Internship report on

Impact of Financial Literacy program on women's participation in economy of Bangladesh: Insights from City Alo Uthan Boithok

By

Sadman Sakib Mahi

19304052

An internship report submitted to the BRAC Business School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

January 14, 2026

Declaration

It is to declare that

1. The internship report I've submitted is my own, original work that I created while earning my degree at BRAC University.
2. The paper is properly cited by complete and precise referencing; the report does not contain any previously published or written by a third-party material.
3. No material that has been approved or submitted for another degree or diploma at any other school or university is included in the report.
4. I acknowledge all significant aid sources.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

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Sadman Sakib Mahi

19304052

Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:

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Shihab Kabir Shuvo

Senior Lecturer, BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Letter of Transmittal

Shihab Kabir Shuvo

Senior Lecturer,

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Kha-224, Merul Badda, Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of Internship report on **“Impact of Financial Literacy Program on women’s participation in economy of Bangladesh: Insights from City Alo Uthan Boithok”**

Dear Sir,

It is my pleasure to submit this internship report “Impact of Financial Literacy Program on Women’s Participation in the Economy of Bangladesh: Insights from City Alo Uthan Boithok”, prepared as a partial requirement to complete my BBA degree at BRAC University.

This report is based on my internship experience at City Bank PLC under the City Alo – Women Banking Department. There I was involved in various activities related to knowledge and skill enhancement services for women entrepreneurship and financial literacy initiatives.

I have tried my best to present the report in a clear, informative and comprehensive manner, reflecting both theoretical insights and practical observations. I sincerely hope that this report meets your expectations and provides meaningful insights into the topic discussed.

Yours sincerely,

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Sadman Sakib Mahi

19304052

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

January 14, 2026

Non-Disclosure Agreement

The agreement is made and entered between City Bank PLC and me, the undersigned student of BRAC University that the paper titled **“Impact of Financial Literacy Program on Women’s Participation in the Economy of Bangladesh: Insights from City Alo Uthan Boithok”** would not be released anywhere except for project work and presentation.

In this paper, I have used information that was released by the organization and authorized information from my supervisor.

Line manager’s Full Name & Signature:

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Mahrufa Binte Alam

Senior Manager, City Alo-Women Banking, Retail Banking Division

City Bank PLC, Level 5, Rashid Tower, Road- 21, Gulshan, Dhaka-1212

Student’s Full Name & Signature

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Sadman Sakib Mahi

Kha 224, Pragati Sarani, Merul Badda, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge my deepest gratitude to everybody who has contributed to the successful completion of this internship report.

First, I would like to thank Almighty Allah for giving me strength, patience and guidance to complete my internship and prepare this report.

I would also like to thank my academic supervisor, Shihab Kabir Shuvo, Senior Lecturer, BRAC Business School along with Co-supervisor, Ahmed Abir Chowdhury, Senior Lecturer, BRAC Business School and all esteemed faculty members of the BRAC University for their valuable instructions, constructive feedback and encouragement that has helped me in preparing this report in a structured and academic manner. Finally, I am thankful to my family, friends and well-wishers for their constant support, motivation and encouragement throughout the internship period and the preparation of this report.

Executive Summary

This internship report was prepared as partial completion of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program. The report is based on a three-month internship in one of the topmost private commercial banks in Bangladesh; City Bank PLC and the particular unit of the bank, is the City Alo - Women Banking Department. The ultimate aim of the internship was to have practical exposure to the banking sector and to be able to correlate the information learnt in school with real life organizational practice.

The report focuses on the overview of City Bank PLC including its background, vision, mission, organizational structure, management practices and products and services of the organization. Specific discussion operations of City Alo as a women dedicated proposition that seeks to empower women entrepreneurs with a variety of financial activities, providing training and advisory services to achieve financial inclusion and sustainable economic growth.

The tasks and duties performed during the internship period consisted of but were not limited to assisting with the communication between customers, supporting women entrepreneurship training and certification programs, collecting and maintaining business data, report preparation and presentation material preparation and coordination with the internal stakeholders. The activities offered me workable experience regarding customer relationship management, operations and female-sensitive banking services.

In order to analyze the organizational and strategic position of City Bank PLC, analytical tools, including SWOT Analysis, DuPont Analysis and Porter's Five Forces Model are also used in this report. Through these analyses, the strengths of the bank were revealed to be the reputation and digital banking as well as the niche market programs and the weaknesses were also noted as being high competition, regulatory pressure and technological risks.

Overall, the internship experience in City Bank PLC was very beneficial for enhancing the professional skills and ability to analyze, as well as the knowledge of the banking industry. The report finds that City Alo has a major role to play in women empowerment and inclusion in financial matters, as well as contributing towards the overall strategic goals of City Bank PLC and the economic development of Bangladesh.

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List of Acronyms

- ATM – Automated Teller Machine
- BB – Bangladesh Bank (The Central Bank)
- BDT – Bangladeshi Taka (Currency)
- CBL – City Bank Limited
- DPS – Deposit Premium Scheme / Deposit Pension Scheme
- FDR – Fixed Deposit Receipt
- FX or Forex – Foreign Exchange
- MFS – Mobile Financial Service (e.g., bKash, Nagad)
- PCB – Private Commercial Bank
- PLC – Public Limited Company
- BBA – Bachelor of Business Administration
- CIU – Chittagong Independent University
- NSU – North South University
- Amex – American Express
- CEO – Chief Executive Officer
- CMSME – Cottage, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
- CRM – Customer Relationship Management
- Fintech – Financial Technology
- MIS – Management Information System
- NGO – Non-Government Organization
- RMG – Ready-made Garments
- SME – Small and Medium Enterprises
- NID – National Identity
- POS – Point of Sale
- QR – Quick Response code

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Chapter 1: Overview of the Internship

1.1 Student Information

Name: Sadman Sakib Mahi

Student ID: 19304052

BBA Major in Computer Information Management & Minor in Accounting

BRAC Business School, BRAC University

1.2 Internship Information

1.2.1 Internship Address

Company: The City Bank PLC

Period: 3 Months (July 08th to October 06th, 2025)

Department: City Alo-Women Banking

Division: Retail Banking

Office Address: Rashid Tower, Level - 5, House - 11, Road - 21, Gulshan - 1, Dhaka - 1212.

1.2.2 Supervisor's Information

Supervisor Name: Mahrufa Binte Alam

Position: Senior Manager, Product and Procurement, City Alo - Women Banking,
Retail Banking Division, City Bank PLC

Head Office: City Bank Center, 28, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan - 1, Dhaka - 1212.

Ms. Mahrufa has been a part of the City Alo Women Banking department for nearly 4 years and currently manages the business development team. During this period, she has been actively working to promote City Alo initiatives and well advancing women banking activities.

1.2.3 Job Scope – Job Description/Duties/Responsibilities

During my internship at City Alo, I was given to perform the following duties:

- Collection of the data leads for City Alo Certification Program from the digital promotions team and filtering out the data with eligible candidates for the training course.
- Contact the interested participants who filled up forms to join the City Alo Certification Program for women entrepreneurs.
- Collection of business and professional details from interested participants of the course through one-to-one phone calls.
- Managing and updating participant information using MS Excel and internal records.
- Making invitation calls, session reminders and follow-up communication.
- Assisted in coordinating training events such as online tax filing, ambassadors' meetup and cohort activities with NSU and CIU, BDtax and internal departments of the bank.
- Supporting the internal team communication between City Alo representatives and cohort trainers and participants.
- Preparation of PowerPoint presentations, participant lists and data reports using MS Excel.
- Participating in indoor and outdoor events organized by the City Alo such as Uthan Boithok, Customer Loyalty Program,
- Supporting the general administrative and operational tasks of the department when required.

1.3 Internship Outcomes

1.3.1 Student's contribution to the company

During my internship at the City Alo – Women Banking Department, I was able to contribute to many operational and program related activities. I supported the team in the smooth execution of the City Alo Certification Program with NSU and CIU. This is an offline training program for new and emerging women entrepreneurs where they can learn how to manage a business efficiently and get proper directions to enhance their business growth. My task was to communicate with the applicants, brief on the course, ensure course enrollment by confirming fees payment, collecting essential business information of the final participants and update their bank account opening status. Communicating with the women entrepreneurs from previous batches and gathering and updating existing data on their business activities, income level and financial needs and feedback.

I also got to perform data entry, verification and maintenance of City Alo Ambassador lists on a monthly basis and prepared Uthan Boithok MIS for the event attendees. I talked with women entrepreneurs who applied for SME loans and updated information for passing on the related details to particular bank representatives.

My monthly data entry and verification work helped to maintain accurate MIS records for City Alo ambassadors in branches, Uthan Boithok sessions and participant databases. Preparation and editing the training materials, presentation slides and participant documents for the department were also performed when required.

Again, I had the opportunity to coordinate and also participate in some events including customer loyalty programs which are held in different branches of the bank namely, certificate giving ceremonies of training, City Alo ambassador meetup, product exhibition. Participating in field visits such as the City Alo Uthan Boithok in Noakhali gave the opportunity to observe financial inclusion activities at community level.

