesh right now has the third largest number of old people after India and China and it is also frightening problems in the rural areas.<sup>7</sup> About 7.7% aged people are living in rural areas in Bangladesh. So, the number of elderly is significant in terms of

<sup>3</sup> Mu.Mijanur Ra.hman, “Bangladeser Grameen Probinder Bardhokko Obostha-Somosyaer Prokriti O Karon”(Aging Condition of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh Cause and Nature of the Problem) *Bangladesh Lok Prosason Potrika*, Dosom borsha somkhya, ( 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Bangladesh Demographics Profile (BDP), *Report on Age Structure-65 Years and above 2012* (Dhaka: Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), *Report on Sample Registration Vital System 2007*(Dhaka: Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh,2008).

<sup>6</sup> Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), *Population Census 2001*, National Series, Vol.1, Analytical Report ( Dhaka: Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh,2007).

<sup>7</sup> Help Age International, *Uncertainty Rules over Lives: The Situation of Older people in Bangladesh* (London: Help Age International,2006).

our total population. From the literature it is evident that the elderly in the past contributed a lot for the betterment of family, society and country by their stock knowledge, experience, wisdom and activities. They were also treated as the important guardians, mediators and members of the family and society. Now they are being stereotyped, according to the report of the researchers, by the members of the family, society and country in various ways. They are also considered as the threat to national income, source of increasing dependency, creator of generation gap and social problems. Older people are being left out, excluded from the normal day to day activities of the society. Moreover, they are, according to Burgess, thrusting into a state of social inactivity that may be termed as role less role.<sup>8</sup> They observe in their every day life that the society focuses, advertises, and welcomes the young rather than the old. So they feel that society is just for the young generation. They think that they have no option but to be treated in many cases as an unattractive, unproductive, unintelligent, unemployable and less important social group. That is, the elderly think that they are in a state of less role and status.

Population ageing has major consequences in all areas of our life. In the economic area, it is believed that the elderly people affect economic growth, savings, investment and consumption, labor markets, pensions, taxation and the transfer of wealth, property and so on. In the rural areas of Bangladesh elderly face lack of minimum income and employment opportunities, extreme poverty, illness accompanied by absence of proper health/medical care, food and nutrition, living arrangements etc. They also face isolation, exclusion, loneliness, negligence, psychosocial and cultural complexities etc.

Family is still the primary source of care for the elderly in our country. In the traditional joint family system, elderly people enjoyed respectable and honorable life. But, the scenario today is almost totally different. The process of becoming old is taking place at a time when the family pattern is breaking down due to urbanization, migration, economic hardship, declining social values, self-interest, quarrels, maladjustment etc. This changing situation and impact of other disadvantageous

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<sup>8</sup> Earnest W. Burgess ed. *'Aging in Western Societies'* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

socio-economic conditions are creating problems and unhappiness for many elderly people, especially for the poor families. Due to the size of the population, scarcity of resources, poverty, insufficient health facilities and absence of strong social security, ageing is going to be a major problem for Bangladesh. The role they are playing is sometimes not expected by the member of the family as well as the people of the society. They are playing many imposed roles which are against their status. After all the role and status of the elderly have undergone change and become a complicated topic of discussion even in our rural society.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Role and status of the elderly are interlinked and inseparable. These concepts have recently been judged to accommodate much of sociology's substantive concern.<sup>9</sup> They are fundamental to social structure and many of its processes. As primary social units, status and role become organizing concepts in the analysis of most norms, relationships, conformity and deviance, stability and change.<sup>10</sup> It encompasses three questions. These are- who are the elderly, where are they, and what are they? There is a maxim in social psychology: "What we think of a person influences how we perceive him, how we perceive him influences how we behave towards him and how we behave towards him ultimately shapes who he is."<sup>11</sup> That is, role and status of elderly vary from elderly to elderly, family to family, society to society, and even country to country. Actually, society determines the role and status of people according to their age and sex, class and race. Just as society assigns statuses and roles according to their class, race, and sex, it also assigns statuses and roles on the basis of age.<sup>12</sup>

There is also a theoretical controversy regarding these concepts because numerous theories are there of aging which also depict the activities and position of the aged

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<sup>9</sup> Kamarovsky, Mirra, "Some Problems in Role Analysis" *Am.Soc.Rev* (1973) 38,649-662.

<sup>10</sup> Irving Rosow, "Status and Role Change through the Life Span" (In Binstock, R. H. and, Shanas, E. (eds.), *Handbook of Aging and Social Sciences*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold com,1976).

<sup>11</sup> Blau , Z. S, *Old Age in a Changing Society*, (New York: New View Points 1973).

<sup>12</sup> Riley, Matilda White, Marilyn Johnson, and Anne Foner, '*Aging and Society: A Sociology of Age Stratification*', vol.3, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1972).

persons from theoretical ground. However, in spite of having disagreement among the thinkers, all theories on aging highlight the position and activities of elderly in society. To put somewhat differently, role and status of the elderly is major concern in theoretical discussion.

A role is the expected pattern of behavior associated with a given social status. Status refers to the location of a person or group in a system of social relationship in the society. It is simply as a position in a social system. It also refers to what a person is. Status is used as a synonym for honor or prestige when it is a part of the study of social stratification. A status is simply a rank or position that one holds in a group.

For analytical purposes, statuses are divided into two basic types: ascribed and achieved. Ascribed statuses are those which are fixed for an individual at birth. It exists in all societies including those based upon sex, age, race ethnic group and family background. Achieved statuses are those which the individual acquires during his or her lifetime as a result of the exercise of knowledge, ability, skill and/or perseverance. Societies vary in both the number of statuses that are ascribed and achieved, and in the rigidity with which such definitions are held. Both ascribed and achieved statuses exist in all societies. However, status, according to Linton, is only a phenomenon of social organization, not the intrinsic characteristic of man. What matters is not what you really are, but what people believe you to be.

Status and role are reciprocal aspects of the same phenomenon. Some confuse the two terms, status and role. In a word, status defines who a person is, as for example, he is a child, or a doctor; whereas, role defines what such a person is expected to do, as for example, he is too young to work, he should care about parents etc. Status, or position, is the static aspect that fixes the individual's position in a group; role is the dynamic behavioral aspect that defines how the person who occupies the status should behave in different situations. In other words, status refers to a collection of norms; and each society classifies its members into a more or less elaborate system of statuses. Each of the statuses involves a role, set of behavior or action-patterns that people belonging to a given status are expected to perform. One plays as many roles as he has statuses. Thus, whereas the status of a person tells us what he is, his role will tell us what he does as a member of a status group.

Despite this fundamental difference between the two, statuses and roles are very closely interlinked. There are no roles without statuses and no statuses without roles. If status, then role; if role, then status.<sup>13</sup> That means role and status are almost inseparable.

The concept of elderly is also a debated issue .It varies from country to country. Biological, chronological, socio-cultural and psychological factors are related to aging. In the developed world, chronological time plays a paramount role in this matter. The age of 60 or 65, roughly equivalent to retirement ages in most developed countries is said to be the beginning of old age. In many parts of the developing world, chronological time has little or no importance in the meaning of old age. Other socially constructed meanings of age are more significant such as the roles assigned to older people. In some cases it is the loss of roles accompanying physical decline which is significant in defining old age.

In contrast to the chronological milestones which mark life stages in the developed world, old age in many developing countries is seen to begin at the point when active contribution is no longer possible.<sup>14</sup> This is not true for rural societies in Bangladesh, because people in these settings become older before the age of 60 due to poverty, physical hard working, inability and illness for facing malnutrition, and geographical condition as well. But they are to perform many roles.

The definition of old age also varies between men and women. Women are considered aged between the ages of 45 and 55 years whereas 55 and 75 years for men”.<sup>15</sup> The rural women in Bangladesh are to welcome this concept in their fate very early due to their involvement in various activities and want of appropriate food because of prevailing poverty in their family life. According to the Bangladesh Association of Gerontology, the group of population who belong to the age group of 60 and more is called elderly. This is very much theoretical explanation as to the aging. Reality is that, significant people in rural areas become aged before reaching 60 years and above as they directly or indirectly

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<sup>13</sup> Irving Rosow, Status and Role Change through the Life Span, 1976

<sup>14</sup> M. Gorman, “Development and the Rights of Older People”, In: Randel J, et al., eds. *The Ageing and Development Report: Poverty, Independence and the World's Older People* (London : Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Thane P., “The Muddled History of Retiring at 60 and 65”, Personal correspondence UN: Marybeth Weinberger, ( 2001).

live with various deep rooted social problems in their everyday life .In our society, we can highlight the term elderly in following way:<sup>16</sup>

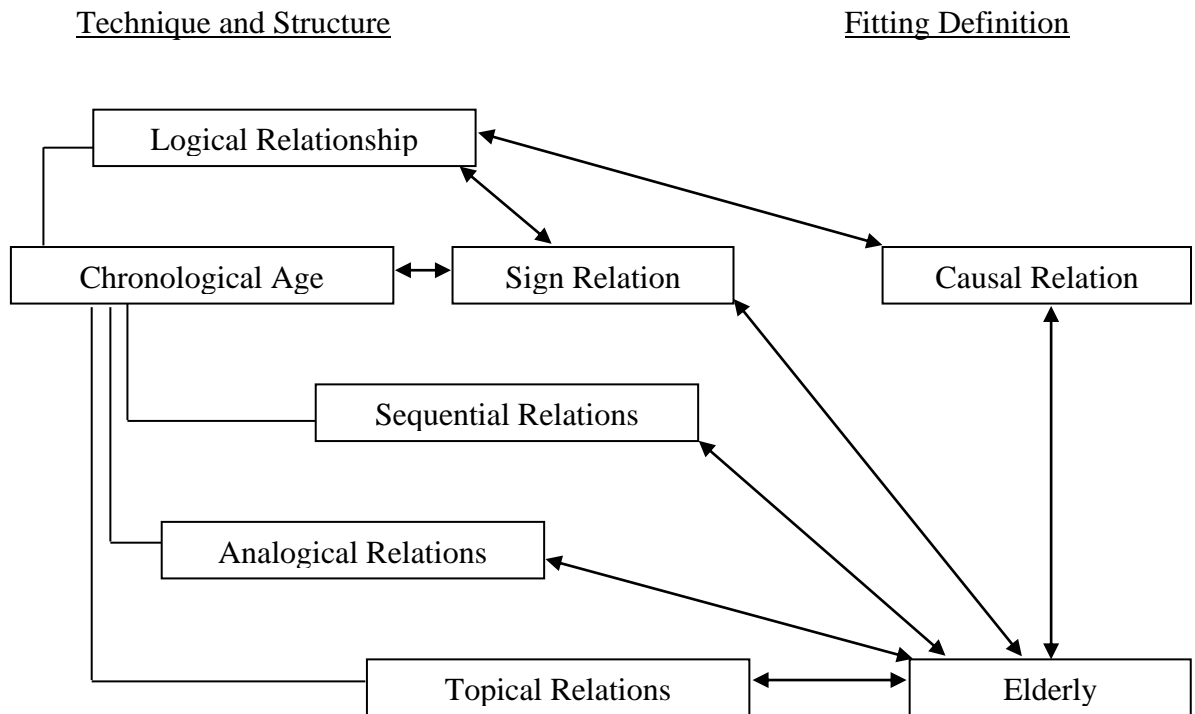


Figure 1 : The elderly term

Source: Islam, Social Aspect of Aging in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Rajshahi.

Age is also a dubious term in social gerontology. There are various factors associated with this. That is to say, people do not aged just for biological process of aging, they acknowledge this process by chronological, psychological and social factors which can be shown in following way

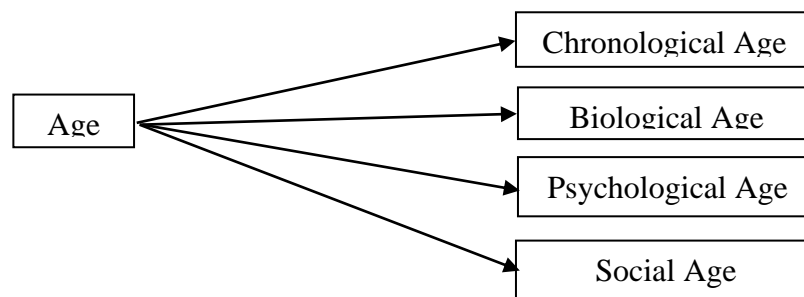


Figure 2: The concept of age

16 A. K. M. Shafiul Islam, “Social Aspect of Aging in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Rajshahi” (PhD diss. , Department of Sociology, University of Rajshahi. 2002).

Sociological and Anthropological studies also reveal that in the prehistory, the elderly were respected and highly praised. In the case of Hebrews, the elderly had essential function. In the Egyptian civilization, the elderly placed social role as educators and guides for the youth. Although, in hunting and gathering societies, age was seen as a burden in pastoral, horticultural, and agrarian societies, on the other hand, tend toward gerontocracy, (a form of social organization) in which the elderly have the most wealth, power, and prestige. In the early period from 1607 to 1820, old age was highly respected: “Veneration of the aged was spoken as of natural and normal.”<sup>17</sup>

The Chinese tradition has always called for the veneration of the elderly. In past, age and power went together. So, parents had absolute authority over their children. But the social turmoil and political changes that began in China have undermined the power of the aged.

We can know that the Japanese have a strong cultural tradition of respect for elders. They reserve certain seats on bus and trains for the elderly, arrange 61<sup>st</sup> birthday, use respectful language when they speak with the elderly, sponsor sports day for elderly, and provide them with economic, medical and social support. But much industrialization occurred in Japan which tends to create a decline in the relative power and prestige of the aged as the prime source of wealth shifts away from the land and geographical mobility undermines the strength of families.<sup>18</sup> The rapid change in technology also diminishes the expertise of the elderly and they are pushed towards non- productive roles.<sup>19</sup>

‘Old’ is not a polite word for people in western societies. As they are capitalist societies, they consider everything on the basis of accumulation of capital. Since an old person is not productive force according to them, the elderly are neglected, ignored, underestimated and mistreated by the young people of the western societies.

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<sup>17</sup> Ficher David Hackett, *‘Growing Old in America’*( New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>18</sup> Erdman Palmore, *The Honorable Elders*( Durham, N. C : Duke University Press, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> Plath, David W, “Japan: The After Years”, In *Aging and Modernization* eds. Donald O Cowgill and Lowell D. Holmes. (New York: Appleton- Century- Crofts, 1972).



India and Bangladesh had strong family ties and institution of joint family for taking care of the elderly. But the change in the living arrangements and family structure has adverse impact on the quality of life of the aged people even in these lands of glorious heritage.<sup>20</sup>

So, the study of the types of societies reveals that the elderly were happier in the past. They enjoyed satisfactory role and significant status.

Traditionally the elderly people in Bangladesh were very much respectable. Once they were guardians, venerable counselors, advisors and heads of the family and society. Now they became a negligible and less important group due to changing socio-economic and demographic conditions.

Besides, decreasing fertility rate along with increasing life expectancy, migration and fall in family- based care for the aged made the aging problem in rural areas very complex. To speak straightly, the rural society of Bangladesh is different from urban one. In a low income country like Bangladesh older persons, especially in rural areas, are often characterized as frail, dependent and unproductive.

In cultural, social, religious and ethical point of view they are supposed to remain good position. From the findings of the researcher it is seen that their overall conditions are not so good. In research area their conditions are really dissatisfactory. Due to the breakdown of joint family, advancement of technology, worship of young generation by media are disassociating the elderly from the role they are enacting and the status they are enjoying. Mere it is not enough; they have been kept in a marginal condition .Their roles in different sectors are decreasing drastically. For these reasons, their statuses are also decreasing day by day.

So, the study tried to identify the relationship between the income and enjoyment of role and status, physical condition and receiving respect, familial condition and social status, bank balance, property and taking part in decision making process, previous reputation and enjoyment of status in the family and rural community. So, this research tried to assess the role and status of the elderly in their rural settings.

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<sup>20</sup> Chakrabarti, Prafulla, "How Do the Rural Elderly People of Bengal Live", In: Kabir, M.et al. (eds), The Elderly Contemporary Issues, (Dhaka: Bangladesh Association of Gerontology, 2003).

## 1.3 Research Question

A research question is a clear, focused, concise, complex and arguable question around which a researcher centers his or her research. The researcher generally asks a question about an issue that is genuinely curious. In a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions, not objectives or hypotheses. These research questions assume two forms: a central question and associated sub questions. The central question is a broad question that asks for an exploration of the central phenomenon or concept in a study. In quantitative studies, investigators use quantitative research questions and hypotheses, and sometimes objectives, to shape and specifically focus the purpose of the study. As the nature of the study is both quantitative and qualitative, the researcher stated research question and objectives of the study. Research questions help researcher focus their research by providing a way through the research and writing process. It must be formulated in concrete terms with a view to clarifying what the field contacts are supposed to reveal. It does not come from nowhere. In many cases, its origin lies in the social context. “The decision about a specific question mostly depends on the researchers’ practical interests and their involvement in certain social contexts.”<sup>21</sup> It may be either a central question or associated sub-questions. The description above made the researcher thoughtful and some questions developed in his mind. These are:

- (a) What is the scenario of role and status of elderly in the study area?
- (b) How do individual, group and society treat with the elderly?
- (c) Who take part in decision making process?
- (d) How does the members of the family evaluate elderly in taking any decision?
- (e) Why are the elderly not given priority in taking any decision?
- (f) How does society look upon them in doing so?
- (g) Who enjoys satisfactory role and status?
- (h) Whose opinion is given priority at the time of educating children, building houses, arranging marriage and performing religious and cultural activities?

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<sup>21</sup> Flick, Uwe (edited), *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2009).

- (i) How do the people evaluate them in village arbitration, local socio-cultural and religious programs?

## 1.4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of a research summarize what is to be achieved by the study. These should be closely related to the research problem. It must be interrelated, brief and realistic rather than vague and highly ambitious. The objectives of the study also explain the purpose of doing, where it will be done, who the subjects are, what will be done in the research etc. Good objectives should be **SMART**. That is, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. **Specific** – The task has to be specified well enough so that researcher knows what it is. **Measurable** – If researcher cannot measure research progress, how will he or she know when they will finish? **Achievable** – It will not be too much ambitious which is beyond the capacity of a researcher to achieve. **Realistic** – The objective to be realistic, it needs to be something that the researcher will actually do. **Timely** – If a task doesn't have a deadline, it will be difficult to reach the destination.

To speak concretely, research objective must be clearly stated and be specific in nature. It indicates a statement of the main and sub objectives. The main objectives highlight the central thrust of the study whereas the sub objectives identify the specific issues the researcher purpose to examine. As the condition of aging in rural Bangladesh is considered, the following have been set as the objectives of the study. However, the principal objective of this study is to assess the role and status of rural elderly. The specific objectives of the study are mentioned below:

1. To know the socio-economic conditions of the elderly;
2. To investigate their position in decision making process;
3. To delineate the influence of wealth on the enjoyment of their role and status;
4. To identify the role and status of the elderly in the family in the rural community.

## 1.5. Review of Related Literature

Once the researcher identifies a topic that can and should be studied, the search can begin for related literature on the topic. The literature review accomplishes several purposes such as; it shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to one being undertaken. Not only that, it fills in gap and extends prior studies. The review of literature provides an understanding of the issues closely related to the research topic. Through the literature review, the researcher can understand the existing knowledge gap, depth of problem, nature and causes of problem etc. It also helps the researcher know the untouched field of research. To speak straightly, it helps the researcher determine whether the topic is worth studying, and provides insight into ways in which the researcher can limit the scope to a limited area of inquiry. Some books, articles, reports, manuscripts and a number of websites have already been reviewed to find out the research gap. Some of them are mentioned below:

**Islam** mentions the socio-economic condition of the elderly, their health status, role, status, problems etc. In chapter no. five he also analyses the role and status of the elderly. Basically he tried to explain the role and status of the elderly in the light of the family and the elderly, headship and family, role of the elderly, and relationship and living arrangements. His process of allocating status and explanation of the transformation of headship opened an insight and increased thrust to the researcher to do research on this topic. To put it frankly, he has created an opportunity for the researchers to study every aspect of the role and status precisely. Moreover, he studied the elderly in the context of Rajshahi city. But my field is the rural society. So, it has created an option for knowing the role and status of the rural elderly vastly and makes comparison of the role and status with the urban society.<sup>22</sup>

**Mason** analyzed that family support for the elderly in Asia is changing due to the impact of urbanization, industrialization and migration on family structure and care of

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<sup>22</sup> A. K. M. Shafiu Islam, "Social Aspect of Aging in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Rajshahi" (PhD diss., Department of Sociology, University of Rajshahi. 2002).

the elderly. There is a relationship between family support for the elderly and enjoyment of role and status. Why does a family support the elderly? Can all the elderly get this support equally? Who can get the support? Of course, these questions reminded the relationship between family support for the elderly and enjoyment of role and status.<sup>23</sup>

**Abedin** focused on the overview of the issues related to the increase in the number of elderly in Bangladesh. From his description it is easy to find a correlation that the increasing ageing population has particular implications for the development of the country, because they are unproductive but dependent in maximum cases. Through his research, he drew an attention to the other researchers to do research on various aspects of the elderly.<sup>24</sup>

**Chakrabarti** demonstrated an overview of the old age problems in West Bengal of India and tried to emphasize the preventive measures needed to solve the problem of the elderly. He also outlined a broad picture of the demographic, socio-economic conditions and psych-social problems of the elderly in West Bengal. In doing so, he did not incorporate the role and status of the elderly.<sup>25</sup>

**Islam et al.** did research on health status and modeling of rural aged population of Kushtia District in Bangladesh. They tried to identify the determinants of health status of aged population. They also indicated that respondents' sex, type of family, occupation of the family head and suffering from any diseases have significant effects on taking treatment of aged population. He did focus on health status of the rural elderly. So, he also opened a way to the other researchers to study on various aspects of the rural elderly.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Mason, Karen O. 'Family Change and Support of the Elderly in Asia: What do we know?'" (*Asia-pacific Population Journal*, Vol-7, No.3:13-32 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Samad.Abedin, Social and Health Status of Aged in Bangladesh, Presented Paper in the Seminar on Aging in Bangladesh: Issues and Challenges, (Rajshahi: Centre for Policy Dialogue CPD, 1999).

<sup>25</sup> Chakrabarti, P. 'Perception of Old Age Problem in Rural Nadia', (Aging and Society, *The India Journal of Gerontology* 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Rafiqul Islam, Moshrraf Hossain and Moshiur Rahman, "Health Status and Modeling of Rural Aged Population of Kushtia District in Bangladesh." *Journal of Neuro Science and Behavioral Health*, vol-2,(2010).

**Oszen and Tokuno** did research on 'The social role and position of elderly in order to sustain rural life in Japan'. Though it is relevant to my study but the fact is that the conditions of role and status of rural elderly in Japan are not same to Bangladesh. Mere it is not enough; the rural society of Japan is quite different from that of Bangladesh. Besides, the rural elderly of Japan have high mobility and very active life.<sup>27</sup>

**Kasthoori** also discussed the problem of the aged. He basically mentioned that in urban society the couple cannot spend time with their parents and parents also cannot adjust with them due to industrialization, urbanization and modernization. So, what the status and role of the elderly will be in this changing situation was not discussed by him.<sup>28</sup>

**Barrow and Smith** in their book mentioned what the elderly is, what happens in old age, how they are different from other people, what the opinion and evaluation of people is to them etc. It helped me in various ways. But the role and status are almost a missing issue here. So, it has become an important topic of discussion and researchable issue in the present era.<sup>29</sup>

**Bhuiyan and Islam** described the socio-economic and health status, and other sides of the elderly. They did not incorporate about the role and status. Besides, they have conducted on their study in Rajshahi city. But I am doing research in the village. So, they made an option for me to conduct this research work.<sup>30</sup>

**Mamun and Choudhury** did focus on social status and old age allowance smoothly. That is, they evaluated whether there is a relationship between old age allowance and enjoying role and status. In this case, they find a positive correlation between these variables. But the role of the elderly has not been encompassed by them.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Tolga Ozsen and Sadao Tokuno "The Social Role and Position of Elderly in order to Sustain Rural Life in Japan"( Paper Prepared for XII world congress of Rural Sociology, Goyang-Korea, July 6-11, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> R. Kasthoori, 'The Problem of the Aged: A Sociological Study'( New Delhi: Upal Publishing House, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Barrow M. And Georgia A. Patricia. *Aging, Ageism and Society*( United States of America: West Publishing Company, 1980).

<sup>30</sup> Bhuiyan Mu. Abu Bakr and Islam Muhammad Shariful, 'Boyoshkoder Artho- Samajic o Sasthogoto Chalchitro: Rajshahi City Corporation Elaker Upor Ekti Somiksha' (Socio-economic and Health Status of Elderly: A Survey on Rajshahi City Corporation), *Social Science Journal*, 10(2005).

<sup>31</sup> Mamun Sayeda Afrina and Choudhury Md. Shahidur Rahman. 'Briddhoder Samajik Morjaday Boyosko Bhata Karjokromer Probhab: Ekti Porjalochona'(Influence of Old age Allowance in Social Status of Elderly: A Criticism), *Social Science Journal*, 11(2005).

**Rao** did research on the rural elderly. But her context is quite different from my research. The topic of her research is ‘Instability in joint family and its influence on security of the rural elderly in Bangladesh’. Her work influenced me greatly to do research on role and status of the rural elderly. Instability in joint family largely hampers the usual life of the elderly. If the financial condition of the elderly is unwell off, their role and status are not given priority like a stable joint family.<sup>32</sup>

**Hossain** intended to identify the needs of the destitute elderly, to identify the services offered by the family and institution for them. It also helped me to know the condition of the elderly in present Bangladesh.<sup>33</sup>

**Ahmed** conducted a research to identify the socio-economic situation, explore the indigenous system of care giving and to understand the extent of participation of the older tribal people in Bangladesh. Though it is concerned with the tribal elderly, it is also helpful for understanding the problems of the elderly.<sup>34</sup>

**Young** has given a detailed description about trends of old age population, attitudes to the old age, elderly people and poverty, health facilities and security services for the elderly of the British community. I benefitted from this research in terms of theoretical understanding in this regard.<sup>35</sup>

**Wilson** discussed the global ageing problem, especially, ageing across cultures, rising tides, demography and old age, globalization, migration and ageing, material resources in later life, family and community in later life, institutional living in later life and so on. In touching various issues on the elderly, she, however, did not talk about the role and status of the elderly.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Shormmistha Roy, 'Joutho Poribare Oasthitishilota Abong Bangladesher Gramoncholer Briddhader Nirapotter Upor Er Probbab: Ekti Thana Bhattik Somiksha' ( Instability in Joint Family and Its Impact on Security of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh: A Survey on a Thana) (PhD diss., Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi ,2000).

<sup>33</sup> Md. Faruque Hossain., “Welfare of the Destitute Elderly through Institutional and Family Settings in Bangladesh” (PhD diss., Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Md. Faysal Ahmed, “Aging Situation in Some Selected Tribal Communities in Bangladesh” (PhD diss., Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> Pat, Young. *Mastering Social Welfare* ( London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1995).

<sup>36</sup> Wilson Gail, *Understanding Old Age* (London: Sage Publications, 2000).

**Morales and Sheafor** have analytically discussed the socio-economic and environmental situations of the elderly. It has done on the basis of American society. So, they made an option for the other researchers to relate it to their countries.<sup>37</sup>

**Townsend** analyzed the overall condition of the elderly people. The main theme of this study was the family life of the people of the pensionable age in a worker class in East London and the social problem of old age. He also focused on the elderly in home and family. In touching various issues it was not possible for him to give emphasize on role and status of the elderly. Besides, he conducted his study on highly industrialized country. The overall things of his study may not match the present study. But his insights regarding various issues to the elderly may help the researcher no doubt.<sup>38</sup>

**Nimkoff** studied the changing family relationship of the older people in the United States. In doing so, he did focus on the marital relationship, the relationship between the aged and their children, the relationship between the aged and their grandchildren, and the relationship between the aged and their siblings and other kinfolks. So, for identifying the changing family relationship of the older people in rural society of Bangladesh, this study has given direction to the researcher.<sup>39</sup>

**Wagner et al.** focused on the number and functions of the social relationships in old age. They have studied the consequences of widowhood, childlessness, and institutionalization on the social relationships and loneliness of the elderly people in Berlin. Actually, they made a room for the other researchers to do research on other untouched issues.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Armando T. Morales, and Sheafor, W. Bradford, *Social Work A Profession of Many Faces* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998).

<sup>38</sup> Townsend, Peter, *The family Life of Old People: An Inquiry in East London* (London: Routledge and Kejan Paul, 1961).

<sup>39</sup> M.F. Nimkoff, Changing Family Relationship of the Older People in the United States during the Last Fifty Years, In Tibbits, C. and Danahue, W. (eds) , *Social and Psychological Aspects of Aging*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).

<sup>40</sup> Wagner, et al. Social Relationships in Old Age, In *The Berlin Aging Study from 70 to 100*, (Baltes and Mayers eds. Cambridge University Press, 1999).



## 1.6. Significance of the Study

The aging of population is a pervasive phenomenon across all developing and developed countries of the world. It is happening in Bangladesh at a time when the pattern of life is changing, the composition of family is undergoing a rapid transformation, kinship bonds are weakening, industrialization, urbanization, modernization and media revolution and technological advancement etc. are taking place. The elderly persons of the family are not the possessor of supreme power in the family due to the transformation of joint family system into nuclear one. For this reason they are becoming dependent population and losing their role and status.<sup>41</sup>

The study of aging in the context of rural society of Bangladesh reveals that the elderly had significant roles in various sectors of society. In the rural society once they were dominant group, now they became dependent one. They are also considered as the burden of the family and society as a whole. On the other hand, their number is also increasing day by day rapidly. They are regarded to be vulnerable as they suffer from the cumulative effects of a lifetime of deprivation, poor health and nutrition, low social status, discrimination and restriction on mobility, lack of means to fulfill their basic needs such as food, clothes, shelter, health care, love and affection. Not only that, they seem to be socially neglected, politically ignored, technically marginalized and culturally suppressed.

Moreover, they are treated as obsolescent, inactive, and acquiescent and family oriented. For these reasons, they have become one of the most vulnerable and high risks group in the society in terms of health, behavior and socio- economic status in the society. It seems that the consequences of social, physical and economic dependency will be an increasing challenge in the near future.

So, it is doubtless that the elderly have difficult position in our society. Some are able to maintain positive image while the others are not because human being usually loss their energy, merits, capability and power in their later age. Though the elderly are highly respected and are still honored in some families, at present they are considered

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<sup>41</sup>S. Mishra ,*Problem and Social Adjustment in Old Age: A Sociological Analysis* (New Delhi,Gian Publishing House,1989).

as social problem. As it has become one of the most important social problems, more research, especially empirical, must be undertaken on this issue.

The study may give some necessary directions for both academic and policy related benefits. As a contribution to knowledge, this study may also focus on micro level investigation to understand the real issues of old age- role, status, aging, ageism, age discrimination, age prejudice, age stereotype, age stratification, decision making process of the elderly, influence of wealth on the enjoyment of role and status, the role and status of the elderly in family and in rural community, and overall aspects of the elderly in the context of sociology and social gerontology.

Besides, it has dealt with a study of aging and role and status of rural elderly in Bangladesh. So, the outcome of the study will advocate for taking a national policy for the elderly of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh majority of the elderly population in the rural areas cannot meet the basic needs. So, the concentration of this research is to do the welfare of them.

It is believed that the aging population threatens the growth of the nation. It is also supposed to put pressure on the labor force. So, this study also may draw attention to the government as well as the policy makers to take the elderly problem seriously and form a policy framework to the welfare of the elderly.

Society is changing rapidly. The gap between the young and the old generations has already created. The role and status of the elderly is shaped by the society and making them a sub- cultural group in the society. Those who are young today will be the elderly in future. So, it is necessary to undertake empirical study on their role and status to establish sustainable policies in socio- economic matters. And the findings of the study may make the people conscious and old age better.

## 1.7. Scope and Limitation

No research work is free from inadequacies and limitations. To speak it another way, research is a never-ending process. In addition to these, it is a very difficult task for a researcher to collect reliable information on the sensitive and personal issue like role and status of the elderly in the context of the rural society.

Besides, Bangladesh is a village-based country. About 77% people live in the rural areas.<sup>42</sup> By studying four villages it may not be possible to get a clear picture of the whole of rural Bangladesh.

Besides, the researcher did not consider all the rural elderly in the study area. Only 203 respondents out of 609 have taken as study sample. It may not be representative. Moreover, the overall condition of elderly may not be same to the other parts of the country.

The study mainly assessed the role and status of the rural elderly. But aging at present is a widened topic of discussion. Polymorphic explanation is associated to this concept. So, there are various issues related to aging, such as, aging and the life course, demography and aging, family and aging, diversity and aging, social networks and aging, gender and aging, social stratification and aging, social relationships and aging, labor force and aging, economic status and aging, technological change and aging, religion and aging, life style and aging, politics and aging, the law and aging, justice and aging, friendship and aging, empowerment and aging, health and the elderly, motivation and the elderly, social, economic, psychological and demographic aspects of the elderly, etc.

Again, the study has focused on the rural elderly, not urban one. Another fact is that, there is a long standing debate among the sociologists whether the sociology is a science or not. Apart from these, the entire social settings are their laboratory. Besides, the sociologists are also human beings and they conduct research on human beings. The nature of human behavior is also changing. So, it made the researcher thoughtful that the respondents may not give correct answer. They sometime hesitated

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<sup>42</sup> Md. Rafiqul Islam, "Socio-cultural Comparison Among the Upper, Middle and Lower Class People of Dhaka City: An Anthropological Study", *Social Science Journal*, 11 (2005).

to share information with the researcher. Most probably they thought that if they share real picture about their family it may be threat to them in their future existence and care from the family.

Considering these limitations it is almost impossible to claim generalization or make trend analysis. But the study done by the researcher attempts to capture the changing role and status of the rural elderly in Bangladesh.

Utmost care taken especially when the problem arose at time of data collection solved by the researcher tactfully, and it was tried to minimize the error in the context of collecting objective data and field working. Ethical issues were also tried to maintain by the researcher during the collection of data.

# Chapter-2

## Methodology

### 2.1 Methodological Consideration

Methodology means a general orientation about how research is done.<sup>43</sup> This chapter deals with the methodological requirements of the research. It looks at how the research has undertaken and introduced the design used to collect the data for the research. It also explores the research instruments used by the researcher in the collection of primary data, the sampling method, data collection procedure and the analysis of the collected data. In this study qualitative and quantitative research approaches have been adopted and applied. The chapter also gives a brief overview of the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of qualitative and quantitative research and outlines the utility of and reasons for choosing this method over other methodologies. The research follows an exploratory approach as it aims to explore the role and status of the rural elderly in Bangladesh. The method of data collection depends to a great extent on the information that is required, the respondents, the time reference, and quality or quantity of data.<sup>44</sup> It is one of the most important aspects of the research process. It is also an extremely important and vital aspect for conducting a scientific research. The first thing we need to learn is why the methodology is so important. The logic behind adopting certain methodological approaches depends on the nature and purpose of the study.<sup>45</sup> However, various research approaches have been used in this study. Mixed approach, (that is quantitative and qualitative) especially has been given priority in this study. Qualitative and Quantitative data are intimately related to each other. All quantitative data are based upon qualitative

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<sup>43</sup> Amir B Marvasti, *Qualitative Research in Sociology; An Introduction* (New Delhi, Sage Publication, 2004).

<sup>44</sup> Md. Rofiqul Islam, *Socio-cultural Comparison among the Upper, Middle and Lower Class People of Dhaka City: An Anthropological Study*, 2005

<sup>45</sup> Pauline V. Young, *Scientific Social Survey and Research*, 3rd ed. (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966).

judgments; and all qualitative data can be described and manipulated numerically.<sup>46</sup> It is the study that uses only one method are more vulnerable than the study that uses multiple methods. No single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors... multiple methods of observation must be employed.<sup>47</sup>

### **Significance of taking quantitative approach**

A quantitative approach always deals with a quantity or number. It is to do with numbers. Quantitative information is something that can be assigned to a specific number. So, it involves a numerical value. For analyzing and expressing the data in a numeric order, quantitative approach has been used in this research.

### **Significance of taking qualitative approach**

Qualitative research is a broad approach which seeks to study social phenomena to gain a deep understanding of the activities of the people. Qualitative approach is a general way of thinking about conducting qualitative research. It describes either explicitly or implicitly. It explores attitudes, behavior and experiences. It also attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants. Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative phenomenon.<sup>48</sup>

For the fulfillment of the in-depth knowledge of the role and status of the rural elderly, qualitative approach along with quantitative has been given priority.

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<sup>46</sup> M.K .William Trochim, *Research Methods* (New Delhi, Biztantra, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> M. Q. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 2nd ed, (London: Sage Publications, 1990).

<sup>48</sup> C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (New Delhi, New Age International Publishers, 2009).

## 2.2 Methods of Research

Sociologists try to be systematic in carrying out their research. In doing so, they use many methods in studying society for reexamining the social world with a view to understanding why or how people behave. Although they have controversy as to the use of methods, the scientific approach is the basis for all of them. Methods refer to the processes and principles by which a researcher tries to approach the problem and seek answer. Research Methods are also the ways in which the researcher goes about collecting information for his/her study. Sociologists use many different designs and methods to study society and social behavior. It cannot deny that each research method has its strengths and weaknesses. Considering all these, an attempt has been tried to use several research methods in this research. They are social survey, observation, focus group discussion, case study, life history etc.

### **Survey method**

Survey is a descriptive research method. It is useful when the researcher wants to collect data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed, such as, opinion, attitude etc. It is also used for developing generalizations about populations. The basic procedure in survey is that people are asked a number of questions on those aspects of behavior which the researcher is interested in. A survey is a study, generally in the form of an interview or questionnaire that provides researcher with information about how people think and act.<sup>49</sup> So, for coming into direct contact with the people and facing the realities of the problem, survey method has been used for collecting data.

### **Observation**

Observation is such a method in which the behavior of research subject is watched and recorded without any direct contact. In this method the researcher observes and records events. Observation is actually a research technique in which the researcher directly observes people's behavior in its natural context.<sup>50</sup> It is basically developed for observing people in their settings. Observation refers to a research technique the researcher watches, listens to, and records behavior and conversation as they

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<sup>49</sup> Richard T. Schaefer, *Sociology* (New York, McGraw-Hill Companies, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> Lisa, J. MacIntyre, *Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology* (New York: McGraw Hill Companies, 2001).

happen.<sup>51</sup> It focuses more on everyday life. For this reason it is not necessary to rely on the willingness and ability of respondents to report accurately. It helps in overcoming issues of bias. It is also useful when the subject cannot provide information and is feared to provide inaccurate information. So, for the sake of getting in-depth insight about the respondents what they say and what they actually do in their socio- cultural settings observation method has applied. It has also done for the data collected from the other techniques on this issue.

### **Focus group discussion (FGD)**

This technique will be used as an additional tool for data collection. It will be conducted with the respondents in a relatively informal atmosphere and in a participatory manner. In focus group, group is a unit of analysis. Each session lasted from one and half an hour. Each group formed by ten members. Photographs, videos, recordings and so on will be used in this technique.<sup>52</sup> In this technique, the participants do not need to introduce themselves and the notes that are circulated afterwards do not identify speakers. The workers' names are listed separately and the facilitators provide their contact details to workers so that they cannot suffer any penalties for participating in the discussions. The workers have been chosen randomly from a list of workers. A sample of around 40 workers is the minimum size so as to identify trends in the discussion. However, the random sample has been manipulated.

### **Case study**

In the research area some people and family have been found in different style. To explore their real nature, case study method has been used. It has also been applied to supplement survey data obtained through questionnaire. It is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context.<sup>53</sup> The purpose of a case study of one or two respondents would be to give detailed information about

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<sup>51</sup> Joan Ferrante, *Sociology: A Global Perspective*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (United States: Cengage Learning, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> Vandana Desai, and Robert B. Potter, (Edited), *Doing Development Research* (New Delhi, Vistar Publications, 2010).

<sup>53</sup> Robert, K Yin., *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (Beverly Hills, Sage Publication, 1984).



them and the research issue.<sup>54</sup> A case study can take months or even years to complete. In this step, tape recorder has also been used and diary was maintained and activities were noted down regularly so that it can be used later precisely. In order to get in-depth knowledge and strengthen the study several cases have been studied. It has been conducted after FGD and from the respondents of FGD.

### **Life history**

Although face to face in-depth interviews are successful in exploring the role and status of the elderly, it is insufficiently not account for the social change which aged people have gone through. The life history approach indicates that events in early life have a bearing on later life. The researcher made use of life histories in order to understand how past experiences have shaped and informed their current role and status. Actually, a life history refers to a full account of one person's life in his or her words. It is true that household surveys or in-depth interviews can be used to study the problem, but life histories in this research give background information on how past experiences have contributed to present or current role and status.

