

**TESTING THE THEORY OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE
SPECIALLY WOMEN AT TWO VILLAGES IN BANGLADESH: A FILED INVESTIGATION****Muhammad Mahboob ALI***Dhaka School of Economics, Bangladesh
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This study was an attempt to develop a theory on how social networking facilitates to empower people which were developed by Muhammad Mahboob Ali (2016). The study extensively tries to display a comparative picture regarding different dimensions of empowerment before involving in social networking and after involving in social capital, social business and social investment along with social intelligence, social enterprises. A concept was tried to build on social networking and then for this applicability of the concept testing along with two co-authors we choose two villages at Khulna District of Bangladesh. Data were collected through direct interview following an interview schedule during February to April, 2016. The result from the study described those women empowerment is closely related with Social Networking, Social intelligence and social entrepreneurship along with social capital and social investment. Women's condition are not good before getting involved in social networking and after getting involved in the income of the family had been increasing. After involving in social networking the women started to participate in different income generating activities. Then, they also started to control over income, expenditure, credit and savings. They could then participate in household decision making more than before. It was found that in dimensions the women started to become more empowered than before involving in social networking.

Keywords: *Social networking, Social Intelligence, Social Entrepreneurship, women, income generating, empowerment*

JEL Classification: *L26, L31*

I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Social networking is the exercise of intensifying the quantity of one's business and/or social contacts by constructing acquaintances from side to side entities, often through social media along with social capital, social business and social investment. Social entrepreneurs are the people most able to deliver that innovation (Leadbeater,1997).This is a social structure entailing of persons or collections who are associated to each other, for example through relationships. When these networks are characterized in a database and with a web interface, it is frequently mentioned to as a "social network service". However, in traditional system there is no web interface or social media but social capital, social business and social investment works simultaneously. A social network perspective on alliances can have both descriptive and normative outcomes that provide valuable insights for theories of strategic management, organizational theory, and sociology. Incorporating social network factors into our account of the alliance behavior of firms not only provides us with a more accurate representation of the key influences on the strategic actions of firms, but has important implications for managerial practice as well, many of which have yet to be explored (Gulat, 1998). Acemoglu and Ozdaglar (2009) described that social and economic networks refers to a set of people or groups of people with some pattern of contacts or interactions between them. Facebook, friendship networks, business relations between companies, intermarriages between families, labor markets. Recent years witnessed a substantial change in network research. From analysis of single small graphs (10-100 nodes) to statistical properties of large scale

networks (million-billion nodes). Motivated by availability of computers and computer networks that allow us to gather and analyze large scale data.

Riggio (2014) described that Social intelligence (SI), is mostly learned. SI develops from experience with people and learning from success and failures in social settings. It is more commonly referred to as “tact,” “common sense,” or “street smarts”. Gangopadhyay and Dhar (2014) described that social networking and online privacy seriously turn out to be a serious concern when sensitive information is being shared and with the changing definition of ‘social networking’ in this internet age. Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) argued that politically relevant social capital is generated in personal networks, that it is a by-product of the social interactions with a citizen's discussants, and that increasing levels of politically relevant social capital enhance the likelihood that a citizen will be engaged in politics. Further, the production of politically relevant social capital is a function of the political expertise within an individual's network of relations, the frequency of political interaction within the network, and the size or extensiveness of the network. The consequences of social relations within networks are not readily explained away on the basis of either human capital effects or the effects of organizational engagement. Actually social relations are very important. As such social intelligence and social entrepreneurship works with social networking. Social mixing should form an integral part of social intelligence development in teenagers. It argues that parents may have an important role to play, as older generations own circles also remain relatively closed to different cultures, backgrounds and upbringing. (Source: <http://movingonmagazine.co.uk/has-too-much-social-networking-stunted-your-social-intelligence/> (Viewed on 1st January, 2017). The success of a new venture often depends on an entrepreneur's ability to establish a network of supportive relationships. The mobilization of financial resources is a particularly important entrepreneurial activity. Informal or ‘angel’ investors represent a significant source of venture capital. Angel financial network within a newly created firm and further refines how theories of social capital and structural holes might be usefully applied to an entrepreneurial context (Greenwood, 2000).