Provided the reminder and invitation calls for online and offline training sessions such as, Tax Filing Training and offline Ambassadors meetup, SME Loan Documentation Session, City Alo

Certification Program etc. Moreover, creating communication groups in WhatsApp groups for City Alo graduates to support future networking and engagement.

Engaging with internal City Alo representatives across different regions to collect updates and share relevant reports. Also briefing necessary instructions to the branch representatives during campaigns like Breast Cancer Awareness program.

I too played an active role in coordinating events including certification ceremonies, customer loyalty programs, training reminders and community networking programs. By preparing required documents, updating spreadsheets and handling communication with both internal representatives and external participants of the programs, I tried to contribute to improve the workflow efficiency of the team and supported the women entrepreneurship initiatives of the company.

1.3.2 Benefits to the student

The internship opportunity provided significant professional and personal growth. I gained real world experience of the corporate scenario. I could enhance many skills such as client communication, data management and getting deeper into the idea of banking procedures. All of this as a whole strengthened my confidence and interpersonal skills. The exposure to women entrepreneurship programs allowed me to understand the environment of small businesses in the country and potential of women entrepreneurs. Moreover, the importance of financial inclusion for women in banking. I also gained a primary idea on SME loan processes and got an insight to the role of specialized banking services like City Alo in empowering women of the society.

I also improve the technical skills in MS Excel, official reporting, event coordination and presentation preparation for a professional setting. Apart from this, interacting with women entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds broadened my understanding of small business and came to know about the challenges they face in order to conduct business in Bangladesh. Overall, the internship greatly enhanced my workplace discipline, responsibility and problem solving abilities. Indeed, it gave practical experience in preparing me for a future career in the banking sector.

1.3.3 Problems/Difficulties (faced during the internship period)

Even though I had a wonderful experience in my internship, I had to face a few personal and professional challenges that helped me learn and improve gradually. One of the difficulties was adapting to the discipline of a full-time work environment. Reporting on time every day, dressing professionally and maintaining a consistent work routine. I also had to get used to regularly updating my supervisor and writing formal emails as a professional requirement. All of this was not a regular practice for me during student life, so it took a while to cope up.

Initially I observed calls made by my superior, but once I started making the calls myself, I found it a challenging task to maintain a professional tone while repeating the same information again and again to different persons, while many participants were busy or unreachable. In order to manage long call lists while taking accurate details and entering everything correctly into Excel, required patience and concentration. Then again, keeping follow up with interested participants about fees payment and other updates also tested my communication skills and recollection for that I had to remain calm, persistent and clear minded.

While taking relevant business details from the women entrepreneurs and asking about their income, business information or loan needs felt critical for me as I had to ensure the conversation was respectful and professional.

Another practical challenge I faced was limited access to the internet. browsing was restricted except for office websites and software. This issue made it difficult when I needed information from the internet for providing reference during calls and for market research work.

However, having access to the official phone hotspot helped me to somewhat manage the situation when necessary. I also had to learn how to maintain accuracy while working with large Excel files and updating data for different programs. Understanding the internal office procedures and coordinating with multiple needed patience and quick adaptation.

Thanks to my office teammates and superiors for being friendly and polite all through and supporting me through all tasks. Altogether, despite facing these aforementioned challenges, they contributed to my growth and helped me become more confident, responsible and adaptable in a professional environment.

1.3.4 Recommendations (to the company on future internships)

From my short-term internship experience, I can recommend a few areas where small improvements can make the workflow of the office much smoother for future interns. Although

On the first day, I was introduced to the whole team and given a brief on the department and my role there. I received a short verbal briefing along with product sheets and brochures on the very first day. However, I believe the internship experience could become even smoother with a few improvements. For instance, it would be better to have a structured orientation and a clear task list which would give an initial idea of the tasks and responsibilities to be performed.

In the office, I was fortunate to be given a designated desk to work on which is usually not available for interns. I feel this practice should be continued as it significantly increases comfort, productivity and feel being a part of the team.

In case of operations, it would be helpful if interns could access live list updates directly from the Promotions team which would avoid any delays during call communication follow ups to customers or participants. A better communication and coordination between the City Alo team and the Brand Promotions team would also ensure promotional materials and activities are posted on time, which can improve event reach, public engagement and multiply overall program success.

Finally, having an updated official communication device would also make a difference. The office phone used by me was quite outdated, which slowed down calling and sometimes affected workflow. Providing newer devices would definitely increase calling efficiency for future interns. However, formal initiatives to upgrade devices have been taken in this regard.

Overall, these adjustments would enhance both the learning experience of interns and the productivity of the team.

Chapter 2: Organization Part

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of City Bank PLC alongside putting focus on City Alo women banking department, where the internship was undertaken. This chapter is aimed at giving a clear picture of the organization, its structure of operation and the practices within the departments. Through analyzing the organization environment, this chapter assists in relating the experience during the internship to what is learned in academic work and develops the basis of further analysis to be done in the following parts.

2.1.1 Objectives of this Chapter

The objectives of this section are the following:

- To analyze the functional areas of The City Bank Limited in detail
- To discuss the management and marketing practices of CBL
- To analyze the financial and accounting performance of CBL
- To conduct a SWOT Analysis of CBL
- To perform Porter's Five Forces analysis to determine industry competitiveness of CBL

2.1.2 Scope of the Study

This study is confined to the experience in the internship period with the City Bank PLC in the section of City Alo - Women Banking. However, primary addressing in the study are women-centered financial literacy interventions, certification-based programs, community outreach programs like Uthan Boithok and the partnership with agent banking. The analysis is founded on the activities which are observed and performed during the internship period and does not completely discuss the whole operations of the bank rather gives an overall idea.

2.1.3 Methodology

The methodology of the given study is qualitative and descriptive. Data were gathered using direct observation on daily operations, engaging in the work of the department, communication with supervisors and peers and interpreting the MIS data in the organization. Official documents, reports, official websites and sources available for the public concerning City Bank PLC were also examined to obtain relevant information. This style assisted the acquisition of real life experience on organizational processes and women banking programs.

2.1.4 Significance of the Study

The work is important both at academic and practical levels. It facilitates the learning process academically; it assists in bridging the gap between the theoretical concepts taught in the classroom to the actual banking setting. In practice, it will give a direct experience of the needs of women oriented financial services, financial literacy programs and approaches to customer engagement. The conclusions of this research can be beneficial to future interns and students as well who would like to learn about women banking and financial inclusion in Bangladesh.

2.1.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite proper diligence, the research has certain shortcomings. The internship was also short in time, only three months' experience which constrained the level of engagement in some of the operations and strategic sectors. Organizational policies had limited access to confidential financial and customer data. Also, the practical observations are merely based on a single department on which the study is founded. This in fact does not portray the ultimate representation of the whole operations of the City Bank PLC.

2.2 Overview of the Company

2.2.1 Background Information of City Bank PLC

City Bank PLC is regarded as one of the best commercial banks in Bangladesh which is privately owned. It is a major player in the financial sector of the country through offering diversified banking services and customer oriented programs. The bank operates through an extensive network of 134 branches, 70 sub-branches, 426 active agent banking outlets (as per current data) and digital platforms (including Citytouch app) across the country. Such broad coverage helps City Bank to access both urban, semi urban and rural consumers and helps them access financial inclusion and access to formal banking services. Besides conventional branch banking, the bank has highly concentrated on agent banking to reach out to communities that are not well covered by physical banking branches.

City Bank is a customer-oriented company and the focus is on innovation, quality service and financial inclusion. The bank intends to meet the demands of various customer bases through specialized banking segments and customized financial products without breaching the regulatory policies by Bangladesh Bank.

With constant enhancement of service delivery, technology implementation and national economic objective, City bank PLC has been able to sustain itself in the competitive banking sector of Bangladesh. Its financial inclusion, digital transformation and responsible banking have helped it to maintain its steady growth and reputation in the market.

2.2.2Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The Financial Supermarket with a Winning Culture Offering Enjoyable Experiences

Mission

- Offer wide array of products and services that differentiate and excite all customer segments
- Be the "Employer of choice" by offering an environment where people excel and leaders are created
- Continuously challenge processes and platforms to enhance effectiveness and efficiency
- Promote innovation and automation with a view to guaranteeing and enhancing excellence in service
- Ensure respect for community, good governance and compliance in everything we do

Values

- Result Driven
- Accountable & Transparent
- Courageous & Respectful
- Engaged & Inspired
- Focused on Customer Delight

(Source: City Bank PLC website)

2.2.3 Core Products and Services

The City bank PLC has a wide scope of financial products and services that include:

Retail Banking

It provides savings and current accounts, fixed deposits, DPS, consumer loans, home and auto finance, personal loan, lockers, inward remittance support and branch-based advisory to onboard and service issues.

SME Banking

Working capital finance, term loans, overdraft and cash credit, trade based facilities to small and medium, supply chain finance solutions and basic cash management services bespoke to the needs of the CMSME.

Institutional and Corporate Banking

Term and project credit, syndicated credit, revolving credit, full cash management, escrows and trustee services and relationship coverage of local and multinational clients of large size.

Trade Services

Status visibility to the clients, end to end processing, import, documentary collections, status visibility to the clients, export letters of credit, guarantees, standby instruments and end to end.