In sociological research, a life history is the overall picture of the informants. The purpose of the interview is to be able to describe what it is like to be this particular person, that is, the one being interviewed. Here the respondents are asked to describe their lives. As the pattern and changes of the role and status of the elderly have been set as the topic of research, the respondents have been requested to describe what they have seen in their lives about the role and status of the elderly. Moreover, the young generation and middle aged people have been used as informants.

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<sup>54</sup> Gerard Guthrie, *Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research* (New Delhi, Sage Publication, 2000) P.28.

## 2.3 Selection of the Study Area

In this study, four villages of Gopalnagar union from Dhunat upazila of Bogra district have been selected randomly. The names of the villages are: Konagaty, Sholiabari, Razarampur and Ariamohan. Although at present about 7.4 percent of our population is elderly, their percentage in these villages is near about 8.0, 7.6, 8.8 and 8.1.<sup>55</sup> There is various scopes of doing research on the issue related to aging in this area. Unfortunately, as far as I know, no research work has been conducted here. Besides, the socio-economic, cultural and demographic features of these villages are almost the same. Luckily, I am well accounted with them and their socio-economic and demographic settings because I am a man of this region. So, it has become obviously helpful for me to collect data. I have visited the villages several times before the fieldwork. During those visits the researcher also met the inhabitants of the area and discussed the matter to convince them for the purpose of the study. They shared their problems whole heartedly with me. So, I also think that the findings of the four villages of this research will provide the real insight of whole rural Bangladesh.

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<sup>55</sup> *Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)* “Community Report on Bogra Zila: Population and Housing Census 2011”, Ministry of Planning, (Dhaka: Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2012).

### Description of the study area

The study was conducted in the rural areas of Bogra with an area of 420.64 sq km. It is surrounded by Shibganj on the north, Sherpur and Nandigram upazilas on the south, Gabtali and Dhunat upazilas on the east, and Kahaloo and Nandigram upazilas on the west. Main rivers are Karatoya, Chamati, Bangali.

Bogra Sadar (Town) Bogra municipality consists of 12 wards and 46 mahallas. It has an area of 18.85 sq km. The town has a population of 150138; male 52.37%, female 47.63%. Literacy rate among the town people is 63%. It has two dakhungalows.

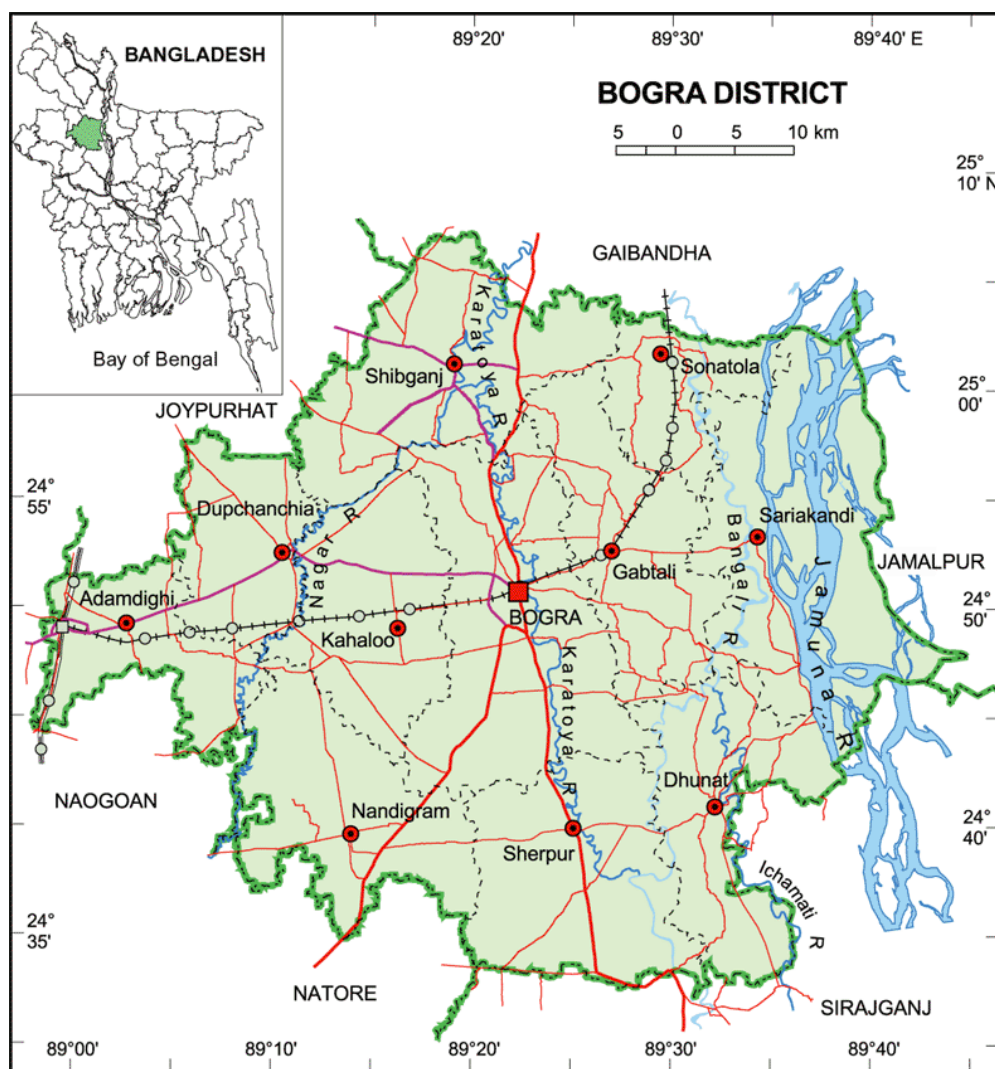


Figure 3: Map of Bogra district surrounded by other districts



Figure 4: Map of Bogra district

## **Dhunat Upazila**

Dhunat thana was established in 1962 and was turned into an upazila in 1983. The upazila consists of 10 union parishads, 91 mouzas and 209 villages.

### **Historical events**

During the War of Liberation the Pak army conducted mass killing and massive destruction in and around Alangi Bazar. Marks of War of Liberation Mass grave 1 are available here.

### **Religious institutions**

Coexistence of various religious groups is available here. But mainly two communities represent here. One is Muslim and the other is Hindu. The Muslim is majority. There are 304 mosques and 5 temples in this region.

### **Population**

The total population of Dhunat Upazila is about 246984. Among them male is 50.46%, and female is 49.54%. On the basis of religion, Muslim is 94.82%, Hindu 5.06%, and others 0.12%.

### **Literacy and educational institutions**

Average literacy in Dhunat Upazila is about 19.3%; among them male is 25.1%, and female is 13.4%. That is, the literacy rate in this Upazila is very low. The government in our country is trying to improve this situation as their agenda.

**Educational institutions:** There are 5 colleges, 35 secondary schools, 96 primary schools (government), 98 primary schools (private), and 24 madrasas. Gosaibari AA High School (1918) is an old educational institution here.

### **Cultural organizations**

There are one public library, 48 rural clubs, 3 cinema halls, and 10 playgrounds in this region.

### **Main occupations**

Agriculture is the main occupation here. About 50.22% are engaged in agricultural activities. Besides, there are 26.35% agricultural laborers, 1.75% wage laborers, Businessman 8.41%, and service holder 2.46%, fishers 1.27% and others 9.54%.

### **Land use**

There are 20,841.56 hectares of arable land: single crop 6%, double crop 68%, and triple cropland 26%. Arable land under irrigation is nearly 93%.

### **Land control**

Among the peasants 37% are landless, 18% marginal, 22% small, 18% intermediate and 5% rich. Cultivable land per head is 0.08 hectare. Market value of first grade arable land is about Tk 6000 per 0.01 hectare.

### **Main crops**

Paddy, wheat, jute, chilli, mustard seed, patal and onion are the main crops in this region.

### **Extinct and nearly extinct crops**

Planted aush & aman paddy, kaun (Italian millet), cheena (common millet), tobacco, arhar (one kind of pulse), khesari (one kind of pulse), chick-pea, tisi (linseed), shan pat (variety of jute), etc are nearly extinct.

### **Main fruits**

Banana is the main fruit here. Various seasonal fruits are also available here. Apart from this, an attempt has made to produce various foreign fruits.

**Fisheries and dairies:** There are 5 poultries fishery and 3 hatcheries in this Upazila.

### **Communication facilities**

**Roads:** There are pucca 8 km, semi pucca 10 km and mud road 753.25 km.

**Traditional transport:** Horse carriage and palanquin means of transport are nearly extinct. **Manufactories:** Ice factory 3, rice & flour mill 13. **Cottage industries:** Weaving 50, bamboo work 50, goldsmith 25, blacksmith 50, potteries 40, wood work 50, tailoring 60, welding 5.

**Hats, bazars and fairs:** Hats and bazars are 23, most noted of which are Dhunat, Mathurapur, Gosaibari, Ajoypur, Aalangi, Sonahata; fair 2.

**Main exports:** Paddy, jute, chilli are the main exports of this area.

**NGO activities:** Grameen Bank, brac, ASA, BIZ, Thengamara Mahila Sabuj Sangha (TMSS), DIPP, Mangal Samiti (West Varan Shahi).

**Health centres:** Upazila health complex 1, union health and family welfare centres 10, family planning centres 4. <sup>56</sup>According to Bogra Zila Community Report, total population in Dhunat Upazila is about 292404. Among them , male is about 143091 and female is

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<sup>56</sup> Md Siraju Islam ,l (ed), *Banglapedia* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society,2001).

about 149313. Total household is about 74835 and population density is about 1180 (sq.km) and the percentage of 60+ population is about 8.6.<sup>57</sup>



Figure 5: Map of Dhunat Upazila.

<sup>57</sup> Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Population and Housing Census 2011 : Community Report- Bogra Zila (Dhaka: Statistics and Informative Division, Ministry of Planning ,2012).

## 2.4 Sample Size and Sampling

The cost of studying an entire population is beyond the financial resources of researchers. If sample is selected properly, the results can be as valid as results obtained from the entire population. It is a method of obtaining data/ information about the population/ universe by investigating only a representative portion of them.<sup>58</sup> It is stated earlier that the data have been collected from the four villages of Bangladesh. Simple random sampling method has been used for this research to the selection of unions and villages. In this respect lottery system has been adopted to choose the union and villages. The reason is, in this method, each individual has an equal probability of being selected from the population, ensuring that the sample will be representative of the population. On the other hand, the district and upazila have been selected purposively. The reason behind this purposive selection is, at present the percentage of the elderly in Bangladesh is about 7.4, the average percentage of elderly in Bogra district is about 7.9 and in Dhunat upazila it is near about 8.6. The following table may state this situation clearly.

Table 2.1

### Percentage of elderly in different upazilas of Bogra district in Bangladesh

Serial No.	Name of upazila	Percentage
1	Bogra sadar	7.7
2	Adamdighi	7.0
3	Dhunat	8.6
4	Gabtali	8.6
5	Kahaloo	7.4
6	Nandigram	7.6
7	Sariakandi	7.9
8	Shahjahanpur	7.0
9	Sherpur	8.1
10	Sonatola	8.6
11	Shibgonj	8.1
12	Dhupchancia	8.2

Source: Community Report- Bogra Zila, 2011

<sup>58</sup> M. Zainul Abedin, *A Hand Book of Social Research* (Dhaka: Book Syndicate, 2005).



The same socio-economic, cultural and demographic situations, significant proportion of the elderly, characteristics of village life encouraged the researcher to select this upazila purposively.

After preliminary baseline survey the number of respondents has been selected as the study samples. In this step, households of the villages have been surveyed to find out the elderly. From the total elderly (that is from 609), 203 have been selected as my study sample. 203 respondents have also been used for scheduled questionnaire survey. 40 respondents have been taken for FGD. They have been divided into four sessions and each session consisted of ten members. That is FGD with elderly who are respondents, FGD with elderly who are not respondents, FGD with the heads of the family members of the elderly and FGD with young generation. Ten cases have also been studied. The data of baseline survey are shown in following table:

Table 2.2

**Result of baseline survey**

SL. No.	Name of Village	House holds	Population			Elderly			Sample Elderly		
			Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	<b>Konaganti</b>	683	1176	1103	2279	158	159	317	53	53	106
2	<b>Sholiabari</b>	437	813	828	1641	89	108	197	30	35	65
3	<b>Razarampur</b>	155	292	295	587	26	32	58	8	11	19
4	<b>Ariamohan</b>	93	165	188	353	15	22	37	5	8	13
<b>Total</b>		1368	2446	2414	4860	288	321	609	96	107	203

Source: Base line Survey

## 2.5 Sample distribution and its techniques

Category of study	Number of sample	Sampling techniques	Types of sample
Scheduled questionnaire survey	203	Random (simple)	Rural elderly both male and female
Case study	10	Purposively	Rural elderly both male and female
FGD	40	Purposively	Elderly both respondents and non-respondents, head of the family members and young generation
Total number of sample	203		

## 2.6 Data Type and Source

The study is based on primary data mainly. However, secondary data have been used for explaining and attaining research objectives.

Types of Data	Sources of Data	Tools of Collection
Primary Data	Rural Elderly(203)	Scheduled questionnaire Survey
	Rural Elderly (10)	Case Study
	Elderly both respondents and non-respondents, head of the family members and young generation (40)	FGD
Secondary Data	Books, Journal, Research Reports, Articles, Survey Reports, websites and Other available and relevant documents	Document Analysis

## 2.7 Techniques of Data Collection

Required qualitative and quantitative data have been collected through questionnaire which includes both open- ended and close- ended questions as primary data source. Secondary data have been collected through document analysis. A document refers to something that we can read, and relate to some aspects of the social world. For collecting primary data, 203 respondents have been surveyed by scheduled questionnaire. Focus group discussion technique has been used as an additional tool for data collection. It has been conducted with the respondents in a relatively informal atmosphere and in a participatory manner. FGD has been divided into four sessions. Each session will consist of ten respondents. For in-depth insight and scrutinization of the facts, case study has been taken. Observation method has also been used to analyze non-verbal behavior of the respondents.

## 2.8 Techniques of Data Analysis

Collected data in this research have been processed and analyzed with the help of computer. SPSS has also been used. Frequency distribution, cross tabulation, percentage, chi- square and graphical presentation style have been used for analyzing quantitative data. For qualitative data variance, correlation, regression and some other advanced statistical tools have also been used in this study. Qualitative data have been collected through, FGD, observation and case study, has been analyzed through simple reasoning process i.e. respondents view.

## 2.9 Definition of Key Terms/Conceptual Clarification

**Aging:** Ageing, in the demographic sense, refers to the age distribution of a population. When older population increases than younger people is called aging. A population can, therefore, be said to be ageing, if it is moving towards such a distribution. But first the concept itself should be defined. Definition of aging could be defined by reference to *the average age of the population*. This is an unsatisfactory index, however, and it is not often used. It does not reflect changes in distribution accurately, nor does it show clearly the effects of old age. The word ‘aging’ is a biological process but it is of interest to sociologists because it is accompanied by

changes of how one is treated in a society.<sup>59</sup> Various factors are associated with it. Simply speaking, aging refers to the complex process of becoming old. On the whole, it means to the physical, psychological and social processes which are related to grow old.

**Age Cohort:** Age is generally defined by years since birth. Cohort is defined as the year of birth. Age cohort refers to an aggregate group of people born during the same time period.<sup>60</sup>

**Age discrimination:** Age discrimination means the unequal treatment of population on the basis of their age. It also involves treating people less favorably because of their age.

**Ageism:** Ageism indicates the institutionalized practice of discrimination to an age group population. To speak in another way, discrimination against people on the grounds of age is called ageism. It can also be defined as attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates or exploits a person or group due to their age.

**Age prejudice:** Age prejudice refers to the negative attitude to a group of people based on their age. For example, most people in all ages regarded those who are 60 and over as less capable, enactive, less productive, etc. than the people of other ages.

**Age stereotype:** Grouping people or individuals and making a judgment about them without knowing can be entitled as stereotype. Age stereotype highlights the preconceived judgments to a group of people considering their age.

**Generation:** Generation is simply a group of people who are born in the same general time span and who share some life experiences, such as, big historical events, pastimes and early work experiences. It is a typology that sorts people into time – period cohorts, family role based and / or life stage categories.<sup>61</sup> To put it another way, a group of people who are born and live about the same time and have common cultural or social characteristics and attitudes is called generation.

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<sup>59</sup> [http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction to Sociology](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology), April 10,2010

<sup>60</sup> Anderson, L. Margaret and Taylor, F. Howard, *Sociology: The Essentials*, Sixth edition (USA: Wardsworth CengageLearning, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> Philips, et al. *Key Concepts in Social Gerontology* (India: Sage Publication Ltd, 2010).

**Role:** The word 'role' refers to the actions and activities of a person or group in relation to their status. Here, the actions and activities of the rural elderly have been defined as role. Role is the behavior expected of a person in a particular social position.<sup>62</sup>

**Role performance:** The role performance indicates the actual behavior of the person occupying a role. This concept relates to how successfully the people play their prescribed role. Operationally speaking, it highlights the ability of playing role by the elderly.

**Role conflict:** It is a predicament in which the role is associated with two or more distinct statuses. Role conflict is caused by simultaneous occupancy of conflicting structural positions. How do the individuals manage to carry out expected role in spite of inter role conflict. Since little credence is given to individuals' ability to modify social structure and its structural resolutions.

**Role expectation:** Role expectation describes the norms about how a role should be enacted. Here, the norms about how the elderly in rural areas enact their role has identified as role expectation.

**Status:** Status refers to the position or rank of a person or group within the society. Here the position of the elderly in the society has been defined as status. A Socially defined position in a group or society is called status.<sup>63</sup>

**Achieved role or status:** It refer to the type of role or status which is attained by effort. It is called achieved role or status. It is the result of chance. Such as: Age, sex, race etc.

**Ascribed role or status:** A role or status determined at birth is called achieved role or status. It is achieved through some combination of personal choice, effort and ability.

**Elderly:** There are many opinions among the theorists as to the definition of the elderly. It varies from one country to another. However, it is also subject to the constructions by which each society makes sense of old age. The group of population

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<sup>62</sup> Lewis A Coser et at, *'Introduction to Sociology'* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. London, 1983).

<sup>63</sup>David. Popenoe, *'Sociology'* (London: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1986).

who belongs to the age group of 60 and more is called elderly.<sup>64</sup> In this research those who are 60 years and over have been considered as the elderly.

**Rural elderly:** Human settlements are classified as rural or urban depending on the density of human-created structures and resident people in a particular area. In general, rural areas include villages and hamlets. In a word, people who are 60 and above is called the elderly. So, the people who are 60 years and above but live in rural areas are called the rural elderly.

**Social institution:** The concept of social institution is very important in sociological study. Human beings base their behavior largely on the required and preferred norms they have learned. An institution is a system of such norms built around certain societal functions. When we speak of institutions we think ...of the system of controls that extends beyond personal relations. This system of control is the bond between the past and the present and between the present and the future, linking men to their ancestors, their gods, and their descendants.<sup>65</sup> To speak briefly, socially established rules and procedures which sustain in spite of bringing about social change are called social institution, such as, education, marriage, family, kinship, property etc.

**Demographic transition:** The demographic transition model refers to the transformation of countries and societies from having high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates. In the developed countries this transition began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continues today. Less developed countries began the transition later and are still in the midst of earlier stages of the model. Demographic transition means the passing of population from one population stage to another. The shift from high to low rates of birth and death is called demographic transition.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Bangladesh Association of Gerontology (BAG). "The Elderly Contemporary Issues" (Dhaka: BAG, 2005).

<sup>65</sup> Robert, M. MacIver and Charles, H. Page. *Society: An Introductory Analysis* (New York: Rinehart, 1949).

<sup>66</sup> Metta Spencer, *Foundation of Modern Sociology* (London: Prentice Hall Inc. 1979).

## Chapter -3

### **Relevancy of the Theories on Aging Regarding the Role and Status of the Elderly in the Context of the Study Area**

The society and culture of Bangladesh, especially, in rural area, is very much complex. It is almost very difficult to explain something in the context of these settings on the basis of theoretical ground provided by the thinkers of the developed and industrial countries of the world. For this reason, there are ample opportunities to rethink something adjusting with the society and culture of our own. From this spirit, an attempt has made to discuss several theories on aging related to the role and status of the elderly and quest for developing a new one. These may be categorized into three groups: (i) biological, (ii) psychological, and (iii) sociological.

**The biological theories of aging:** Though biological theories of aging describe the inevitable process related to aging, it is indirectly related to the performance of role and enjoyment of status of the elderly in our society.

**The wear and tear theory of aging** believes that the effects of aging are caused by damage done to cells and body systems over time. Essentially, these systems "wear out" due to use. Once they wear out, they can no longer function correctly. In fact the "wear and tear" theory is really the result, not the cause, of aging. Cells and body systems of our rural elderly wear out due to hard labor and they become aged before reaching sixty years old. Yet they are to play many imposed roles.

**The Neuroendocrine Theory** elaborates on wear and tear by focusing on the neuroendocrine system. This is a complicated network of biochemicals which govern the release of hormones. The hypothalamus controls various chain-reactions to instruct other organs and glands to release their hormones etc. It also responds to the body hormone levels as a guide to the overall hormonal activity. As the people grow older, the hypothalamus loses its precision regulatory ability and the receptors which uptake individual hormones become less sensitive.

**The Free Radical Theory** is now very famous theory of aging. It describes that a molecule that has a free electron makes it react with healthy molecules in a destructive way. This unbalanced energy makes the free radical bind itself to another balanced molecule as it tries to steal electrons. In so doing, the balanced molecule becomes unbalanced. For this reason, the elderly in our society face many problems at time of performing their role.

**The membrane theory of aging** highlights that as the people grow older, the cell membrane becomes less lipids and it impedes its efficiency to conduct normal function. It is a fact that the elderly in the rural society are to play huge ranges of assigned roles for the family whether they have physical ability or not. The normal function is played by them through this condition.

**The Cross- linking theory of Aging** is also referred to as the Glycosylation theory of aging. In this theory it is the binding of glucose to protein that causes various problems. Once this binding has occurred the protein becomes impaired and is unable to perform efficiently. Due to the lack of this linking people face many health related problems. With this result, they face early aging which is barrier to play active role in the family.

**The Mitochondrial Decline Theory asserts that** the mitochondria are the power producing *organelles* found in every cell of every organ. As organs cannot borrow energy from one another, the efficiency of each organ mitochondria are essential to that particular organs repair processes and functions. If the particular organs mitochondria fail, then so does that organs of course can lead to death. If a family depends on that person after his death what can happen to that family is easily understood.

**The personality and the continuity** are considered as the **psychological theories of aging**. In personality theory, the interest, motivation and awareness of the elderly are especially given priority. The continuity theory of aging indicates that personality, values, morals, preferences, role activity and basic patterns of behavior are consistent throughout the life span. This theory builds up and modifies the activity theory. This theory offers the backdrop of life perspective to describe normal aging. In this theory it is emphasized that the latter part of life is simply a continuation of the earlier part of



life, a component of the entire life cycle. However, studies from various nations indicate that the aged are in the later stages of life contribute enormously to the solidarity and cohesion of society by providing care and giving services. Being active and engaged in different roles of society ensures that old people can make a living and sustain themselves even in the absence of a social security system. They can contribute to the improvement of livelihoods. Disengagement from societal roles leads to redundancy and dependency of the elderly. Activity theory seeks to prevent that by arguing that activity is preferable to inactivity because it facilitates well-being on multiple levels. Continuity theory argues that the role activity and basic patterns of behavior are consistent throughout a life span, regardless of life.<sup>67</sup> Atchley states that aged people try to maintain continuity of lifestyle by adopting strategies connected with their past experience.<sup>68</sup> Continuity theory is a modification and elaboration of the activity theory. Blieszner et al argue that to simply maintain the same standard of living as they grow old, aged 85 people must rely on pensions, savings and/or their children or other relatives.<sup>69</sup> However, matters differ in developing from developed countries where pensions are in place for the elderly. The majority of developing countries do not provide pensions to the aged so that they have to rely on themselves or on the family members. However, due to increased levels of migration of able bodied young people, the elderly are left behind to fend for themselves and dependent children. In such circumstances most aged people continue with different life activities, both on-farm and off-farm strategies, to look after themselves. As maximum elderly in the rural society, lose their level of activity, due to hard working, and want of balanced food, it affects the later part of life of their lives.

An attempt has made to discuss the **sociological theories of aging** for describing the issues related to the role and status of the elderly. **The social conflict theory** sees different age categories across the life cycle competing for scarce resources. It emphasizes interests, rather than norms and values, in conflict. The pursuit of interests generates various types of conflict. Social conflict or group conflict occurs when two

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<sup>67</sup> Allan, G. Friendship, Sociology and Social Structure. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, Vol 15, No (5), (1998), pp 685–702.

<sup>68</sup> R. C.. Atchley, *Continuity and Adaptation in Aging* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press. 1999).

<sup>69</sup> R., Blieszner, and R. G. Adams, *Adult Friendship*.(Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992).

or more actors oppose each other in social interaction. In social interaction it has become a common fact that the younger even in the rural society are not interested in paying their attention to the older people.

Borrowing from the conflict perspective, **the exchange theorists of aging** explains that the elderly experience decrease social status because they have lost the skills, power, and other valuable resources they once exchanged for social prestige. According to this view, our interactions are determined by the rewards or punishments that we receive from others and all human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis. As they have nothing to give the other members of the family except some unpaid works, they cannot expect active role and satisfactory status.

**The subculture theory of aging** states that older persons interact with others who are similar backgrounds, experiences, attitudes, values, beliefs, and lifestyles. This happens not only by choice but because of segregation, social differentiation and discrimination based on age. The study found that the elderly interacted with the family members, people of the village, neighbors, and the relatives. Moreover, the elderly have good relationships with these types of people.

**Age stratification theory** refers that older adult born during different time periods form cohorts that define age strata. There are two differences among strata: chronological age and historical experience. This theory is interested in explaining two arguments. The first argument is that age is a mechanism for regulating behavior and as a result determines access to positions of power. The second argument is that birth cohorts play an influential role in the process of social change. Once upon a time though age used as mechanism for regulating behavior in the rural society, now other socio-economic factors are related to this.

**According to life course theory**, aging occurs from birth to death. Aging involves social, psychological and biological processes. Additionally, aging experiences are shaped by cohort and period effects also reflecting the life course focus, consider the implications for how societies might function when age based norms vanish a consequence of the deinstitutionalization of the life course and suggest that these implications pose new challenges for theorizing aging and the life course in

postindustrial societies. Dramatic reductions in mortality, morbidity and fertility over the past several decades have so shaken up the organization of the life course and the nature of educational, work, family and leisure experiences that it is now possible for individuals to become old in new ways.

**According to the cumulative advantage/disadvantage theory** the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Advantages and disadvantages in early life stages have a profound effect throughout the life span. However, advantages and disadvantages in middle adulthood have a direct influence on economic and health status in later life. As elderly in the rural society, in maximum cases, faced disadvantages, they will suffer in later life.

**Social constructionist theory** is built upon the observation that many of the aspects of our everyday experience are the consequence of implicit social agreement, institutional practices or collective social action rather than objective reality, and only exist within the context of such agreements, practices or collective actions. It is anything that exists by virtue of social interactions and opposed to objective reality. Some philosophers have described social constructs as epistemologically objective and ontologically subjective. A decided interest in subjectivity, agency, discourses and their ordinary practices leads the way.

Many studies of meaning in everyday life derive their basic approach from the school of sociological theory known as phenomenology. **The phenomenological theory of aging** is primarily concerned with the meaning that life and growing old have far reaching impact on aging people. Rather than constructing a theory about aging, phenomenologists attempt to define growing old through close association with those who are actively participating in the process.

**The feminist theory of aging** considers gender primarily in understanding aging and the aged. The gender stratification, power structure, macro level analysis of social institutions, social networks and care giving, family work, etc. are given priority by the thinkers of this theory.

**The activity theory of aging** comes from symbolic interactionism. A group of sociologists in Chicago University developed this theory. The activity theory is also known as the implicit, normal and lay theory of aging. To put it another way, Robert J. Havighurst (1961) calls it 'Role flexibility'-the key to successful adjustment to aging. He points out that some roles are discontinued, some are intensified, others are intensified with effort, and still others are assumed for the first time<sup>70</sup>. It describes that successful aging happens when older adults remain active and maintain social interactions. It takes the view that the ageing process is delayed and the quality of life is enhanced when old people remain socially active. It also argues that it is essential for people to remain socially active as they grow old. It also focuses that "elderly people who remain active will be best adjusted."<sup>71</sup> To speak differently, activity theory implies that social activity is the essence of life for all people of all ages. <sup>72</sup> It has rose in opposing response to the disengagement theory. The theory assumes a positive relationship between activity and life satisfaction. The critics of the activity theory state that it overlooks inequalities in health and economics that hinders the ability for older people to engage in such activities. Also, some older adults do not desire to engage themselves in new challenges. But it is theoretical speaking. In real sense it is not possible especially for rural society as the elderly in rural society are to do hard work for sustaining their lives. Maximum of them cannot take sufficient food, let alone balanced and nutritious one. On the other hand, the family members do not pay too much attention to them due to changing socio-economic and cultural settings. So, it is almost impossible for every elderly to remain socially active in spite of having wishes when they grow old. It does not match with the present rural social structure.

Sociologist E.W. Burgess described the situation of the elderly in the context of American society. He found that the older people are being left out, excluded from the normal day to day activities of the society. They are according to Burgess, thrusting

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<sup>70</sup>Prafulla Chakrabarti, 2009.

<sup>71</sup> Jagdish Pande,, *Research in Sociology: Areas, Method and Guidelines* (New Delhi, Sawastik Publishers, 2009).

<sup>72</sup> G. M. Barrow, And P. A. Smith, *Aging, Ageism and Society* (Minnesota, USA: West Publishing Company, 1979).

into a state of social inactivity that may be termed as role less role.<sup>73</sup> The traditional social institutions (workplace, family, kinship, community) are not interested in treating the elderly as active members. According to Burgess, the role less role is a situation in which the older person is left with no meaningful social functions to perform.<sup>74</sup> In my research it is found that the elderly people are engaging more and more normal day to day informal activities and disengaging from prestigious and official or formal activities. They cannot be termed as role less. They are playing more roles. This is not something new but yet less noticeable by the members of the society in true sense. Once they were the main decision makers, now they tend to have lower status and less power. For this reason they are to play many roles which are not counted by the society as roles.

On the other hand, the theory on aging that comes from the functionalist perspective is called **the social disengagement theory**. It contends that it is inevitable that people will decrease their level of activity and seek more passive roles as they age.<sup>75</sup> The disengagement theory postulates that the society withdraws from the aged person to the same extent as that person withdraws from the society. This is because the old age indicates a period when both the older person and society experience mutual separation. For an example, it can be retirement from work. This is understood as a natural and normal tendency affecting a basic biological rhythm of life. In other word, the process of disengagement is assumed to functional. That is, it serves needs for both the society and the individual. The disengagement theory of aging claims that elderly people begin to systematically disengage from their previous social roles as they realize the inevitability of death in the near future. The theory also suggests that society responds to the elder's disengagement with a sort of mutual recognition that the elder will soon pass and society must prepare to function in their absence. As such, the theory argues that it is natural and acceptable for older adults to be withdrawn from the society. There seem to be deeply rooted reasons in both the culture and the social structure for this withdrawal process. Society favors the young

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<sup>73</sup> Earnest, W. Burgess ed. *Aging in Western Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

<sup>74</sup> David L Decker,. *Social Gerontology: An Introduction to the Dynamics of Aging* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1980).

<sup>75</sup> Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man, An Introduction* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936).

as their knowledge is newer. This theory suggests that the orderly transfer of various statuses and roles from the old to the young provides benefits for both the society and the individuals. Disengagement is viewed as diminishing satisfaction and meaning in life. On the other hand, activity theory links personal satisfaction in old age to a high level of activity. However, these two theories of aging explain the psychosocial aspects of aging in older adults.

According to Cumming and Henry, disengagement is an inescapable process in which many of the relationships between an ageing person and other members of the society are severed and those that remain are altered in quality. The theory proposes that it is natural for the young and able bodied people to take on the roles of the older people as they are pushed out of the system. A major shift in interaction between seniors and society begins once older people fully recognize the brevity of their remaining life span. In general, society tends to distance itself from the elderly as they are taken to be passive and unproductive. Cumming and Henry also argue that growing old involves a gradual and inevitable mutual withdrawal or disengagement that results in decreasing interaction between an ageing person and others in the social system they belong to. It gives the elderly people a new role in life; that is, rather than for one to be fully engaged in a lot of activities old age reduces the capacity to fulfill those roles and facilitates disengagement. In developed or industrial nations where old aged people are beneficiaries of state pensions and grants disengagement theory does apply, older people whose job skills degrade voluntarily remove themselves from the workforce. Access to pensions and social grants protects them against poverty. However, in developing countries lacking social security pensions, the aged face a double misfortune as they are pushed out of employment and become vulnerable to the risk of poverty. Many, instead of resting and enjoying a new life as elderly persons continue to engage in manual labors as to meet the challenges facing the theory applies universally for both developed and developing countries and for all historical times. Disengagement is inevitable; it is bound to happen sometime in one's future life and also it is not caused by social factors. According to Stein et. al. in every culture and at all times, the society and the individual prepare for the ultimate disengagement (death) by an inevitable, gradual and mutually acceptable process of

social disengagement. It is a double withdrawal of the individual from society and of society from the individual. From the individual's side withdrawal is achieved by reduction of the number of roles one plays.<sup>76</sup> This issue can be continued in another way that from a societal point of view the individual is granted freedom from structural constraints and permission to withdraw. Once set in motion, the process is irreversible and the individual retreats from the social world, which in turn relieves him/her of normative control leaving the individual becoming de-socialized and demoralized with loss of self esteem. For the age is a difficult process but, as someone suggests, the process of disengagement is functional for the individual leaves them to engage only as they are able and for society enforcing roles for young people. Activity theory contrasts with disengagement theory as it points that to remain active and engaged with society is crucial to satisfaction in old age. Havighurst supports the theory by arguing that involvement in social networks and integration in them is positively related to life satisfaction. Accordingly the successfully adjusted older person is engaged in life and maintains a high level of social contacts. To maintain a positive self-image, older people must develop new interests, hobbies, roles and relationships to replace those that are diminished or lost with ageing. Havighurst further argues that society has been a limiting factor for the aged by applying different norms to the aged than for the middle-aged.<sup>77</sup>

It is stated earlier that disengagement theory is one of the first theories of aging developed by social scientists. It was originally formulated by Cumming and Henry. However, in their book, Cumming and Henry develop a logical argument for why older adults would naturally disengage from society. These nine postulates are in fact the process of disengagement. They formulate their argument along nine postulates to explain why it is rational for individuals who know that death is approaching and who have seen friends of their age pass to begin to anticipate their own deaths and disengage. **The postulates are the following:**

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<sup>76</sup>C. Stein and I. A Moritz, *Life Course Perspective of Maintaining Independence in Older Age* (Geneva: World Health Organization. 1999).

<sup>77</sup> R.J. Havighurst, *Disengagement and Patterns of ageing* (Chicago: Chicago:University Press. 1968).

**Postulate one:** Everyone expects death, and one's abilities will likely deteriorate over time. As a result, every person will lose ties to others in his or her society.

**Postulate two:** Individual interactions between people strengthen norms, an individual who has fewer varieties of interactions has greater freedom from the norms imposed by interaction. Consequently, this form of disengagement becomes a circular or self-perpetuating process.

**Postulate three:** Men have a centrally instrumental role in America, and women a socio-emotional one, disengagement differs between men and women.

**Postulate four:** The individual's life is punctuated by ego changes. For example, aging, a form of ego change, causes knowledge and skill to deteriorate. However, success in an industrialized society demands certain knowledge and skill. To satisfy these demands, age-grading ensures that the young possess sufficient knowledge and skill to assume authority and that the old retire before they lose their skills. This kind of disengagement is affected by the individual, prompted by either ego changes or the organization, which is bound to organizational imperatives, or both.

**Postulate five:** When both the individual and society are ready for disengagement, complete disengagement results. When neither is ready, continuing engagement result. When the individual is ready and society is not, a disjunction between the expectations of the individual and of the members of this social systems results, but engagement usually continues. When society is ready and the individual is not, the result of the disjunction is usually disengagement.

**Postulate six:** Man's central role is work, and woman's is marriage and family. If individuals abandon their central roles, they drastically lose social life space, and so suffer crisis and demoralization unless they assume the different roles required by the disengaged state.

**Postulate seven:** Readiness for disengagement occurs if the individual is aware of the shortness of life and scarcity of time, the individual perceives his or her life space decreasing, and the individual loses ego energy. Each level of society grants individuals permission to disengage because of the following: requirements of the



rational-legal occupational system in an affluent society, the nature of the nuclear family, and the differential death rate.

**Postulate eight:** Fewer interactions and disengagement from central roles lead to the relationships in the remaining roles changing. In turn, relational rewards become more diverse, and vertical solidarities are transformed to horizontal ones.

**Postulate nine:** Disengagement theory is independent of culture, but the form it takes is bound by culture.<sup>78</sup>

Cumming's and Henry's argument, while logical, is not supported by any empirical data. Thus, it has largely been dismissed by social scientists and gerontologists. This theory however in a broader sense suggests that the orderly transfer of various statuses and roles from the old to the young provides benefits for both society and individuals. In rural settings of Bangladesh society, it is found that people in old age normally loss their level of activity. That is, the biological aspects of aging are highly undeniable. As they are to do many works but do not eat too much food which is necessary for them, they become aged in earlier than the urban people.

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<sup>78</sup> E. Cuming, and W Henry., *Growing Old* (New York: Basic Books, 1961).