Recently many large-scale online social network sites, such as Facebook and Friendster, become successful because they are very effective tools in connecting people and bringing small and disconnected offline social networks together. Moreover, they are also becoming a huge dissemination and marketing platform, allowing information and ideas to influence a large population in a short period of time. However, to fully utilize these social networks as marketing and information dissemination platforms, many challenges have to be met (Chen et al., 2009). Leadbeater (1997) argues that social entrepreneurs need to lead the way with schemes for self-help, particularly by promoting local, national and international twinning arrangements between projects to share ideas, contacts and staff. For liberal feminists, the optimum level of gender arrangement is one that facilitates the individuals to adopt the life style that suits him or her and also accepted or respected (Ritzer, 2001) by the society at large. However, liberal feminists are not in favor of structural change to a great extent. Furthermore, some of liberal feminists think that individual woman cannot make change; therefore, state intervention is prerequisite. BarNir and Smith (2002) argued that the social networks of senior executives account for 11–22 % of the variance in the degree to which firms engage in alliances, depending on the type of alliance. Results also show that the number of inter firm alliances is positively related to several networking properties (propensity to network, strength of ties, and network prestige). Hunt and Kasynathan (2002) pointed out that only a few number of women receiving credit had the ability to control their loans. Many women received loan by their own name and passed on the full amount of their loans directly to their husbands, sons or sons-in-law. Swain (2006) conducted a study following experimental research design in rural India and assessed the potential impacts of a microfinance institution named Self Help Group (SHG). The concept of women empowerment was defined as the process in which the women challenge the existing norms and culture to effectively improve their well-being. Williams & Durrance (2008) found that across a number of instances of community technology, technology use is directly influenced of social networks, and social networks are directly influenced by technology use. Perron (2011) examined case by case the various approaches from companies, public sector entities, philanthropy, etc, and also institutional and private investors in their availability as well as their specific legal capacities and limitations to deliver the funding required supporting the growth. Such initiatives are vital in the fight against poverty and income inequalities. Bhattacharya et al. (2014) described that social networking has affected the process of marketing and how present day marketing activities is highly dependent on this phenomenal process of social networking. Also focus has been laid on how social networking affects the process of market signaling and hence reduces the possibility of asymmetric information within a market and lowers the possibility of market failure for a particular product. Riggio (2014) argued that networking organizations, or speaking groups are good at helping develop basic communication skills. Work on becoming a more effective listener, through what is called “active listening” where you reflect back what you believe the speaker said in order to ensure clear understanding. Most importantly, study social situations and your own behavior. Learn from your social successes and failures. Yang et al. (2014) observed that social intelligence and technology explore the roles of information, the Internet, and mobile technology in improving our understanding about human behaviors and social interaction in human society at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels—building a sustainable social environment, developing social intelligence,

and having practical applications with major impacts in solving societal problems such as health, security, energy, and the environment.

Ali(2016) suggested that establishment of integration fund to encourage creative entrepreneurship so that poor downtrodden people can come out with innovative business process through financial inclusion process, to remove poverty. Jahan and Ullah(2016) described that social entrepreneurship represents both a growing field of hybrid action and a catalyst for wider recalibrations of the roles and boundaries of the market, the state and civil society. Rattanawiboonsom and Ali(2016)more intensive and pragmatic policy should be developed for the development of the social enterprises particularly for self-motivated entrepreneurs. Experiences from the research work, they observed that the rural poor are mobilized and working together in self-controlled community based organizations which ensures social welfare and Pareto optimality. Not only small and medium enterprises but also micro enterprises should get special priority and inclusion through financial organizations are being required for developing proper steps to poverty alleviation, public-private and foreign strategic alliances are required in the small and medium enterprise sector with special emphasis on micro enterprises of the country.

On the basis of aforesaid reviews, we have developed following Social networking model which is given in next section.