Treasury and Markets

FX business, money market placements, investment in government papers and solutions to corporate clients with treasury needs on asset liability management.

Islamic Banking

Special window with Shariah compliant deposits and Shariah compliant financing solutions, which is assisted through the help of advisory Shariah structure.

Cards and Payments

The segments, dual currency cards, partnering with credit cards and debit cards.

Sole provider of American Express besides VISA, Mastercard and other cards facilities to provide premium products, merchant acquiring that includes POS acceptance and facilitating the QR or e-commerce payments. CBL is also the only bank to introduce Google Pay cardless payment service for android as of now in the country.

Digital Banking

Digital banking encompasses Citytouch, internet and mobile banking in transfer of funds and payment of bills, managing cards, statements, requests and requests, core banking same balances and transaction history connectivity.

Customer Support and Customer Service

At the center of 24/7 call center, complaints resolution, branch service, CRM, track of which entails tracking of requests such that a problem is logged, channeled and closed and the customer is informed and all of it lies on customer service and support.

Service Enablers

The SOPs include a real time core banking system, training front line employees, to provide the front line employees with uniformity in the quality of services offered by the branches, subbranches, ATM services and digital services.

These diversified services enable the City Bank to cater to customers of various economic and geographical backgrounds as well as foster financial inclusion.

2.2.4 City Alo - Women Banking

City Alo is a women-focused banking proposition of the City Bank PLC, which aims to empower women economically and ensure that they are financially inclusive. The program is aimed at offering women friendly banking products, advisory services and financial literacy programs to women in business, service holders and homemakers.

City Alo provides special savings, loan services, certification services and community based programs to involve more women in the formal financial system. Certain community engagement programs like City Alo Certification Program, City Alo Uthan Boithok, Customer Loyalty Program are major programs within this branding. In these ways, City Alo contributes significantly to the entrepreneurship of women, their savings and financial decision-making.

2.2.5 Organizational Readiness to Financial Inclusion

The City Bank PLC has financial inclusion as one of its core strategic goals. The bank is proactive in having underbanked and unbanked groups in the formal financial system through propositions such as City Alo, Agent banking, SME financing and so on. This allocation is particularly focused on women because of their increasing contribution in the management of households as well as in economics.

Innovation in products, community participation and digital solutions enable City Bank to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic development in Bangladesh even more.

2.3 Organizational Structure

City bank PLC has a clear organizational structure which is meant to achieve good governance, good decision making and control over operations. The Board of Directors is led by a body that is in charge of the strategic direction and policy formulation of the bank. The Managing Director and CEO direct the executive management to execute strategic goals into operational plans via the different business and support divisions.

The roles and functions of every division are well defined and make the organization accountable and coordinated in terms of responsibilities. Functional units assist business divisions, which are Retail Banking, SME Banking, Corporate Banking and Specialized Banking.

The City Alo proposition is based on the retail or specialized banking model and closely collaborates with the branch teams, relationship managers and external stakeholders to execute the women-based banking programs in an efficient manner.

2.4 Management Practices

This section presents the management practices of The City Bank PLC with reference to City Alo - Women Banking department. The observations are informed by the internship experience, observation of supervisors and engaging in daily departmental operations. When working as an intern, the exposure was mostly operational and coordination level practices as opposed to strategic level decision making.

2.4.1 Leadership Style

The leadership style that has been witnessed in the City Alo department of CBL can be termed as participative and supportive. Supervisors promoted free communication and gave advice where necessary. The members of the teams had a friendly approach and were ready to exchange knowledge regarding tasks and responsibilities. The leadership style was effective in establishing a good working environment, particularly among interns who had to work in the corporate banking environment. A similar leadership style is usually practiced throughout all the parts as an organizational standard.

2.4.2 Human Resource Practices

The human resource practices in the department were centered on activities based learning and performance monitoring. The allocation of responsibilities to the interns was done step by step, starting with observation and then going to handling tasks in a non-supervised manner. Supervisors gave regular verbal feedback to improve the quality of work and to ensure improvement. The aspects of professional conduct, punctuality and communication were stressed during the internship period.

The process of recruitment and selection of permanent employees in the City Bank PLC is of a structured and formal nature which involves screening, interviews, background checks and verifications. Compared to the other process involved in recruiting interns, the recruitment procedure was relatively easier and relied on academic qualification, interest in banking and communication skills. Interns were chosen to assist the departmental work and such exposure was given in the workplace.

2.4.3 Training and Development

The City Bank PLC arranges regular training facilities for the employees. They provide a "City Future Fit" training for the promising work powers to make them ready for the evolving banking scenario. After joining mandatory training for overall personality and leadership qualities are provided with basic banking rules, regulations and internal practices. Developing the organization culture of the company within the workforce. From my experience, the City Alo department primarily used the on the job learning method of training and development. Interns were given brief verbal sessions, product idea sheets and other related brochures to familiarize themselves with City Alo products. Practical learning was done through participation in live training programs, online training programs and events like Uthan Boithok, which gave them field training. This exposure guided the interns to know how banking works in real life and how to engage customers.

2.4.4 Performance Appraisals and Monitoring

The main factors considered in the performance appraisal of the interns included completion of tasks, quality of work done and deadlines. Supervisors were tracking the daily progress by means of oral reports and work assignments. Positive feedback was also given that was used to assist in working on the performance and professional conduct. This assessment modality enabled lifelong learning and acquisition of skills throughout the internship.

2.4.5 Team and Work Environment Co-ordination

The City Alo department has a professional and cooperative working environment. Co-ordination among teams was ensured because of frequent communication between the members of the team and departments. The support of workspaces was offered to the students and they were treated as members of the team to understand the working of the department and the organizational culture.

2.5 Marketing Practices

City Bank PLC uses a customer centric marketing strategy with the goal of differentiation and building long term relationships. The bank has various customer segments such as retail customers, SMEs, corporate, high net worth and women entrepreneurs with customized value propositions.

Brand positioning is based on reliability, innovativeness and quality of premium services. Niche positioning and brand equity is boosted by specialized programs like City Alo and CityGem.

Marketing channels involve relationship management through branches, online marketing, apps on phones, social media and strategic alliances.

The promotional efforts incorporate the traditional media, digital campaigns and co-branding. The focus on digital marketing to market the services like Citytouch, card products and women-based banking solutions increases, which helps to achieve customer engagement and loyalty.

2.6 Financial Performance and Accounting Practices

The financial performance is a significant measure of the power and stability of any bank. Being a publicly listed commercial bank in Bangladesh, City Bank PLC releases its financial performance on an annual basis that reflects its performance in the banking sphere, profitability and performance which are related to the banking industry.

City Bank has shown stable growth in the past years. The bank registered a record net profit of more than Tk.1,000 crore in the year 2024 in a consolidated form in the financial year, which only a handful of local banks could reach this high level of profitability. This was an impressive rise against the past years and was fueled by good earnings of core banking activities in terms of interest on loans and investment and through fee based services. (The Business Standard,2025)

By 2023, the bank recorded a consolidated net profit of Tk.638 crore, which is 33.5 percent higher than that of the previous year. This increased growth was aided by an increase in retail and small and micro lending businesses and the operating profit. (City Bank PLC,2024)

There was also a strong growth in revenue at City Bank. The total revenue earned by the bank in the year 2024 is approximately 33 times more than the previous years and it is a good indication of the improved business during that year. Its revenue increases were maintained by the growth of deposits, diversification of the sources of revenue and enhanced quality of its assets. (StockAnalysis,2025)

There were still positive trends to quarterly performance in 2025. The bank has registered a year on year increase in profit of 60 percent in the first nine months of 2025 with a total figure of approximately Tk720 crore, credited mainly to the strategic investment in the government securities and the better cash flow in its operations. (The Business Standard,2025)

Besides the financial aspects of profit and revenues, the idea of sustainable and inclusive growth of City Bank is embodied in the larger reporting operations. In 2025, the bank released the first Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report, restricting its priorities to sustainable finance, corporate responsibility, support of women entrepreneurs and financing SMEs.(City Bank PLC,2025)

2.6.1. Financial Results (DuPont Analysis)

For City Bank PLC, the relationship between three key drivers namely: profitability, efficiency and leverage eventually determine the Return on Equity (ROE) of City Bank PLC. The Net Profit Margin of the bank is an expression of the remaining earnings after all expenses. It is directly influenced by the Operating Profit Margin, the Tax Effect and the Effect of Non-operating items. This profit margin is then multiplied with the Total Asset Turnover, which is an efficiency ratio that shows the revenue generated against per taka of the asset to come up with the Return on Assets (ROA). The last one is that the Financial Leverage increases the ROA, which represents the ratio of assets financed by debt to equity that shows that leverage is used. The returns to shareholders are multiplied to reach the ultimate ROE.