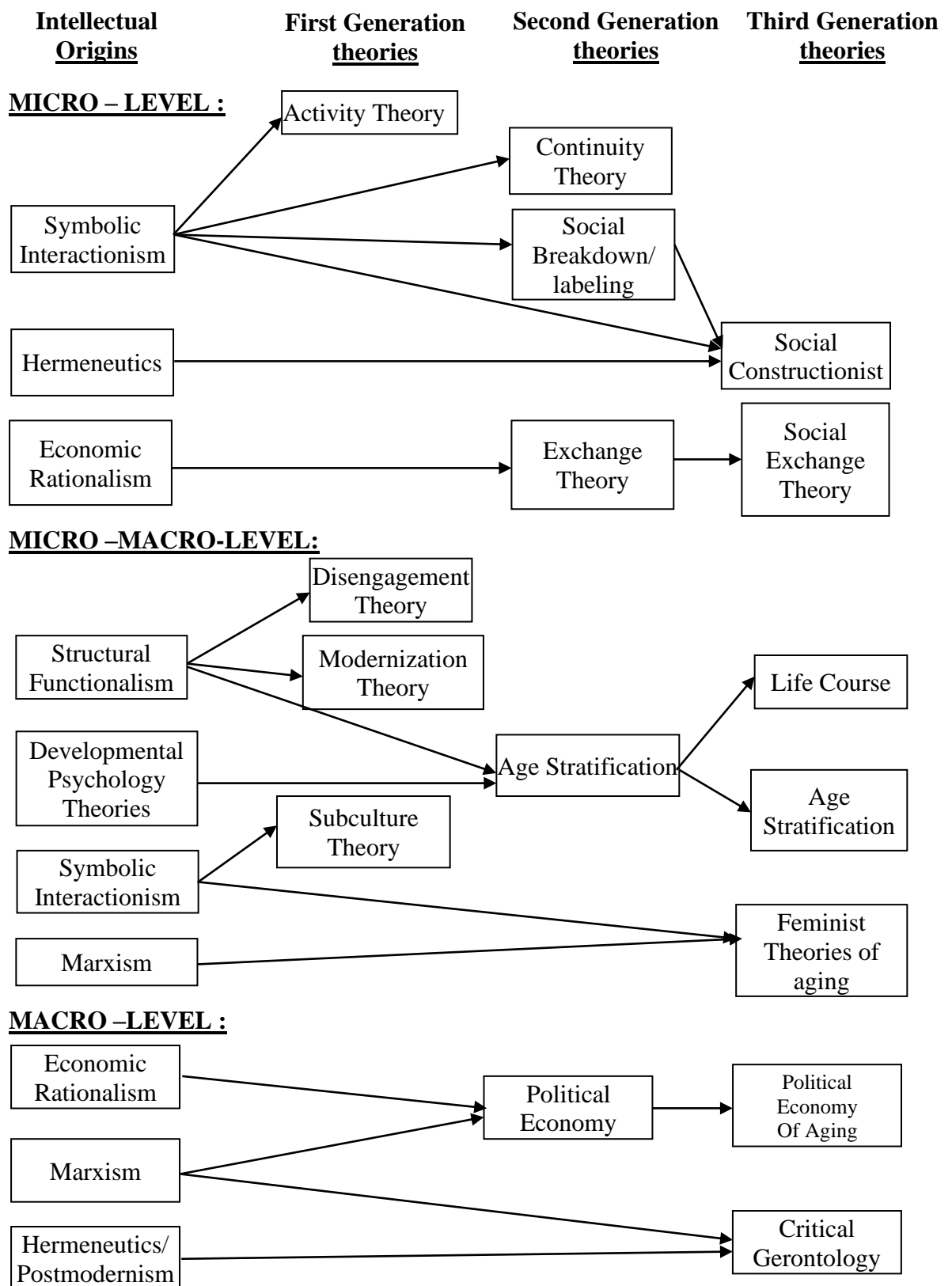


Figure 6: The generation of theories in social gerontology (Source: Parrott et.al.1997)

A lion share of the elderly loses their level of activity, no doubt. In spite of that they play active role in informal spheres except official or formal one which is invisible and nonpaid. For example, they are to look after animals, nourish grand children, care for garden, and do much more seasonal work, look after the houses in absence of their sons and sons' wives. It is also found that the daily activities of the elderly are to perform by them. So, they are to play multifaceted complex roles. They are disengaging from the prestigious and status based activities and engaging in many more non-countable less prestigious but essential activities. If they do not do these activities, the other members will not be able to engage in various activities. Behind the curtain, silently they are playing roles and help other members to play role. In other words, the elderly in our rural society are playing out assigned social roles. So, the orderly transfer of various statuses and roles from the old to the young may theoretically provide benefits for both society and individuals, practically it is not possible. This is because; various statuses are transferred from old to young, and several prestigious roles are also transfer from old to young but many more roles are imposed upon the elderly but ignored by the people of the society as well as of the country. It may be termed as **The Ignored /Disregarded/Neglected/Slighted Engagement Theory**. **The Slighted Engagement Theory** highlights that the elderly play many informal roles in spite of having ability or not which is ignored by the people of the family, society and country. The comparative discussion among the activity, disengagement and the slighted engagement theories of aging on the role and status of the elderly are shown in a figure below:

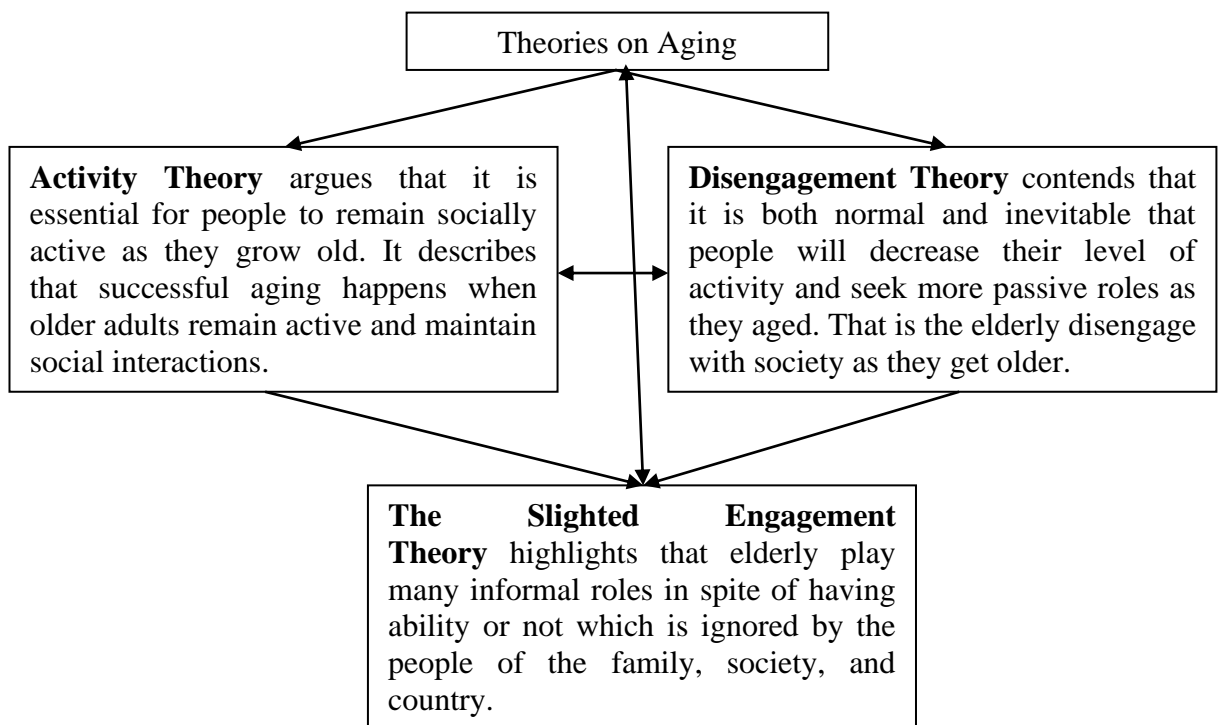


Figure 7: Comparative discussion regarding role and status of the elderly in the light of sociological theories on aging

**Limitations of the Slighted Engagement Theory:** This theory is not fit for all the elderly in the rural society. There are some families in the rural society where the elderly are highly respected because these elderly are well educated or their sons or daughters do job in urban places or they have bank-balance, previous reputation for doing handsome job, property or the strong religious tie. Considering the significant proportion of the elderly in the rural society, this theory is applicable. Apart from this, this theory attempts to explain the role and status of the rural elderly in Bangladesh, not urban ones. This theory also does not explain the overall aspects related to aging. Besides, it is an effort to explain the complicated pattern of role and status of the rural elderly in Bangladesh. It may not match the elderly of the other countries of the elderly. In spite of these limitations, this theory has practical value to rethink the activities and position of the elderly in rural Bangladesh. It may help to the policy makers to take appropriate policy for the rural elderly so that they can enjoy their status satisfactorily and perform their role with honor. It may help the other

researchers who have thrusts to study the aging issue in studying the role and status of the elderly in Bangladesh and other parts of the countries of the world.

However the discussion above highlights that the elderly of our rural society are somewhat disengaging from several activities but they are also engaging in various activities and their engagement helps other members to relief them from these activities and engage in other activities. They have to, for example, look after animal, supervise home, rare up grand children, supervise cultivable land, take care of garden, shop, cook, wash cloth, arrange bed, sweep room and yard, carry out simple chores in house, give time to relatives, solve the familial disputes, engage in religious activities and pray for the family members for their wellbeing, keep good relation with neighbors, people of the village and relatives, invite relatives in different socio-religious occasions etc. Despite inability, the rural elderly are to play various informal, unpaid, imposed, and assigned roles in family and society. Their engagement in these sectors is overlooked, neglected, disregarded and slighted by the people. Hence an attempt made to develop this theory for upholding the activities or engagement of the rural elderly in our society.

## **Chapter- 4**

### **Socio-economic Conditions of the Elderly**

The number of the elderly is increasing in Bangladesh rapidly. The socio- economic condition of the elderly in the rural areas is also changing at high speed. That is, they are living long. Their occupations, marital status, type of family structure, ownership of land, house, income, expenditure etc. are becoming very complex. It seems to the researchers that the consequences of social, physical and economic dependency of the elderly upon the family members have become an increasing challenge for the elderly and family as well. The burden for caring for the older people has traditionally fallen on the family, especially when the elderly are ill, incapacitated, or financially dependent. Unfortunately, the breakdown of the joint family, decline of socio-cultural and religious values (due to industrialization, urbanization and westernization), high poverty, media revolution and generation gap alienated them from the mainstream of the society. Besides, the socio-economic condition of Bangladesh is a dual nature. In the rural areas, normally, the elderly do not retire formally rather they are to engage in various domestic and socio-economic activities. Maximum people in the study area are still engaged in agricultural and housewifery activities. The level of education is low among the people let alone higher education. Religious heterogeneity is absent in the study area that is all the people in these areas are Muslims. So, the marital condition and dimension are also homogeneous. The people in these areas still do not enjoy electricity facilities and media coverage largely. The traditional features of rural society are available here. Both cultivable and homestead land plays an important role for playing role and enjoying status. Surely, education, occupation, income, pattern of housing, land property stratified the people of society into the different categories. In maximum cases, social structure determines the division of labor on the basis of sex in the research area. Housing facilities are essential for all the elderly. In a developed country it is still the government responsibilities to ensure housing facilities. In the research areas it is observed that this situation is not satisfactory, that is, they are to share their rooms with their son's children and daughters. Whether it is one kind of

source of recreation or burden depends on the norms and values and overall conditions of that family. So, this chapter will try to show the socio- economic conditions of the elderly in the research area.

Table No.4.1

**Age of the elderly**

Age categories	Frequency of the respondents (Male)	%	Frequency of the respondents (Female)	%	Total number of the respondents	%
60 - 65	46	22.7	72	35.5	118	58.1
65 – 70	15	7.4	14	6.9	29	14.3
70 – 75	24	11.8	11	5.4	35	17.2
75 – 80	5	2.4	3	1.5	8	3.9
80 – 85	3	1.5	4	1.9	7	3.4
85 – 90	3	1.5	3	1.5	6	3.0
Total	96	47.3	107	52.7	203	100.0

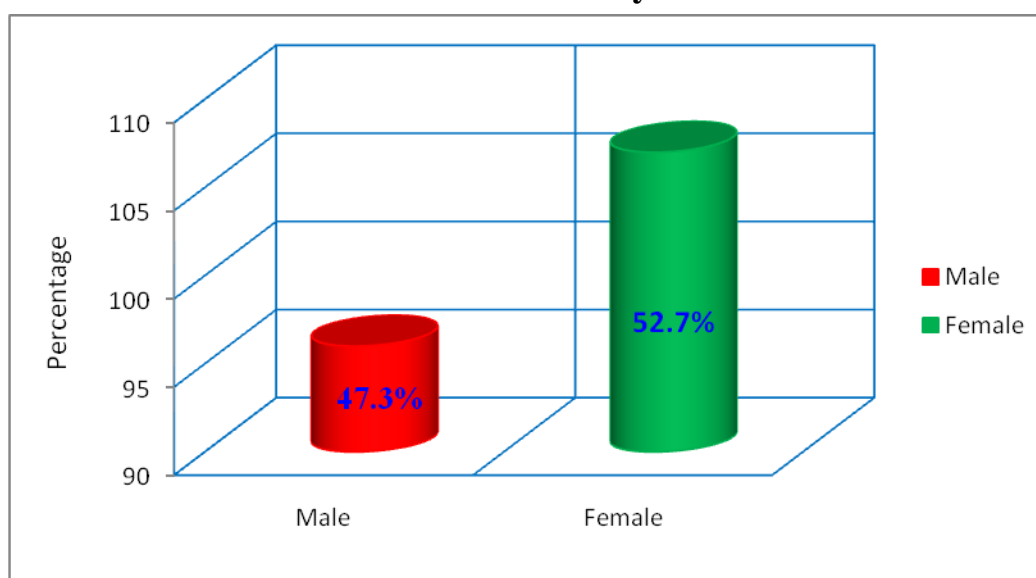
Preindustrial societies granted the greatest power and prestige to the old. The aged were in fact so respected that younger people sometimes looked forward to the old age. The old were the repository of the community’s folklore, knowledge, experience, and wisdom while other members of the society looked to them for guidance.<sup>79</sup> In any society there are strong pressures on its members to behave in certain ways. Similarly, in all societies there are accepted ways of doing things, and these ways are directly related to the culture of the society. In our society traditionally the elderly are treated with great respect, and their advice is listened to carefully. So, age category of the people in the society is important for understanding the issue of aging in both rural and urban societies of Bangladesh. It is stated earlier that age is associated with the chronological, psychological and social terms. For defining the elderly, age plays vital role. Actually, our social system determines the age related position of people. However, the age categories of the respondents show that (60-75) represents the highest concentration of elderly considering age while (80 and above that is old-old) are the lowest. People in this age cohort are less active, very old, normally dependent, disabled and lack of physical and mental strength. That is, most of the respondents are in the age group of 60-75. That is to say, they are very much competent and fit for

<sup>79</sup> Ian Robertson, *Sociology* (New York: Worth Publishers Inc., 1977)-332.

doing activities. The interesting fact is that the female elderly are highest in the age group (60-65) than the male one. In this situation it can be said that the female of Bangladesh, especially in our rural settings, become elderly faster than the male elderly. After all, the percentage of young old is highest in the population structure in the research area.

Figure: 8

### Sex of the elderly



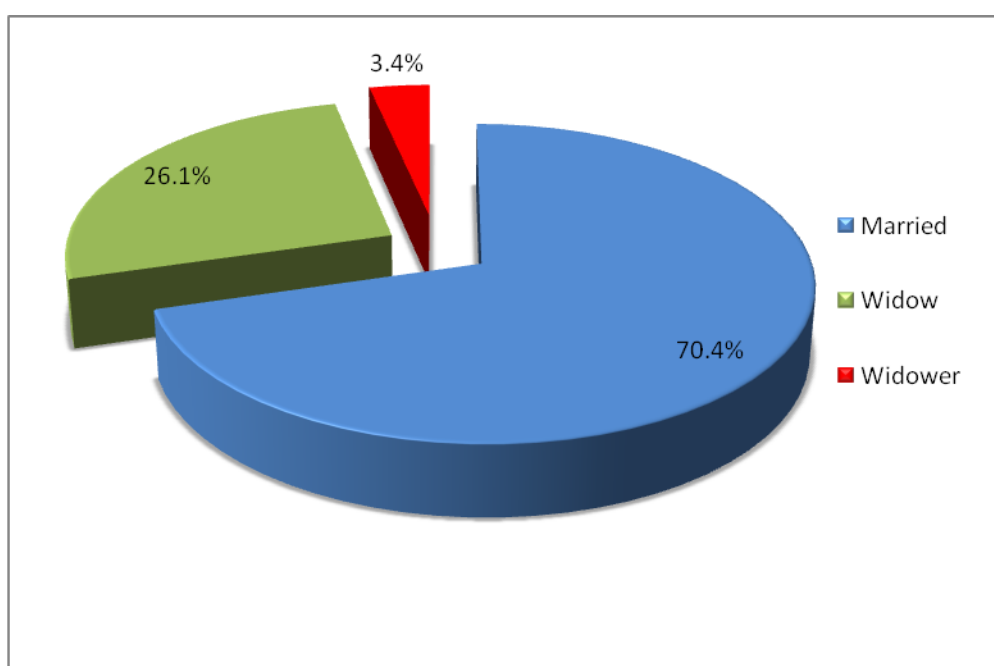
There are obvious similarities between the way societies distribute roles according to sex and the way they do so on the basis of age. All societies throughout history have given greater access to valued roles and other social rewards to men rather than women. Society of Bangladesh is still patriarchal in nature. Patriarchy is a social system in which males are the primary authority figures to social organization and occupy roles of political leadership, moral authority, control of property etc. That is, father holds authority over women and children. It implies the institutions of male rule and the position of female is subordinated. Agriculture based society downgraded the status and hidden qualities of women, according to modern western standards and to the implicit standards of hunting-and-gathering societies. It is characteristically patriarchal, that is, they are run by men and based on the assumption that men directed political, economic and cultural life. Individual families are normally set up on a patriarchal basis, with the husband and father determining fundamental



conditions and making the key decisions. Patriarchal family structure rested on men's control of most property. It is also true that the role and status of male and female elderly in our rural society is different. Our system of socialization has direct influence on this. The table above indicates that among the total elderly the percentage of male elderly is 47.3 whereas the female elderly is 52.7. So, it is easily understandable from the table that the percentage of female is higher than the male elderly in the study area.

Figure: 9

### Marital status of the elderly



Marriage is an important event for our social life. It involves some duties and obligation for men and women. It considerably widens the social and economic responsibilities of a married person. It is also mentionable that arranged marriage is still dominant in these villages. Muslim population is highest concentration in Bangladesh rather than the people of other religions. Marriage is regarded as universal among them. Considering marital status of the elderly it can be said that all the respondents are married. Among them, 70.4 percent respondents are living with their husbands and wives whereas 26.1 percent are widowed and 3.4 percent are widower. In our society, the status of widower is much better than that of widow especially for

rural arenas. Here, widow is a social problem; because, men remarry after the death of their wives but widows do not have same the social circumstance in our society. For this reason, this problem is very acute among elderly women. In this study it is found that a significant number of the elderly are living their lives with their spouses. That is, 70.4 percent elderly still enjoy their conjugal life as because their spouses are still alive.

Table No.4.2

**Level of education of the elderly**

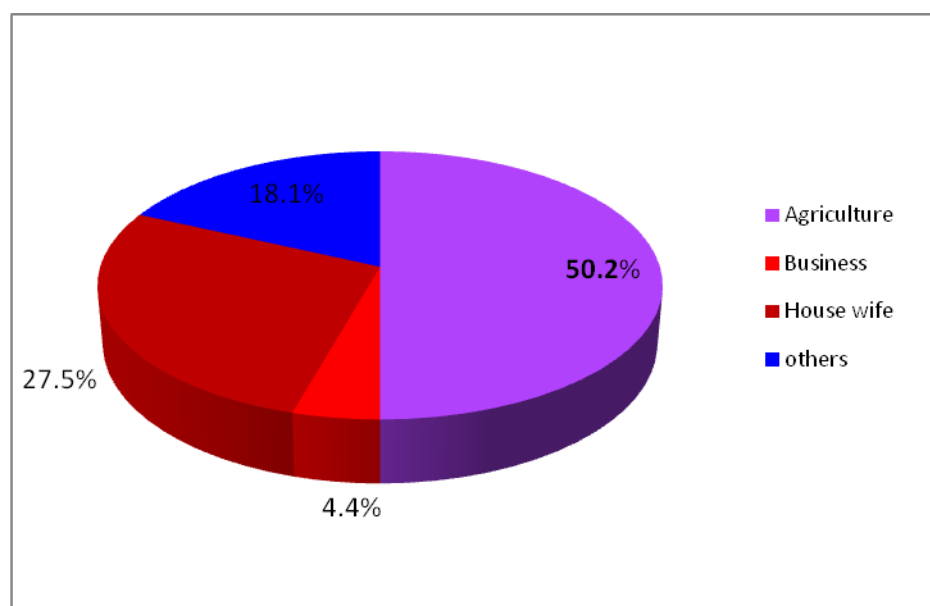
Level of Education	Frequency of Male	%	Frequency of Female	%	Total	%
Nil	72	35.5	85	41.8	157	77.3
Signature ability	12	5.9	13	6.5	25	12.3
Primary	5	2.5	6	2.9	11	5.4
Secondary	5	2.5	3	1.5	8	4.0
Higher secondary	1	0.5	0	0	1	0.5
Graduate	1	0.5	0	0	1	0.5
Total	96	47.4	107	52.6	203	100.0

It is without doubt that the elderly perform very vital roles towards the growth and stability of the family in general. Their place in the web of social system in rural society is akin to the position and function of an important part of a human organ. In other words, they perform some roles that are tangential and inalienable to the functioning of their families and society. These roles include socialization and educational functions, protective and mystical functions, medicinal and healing functions, leadership, social functions and various contributions to the economic production of the rural society. This table deals with the level of education of the elderly which indicates their rate of education. Education refers to almost synonymous of socialization and formalized transmission of knowledge, skills and values. It is essential for the survival of society as it provides knowledge and transmits it from one generation to another. From the table it is easily understood that maximum elderly are illiterate. In this respect, the condition of female is very severe. About 77.3 percent elderly, both male and female, do not know how to write and read. The percentage of male is 35.5 and female is 41.8. Here, merely, 12.5 percent elderly

males and 12.1 percent elderly females have no formal education. But they can sign only. Again, the ratio of higher education is very poor and limited among them. About 4.0 percent crossed the level of secondary examination and 0.5 percent merely passed higher secondary examination. Only 0.5 percent has crossed the level of graduation among the elderly. So, it can be said that the educational status of the rural elderly in Bangladesh is very low. About 12.3 percent including 5.9 percent male and 6.5 percent female acquired the ability of sign as it is necessary for some purposes.

Figure: 10

**Occupational status of the elderly**



As the proportion of elderly people in the Bangladesh population is rapidly rising, especially the relative proportion of people over the age of 60 and above, our society is faced with the challenge of many problems. This table is aimed to examine how a sample of the elderly people spends their time and the portion of that time that was spent in valued occupations. In rural society it is a common picture that large numbers of people are engaged in agricultural and related sectors of economy. More than seventy percent elderly are directly or indirectly involved in agricultural activities. So, agriculture is the dominant occupation among the villagers as well as

the rural elderly Data were collected from respondents recording every occupation they engaged in their arenas. More than fifty percent elderly spend their time engaging in agricultural activities, because, they have cultivable land and do not hold any job. On the other hand, about 27.1 percent of those who are female elderly engage themselves in housewifery activities except 4.4 percent elderly who are engaged in business related function.

Table No: 4.3

**Occupational status of the elderly on basis of age**

Age Group	Agric ulture	%	Busin ess	%	House wife	%	others	%	Total	%
60-65	53	26.1	7	3.4	35	17.2	23	11.3	118	58.1
65-70	15	7.4	2	1.0	8	3.9	4	2.0	29	14.3
70-75	24	11.8	-	-	6	3.0	5	2.5	35	17.2
75-80	5	2.5	-	-	2	1.0	1	0.5	8	3.9
80-85	3	1.5	-	-	2	1.0	2	1.0	7	3.4
85-90	2	1.0	-	-	2	1.0	2	1.0	6	3.0
Total	102	50.2	9	4.4	55	27.1	37	18.2	203	100.0

An occupation refers to work that is done in exchange for a regular wage or salary. In all cultures including ours, work is considered as the basis of economy. Non-paid work may not be occupation but essential for family as well as social life which is largely performed by the rural elderly. Although different occupations have different effects on family life, it is more important to see the way in which all occupations are structurally related to our family system as a whole. The institutional emphasis on achievement rather than ascription, the competitiveness of the occupational system, the separation of home and work- all these factors are compatible only with the type of family the people live in. Although, in the rural society, work means paid job, many more unpaid jobs are done by the rural elderly. Many types of work do not conform orthodox categories of paid employment. Much of the work is done in formal economy. Houseworks and voluntary works are the examples of nonpaid works carried out previously mostly by women and they have an important social role. The table above shows that more than half of the respondents are engaged in the agricultural activities. The young elderly who are in the age group of 60-65, are 26.1 percent. In housewifery activities, their percentage in this age is 17.2 and business is

3.4 percent. Again, it is also evident that 11.8 percent elderly who are in the age group of 70-75 also engage in these activities. In the case of female elderly, maximum are engaged in housewifery activities. The percentage of business, on the other hand, is about 4.4. So, the table explains that the young elderly engage in more paid activities.

Table No: 4.4

**Occupational status of the elderly on basis of sex**

Occupation	Sex				Total	%
	Male	%	Female	%		
Agriculture	86	42.4	16	7.9	102	50.2
Business	6	3.0	3	1.5	9	4.4
House Wife	-	-	55	27.1	55	27.1
Others	4	2.0	33	16.3	37	18.2
Total	96	47.3	107	52.7	203	100.0

The separation of home and work has tended to bring about a sharper differentiation of sex roles than existed in predominant rural society. Women participate to some extent in all the occupations men engage in, but a far higher proportion of married men than women have occupation. It would be manifestly impossible for women to be involved equally with men in the occupational system unless we develop some other arrangements for taking care of children and for managing households. As it is totally impossible for rural society considering present context of our norms and values, occupational status varies from the elderly men to women. Indirectly women, as mothers, of course contribute to the occupational system by the important part they play in socialization. It can be said in another way that a boy learns attitude appropriate to men not only from his father but also from his mother. The table placed above clearly indicates that 42.4 percent male elderly are engaged in agricultural activities whereas the percentage of female in this case is 7.9 percent. Though, women in Neolithic age invented agriculture, it is clear that their participation in this sector is very lower than male elderly. In maximum cases, our social structure determines the division of labor on the basis of sex in our society. About 3.0 percent male elderly engaged in business activities and the percentage of female in this sector is 1.5. The table also focuses that women have highest engagement in housewifery activities. It is

also mentionable here that the women who are related to business, agriculture and other activities are involved in housewifery activities.

Table No. 4.5

**Monthly income of the elderly**

Monthly income	Frequency	Percent
0000-2000	164	80.8
2000-4000	23	11.3
4000-6000	10	4.9
6000-8000	3	1.5
8000-10000	1	0.5
10000-12000	1	0.5
12000-14000	1	0.5
Total	203	100.0

The economic aspects of ageing might expect to find one of the two things. The first would be an examination of the problem from the viewpoint of the economy as a whole. Such a study would be concerned with the impact of changes in the size and age structure of the working population upon the volume of production. Another approach, however, is to examine the sources and levels of income available to the aged in the population. Such a study is concerned with the forces determining the share of the national income available to the aged. Handsome monthly income is the indicator of socio-economic wellbeing. Income is an important factor in determining the social inequality among the members of the society. But it is another problem to find out the real income of the people of our rural people due to some reasons. They are the tendency of keeping income a secret, estimation of income, conversion of income in monetary terms, fluctuation of prices in different seasons. Moreover, some household have many sources of income. Again, some families do not maintain cash book for income and expenditure. However, the table indicates that monthly income of the elderly is below 2000 taka. More than eighty percent of the elderly face this situation. Nearly 11.3 percent elderly are in the 2000-4000 taka income level. Approximately 4.9 percent elderly earn 4000-6000 taka in a month but their number is very few.

Table No. 4.6

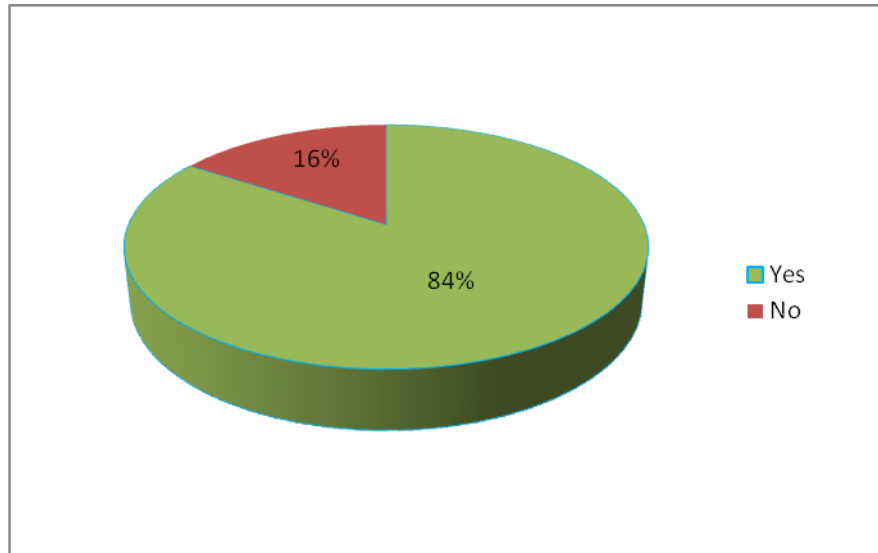
### Monthly expenditure of the elderly

Monthly Expenditure	Frequency	Percent
0000-2000	188	92.6
2000-4000	9	4.4
4000-6000	1	.5
6000-8000	3	1.5
8000-10000	2	1.0
Total	203	100.0

Economic problems of the aged affect them in many ways. Low income is undoubtedly an economic problem to them. So, comparative discussion between income and expenditure focuses the social position of people in any society. But it is difficult to calculate the monthly expenditure of the rural elderly. They are not interested in disclosing this. Their monthly expenditure of the elderly and even in their family varies from one month to another. That is, the expenditure of rural elderly ups and downs. For an example, if they buy clothes, the expenditure of this month will be higher than that of the previous one. Again, if they become ill, it will be difficult to calculate and adjust monthly expenditure. Yet it is true that at least we can get average monthly expenditure from them. They do not maintain any cash book. For these reasons it is almost a difficult task to count their monthly expenditure. Yet this painstaking job has been done carefully. This is very much true for our rural elderly. It appears from the data in the table that monthly expenditure of the elderly is below the 2000 taka. More than ninety percent of the elderly face this situation. It may seem to us that they are capable of spending their life. The fact is quite different because they are to expend a small amount of for not having too much that can meet up their demand. So, maximum of them live from hand to mouth. For this reason they depend on government relief program and people's help. Households of a rural society consider their income as family secret and they do not want to disclose it, estimation of income, convert income in monetary terms, fluctuation of prices in different seasons are the problems for calculating monthly expenditure also.

Figure: 11

### Ownership of homestead land



Land is a factor of production. It includes three kinds of resources. Land as physical resources that mean land is used for agriculture. Secondly, there are skills based partly on knowledge and partly on ability, of which there are various kinds and degrees. Finally, there are certain attitudes and motives that to some degree are necessary to production as a continuous, orderly social process; these include willingness and eagerness and willingness to reserve some physical resources to production rather than consumption. All the components of land underlie the whole process of production.<sup>80</sup> Bangladesh is still a village- based country. Majority of the people of our country are still live in the villages. Here, land both cultivable and homestead plays an important role in rural power structure. The table shows that 84.2 percent elderly has homestead land. On the other hand, 15.8 percent elderly is still homestead landless. It is a positive sign no doubt. But maximum elderly want to live in their own homestead land. That is, they do not want to live in this world as forbearers of others. Todaro identifies three values of development :(i) Life sustenance: the ability to provide basic needs, (ii) Self esteem: to be a person; (iii) Freedom from servitude: to be able to choose.<sup>81</sup> So, the elderly also have self esteem and want free from servitude.

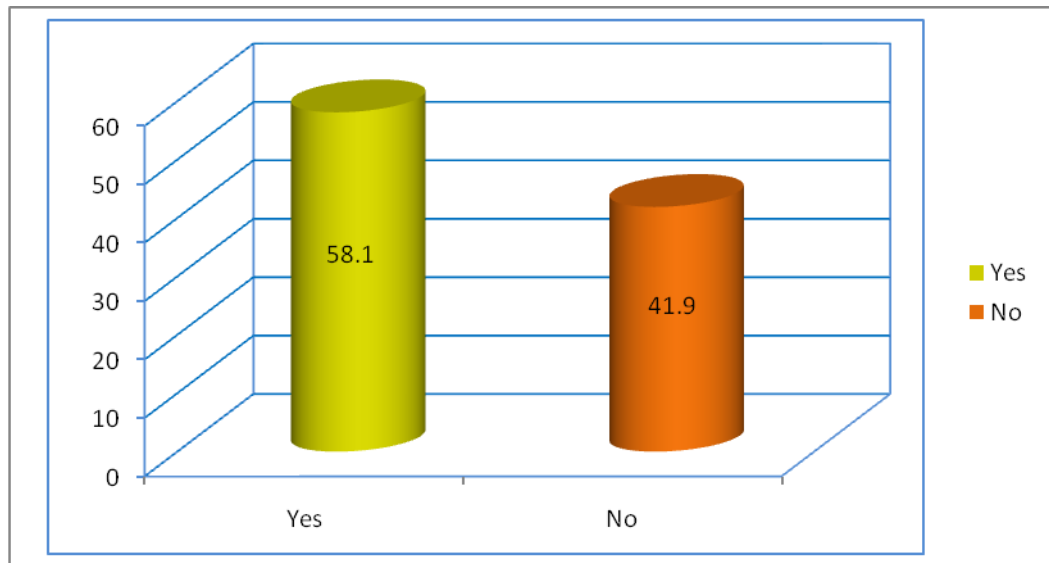
Figure: 12

<sup>80</sup> Harry M. Johnson, *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction*( New York: Allied Publishers Ltd,1960)-216

<sup>81</sup> M.R. Todaro, *Economic Development in the Third World*, London: longman, 1981.



### Ownership of cultivable land

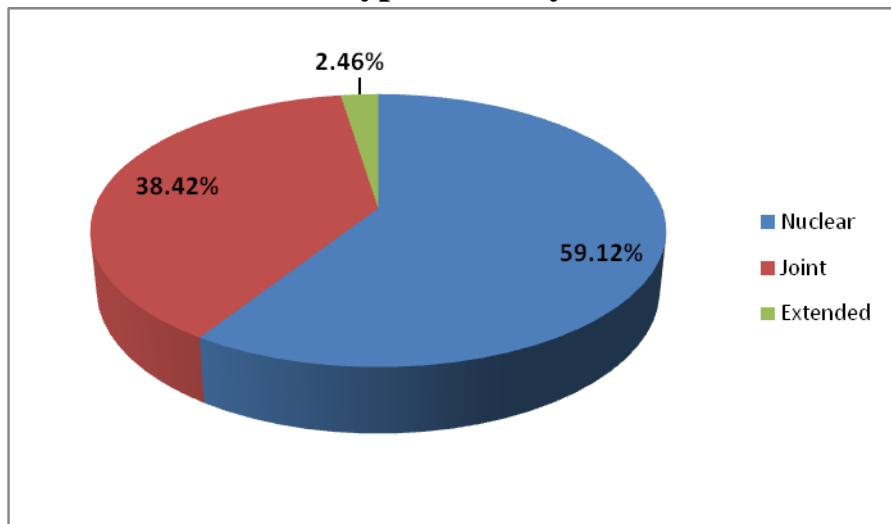


In rural areas of Bangladesh land is considered as important wealth and agriculture is mode of production. It is true that human being cannot survive without the support of natural resources. Land is regarded as principal resource among the resources. For assessing the involvement of the households in agriculture, it is necessary to estimate the amount of land in cultivation. For these reasons the respondents have been asked to state how many decimals of cultivable land they have. Men collect food, fuel, fiber and many other raw materials to fulfill their everyday needs. The table shows that 58.1 percent elderly have cultivable land; on the other hand, those who have no cultivable land their percentage are 41.9. Land is one of the indicators of enjoying role and status. It is also found that some elderly take others' land on sharecropping or on lease basis in some seasons as they have limited amount of cultivable land. A significant number of the elderly are not able to enjoy this due to lack of sufficient cultivable land. In peasant society, the socio-economic position of a person depends on land ownership. How much land people own determines the position of people in the society<sup>82</sup>.

Figure: 13

<sup>82</sup> Kazi Tobarak Hossain, "Landless Peasant and Wage Labor Context", in Kazi Tobarak Hossain and Hasan Imam edited., Village Of Bangladesh (Bangladesher Gram), 2000.

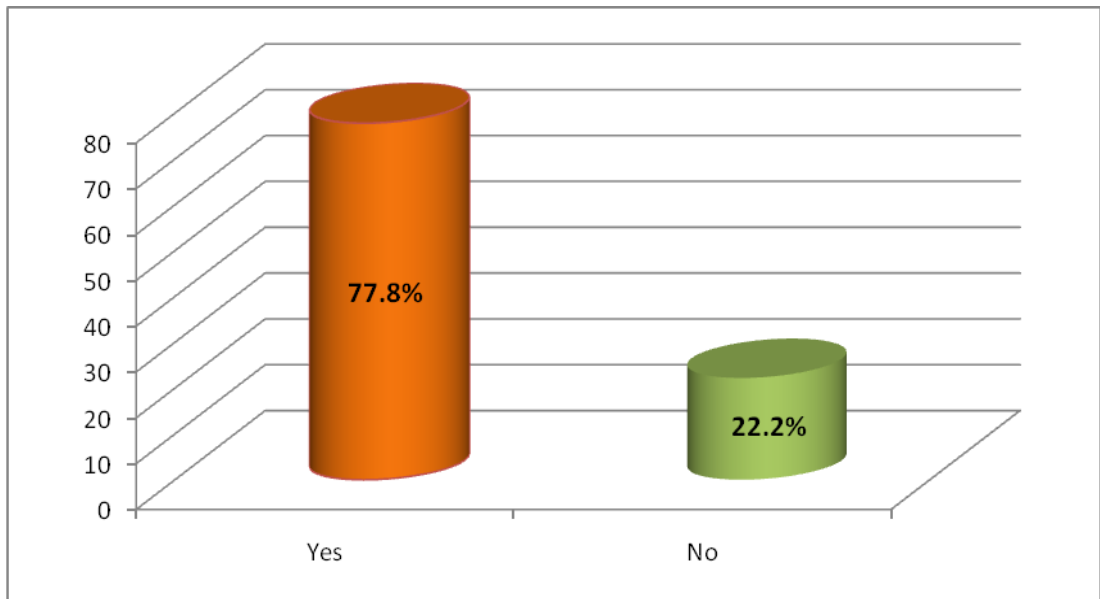
### Type of family



Human reproduction does not merely depend on biological factors it is also influenced by the system of family. Family is the basic social institution of social structure where the elderly start and finish their time. Social institution is the structure and machinery through which a human society organizes, directs and executes the multifarious activities required to satisfy human needs. The family in Bangladesh would regard as kinship organization. It is still regarded as simultaneously as shelter and protector of men and women. But the undergoing change in structure and composition of family system shaped the different types of role and status for the elderly. The table shows that more than half of the elderly live in nuclear family. That is about 59.12 percent elderly live in nuclear family. Nuclear family consists of husband, wife and off spring living independent families of orientation to the demand of occupational or geographical mobility. Many nuclear families are found consisting of the elderly with their unmarried offspring where eldest son though live in another place and live in another nuclear family helps to his parents financially. So, the function of nuclear family in Bangladesh is different from western one. On the other hand 38.42 percent elderly still live in joint family. The percentage of extended family is very low no doubt because, the percentage of joint and extended family is decreasing due to increasing urbanization, influence of education, impact of industrialization, change in marriage system, influence of western values, awareness among women etc.

Figure: 14

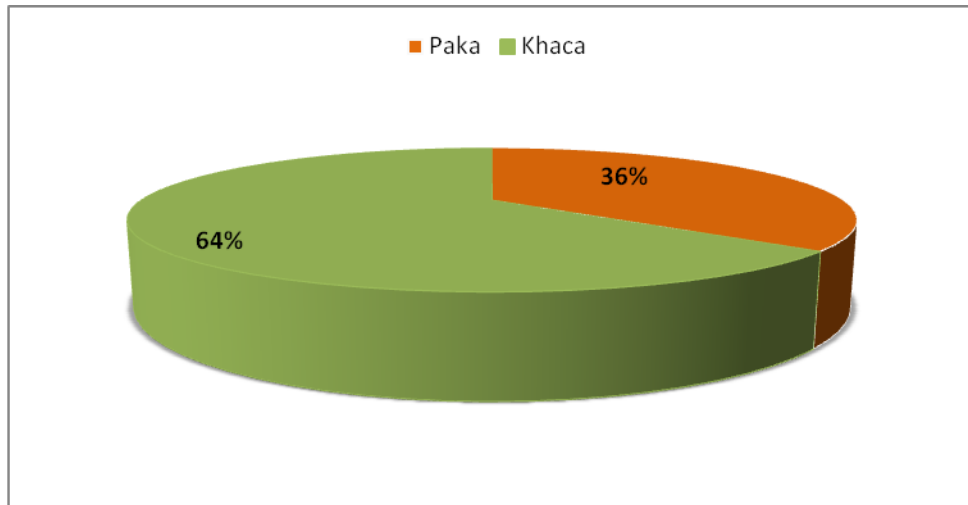
### Separate room for the elderly



It is basic demand and reality that the elderly will live in separate room as the adult members of a family do so. Besides, they are the senior members of family. They have high self esteem and privacy. Generally no respondents live alone. They either live with their spouse or family members. The need for having separate room for the elderly also depends on the relationship of the elderly with the family members. They want to share their rooms with their grand children whole heartedly. They find the sources of enjoyment there. But in maximum cases, the family members are not interested and the grand parents are also not interested because they want to pass their time by reading, playing games in mobile or listening song in their cell phone. It is evident from the data in the above table that about 77.8 percent elderly have separate rooms. On the other hand 22.2 percent replied that they do not have any separate rooms at all. That is, they are to share their rooms with their son's children. Whether it is one kind of source of recreation or burden depends on the norms and values and overall conditions of that family.