II. A PROPOSED MODEL OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

In Figure:1 we have seen a model as concept developed by Ali(2016) based on aforesaid literature review as well as historical perspective of human progress of the Indian subcontinent - how social networking is working:

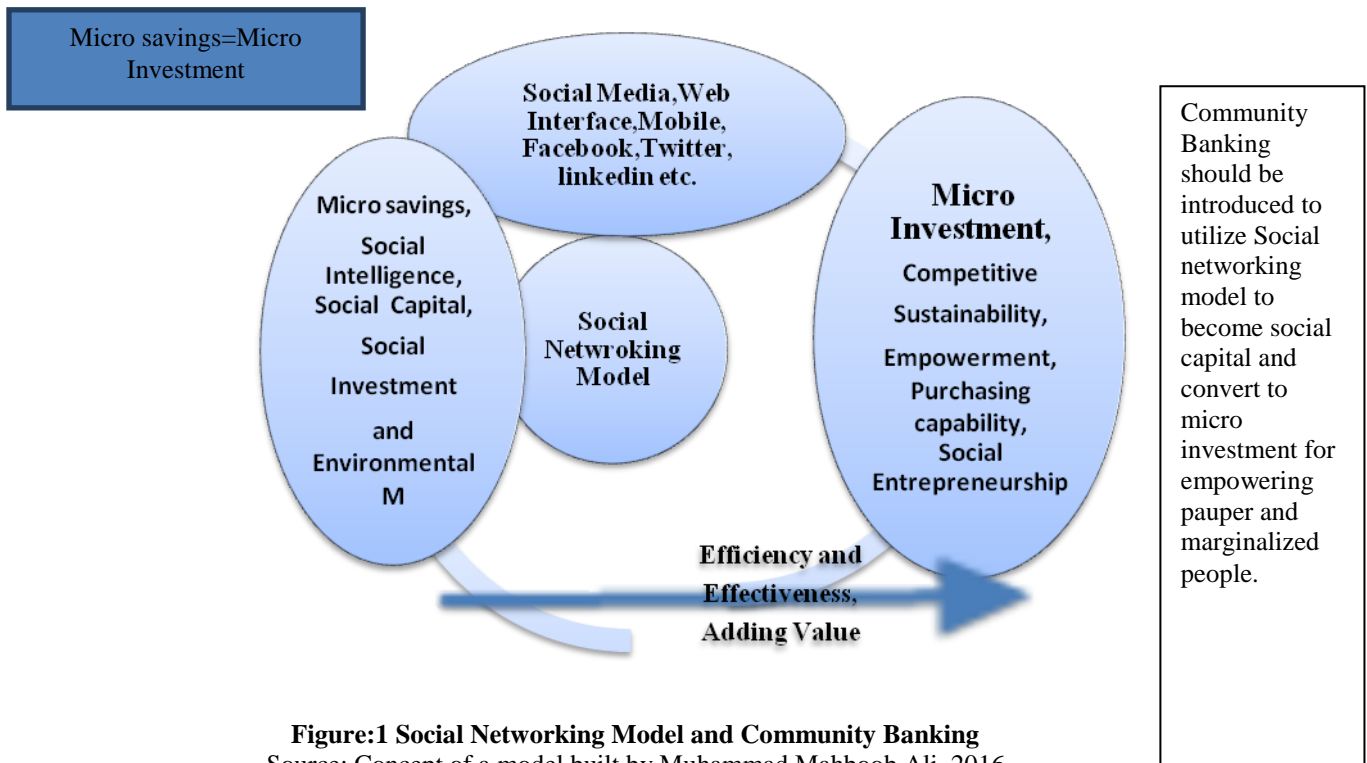


Figure:1 Social Networking Model and Community Banking
 Source: Concept of a model built by Muhammad Mahboob Ali, 2016

The model was developed by Ali(2016) where he proposed that to effective social networking model’s applicability -community banking is necessary to arrange by the govt. of Bangladesh so that micro savings can be transformed to Micro investment .This community banking should be established under structural format with regulatory authority and work at a least cost banking services in Bangladesh. This will help informal sector to transform formal sector and as a process Palli Sanchaya Bank, Bangladesh NGO foundation, Kormasthan Bank and/or post office may be brought under this community banking framework which is neither agent banking or mobile banking or cooperative system.

III. TESTING AREA

For the study we choose two villages' i.e. *Hatbati and Hatalbunia* where primitive nature and mostly modern social media except limited use of mobile phone is not working. As such here we consider Social media as constant and try to choose other factors of the fig:1 is working in aforesaid villages including social entrepreneurship and social intelligence.