Particulars	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Return on Equity (ROE)	14.07%	30.00%	9.00%	17.60 %	26.10%
Return on Asset (ROA)	11.00%	0.70%	2.00%	1.20%	1.70%
Net Profit Margin	12.70%	20.00%	15.00%	13.50%	15.50%
Operating Profit Margin	15.50%	20.00%	21.10%	29.60%	32.90%
Tax Effect	30.00%	32.50%	37.50%	57.60%	61.00%
Effect of non-operating income	20.28%	44.68%	67.23%	79.10%	77.20%
Total Asset Turnover (Count)	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.11
Financial Leverage (Count)	11.32	11.45	10.82	15.17	15.09

Table 2.1: Du Pont Analysis of City Bank PLC

The analysis of DuPont of City Bank PLC demonstrates a dynamic and eventually developing performance growth from 2020 to 2024. Return on Equity (ROE) is volatile, with a starting value, with an average of 14.07% in 2020 and a high of 30.00% in 2021. Again, declining back to 9.00% in 2022 with a strong recovery to 26.10% in 2024. This last ROE has been broken down into its components, like a solid Return on Assets (ROA) of 1.70% that has been considerably amplified by a high Financial Leverage of 15.09 times. The ROA is the product of an increasing Net Profit. Margins of 15.50% though, being lower than the skyrocketing Operating Profit Margin of 32.90, signifies high effects of provisions and non-operating things and a trend. Raising Total Asset Turnover has increased by 0.05 to 0.11 times, which indicates an increased efficiency in the utilization of assets to raise revenue. As the analysis points out, the bank has an impressive ROE in 2024 which was led by primary improvement of operational profitability and leverage strategic use, despite being supported by increased leverage. The Tax Effect and Non-operating items took up significant amounts of operating profit.

Accounting Practices

City Bank being a regulated financial institution also practices accounting in line with the Bangladesh Bank requirements and in international standards where such requirements exist. The financial statements of the bank as announced in the 2024 annual report, have been audited on an annual basis and details on the financial positioning of the bank including the key criteria used in net interest income (NII), asset quality, liquidity position and profitability can be found. Independent external auditing is usually done on these reports so as to verify their accuracy and adherence to regulatory requirements. (City Bank PLC, 2025)

Accounting practices of City Bank also stress transparency of financial reporting including the detailed disclosure of revenues, profits, dividends and investment portfolios. The stakeholders and investors of the bank receive the financial performance of the bank through frequent earnings reports, annual reports and formal press releases.

In general, the City Bank PLC has shown a steady financial development in the past years and high profitability, growth in revenues and efficient utilization of the investment and lending processes. Its accounting and reporting standards are in line with industry standards and regulatory adherence which to the customers, investors and other market stakeholders add to the level of confidence.

2.7 Operation management and information systems

City Bank has integrated core banking systems that facilitate real-time connections between branches, ATMs and card services and digital platforms to provide operational efficiency. This integration makes delivery of services accurate, fast and consistent.

Electronic hubs like Citytouch will be essential in lowering the reliance on the physical branches as well as increasing the convenience of the customer. Service monitoring, complaint resolution and compliance management are supported by centralized contact centers, CRM systems, as well as back office operations. Considerable information protection systems and business continuity strategies to protect customer information and operational stability.

2.8 Industry and Competitive Environment

The banking sector in Bangladesh is a very competitive environment, which is regulated, quickly digitalized and with changing customer demands. City Bank is a competitor of other private commercial banks, state-owned banks and new fintech organizations.

The strengths of City Bank are good brand name, product diversification, online capability and specialized propositions such as City Alo. There are opportunities in the area of financial inclusion, financing women entrepreneurs and the expansion of digital services and threats such as the high rivalry, the regulatory pressure and the technological disruption.

2.8.1 City Bank PLC - SWOT Analysis

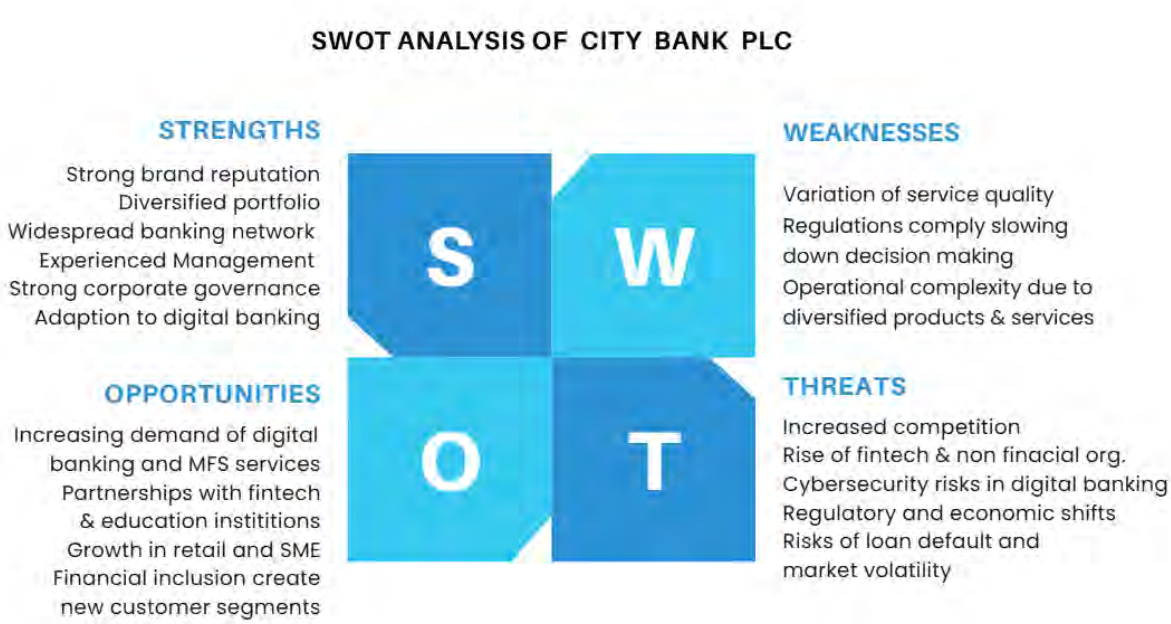

Figure 2.1: SWOT analysis of City Bank PLC

The SWOT analysis ought to be a systematic assessment of the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses and its external opportunities and threats that give a perspective of its strategic position in the banking sector.

Strengths:

City Bank PLC has a strong brand value which is among the best private commercial banks in Bangladesh. The product and service portfolio it offers is diversified and therefore it serves a broad customer segment such as retail, SME, corporate and priority customers. The specialized propositions of the bank like City Alo - Women Banking and City Gem - Priority Banking provide a distinct market difference and increase the customer loyalty. Good corporate governance, management and an expanding digital banking infrastructure further enhance efficiency in operations and convenience to customers.

Weaknesses:

CBL has some internal constraints as much as it has strengths. Some customers and less technologically advanced employees who adopt the new digital systems might find it challenging to operate them. The different branches might differ with regard to service delivery based on the capacity of the workforce and the local demand. Also, there are cases when constant dependence on compliance procedures leads to the stagnation of decisions and flexible operation.

Opportunities:

There are also considerable prospects of City Bank PLC in the field of financial inclusion and digital banking development. The increasing involvement of women in the entrepreneurship sector provides a good opportunity towards City Alo-oriented financing and advisory services. An improved usage of mobile and internet banking creates the prospects of delivering services at a lower cost and reaching more customers. Vital innovation and customer engagement can also be promoted through strategic collaboration with educational establishments, fintech organizations and development agencies.

Threats:

City Bank is in an environment that is highly competitive with other private banks, state owned banks and non-bank financial institutions. There is a threat of disruption caused by fintech firms providing alternative financial solutions due to rapid technological progress. On-going challenges to sustainable growth are regulatory changes, economic uncertainty, cybersecurity threats and credit risk that comes with loan defaults.

2.8.2 Porter's Five Force Model for City Bank PLC.

The Five Forces model is applied in examining the intensity and appeal of the banking industry in which City Bank PLC operates.

Threat of New Entrants

- The limited new entrants to the banking sector are due to the high capital requirement and heightened regulatory consent of Bangladesh Bank.
- Entry barriers are created by having strong compliance, licensing and capital adequacy requirements.
- Nevertheless, there are areas of service entry that are reduced by the actions of fintech companies and digital financial service providers.

Overall threat is moderate

Bargaining Power of Customer

- There are numerous banking alternatives available to customers and this raises their bargaining strength.
- Ease of switching is a situation where the product (loans, deposits, cards) is available in multiple banks.
- Corporate and high net worth clients have better bargaining power.
- City amenities such as City Alo and CityGem are relationship banking propositions that limit switching behavior.

The overall customer power level is high.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

- The major suppliers are depositors, technology vendors and human resources.
- Interest rate sensitivity depositors affect the costs of funds.
- Vendors of technology are moderately strong because of dependency on the systems and switching costs.
- Experienced banking experts have moderate bargaining power.

General supplier power is average.

Threat of Substitute Products or Services.

- Substitutes are mobile financial services (bKash, Nagad, Rocket, Upay), fintechs and non-bank financial institutions.
- Reliance on conventional banking services is becoming limited as Fintech lending and digital wallets are capturing the market.
- Nevertheless, banks still lead the way in big scale financing, trade finance and deposits.

In general, the threat of substitutes is moderate to high.

Competitive Rivalry within Industry

- Rigorous market rivalry between private commercial banks and the state owned banks and other non banking financial institutions.
- Banks are competing based on interest rate, quality of service, digital innovation and customer experience.
- Bad competition is aggravated by high operational expenses and low market growth.
- Competitive position is reinforced with differentiation in terms of niche banking propositions such as City Alo - Women Banking, Citygem – Priority Banking.