Figure: 15

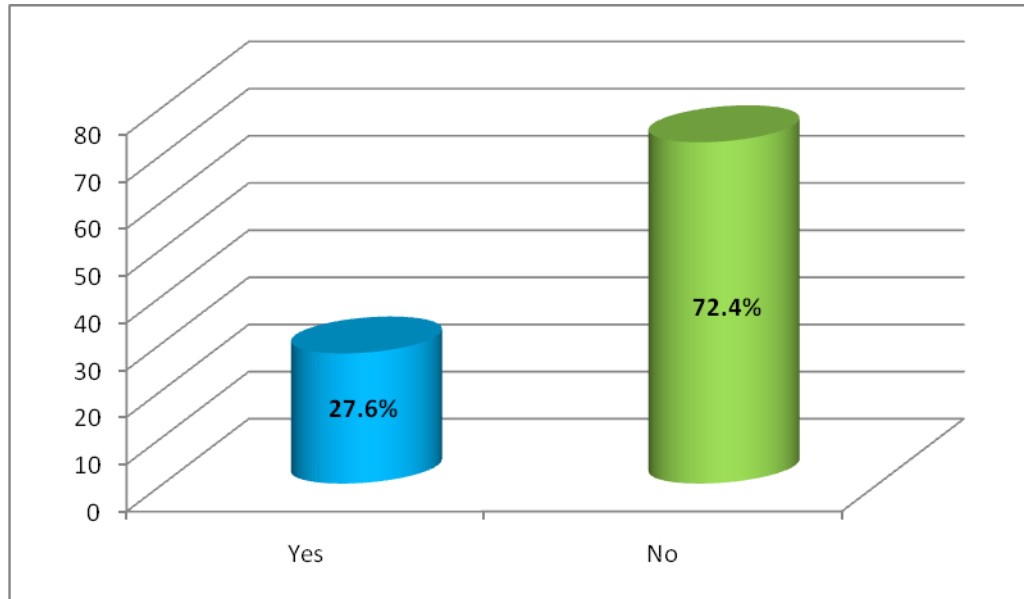
**Type of toilet of the elderly**



Throughout the globe, sanitation problems are the cause of many types of disease and death. This problem is particularly difficult for people with impaired immunity. As the elderly are included in these categories they are affected by this in many ways. Poor sanitation practices have dire health impacts on all classes of people. It has far reaching negative impact on the elderly. In old age they normally face various physical problems. When they lack proper sanitation coverage, it adds with existing problem and makes the problem very complex. Diarrhea, typhoid and other diseases are spread by bacteria in feces. Diarrhoea and respiratory disease which are the combined leading causes of the elderly mortality globally and in Bangladesh are common amongst the rural elderly. The government of Bangladesh is trying to improve the water, sanitation and hygiene situation of rural Bangladesh, for not only actualizing the millennium development goal, by 2015, but also to decrease the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. It is one of the visions of Bangladesh government to ensure the sanitation among the people of this country. It is also a goal of NGOs to ensure better health facilities among the people. The information in this table shows that about 64 percent elderly are living without sanitary latrine. Only 36 percent elderly have sanitary latrines. In our rural area, the opportunity of using sanitary latrines did not actualize properly. So, it is a dreadful scenario of our society.

Figure: 16

**Bathroom facilities of the elderly**



Most of the elderly females have bathroom facilities within the house whereas more elderly males have the facility outside the house. This implies that rural males prefer to go out for bathing, as the fields are open and irrigation tube wells available. But this causes various water born diseases to them. The table also shows that about 72.4 percent elderly take bath without bathroom. They are to take bath in ponds, canals and rivers. It is observed that they take bath in an unhygienic situation for not having bathrooms. The government of Bangladesh is trying to improve the condition of health of all classes of people with a view to actualizing the millennium development goal 2015. So, it is needed to ensure the awareness arising program among the elderly as well as family members so that they can realize this matter appropriately. Besides, in rural society, people feel easy and comfortable in taking bath in these sources without considering quality of the water. It is also found that in spite of having bath rooms the elderly are in the habit of taking bath using these sources.

From the data mentioned in the tables and graphs show that the socio-economic conditions of the rural elderly of the study area are not so good. Most of the respondents are in the age group of 61-75. The interesting fact is that the female elderly are highest in the age group 61-65 than the male elderly.

About 70.4 percent elderly still enjoy their conjugal life because their spouses are still alive. Moreover, 75 percent elderly do not know how to write and read whereas the ratio of female in this affair is 79.4. That is, a significant number of respondents could not claim to have any formal education. And gender inequality in this respect is also present. The low percentage of literacy in Bangladesh is well-known phenomenon. The ratio of literacy in rural and urban areas in Bangladesh is also different and in this case the position of rural elderly is also different no doubt. Historically speaking, the education, especially formal, was merely confined in upper strata.

The study depicted that more than half of the respondents are engaged in agricultural activities. The young elderly who are in the age group of 60-65, their number are 26.1 percent. In housewifery activities, their percentage in this age is 17.2 percent and business is 3.4 percent. Again, it is also evident from the table that 11.8 percent elderly who are in the age group of 70-75 also engage in these activities. In the case of female elderly, maximum are engaged in housewifery activities. The percentage of business, on the other hand is about 4.4.

The study also described the occupational status of the elderly on the basis of sex. In this case it is found that 42.4 percent male elderly are engaged in agricultural activities whereas the percentage of female in this case is 7.9 percent. Though women in Neolithic age invented agriculture, it is clear that their participation in this sector is very lower than male elderly.

In maximum cases, our social structure determines the division of labor on basis of sex. About 3.0 percent male elderly are engaged in business activities and the percentage of female in this sector is 1.5. The table also focuses that women have highest engagement in housewifery activities. It is also mentionable here that the women who are related to business, agriculture and other activities also involved in housewifery activities. The reduction of income is one of the most consistent position changes while occurs in aging and is related to the loss of occupation.

About 60.1 percent earn 500-4500 in a month and they informed that their income has reduced and they depend on the other members of the family and society as well. That is, they are to live below the poverty line. The monthly expenditure of the elderly is also low. The fact is that they cannot expend for not having sources of income. Besides, 62.6 percent elderly expend 500- 4500 taka in a month. In this connection more than eighty percent of elderly is below 2000 taka.

Similarly, monthly expenditure of more than ninety percent elderly is below 2000 taka. They cannot expend more, for having minimum sources of income. In this connection this study identified that there is a greater variation in the nature and extent of economic dependency of the respondents by age and sex.

Land both cultivable and homestead plays an important role in rural power structure. The study indicated that 84.2 percent elderly has homestead land. On the other hand, 15.8 percent elderly is still homestead landless. It is a positive sign, no doubt. But every elderly wants to live in their own homestead land. From the study it is also revealed that about 58.1 percent elderly has cultivable land. On the other hand, the percentage of those who have no cultivable land is 41.9. Land is one of the indicators of enjoying role and status. A significant number of the elderly are not able to enjoy this due to lack of sufficient cultivable land.

About 95.6 percent elderly live in their own houses. But maximum of them share their rooms with their grandsons and daughters. Merely it is not enough, about 64 percent elderly are leading their life without sanitary latrine and 72.4 percent of them are taking bath without bathroom.

From **correlation table: 1**(See Appendix – 5, page- 176) it has been found high correlation between monthly income and expenditure in the family (0.774\*\*), monthly income of elderly (0.203\*\*), cultivable land (0.449\*\*). The negative correlation is found between age and monthly expenditure of the elderly. (-0.21\*\*).

From regression analysis **table: 2(ii)** (See Appendix – 5, page - 177) the model summary shows the relationship between income and expenditure. If 1 unit increases income, 0 .261 unit increases expenditure.

From logistics regression analysis **table 3(ii)** (See Appendix – 5, page -178 ) it has been found that in agriculture , business, service holder, age and monthly expenditure the importance of male is high whereas in house wife, ability to do daily activities & difficulty in performing daily activities the importance of female is high. Again in monthly income of the family, monthly income of the elderly & monthly expenditure of the elderly, the importance of male & female are independent. That is, the socio-economic conditions of the elderly in the study area are really dissatisfactory.



## Chapter – 5

### Decision Making Process of the Elderly

Decision making process of the elderly is a complicated state of affair. This happens because various factors are closely associated with it. Decision making process has relationship with headship in the family because, it controls and directs the socio-economic condition, socialization process, political, religious and cultural process in the society. It is stated in an earlier discussion that Bangladesh society has been giving the highest respect to the elderly and the head of the family is a central figure for enjoying the highest status. Due to patriarchal nature of our society, the male elderly are considered as the head of the family in maximum cases. In study area dual nature of headship has found. That is, actual head and instrumental head. Actual heads are those who are the income earners having wealth and property. On the other hand, instrumental heads are those who do not possess these. There are some families in the study area seemingly the elderly are the heads of the family but in reality it is observed that they are the nominal or conventional head- actual head is the income earners of the family. Here, it has tried to shown on the basis of head of the family of the elderly, principal income earner, decision maker on spending income, decision maker of building and repairing houses, decision maker of receiving treatment, decision maker of educating children, seeking permission of going outside from home, etc. It is also mentionable here that if the role and status is decreased, the elderly becomes dependent on the family and society. If the elderly become dependent members, generally they become non-income earner, non head and non-decision maker in the family. That is, status as head of the family associated to authority and prestige not by the reason of age alone; it is determined by several factors, including education, occupation, marital status, health condition, resources, intergenerational and interpersonal relationships. It is also found that many elderly are not the head of the family and do not take part in decision making process but keeping with good tradition they are interested in concealing this matter. The elderly who are not capable or who have less resources are less consulted and informed about the

familial matters including arranging marriage, purchasing valuable goods, selling property, building and repairing houses, educating children and receiving treatment. Though the elderly are considered as asset and not liabilities for the family, it is also observed that they suffer from many kinds of problems in terms of financial capacity, authority and mental state. It is also found that the position of the male elderly in terms of controlling over property such as economic wealth, land, sons, and daughters is better than that of the female elderly. The involvement of the male elderly in familial decision is higher than the female elderly.

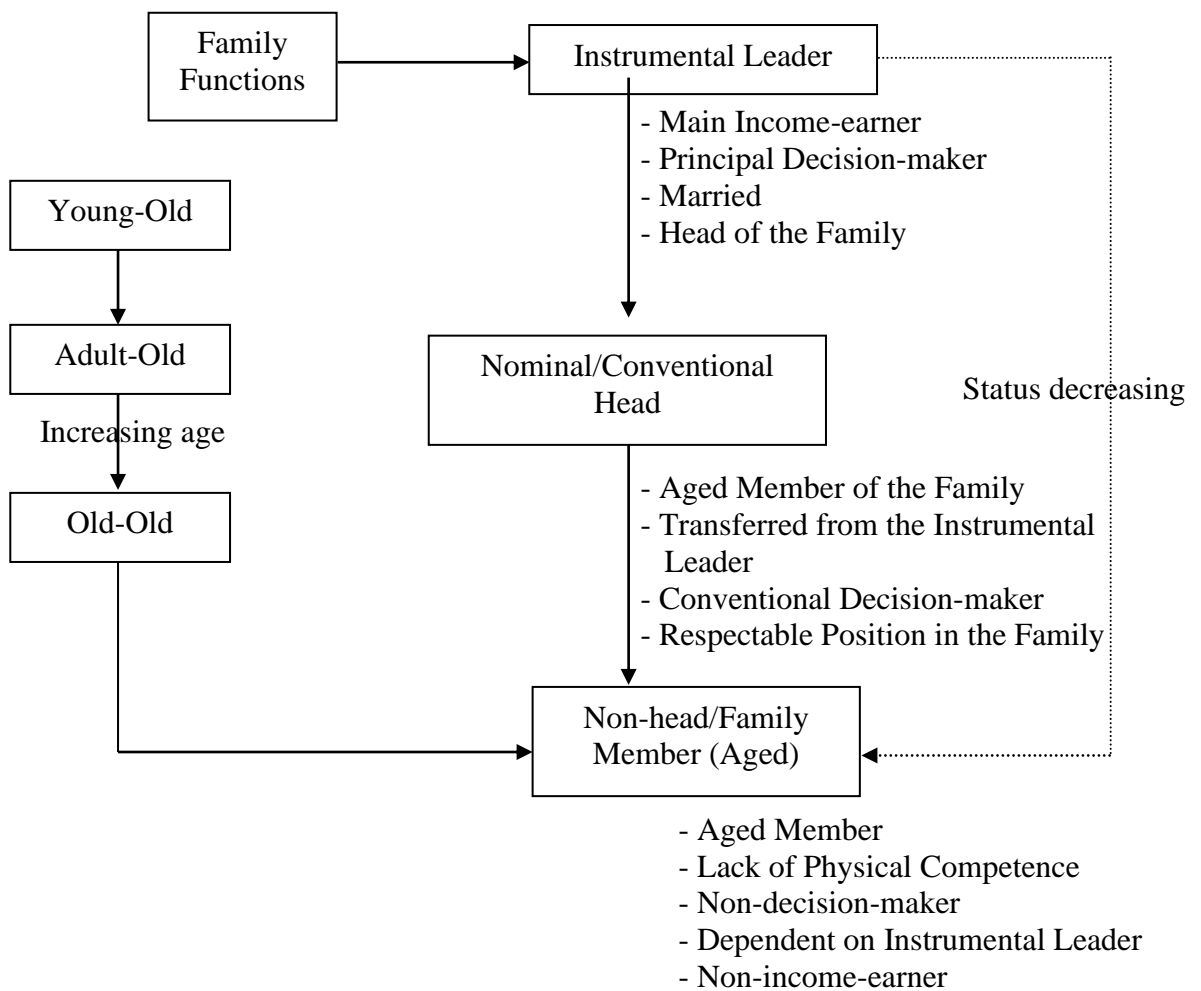


Figure 17: Transformation of the headship in the family

(Source: A.K.M Shafiul Islam. "Social Aspects of Aging in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Rajshahi City," An unpublished PhD diss., University of Rajshahi, 2002.)

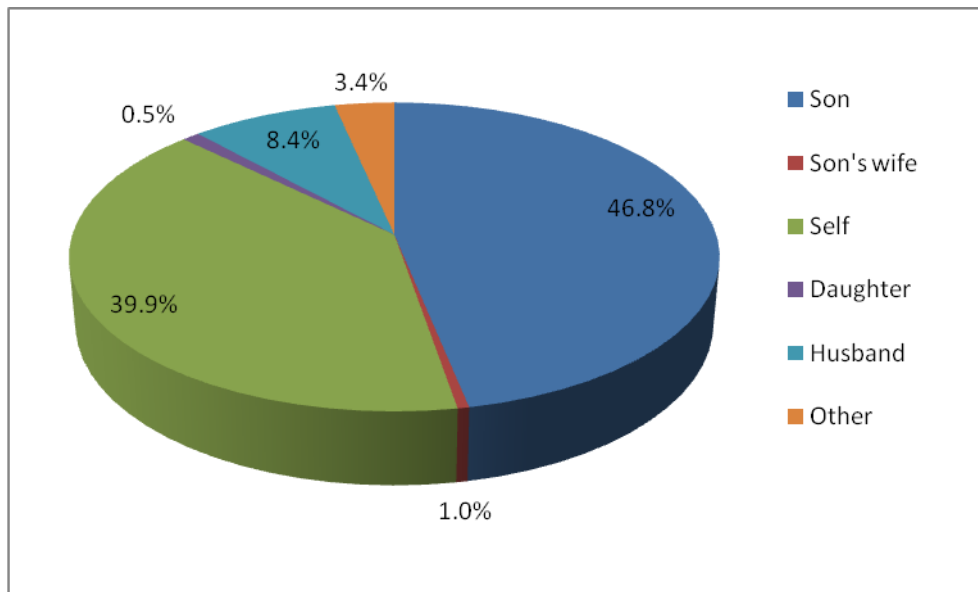
Table No. 5.1  
**Head of the family of the elderly**

Age Group of the respondents		Self	%	Son	%	Daughter	%	Wife/ Husband	%	Others	%	Total	%
Male	60-65	39	40.6	4	4.2	-	-	3	3.1	-	-	46	47.9
	65-70	15	15.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	15.6
	70-75	23	24.0	1	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	25.0
	75-80	3	3.1	2	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5.2
	80-85	3	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3.1
	85-90	3	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3.1
	Total	86	89.6	7	7.3	-	-	3	3.1	-	-	96	100.0
Female	60-65	20	18.7	32	29.9	-	-	16	15.0	4	3.7	72	67.3
	65-70	4	3.7	6	5.6	1	0.9	3	2.8	-	-	14	13.1
	70-75	2	1.9	5	4.7	-	-	3	2.8	1	.9	11	10.3
	75-80	-	-	2	1.9	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	3	2.8
	80-85	-	-	4	2.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2.8
	85-90	1	0.9	2	2.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3.7
	Total	27	25.2	51	47.7	2	1.9	22	20.6	5	4.7	107	100.0
G.total	113	55.7	58	28.6	2	1.0	25	11.5	5	2.5	203	100.0	

Head of the family in rural Bangladesh is considered as the central figure of enjoying the highest social status. Two types of head have been found in the study area. One is actual head, and the other is instrumental. In maximum cases those who are the income earner of a family are considered as the actual head. From the table it is understandable that considering head, the percentage of the male elderly is 89.6. Among them 40.6 percent is 60-65 age categories, about 15.6 percent is 65-70 and 24.0 percent is in 70-75 age categories. The rest of the percentage of the male elderly belongs to the above eighty years which is negligible percent. So, it can be said that, in case of head of the family, the young elderly have satisfactory position than the young, old or the old elderly. On the other hand, the percentage of the female elderly in this respect is about 25.2 percent from which 18.7 percent belongs to 60-65 age.

Figure 18

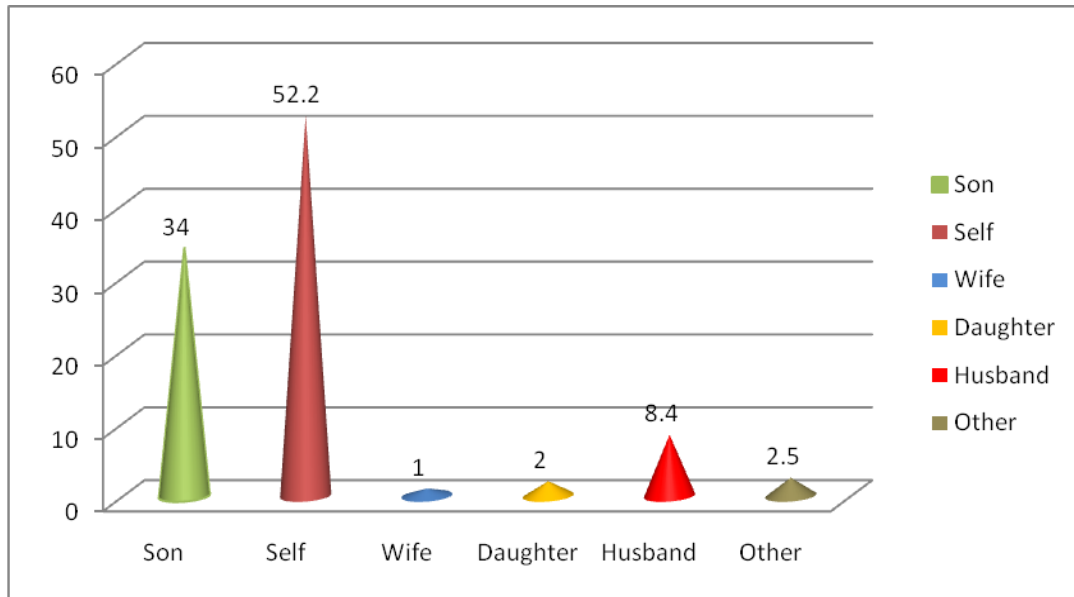
**Principal income earners in the family**



The new histories that focused on the elderly also revealed the important role economics play in creating a diverse history of old age. Economy is a social force which affects all classes of people including the elderly. As older households tend to have less income and generally a significant proportion of them depend upon the income of principal income earners in the family, the situation is reverse when considering the net worth of household. Once upon a time, the elderly were the heads of the family and central figures for enjoying the highest status. Major decisions as the familial matter came from them. Other members of the family had no option but to respect the decision offered by the elderly. It is evident from the graph mentioned above that this situation has undergone a radical change. At present it largely depends on the sweet will of income earners in the family of the elderly. From the table it is also understandable that 39.9 percent respondents are the principal income earners of the family whereas the percentage of sons in this case is 46.8. Again, there are 8.4 percent female elderly whose husbands are their income earners. The percentage of daughter in case of principal income earners is very negligible that is only 1.0 percent. If it is not accident related cause, they are to depend on father, husband or sons in our rural context.

Figure: 19

**Principal decision makers in the family of the elderly**



Some may think about the death of family, isolated pattern of family, and even the abolition of family in the context of urban society. In rural settings, social system is almost impossible without family. The explanation of family from functionalist point of view involves three basic questions: What are the functions of a family? What are the functional relationships between the family and other parts of social system? The third question is concerned with the function performed by an institution or a part of society for the individual.<sup>83</sup> The answer to the first question is maintenance of social system, the second question is integration and harmony and the third question is function of the family for its individual members. So, the role and status of the elderly depend largely on the principal decision makers of the family of the elderly. The analysis of the data in the above table shows that 52.2 percent elderly is still taking decision in the family. Though 34.0 percent is their sons, 8.4 percent on husband and 2.0 percent by daughters, the percentage of taking decision by their own is undoubtedly high. It indicates that the patriarchal nature of our rural social structure still exists significantly.

<sup>83</sup> M Haralambos, *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives* (London: University Tutorial Press, 1987)-330-31

Table No 5.2

**Principal income earner and decision maker of the family of the elderly**

Principal income earner	Principal decision maker of the family												Total	%
	Son	%	Self	%	Wife	%	Daughter	%	Husband	%	Other	%		
Son	66	32.5	25	12.3	2	0.9	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.5	95	46.8
Son's wife	-	-	1	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.5
Self	3	1.5	78	38.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81	39.9
Daughter	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.9	-	-	-	-	2	1.0
Husband	-	-	2	0.9	-	-	-	-	15	7.4	-	-	17	8.4
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.9	1	0.5	4	1.9	7	3.4
Total	69	34	106	52.2	2	0.9	4	1.8	17	8.4	5	2.4	203	100

In traditional societies, older people were often accorded a great deal of respect. Among cultures and included age grades, the elders usually had a major-often the final-say over matters of important functions of the family. Within families, the authority of both men and women mostly increased with age. Involvement in decision making process in family is the indicator of social status of the elderly and also the element of empowerment in family. In rural arena of our country the elderly were simultaneously income earners and decision makers. If they would not be income earners, they were still decision makers because, the familial tie and authority, norms and values, and custom and tradition were high for obeying the decision of the elderly in the family and society whether they were income earners or not. Now it is seen that the main income earners in maximum cases are involved in this matter. From this study it is easily observed that 38.4 elderly are the principal income earners and decision makers. The position of son in this point is about 32.5 percent. Though 32.5 percent sons are simultaneously income earners and decision makers, 12.3 percent elderly are decision makers though their sons are principal income earners. According to our tradition, the elderly are supposed to be decision makers. So, it indicates a changing situation in our social norms and values.

Table No .5.3

**Principal income earners and decision makers of spending earned income**

Persons		Principle income earner of the family								Total	%
		Self	%	Main income earner	%	Employed	%	Other	%		
Decision maker of spending earned income	Son	19	21.8	70	66.0	5	71.4	1	33.3	95	46.8
	Son's wife	1	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.5
	Self	65	74.7	14	13.2	2	28.6	-	-	81	39.9
	Daughter	-	-	1	0.9	-	-	1	33.3	2	1.0
	Husband	2	2.3	14	13.2	-	-	1	33.3	17	8.4
Total		87	100	106	100	7	100	3	100	203	100

Social institution is the structure and machinery through which a human society organizes, directs and executes various activities required to satisfy human needs. When man relates himself with others he creates what have been described as forms or structures in order to enable him meet his needs and function in other ways of life. Thus, the man is creator of forms in society, the formulator of rules, regulations, procedures, and forms or behavior, is governed and controlled by them, in order to function effectively in fulfillment of needs. Social institutions have been created by man form social relationships in society to meet basic needs such as stability, law and order, clearly defined roles or authority and decision making. There are five major institutions in rural society. These institutions are present in all societies so there are called as a basic institutions. Family is important among these institutions no doubt. Family as an institution provides for care, protection and nature of children. In rural family it is a common picture for present era that the principal income earners are the decision makers. Though about 39.9 percent elderly are the principal income earners, 74.7 percent can take decision of spending their income. It was supposed to be hundred percent. Near about 46.8 percent sons are the principal income earners and 21.8 percent of them can take decision of spending their income. So, the decision of spending earned income is gradually vested on sons of the family.

Table No. 5.4

**Decision making in buying and selling various items in the family of the elderly**

Decision Making	Frequency	Percent
Son	66	32.5
Self	102	50.2
Wife	9	4.4
Daughter	4	2.0
Husband	21	10.3
Other	1	0.5
Total	203	100.0

If the elderly are evaluated regarding doing any important task in the family they feel that they have strong attachment to family. To put it in another way they think that they have diligent role and gratified status. The table above represents that 50.2 percent respondents are still involved in buying and selling necessary things in the family. They are capable enough to take decision in this respect. On the other hand, the percentage of sons in this case is about 32.5 percent. About 10.3 percent in this respect is husband, that is, the female elderly who have husbands. The decision is taken by them in this regard. Merely 2.0 percent daughters are able to take part in doing these activities. Most probably it will not be verbosity that the elderly had essential role in these issues. Now in my study areas it has found that their percentage hardly exceeded the fifty percent.



**Table No. 5.5**

**Decision making in building and repairing in the family of the elderly**

Decision Making	Frequency	Percent
Son	73	36.0
Self	97	47.8
Wife	6	3.0
Daughter	4	2.0
Husband	22	10.8
Other	1	0.5
Total	203	100.0

Decision making in building and repairing dwelling houses is also important for enjoying role and status in the rural society of Bangladesh. Traditionally the elderly have mentality that their family members will give them importance in this matter. From the table it can be understood that 47.8 percent elderly is still active in this state of affaire. The dependency on sons in this matter is about 36.0 percent. The percentage of the husbands of the female elderly in this issue is also countable, no doubt.

**Table No 5.6**

**Decision makers for receiving treatment in the family**

Decision Making	Frequency	Percent
Son	76	37.4
Self	93	45.8
Wife	6	3.0
Daughter	3	1.5
Husband	24	11.8
Other	1	0.5
Total	203	100.0

The issue regarding where the members of the family will receive treatment from, who will decide in this affair, what type of treatment they will receive depend the nature of the family stature and willing of the orientation nature of the family especially in rural settings of our country. In this research, it is found that, 45.8 percent elderly can take decision and 37.4 percent depend on their sons. In the case of the female elderly, 11.8 percent depend on their husbands.

Table No. 5.7

**Seeking permission for going outside from home**

Opinion	Sex of the respondent				Total	%
	Male	%	Female	%		
Yes	33	16.25	78	38.4	111	54.7
No	63	31.03	29	14.3	92	45.3
Total	96	47.23	107	52.7	203	100.0

Homebound seniors in rural communities have been rarely included in gerontological studies. Homebound rural elderly face an array of multifaceted problems that are fairly intricately linked. Besides physical health limitations, they are to face some changing socio-cultural situations. Seeking permission for going outside from home is one of the indicators of understanding social status of the rural elderly in Bangladesh. It has two types of explanations. That is the elderly are either dependent physically or economically. Questions were asked to the respondents about going outside from home especially to relatives' house. In this case nearly 54.7 percent elderly replied that they are to seek permission and 45.3 percent of them opined that they are not take permission. The condition of female elderly is not good than male one. They were asked why they seek permission from family members as well as why they are not seek permission. They replied that they are to perform the following tasks in the family for these reasons they are to seek permission from their family members. These activities and their percentage from 111 respondents out of 203 are mentioned in following table:

Table: 5.8

**Causes of seeking permission in case of going outside from home**

Causes	Number	Percentage
Take care of children	35	31.53
Look after domestic animal	20	18.02
Help in shopping	11	9.91
Help in doing every day familial activities	20	18.02
Supervision of cultivable land	20	18.02
Others	05	4.50
Total	111	100

The gerontological study focuses that during prehistory the family members sought permission from elderly in case of going outside from home. This tradition was also available in Indian and Bangladeshi society also. The situation has already been almost altered. Now the elderly are to seek permission regarding this matter. Whenever the elderly want to go outside from house about 54.7 percent of them are to their homebound affairs. As 92 respondents are not seek permission in this issue out of 203, an attempt has made to show how much percentage of elderly are sought permission due to various activities in family which are performed by them. In this regard it has found that approximately 31.53 percent are not allowed to go outside as they are to take care of children, 18.02 percent look after domestic animal, 9.91 percent help in shopping, 18.02 percent help in doing everyday other activities, and about same percent of elderly are to supervise cultivable land. So, once they were dominant, now they are dependent. It is also their mental pressure and pain no doubt.

Table No. 5.9

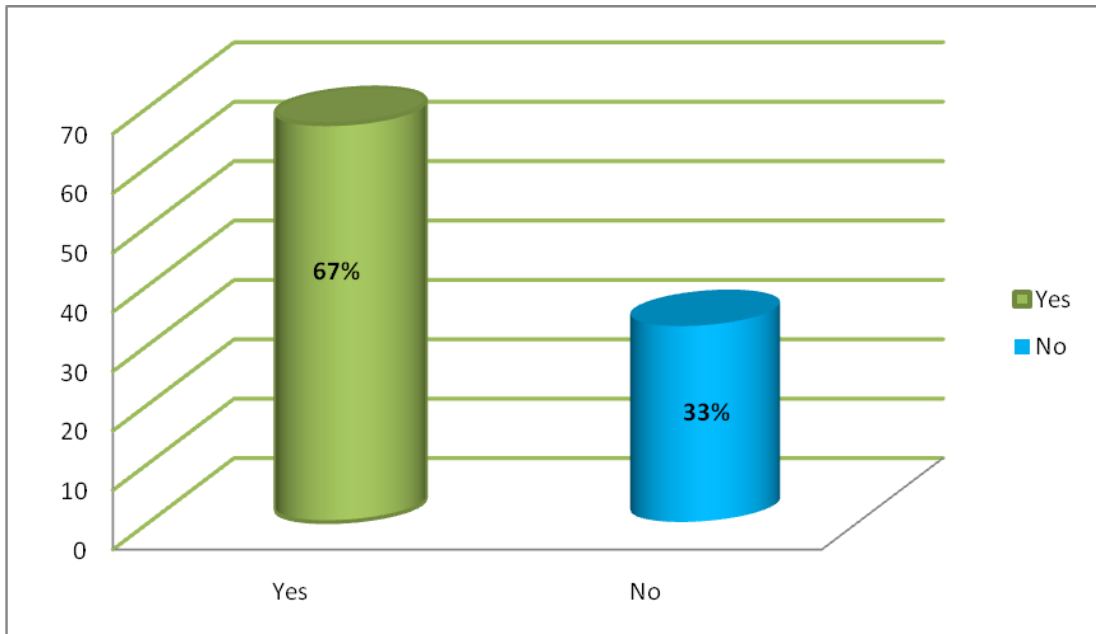
**Position and nature of acceptance of the decision of the elderly in the family**

Position in the family	Nature of accepting decisions by the family members						Total	%
	Properly	%	Conventionally	%	Don't accept	%		
Head of family	75	36.9	22	10.8	3	1.5	100	49.3
Elderly	24	11.8	22	10.8	7	3.4	53	26.1
Dependent	13	6.4	21	10.3	8	4.0	42	20.7
Only Member	1	0.5	5	2.5	2	0.9	8	3.9
Total	113	55.6	70	34.4	20	9.8	203	100

Nature of accepting decision of the elderly in the family is the source of mental wellbeing of the elderly. It has shown in the light of the position of the elderly in the family. The table shows that when 49.3 percent elderly enjoy their status as the head of the family, their decision is about 36.9 percent accepted properly, 10.8 percent conventionally and 1.5 percent of their decision is not accepted by the family members. When their status is elderly in the family 11.8 percent decision of them is accepted properly, 10.8 percent conventionally and 3.4 percent is not accepted. If they are considered as the only family members, their position in the family is vulnerable. So, as an elderly, dependent, and family member, their status is not satisfactory in the family. It is noticeable that if the position of elderly in the family is head, their decision is given priority significantly. On the other hand, if the position of the elderly in the family is only elderly, their decision in the family is not given priority properly. But the question is, how much is the percentage of rural elderly as head of the family? Who can be the head of a family? What are the things that help the elderly to be family heads? Surely, the answer of these questions obtained and narrated in the chapter is the influence of wealth on the enjoyment of role and status.

Figure: 20

**Taking part in decision making process of the elderly stated above**



When we think about decisions we try to imagine that an individual consciously weighing up evidence rationally, and reaching a logical conclusion about a specific correct course of action. In reality, most decision-making is not like that, but the traditional model of rational decision-making continues no doubt. Here it has also given emphasis by looking more deeply at what exactly is involved in the decisions that matter in an ageing society, including contextual, social, ethical, habitual and unconscious factors that shape our decisions, and also inform second-order decision-making, that is, our decisions about the basis on which decisions should be made. The analytical foundations of rational decision-making have been called into question, and a new perspective is emerging in which more compelling factors that influence decisions are identified, including, inter alia, the role of habit, the desire for cognitive consistency, the influence of social norms and the need to feel like the persons who are doing the right thing.

Through life history method they elderly were requested to describe what they have seen and observed throughout their lives. Question was also asked to the respondents whether the elderly could take part in these decisions previously or not. Almost 67.0 percent of the elderly replied positively whereas 33.0 percent replied that they have no idea about it. So, the table reflects that the elderly previously could involve themselves in decision making process properly. Now this situation has changed.

Kofi Anan, the secretary general of United Nations said that “Trees grow stronger over the years, rivers wider. Likewise with age, human beings gain immeasurable depth and breadth of experience and wisdom. That is why older persons should not only be respected and revered; they should be utilized as the rich source to society that they are”.<sup>84</sup> Theoretically and ethically this speech is important. In reality it is found different.

Considering the heads of the family of the elderly, it is found that, the percentage of male elderly is 89.6 percent among them 40.6 percent is 60-65 age categories, about 15.6 percent is 65-70 and 24.0 percent is in 70-75 in age categories. The rest of the percentage of the male elderly belongs to the above eighty years which is negligible percent. On the other hand the percentage of the female elderly in this respect is about 25.2 percent from which 18.7 percent belongs to 60-65 age.

It is also understandable that 39.9 percent respondents are the principal income earners of the family whereas the percentage of sons in this case is 46.8. Again, there are 8.4 percent female elderly whose husbands are their income earners. Nearly 52.2 percent elderly is still taking decision in the family and 38.4 percent elderly are the principal income earners and decision makers and the position of the sons in this point is about 32.5 percent. Though 32.5 percent son is simultaneously income earner and decision maker, 12.3 percent elderly are decision makers though their sons are principal income earners.

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<sup>84</sup> Prafulla Chakrabarti, *Sunset Years of Life*, Kolkata: Urbee Prokashan, 2009.

Regarding taking decision in buying and selling something in the family it is found that 50.2 percent respondents still are involved in this decision making process. On the other hand, the percentage of sons in this respect is about 32.5 percent.

In case of receiving treatment in the family it is found that 45.8 percent elderly can take decision but 37.4 percent depend on their sons. Regarding female elderly, 11.8 percent depend on their husbands. About 38.4 percent female elderly replied that they are to seek permission and 14.3 percent of them opined that they are not to take permission as they are almost separated from the family members whereas the percentage of male elderly in this aspect is about 16.25 and 31.03. The condition of female elderly is not good than male one.

When 49.3 percent elderly enjoy their status as the heads of the family their decision is accepted 36.9 percent properly, 10.8 percent conventionally and 1.5 percent of their decision is not accepted by the family members. When their status is elderly in family 11.8 percent decision of them is accepted properly, 10.8 percent conventionally and 3.4 percent is not accepted. If they are considered as the only family members, their position in family is vulnerable. So, as an elderly, dependent, and family member, their status is not satisfactory in the family. Question was also asked to the respondents whether the elderly could take part in these decisions previously or not. About 67.0 percent of the elderly replied positively whereas 33.0 percent replied that they have no idea about it.

**From the analysis of chi-square test table – 4 (i), table – 4 (ii), table – 4 (iii) (see Appendix -5, page 179-182)** there is a significant effect between principal income earners of the family and principal decision maker of the family, position and nature of acceptance of the decision of the family and sex and position of elderly in buying and selling necessary things for the family. The study has found that regarding decision making process in the family the position of elderly are largely nominal rather than actual. Both the role and status of the elderly in this regard is going to reach at a vulnerable position.

# Chapter – 6

## Influence of Wealth on the Enjoyment of Role and Status

Generally wealth refers to the abundance of valuable resources or material possessions. It includes natural, human, and physical assets, such as, land, education, infrastructure etc. That is, everything valuable a person or family owns is called land. There are various factors affecting the role and status of the elderly. That is, political, social, cultural, demographic and economic factors affect the role and status of the elderly. The following framework may remind us of how these factors affect the status and wellbeing of the elderly.

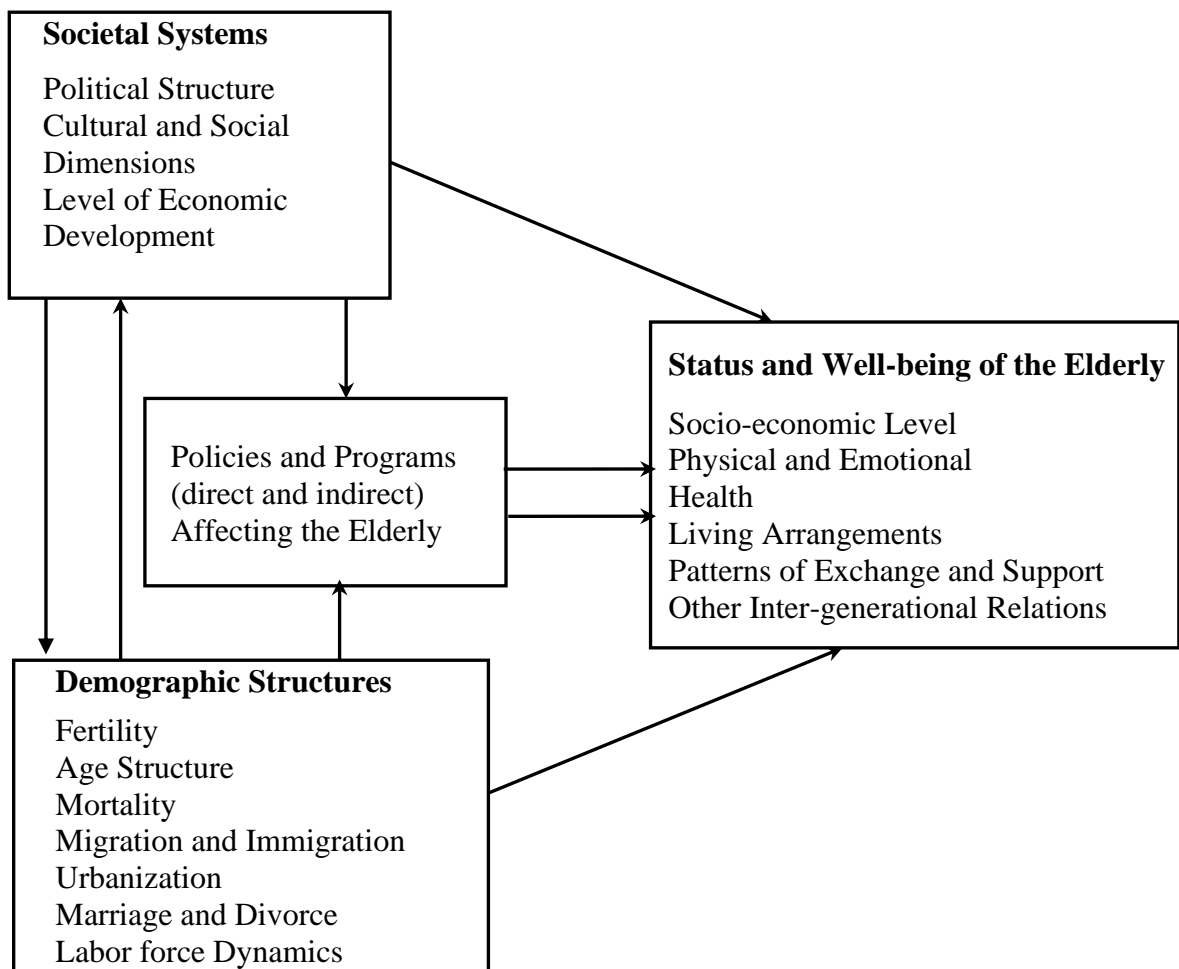


Figure 21: Conceptual framework for factors affecting the status and well-being of the elderly (Kabir, 1999)

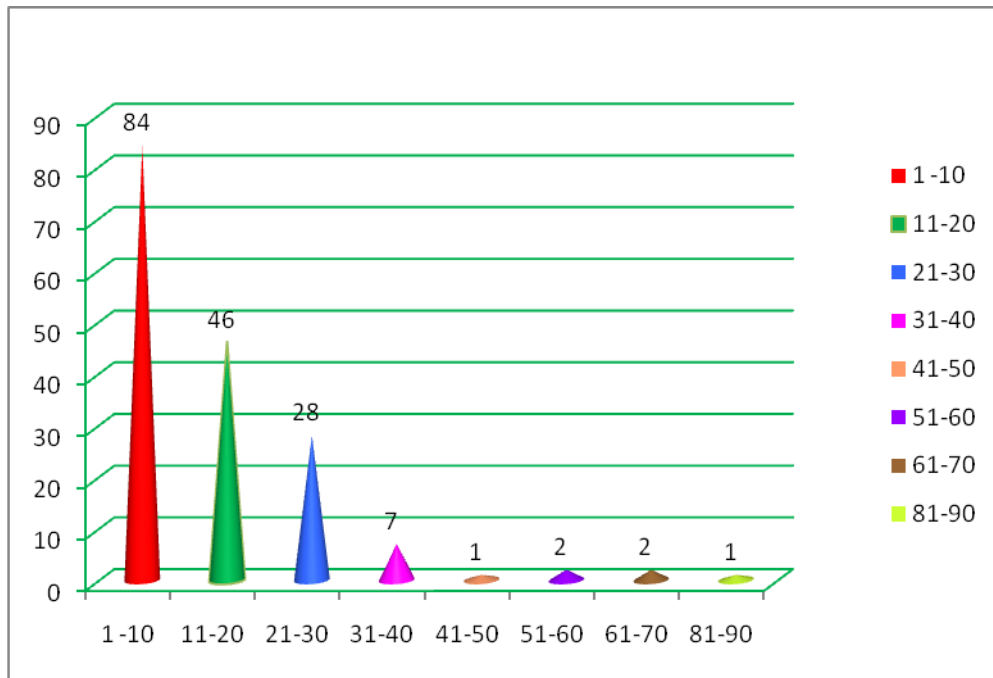
Source : Kabir ,The Elderly Contemporary Issues.



