

Goat Farming: A Tool for Poverty Reduction

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to broach some core information relating to sustainable small farming which can be a smart tool to eradicate poverty in Bangladesh. Therefore an attempt has been made to scrutinize the key issues and trammel behind of having boomed small farming in Bangladesh. Having said that to get the better picture in this connection, extensive literature reviews have been conducted to find out the most effective way through which the better and sustainable solutions would be disseminated for the betterment and development of our poor and marginal farmers in Bangladesh.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture, Livelihood, Small Farming, Market Value, Traditional method, Goat Rearing

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INTRODUCTION

The economy of Bangladesh is primarily depending on agriculture. More than seventy percent of the total population live in rural areas and are directly or indirectly engaged in wide range of agriculture activity. Among agriculture, livestock is the most viable sector in the economy of Bangladesh. About twenty percent of the population of Bangladesh earns their livelihood through livestock. Bangladesh's rural economy, and specifically agriculture, has been powerful drivers of poverty reduction in Bangladesh since 2000 [1]. In the livestock sector, goats are very important species, mainly on account of their short generation intervals, high prolificacy and high market value. Throughout the world, goat is considered as 'poor man's cow'.

Black Bengal goats are distributed throughout the country and the goat farming is integrated with agriculture in many places. Goat farming for milk and meat is an age old practice and goat is one of the first animals to be domesticated by men. There is no religious taboo attached with goat farming, so all sections of the society can adapt goat farming as a livelihood. Goats are distributed over all types of ecology with more concentrated in the tropics and dry zones of developing countries, largely contributes to the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers. Throughout the world goat is considered as 'poor man's cow'. Goat is considered as liquid asset, because at any point the goat can sell easily.

Black Bengal Goat Project

Black Bengal goat is the bride for Bangladesh; also this is called as poor man's cow having high income generating

potential. Goat rearing plays an important role in the national economy. It provides gainful employment and income to the weaker sections especially the rural poor. Most of the goats about 80% in the country are Black Bengal, reputed for their high prolificacy, adaptability to hot humid conditions and superior quality of meat and skin. Black Bengal goats are distributed throughout the country and the goat farming is integrated with agriculture in many places.

Presently, goat is the fourth largest livestock groups in the world and the goat population has increased higher than the sheep and cattle. In Asia, the growth rate of goat and sheep population is much higher than the cattle population. This is probably due to the fact that keeping small ruminants has multiple benefits like: requires less capital, women friendly, easy management and local marketing facilities. Goat is the most promising livestock for commercial meat production and second only to the poultry in the country.

Goat rearing plays an important role in the national economy. It provides gainful employment and income to the weaker sections especially the rural poor. The size of the flock is varies from 3-5 to higher as 50 goats. In some families, income from the goat rearing is contributing higher portion to the household.

Literature Review

Goat farming however, is a livelihood diversification tool to gain sustainable livelihood for poor people in rural area. Hussein and Nelson (1998) said that "livelihood diversification encompasses not only off-farm but also on-

farm activities.” Moreover, goat rearing remains single activity which can raise income and reduce environmental risks for small scale holders. Similarly Bairwa (2011) believed that “goat is new emerging approach in the world as shrinking pasture lands, demand high value meat products, to meet the goal of food security.”

Goat rearing is assumed as growing and emerging activity through which the poverty can be eradicated in rural areas but it entails to adopt multi-facet approach to reduce poverty thorough goat intensification. Peacock (2005) presented a summary of the findings of goat development project in potential for goats to reduce poverty in Africa where the goat development projects for these studies were selected from different countries. On the other hand, Devries (2008) provided some key information related to goat rearing in Heifer Internationals experience promoting goats for the poor which is written from recent case studies conducted in China, Peru, Romania and Tanzania. The report shows that goats can be very beneficial to the poor.

Another report provided by Sharma and Jindal (2008) which stated that goats are reported to be more economical than cattle and sheep under natural grazing browsing. Similarly Coppock et al (2006) also believed that “goats are often regarded as, income generators and reservoirs of wealth.”

Methodology

The study has been conducted in two districts, viz. Satkhira and Chuadanga under Khulna division, Bangladesh. To explore the study, data have been collected from different households of 8 villages in both districts in 2018 using a well defined pre-tested questionnaire through personal interview and focus group discussion method. The study has done eight with personal interviews and key informants. Prior to conduct the interview, the researcher has been designed an instrument which is semi-structured for an interview and tested with few respondents and did changes in instrument and train to research associate about his role that is to take notes and interpretation when ever require to interpret. The personal in-depth interviews took place in informal setting at their home.

To have better understanding about goat rearing an attempt has been taken to explore the study. Therefore, we have done focus group discussion to collect data which has identified the list of households in adopting technology and those who have not been adopting goat technology. As a result, the researcher has made a two groups for interview from the list in simple random technique, first group who have been adopting technology or technology adopter, second group, the member of second groups have not been adopted technology. Apart from that, to explore the study secondary data also have been used from renowned journal, scholars' articles, local plan and policy document and related academic literature.

