

Success of cotton cultivation in poverty alleviation

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Cotton is the main raw material of textile mills and a cash crop to farmers. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman established the Cotton Development Board in 1972 with the aim of introducing cotton cultivation in Bangladesh for the development of textile industry and sustainable development of the country. The Cotton Development Board has been providing necessary support to make cotton cultivation more profitable for the farmers. The Cotton Development Board provides support to farmers in research, extension, distribution of microcredit and marketing of cotton. As a result of the concerted action taken by the Cotton Development Board under the auspices of the present government, the production of cotton in the country has increased consistently over the past few years. Through the research of the Cotton Development Board, a total of 20 (twenty) has released high yielding varieties. Chinese hybrid cotton seeds are being cultivated at field level from 2009-10 season by government and private initiatives, yielding 12-15 maunds per bigha.

Bangladesh is the world's second largest cotton consumer and largest importer country. Bangladesh ranks second only to China in terms of imports as the local garment industry is highly dependent on cotton imports place. More than 74 percent of Bangladesh's garment exports are cotton garments. But in this case the global picture is completely different. Overall, 78 percent of the world's manufactured clothing is handwoven. Local entrepreneurs have also increased investment in handwoven fabrics to strengthen their position in the global market. Cotton spinning capacity in Bangladesh is in good condition. Local spinners are able to supply 95 percent of the yarn for the knitting sector and 40 percent of the materials for the oven sector.

The textile and clothing industry is divided into two parts in the global market. One part is natural fiber i.e. cotton yarn and the other part is artificial fiber based on man made fiber i.e. polyester, nylon, viscose etc. Historically, the textile and clothing sector of Bangladesh is dependent on natural fiber and cotton yarn. But there has been a major change in the textile and clothing sector in the global market in the last 10 years. That is, 70 percent of the textile and clothing market is now occupied by synthetic yarn polyester or man made fiber. And 30 percent is occupied by clothes made of cotton yarn.

Bangladesh's strong position in the global market of ready-made garments is based on the natural fiber and cotton yarn based garment industry. Bangladesh usually imports cotton from India, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and African countries. Local mills import the most cotton from India. Cotton is imported from the neighboring country through the sea port of Calcutta and the land port of Benapole. Due to relatively short geographical distance with India, shipment takes less time. As a result, transportation and other logistics costs are also relatively low. The quality of cotton produced in our country is equal to the quality of imported cotton. The annual fiber demand of 407 spinning mills in our country is more or less 50-60 lakh bales (1 bale = 182 kg). Current production is only 3-4 percent of domestic demand. 10-15 percent of the total demand locally. To meet the increased demand, the Cotton Development Board has adopted an action plan for cotton cultivation in one lakh hectares of land by 2030. To expand cotton cultivation without disrupting food production, the Cotton Development Board has started work by earmarking non-traditional areas such as tobacco and agroforestry land for cotton cultivation. Since cotton is drought and salinity tolerant, cotton cultivation is being expanded in drought, saline, pasture and hilly areas. Without disrupting food production, it is possible to produce one million bales of fiber cotton by cultivating cotton in less productive areas such as Barendra, Char, hilly and coastal areas. In the southern part of the country, the work of expanding cotton cultivation has started in rabi season in fallow land after Aman paddy harvesting. At present there are expansion activities of cotton development board in 131 upazilas of 39 districts of the country. Expansion activities are

being implemented. Cotton production and processing has huge employment potential in the country. Besides providing cotton fiber as raw material for cotton plantation, textile industry is playing an effective role in food security of small and marginal farmers.

From cotton seed sowing to seed cotton processing, employment opportunities are created for women workers. 40 percent fiber and 60 percent seed are obtained from seed cotton produced. Again 15 percent edible oil and 85 percent oil are obtained from the seeds. Cotton husks are used as fish and animal feed. In the financial year 2021-22, more than 700 tons of edible oil and more than 3 thousand tons of oil have been produced. A high-capacity machine has been installed at the headquarters of the Cotton Development Board for checking the quality of cotton. On the advice of Cotton Development Board, a cotton oil refinery factory has been set up by private enterprise in Kushtia. Edible oil is being produced from the factory. Cotton Development Board has been implementing research program since 1991. The main objectives of cotton research are to develop short-term high-yielding and hybrid varieties with fiber of desired qualities, to develop agronomic management techniques to increase productivity, to improve soil fertility through integrated management of organic and inorganic fertilizers, to evaluate organic pesticides for controlling harmful insects of cotton and to manage cotton diseases. In addition, research on resilience in combination with traditional knowledge and bio-technologies to expand cotton cultivation in hilly, pasture, saline and drought-prone areas. From cotton production to ginning, oil and Khail (Oil-cake) marketing, employment opportunities are created for a wide range of people including women. Cotton plant is also used as a medium for mushroom production. In the leading cotton producing countries, cotton plants are being used to make particle board. According to the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), the country's annual yarn spinning and cloth production capacity is 33 billion kg and 78 billion meters respectively. Bangladesh annually produces 1.15 million bales of unginned cotton. Has the ability to use. But currently 85 lakh bales of cotton are being used.

The garment industry has developed in Bangladesh. The export sector of the country is based on the garment industry. Its main material is cloth. Therefore, the demand for clothes is increasing gradually. Due to rising labor wages, environmental problems and the recent trade war with the United States, Chinese companies are withdrawing from the clothing business

It increases the potential of Bangladeshi garments in the world market. Most of the investments are coming in the garment sector where the government is establishing economic zones. When production starts in these factories, the demand for clothes will increase.

Apart from this, as a by-product of cotton, there is a possibility of employment in the industry of making gauze, bandages, high quality paper, photo film paper etc. In one word, cotton is one of the agricultural products for food security, poverty alleviation and socio-economic development of small and marginal farmers. Through modern methods of cotton cultivation, it is possible to fulfill the cotton demand of the country and play an important role in the employment of backward women in the society and poverty alleviation.

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