This framework explains that societal system (political structure, cultural and social dimensions, level of economic development) determines policies, programs, demographic structure, status and wellbeing of the elderly. Similarly, demographic structure (fertility, age, mortality, migration, marriage, divorce, labor force dynamics) influences policies, programs, and wellbeing of the elderly. However, in this chapter an attempt has made to discuss how the wealth including land, property, bank-balance, garden, pond, domestic animals etc influence the elderly especially on the enjoyment of their role and status. It should be also kept in mind that the institution of property may also include either tangible or intangible wealth or both. Tangible objects include land, mines, houses, furniture, tools, clothes, jewels and other raw materials. Intangible property means good will of a person, and intellectual and artistic things. So, property and wealth may have difference but they are also connected to each other especially for the context of our rural society. Property is also inseparably included in wealth.

Figure: 22

**Homestead land of the elderly**



The increase of population and reduction of natural resources in our country have forced human beings to give priority on rural lands which play an important role for rural power structure and essentially important for rural elderly for taking part in decision and enjoying familial status as the value of land is still increasing. So, the elderly who have homestead land and the elderly who do not possess this, enjoy different position in the rural power structure. The table above indicates that about 41.4 percent elderly do not have more than 10 decimal of homestead land. About 22.7 percent have 11-20 decimal land. On the other hand, the elderly who have more than 50 and above decimal of homestead land are not totally more than 3 percent. Homestead land is included in property, and property is the indicator of prestige or status. So, from the table it is obvious that the position of the rural elderly in our country in this point is not at a good condition rather than vulnerable one.

Table No. 6.1

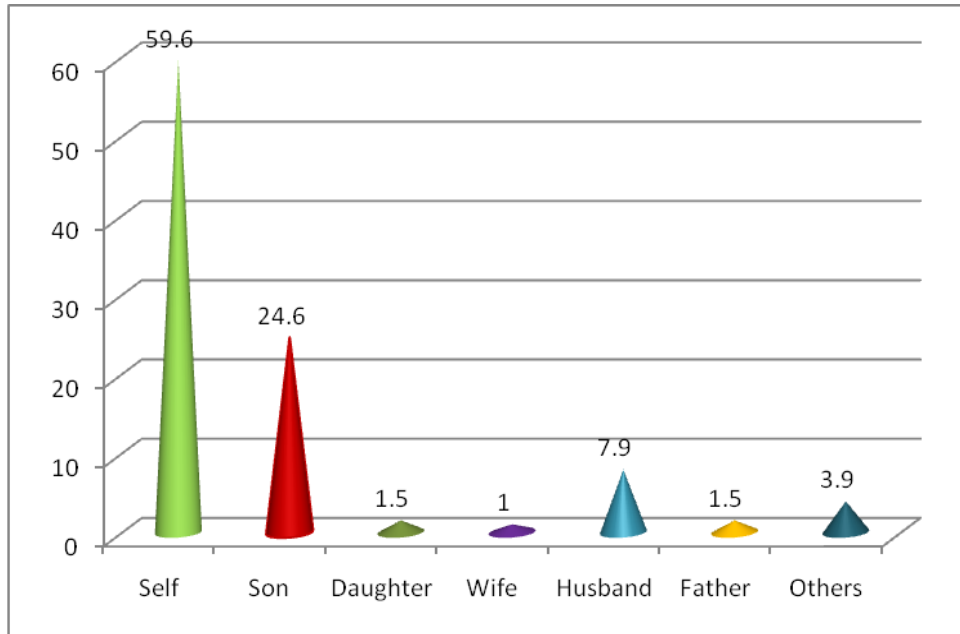
**Amount of cultivable land of the elderly**

Cultivable Land in decimal	Frequency	Percent
1-100	99	48.8
101-200	8	3.9
201-300	5	2.5
301-400	3	1.5
601-700	3	1.5
Total	118	58.1

From the table it can be understood that about 48.8 percent elderly have merely 1-100 decimal of cultivable land. On the other hand, the elderly who have more than 100 decimal of cultivable land are not totally more than 10 percent. Cultivable land is one of the most important properties of our rural society for playing role and enjoying status. From the table it is obviously understandable that the position of the rural elderly in our country regarding this issue is not satisfactory.

Figure: 23

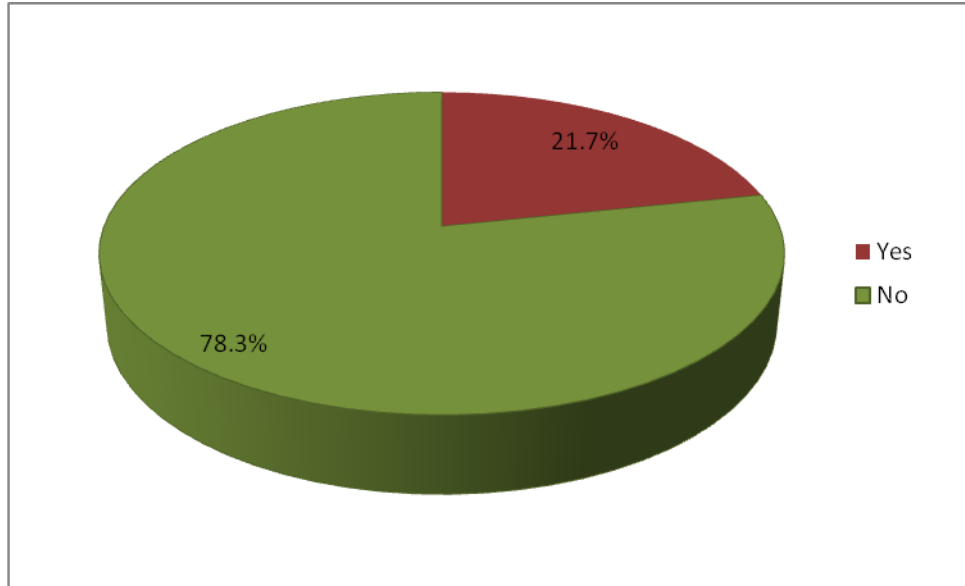
### Ownership of house of the elderly



When we think about homelessness, the elderly people issue doesn't immediately come to our mind. Homeless elders, although increasing in numbers, continue to be a forgotten population. In rural society they are not homeless at all. They have home. They are the owner of the home but it is not absolute. Home is not totally the asset of elderly. The other members of the family possess this ownership. The figure above highlights that merely 59.6 percent elderly are the owner of the house. The percentage of son in this case is about 24.6 percent, daughter is about 1.5 percent. There are some families in rural society consisting merely wife and husband who are sixty and above years old, 7.9 percent male elderly are the owner of the house and the percentage of female elderly is about 1.0 percent. So, the position of female elderly are also vulnerable than male one.

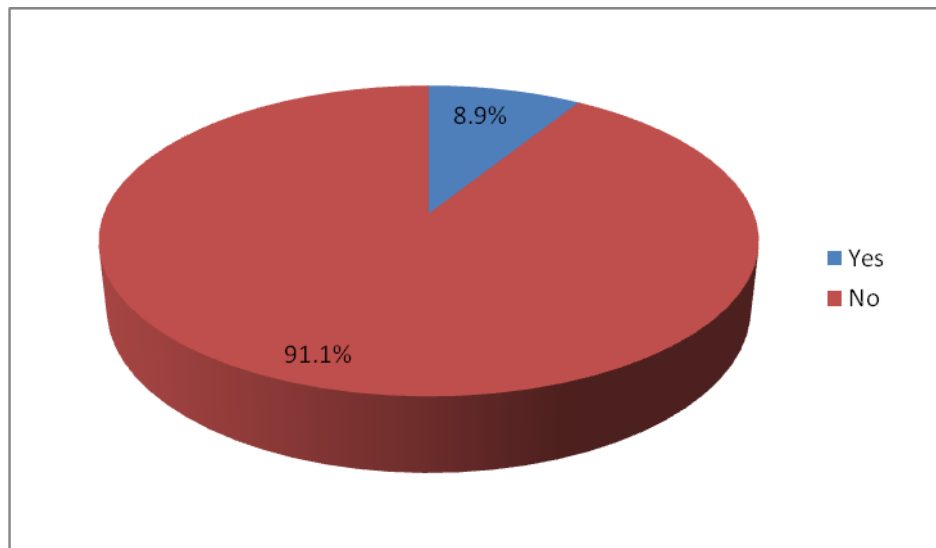
Figure: 24

**Ownership of pond**



In rural Bangladesh, ponds play very vital role in socio, cultural, economic and environmental development. It is the common property of villages and supports the livelihoods of the marginalized community in rural, urban, coastal and tribal areas of Bangladesh. These small scale water bodies generate substantial income to village common fund through usufructs (fishery, trees etc.), which in turn is used for village development work. The ponds capture the runoff water of the monsoon rainfall occurring in a short span of time and providing water for irrigation and other multiple uses for the community who depend on this. These ponds are highly adoptive to the implications of the climate change. However, it can be observed from the study of the table that about 78.3 percent elderly have no pond. It is also the source of income and indicator of enjoying status as well as playing role along with other indicators of wealth in rural society. As nearly eighty percent elderly have no pond, they are not able to earn more by this means of income. Ownership of pond is not only source of income and element of enjoying status but also the ingredient of protein based food for the elderly.

Figure: 25  
**Ownership of Garden**



Gardening activities are centered on women and it can increase income for them, which may result in the better use of household resources and improved caring practices. Thus, the simultaneous impact of gardening programs in terms of giving a position in family and promoting their full participation in domestic life can make an important contribution to the overall development of communities. For poor households, vegetables and fruits are often the only source of micronutrients in the family diet. Homestead production of fruits and vegetables provides the household with direct access to important nutrients that may not be readily available or within their economic reach. Therefore, gardening would be a good means to improve household food security. Garden, especially fruit, provides food, fiber, fodder and other important things for consumption as well as sale. It plays an important role in the development efforts of motivating the rural people in seeking self sufficiency. Garden is the source of income, and income is the indicator of playing role and enjoying status. It is considered to be the important indicator of enjoying role and status in the rural society of our country. The table indicates that more than ninety percent elderly have no garden. Near about nine percent elderly have garden.

Table No. 6.2

**Ownership of domestic animal**

Sex of the respondent	Domestics animal			
	Yes	%	No	%
Male	59	29.1	37	18.2
Female	56	27.6	51	25.1
Total	115	56.7	88	43.3

The domestic animals play very important socio-economic and cultural roles for the wellbeing of rural elderly, such as food supply, source of income, asset saving, source of employment, soil fertility, livelihoods, agricultural diversification and sustainable agricultural production. It has an important contribution for food supply of rural and urban areas and contributes to the family nutrition. Besides milk, eggs and meat used as a source of food, other livestock products are used for domestic consumption. Domestic animals as living savings can be converted into cash whenever the family needs it is a security asset influencing access to informal credits. In many rural regions financial markets are absent or non-existent; domestic animals are a source of asset accumulation and a measure of prosperity. It can be seen as “bank account” and important source of family savings for rural people. In rural society the maximum elderly are to live their lives from hand to mouth. Domestic animals help them to recover from hand empty situation. The female elderly domesticate goat, sheep, hen, duck etc. They sell eggs of the hen and duck and buy necessary things for conducting daily life. On the other hand, milky cows help them overcome the want of every day need. The table describes that 56.7 percent elderly have no domestic animals where as 43.3 percent have it. Again, 29.1 percent male elderly possess the domestic animals whereas the position of female elderly in this case is about 27.6 percent. The interesting fact is that female elderly almost look after the domestic animals but they all have no ownership of it. As, it is the source of income, important factor for enjoying status in the family of the rural society, their condition is not satisfactory here.

Table: 6.3

**Information on livestock of the elderly**

Name of animal	Number	Percentage
Buffalo	00	0
Cow	15	13.04
Goat	20	17.39
Sheep	04	3.48
Duck	23	20
Hen	53	46.09

Livestock plays a vital role in economic development and play a major role in the life of farmers in developing countries like ours. In rural society, the importance of live stock is beyond explanation. As it provides major additional contribution to agriculture through draft power, manure, fuel, fertilizer etc., the significance of it for rural elderly especially for rural female elderly is significant. Animal products such as meat, milk and eggs provide daily cash income to agricultural families and also provide much required nutrition to rural population. The outlook for the poultry farming is promising. This is because It is element of food supply, source of income, asset saving, source of employment, soil fertility, livelihoods, transport, agricultural traction, agricultural diversification and sustainable agricultural production as stated before. Livestock production includes chickens, pigs, goats, cattle, horses, buffaloes and sheep the main species. Beyond the economic function, each livestock species also performs social and cultural functions. Besides milk, eggs and meat used as a source of food, other livestock products are used for domestic. As 88 respondents out of 203 don't have domestic animals like these their condition in this sector is not satisfactory. Those who have livestock among them 46.09 percent domesticate hen, 20.00 percent duck, about 3.48 percent sheep, 17.39 percent goat, and 13.04 percent is cow. Once upon a time the rural people used to domesticate Buffalo, now they are not interested about it.



Table No. 6.4

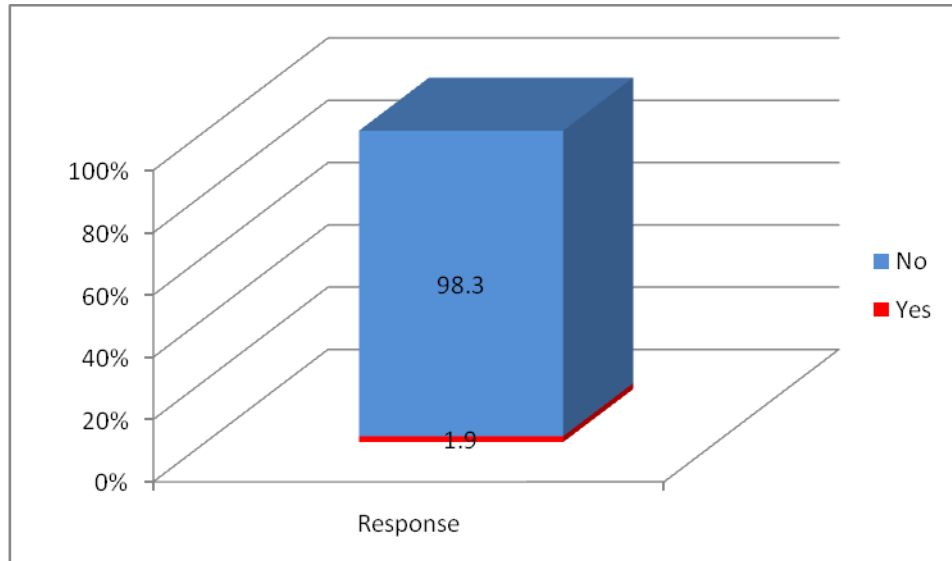
**Ownership of furniture in house**

Sex of the respondent	Ownership of furniture			
	Yes	%	No	%
Male	86	60.14	27	45.00
Female	57	39.86	33	55.00
Total	143	100.00	60	100.00

Rural society has become very much complex that encompasses many aspects. The family is the primary unit in the rural society and it is the core of all social and economic activities. Social relationships are gradually being declining in recent time due to a number of factors. It is really at this juncture difficult to generalize regarding the social characteristics of our rural society because there tends to be a great deal of variation due to differences in the social position, behavior, norms, values, and attitudes of individuals or groups of people. Rural people especially elderly when they are almost hopeless and helpless due to poverty and other socio-cultural factors want to live with what they have. They very often give emphasis on their household furniture as they consider it the sources of wealth. On the other hand, the members of the family sometime take care of the elderly with a view to taking these by means of satisfying elderly. It has become facts that what the elderly have rather who are they and where are they. The table above clearly points out that about 60.14 percent male elderly are the owners of furniture where as the percentage of female elderly is about 39.86 percent. On the other hand 45.00 percent male elderly said that they have no furniture whereas the percentage of female elderly in this case is about 55.00 percent. The position of female elderly in this sector is not equal in study area.

Figure: 26

**Information on bank-balance**



It has already been stated in introductory chapter that three questions are related to the elderly issue. That is, who the elderly are, where they are, and what they are? That is, economic aspects are related to the elderly issue. To speak straightly, role and status of the elderly depend largely on the economic condition the rural elderly have. From the table it is understandable that 98.03 percent elderly have no bank balance at all. The question is why? It is found that maximum elderly do not have sufficient money to keep in bank, maximum of them do not have sufficient knowledge on banking system, and some them are interested in keeping money in hand. Besides, it has also described in the chapter socio-economic condition of the elderly that about 75.00 percent male elderly and 79.4 percent female elderly do not know how to read and write let alone having knowledge on banking system. So, it can not expect from them that they will keep their money in bank.

Table No. 6.5

**Ownership of ornaments of the elderly**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	120	59.11
No	83	40.89
Total	203	100.0

It is natural that the women are fond of ornaments. If the mother or mother-in-law has ornaments, the daughter or sons' wives look upon them differently than the female elderly who do not have. Of course, it is a trend not common to all. From the table it is understandable that 59.11 percent elderly have ornaments. On the other hand, 40.89 percent have no ornaments. Ornaments especially for women in our rural society play important role for enjoyment of status and role for the elderly.

Table No. 6.6

**Getting invitation in the local socio-cultural programs by the elderly**

Age Group	Getting invitation in local socio-cultural programs			
	Yes	%	No	%
60 – 65	35	17.2	83	40.7
65 - 70	11	5.4	18	8.9
70 - 75	15	7.4	20	9.9
75 - 80	2	1.0	6	3.0
80 - 85	5	2.5	2	1.0
85 -90	1	0.5	5	2.5
Total	69	34.0	134	66.0

The table above gives an exact picture of status of the rural elderly in Bangladesh. Getting invitation in local socio-cultural program is the indicator of enjoying status. It is noticeable from the data that about 34.0 percent elderly get invitation in local socio-cultural programs. Among them 17.2 percent belong to 60-65, 5.4 percent 65-70 and 7.4 percent 70-75 age categories whereas 66.0 percent elderly cannot enjoy this. The fact is that they cannot contribute to the program. Another important fact is that the participation of the young elderly (60-75) is higher than the old elderly in this matter. So, age has also influence in getting invitation to local socio-cultural programs.

Table: 6.7

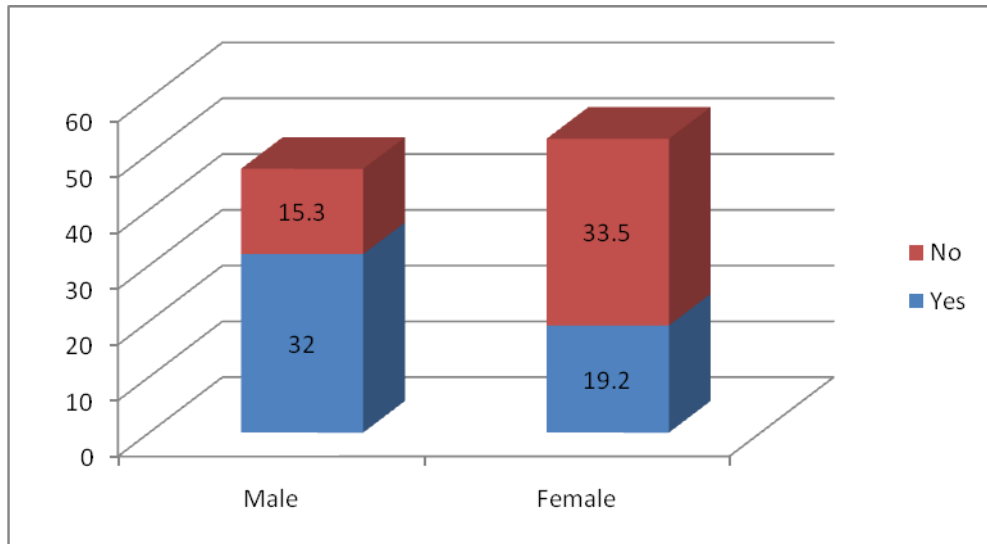
**Causes of not getting invitation in local socio- cultural and programs**

Causes	Number	Percentage
Physically not fit for going there	09	6.72
Poverty	82	61.20
Disinterested to go there considering spending money	19	14.18
Previously, I didn't contribute according to their expectation	08	5.97
Others	16	11.94
Total	134	100

Participation of rural elderly in socio-cultural programs is considered to be largely determined by various factors such as increased poverty levels due to retirement from work, reduced income generating activities as they lose their level of physical activity, loss of spouse and its impact on mental well being etc. The lack of participation in socio-cultural activities by the elderly is significantly associated with increased their morbidity and mortality. Because, it entails both informal and formal roles for the aged person and keep mentally fit for performing role. Disability exacerbates in the presence of chronic conditions, which in turn might adversely affect elderly people's participation in these programs. In addition to age related disability, socio-economic conditions and lifestyle factors are associated with social participation of the elderly in any society of the world. Life events including gender are important factor influencing social participation in old age, as women are generally more socially and economically disadvantaged than older men in our patriarchal society. However, this study identified that 134 respondents out of 203 do not get invitation in local socio-cultural programs and about 61.20 percent of them can not participate due to poverty.

Figure: 27

**Compelling family members to do work according to the desire of the elderly**



The figure above hints the ability to compel the members of the family to do work according to the wishes of the elderly in the rural society. It is obvious from the graph that near about fifty percent including 32.0 percent male and 19.2 percent female can compel the members to do according to their wishes. On the other hand, about 48.8 percent elderly including 15.3 percent male and 33.5 percent female can not do this. In past it was high, no doubt. At present their ability is decreasing drastically day by day not for their declining situation of health or age related problems but for economic crisis.

Table No. 6.8

**If the elderly help the poor in the village**

Principal income earner	Response				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Son	52	25.6	43	21.2	95	46.8
Son's wife	1	0.5	-	-	1	0.5
Self	38	18.7	43	21.2	81	39.9
Daughter	-	-	2	1.0	2	1.0
Husband	4	2.0	13	6.4	17	8.4
Other	1	0.5	6	3.0	7	3.4
Total	96	47.3	107	52.7	203	100

Helping the poor man by the elderly depends largely on three causes: economic ability, mentality, and their dependency upon other people. The table placed above highlights that principal income earners play important role in helping the poor than the elderly because about 47.3 percent principal income earners including 25.6 percent son 18.7 percent elderly can help the poor man and 52.7 percent including 21.2 percent, sons and 21.2 percent elderly cannot do this. Though these types of activities are generally done by the principal income earners of the family, previously the elderly as a whole could do these.

Table No. 6.9

**If the elderly can invite relatives on different socio- religious occasions**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	123	60.6
No	80	39.4
Total	203	100.0

The data in the above table points out that about 60.6 percent elderly can invite their relatives in different socio religious occasions. On the other hand, 39.4 percent elderly cannot do this due to lack of economic ability. So, it is clear from the explanation that in spite of having inclination the elderly in our rural society cannot do this mainly for

economic hardship. The elderly also think that if they would have wealth or economic support, they could invite their relatives to their house. They opined that the elderly previously could do these because they were respected by the family members. Now, according to their opinion, who cares whom!

Table No. 6.10

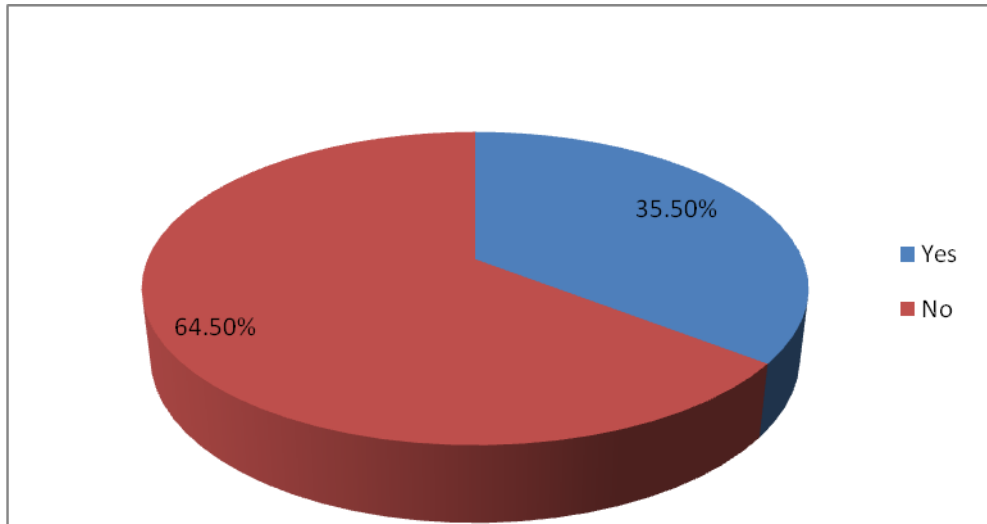
**Causes of not inviting relatives in different socio- religious occasions**

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Want of money	45	56.25
Son/ sons can't tolerate it	12	15.0
Son's wife can't tolerate it	6	7.5
Other members of the family can't tolerate it	10	12.5
Others	07	8.75
Total	80	100

It is still a tradition of our rural society that when any socio- religious programs are arranged in the village and close to the villages the village people want to invite their relatives in these programs. Such as, Waj mahfil (lectures and instructions on religion), Village fair, Folk songs, Boat race, Horse race, Jatra gan (open air drama) etc. The study explored that about 39.4 percent elderly that is 80 respondents out of 203 can not invite their relatives when these types of programs are held in their villages. Questions were asked to them why they are not able to do this. Approximately 56.25 percent opined that they can not due to want of money, about 15.0 percent said that their sons can not tolerate , near about 7.5 percent replied that they can not do it due to their sons' wives, about 12.5 admitted that their family members don't like this and about 8.75 percent imposed it on other causes.

Figure: 28

**Participation of elderly in rural arbitration**



Taking part in rural arbitration is also the symbol of enjoying role and status of the elderly. But it depends on the economic condition, educational qualities or level of education, previous position of occupation, access to urban society, powerful persons among the relatives, political attachment with the political parties, physical ability and ascribed qualities of elderly in rural settings. Those who have highest position in these sectors are able to take part in rural arbitration and the rural people also fear to them and abide by their decisions. The table shows that 35.5 percent elderly can take part in this matter. The pathetic fact is that, 64.5 percent elderly can not take part in rural arbitration.



Table: 6.11

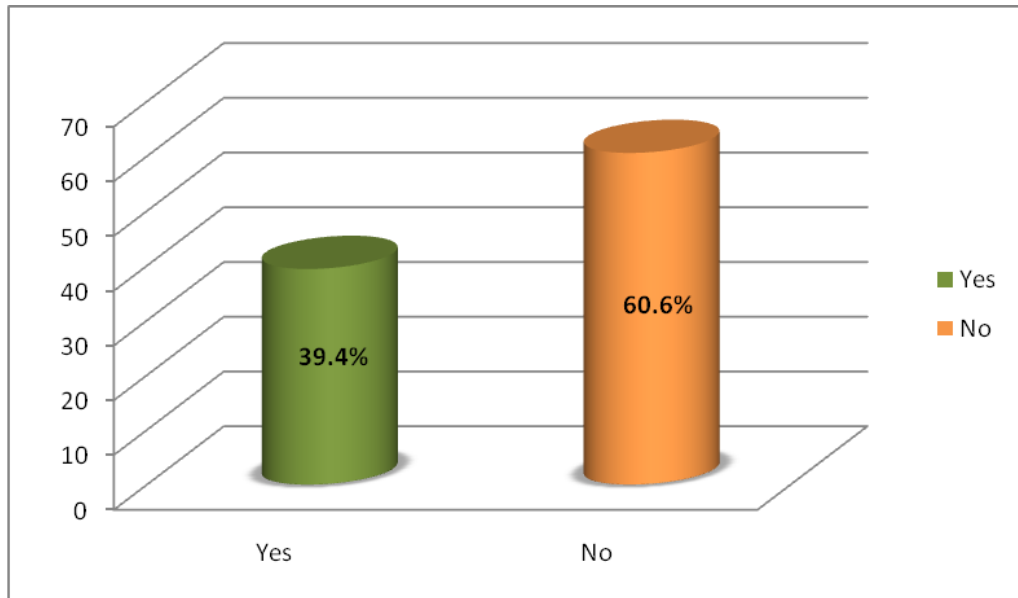
**Causes of not participating in rural arbitration**

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Disabled	10	7.63
Uneducated	14	10.69
No previous prestigious occupation	13	9.92
Don't have much wealth-property	65	49.62
No powerful person among relatives	12	9.16
Not too many sons to support him for compelling people	09	6.87
No involvement in politics	08	6.11
Total	131	100

Previously the village satisfied all the needs of the people. The people had a sense of unity and a feeling of amiability towards each other. That is, the village was a primary social institution. Faith in religion and universal power was highly found in the life of the villages. The major occupation was agriculture which involved dependence on nature. Farmers worship forces of nature. The life of the village was the joint family system. Family had a strict control and administrative powers over the individual. In the life of the villagers group feeling occupied an important place. They would respect the judgment and obey the orders of their elders. Now this situation has modified and with this become complicated in nature. Near about 35.5 percent elderly can take part in this matter whereas about 64.5 percent elderly can not take part in rural arbitration. Those who can not take part in this about 49.62 percent of them accused less wealth-property for this. The rest of the respondents who can not take part mentioned that they can not do as they are disabled, uneducated, lack of previous prestigious occupation, no powerful persons among relatives, not too many sons who can support them, and for having no involvement in politics.

Figure: 29

### Giving importance to elderly in the family



Although at the early stages of economic development, family-based support systems provide a principle source of old-age security, the responsibility of taking care of the aged by the family members or giving importance to them in family is gradually changing. Because the level of economic development varies, the level and the nature of family support also vary substantially between nations. Moreover, family support is also likely to be different between urban and rural areas. The majority of the elderly in Bangladesh are likely to reside in rural areas. The role of family for giving importance to elderly is vital. Feeling important persons in the family depends on several factors. They are: economic, political social, cultural, religious, and demographic factors. These factors are interrelated to each other. However, the table shows that about 60.6 percent elderly do not think themselves the important members of the family as well as society whereas 39.4 percent of them think important persons in the family.

Table No. 6.12

**If the elderly are given importance in family**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	96	47.3
No	107	52.7
Total	203	100.0

The elderly in the family would play the following roles in the family: They were the ultimate mentor. They shared their life experiences and gave advice. Their old stories were and are still very entertaining. Another thing they did was solve family disputes. Their judgment overrules all others in the family. Now these things have undergone changed. Now, the position of the elderly in the family depends on the role of the elderly as well as the position of family in the society. The structure of family and the relation of elderly with family members indicate whether they will be given importance in the family or not. The elderly want to keep good relation with other members of the family. Simultaneously they expect that from them. From the table, it is also apparent that 47.3 percent respondents admitted that the members of the family give importance to them whereas 52.7 percent of the elderly admitted that the family members don not give importance to them. That is to say, they are not important for playing vital role in the family. Question was also asked them, why? They replied that, due to economic hardship, physical dependency and changing situation of society, they are not given importance to them.

Table No. 6.13

**Whether the statuses stated above enjoyed previously by the elderly**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	139	68.5
No	64	31.5
Total	203	100.0

When the researcher asked the respondents to describe their lives they have seen in their lives on above mentioned description maximum said that those days have gone by. According to their opinion the position of the elderly in the family and the society and the relation of elderly with various social institutions were really satisfactory as they observed throughout their lives in their family of orientation and procreation. The elderly have a tendency to recall the past more and more at time when they observe any radical change in activity of the family and society. This is because; they observed many things throughout their life. Now they want to match the present time with the past. Through life- history method it is known that 68.5 percent elderly could enjoy the statuses stated above whereas 31.5 percent replied negatively. Some of them replied that they have no idea about it.

It has stated earlier that the enjoyment of role and status was influenced by many factors. Weber identified three factors behind social stratification. They are: property, power and prestige. On the other hand, Marx explains this on the basis of mode of production.

The role and status of the elderly and its matter of enjoyment largely depend on how much wealth and property they have. However, it has been found that about 41.4 percent elderly have not more than 10 decimal of cultivable land and 22.7 percent have 11-20 decimal land. About 48.8 percent elderly have merely 1-100 decimal of cultivable land. On the other hand, the elderly who have more than 100 decimal of cultivable land are not totally more than 10 percent. Cultivable land is one of the most important properties of our rural society for playing role and enjoying status.

On the other hand, the elderly who has more than 50 and above decimal of homestead land are not totally more than 3 percent. Homestead land is included in property, and property is the indicator of prestige or status.

Approximately 78.3 percent elderly have no pond. It is also an indicator of enjoying status in the rural society. More than ninety percent elderly have no garden, nearly 94.6 percent of the respondent replied that they have no fruit garden. Approximately 56.7 percent have no domestic animals though domestic animals are important sources of wealth in our rural society. Near about 98.03 percent have no bank balance and 40.89 percent have no ornaments though these are the sources of playing role and enjoying status. Ornaments especially for women in our rural settings play an important role for enjoying status.

About 34.0 percent elderly get invitation in local socio-cultural programs. Among them 17.2 percent belong to 60-65, 5.4 percent 65-70 and 7.4 percent 70-75 age categories whereas 66.0 percent elderly cannot enjoy this. So, it is a changing scenario for rural society, no doubt.

The ability to compel the members of the family to do work according to the wishes of the elderly in our rural society is near about fifty percent. Principal income earners play important role in the helping poor than the elderly. This study indicated that about 47.3 percent principal income earners include 25.6 percent sons. Nearly 18.7 percent elderly can help the poor man and 52.7 percent include 21.2 percent son and 21.2 percent elderly cannot do this.

Nearly 60.6 percent elderly can invite their relatives in different socio- religious occasions. On the other hand, 39.4 percent elderly cannot do this due to lack of economic ability. About 60.6 percent elderly do not think themselves the important members of the family as well as society whereas 39.4 percent of them think as an important person in this system.

Taking part in resolution of familial disputes is also the symbol of enjoying role and status of the elderly. It is also apparent that about 47.3 percent respondents admitted that the members of the family give importance to them whereas 52.7 percent of them admitted that the family members do not give importance.

Question was also asked to them regarding why they do not take part in the resolution of family disputes. They replied that, due to economic hardship, physical dependency and changing situation of society, they are not given importance to them.

The elderly have a tendency to recall the past more and more. This is because they observed many things for long their life times. Now they want to match the present time with past. Through life history method it is known that 68.5 percent elderly could enjoy the statues stated above whereas about 31.5 percent replied negatively. Some of them replied that they have no idea about it. The study successfully identified that wealth has great influence on the enjoyment of role and status. As the elderly have not enough these, they are not playing role actively and enjoying status accordingly.

## **Chapter – 7**

### **The Role and Status of the Elderly in Family and Rural Community**

The family in Bangladesh has been regarded as a basic element of a solid kinship and social organization. It is a shelter of every man and woman. People pass their lives from their birth to death in their family and community. It is the real protector of its member from various dangers and worse condition. In our society the elderly are supposed to enjoy a respectful status in the family and community. Normally they occupy a position of prestige and privilege and sometimes power also. In every matter the family members would seek help from the elderly. The members of the family would always take guidance from the elderly. Actually, the elderly were the guardians for performing many activities. They had absolute power in solving familial problems. Every activity was done according to the decision by the elderly. Now these situations have changed. In the study area it is observed that the elderly are to do various activities in their family. They have little time to spend their time in the leisure activities. Although the elderly in the rural community had significant and prestigious roles and status, it has also declined greatly. Whether they are too much able or not, in maximum cases they are to perform various household activities. Basically, families are front and centre in a life course perspectives because it is the primary setting where individuals of many ages are assembled together and have relationships that span many decades. This is because; educational and occupational attainment, marital and fertility patterns, and health outcomes are strongly conditioned by family background and resources. It is social ties which tend to enjoy better physical and mental health which is available in family and rural community. But increase in the number of the elderly affected family structures as well as ways of living. It is true that the old men and women had supreme authorities within and over their families, solely empowered to take ultimate decisions. Now a young person can come out of the bindings and order of joint family with ease and without hesitation as he or she has several options to earn money and support him or herself. So, the control of centralized power within a family is non-existent. Persistent poverty and increasing

landlessness led to changes in household structure in the rural areas. Many poor elderly have to live alone due to unemployment in the agricultural sector which forces young people to move to the city for work for long periods, or a particular season.

**Table No. 7.1**  
**If the elderly have work for the family**

Age Group	Work for the family				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
60-65	103	50.7	15	7.4	118	58.1
65-70	27	13.3	2	1.0	29	14.3
70-75	31	15.3	4	2.0	35	17.2
75-80	4	2.0	4	2.0	8	3.9
80-85	4	2.0	3	1.5	7	3.4
85-90	3	1.5	3	1.5	6	3.0
Total	172	84.7	31	15.3	203	100.0

The elderly in the rural society like ours are to do many unpaid, invisible, and informal work in the family. Sometimes they voluntarily do the work. Again, sometimes the work is imposed upon them. They are to do many works in absence of their sons and sons' wives. If they do not do these types of unpaid works for their family, it is not possible for the members of the family to do the paid work for the family. So, visibly it may seem to us that the elderly are not doing paid works; silently they are helping to do that work through helping family members. The table above clearly signifies that among elderly who are in the age group of 60 to 65 among them 50.7 percent have works for the family. Besides, they are the young old. They are capable of doing maximum types of work. On the other hand the elderly who are above eighty years old have little work for their family due to worse physical condition.



Table No. 7.2  
**The ability of the elderly to do their daily activities for the family**

Age Group	Ability to do daily activities				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
60-65	85	41.9	33	16.3	118	58.1
65-70	22	10.8	7	3.4	29	14.3
70-75	14	6.9	21	10.3	35	17.2
75-80	1	0.5	7	3.4	8	3.9
80-85	3	1.5	4	2.0	7	3.4
85-90	1	0.5	5	2.5	6	3.0
Total	126	62.1	77	37.9	203	100.0

Developed countries of the world provide social benefits according to the need of the elderly. The elderly in our low income based countries are to do much work in spite of their physical inability. From the table above it is also understandable that the elderly who are in the age group of 65 to below eighty can perform their daily activities. Again, the elderly who are above eighty years and doing these types of activities are very low.

Table No. 7.3  
**If the elderly face difficulty in performing daily activities in the family**

Age Group	Difficulty in performing daily activities			
	Yes	%	No	%
60-65	83	70.3	35	29.7
65-70	20	69.0	9	31.0
70-75	31	88.6	4	11.4
75-80	8	100.0	-	-
80-85	7	100.0	-	-
85-90	5	83.3	1	16.7
Total	152	75.9	48	24.1

The table states that, about 75.9 percent elderly face difficulty in performing their daily activities. Among them 70.3 percent are in the age group of 60-65, 69.0 percent is 65-70, 88.6 percent is 70-75, 100.0 percent is 75-80, 100.0 percent is 80-85 and 83.3 percent is in 85-90. One respondent in this age replied that he can do all types of activities. Again, 29.7 percent do not face difficulty in the age group in 60-65 and 31.0 percent who are in 65-70. The table also shows that the elderly who are 60 years and above feel difficulty in performing their activities except one respondent.