So, overall rivalry is high

2.9 Conclusion and Implementation to Internship

The paper has provided an overall picture of City Bank PLC, such as its organizational structure, management practices, service provisions, marketing strategy and operational structure. The elements of the organization presented here offer the strategic and operational environment, in which the City Alo - Women Banking initiative operates.

These insights aided in putting the internship experience into perspective since these tasks and duties could be tied to the bigger company goals. The exposure to the female-oriented banking initiatives, customer contact procedures and corporate alignment highlights the methods City bank is turning its strategic goal to real implementation specifically in expanding financial inclusion and women empowerment.

Chapter 3: Project Part

Impact of Financial Literacy program on women's participation in economy of Bangladesh: Insights from City Alo Uthan Boithok

3.1 Introduction

According to recent estimates, about 47% of the world's women are part of the workforce, compared to about 72% of men. This gap varies widely in the Asia and Pacific region. (Hasan,2025) Bangladesh being one of the largest populations of the world, holds a significant stature in women's participation in the economy.

As a part of the internship work in the women banking department, I had the opportunity to attend an Uthan Boithok event held focusing on women of suburban and rural areas. The aim of the program is to introduce the benefits of formal banking and safe financial practice. Besides, discussing the perks offered to women in order to encourage them to get involved in banking channels which as a whole can uplift the overall economy of the country.

A still photo from City Alo Uthan Boithok held at Bashurhaat, Noakhali.

The purpose of this chapter is to showcase the importance of financial literacy programs like Uthan Boithok(courtyard meeting) influencing involvement of women in economic activities. The chapter gives an outline of the background of the study and the main challenges faced by women in accessing financial services. It also mentions the objectives and significance of the project along with its potential scope. Alongside, a brief review of literature is there to show how the previous studies support the idea of financial knowledge contributing to women empowerment. The methodology used to conduct the study and the findings gathered from the event that I attended in person is discussed here. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and several recommendations based on the insights of the field visit.

A still photo from City Alo Uthan Boithok held at Bashurhaat, Noakhali.

Through this project, the intention is to share a clear understanding of how the community based financial literacy programs can influence financial decisions and boost confidence in women and strengthen the economy of Bangladesh.

3.1.1 Background & Problem Statement

Women are half of the population of the country yet many of them are remaining out of any formal financial system. Majority of the women living in the rural and suburban areas still depend on the informal savings or saving money at households because they lack financial knowledge or feel insecure because of the same. Moreover, limited awareness, social stigma and lack of confidence prevent them from opening a bank account and availing financial services. In some cases, they find it difficult even visiting banks in person because of household responsibilities and chores. Therefore, they miss the opportunities to risk free savings, access women friendly credit facilities that can support family income and small business initiatives.

In this regard, like many other banks, City Bank's women banking, City Alo is working to reduce the gaps by adopting different financial literacy and awareness programs. Among which the Uthan Boithok, a community level courtyard meeting focusing solely on women is one of the most impactful initiatives. These sessions help women to get familiar with banking services, discuss the benefits of using legal remittance channels and publicities the women centric banking facilities designed for their economic upliftment.

However, despite these efforts, a large number of women still feel hesitant to use banking services due to lack of knowledge and confidence. Alongside many of them get negative advice or physical barriers like long distances of branches. In this case, there is agent banking in the areas to provide banking services to these people where regular branches are out of reach. In fact, it is a collaboration activity of agent banking and women banking to reach out to these parts of the population who cannot avail banking services and proper financial advice because of distance. The challenge remains in not only proving the correct banking knowledge but also building trust and proper guidance to financial inclusion.

This study focuses on understanding how programs like Uthan Boithok influence women towards banking and its ability to include them in the economy via banking service.I aim to highlight the ongoing challenges and impact on women's financial behaviour by analysing the awareness level and responses of the participants from my on site experience.

3.1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of this report is to understand the influence of financial literacy programs, particularly the City Alo Uthan Boithok on participation of women in the national economy. The specific objectives are:

- To assess the effectiveness of the Uthan Boithok program in improving women's knowledge of banking and financial services.
- To observe whether the session encourages women to open bank accounts or at least think about using banking facilities.
- To identify the challenges women face even after receiving financial literacy support
- To provide insights that can help City Alo to revamp future financial inclusion programs for women

3.1.3 Purpose & Significance

Financial literacy is one of the main foundations for women empowerment. When women become familiar with the benefits of saving money safely, getting credit support for their small initiatives, receiving remittance through proper channels and learning ideal management of money then they become active economic contributors. The more there is inclusion of women in the financial economy The arrangement of Uthan Boithok in the localities, reaching out to people draws their interest and helps to remove the barrier to hesitation and lack of exposure to banking activities.

By shedding light on one of these sessions, the study highlights the real conversations and thoughts of women who are getting newly involved in banking. The key insights from this report can support City Alo's objective to circulate financial literacy and also influence other organizations to understand the meaningful impacts of this kind of community engagement program.

3.1.4 Scope of the Study

The study of this report is based on one Uthan Boithok session that I attended during my internship in the City Alo Women Banking Department. There around 120 to 140 women participated in the event. The attendees included existing account holders, new applicants and women with no previous banking experience. The project puts focus on their understanding from the speakers, responses, questions and overall engagement during the session.

The findings are limited to short term on field observations, as there was no opportunity to track long term behavioral changes or follow up actions. Although I could collect data from the event about some key factors that give a robust idea of how the participants are engaged in self-employment, service, farming, foreign remittance and monthly income. The study does not include a comparative analysis with other financial literacy programs. But collection of information available from the internet about Uthan Boithok activities of many other banks are discussed as comparative analysis. However, the report mostly portrays a focused understanding of how a single session can influence women's awareness and interest in financial participation.

3.2 Literature Review

Women's participation in the formal economy of Bangladesh has gradually increased during the past few years. Although a significant number of women who are living in rural and semi-urban areas still experience limited access to financial services. According to research, financial literacy is one of the best methods to increase economic empowerment of women and their participation in banking operations. The Business Standard claims that financial literacy is essential in enhancing women's ability to make financial decisions, manage funds, initiate small businesses and interact confidently with financial institutions (The Business Standard, 2023).

The rising impact of digital finance and agent banking in reaching out to underprivileged women is also highlighted by recent studies. Another reference from a recent publication by Springer (Islam et al., 2025) it is found that digital finance makes it convenient for women to use banking channels, remittance services and maintain savings boosting business growth and poverty elevation. The inception of agent banking has made a key contribution to financial inclusion in Bangladesh because it brings banking services closer to people who live far from branch locations. This characteristic aligns with the structure of Uthan Boithok programs where the participants are mostly dependent on agent banking points for day to day transactions.

In addition, more extensive statistical data supports the significance of financial literacy in achieving inclusive finance. As stated by Sinha (2021), financial literacy strengthens the capacity to sensibly use financial services and reduce vulnerability to financial risks in an individual. In fact, women are more likely to participate in formal financial channels, when they understand banking procedures, remittance options and savings strategies. All these findings suggest that community based financial education is a practical and effective tool for economic empowerment.

Apparently, Bangladesh centric studies also show a positive relationship between women's financial inclusion and overall empowerment. A study by Mat Journals (Rahman & Sultana, 2017) explains that women after receiving structured guidance on banking services tend to gain more confidence, develop saving habits and actively participate in making household financial decisions. Community-focused sessions such as, Uthan Boithok creates a friendly environment where women feel comfortable and valued by learning, asking questions and exploring banking opportunities. They understand the importance of self reliance and vital role play in family and society.

In this context, City Alo's Uthan Boithok initiative aligns closely with the challenges presented in current literature. The social initiative provides rural and semi-urban women with knowledge about making savings, receiving remittances through legal channels, micro credit facilities, bank account opening benefits and opportunities in setting up small businesses. This approach reflects established findings that effective financial literacy programs must be communicative, practical and culturally fit with the community. Therefore, this particular study of evidence provides a solid base for assessing the impact of the Uthan Boithok event on women's economic participation.

3.3 Methodology

This study followed both a qualitative and quantitative approach to analyze the impact of financial literacy on women which was conducted by the City Alo Uthan Boithok program. Since I had the opportunity to attend the Uthan Boithok session organized at Bashurhaat, Noakhali in person and also collected data from the event and online sources, the methodology is based on both direct field visit and structured data collection process.

3.3.1 Data collection process

Primary Data Collection

The primary data for this report was gathered during my visit to the Uthan Boithok program. The event was jointly conducted by City Alo Women Banking and the Agent Banking division of City Bank. As banking branches are limited in suburban and rural regions, the Agent Banking team played a major role in organizing the event, inviting women attendees and coordinating local logistics.

During the program, I observed the session where the utmost significance was given to providing financial literacy, making women understand the benefits of savings, importance of using legal remittance channels and women focused banking services and privileged offerings. In addition to observation, I had the scope to collect a structured MIS dataset provided by the Agent Banking team. In the dataset it contained information on 105 women attending the event. Their details consisted of their profession, monthly average income, family members working abroad, monthly remittance amount they receive, their preferred remittance channels, existing bank accounts, DPS account involvement, interest in taking loans and whether they were existing City Bank customers or not. Personal data fields were avoided maintaining their confidentiality.

