

Socio-economic conditions of farmers due to urbanization at Savar upazila

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Abstract: A field survey was conducted to know the urbanization effect on socio-economic status of the farmers of Savar upazila under Dhaka district. Data were collected during October 2013 to January 2014 from purposively selected 216 respondents who were permanent resident of the study area. Data revealed that the income and expenditure of the respondents was increased than that of five years ago. Non-agricultural income has become an important source of household income because of urbanization. Almost all components of livelihood status of the farmers are rising up due to the urbanization effect of the locality.

Key words: Urbanization, income, expenditure, livelihood indicators.

Introduction

Urbanization is the outcome of the social, economic and political developments that lead to urban concentration and growth of large cities. It is a modernization process that expanded at the adjacent area of a town bringing a change in land use and transformation from rural to metropolitan pattern of organization and government. Savar has experienced a rapid growth of population and urban expansion and a change of traditional agrarian land use during the last twenty years due to the influence of the urbanization process of Dhaka Metropolitan Area. The geographic location of Savar upazila under Dhaka district push it forward for the same where benefits and beneficial effects are go forward simultaneously. Due to centrifugal migration of industry and commerce more and more industries quit from the core city and get themselves placed in the suburban township like Savar because of well road communication (Fouzder, 2005). Agricultural sector is the most affected one due to urbanization. As urbanization intensifies, agricultural and non-agricultural land use conflicts become more severe. Agricultural lands are fast depleting in areas close to major roads because all the infrastructural establishments are built up on this land, which were used for crop production mainly from generation to generation. Land therefore, has the singular characteristic of being the most important factor in the sustenance of mankind (Adarkwa and Post, 2001). The loss of prime agricultural lands has really affected the indigenous who are mostly farmers. On the other hand, it is evident from consecutive population census reports that population of Savar has been rising substantially over the years causing rapid urbanization. During 1991-2001 periods the population growth rate was 8.63% compared to 4.46% during the previous decade. With the increase in population, the density of population has also shot up from 1349.49 persons sq. km. in 1991 to 2152.00 persons per sq. km. in 2001 (NPCR, 2001). As a result, a change in total agriculture comes forward so that still now agriculture is the major occupation of the vast people of this locality. Though urbanization is a pressing need for the current time but not to the extent of denying the rural folks of their main source of livelihood. Therefore, the main objective of the study is to know the changes that occur in socio-economic condition of farmers due to urbanization of the study area.

Materials and Methods

The field survey was conducted during October 2013 to January 2014 in different villages of Savar upazila under

Dhaka district to know the socio-economic condition of farmers due to urbanization of the study area. Two hundred sixteen farmers were purposively selected as a sample size for collection of primary data with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire through face to face interview who were permanent resident of the study area. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, publications of different governmental and other institutions, news paper and research papers on similar issue. Collected data were converted into percentage. The selected variables were age, number of family members, farm size, education, occupational status, income from agriculture, income from non-agriculture, income from agriculture and non-agriculture, family cost management, farm input purchase capacity, healthcare awareness, educational awareness, availability of source of drinking water, toilet condition and medicare facilities. After completion of field survey, the information obtained from all the respondents were coded, compiled, tabulated and lastly transferred into a master sheet to facilitate tabulation.

Results and Discussion

Demographic characters of the respondents: The study population is also an ideal representative like other society found in our community. Age of the respondents is one of the crucial factors that influence practices of modern technologies. In the study majority (51.85 percent) of them were belonging under middle aged category. Similar findings were found by Islam (2012). Generally this category of farmers used to have broader outlook and have much potentials than the older farmers. In addition, they used to have more organizational participation than other categories which help them to acquire new knowledge and skills towards new farming practices (Islam, 2007). Moreover, the farmers having young to middle aged are generally more energetic and innovative. Also they are likely to hold a good deal of influence for community decision-making regarding receiving and disseminating new technologies. On the other hand, most of old are depend on their successors and always ready to make themselves free from all domestic activities. Average family sizes of the respondents were 5.51 that are higher than the national average rural family size of 4.89 (BBS, 2010). It is likely that large families may have adequate family labour to meet labour requirement as well as versatile interaction among themselves and information sources may facilitate the farmers to aware about need of urbanization. There is a scope of huge campaign about family planning in mass media, higher adoption of family