Goat Farming system in Bangladesh

In our country around 05% of population still lives at villages. Cattle husbandry has an important role to play in the rural economy. In goat rearing farming around 08% of the goats farmers are landless, marginal, small and poor farmers. For economic development, poverty alleviation and employment opportunities for rural women in the society goat rearing is playing as sustainable tool through which

majority poor women are being able to eradicate their poverty in the villages. Goat is more convenient than other livestock and by rearing goat more income can be achieved in a short time.

Goats in Bangladesh are mostly maintained by landless, small and marginal farmers on very low inputs, with a tendency to graze in pasture. Both male and female are involving in goat farming, men use to graze the animal in pasture and collect the green fodder from field. And the women work will be on goat farm management, which includes feeding, cleaning of shed and goat & kids care. Pusatia (Contract Goat Farming) way of goat rearing practice also find in many places, where the goat farmer lease the doe to landless poor farmer for rearing. After kidding, the kids are divided among the goat farmer and goat owner equally.

Traditional method and semi-intensive method of goat rearing practices are followed in family level goat farming. In semi-Intensive goat rearing the goats are kept in partial confinement and partial grazing with adequate supplementary feed, veterinary care and breeding management. During confinement, goats are housed in *Macha* (Perch). The Macha is constructed in elevated platform with sufficient floor space and proper ventilation and comfortable temperature, which allows the goat urine and feces freely fall from the shed, so the major diseases and infections are avoided

General Features of Black Bengal Goat

Black Bengal Goat is the native breed of Bangladesh. This is a small goat breed spread throughout the country and northeastern India. This goat breed is reared for meat; Black Bengal goat meat has a great demand throughout the world. There are wide variations in color, body size and weights of goats found in different locations. Black Bengal goats have different coat color variation i.e. black, brown, and white and any combination of those colors.

The reproduction rate of Black Bengal Goat is one of the most beneficial characteristics for the meat and milk producer. Body weight at 12 months varies from 16 to 22 kg. These goats are very profile breeders and usually kids twice in a year with the high rate of prolificacy. Goat doesn't require any special place for housing and it can browse grass in free land, so the feeding and management is very easy and cost effective. As a reason many rural women are engaged in Black Bengal Goat rearing and earn handful income, which helps women in decision making and control over income & resources.

Challenges in Goat Farming

Mortality affects the success of any goat farm. There are many reasons for goat mortality which includes improper housing, nutritional scarcity and goat health. It can be controlled by providing good ventilated housing, timely deforming and vaccination, feeding the animal with required nutrition and proper stock management.

Sometimes, goat gets the diseases instantly. In those situations, the animal could die and the disease spread to the other animal in the farm. Animal growth and production get affected by parasites, in some cases animal death also be possible. The best way to control diseases and parasites are good bio-security management for goats especially, at the

time of entry and exit. Timely vaccination and deforming could help the animal to protect from different diseases.

Day by day the pure Black Bengal buck is declining due to the cross breed prevalence. The farmer who wanted to rear pure breed unable to get that in village, so they are forced to go for cross breed or others.

Risk is uncertain, which occurs at any time. In goat farming uncertainty like accident, sickness and disease makes the animal life at risk. The death of animal causes huge loss for a poor farmer. There is no government and private agencies are working on goat insurance to cover the risk of animal loss.

Mostly, goat farmers sell their animals to local traders who purchase the animal from village. Here the goat price is fixed by negotiation; in that process those who have upper hand discussion get benefits, probably the middleman. Farmer who rears the goat for a year gets lower price for their animal.

Sustainability of the Project

Sustainability comes from the community ownership. Here the concept of Goat Cluster is introduced for collective action. The goat cluster is promoted in village level by organizing 20-30 women goat farmers. These goat clusters act as a hub to connect mainstream (Government, NGOs, Markets and input supply) and goat farmers for the purpose of collective marketing, collective feed purchase and other veterinary aid. It is very important to link the goat farmers with livestock department to free veterinary aid.

Interested youth from villages are selected and trained on veterinary aid, then promote them as Livestock Service Provider (LSP). Each LSP should cover minimum three villages; it will help the goat farmer to get veterinary services at doorstep at any time. As of now there are some NGOs along with the support of government some training were provided to around seventy persons for livestock service provider.

Conclusion

In general, the study has concluded that goat-rearing has tremendous potential for improving the food, employment and livelihood security of rural people. However, "a holistic livestock policy and consistent efforts are necessary to minimize technological knowledge gap on improved goat management practices, watershed development, fodder conservation and sustainable agro-forestry models" (Singh, Dixit and Royb - 2013). Goat rearing extends the hand to rural poor to come out of poverty and generates handful employment in rural Bangladesh. There are many governmental and Non-Governmental organizations are supporting goat farmers by providing financial and technical assistance. Goat rearing generates many women

entrepreneurs in all parts of the country. So, the control over income and decision making power of a women is slightly improved in rural areas. It is proven that, semi-intensive method of goat rearing with proper technical and feeding management could increase the farm profit and reduces the mortality. The pure Black Bengal goat meat is having good commercial demand in locally and globally. But, the knowledge on market requirements and seasonal demands should reach the goat farmer by connecting them with mainstream or to generate good marketing strategy. It could help the goat farmers to get optimum benefit from selling of goats. The effectiveness of goat insurance and its supports to poor goat farmer economy could also be seen in many places.

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