In addition to the main communication event, the attendees were offered free medical checkups, agent desk to open on spot bank accounts, bank representatives to help with any query regarding financial advice, guidance on money transferring from abroad and information about small business opportunities. These side activities helped perceive a broader insight into the social and economic role of the program.

Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data resources were collected mostly from the internet including the official City Bank website, City Alo program descriptions, reports published on financial inclusion of women in Bangladesh and many research articles based on financial literacy, women empowerment, various statistics and the impacts of agent banking in financial inclusion and economic development. All these materials helped me to develop the background of the paper, support the analysis and compare the field findings with national trends.

3.3.2 Data Analysis Approach

To analyze the MIS dataset, a combination of descriptive statistics and graphical representation is used. The data is organized into various tables, charts and graphs to present the patterns such as:

- Percentage of existing City Bank account holders
- Number of participants receiving foreign remittance
- Remittance channels used
- Monthly income categories
- Loan interest and business aspirations
- Usage of DPS or savings schemes

The given visual representations help to recognize the financial behavior of the attendees and highlight the influence of Uthan Boithok in their decision making.

3.3.3 Methodological Rationale

The subject matter of financial literacy is not only technical but also a social and behavioral one which is why the mix method approach was chosen for this study. My on-field experience gave me the opportunity to observe the reaction of women to the topics discussed, their attention and interest to the topics and involvement in the activities. Whereas the MIS data set provided a structured base to get an overview of their financial patterns, they would appreciate it. Combining both methods offered a more comprehensive understanding of City Alo's initiative in supporting women's participation in the economy.

3.3.4 Ethical Considerations

All the personal data that can identify the participants such as name and contact numbers has been removed from the data sheet collected during the event. The study focuses only on the aggregated results with a view to ensuring privacy of individuals. The findings from the data sheet illustrate educational insights for academic purposes only.

3.4 Findings and Analysis

This part presents the key findings obtained from the City Alo Uthan Boithok held at Bashurhaat in Companyganj upazila of Noakhali. The survey is based on observations and the MIS data collected from 105 women participants of the program. The data analysis focuses on the banking knowledge, banking accessibility, remittance patterns and loan requirements of semi-urban women living in that area. The findings also connect these patterns with the broader objectives of delivering financial literacy and encourage women's full-fledged participation in the economy.

3.4.1 Demographic and Socio-economic Profile of Participants

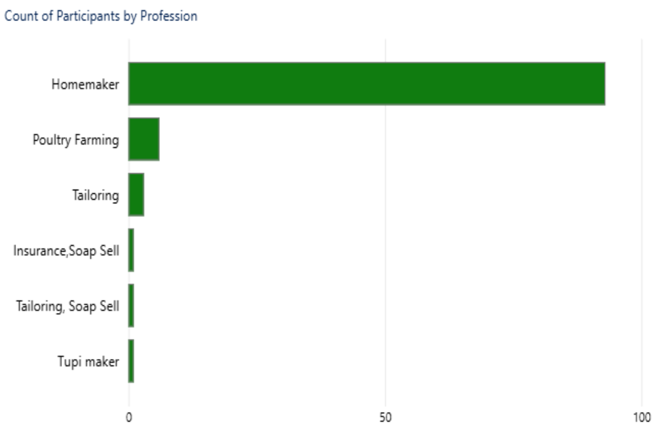

Figure 3.1: Profession of the participants

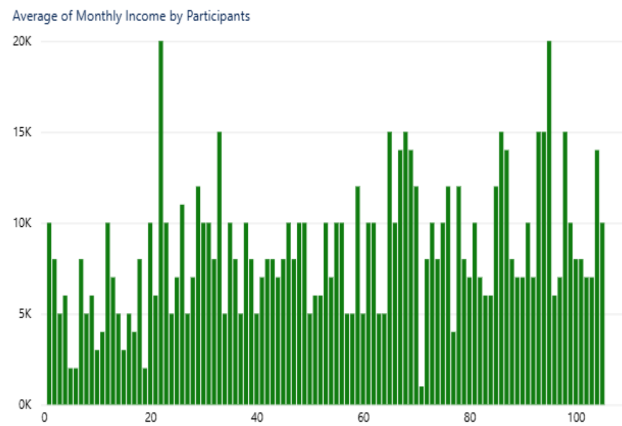

Figure 3.2: Average monthly income

The attendees of the session came from diverse households and economic backgrounds. Most women were homemakers by profession. Besides, there were also owners of micro businesses such as tailoring, handicrafts, poultry farming and few service workers. Their monthly incomes generally fall within a decent range, which matches with the usual economic standards in semi-urban regions of Bangladesh. The data showed that many women had initial exposure to banking but were limited to formal banking before attending such sessions. Through personal talks with some individuals, it was known that they were unaware of the variety of facilities offered by banks and the special benefits for women were also unknown to many. They get an idea of safe savings and contribute financially to the family that can elevate their self value. Their socio-economic condition indicates that community based financial literacy programs are particularly effective for this segment of population, as they reduce the barriers that prevent women from reaching out to banks directly.

3.4.2 Remittance Dependency and Financial Decision Making

Figure 3.3: Participants having remittance earning family member

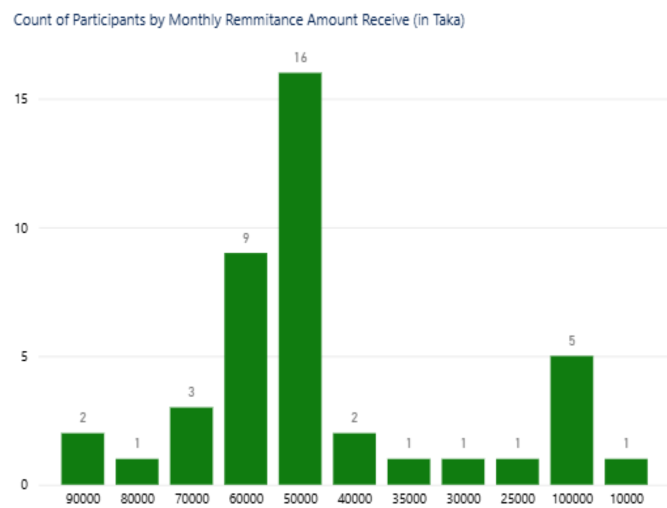

Figure 3.4: Monthly remittance amount received

A significant proportion of the participants (42 out of 105) belonged to families with at least one member earning from working abroad. These households mainly depend on monthly remittances received from the migrant members, which ensures a major cause of their financial stability. It is realized that most of the families get remittance around 50 to 60 thousand to a maximum of 100 thousand in Taka. This scenario depicts the substantial impact migrant workers are putting on the country's economy, also influencing women's financial ability and money handling capacity. By this, the indirect influence of women empowerment and their financial mobility from foreign earnings can be picturized. Also, the potential role women of this segment are/can be playing in the overall fiscal prosperity.

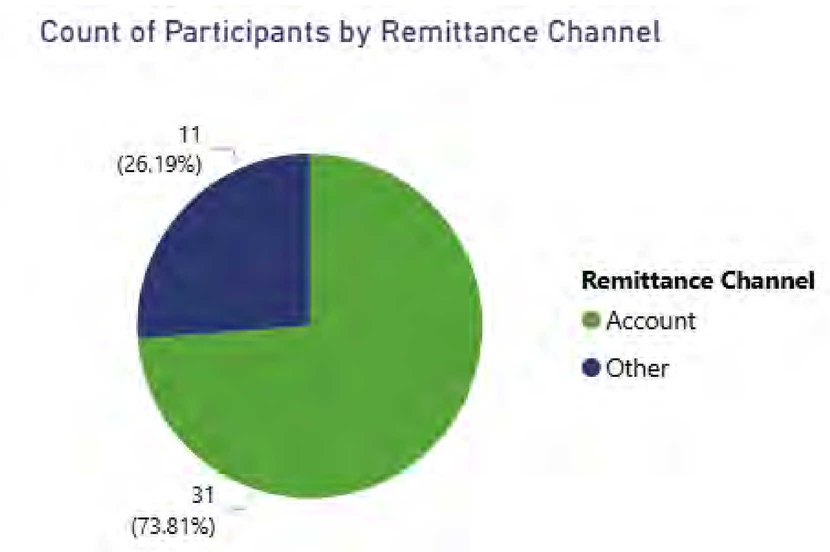

Figure 3.5: Channel used by remittance receiving participants

The noted data mentioned that almost three out of four women use the legal banking channels to receive foreign remittance which is a positive sign of them being aware of and risk free transactions. On the contrary, around one fourth of the participants who receive remittances relied on informal or unauthorized money transfer channels. In this way, there persists in risks of losing an entire transaction amount due to not having a resource and fraud. They also lack proof of documentation and get unknowingly linked to illicit activities. This occurs mostly due to lack of awareness or having limited knowledge in banking procedures. As a matter of fact, unauthorized transactions lead to tax evasion, loss in forex reserves and underestimation of official data and stats, affecting the overall economic scenario. In this case, the Uthan Boithok provides this awareness message in a simple coherent process that encourages them to use legal banking medium to use authorized banking channels.