Table No. 7.4

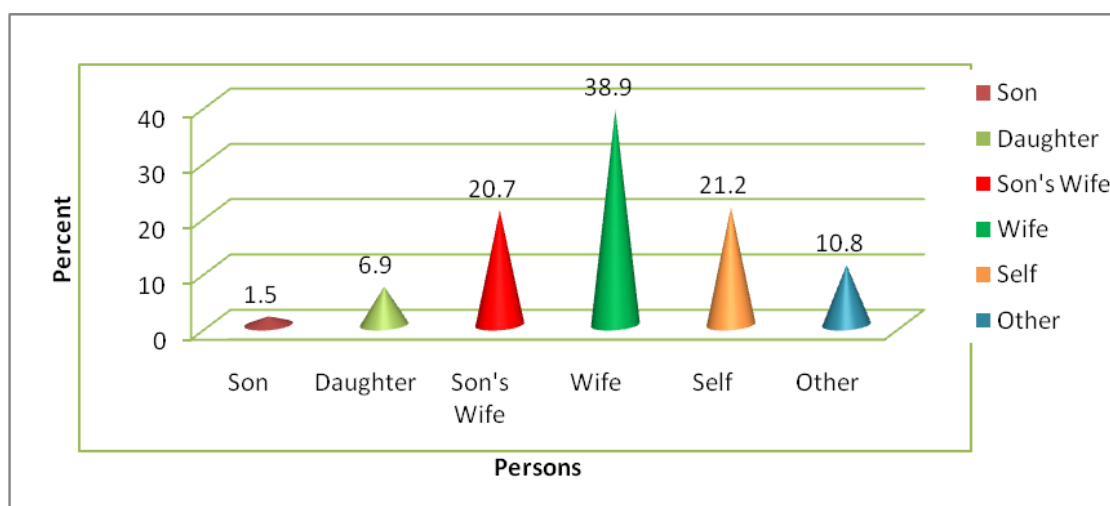
**If the elderly help other members of the family**

Age Group	Helping members of the family				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
60-65	99	48.8	19	9.4	118	58.1
65-70	23	11.3	6	3.0	29	14.3
70-75	31	15.3	4	2.0	35	17.2
75-80	3	1.5	5	2.5	8	3.9
80-85	4	2.0	3	1.5	7	3.4
85-90	3	1.5	3	1.5	6	3.0
Total	163	80.3	40	19.7	203	100.0

If we look at the table above it can understand that the elderly who are in the age group of 65 to 70, that is, who are young old, help the family members, and their percentage is 48.8. On the other hand, those who are above eighty are a little bit able to help the members of the family. The fact behind it is their physical dependency and other health and age related problems. Besides, they are to do their daily essential activities by their own.

Figure: 30

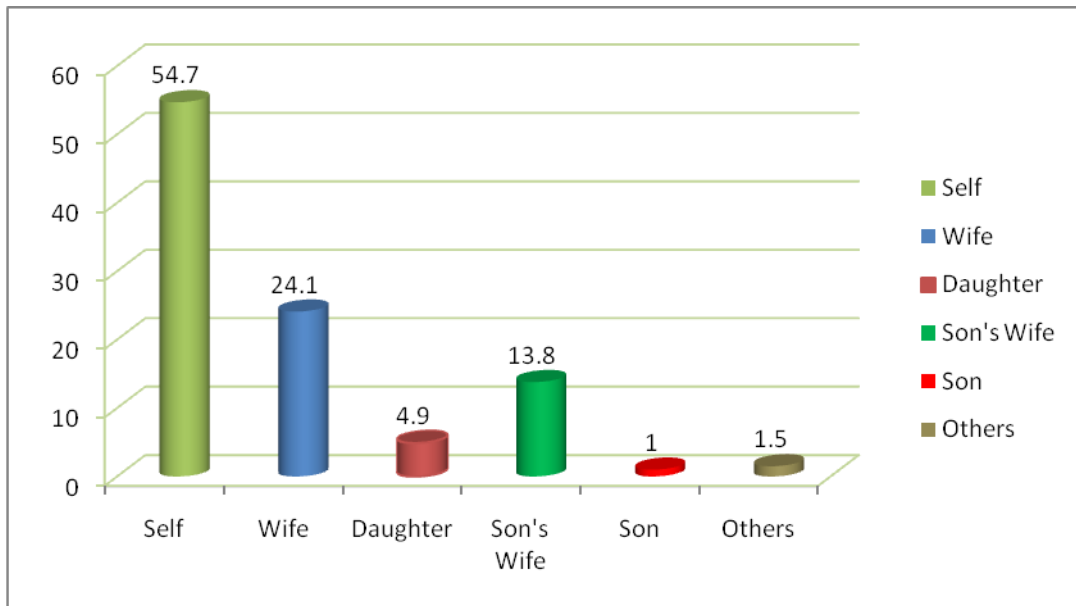
**Washing cloth for the elderly**



The table above beckons that 21.2 percent elderly wash their cloths by themselves. Nearly 38.9 percent elderly make their wives do this or their wives willingly do this. About 20.7 percent elderly depend on their son’s wives. About 1.5 percent sons do this because they think that it is their duty and are related to socio-religious values. About 8.4 percent is done by the daughters of the elderly.

Figure: 31

**Persons arranging bed for the elderly**



In old age, the people become normally weak. They expect help from other members of the family. The male elderly especially become dependent as this job was previously done by their wives. The table above focuses that 54.7 percent elderly arrange their beds by themselves. 24.1 percent make their wives do this, or their wives willingly do this. 13.8 percent elderly depend on their son's wives. About 4.9 percent in this regard is done by the daughters of the elderly. The elderly themselves want to do this. Some of them cannot do this for physical illness or other health related complexities.

Table no. 7.5

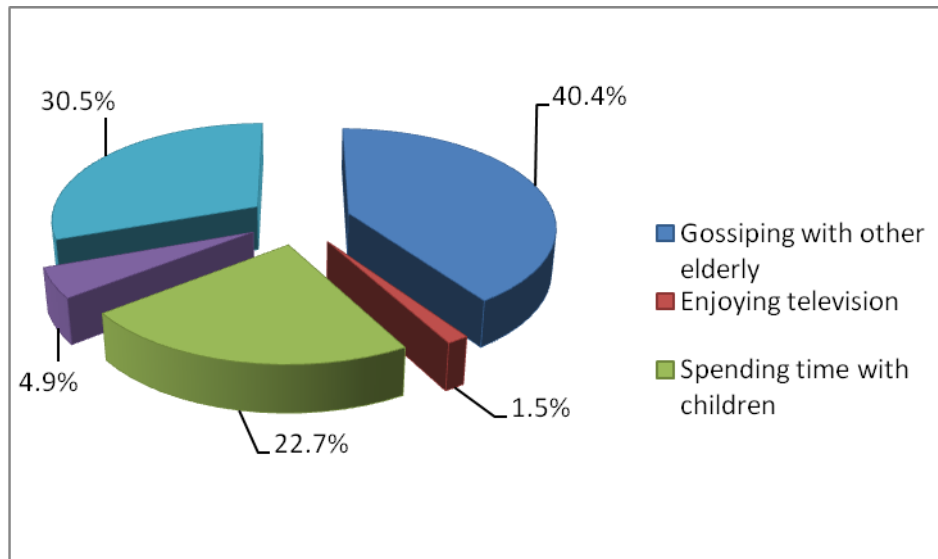
**Persons with whom the elderly share their problems**

Persons	Frequency	Percent
Husband	36	17.7
Wife	79	38.9
Neighbor	2	1.0
Son	65	32.0
Every one in the family	7	3.4
Daughter	7	3.4
son's wife	6	3.0
Others	1	.5
Total	203	100.0

In old age the elderly face various problems. The problems faced by the elderly may be better understood by looking at their composition of family and interpersonal relationship among the members of the family. From the table it can easily be understood that 17.7 percent elderly (female) share their problems with their husbands, about 38.9 percent (male) elderly with their wives, nearly 32 percent share with their sons and three percent share with their son's wives, and there are 3.4 percent elderly who are in the habit of sharing their problems with all members of the family. They cannot share their problems with daughter because they are married and the elderly do not have any mobile or telephone. They are not interested in sharing their problems with the neighbors. Only 1.0 percent elderly share their problems with neighbor. In the rural society village politics and family politics have become complex issues. So, the family members do not expect that the elderly in their family share their problems with other members of another family.

Figure: 32

**Spending leisure time of the elderly**



The table above highlights that about 40.4 percent elderly spend their time gossiping with other elderly. 22.7 percent spend their time with grandchildren. There is no electricity connection to these villages. They have almost no television. Nearly 4.9 percent spend their time hearing radio. They do not spend their time reading newspapers because there are no local or national newspapers in these villages.

Table no. 7.6

**If the elderly carry out simple chores in the house**

Age Group	Male				Female			
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
60-65	20	20.8	26	27.1	63	58.9	9	8.4
65-70	9	9.4	6	6.3	13	12.1	1	0.9
70-75	10	10.4	14	14.6	10	9.3	1	0.9
75-80	-	-	5	5.2	-	-	3	2.8
80-85	1	1.0	2	2.1	1	0.9	2	1.9
85-90	-	-	3	3.1	1	0.9	3	2.8
Total	40	41.7	56	58.3	88	82.2	19	17.8

From the table it is also understandable that 41.7 percent male elderly carry out simple chores in house whereas 58.3 percent do not do this. It is also noticeable that about 82.2 percent female elderly carry out simple chores in the house whereas 17.8 percent cannot do this. So, female elderly in the rural society carry out more simple chores in the house than male ones because society assigned the division of labor for male and female in the society.

Table No. 7.7

**Ability to go for shopping or to any other place outside home without taking help from others**

Age Group	Response			
	Yes	%	No	%
60-65	83	40.9	35	17.2
65-70	17	8.4	12	5.9
70-75	27	13.3	8	3.9
75-80	2	1.0	6	3.0
80-85	3	1.5	4	2.0
85-90	5	2.5	1	0.5
Total	137	67.5	66	32.5

This table depicts the picture of going shopping or any other place outside home without taking help. It is obvious from the table that 67.5 percent are capable of doing this. Among them 40.9 percent are 60-65, 8.4 percent 65-70 and 13.3 percent are in the age group of 70-75 that means young elderly have ability to do this. Again 32.5 percent are not able to do this. Among them 17.2 percent are 60-65, 5.9 percent 65-70 and 3.9 percent are in the age group of 70-75.

Table No. 7.8

**Ability of the elderly to work the same amount of time the other people can spend**

Age group	Ability to work the same number of hours the other people can do				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
60-65	30	14.8	88	43.3	118	58.1
65-70	4	2.0	25	12.3	29	14.3
70-75	4	2.0	31	15.3	35	17.2
75-80	-	-	8	3.9	8	3.9
80-85	-	-	7	3.4	7	3.4
85-90	-	-	6	3.0	6	3.0
Total	38	18.7	165	81.3	203	100

The table shows the ability to work the same number of hours the other people can do. About 18.7 percent replied that they can do. Among them 14.8 percent are in the age group of 60-65. That is, the young elderly are successful about this issue. On the other hand, about 81.3 percent elderly among them 43.3 percent in spite of remaining in 60-65 age categories can't do this due to normal process of aging. There are some elderly who are able to do this is but this quite exceptionally exceptional.

Table No. 7.9

**If the elderly have congenial familial relationship for the enjoyment of satisfactory status**

Sex of the respondent	Response				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Male	84	41.4	12	5.91	96	47.3
Female	92	45.3	15	7.39	107	52.7
Total	176	86.7	27	13.3	203	100.0

The question was asked to the elderly whether their familial relationship is satisfactory or not for enjoying status. About 41.4 percent male and 45.3 percent female replied positively. On the other hand 5.91 percent male and 7.39 percent female replied negatively. Though family is the best place in our society for the care of the elderly, they think that familial relationship is not congenial for the enjoyment of role and status.

Table No. 7.10

**If the elderly are given priority at time of arranging marriage in the family**

Sex of the respondent	Response				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Male	89	43.8	7	3.4	96	47.3
Female	87	42.9	20	9.9	107	52.7
Total	176	86.7	27	13.3	203	100.0

From the description of the above table it is said that, 43.8 percent male and 42.9 percent female elderly replied that they are given priority at the time of arranging marriage in the family. Again, 3.4 percent male and 9.9 percent female elderly are not given importance about it. That means the elderly in rural Bangladesh have still good relations with social institution.

Table No. 7.11

**If the elderly are sought suggestion by the family members regarding education of children**

Sex of the respondent	Response				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Male	21	10.34	75	36.94	96	47.28
Female	18	8.88	89	43.84	107	52.72
Total	39	19.22	164	80.78	203	100.0

From the table above it is also obvious that 80.78 percent elderly including 36.94 percent male and 43.84 percent female have no role to educate their grandchildren. The family members are not interested in taking any kind of suggestion from them. Merely 19.22 percent elderly including 10.34 percent male and 8.88 percent female is taken into consideration about this issue. From them, the percentage of female is less than the male elderly. The study has found some valid reasons in this respect. It has been stated earlier that maximum elderly do not know how to read and write. Limited elderly have only ability to sign. Higher education is almost absent among them. So, the family members do not seek advice from them about this issue.



Table No. 7.12

**If the elderly take part in religious activities**

Age group	Response			
	Yes	%	No	%
60-65	101	85.6	17	14.4
65-70	25	86.2	4	13.8
70-75	32	91.4	3	8.6
75-80	8	100	-	-
80-85	7	100	-	-
85-90	6	100	-	-

Although religions vary in doctrine, practice, organization, feelings and its rituals, the social functions of it, both for the religious group itself and for the wider society, can be classified as contribution to pattern maintenance, tension management and social solidarity. Social functions of religion help the elderly relief from worldly sufferings. The changing age structure of populations affects all social institutions including religious ones. Perhaps, considering this religion was important area of inquiry for the classical theorists in the social sciences. Through the writings of Durkheim, Weber, William James, Karl Marx, Karl Mannheim it is well understood to us all. For an example from the Weber we take the idea that specific religious belief has psychological consequences for human motivation, suggesting that the differing beliefs of the world's religions ageing and the aged may have specific consequences for those older persons whose late lives are lived out in those communities. The table depicts that there is a relationship between the increasing of age and involving in religious activities. In old age, people have a tendency to be pious. The rural elderly involve themselves in religious activities when their age increases. When they are in 60-65 about 85.6 percent take part in religious activities, and when 65-70, the percentage is about 86.2 percent. By this way, it is found that those who are 80 years and above take part in this activities.

Table No. 7.13

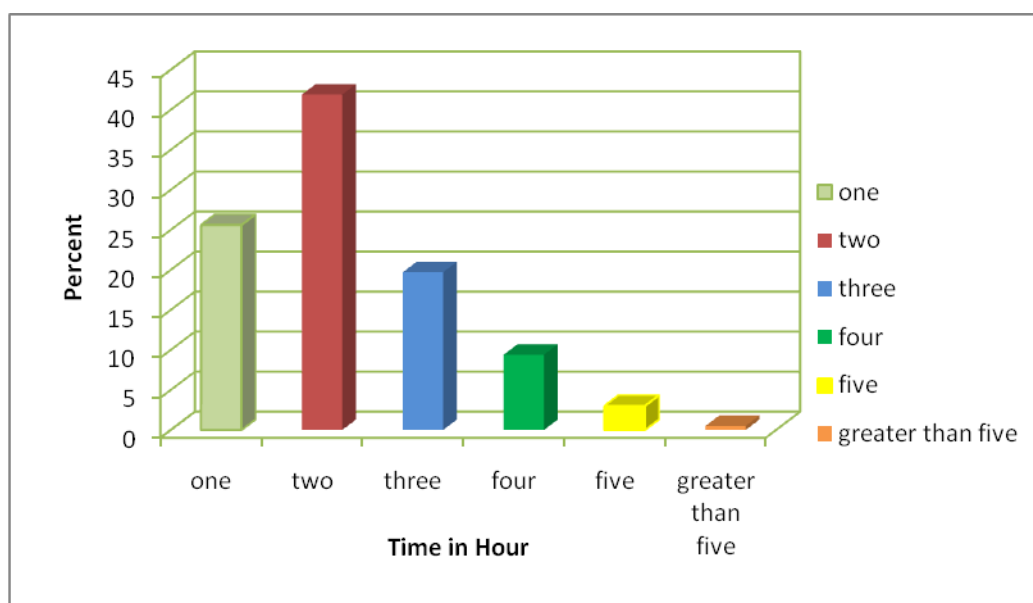
**Position of elderly in family especially for buying and selling necessary things**

Sex of the respondent	Position						Total	%
	Good	%	Bad	%	Don't seek suggestion	%		
Male	82	40.4	4	2.0	10	4.9	96	47.3
Female	75	36.9	6	3.0	26	12.8	107	52.7
Total	157	77.3	10	4.9	36	17.7	203	100.0

The table presents that the position of the elderly in buying and selling necessary things for the family is good. In this case, the percentage of male is 40.4 and female is 36.9. It is mentionable here that about 4.9 percent male and 17.7 percent female elderly are not asked for this purpose.

Figure: 33

**Amount of time spent by the elderly in performing religious activity**

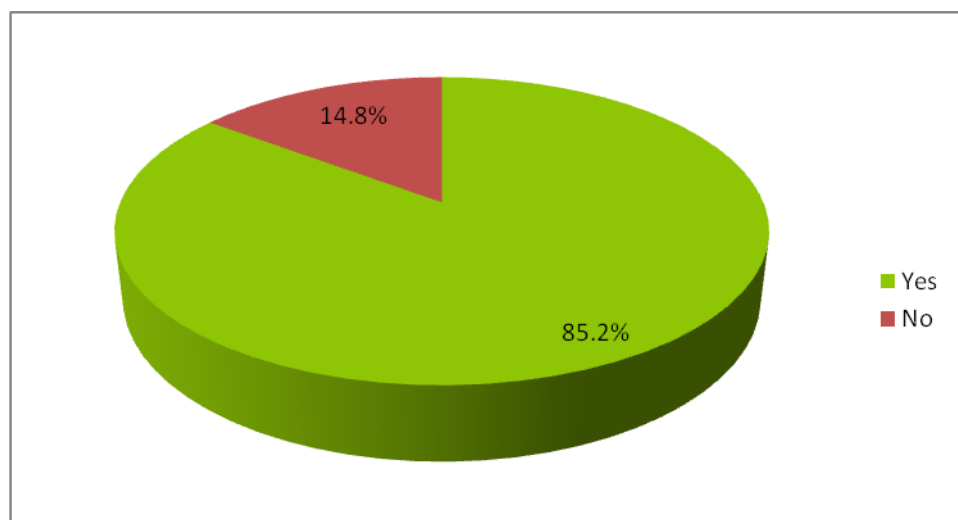


There is a long standing debate among the sociologists and gerontologists as to the participation of the elderly regarding religious activities in later life. As religion is a part of culture and is closely related to the life and society in rural society, normally every person belongs to this institution from birth to death, even after death. But the

elderly are too much religious minded than younger generation. In this section an attempt has been made to show the participation of the elderly in religious activities on the basis of age. It is evident from the figure that 41.9 percent elderly spend two hours in a day for performing religious activities. In this regard it has been found that about 25.6 percent spend one hour, 19.7 percent spend three hours, 9.4 percent spend four hours, and 3 percent spend five hours. The percentage of performing religious activities more than five hours is below one percent. That is, the upward trend in practicing religious activities is apparent with the rising of age of the elderly. After all, the figure explains that the elderly people spend huge time than the other people in religious activities.

Figure: 34

**Showing respect to elderly for religious activities by the family members**



It is almost a normal matter that the elderly will be respected in the family because of having their stock knowledge on religion. From the table above it is understandable that 85 percent show respect and 14.8 percent do not. The question is, why? In answer to this question it can be said that the family members are enlightened and the elderly are illiterate. So, they show respect but do not think that the decision of the elderly is absolute about it.

Table No. 7.14

**If the family members influence the elderly at time of election**

Sex	Influence the elderly at time of election				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Male	36	17.7	60	29.6	96	47.3
Female	54	26.6	53	26.1	107	52.7
Total	90	44.3	113	55.7	203	100

The data in the above table illustrates that about 44.3 percent elderly including 17.7 percent male and 26.6 percent female replied that the family members influence them before election. Again, 55.7 percent elderly including 29.9 percent male and 26.1 percent female mentioned that the family members do not influence them at time of election. Once upon a time the elderly were the counselors and advisors. Now they are influenced by the family members significantly.

Table No. 7.15

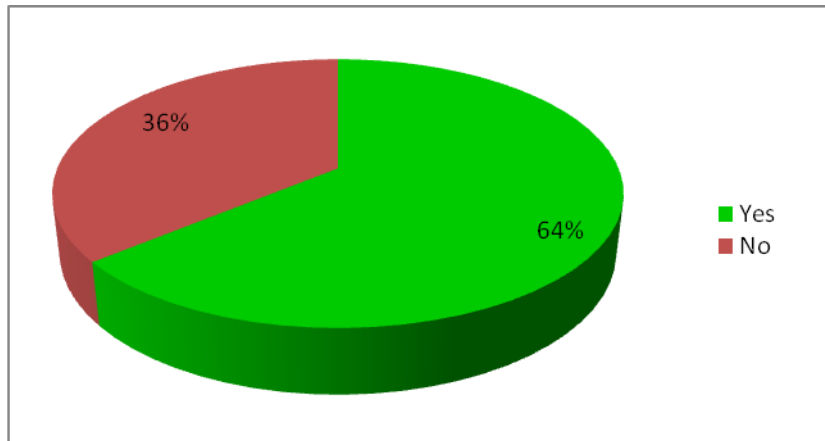
**If the family members seek opinion of the elderly at time of election**

Sex	family members seek advice at the time of election				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Male	57	28.1	39	19.2	96	47.3
Female	39	19.2	68	33.5	107	52.7
Total	96	47.3	107	52.7	203	100

Data shown in the above table explain that 52.7 percent elderly including 19.2 percent male and 33.5 percent female replied that their family members do not seek permission from them at time of election. On the other hand 47.3 percent elderly including 28.1 percent male and 19.2 percent female replied that their family members seek advice from them at the time of election. It indicates the changing status of the elderly.

Figure: 35

### Seeking help from elderly by the neighbors



The neighbor plays vital role in rural society and the position of the elderly in this case is guardian, counselor and mediator. In this table it is understandable that 64.0 percent neighbors come to the elderly for help and 36.0 percent elderly replied that they are not needed to their neighbor. They think that it is the result of social change. They also think that neighbors do not come to them for not having their wealth and social prestigious position.

Table No. 7.16

### If the neighbors seek advice from elderly at time of marriage of their sons or daughters

Head of the family	neighbor coming to elderly for taking advice before marriage of their sons or daughters				Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Self	73	36.0	40	19.7	113	55.7
Son	23	11.3	35	17.2	58	28.6
Daughter	-	-	2	1.0	2	1.0
Husband/wife	11	5.4	14	6.9	25	12.3
Others	2	1.0	3	1.5	5	2.5
Total	109	53.7	94	46.3	203	100

The elderly have leadership role which they can play in building better communities. They can motivate other people to get involved in community development. They come to their neighbor with a view to helping them in many ways. They can use their skills in helping the neighbor especially in arranging marriage. It was a tradition in rural society that before mate selection the elderly were asked as to the bride/ groom.

Now, it has undergone a change. In this matter, 53.7 percent elderly replied that the neighbor comes to them, and 46.3 percent replied negatively. It is also noticeable here that people come to the head of the family regarding arranging the marriage in the family.

Table No. 7.17

**If the elderly are given priority to watch television programs**

Age group	Response			
	Yes	%	No	%
60-65	31	15.3	87	42.9
65-70	10	4.9	19	9.4
70-75	7	3.4	28	13.8
75-80	1	0.5	7	3.4
80-85	4	2.0	3	1.5
85-90	1	0.5	5	2.5
Total	54	26.6	149	73.4

Questions were asked to the elderly whether they are given priority or not about watching television. In this respect, 26.6 percent of the elderly replied positively and 73.4 percent of them replied negatively. The fact behind is the want of television in these villages. There is no dish connection and electricity in these villages. Very few families have black-white television which is powered through battery or solar system. It is also mentionable here that the elderly above eighty years are not interested in watching television because they considered it as the source of sin. In this respect it has also been found that the young elderly (60-75) are given priority and their percentage is about 23.6 percent.

**Table No. 7.18**  
**If the elderly take part in rural development activities**

Participation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	85	41.9
No	118	58.1
Total	203	100.0

Older adults comprise a growing proportion of the rural population of our country. This population shift has far-reaching socioeconomic and political implications for people of all ages. They make valuable contributions to the society, both material and immaterial, and younger generations benefit from their experience. They can create new opportunities for both individual and societal development. From the table it can obviously be understood that merely 41.9 percent elderly participate in rural development activities and 58.1 percent cannot due to various associated factors along with poverty, education and occupation.

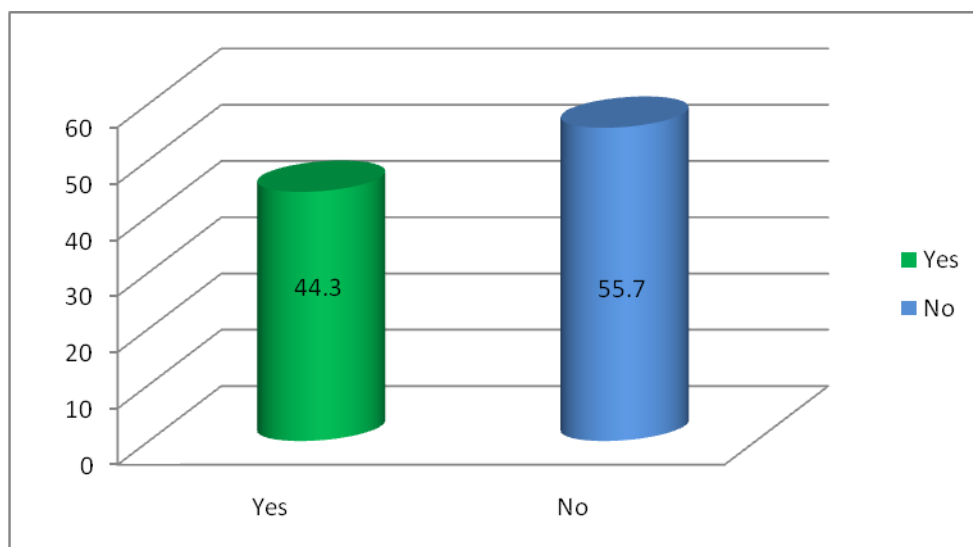
**Table No.7.19**  
**If the elderly take part in family disputes**

Age Group	Response					
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
60-65	97	47.8	21	10.3	118	58.1
65-70	23	11.3	6	3.0	29	14.2
70-75	33	16.3	2	1.0	35	17.3
75-80	5	2.5	3	1.5	8	4.0
80-85	6	3.0	1	0.5	7	2.9
85-90	4	2.0	2	1.0	6	3.4
Total	161	82.8	42	17.2	203	100

Taking part in resolution of familial disputes is also the symbol of enjoying role and status of elderly. The table shows that the age category of the respondents has relationship with taking part in resolving familial disputes. It is also understandable from the table that 82.8 percent elderly can take part in this matter. The interesting fact is that, 47.8 percent elderly in the age group of 60-65 take part in solving disputes in the family.

Figure: 36

**Taking part in disputes outside village**



Taking part in disputes outside village is also the symbol of enjoying role and status of elderly. The table implicates that 44.3 percent respondents can take part in resolving disputes outside village. It is also understandable from the table that 55.7 percent elderly cannot take part in this matter. Surely it does not depend on merely age rather than the previous occupation, connectivity to the urban society, wealth, education, power etc. of the elderly.

Table No.7.20

**Pattern of behavior of family members to elderly**

Pattern of behavior	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Good	30	31.25	24	22.43	54	26.60
Medium	48	50.00	59	55.14	107	52.71
Bad	18	18.75	24	22.43	42	20.69
Total	96	100.00	107	100.00	203	100.00

The table placed above explains the pattern of behavior of the family members to the elderly. It has been observed that about 26.60 percent family members express good, about 52.71 percent medium and near about 20.69 percent bad behavior to elderly. That is, the pattern of behavior of the family members to elderly is dissatisfactory to the elderly in the study area.



Table No.7.21

**Distribution of elderly on basis of position in society**

Position in society	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Good	16	16.67	13	12.15	29	14.29
Medium	36	37.5	41	38.32	77	37.93
Poor	44	45.83	53	49.53	97	47.78
Total	96	100.00	107	100.00	203	100.00

The table mentioned above highlights the position of elderly in the society. From this it is apparent that merely 14.29 percent elderly have well, about 37.93 percent have medium and nearly 47.78 percent have poor position in society. That is, approximately half of the elderly live in society with poor position. So, it is another changing situation of the rural elderly in our society.

Table No 7.22

**Nature of the relationship of elderly with neighbors**

Relationship with neighbor	Sex of the respondent				Total	%
	Male	%	Female	%		
Good	90	44.3	96	47.3	186	91.6
Fair	1	0.5	5	2.5	6	3.0
Medium	5	2.5	6	3.0	11	5.4

In rural settings it is observed that the relationship among the people is sometimes quarrelsome. The table above describes that the relationship between the elderly and the neighbor is good. More than ninety percent replied that their relationship with the neighbor is good. On the other hand 3.0 percent said that their relation is fair and 5.4 told that their relation with neighbor is medium. So, the neighbors do not think that the elderly are the creators of generation gap or social problem rather healers of social diseases among the people of the society, helmsman of bridging social relations among the family members and proper guide for directing members of the family to right direction.

Table No. 7.23

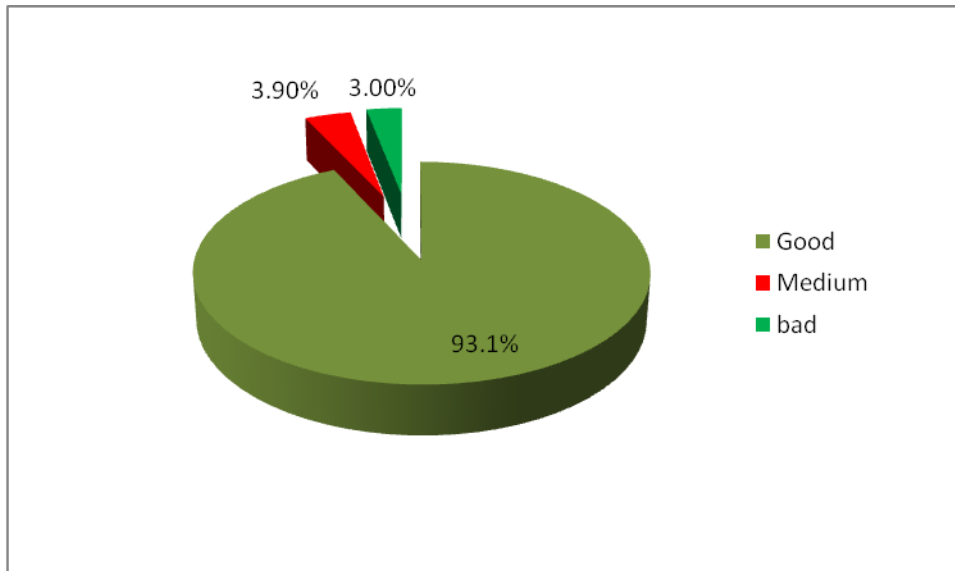
**Nature of the relationship of elderly with the people in their village**

Relationship	Frequency	Percent
Good	182	89.7
Fair	11	5.4
Medium	10	4.9
Total	203	100.0

It is generally believed that the elderly are less capable of adjusting with the people of the society for their old age. They are also considered to be the marginal group in terms of their age- related problems with the people of the society. The table shows that about 89.7 percent elderly have good relationship with, merely 5.4 percent have fair, and only 4.9 percent elderly have medium relationship with the people in their village. That is, the elderly are capable of adjusting with the people of village and they are successful about keeping good relationship with village people. It is still near about ninety percent elderly who have good relationship with the people of their village. So, undoubtedly it is a good sign for our society, because, older people with strong social ties tend to enjoy better physical and mental health than older adults who do not maintain close relationships with others. Individuals are shaped by the society, and it is largely true that through interpersonal relationships they can change the social world where they spend their lives and share their joys and sorrows.

Figure: 37

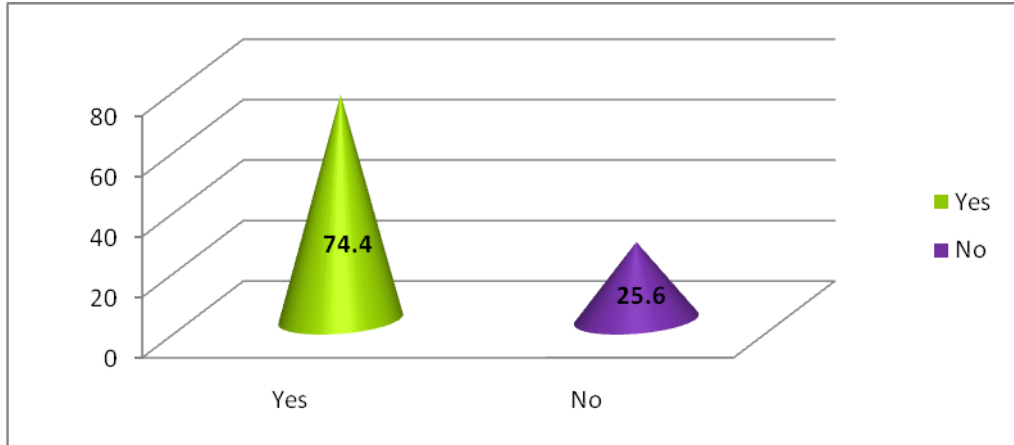
**The relationship of elderly with relatives**



The normal process of aging highlights that the elderly are less capable of adjusting with the people of society and community as well. They are also stereotyped as marginal group in terms of their sociability with the people of the society and rural community. These are the myth regarding the aging as well as the rural elderly. The practical situation as observed in study area does not support this myth. The table shows that about 93.1 percent elderly have good relationship with the relatives whereas nearly 3.9 percent have medium and only 3.0 percent do not good relationship with their relatives.

Figure: 38

**Whether the elderly could do these kinds of activities previously**



The questions whether the elderly previously in their experiences could do these activities or not were also asked to the elderly. About 74.4 percent elderly replied that the elderly in the past could do these activities. Merely 25.6 percent replied negatively. From this explanation and observation it can infer that the position of the elderly in performing these activities were undoubtedly good.

The elderly of our rural society in the past were held high regards in family and rural community. They were heads of the family, and advice was sought from them on range of issues. Their word was final in setting disputes in family and rural community. Actually the family and village community would look upon them as the pillars of the family and society. At present their position in these places has become very complicated. Their role and status has also become very complicated.

It has been observed from the study that among the elderly who are in the age group of 60 to 65, about 50.7 percent have work for the family. Besides, they are the young old. They are capable of doing maximum types of work. On the other hand the elderly who are the above eighty years old have little work for their family due to their worse physical condition.

About 75.9 percent elderly face difficulty in performing their daily activities. Among them about 70.3 percent are in the age group of 60-65, 69.0 percent is in 65-70, 88.6 percent is in 70-75, 100.0 is in 75-80, 100.0 percent is in 80-85 and 83.3 percent is in 85-90 because, one respondent in this age replied that he can do all types of activities. Again, 29.7 percent and 31.0 percent do not face difficulty in the age group of 60-65 and of 65-70 respectively.

The elderly who are in the age group of 65 to 69, that is young old, help the family members, and their percentage is about 39.9 percent. About 21.2 percent elderly wash their cloths by themselves. On the other hand 38.9 percent make their wives do this or their wives willingly do this. In this case, 20.7 percent elderly depend on their son's wives.

Approximately 54.7 percent elderly arrange their beds by themselves. About 17.7 percent elderly (female) share their problems with their husbands, 38.9 percent (male) elderly with their wives, 32 percent share with their sons and three percent share with their son's wives. So, it is understandable that the relationship between the elderly and their sons' wives is not friendly. About 40.4 percent elderly spend their time gossiping with the other elderly.

About 41.7 percent male elderly carry out simple chores in house whereas 58.3 percent do not do this. It is also noticeable that about 82.2 percent female elderly carryout simple chores in the house whereas 17.8 percent can not do this. So, the female elderly in rural society carry out more simple chores in the house than male one because society assigned the division of labor for male and female in the society.

About 67.5 percent of them are capable of going outside whereas 32.5 percent are not able to do this. About 41.4 percent male and 45.3 percent female elderly replied positively that their familial relationship is helpful for enjoying satisfactory status. About 43.8 percent male and 42.9 percent female elderly replied that they are given priority at the time of arranging marriage in the family. About 80.78 percent elderly have no role to educate their grandchildren. For buying and selling necessary things, the percentage of male are 40.4 and female are 36.9 percent. About 30 percent elderly including male and female are not asked for this purpose.

In old age, people have a tendency to be pious. The rural elderly involve themselves in religious activities when their age increases. When they are in 60-65 about 85.6 percent take part in religious activities when 65-70, the percentage is about 86.2. By this way, it is found that those who are 80 years and above take part in these activities. About 85.0 percent family members of the respondents show respect to the elderly in religious activities.

More than half of the elderly opined that, the family members do not influence them before election. About 52.7 percent elderly including 19.2 percent male and 33.5 percent female replied that their family members do not seek permission from them at the time of election. On the other hand 47.3 percent elderly including 28.1 percent male and 19.2 percent female replied positively.

About 64 percent neighbors come to the elderly for help. Again 46.3 percent elderly replied negatively that the neighbors do not come to them for taking advice before marriage of their sons or daughters. It was a tradition in the rural society that before mate selection the elderly were asked as to the bride/ groom. Now, it has undergone a change. In this matter, 53.7 percent elderly replied that the neighbor comes to them, and 46.3 percent replied negatively. It is also noticeable here that the people come to the heads of the family regarding arranging the marriage in the family.

If the elderly are given priority to watch television program, 26.6 percent of the elderly replied positively and 73.4 percent of them replied negatively, that is, there is no television in their family. Besides 41.9 percent elderly participate in the rural development activities and 58.1 percent cannot do.

In the rural society influential people are those who are called for solving problems. It is also understandable from the table that near about 82.8 percent elderly can take part in solving disputes in the family. The interesting fact is that, 47.8 percent elderly in the age group of 60-65 take part in solving disputes in the family. About 47.9 percent elderly can take part in resolving familial disputes. Nearly 44.3 percent respondents can take part in resolving disputes outside village. It is also understandable that 55.7 percent elderly cannot take part in this matter.

Approximately 89.7 percent elderly have good relationship with people in their villages, 5.4 percent have fair, and only 4.9 percent elderly have medium relationship with the people in their village. More than ninety percent replied that their

relationship with the neighbor is good. On the other hand 3.0 percent said that their relation is fair and 5.4 told that their relation with neighbor is medium. About 93.1 percent elderly have good relationship with relatives. About 74.4 percent elderly replied that the elderly in past could do these activities.

From **the analysis of chi-square test table – 4 (iv), table – 4 (v), table – 4 (vi) and table – 4 (vii) (see Appendix -5, page: 182-185)** there is a significant effect between the age group and having work for the family, ability of the elderly to do their daily activities for the family, age and the performance daily activities and age and the helping other members of the family. That is, this study has also found the declined role and status of the elderly in the family and the society as well.

## Chapter – 8

### Conclusion

Elderly population undoubtedly is the assets of any country for their bridging and cementing role based on wisdom, knowledge, expertise and experience in the context of cultural existence. Due to over population, scarcity of resources, existing poverty, insufficient health facilities, absence of social security, changing socio-economic, cultural, demographic situation and adoption of western culture, they have become an important topic of discussion from polymorphic angles. However, this concluding chapter reiterates some of the salient findings of the study about the role and status of the elderly in rural Bangladesh.

It is evident from the secondary sources that our global population is aging at an unprecedented rate. In Bangladesh it seems appropriate at this juncture to explain that the rate of the elderly is increasing very fast. Elderly, like all members of any society, have the right to enjoy their role and status. It is also expected that their role and status must be satisfactory for doing a lot for the betterment of the society for their life long schemes. Unifying schemes of the researchers, trainers, educationists and donor agencies highlight that the elderly in our rural societies has reached in a critical position which seek to better address their role and status.

The data mentioned in the tables and graphs show that the socio-economic conditions of the rural elderly are not so good. About 75 percent elderly do not know how to write and read whereas the ratio of female in this affair is 79.4. About 60.1 percent earns 500-4500 in a month. That is, they are to live below the poverty line. The monthly expenditure of the elderly is also low. The fact is that they cannot expend for not having sources of income. Besides, 62.6 percent of the elderly expend 500- 4500 taka in a month. In this connection more than eighty percent of elderly is below 2000 taka. Similarly, monthly expenditure of more than ninety percent elderly is below 2000 taka. They cannot expend more for having minimum sources of income. About 95.6 percent of the elderly live in their own houses. But maximum of them share their rooms with their grandsons and daughters. Merely it is not enough, about 64 percent



elderly are leading their life without sanitary latrine and 72.4 percent of them are taking bath without bathroom. The high correlation is found between monthly income and expenditure in the family (0.774\*\*), monthly income of elderly (0.203\*\*), cultivable land (0.449\*\*). The negative correlation is found between age and monthly expenditure of the elderly. (-0.21\*\*) The model summary of regression analysis shows the relationship between income and expenditure. If income increases to 1 unit, expenditure increases 0.261 unit. From the analysis of the logistic regression it is found that in agriculture, business, service holder, age and monthly expenditure the importance of male is high whereas in house wife, ability to do daily activities and difficulty in performing daily activities the importance of female is high. Again regarding monthly income of the family, monthly income of the elderly & monthly expenditure of the elderly, the importance of male and female is independent.