Table:1 Comparative Demographic profile of two villages

| Types | <i>Hatalbunia</i> | <i>.Hatbati</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Area | 120 km ² | 75 km ² |
| Total Population: | 5,176 | 2,670 |
| Male | 56.81% | 51.07% |
| Female | 43.19% | 48.93% |
| Religion | | |
| Sanatan- | 55% | 65% |
| Islam- | 35% | 25% |
| Christian- | 10% | 10% |
| Total Household | 2,876 | 1,268 |
| Literacy Rate: | 50.25% | 53.35% |

Note: Demographic profile of these two villages have been collected from Jalma Union Parishad, year- 2012

The goal of the network was to create village-like structures, connect local initiatives and citizens, and support them in utilizing the concept of Social Networking as a means to solve social problems. Social Networking is driven to bring about change while pursuing sustainability. Although from a strictly profit-maximizing perspective it seems inappropriate to pursue a goal other than profit, Social Networking's aim is to achieve certain social and environmental goals. In this perspective, a Social Networking can also be understood as a business-pursuing NGO which is (eventually) financially self-sufficient (Jager, 2010). The situation for rural women is miserable and their sufferings know no bound despite present govt.'s positive role to improve women's condition and for last seven years mostly succeeded. However, most women have no independent income source because they have low education levels, few marketable skills, marry at an early age, and maximum case do not own land or property. Women of rural areas of Bangladesh are given equal access to rural credit and using this credit in productive activities they have raised their status, lessened their dependency on social capital, social business and social investment and improved their homes and nutritional standards of their children. 90% of women who were housewives and used to begging as a means of survival now have roof over their heads and can support themselves. The study has undertaken with following reasons:

- To analyze the role of Social Networking in empowering the rural people i.e. male and female.
- To know the present status of rural credit, social intelligence, social entrepreneurship and Social Networking ;
- To evaluate the increased performance of women in socio-economic context of Bangladesh;
- To provide some implications of the study.

IV. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

A concept was tried to build on social networking and then for testing its applicability of the concept we choose *Hatbati and Hatalbunia* villages of *Batiaghata* Upozila under Khulna District of Bangladesh purposively as the study area. Data were collected to explore whether Social Networking promotes men and women empowerment or not, and if does in what scale? Unit of analysis was selected among women who were involved in Social Networking mainly rural credit program of *Hatalbunia and Hatbativillages* under *Batiaghata* Thana of Khulna district for more than one year. All the women receiving Grameen-credit of the *Hatalbunia and Hatbativillages* of *Batiaghata* Thana under Khulna district was considered as the population of the study. According to the unit of analysis 312 women population were enlisted from the various NGOs as the study population. Simple random sampling technique was applied to collect data from those women who were receiving rural credit in *Hatalbunia and Hatbativillages*. Then 350 women were selected from the villages following simple random sampling procedure out of which we received duly filled up 312 questionnaires returned back. Survey method as well as case study and focus group discussion methods were used as the methods of the study. Data were collected through direct interview following an interview schedule during February to April, 2016. Tabulated data will be processed by computerizing and using computer software's like SPSS 20 version.

V. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Ha1: Before involving in social capital, social business, social investment, social intelligence and social entrepreneurship -the men and women had very low participation in income generating activities.

Ha2: Involving in Social Networking program leads the rate of participation in social and political activities among the women are rising.

Ha3: Dimensions of empowerment the women are now staying in higher position than before involving in Social Networking.

VI. ESTIMATED RESULTS

Social Networking has created a new dimension in the traditional business system but most of the people of our country do not still know about the term.

Table:2 Status of Women Rights and Education

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 31.203 | 6 | .000 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 31.203, Df =6, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's status of education with women rights.

Table-3 Participation in Household Decision Making and Educational Status

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 20.110 | 6 | .003 |

In the table, Chi Square Value = 20.110, Df =6, Significant at .003 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's status of education with participation in household decision making.

Table-4 Control over Income, Expenditure, Credit and Savings with Occupation

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 16.310 | 6 | .012 |

In the table, Chi Square Value = 16.310, Df = 6, Significant at .012 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's occupational status with control over income, expenditure, credit and savings.

Table 5 Participation in Household Decision Making Process with Occupation

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 15.009 | 6 | .020 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 15.009, Df =6, Significant at .020 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's occupational status with participation in household decision making.

Table-6 Income and Women Empowerment Index

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 41.712 | 6 | .000 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 41.712, Df =6, Significant at 1% level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence.