However, during the session many participants were curious about the "instant money receive" facility for quick remittance deposit offered by City Bank. This reflects the impact of financial literacy message delivery, as women learned to compare informal channels with formal and safer alternatives. For many, understanding the benefits of receiving remittances through banks appeared to reduce fear and misinformation about formal systems.

3.4.3 Banking Access and Account Ownership

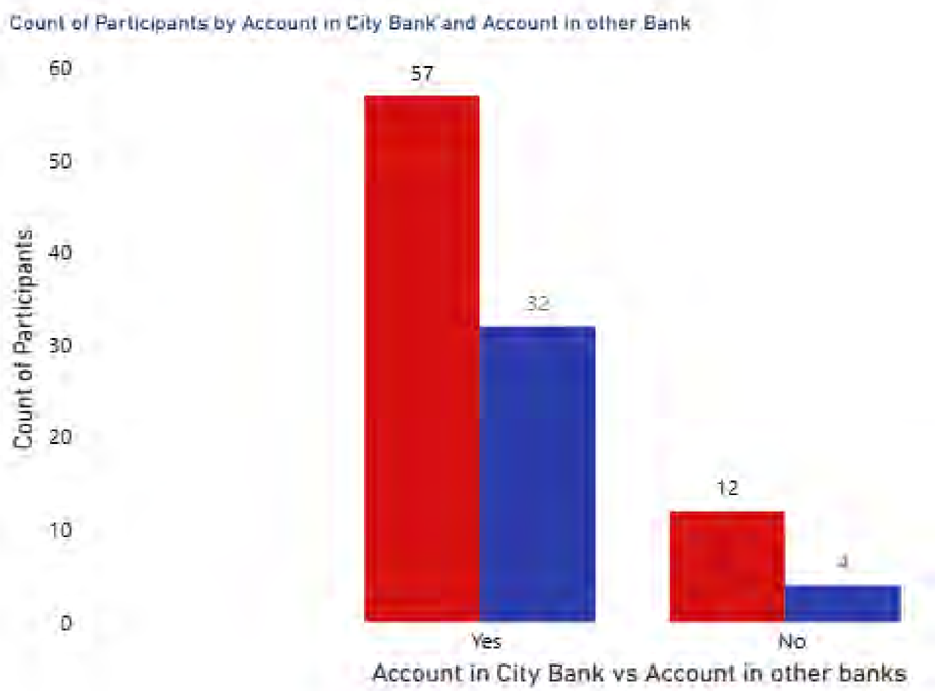

Figure 3.6: Participants having City Bank A/C and Account in Other Banks

(only in CBL-57,Both-32,Neither-12,Only in other banks-4)

The MIS data revealed that a considerable number of women already had bank accounts meanwhile others were either new account openers who filled up account opening form from the on-spot account opening booth or had accounts with other banks. There were rest who never opened an account before. Not to mention, City Bank's agent banking team played a crucial role in narrowing down this gap. As discussed in the previous part, branches are often distant from rural locations where agent outlets make it accessible to the rural and sub rural people for regular deposits, withdrawals, remittance collection and other banking services.

Participants not having accounts stated the reasons such as lack of proper documentation, hesitation or the perception that banking is "not for women". The Uthan Boithok session directly addressed these misconceptions by explaining account benefits, minimum requirements and women-specific features of City Alo products. This suggests that live, face-to-face awareness sessions can motivate non-users to enter the formal financial system.

3.4.4 Savings Behavior and Access to DPS Products

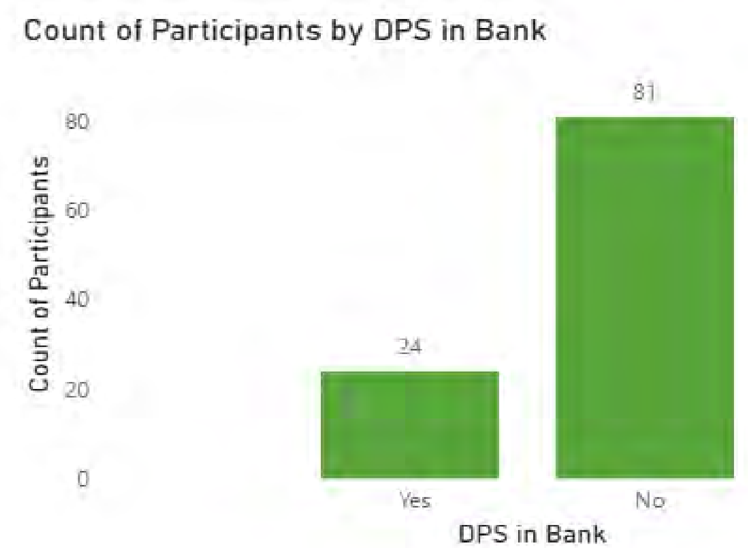

Figure 3.7: Number of participants with DPS account

The number of participants maintaining a monthly deposit scheme (DPS) was found low compared to the number of participants present in total. There were approximately 93 women with at least one bank account, whereas DPS savers were only 24, which is almost three folds less. This marks a gap in regular saving practices in rural and sub urban women where this kind of courtyard meetings can play an effective role. Upon discussion it became evident that many women save casually at home or through local rotating savings groups which lack formality and regulations.

In the session the speakers emphasized on the impact of creating a savings habit even if it is a small monthly deposit which can qualify them for availing future credit opportunities and maintain a valid record of banking practices. Also it ensures security, regulated facilities and risk free return of the savings whenever necessary. Through explaining these points in a community level setting, the financial literacy directly motivates to create formal savings as a whole.

3.4.5 Loan Requirements and Entrepreneurship Aspirations

Figure 3. 8: Willingness of participants to take loan

The data showed that a fair number of participants were interested in raising small or micro-loans from banks. Nearly 40% of attendees expressed their need for loan support. A considerable number of these women were engaged in small-scale activities such as tailoring, livestock, handicrafts or food production. Even many homemakers are somehow related to regular or seasonal activities otherwise willing to get involved in earnings. Their loan needs were relatively modest and matched with the working capital requirements.

According to the perception of some of the participants, they previously felt the banking system was quite intimidating and complex. There are many criteria and documentation required to maintain an account and take financial support. Thus, they were unsure about their eligibility and documentation. But the Uthan Boithok session helped to clarify the process, requirements and benefits of formal credit. After attending the meeting, many women gained huge confidence to take small income generating initiatives and take bank facilities. This finding supports the idea that financial literacy sessions can directly encourage entrepreneurship among women. Otherwise, there would persist hesitation to approach financial institutions.

3.4.6 Role of Agent Banking in Supporting Financial Inclusion

Agent banking, since its official inception in Bangladesh in 2013, has worked as a catalyst in financial inclusion of people who were out of reach for branch banking range and deprived of banking services. In fact, it has achieved the most significant progress in financial inclusion of women living in sub urban and rural areas, including them in the banking and economy.

Particulars	As on Sep, 2025	As on Sep, 2024	Changes (%) (Sep 25 over Sep 24)
Total Agent owned by Female	1449	1441	0.6%
Urban	274	263	4.2%
Rural	1175	1178	-0.3%
Master Agent owned by Female	80	70	14.3%
Urban	25	25	0.0%
Rural	55	45	22.2%
Unit Agent owned by Female	1369	1371	-0.1%
Urban	249	238	4.6%
Rural	1120	1133	-1.1%
Deposit A/c owned by Female	12396888	11633560	6.6%
Urban	1450157	1301247	11.4%
Rural	10946731	10332313	5.9%
Loan A/c owned by Female	87092	83893	3.8%
Urban	10634	9579	11.0%
Rural	76458	74314	2.9%

Table3.1 : Female in Agent Banking Activities (Source: Bangladesh Bank)

According to the Agent Banking Statistics of July-September 2025 of Bangladesh Bank, At the end of September 2025, 49.4% of all deposit accounts under agent banking are held by females, reflecting a significant step toward gender-inclusive financial inclusion. (*Bangladesh Bank*, 2025). As per this statistic, we can say agent banking's approach in the targeted areas have made more female customers than that compared to male. So, it has been more successful in inclusion of women in these areas. Agent banking efficiently caters to the unique financial needs of the economically disadvantaged, particularly in microcredit loans. (Khan,2024)

Figure 3.9: Number of accounts opened by Agent Banking (2017-2022)

Data source: Agent Banking Quarterly Report by Bangladesh Bank

The speakers also appreciated the leading role of the agent banking team towards revolutionary progress in financial inclusion overall. Since most people including women do not have easy access to a physical branch, agents serve as reliable representatives to assist with account opening, cash withdrawal, remittance processing and loan disbursement and general information. Agent banking thus makes the financial system physically and socially accessible to women of this once deprived segment. Md. Khan mentions in his article titled “Agent Banking's impact on financial inclusion in Bangladesh” that the approach of agent banking “reaching union levels and providing financial services to rural and underprivileged individuals. This innovative approach encourages participation, especially among women.” (Khan, 2024)

Not only in account creation and deposits, remittance services but this Agent banking also has excelled exceptionally in loan disbursement. In fact, according to data from Bangladesh Bank for females, loan disbursements in rural areas are twice that of urban areas. This demographic signifies the impact of agent banking and financial literacy programs in rural areas.