The study identified that the position of elderly in decision making process is not satisfactory. Considering the heads of the family of the elderly, it has found that, the percentage of the male elderly is 89.6 percent. On the other hand the percentage of the female elderly in this respect is about 25.2 percent. It is also understandable that 39.9 percent respondents are the principal income earners of the family whereas the percentage of sons in this case is 46.8. Nearly 52.2 percent elderly is still taking decision in the family and 38.4 percent elderly are the principal income earners and decision makers and the position of son in this point is about 32.5 percent. Though 32.5 percent son is simultaneously income earner and decision maker, 12.3 percent elderly are decision maker though their sons are principal income earners. Regarding who takes decision of buying and selling something in the family in this regard it is found that 50.2 percent respondents still are involved in this decision making process. On the other hand, the percentage of sons in this respect is about 32.5 percent. In case of receiving treatment in the family it is found that 45.8 percent elderly can take decision, 37.4 percent depend on their sons. Regarding female elderly, 11.8 percent depend on their husbands. About 38.4 percent female elderly replied that they are to seek permission and 14.3 percent of them opined that they are not to take permission as they are almost separated from the family members whereas the percentage of the

male elderly in this aspect is about 16.25 and 31.03. The condition of female elderly is not better than male ones. When 49.3 elderly enjoy their status as heads of the family, their decision is 36.9 percent accepted properly, 10.8 percent conventionally, and 1.5 percent of their decision is not accepted by the family members. When their status is elderly in the family 11.8 percent decision of them is accepted properly, 10.8 percent conventionally, and 3.4 percent is not accepted. If they are considered as the only family members, their position in the family is vulnerable. So, as an elderly, dependent, and family member, their status is not satisfactory in the family. Question was also asked to the respondents whether the elderly could take part in these decisions previously or not. 67.0 percent of the elderly replied positively whereas 33.0 percent replied that they have no idea about it. From the analysis of chi-square test there is a significant effect between principal income earners of the family and principal decision maker of the family, position and nature of acceptance of the decision of the family and sex and position of the elderly in buying and selling necessary things for the family.

The role and status of the elderly and its matter of enjoyment largely depend on how much wealth and property the elderly have. However, about 41.4 percent elderly do not have more than 10 decimal of homestead land and 22.7 percent have 11-20 decimal land. On the other hand, the elderly who have more than 50 and above decimal of homestead land their number is not totally more than 3 percent. Homestead land is included in property, and property is the indicator of prestige or status. About 48.8 percent elderly has merely 1-100 decimal of cultivable land. On the other hand, the elderly who has more than 100 decimal of cultivable land is not totally more than 10 percent. Cultivable land is one of the most important properties of our rural society for playing role and enjoying status. Approximately 78.3 percent elderly have no pond. It is also an indicator of enjoying status in the rural society. More than ninety percent elderly have no garden, 94.6 percent have no fruit garden, 56.7 percent have no domestic animals, 98.03 percent have no bank-balance and 40.89 percent has no ornaments though these are the sources of playing role and enjoying status. Ornaments especially for women in our rural settings play an important role for enjoying status. About 34.0 percent elderly get invitation in local socio-cultural

programs. The ability to compel the members of the family to do work according to the wishes of the elderly in our rural society is near about fifty percent. Principal income earners play important role in helping the poor than the elderly because about 47.3 percent principal income earners including 25.6 percent son 18.7 percent elderly can help the poor man and 52.7 percent including 21.2 percent son and 21.2 percent elderly cannot do this. Nearly 60.6 percent elderly can invite their relatives in different socio- religious occasions. On the other hand, 39.4 percent elderly cannot do this due to lack of economic ability. About 60.6 percent elderly do not think themselves the important members of the family as well as society whereas 39.4 percent of them think as an important person in this system. Taking part in resolution of familial disputes is also the symbol of enjoying role and status of the elderly. It is also apparent that 47.3 percent respondents admitted that the members of the family give importance to them whereas 52.7 percent of them admitted that the family members do not give importance. Question was also asked to them, why? They replied that, due to economic hardship, physical dependency and changing situation of the society they are not given importance to them. The elderly have a tendency to recall the past more and more. This is because they observed many things for long in their life. Now they want to match the present with the past. Through life history method it is known that 68.5 percent elderly could enjoy the statues stated above whereas 31.5 percent replied negatively. Some of them replied that they have no idea about it.

It has stated earlier that the elderly of our culture in rural settings were held high regards in the family and rural community. They were actual heads of the family and advice was sought from them on different range of issues. Their word was final in setting disputes in family as well as in the rural community. Actually the family and village community would look upon them like the real helmsman of boat of the family and society. At present their position in these places has become very complicated. About 75.9 percent elderly face difficulty in performing their daily activities. About 21.2 percent elderly wash their cloths by themselves. On the other hand 38.9 percent make their wives do this or their wives willingly do this. In this case, 20.7 percent elderly depend on their son's wives. 54.7 percent elderly arrange their beds by themselves. About 17.7 percent elderly (female) share their problems with their

husbands, 38.9 percent (male) elderly with their wives, 32 percent share with their sons and three percent share with their son's wives. So, it is understandable that the relationship between the elderly and their sons' wives are not friendly. About 40.4 percent elderly spend their time gossiping with other elderly. 41.7 percent male elderly carry out simple chores in house whereas 58.3 percent do not do this. It is also noticeable that about 82.2 percent female elderly carry out simple chores in the house whereas 17.8 percent cannot do this. So, female elderly in rural society carry out more simple chores in the house than male one because society assigned the division of labor for male and female in the society. About 67.5 percent of them are capable of going outside whereas 32.5 percent are not able to do this. About 41.4 percent male and 45.3 percent female elderly replied positively that their familial relationship is helpful for enjoying satisfactory status. About 43.8 percent male and 42.9 percent female elderly replied that they are given priority at the time of arranging marriage in the family. About 80.78 percent elderly have no role to educate their grandchildren. For buying and selling necessary things, the percentage of male are 40.4 and female is 36.9. About 30 percent elderly including male and female are not asked for this purpose. It has found that those who are 80 years and above all of them take part in these activities. About 85.0 percent family members of the respondents show respect to elderly in religious activities. More than half of the elderly opined that, the family members do not influence them before election. About 52.7 percent elderly including 19.2 percent male and 33.5 percent female replied that their family members do not seek permission from them at the time of election. On the other hand, 47.3 percent elderly replied positively. About 64 percent neighbors come to the elderly for help. Again 46.3 percent elderly replied negatively that the neighbor do not come to them for taking advice before marriage of their sons or daughters. It was a tradition in rural society that before mate selection the elderly were asked as to the bride/ groom. Now, it has undergone a change. In this matter, 53.7 percent elderly replied that the neighbors come to them, and 46.3 percent replied negatively. It is also noticeable here that people come to the head of the family regarding arranging the marriage in the family. If the elderly are given priority to watch television program, in this respect, 26.6 percent of the elderly replied positively and 73.4 percent of them replied negatively. Besides 41.9 percent elderly participate in the rural development activities

and 58.1 percent cannot do. In the rural society influential people are those who are called for solving problems. It is also understandable from the table that 82.8 percent elderly can take part in solving disputes in the family. Nearly 44.3 percent respondents can take part in resolving disputes outside village. It is also understandable that 55.7 percent elderly cannot take part in this matter. Approximately 89.7 percent elderly have good relationship with the people in their villages. More than ninety percent replied that their relationship with the neighbor is good. About 93.1 percent elderly have good relationship with relatives. About 74.4 percent elderly replied that the elderly in past could do these activities. From the analysis of chi-square test there is a significant effect between the age group and having work for family, the ability of the elderly to do their daily activities for the family, the age and performing daily activities and the age and helping other members of the family.

The process of aging in our country is happening at a time when the style of life of the people is shaping into a hybrid form, bond of kinship is weakening, composition of family is undergoing transformation, urbanization, industrialization, modernization, globalization and media revolution are occurring, individualism is increasing. So, in these situations the issue of performing role in the family and society and the enjoyment of status in these places for the rural elderly have become complicated. All the people will be older if they live long. So it's the duty for the people of all sections of our country to come forward for the well-being of our senior citizens. That means, it has become essential to improve their socio-economic condition for uplifting their quality of life, ensure their participation in decision making process so that they feel strong familial attachment, highlight their role for guiding members and bridging social relations among them, value them for sustaining socio-cultural heritage with a view to making them understand that they have still active role and satisfactory status. So, for better understanding and wider generalizing about the role and status of the rural elderly in the family as well as in the society there is no other important options but to undertake further studies on this issue.

# Appendix-1

## Recommendations

Aging is an inevitable process. There is no scope to deny it. Elderly is a situation which is not by born. Every one will have to face this situation unless some one dies earlier. It is also a pathetic situation that the man who has done many things for the family, society and the country as a whole is to face various problems when they are almost helpless in terms of physical, mental, social, economic and psychological states. The trend of increasing the elderly due to low fertility and mortality and increasing life expectancy because of the advancement of the medical facilities has not only in international arena but also in Bangladesh become a problem. Moreover, the rural elderly are to engage in various activities in spite of their physical inabilities. So, something should be done for them so that they can enjoy their role and status as well as successful aging. These are-

- Bangladesh like other developing nations lacks adequate public programs for the elderly. It does not have any age based programs such as social security that serves all the elders who meet the age criteria. It should be taken into consideration.
- Bangladesh has some public programs for the elderly based on financial need, but these are limited in terms of resource capacity, lack of monitoring, transparency and nepotism of the local government. It should be increased and made compulsory for all the elderly.
- Very recently government has realized the need and importance of supporting of its senior population through old age allowance, assistance for widows, old homes etc. This is also limited and entangled by corruption. So, these types of programs should make compulsory for the extremely poor and destitute elders.
- Many elderly, both in rural and urban areas, depend on private sector for their health care services because public sector services have many shortcomings such as poor quality of services, communication problem, corrupt practice etc.

that push the elders towards private sector services. So, it is urgent for the government to take initiative about it.

- Policy makers should examine different elderly friendly policies that might make the family members more capable of caring their elderly, such as, educational and training of programs for caregiver.
- Those who are young generation today will be elderly in future. They should save money and form association and organization with a view to helping the elderly who are helpless and destitute so that the culture of helping and respecting the senior citizens is nourished and exercised among the next generation.
- There are some assistive technologies that show great promise in helping elders with functional limitations to stay less dependent on the caregivers and remain active, such as, mobile phone, computer and internet facilities. If the government establish club and provide television, newspapers, computer, internet facilities and instruments for various games just for the senior citizens, the elderly will be benefitted from that. Trainers should be employed. It may be hypothetical for the first time.
- The household security should be ensured among the elderly because they need socio-calm environment for their mental refreshment. If they are not secured in their homes, it is not possible to ensure their enjoyable role and status in the family.
- Government should start a program for rewarding the family who care the elderly most and punishing those who are careless to the elderly. With these results, the people of the country will be motivated for caring the elderly.
- Mass media refers to the communication including written, broadcast, spoken that reaches to a large audience. This includes television, radio, advertising, movies, internet, newspaper, magazines etc. It is a significant force in modern culture which is referred to by sociologists as mediated culture. They can telecast and publish programs that help the elderly to play active role in prestigious level and enjoy satisfactory status. It can uphold the image of the elderly through developing an ethical and human attitude towards the elderly.

They can also undertake various programs for benefiting the elderly. They may also undertake various awareness arising programs in favor of the elderly so that the people of the society can be aware.

- The Imam (leader) of mosque can make the community people aware of serving the elderly and giving importance to them in the light of Islamic point of view because people in our country are religious minded. They, at least, go to mosque every Friday.
- The family members should consult the elderly in respect to all matters. If the elderly disagree with the family members, they should try to make the elderly understand that issue tactfully. With this result, the elderly may feel that they have active role and satisfactory status in the family.
- Elderly people are to be declared as the senior citizens to the county and be provided with the economic security, strengthened national committee on aging, ensured elderly issues in national education system, established elderly club, ensured elderly rights to property and promoted media campaign, public awareness and aging research.
- It is necessary to develop more income generation projects for the elderly in rural areas of Bangladesh so that the elderly can be self sufficient and economically active. If they are able to do this, it will be easy for them to play role and enjoy status in the family and society successfully.
- The government should reintroduce the primary health care for the elderly population. This is because in rural society maximum elderly are poor. So, it is needed to give them free health care service so that they can be active and free from physical dependency.
- Informal care giving should be enhanced. In this regard, care giving and interaction system should be increased. Family members should care them willingly and education, information and counseling is needed to enable families to make decision with the elderly on care giving system.
- Formal recreation centre for the elderly should be established. It can be arranged through institutionalized system so that the elderly can spend their leisure with personal satisfaction.

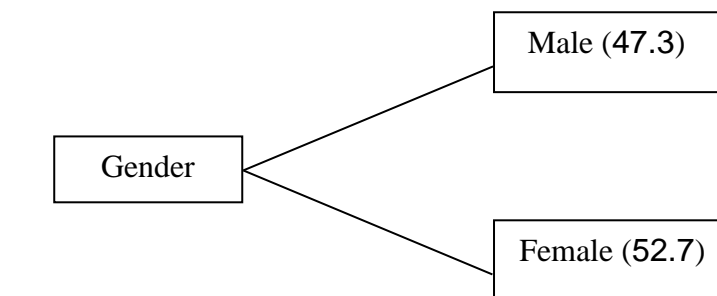


- Religion is a part of our culture. It helps to increase social solidarity, upholds the norms and values and helps to control the society if it is practiced exactly by the members of the society. So, religious practice can help the members of the family increase social status and play satisfied role in the family and community. So, the people of every religion should abide by their religious code of conduct about the elderly.
- For the measures of the aging problem, the non-government organization should take some volunteer programs for the destitute, low or no income, displaced or disabled elderly group. They should take necessary programs for improving the quality of life, income generating steps; create recreation centre, motivational and consciousness program. Though they have some programs such as Bangladesh Association for the Aged and Institute of Geriatric Medicine (BAAIAM), Probin Hitaishi Sangha (PHS) etc. for the elderly, this is not enough and all the elderly do not access to this.
- The younger generation should change their attitude to the elderly and engage them in social interaction so that they feel active members of the society. In this respect the younger generation should fix time for the elderly everyday for making the life of our senior citizens pleasant.
- To help the elderly in enjoying role and status in the family, the women can play better role than men because in rural society, women especially son's wives spend maximum time in family. So, their proper care, interaction, relationship with the elderly help to enjoy better role and status, no doubt. In this respect the government put fund into programs and services which allow families to take better care for the elderly. For this the government should fix a handsome fund for the family.

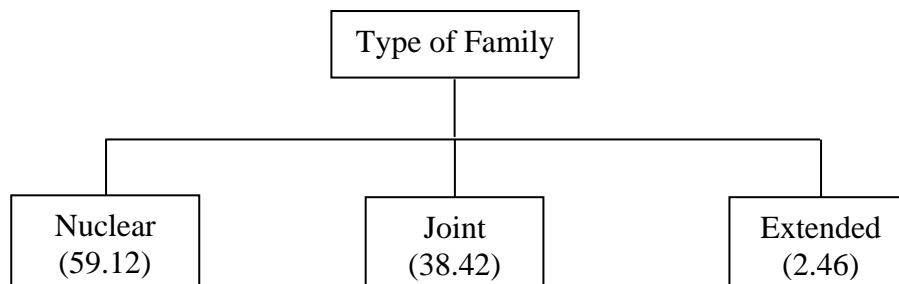
## Appendix- 2

### Major findings of the study at a glance

Age Categories	Male	Female	Total
60 – 65	47.9	67.3	58.1
65 – 70	15.6	13.1	14.3
70 – 75	25.0	10.3	17.2
75 – 80	5.2	2.8	3.9
80 – 85	3.1	3.7	3.4
85 – 90	3.1	2.8	3.0

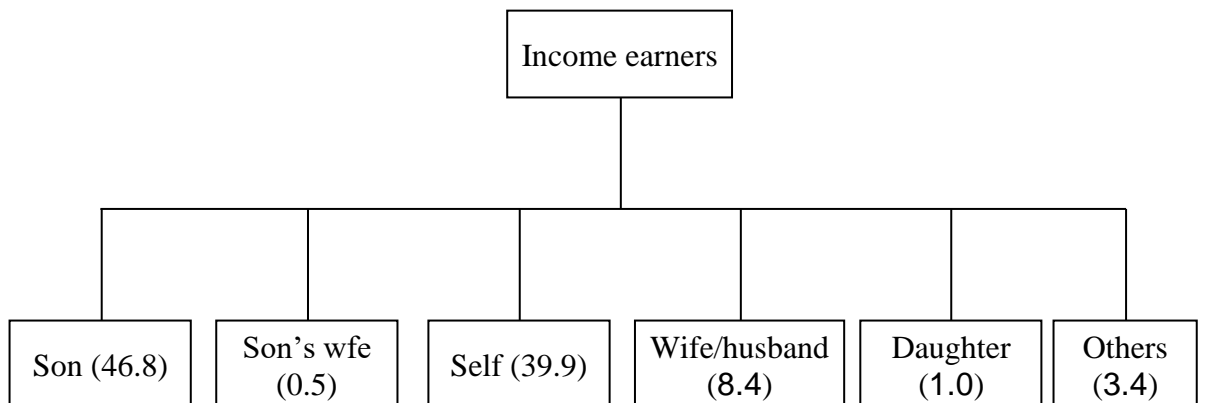
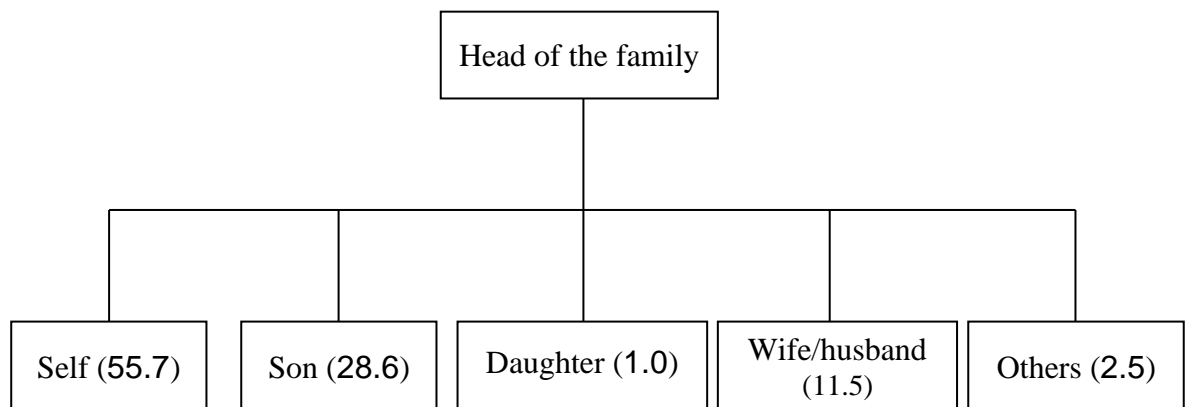


Status	Male	Female	Total
Married	45.3	25.1	70.4
Widowed	2.0	27.6	29.6

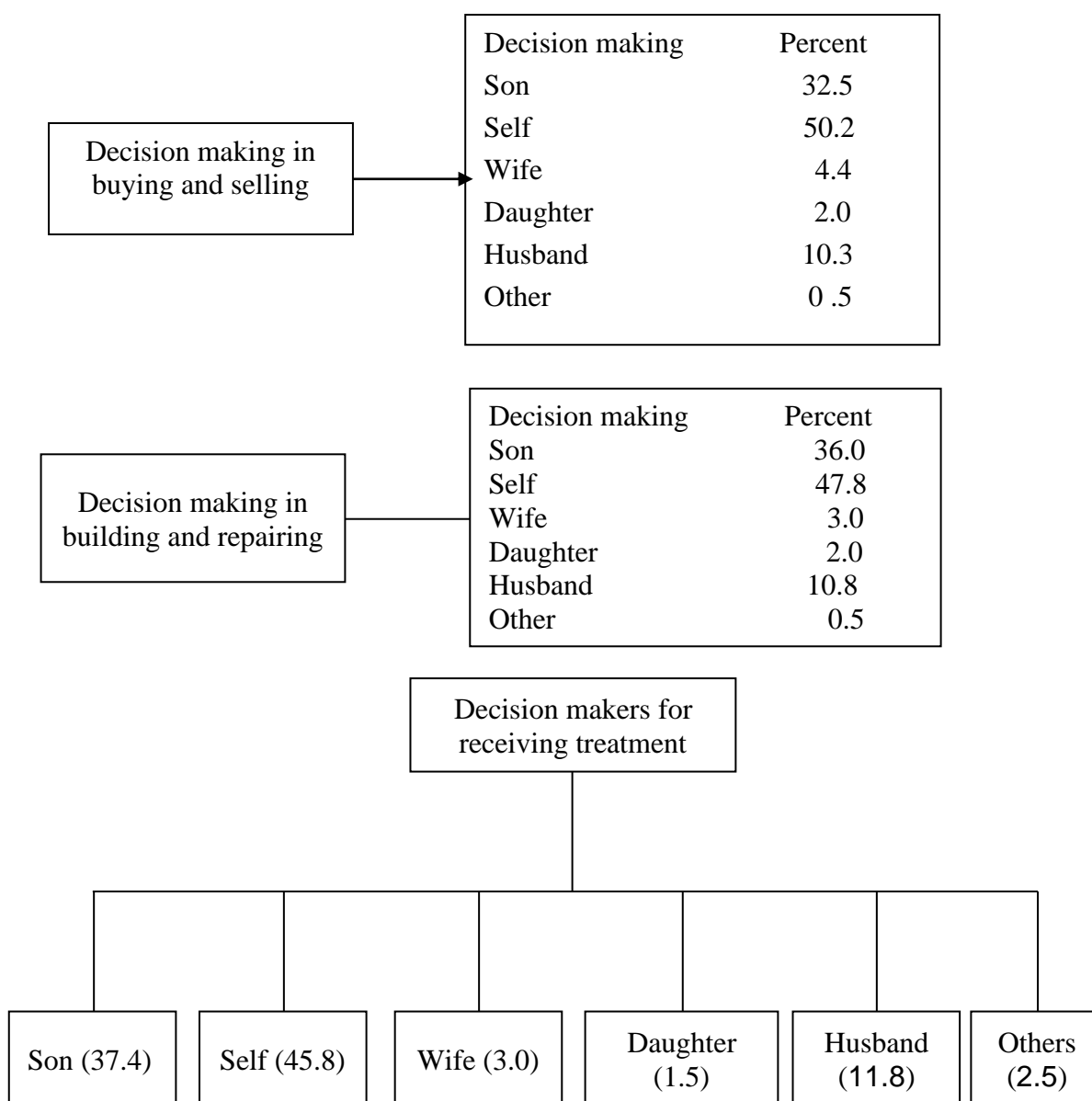


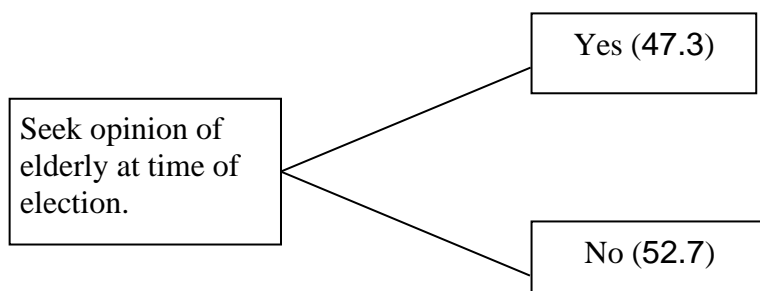
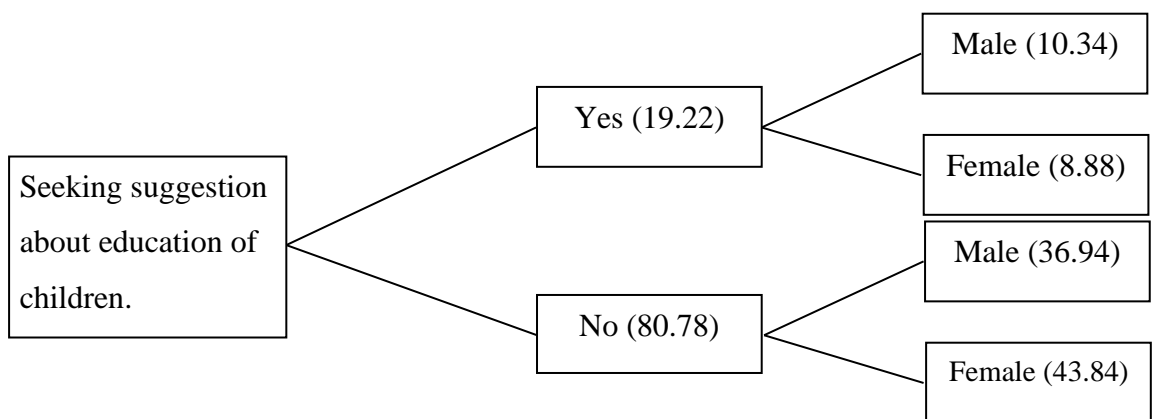
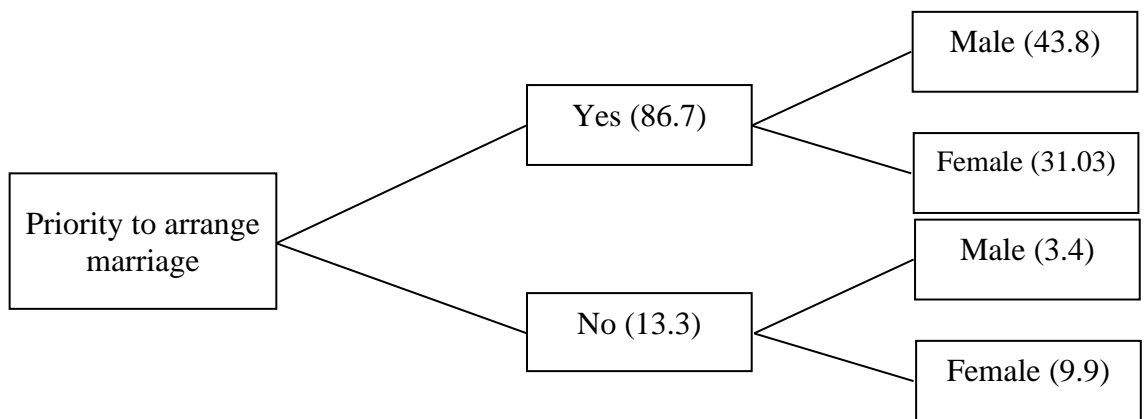
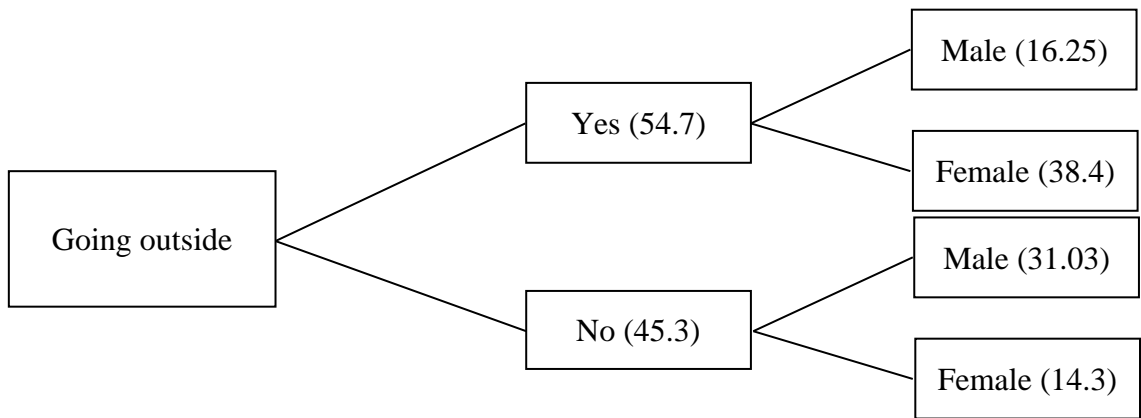
Education	Male	Female	Total
Nil	35.5	41.8	77.3
Signature ability	5.9	6.5	12.3
Primary	2.5	2.9	5.4
Secondary	2.5	1.5	4.0
Higher secondary	0.5	0	0.5
Graduate	0.5	0	0.5

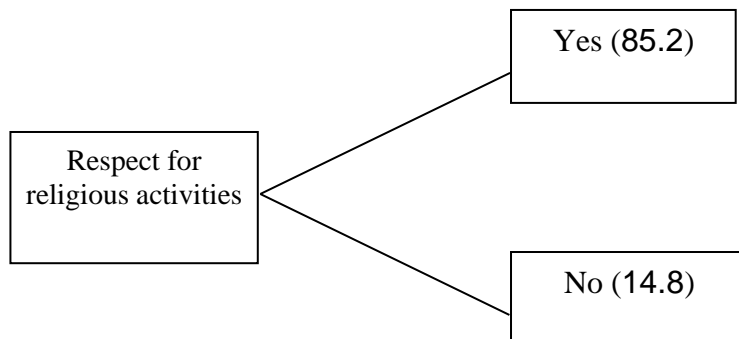
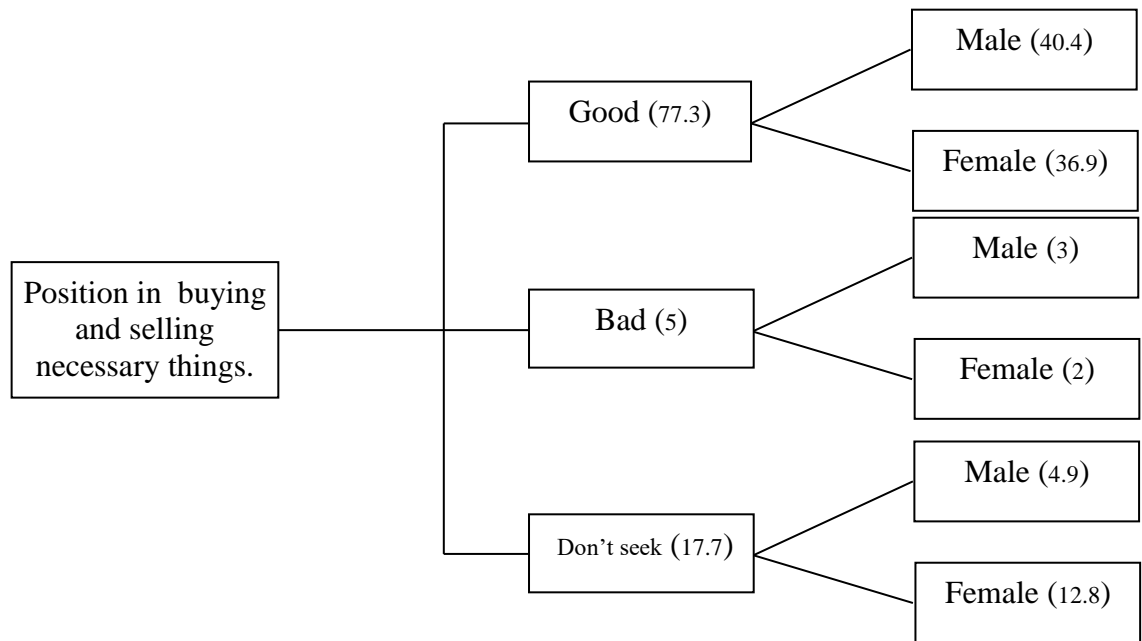
Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture	42.4	7.9	50.2
Business	3.0	1.5	4.4
House wife	-	27.1	27.1
Others	2.0	16.3	18.2



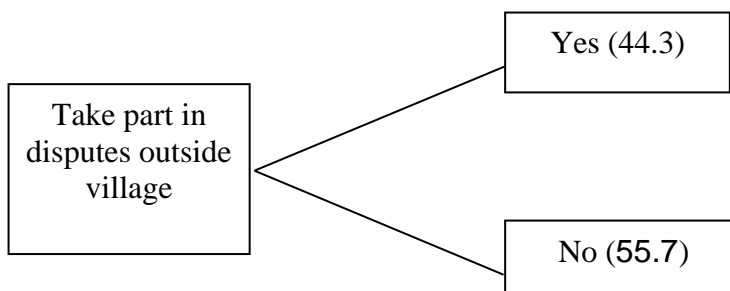
Principal income earner of the family	Principal decision maker of the family							Total
	Son	Self	Wife	Daughter	Husband	Other		
Son	32.5	12.3	0.9	-	0.5	0.5	46.8	
Son's wife	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.5	
Self	1.5	38.4	-	-	-	-	39.9	
Daughter	-	-	-	0.9	-	-	1.0	
Husband	-	0.9	-	-	7.4	-	8.4	
Other	-	-	-	0.9	0.5	1.9	3.4	

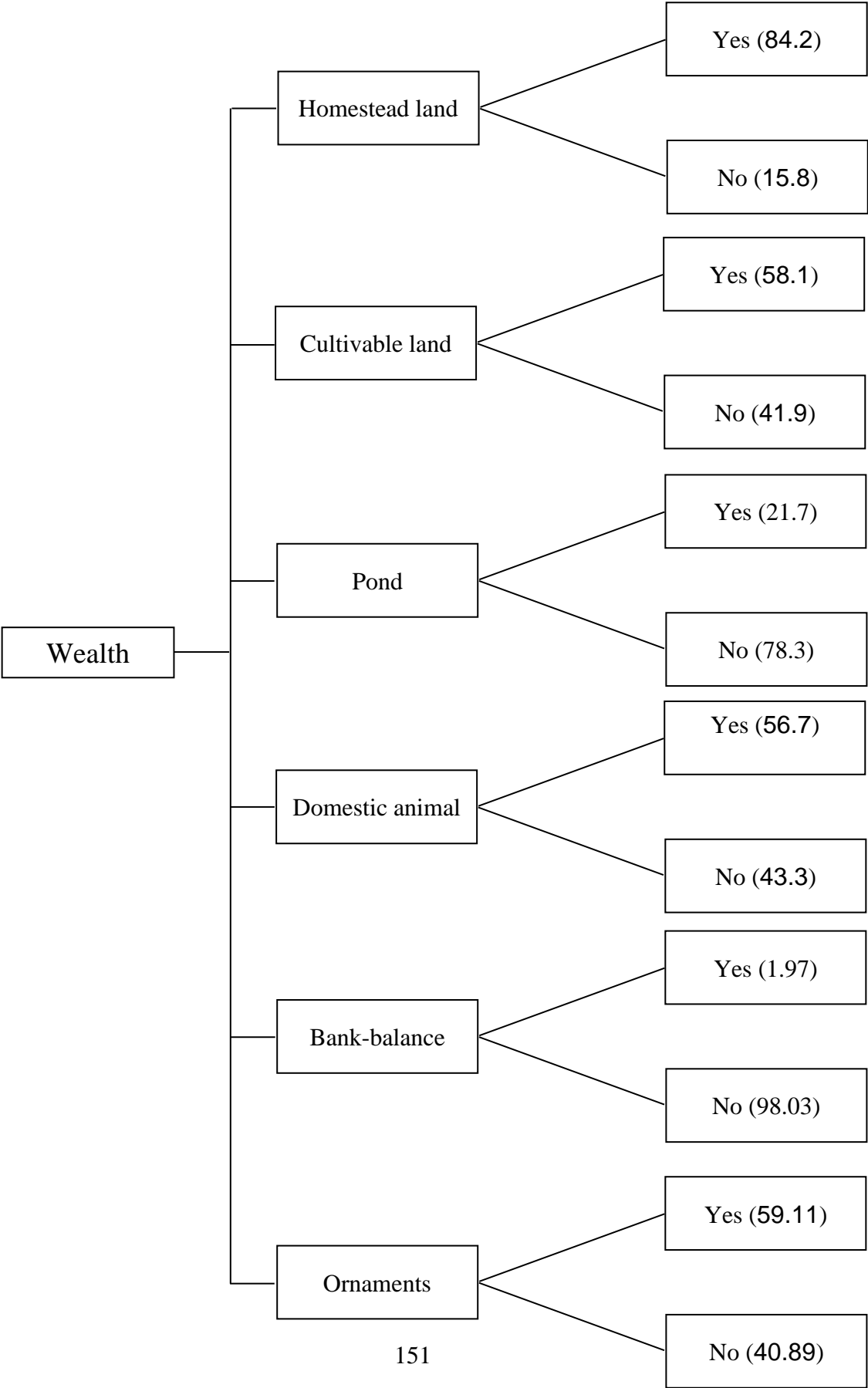




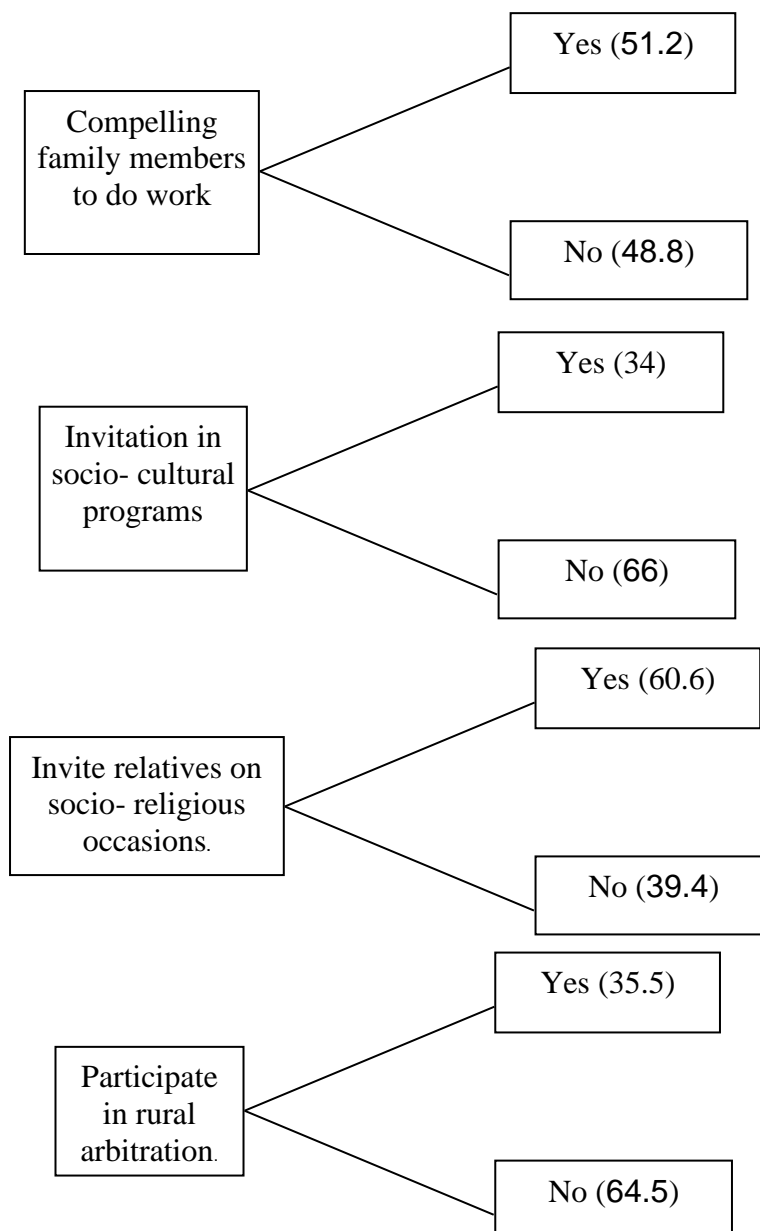


Age categories	Yes	No	Total
60 – 65	47.8	10.3	58.1
65 – 70	11.3	2.9	14.2
70 – 75	16.3	1.0	17.3
75 – 80	2.5	1.5	4.0
80 – 85	3.0	0.5	3.5
86 – 90	2.0	1.0	3.0

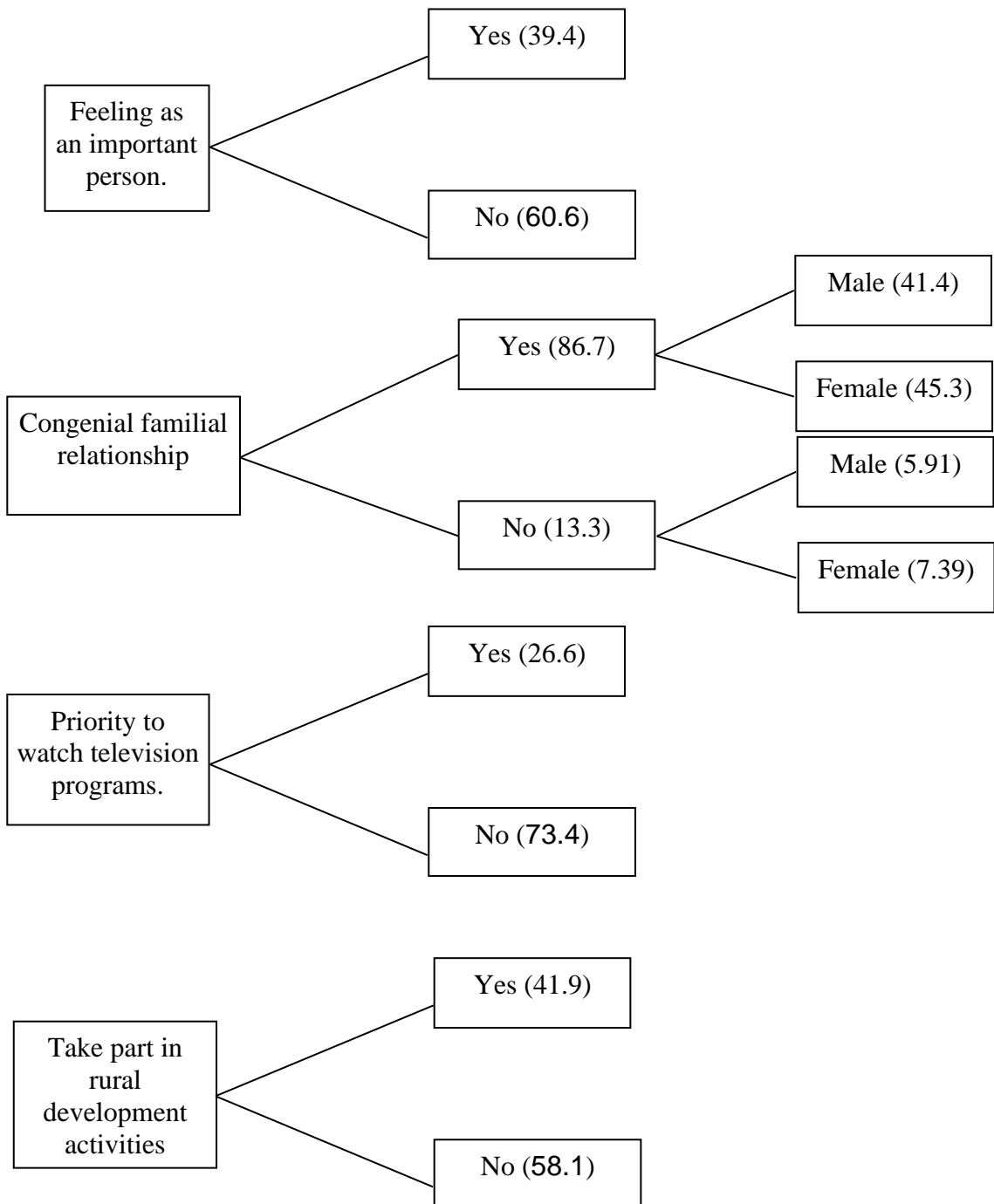




Position in the family	Nature of accepting decisions by the family members				
	Status	Properly	Conventionally	Don't accept	Total
Head of family		36.9	10.8	1.5	49.3
Elderly		11.8	10.8	3.4	26.1
Dependent		6.4	10.3	4.0	20.7
Only Member		0.5	2.5	0.9	3.9







## Appendix-3

### Case study: case-1 to case 10

#### In-depth Case Study of Some Selected Respondents

Case Studies are real life examples of people. A case study is really a puzzle that needs to be solved. The first thing to remember about writing a case study is that the case should have problem solving. It should have enough information so that the readers can understand what the problem is. It is also important that a good case is more than just a description. It arranges all the information, comes to conclusions, tells the reader everything, and the reader really doesn't have to work very hard.