Table-7 Women Empowerment Index with Participation in Income Generating Activities Having Social Networking

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 27.733 | 4 | .000 |

In the table, Chi Square Value = 27.733, Df =4, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's participation in income generating activities with women empowerment index.

Table-8 Women Empowerment Index with Control over Income, Expenditure, Credit and Savings

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 31.087 | 4 | .000 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 31.087, Df =4, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of control over income, expenditure, credit and savings with women empowerment index.

Table-9 Women Empowerment Index with Mobility of Women

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 58.093 | 4 | .000 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 31.087, Df =4, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of control over income, expenditure, credit and savings with women empowerment index.

Table-10 Women Empowerment Index and Participation in Social and Political Activities

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 44.360 | 4 | .000 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 44.360, Df =4, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject’s participation in social and political activities with women empowerment index.

Table-11: Women Empowerment Index with Exposure to Media

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 39.508 | 4 | .000 |

In the table, Chi Square Value = 39.508, Df =4, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject’s exposure to media with women empowerment index.

Table-12 Women Empowerment Index with Participation in Household Decision Making

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 14.216 | 4 | .000 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 14.216, Df =4, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject’s participation in household decision making and women empowerment index.

Table-13: Women Empowerment Index with Perception Regarding Women Rights

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 14.222 | 4 | .007 |

In the table, Chi Square Value = 14.222, Df =4, Significant at .000 level. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject’s perception regarding women rights with women empowerment index.

Table-14: Women Empowerment Index with Control over Income, Expenditure, Credit and savings

| Chi Square Value | Df | Significance Level |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| 8.787 | 2 | .012 |

In the above table, Chi Square Value = 8.787, Df =2, Significance Level =.012. Here, Chi Square Value indicates that there is a significant influence of subject’s control over income, expenditure, credit and savings with women empowerment index.

VII. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

Empowerment of people especially women is closely related with Social Networking .Social Networking has created a new dimension toward women empowerment by opening the door of income generating activities. In the study chi square test had been done to find out relationship between various aspects of Social Networking and women empowerment. In case of hypothesis testing, chi square value 16.310, df 6 and significance level .012 reveals that there is a significant influence of subject's occupational status with control over income, expenditure, credit and savings. There is a significant influence of subject's occupational status with participation in household decision making with chi square value 15.009, df 6 and significance level .020. Chi square value 41.712, df 6 and significance level exposed that there is a significant influence of subject's occupational status with women empowerment index. Chi Square Value (27.733) indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's participation in income generating activities with women empowerment index. Chi square value indicates (31.087) that there is a significant influence of control over income, expenditure, credit and savings with women empowerment index. Control over income, expenditure, credit and savings results high women empowerment index. Chi square value 44.360, df 4 and significance level .000 indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's participation in social and political activities with women empowerment index. Chi square value (39.508) indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's exposure to media with women empowerment index. Chi Square Value (14.216) indicates that high influence of subject's participation in household decision making results high women empowerment index. Chi square value 14.222, df 4, significance level .000 exposes that there is a significant influence of subject's perception regarding women rights with women empowerment index. Chi square value (8.787) indicates that there is a significant influence of subject's control over income, expenditure, credit and savings with women empowerment index.

Over all findings exposes that women who were involved in Social Networking had got better socio-economic condition than before. Furthermore, they were rushing towards women empowerment as their tendency to become self-sufficient had grown. But women empowerment depends highly on occupation, participation in household decision and perception about women rights and so on. From case study and FGD it had been found that though all the women were related with Rural credit and other types of Social Networking, they had low control over credit as most of the respondents social capital, social business and social investment and used to control that credit. Moreover, in case of women empowerment they had low access to various sectors of income generating activities, household decision making, social and political activities and mobility but they got relative access to control over credit, expenditure, income and savings with high access to group discussion. Social Networking had given these women access to credit but lack of monitoring their empowerment had not been ensure yet.