The collaboration between City Alo and Agent Banking significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the Uthan Boithok evolving financial inclusion. The agents being present in the program who usually belong to that particular locality and personally know the community create a force of reliability and trust. This helps to reduce insecurity, encouraging women to share their financial challenges openly to the speakers. This community level interaction model reinforces the findings from existing literature, emphasizing the importance of local engagement in women's financial empowerment.

3.5 Overall Impact of the Financial Literacy Session

The financial literacy outreach program in the banner of City Alo Uthan Boithok created a positive and practical impact on the participating women. Based on the observation and interaction with the participants, the notable program outcomes:

- Women actively listened to the speakers and asked questions related to saving habits, bank account benefits and loan opportunities and so on.
- Participants became more cautious about using safe remittance channels and came to know about the risks of informal agents.
- Several non-account holders showed interest in opening accounts with City Bank and most of them filled account opening forms on spot.
- Enhanced knowledge about savings choices such as deposit schemes and their long term benefits, increased confidence regarding small and micro loan opportunities.
- Women gained clarity on the perks of initiating or improving small income generating activities and being self empowered.
- The session helped participants understand the connection between financial knowledge and family welfare.
- The cordial and festive environment of the event made women valued and confident enough to discuss personal financial issues without hesitation.

All the above observations demonstrate that community based financial literacy initiatives like Uthan Boithok can predominantly enhance women's economic involvement. Mainly by fostering knowledge, confidence and access to formal banking practices.

3.6 Summary

This report focused on analyzing the impact of the City Alo Uthan Boithok financial literacy session conducted at Bashurhaat, Noakhali. The study was mainly based on the data collected from 105 women participants as a MIS record, along with direct observation and interaction during the event. The analysis key aspects like women's access to banking, their remittance practices, savings behavior, loan needs and the role of agent banking contributing to financial inclusion of women. The research findings showed that many women still had limited awareness of formal banking services before attending the session. Where a considerable number relied on informal remittance practices and lacked proper savings habits. The Uthan Boithok session substantially helped the participants understand the benefits of opening a bank account, maintaining savings, as well as using legal remittance channels and accessing small loans. The involvement of agent banking made the session effective enough to ensure proper outreach and building trust among the people of the community.

3.7 Conclusion

The City Alo Uthan Boithok is a flagship community outreach program of City Bank PLC which is significantly working to influence women's participation in the national economy. Programs like this creates an interactive learning environment for local women where they feel comfortable to discuss their financial concerns and learn about women friendly banking facilities. Being able to provide transparent and real information to the participants, it helps to reduce hesitation and boost confidence, encouraging them to engage with formal financial systems.

In conclusion, financial literacy initiatives like the Uthan Boithok greatly contribute to women's economic empowerment as it increases their financial awareness, encourages savings actions and motivates small business development. Furthermore, with the collaboration with agent banking facilities, such programs become more approachable and impactful for women living in areas with limited bank branches. Through expanding similar initiatives, the financial institutions can surely play a meaningful role in strengthening financial inclusion and sustainable economic development in Bangladesh.

3.8 Recommendations

Considering the study findings and personal observation during the City Alo Uthan Boithok session, few recommendations can be suggested to improve the effectiveness of future financial literacy programs to enhance women's financial inclusion.

First, City Alo should consider increasing the number of Uthan Boithok sessions in a year. This year they planned four sessions which should be increased to at least six in the coming years. Regular programs can help reinforcement of financial knowledge and maintain a flow of engagement with women for guiding them to adopt valid banking services.

Second, more structured follow-up activities can be conducted after each session so that communication can be maintained with the participants through agent banking representatives or mobile communication. Which afterwards can help track the account opening progress, savings activities and loan interest more effectively.

Third, financial literacy materials such as brochures, visual guides and handouts in local language can be distributed to participants. These materials would allow women to remember the key concepts after the session.

Finally, strengthening coordination between City Alo, agent banking teams and also branch level staff with a view to improve service delivery to participants and other interested females. More information sharing can ensure timely support for account opening and financial product enrollment.

Overall, the findings imply that community level financial literacy programs with the support of agent banking and personalized guidance can play a significant role in empowering women and increasing their participation in the formal economy.

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Appendix A

Participant	Profession	Monthly Income	Any Remittance Earning Member in Family (Yes/No)	Relation with the Remittance Earner	Monthly Remittance Amount Receive (in Taka)	Medium of Remittance (PIN/Account/Other)	Account in City Bank PLC (Yes/No)	DPS in Bank (Yes/No)	Loan Needed (Yes/No)	Account in another Bank (Yes/No)	Name of Bank Account in
1	Tailoring, Soap Sell	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Islami Bank
2	Insurance, Soap Sell	8000	Yes	Son	50000	Other	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Al-Arafah
3	Homemaker	5000	Yes	Brother	40000	Other	No	No	No	No	N/A
4	Homemaker	6000	Yes	Son	25000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Islami Bank
5	Homemaker	2000	Yes	Son	35000	Account	Yes	No	No	Yes	Islami Bank
6	Topi maker	2000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Islami Bank
7	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
8	Tailoring	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
9	Poultry Farming	6000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	N/A
10	Poultry Farming	3000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A

11	Homemaker	4000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	Yes	No	N/A
12	Poultry Farming	10000	Yes	Son	100000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Al-Arafah
13	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	Sonali Bank
14	Poultry Farming	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	N/A
15	Homemaker	3000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	National Bank
16	Homemaker	5000	Yes	Husband	50000	Other	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	National Bank
17	Homemaker	4000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
18	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
19	Homemaker	2000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
20	Tailoring	10000	Yes	Husband	60000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Islami Bank
21	Homemaker	6000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Janata Bank
22	Homemaker	20000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
23	Homemaker	10000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Islami Bank
24	Homemaker	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
25	Homemaker	7000	Yes	Son	100000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Dutch Bangla

26	Homemaker	11000	Yes	Son	50000	Account	No	No	Yes	Yes	Al-Arafah
27	Homemaker	5000	Yes	Brother	30000	Account	No	No	Yes	Yes	Islami Bank
28	Homemaker	7000	Yes	Brother-In-Law	60000	Other	No	No	Yes	No	N/A
29	Homemaker	12000	Yes	Brother	100000	Other	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Uttara Bank
30	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Al-Arafah
31	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Rupali Bank
32	Homemaker	8000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Rupali Bank
33	Homemaker	15000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
34	Homemaker	5000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Islami Bank
35	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Al-Arafah
36	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	Al-Arafah
37	Homemaker	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	N/A
38	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	N/A
39	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
40	Homemaker	5000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Al-Arafah

41	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Al-Arafah
42	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
43	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
44	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Al-Arafah
45	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
46	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
47	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
48	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Asha NGO
49	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
50	Homemaker	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	N/A
51	Homemaker	6000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
52	Homemaker	6000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
53	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Sonali Bank
54	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
55	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A

56	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
57	Homemaker	5000	Yes	Son	50000	Other	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
58	Homemaker	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
59	Homemaker	12000	Yes	Son	50000	Other	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
60	Homemaker	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
61	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Standard Bank Ltd.
62	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Rupali Bank
63	Homemaker	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
64	Homemaker	5000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	N/A
65	Homemaker	15000	Yes	Husband	10000	Account	Yes	No	No	Yes	National Bank
66	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Sonali Bank
67	Homemaker	14000	Yes	Husband	40000	Account	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Pubali Bank
68	Homemaker	15000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	No	No	Yes	Pubali Bank
69	Homemaker	14000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
70	Homemaker	12000	Yes	Husband	50000	Other	No	Yes	No	No	N/A

71	Homemaker	1000	Yes	Husband	60000	Other	No	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
72	Homemaker	8000	Yes	Husband	60000	Other	No	Yes	No	No	N/A
73	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
74	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
75	Homemaker	10000	Yes	Husband	70000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
76	Homemaker	12000	Yes	Husband	80000	Other	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	EXIM Bank
77	Homemaker	4000	Yes	Husband	60000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
78	Homemaker	12000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
79	Homemaker	8000	Yes	Husband	60000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
80	Homemaker	7000	Yes	Husband	90000	Account	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
81	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
82	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
83	Homemaker	6000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
84	Homemaker	6000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
85	Homemaker	12000	Yes	Son	70000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A

86	Homemaker	15000	Yes	Husband	60000	Account	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
87	Homemaker	14000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
88	Homemaker	8000	Yes	Husband	100000	Account	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Jamuna Bank
89	Homemaker	7000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
90	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
91	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
92	Homemaker	7000	Yes	Husband	70000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Islami Bank
93	Homemaker	15000	Yes	Husband	100000	Account	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
94	Homemaker	15000	Yes	Husband	50000	Account	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
95	Homemaker	20000	Yes	Husband	60000	Account	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
96	Poultry Farming	6000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
97	Poultry Farming	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
98	Homemaker	15000	Yes	Husband	90000	Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
99	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
100	Tailoring	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A

101	Homemaker	8000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
102	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
103	Homemaker	7000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
104	Homemaker	14000	Yes	Husband	60000	Account	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
105	Homemaker	10000	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No	No	N/A