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Agriculture Education In Bangladesh

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BANGLADESH economy is predominantly agriculture-based, so that the over-all development of the country depends on increased agricultural production and planned utilization of the produce. To accomplish these, it is necessary to modernise agriculture, for which again spread of modern knowledge in scientific agriculture is essential.

Agriculture is a composite arts developed by employment of knowledge gathered in the different fields of natural science for efficient production and distribution of articles which can be produced on land and water indoor and outdoor. Educationists at a national seminar on Agricultural Education and Research in Bangladesh said that organized agriculture came into practice in the geographic region now called Bangladesh about 4000 years ago by the Austric linguistic tribes and later by the aryan settlers. But the technology of agriculture remained almost static until the British colonialists promulgated permanent settlement act in 1793. Before that, since the inception of organized agriculture, there were autonomous villages in which the people obligatorily followed caste system based on profession. There was no incentive for innovation mainly because of the autonomous villages never felt the need for improvement in production technology, the obligatory professional caste system in agricultural profession was never by choice and the social system was a sterile hybrid of primitive communism and feudalism.

The permanent settlement act 1793 brought forward some revolutionary changes, private ownership of land, production of raw materials

for British industries, new revenue system, foundation of agricultural research, teaching and extension organizations. The Department of agriculture was first established under the department of Land Records in 1880. Independent Department of Agriculture was established in 1906. First agricultural research laboratory was commissioned in 1908 and agricultural research farm at Tejgaon. In 1929, All India Imperial Council of Agricultural Research was established. First institute for agricultural education in India was Bengal Agricultural Institute, established at Tejgaon in 1933. For its support the University of Dhaka created the faculty of agriculture in 1940 and started offering B.Ag. degree to the general science graduates after 2 years of study at the institute. From 1945 the degree (B.Ag.) course was offered to students for 3 years after 12 class of schooling (I.Sc.). This system was followed till the establishment of Agricultural University at Mymensingh in 1961. The Agricultural University started offering degree courses of 5-6 years duration to students who passed S.S.C. examinations. Since 1970 the duration of bachelor's degree course in all its faculties (Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Animal Husbandry, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Engineering and Fisheries) was four years after H.S.C. examinations. Master's degree course was always of one year duration after the bachelor's degree in agriculture since 1940.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) is the coordinating body for agricultural research in the country. It sponsors BARI, BJRI, SRTI, BRRI, LRI, and other organisations engaged in agricultural re-

search. Practically most of the research activities are non-fundamental in nature and hence less creative.

In Bangladesh research concerning livestock is scattered in several organizations. The livestock research system consists of a complex Institutions, centre and faculties of the Agricultural University. These Institutes (Animal Husbandry Research Institute, Comilla, Veterinary Research Institute, Dhaka and Livestock Research Institute, Mohakhali Dhaka) under Directorate of Livestock services are mostly engaged in producing biologies and diagnosing diseases. Central Cattle Breeding Station (CCBS) at Savar is mostly engaged in cattle breeding research. Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI) was established at Savar in 1984 to concentrate research efforts on solving problems that restrain the growth and development of livestock in the farming systems of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Agricultural University through the faculty of veterinary science and the faculty of animal husbandry is using its limited resources to conduct research in the field of animal health and animal production, mostly of an academic and on station nature. In addition, a number of livestock related studies have been undertaken in the organization and various projects supported by foreign donors such as UNICEF, DANIDA, World University Service (WUS), CARE, PROSIKA, BRAC etc.

Experts said that the agriculture technologies so far developed through research in Bangladesh are not, in most cases, best suited and well adapted to local conditions and farmers' constraints. Very often de-

velopment planners blame the farmers for their low response to modern technology. But there might be some genuine causes and valid reasons for the farmers to reject the technologies. Extension research can play an important role in determining the factors responsible for farmer's low responses to modern technologies as well as their preference for adhering to old traditions and customs.

Improving the quality of agricultural graduates is a universal concern. Although enough empirical data are lacking, our graduates lack the needed skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively in their profession. According to communication experts producing quality graduates is a complex process operating in different phases of the study programmes over time. At least four crucial factors can be identified in the process. These are adequacy and relevancy of the course curricula, accessibility of the school to teaching resources and academic environment of the Institutes. Traditional system, we inherited from the colonial rules, has failed to attain the desired goals in all levels of our educational system. We must therefore, seek for a new system. Given the adequate teaching resources and having established environment in the educational institutes, the semester system may prove much more effective than the present system. Academicians recommended that the semester system be introduced initially on a limited basis, evaluate the effectiveness of this system by experimental research designs, and expand the new system gradually to all study programmes should this really prove effective by such empirical studies.