However, here social media was not active as still both the villages are primitive nature and need of community banking is felt.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study extensively displays a comparative picture regarding the stipulation of women in the different dimensions of empowerment before involving in Social Networking and after involving in Social Networking. Before participating in social capital, social business and social investment, the controlling power of the family was typically restricted by their social capital, social business and social investments. Before involving in social capital, social business and social investment, the women had very low participation in income generating activities. Most of them had very low control over income, expenditure, credit and savings. When they could neither participate in household decision making nor participate in social and political activities. Mobility to outside home *i. e.* mobility to market, relative's/parents' house, hospital/clinic, office of the NGO etc. were very low among them. Their exposure to media and communication was also low. But after practicing of social capital, social business and social investment, the people started to participate in different income generating activities *which includes* small business, buying cattle, fish cultivation, poultry rearing, handicrafts and non – farm activities etc. As a result their income level was also rising gradually. Then, they also started to control over income, expenditure, credit and savings. They could then participate in household decision making more than before. Because of involving in Social Networking program the rate of participating in social and political activities among the women also increased. Their mobility outside home and exposure to media and communication was increased after involving in Social Networking. From the study, it was found the in dimensions of empowerment the people especially women group are now staying in higher position than before involving in Social Networking.

Actually social networking helps social entrepreneurs to identify and evaluate a new venture opportunities; To transform creative business ideas into innovative products and services; To Interpret market, customer and demand-supply relationship; To develop marketing plan, improve social networking skills and gain the ability to pitch an idea; To navigate the venture capital investment process; To start his/her own venture

successfully ;To enhance and expand their social intelligences; To exchange knowledge and views; To develop his/her products; To manage Human Resources; To eliminate gender discrimination; To arrange business and economic incubator for his/her new endeavor. Financial institutions should provide fund (if necessary) and Guidance to start his/her business. And thus, Social Networking is playing a vital role for empowering women in rural Bangladesh for which social intelligence and social entrepreneurship plays vital role. Proper utilization of social networking leads to raise human dignity. As such Ali(2016) proposed the model fits true for this study. Policy makers should come forward to think how community banking with the applicability of the social networking can be used in local level planning system of the country. We must be cautious about misuse of social media as reported by different dailies.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Exposure to media and communication of rural people especially women are low which need to be increased by print, electronic media, mobile, Internet, Facebook, twitter etc.

But after involving in social capital, social business, social intelligence and social entrepreneurship- women started to participate in different income generating activities *i. e.*, business, small business, buying cattle, fish cultivation, poultry rearing, handicrafts etc. As a result their income level was also rising gradually.

Through participating in social networking- started to control over income, expenditure, credit and savings. They could then participate in household decision making more than before.

Involving in Social Networking program causes the rate of participating in social and political activities among the women also increased.

Mobility outside home and exposure to media and communication was increased after involving in Social Networking along with social intelligence and social entrepreneurship.

Dimensions of empowerment the women are now staying in higher position than before involving in Social Networking.

Social Networking is playing a vital role for empowering women in rural Bangladesh.

PKSF,BNF etc. may play vital role to increase social networking among rural people. Social networking may be included in the process of SDG which should be practiced by both the Govt. and private sector with foreign collaboration.

To arrange community bank at the grass root level so that informal sector can come under formal sector and financial inclusion can be raised and channelized saving –investment in the e main stream. It will be alternative to our current banking system so that pauper and low income group can get the banking services at least cost. However, in case of financial inclusion, Bangladesh's progress is remarkable as it increases eight steps. Problems in the banking and other financial sector should be strictly handled.

With trial and error, social networking can develop social entrepreneurs considering all sorts of holistic approach. They can be able to contribute to the economic progress of the country with vision and mission and add value in the society through their dynamism, synergy and innovativeness.

Discussions at grass root level ,help to one-another and exchange of views regarding innovation, start up and new ventures may be started at the grass root level which will have positive impact on financial inclusion and increase social networking.

Use of IT through creating community hub at the village level with the support of removing digital divide at rural people through proper execution may be arranged so that connectivity among community can be raised.

Micro savings must be used through social networking for turning to social capital and rotated to Micro investment and establishment of social entrepreneurship.

Gradually dependence on informal sector to formal sector should be raised through involving regulatory authority for creating community banking system which will lead to dynamics of economy will be changed.

Cyber security should be strengthen to remove the problems of social media and culprit should bring under law without delay.

X. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

A separate study may be conducted among representatives of villages increasing sample size of both villages and no. of respondents since nos. of villages are approximately 93,000 and total population of the country is around 168 Million. Moreover, the theory which is in a process of development by Muhammad Mahboob Ali may be tested in other countries of the world by various researchers to give a structural formation ,validation and reliability of the theory in the real life scenario both global and domestic perspectives.

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