#### Case No # 1

Md. Bahaz Uddin Sheikh

Village: konagaty,

Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 88 years

Nature of family: Joint

Family size: 12



Md. Bahaz Uddin Sheikh is an old man. He is plump with a slightly moon shaped face and has thin gray hair. He behaved friendly when we interviewed him, he answered little and that with less relish. He is a conventional head of the family. His eldest son is the actual leader of the family though he is the main income earner of the family. He has been living in this home for 30 years. He is the owner of this home. Md. Bahaz Uddin Sheikh is a farmer as well as small businessman. He is now fairly physically active. Now his physical condition is normal and he informed that he had good health in the past. But he feels very weak now.

Normally he can perform his daily activities and daily instrumental activities and sometimes needs help from others. He cannot perform the social activities actively.

He visits very often to his daughters' home and other kins' home on some special festivals.

He feels that he does not enjoy this life any more. He has been living in his three generational joint families set up with his wife, three sons, their wives and four grand children. He boasts of his cordial relation with his wife. He reported to me that the society is changing and the condition of elderly is deteriorating day by day.

He does not enjoy his position in the family. His sons do not share with him in all crucial family matters for taking decisions. Normally he spends his leisure in performing religious activities and gossiping with others. Now and then he feels bored and he feels his status has declined outside home and in the community.

## Case No # 2

Mst. Alea Begum

Village: konagaty,

Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 62 years

Nature of family: Joint

Family size: 15



Alea Begum is an elderly widow. Her husband had died two years ago. She is a pale, thin woman with a rather pleasant shy smile and grey hair. She behaved very softly when we interviewed her. She answered with shame. At present her position in the family is mother and grandmother. She does not have any kind of financial resources. She has three sons. She depends on her sons' income.

She is now physically less active. Her physical condition is not so bad. She is not too weak to work. She has good position in her family. She also can perform her daily activities. She always tries to help her sons' wives in doing household chores. She also takes after her grand children.

She has not been ill in any serious diseases but she is not too well physically at present. She always tries to maintain cordial relation with her grand children and neighbor and sons' wives. Her sons and their wives also try to respect her. Sometimes she feels bored and loneliness. She thinks that her status has declined after being a widow. She also thinks that she is to play many imposed roles for her family especially child care activities, looking after domestic animals, cooking in absence of sons' wives, cutting straw, sweeping yard and cowshed etc.

### **Case No # 3**

Md. Moyur Ali Sheikh

Village: Konagaty,

Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 85 years

Family size: Three generational



Md. Moyur Ali Sheikh is an old man. He has thin gray hair. He is friendly minded when we interviewed him. He answered little and that with less relish. He is also a conventional head of his family. His youngest son is the instrumental leader/ actual leader of the family. Actually he is physically dependent because he is a blind man.

He has been living in this home for 30 years. He is the owner of this home. He was a farmer. Now he cannot see. He is totally dependent upon others. But he can buy things from hat or bazaar (shopping) with the help of stick. He is now fairly less physically active. Now his physical condition is not normal and he informed that he had good health in the past. But he feels very weak now.

Normally he cannot perform his daily activities and daily instrumental activities and sometimes needs help from others. He cannot perform the social activities actively. He visits very often his daughters' home and other kins' home on some special festivals. He also sometimes feels that he does not enjoy these occasions any more. He has been living in his three generational joint families set up with his wives, four

sons, their wives and grand sons. He still has wife. He boasts of his cordial relation with his wife. He reported to me that the society is changing and the condition of elderly is deteriorating day by day. He does not enjoy his position in the family. His sons do not share with him in all crucial family matters for taking decisions. Normally he spends his leisure time in performing religious activities and gossiping with others. Now and then he feels bored and he feels his status has declined outside home and in the community. In spite of his physical disability he has to do everyday activities. His sons and their wives hardly look after him. His wife and sometimes his daughter help him in these activities.

#### Case No # 4

Md. Khezmot Ali Sheikh

Village: Konagaty, Post: Khatiyamary,

Upazila : Dhunat, Bogra

Age: 64

Nature of family: Joint

Family size: Three generational



Md. Khezmot Ali Sheikh is an old man. He has thin gray hair and long beard. He is also friendly minded when we did interviewed him. He is the actual head of his family. He has only one son and four daughters. He has been living in this home during 64 years. He is the owner of this home. Md. Khezmot Ali Sheikh is a farmer. He is well known as Kobiraj (healer). He is now fairly physically active. Now his physical condition is normal and he informed that he had good health in the past. But he thinks that he is becoming weak day by day. Normally he can perform his daily activities. He cannot perform the social activities actively. He visits very often his daughters' home and other kins' home on some special festivals. He merely prays just for Friday. He is a follower of Pir. He sometimes arranges religious festivals. He also sometimes feels that he enjoys these programs more. He has been living in his three generational joint families set up with his wife, son and grand daughters. He boasts of his cordial relation with his wife. He reported to me that the society is changing and the condition of the elderly is not good at all. Once upon a time his economic

condition was good. At present his condition is almost hand to mouth. His son is a garment worker. He cannot help his father because he is married and he has a daughter and limited income. Md. Khezmot Has also two daughters who are also garment workers. As they are divorcees, sometimes they help their father. He does not enjoy his position in the family. His son does not share with him in all crucial family matters for taking decisions.

Normally he spends his leisure in performing Kobiraji (healing) activities and gossiping with others. Now and then he feels bore and he feels his status has declined outside home and in the community.

### **Case No # 5**

Md. Atahar Ali Talukder

Village: Razarampur,

Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 70 years

Family size: Three generational



Md. Atahar Talukder is 70 years old and lives in a rural village in Razarampur with his wife who is 60 years old, and their two youngest daughters. Actually he has five sons and four daughters. Except two youngest daughters all the children live apart.

He lives in a joint family in a semi-rural area. He farms a medium plot of land. He still takes part in rural arbitration. The family members also look upon him as an important person. He has strong position in decision making process in the family as well as in the society.

He thinks that he enjoys satisfactory status in the family and society. He cannot perform his role actively as before due to his physical inability. Compared to many rural residents in this village, he is well off. His house is a permanent structure with cement walls. He owns a television and a mobile phone.

Md. Atahar Talukder and his wife have five non-resident children who have their own independent households, although only two of these children are married. His non-resident children range in age from 40 years old to 28 years old.

According to Md. Atahar Talukder, he has an equally close relationship with all his children. When asked if he receives any support from his non-resident children, he replied that he receives support from all of them and that he, in turn, supports them. Some of his children send him money on an incidental basis; others bring him food when they visit. Whenever any of his children visits, he gives them food from his farm.

When we asked Md. Atahar talukder from whom he would seek help if he and/or his wife were to become ill, he said that if there was no sufficient time to contact his children who live outside the area, he would turn to a neighbor.

However, even in this relatively straightforward case of an elderly respondent supporting his adult child, his non-resident children were providing him with small amounts of support on an irregular basis. Relatively his social position is good. Family members give importance to him.

He is still the head of the family. He has average cultivable and homestead lands. He has also average economic and social position in the family and society. His performance of role is declining day by day due to worse physical condition.

## Case No # 6

Md. Motiar Rahman Talukder

Village: Razarampur, Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 90 years

Family size: Three generational



Md. Motiar Rahman Talukder is 90 years old and lives in village with his wife, daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren. He is not the primary provider for all the members of his household. He is neither a farmer nor a possessor of any occupation rather dependent. He has lived in this community all his life.

He does not have any kind of financial resources. He has three sons and all of them are married. They have also children. His youngest son is a little bit abnormal. He lives with his land, property, wealth and so on. He and his wife tried to educate their children. His one son is a graduate and has job in garment factory. He has also four children. So, it is not easy for his son to economically look after him. He is not in a very good position. In past, they had available necessary things for conducting family life.

He is traditionally the head of the family though he has no contribution at present to the betterment of the family. He is now physically active. Her physical condition is not so good as before. He is weak but can perform his daily activities. His wife, sons' wives help his daily activities. He also always tries to help his wife, sons' wives to do their work in doing household chores. He also takes after his grand children. He is not empowered in his family in a true sense. He is the decision maker of the family conventionally. But his condition in a family and inter personal relationship in family is not so bad. He has not been ill in any serious diseases. But at present he is not too well physically. He always tries to maintain cordial relation with his grand children and neighbor. Sometimes he feels bore and loneliness. He thinks that his status has declined. He also thinks that he is to play many imposed roles for her family.

### Case No # 7

Mst. Saleha Khatun

Village: Razarampur,

Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 74 years

Family size: Three generational



Mst. Saleha Khatun is a female elderly. Her husband is alive but does not work. Her husband is about ninety years old. She is a pale, thin woman with a rather pleasant shy smile and grey hair. She behaved very softly when we interviewed her. She answered with a smiling face.



At present her position in the family is mother and grandmother. She does not have any kind of financial resources. She has three sons and all of them are married. They also have children. Her youngest son is a little bit abnormal. She lives with her land property, wealth and so on. She and her husband tried to educate their children. Her one son is a graduate and do job in garments factory. He has also four children. So, it is not easy for her son to economically look after her. Her husband is not in a very good position.

Previously, they had some necessary things for conducting family life. Her husband is traditionally head of the family though he has no contribution at present for the betterment of the family. She is now physically active. Her physical condition is not so good as before. She is weak but can perform her daily activities. Her husband, sons' wives help her daily activities.

She also always tries to help her husband, sons' wives to do their work in doing household chores. She also takes after her grand children. She is not empowered in her family in a true sense. Her husband is the decision maker of the family. Her condition in the family and inter personal relationship in the family is not so bad. She has not been ill in any serious diseases but she is not too well physically.

She always tries to maintain cordial relation with her grand children and neighbor. Sometimes she feels bore and loneliness. She thinks that her status has declined when she was to be widowed. She also thinks that she is to play many imposed roles for her family.

## Case No # 8

Md.Chanu Sheikh

Village: Rajarampur, Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 76 years

Family size: Three generational



Md.Chanu Sheikh is a small businessman. He lives in a permanent house. He works outside the home though he is an active business man. He is illiterate. At present he is a farmer and rice seller. He was very hard-working in his previous life. He has children and all of them are married and two of them co reside with him. Of these married children, two are daughters. His physical condition is also deteriorating day by day. These two daughters do not have outside employment, and, even though, they perform most of the household chores.

He has merely fifteen decimal of cultivable land and same amount of homestead land. His two sons are day laborers. They help their father according to their ability. His daughters are extent well of. They sometimes look after their parents. He spends his life with his wife with the help from sons and daughters and relief fund from government. Once he was an actual leader. Now his position is economically dependent. According to his speech, those who have no money, wealth property and powerful man in the family will not account them, let alone the discussion of role and social status.

## Case No # 9

Joygon Begum

Village: Konagaty, Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 85 years

Family size: Three generational



Joygon Begum also co resides with her daughter in her daughter in law's house. She lives in a permanent house .She does not work both inside and outside the home. She is not active for doing any kind of activities. She is still illiterate. At present her status is merely a dependent female elderly. She also looks upon herself as the burden of the family and society. She has only one daughter who got married and co resides with them. Her daughter's in law is very poor. They need not look after their mother. Her mother is not capable of conducting her family life successfully. She does not have satisfactory wealth, property, land and so on. Her daughter is also depending on her. Her physical condition is also deteriorating day by day. But this is normal or biological process of aging. She has no wealth, property, bank-balance, furniture, ornaments, cultivable and homestead lands. She depends on the government relief program and help from the people of the village. She sometimes helps neighbor in their work for the hope of receiving help from them. She spends her every day with physical and mental sorrows. She has to do her daily work by herself. She does not enjoy status in family and village community. Even she does not know what role and status are. She merely expects help from others for conducting her everyday life. If anybody extends his or her helping hands, she becomes satisfied with that. She helps her neighbor of their simple chores with a view to getting something from them.

## Case No # 10

Mst. Shaher Banu

Village: Ariamohon, Post: Khatiamary,

Upazila: Dhunat, Bogra.

Age: 61 years

Family size: Three generational



Mst. Shaher Banu is a 61 year-old widow who lives in a permanent structure with her husband and a son and extended family. The household has a total of 6 members including her grandchildren. Her son is the household head who is 30 years old. She does not work outside the household although she owns, and cares for, chickens. The household consumes some of her eggs, and she sells the remainder. She has only one son on whom she is dependent. She always helps her son's wife and they bring her food while she occasionally gives them eggs.

Her son bears all the costs of her mother. Her father has homestead and a little bit cultivable land. She has neither bank balance nor any wealth except her son. Even her living residence is not her. Her husband is the owner of this house. She has to help her son's wife. She has to do her own work. That means she has to play dual types role. Whether she is happy in her present life or not was asked to her. In reply, she told how they who have no sufficient wealth can expect more. She has no role in decision making process of the family.

She is influenced before national or local election especially in casting vote by her son. However, she is not comfortable with this arrangement. Each morning she gets up and tends to her chickens, and then she stays in the house for the rest of the day. She has to either wash her own clothes or clean her own room. When asked if there are any activities she enjoys, she smiled and kept silence. Someone says in favor of her that she is confined to the house. Even though she is very old and is unable to perform many of the basic activities of daily living, she still contributes to the household activities. She plays many roles but this is not counted as a role and her status is merely as elderly. During the interview family members told us that she gives them some of her eggs money so that they can buy food, while some of them she keeps so that she can give small amounts to her grandchildren. When we asked her if she could still count her money, she replied that she could but slowly.

## Appendix -4

### Respondent Schedule (Questionnaire)

#### Role and Status of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh: Patterns and Changes Study Questionnaire

##### Identification of Respondent

Name of the respondent:

Father's/Husband's Name:

Address: Village:

Post:

Upazila:

Zila:

Date of birth:

Age of the respondent: Years

Sex: 0. Male 1. Female

Marital Status: 0. Unmarried 1. Married 2. Widowed 3. Widower 4. Others

Religion:

##### 1. Socio-Economic Background of the Respondent

1.1 Will you please state your educational qualification?

0. Nil, 1. No formal education but can sign, 2. Primary,  
3. Secondary 4. Higher Secondary 5. Graduate 6. Post-graduate

1.2 What is your occupation?

0. Agriculture 1. Business 2. Service holder 3. House wife 4. Other

1.3 Do you lead a retired life at present?

0. No 1. Yes

1.4 What is the type of your family?

0. Nuclear 1. Joint 2. Extended

1.5 What is the number of members in your family?

0. Male 1. Female

1.6 Who is the head of your family?

0. Self 1. Son 2. Daughter 3. Husband 4. Sons' wife 5. Wife 6. Other

1.7 What is the average monthly income of your family?

Tk .....

1.8 What is the amount of your monthly income?

Tk .....

1.9 What is the monthly expenditure of your family?

Tk. ....

1.10 What is the amount of your monthly expenditure?

Tk .....

1.11 Who bears the expenses of doctors, medicine, etc?

0. Self 1. Son 2. Daughter 3. Son in law 4. Other

1.12 How much land do you have?.....

1.13 How much homestead do you have?.....

1.14 How much cultivable land do you have?.....

1.15 How much bank-balance do you have?.....

1.16 What is the type of ownership of your house?

0. Own 1. Rented house 2. Khasland

1.17 What is the condition of your residence?

0. Building 1. Tin shed 2. Straw made 3. Mud with tin

1.18 How much land is in your homestead?

1.19 Who is the owner of the residence you live now?

0. Self 1. Wife 2. Son 3. Daughter in law 4. Daughter 5. Rented house

1.20 How long have you been here? Year: .....

1.21 Do you have sufficient room in the residence for family members?

0. No 1. Yes

1.22 Do you have a separate room in the house of your own?

0. No 1. Yes

1.23 Do you share your room with other members of your family?

0. No 1. Yes

1.24 Who is the owner of the rooms of your house you live in?

0. Son 1. Son's wife 2. Self 3. Wife 4. Daughter 5. Other

1.25 What type of toilet do you use?

0. Paka                      1. Kancha

1.26 What type of bath room do you have?

0. Paka                      1. Kancha

## 2. Role of the Elderly

2.1 At what time do you normally go to bed?

2.2 At what time do you normally get up?

2.3 Do you have any work for your family?

If yes, state the nature of your work

Shopping	Washing cloths	Child care	Supervising household activities	Supervising land	Supervising domestic animals	Ot her
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2.4 Do you think that you are able to do your daily activities?

0. No                      1. Yes

2.5 Do you find any difficulty in performing your daily activities?

0. No                      1. Yes

If yes, what are the difficulties?

2.6 Do you help other members of the family in their activities?

2.7 Who wash your cloth?

0. Son    1. Son's wife              2. Self              3. Wife              4. Daughter              5. Other

2.8 According to your experience who would normally wash the clothes of the elderly?

0. Son    1. Son's wife              2. Self              3. Wife              4. Daughter              5. Other

2.9 Who arrange your bed?

0. Son    1. Son's wife              2. Self              3. Wife              4. Daughter              5. Other

2.10 In before, who would normally arrange the bed of the elderly?

0. Son    1. Son's wife              2. Self              3. Wife              4. Daughter              5. Other

2.11 To whom you consult your problem?

0. Son    1. Son's wife              2. Self              3. Wife              4. Daughter              5. Other

2.12 With whom would the elderly normally consult their problem?

0. Son    1. Son's wife              2. Self              3. Wife              4. Daughter              5. Other

2.13 How many hours per day do you usually work?

0. 3 hours 1. 4 hours 2. 5 hours 3. 6 hours 4. 7 hours 5. More than seven hours

2.14 How do you spend your leisure time?

0. Gossiping with other elderly 1. Watching television 2. Reading newspaper

3. Hearing radio 4. Spending time with children 5. Other

2.15 How did the elderly spend their leisure time previous? Do you think that they were habituated to

0. Gossiping with other elderly 1. Watching television 2. Reading newspaper 3.

Hearing radio 4. Spending time with children 5. Other

2.16 Are you able to carry out simple chores in the house, such as cleaning, home maintenance or yard work?

0. No 1. Yes

2.17 Can you go grocery shopping or any other place outside the home alone without anybody's help?

0. No 1. Yes

2.18 Do you able to work the same number of hours the other people can do?

0. No 1. Yes

2.19 Do you go to mosque regularly?

0. No 1. Yes

2.20 Can you take seat in the first line of the mosque?

0. No 1. Yes

If no, why,

2.21 Does your neighbor come to you for taking advice before marriage of their sons or daughters?

0. No 1. Yes

If no, why,

2.22 Does your neighbor come to you for taking advice in any problem?

0. No 1. Yes

If no, why,

2.23 Do you take part in rural development activities?

0. No 1. Yes

If no, why,

**3 Statuses of the Elderly: Social, Economic, Political, Cultural and Religious**



3.1 Is your familial relationship helpful for the enjoyment of your satisfactory status?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, why,

3.2 Do they give priority to you at the time of arranging marriage in your family?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, why,

3.3 Do the family members seek suggestion from you regarding education of their children?

0. No            1. Yes

If yes, why,

If no, why,

3.4 How do the family members evaluate you in buying and selling land, property, or other necessary things?

0. Good        1. Bad        2. Don't seek suggestion

If bad, why,

If don't seek suggestion, why,

3.5 Do your family member influence you before election?

0. No            1. Yes

If yes, what are the types of influence?

0. They have to give vote according to the decision of main income earner

1. They may have chance of not giving assistance from family

2. The candidate will look at good grace to him or her.

3.6 Do your family members seek advice at the time of election?

0. No            1. Yes

If yes, state why,

0. You know better about local politics 1. All the members of your family support the same political ideology 2. All the members of your family dependent upon your earned income through your life

3.6 Do you take part in religious activities outside home?

0. No            1. Yes

If yes, state the nature and types of the activities.....

3.7 How much time do you spend in performing this activity?

0. 1 hour                      1. 2 hours                      2. 3 hours  
 3. 4 hours                      4. 5 hours                      5. More than five hours

3.8 Do you feel any difficulty in performing your religious activities?

0. No                      1. Yes

3.9 Do the family members acknowledge you and show respect for religious activities?

0. No                      1. Yes

If no, why,

0. You are conservative                      1. Less religiously educated  
 2. Cannot contribute to the family due to economic hardship.

3.10 Do you get invitation in local socio- cultural programs?

0. No                      1. Yes

If no, why,

0. Physically not fit for going there                      1. Poverty  
 2. Disinterested to go there considering spending money  
 3. Previously, I did not contribute according to their expectation.

3.11 Do you think that the statuses stated above were enjoyed by the elderly previously?

0. No                      1. Yes

If no, why,

If yes, why,

**4. Position in Decision Making Process:**

4.1 Who is the principal income earner of your family?

0. Son    1. Son's wife                      2. Self                      3. Wife    4. Daughter                      5. Other

4.2 Who is the principal decision maker of your family?

0. Son    1. Son's wife                      2. Self                      3. Wife    4. Daughter                      5. Other

4.3 Why he or she is the main decision maker?

0. Main income earner                      1. Employed    2. Other

4.4 Who takes decision of spending earned income?

0. Son    1. Son's wife                      2. Self                      3. Wife    4. Daughter                      5. Other

4.5 Whose opinion is given priority at the time of buying and selling something?

0. Son 1. Son's wife 2. Self 3. Wife 4. Daughter 5. Other

4.6 Who takes decision for building and repairing dwelling houses?

0. Son 1. Son's wife 2. Self 3. Wife 4. Daughter 5. Other

4.7 Who takes decision for receiving treatment?

0. Son 1. Son's wife 2. Self 3. Wife 4. Daughter 5. Other

4.4 If you are not given importance in receiving treatment please explain the causes behind it.

0. Believe in traditional healing system

1. To go to the male doctors by female is against Purdah

2. Costly 3. Other

4.8 Do you seek permission in case of going outside from your home especially to relatives' house?

0. No 1. Yes

If yes, please tell me why?

0. Take care of children 1. look after domestic animal

2. Help in shopping 3. Help in doing every day familial activities

4. 9. What is your position in the family?

0. Head of family 1. Elderly

4.10 What is your role in making decision of the family?

0. Principal 1. Conventional 2. No role

4.11 What is your status in your family?

0. Head 1. Dominant 2. Dependent

4.12 How do your family members accept your decisions?

0. Properly 1. Conventionally 2. Don't accept

4.13 Do you think that other family members don't give importance to you for your old age?

0. No 1. Yes

4.14 What is your position in the family as elderly?

0. Good 1. Fair 2. Medium 3. Poor

If good, please tell me

why,.....

If fair, please tell me why,

.....  
If medium, please tell me why,  
.....

If poor, please tell me why,  
.....

4.15 Do you take part in family disputes?

0. No            1. Yes

4.16 Do your family members give you priority to watch television programs?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, why, explain.

3.16 Do you think that the elderly previously could take part in decision making process stated above?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, why,

If yes, why,

### **5. Influence of Wealth on the Enjoyment of Role and Status**

5.1 Do you have livestock?    0. No    1. Yes

If yes, how many,

Name of animal	Number
Buffalo	
Cow	
Goat	
Sheep	
Duck	
Hen	

5.2 Do you have pond?

0. No            1. Yes

5.3 Do you have garden?

0. No            1. Yes

5.4 Do you have poultry farm?

0. No            1. Yes

5.5 Do you have trees?

0. No            1. Yes

If yes, what are the types and numbers?

Fruit trees	
Non- fruit trees	

5.6 Do you think that you can take part in decision making process for having livestock/ pond/ poultry farm/ trees?

0. No            1. Yes

5.7 Do you think that you feel prestige and your family members show respect for having these?

0. No            1. Yes

5.8 What is the nature of relationship between you and your family members?

Members of the Family	Good	Fair of	Poor
Wife			
Son			
Daughter in law			
Daughter			
Other			

If good, please tell me why?

.....

If fair of, please tell me why?

.....

If poor, please tell me why?

.....

5.9 What is the relationship between you and your neighbor?

0. Good                      1. Bad                      2. Medium

If good, why,

If bad, why,

5.10 What is the relationship between you and your friend?

0. Good                      1. Bad                      2. Medium

If good, why,

If bad, why,

5.11 What is the relationship between you and your relatives?

0. Good                      1. Bad                      2. Medium

If good, why,

If bad, why,

5.12 What is the relationship between you and the people of your village?

0. Good                      1. Bad                      2. Medium

If good, why,

If bad, why,

5.13 Do you feel yourself an important person in the family?

0. No                      1. Yes

If yes, please tell me why,

If no, please tell me why,

5.14 Can you compel your family members to do work according to your wish?

0. No                      1. Yes

If yes, please tell me why,

If no, please tell me why,

5.15 Can you help the poor man if you wish?

0. No                      1. Yes

If no, please tell me why,

5.16 Can you invite your relatives to your house for different socio- religious occasion?

0. No                      1. Yes

If no, please tell me why,

0. Want of money    1. Son's wife can't tolerate it

2. Son/ sons can't tolerate it 3. Other members of the family can't tolerate it

5.17 Do you participate in any rural arbitration?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, please tell me why,

0. Disabled 1. Uneducated 2. Don't have much property 3. No powerful person among relatives 4. Not too many sons to support him to realize any decision.

If yes, what type of arbitration? Please narrate.

5.18 Do you take part in village disputes?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, please tell me why?

5.19 Do you take part in disputes outside your own village?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, please tell me why,

5.20 Do you think that the elderly previously could do these types of activities?

0. No            1. Yes

If no, why,

If yes, why,

5.21 Please make some remarks about the elderly in Rural Bangladesh.

Thank You

Date: .....

Signature of the Field Investigator

**Assessing role and status of the rural elderly through chi-square test,  
correlation and regression analysis**

**Correlations table: 1**

		Age	Monthly income of family	Monthly income of elderly	Monthly expenditure of family	Monthly expenditure of elderly	Homestead land	Cultivable land
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.139(*)	-.021	.122	.054	.085	.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.048	.771	.083	.445	.229	.149
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203	203
Monthly income of family	Pearson Correlation	.139(*)	1	.203(**)	.774(**)	.213(**)	.088	.449(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048		.004	.000	.002	.214	.000
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203	203
Monthly income of elderly	Pearson Correlation	-.021	.203(**)	1	.241(**)	.375(**)	.180(*)	.418(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.771	.004		.001	.000	.010	.000
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203	203
Monthly expenditure of family	Pearson Correlation	.122	.774(**)	.241(**)	1	.225(**)	.220(*)	.393(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.000	.001		.001	.002	.000
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203	203
Monthly expenditure of elderly	Pearson Correlation	.054	.213(**)	.375(**)	.225(**)	1	.065	.435(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.445	.002	.000	.001		.360	.000
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203	203
Homestead land	Pearson Correlation	.085	.088	.180(*)	.220(**)	.065	1	.239(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.229	.214	.010	.002	.360		.001
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203	203
Cultivable land	Pearson Correlation	.102	.449(**)	.418(**)	.393(**)	.435(**)	.239(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.149	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203	203

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Comment:** Table gives the findings on the inter correlation among the socio economic variables. High correlation is found between monthly income and expenditure in the family (0.774\*\*), Monthly income of elderly (0.203\*\*), Cultivable land (0.449\*\*). The negative correlation is found between age and monthly expenditure of the elderly. (-0.21\*\*).

### Regression Analysis



Let us considering the following regression line,

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$$

Where,

$Y$  = Monthly expenditure of the respondents

$X_1$  = Monthly income of the respondents

$\beta_0$  = Constant term

$\beta_1$  = Regression co-efficient

$e$  = Random error

**Table : 2 (i)**  
**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.375(a)	.141	.136	1365.12865

a Predictors: (Constant), monthly income

**Table : 2 (ii)**

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	514.652	112.455		4.577	.000
	Monthly income of the respondents	.261	.046	.375	5.734	.000

a Dependent Variable: Monthly expenditure of the respondents

Then we get the fitted model is,

$$\hat{Y} = 514.652 - 0.261 X_1$$

**Comment:** The model summary shows the relationship between income and expenditure. If 1 unit increases income, 0.261 unit increases expenditure.

# Logistics regression analysis

We know that the logistics regression equation ,

$$E(y) = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_k X_k}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_k X_k}}$$

We want to test the hypothesis,

$$H_0 : B = 0$$

$$H_1 : B \neq 0$$

$$\text{And Wald} = \frac{\hat{B}}{SE(\hat{B})} \sim N(0,1)$$

**Table : 3(i)**  
**Model Summary**

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	91.009(a)	.607	.811

a Estimation terminated at iteration number 20 because maximum iterations has been reached. Final solution cannot be found.

**Table : 3(ii)**  
**Variables in the Equation**

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	Agriculture			25.041	3	.000	
	Business	4.850	.969	25.034	1	.000	127.789
	Service holder	5.070	1.442	12.364	1	.000	159.202
	House wife	-19.287	4673.488	.000	1	.997	.000
	Age	.144	.047	9.247	1	.002	1.155
	Monthly income of the family	.000	.000	4.590	1	.032	1.000
	Monthly income of the elderly	.001	.000	6.698	1	.010	1.001
	Monthly expenditure of the family	-.001	.000	7.640	1	.006	.999
	Monthly expenditure of the elderly	.000	.000	.344	1	.558	1.000
	Ability to do daily activities	-.563	.699	.648	1	.421	.570
	Difficulty in performing daily activities	-1.551	.796	3.793	1	.051	.212
	Constant	-11.287	3.618	9.733	1	.002	.000

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: q1.2, Age, q1.7, q1.8, q1.9, q1.10, q2.4, q2.5.

**Comment:** The probabilities of housewife, monthly expenditure of the elderly , ability of doing daily activities and difficulty in performing daily activities are 0.997 , 0.558, 0.421 and 0.051 respectively which is grater than 0.05 (5% level of significance) . So those variables are statistically insignificant and the rest of the variables (Agriculture, business, service holder, age, and monthly income of the family, monthly income of the elderly and monthly expenditure of the family) are statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The values of exp (B) of agriculture, business, service holder, age, monthly expenditure of the elderly are grater than 1. In this respect the importance of male is high. The values of exp (B) of house wife, ability to do daily activities and difficulty in performing daily activities are less than 1. In this respect the importance of female is high. The values of exp (B) of monthly income of the family, monthly income of the elderly and monthly expenditure of the elderly are equal to 1. That is the importance of male and female are independent.

**Table – 4(i)**

**Principal income earner and decision maker of the family of the elderly**

Principal income earner	Principal decision maker of the family						Total
	Son	Self	Wife	Daughter	Husband	Other	
Son	66	25	2	-	1	1	
Son's wife	-	1	-	-	-	-	95
Self	3	78	-	-	-	-	1
Daughter	-	-	-	2	-	-	81
Husband	-	2	-	-	15	-	2
Other	-	-	-	2	1	4	17
Total	69	106	2	4	17	5	7

**Hypothesis**

**Null hypothesis ( $H_o$ ):** There is no association between principal income earner and decision maker of the family of the elderly.

**Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**  $H_o$  is not true.

By using SPSS software we get the following table

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	478.914(a)	25	.000
Likelihood Ratio	258.076	25	.000
N of Valid Cases	203		

a 28 cells (77.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

**Comment:** When the cell frequency is less than 5, we cannot precede chi square test, in this case the usual rule the cell frequency is added until 5. Other alternative test is Likelihood ratio, it does not have the condition that the cell frequency greater than 5. Since the asymptotic p. vale is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Hence we may reject null hypothesis that is there is a significant effect between principal income earners of the family and principal decision maker of the family.

**Table – 4(ii)**

### Position and nature of acceptance of the decision of the elderly in the family

Position in the family	Nature of accepting decisions by the family members						Total
	Properly		Conventionally		Don't accept		
Head of family	75		22		3		100
Elderly	24		22		7		53
Dependent	13		21		8		42
Only Member	1		5		2		8
Total	113		70		20		203

### Hypothesis

**Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):** There is no association between position and nature of acceptance of the decision of the elderly in the family.

**Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**  $H_0$  is not true.

By using SPSS software we get the following table

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.898(a)	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	37.746	6	.000
N of Valid Cases	203		

a 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .79.

**Comment:** When the cell frequency is less than 5, we cannot precede chi square test, in this case the usual rule the cell frequency is added until 5. Other alternative test is Likelihood ratio, it does not have the condition that the cell frequency greater than 5. Since the asymptotic p. vale is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Hence we may reject null hypothesis that is there is a significant effect between position and nature of acceptance of the decision of the family.

**Table – 4(iii)**

**Position of the elderly in the family especially for buying and selling necessary things**

Sex of the respondent	Position			Total
	Good	Bad	Don't seek suggestion	
Male	82	4	10	96
Female	75	6	26	107
Total	157	10	36	203

**Hypothesis**

**Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):** There is no association between sex and position of the elderly in the family especially for buying and selling necessary things.

**Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**  $H_0$  is not true.

By using SPSS software we get the following table:

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.248(a)	2	.027
Likelihood Ratio	7.485	2	.024
N of Valid Cases	203		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.73.

**Comment:** When the cell frequency is less than 5, we cannot precede chi square test, in this case the usual rule the cell frequency is added until 5. Other alternative test is Likelihood ratio, it does not have the condition that the cell frequency greater than 5. Since the asymptotic p. vale is 0.024 which is less than 0.05. Hence we may reject null hypothesis that there is a significant effect between sex and position of elderly in buying and selling necessary things for the family.

**Table – 4(iv)**

#### If the elderly have work for the family

Age Group	Work for the family			Total	
	Yes		No		
60-65	103		15	118	
65-70	27		2	29	
70-75	31		4	35	
75-80	4		4	8	
80-85	4		3	7	
85-90	3		3	6	
Total	172		31	203	

**Hypothesis:**

**Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):** There is no association between age group and having work for the family.

**Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**  $H_0$  is not true.

By using SPSS software we get the following table:

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.736(a)	5	.001
Likelihood Ratio	15.229	5	.009
N of Valid Cases	203		

a 7 cells (43.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.

**Comment:** When the cell frequency is less than 5, we cannot precede chi square test, in this case the usual rule the cell frequency is added until 5. Other alternative test is Likelihood ratio, it does not have the condition that the cell frequency greater than 5. Since the asymptotic p. vale is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Hence we may reject null hypothesis that is there is a significant effect between age group and having work for family.

**Table – 4(v)**

**The ability of the elderly to do their daily activities for the family**

Age Group	Ability to do daily activities		Total
	Yes	No	
60-65	85	33	118
65-70	22	7	29
70-75	14	21	35
75-80	1	7	8
80-85	3	4	7
85-90	1	5	6
Total	126	77	203

**Hypothesis**

**Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):** There is no association between age group and ability to do their daily activities for the family.

**Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**  $H_0$  is not true.

By using SPSS software we get the following table:

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.261(a)	5	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.450	5	.000
N of Valid Cases	203		

a 7 cells (43.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .37.

**Comment:** When the cell frequency is less than 5 than we cannot precede chi square test, in this case the usual rule the cell frequency is added until 5. Other alternative test is Likelihood ratio, it does not have the condition that the cell frequency greater than 5. Since the asymptotic p. vale is 0.00 which less than 0.05. Hence we may reject null hypothesis that is there is a significant effect between ability of the elderly to do their daily activities for the family.

**Table – 4(vi)**

**If the elderly face difficulty in performing daily activities in the family**

Age Group	Difficulty in performing daily activities		Total
	Yes	No	
60-65	83	35	118
65-70	20	9	29
70-75	31	4	35
75-80	8	-	8
80-85	7	-	7
85-90	5	1	6
Total	152	48	203

**Hypothesis**

**Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):** There is no association between age group and face difficulties in performing daily activities in the family.

**Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**  $H_0$  is not true.

By using SPSS software we get the following table:

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.762(a)	5	.056
Likelihood Ratio	14.695	5	.012
N of Valid Cases	203		

a 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.45.

**Comment:** When the cell frequency is less than 5 than we cannot precede chi square test, in this case the usual rule the cell frequency is added until 5. Other alternative test is Likelihood ratio, it does not have the condition that the cell frequency greater than 5. Since the asymptotic p. vale is 0.012 which less than 0.05. Hence we may reject null hypothesis that is there is a significant effect between age and performing daily activities.



**Table – 4(vii)**

**If the elderly help other members of the family**

Age Group	Helping members of the family		Total
	Yes	No	
60-65	99	19	118
65-70	23	6	29
70-75	31	4	35
75-80	3	5	8
80-85	4	3	7
85-90	3	3	6
Total	163	40	203

**Hypothesis**

**Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):** There is no association between age group and help the other member of the family of the elderly.

**Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):**  $H_0$  is not true.

By using SPSS software we get the following table:

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.614(a)	5	.003
Likelihood Ratio	14.420	5	.013
N of Valid Cases	203		

a 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.18.

**Comment:** When the cell frequency is less than 5 than we cannot precede chi square test, in this case the usual rule the cell frequency is added until 5. Other alternative test is Likelihood ratio, it does not have the condition that the cell frequency greater than 5. Since the asymptotic p. vale is 0.013 which less than 0.05. Hence we may reject null hypothesis that is there is a significant effect between age and helping other members of the family.

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