planning aids about birth control to cope with increasing livelihood costs. Though urbanization is increasing rapidly with reducing agricultural land but still now agriculture is the major occupation of the respondents (Table 1). Additionally involvement with occupation rather than agriculture, business is in better position than that of service. One fourth of farmers (25%) are additionally involved themselves with other business which helps to up rising their livelihood status due to more income. As a mass gathering of outsiders, house renting is becoming popular as a new income source than business only. Though the pattern of farm size of study areas are quite different than other areas of the country but still now it is the prime natural capital that opens up access to input utilization and use of natural resources and provides food,

shelter, income and security upon which farmers' livelihoods is built. The factual evidence of the reality (Table 1) was as conformity of the findings of Islam (2012) that number of small farmers is higher than other farmer's category. The combined education of primary, secondary and above secondary level of the study area are seems to very much higher than national average of Bangladesh 46.15 percent (BBS, 2010). It is a promising positive achievement of urbanization. The level of literacy is the principal indicator of human resource development and a pre-requisite condition for development. It also helps to increase their power of observation and decision making ability. Educated people are more productive and more vibrant responding to change with a broader mind and thinking.

Table 1. Demographic characters of the respondents

Characters	Categories	Number of respondents (216)	Percent of respondents (%)
Age	Young age (20-30 years)	14	6.48
	Middle age (31-50 years)	112	51.85
	Old age (above 50 years)	90	41.67
Number of family members	Age 0- 7 years	144	12.1
	Age 8- 18 years	288	24.2
	Age 19-40 years	420	35.29
	Age 41 and above years	338	28.40
Farm size	Land less (5 decimal <)	0	0
	Marginal (5.1 -50 decimal)	16	7.41
	Small (50.1-247 decimal)	146	67.59
	Medium (247.1-741 decimal)	54	25
	Large (>741.1 decimal)	0	0
Education	Illiterate	10	4.63
	Primary	140	64.81
	SSC	46	21.3
	HSC	10	4.63
Occupational status	Degree and above	10	4.63
	Only farmer	126	58.33
	Farmer + Business	54	25.00
	Only Business	10	4.63
	Farmer + House renting	14	6.48
Farmer + Service	12	5.56	

Table 2. Annual income from different sources

Characters	Period of time & effect	Taka per year
Income from agriculture	5 years back	85286
	Present	153082
	Increase	67796
	% Increase	79.49 %
Income from non-agriculture	5 years back	41590
	Present	74160
	Increase	32570
	% Increase	78.31 %
Income from both agriculture and non-agriculture	5 years back	126876
	Present	227242
	Increase	100366
	% Increase	79.11 %

Annual income: Before 5 years, the main income of the local people were dependent on agriculture and it was 85286/= per year. At present it is higher than the previous and percent of increasing is 79.39 (Table 2). The income is higher than any other non-urbanized upazila of the country. Mahzabin (2011) found in her study on household food security status of selected farmers of Fulpur upazila

under Mymensingh district that most of the respondents had medium annual income group. In the study, both from agriculture and non-agricultural income of a family are higher than any other location of the country. It is true that cultivable land is reducing day by day due to urbanization but income from crop production is increasing due to higher crop intensification which indicated that there has a

strong linkage among farmers, extension workers and other agricultural service providers. The same increasing trend was also observed in non-agricultural income and it was 78.31%. Non-agricultural income has become an important source of household income. For the development of urbanization occupational employment demands have been increasing and the farmers also run

other business besides agriculture. Haque (2014) found that commercialized farmers got more income than subsistence farmer at the same locality due to commercialization. Islam (2012) found the same result that family income increased due to modernization of village than traditional one at Gazipur sadar upazila.

Table 3. Family and farming cost management

Characters	Status	Before (5 years back)		Present	
		No. of respondents	% of respondents	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Family cost management	Very low	28	13	0	0
	Low	166	77	0	0
	Medium	22	10	186	86
	High	0	0	30	14
Farming inputs purchase capacity	Very low	54	25	0	0
	Low	142	66	0	0
	Medium	20	9	160	74
	High	0	0	56	26

Table 4. Livelihood status components

Characters	Status	Before (5 years back)		Present	
		No. of respondents	% of respondents	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Healthcare Awareness	Very low	44	20	0	0
	Low	140	65	0	0
	Medium	32	15	142	66
	High	0	0	74	34
Educational awareness	Very low	58	27	0	0
	Low	138	64	0	0
	Medium	20	9	106	49
	High	0	0	110	51
Availability of source of drinking water	Very low	34	15.7	0	0
	Low	150	69.5	0	0
	Medium	32	14.8	176	81
	High	0	0	40	18.5
Toilet condition	Very low	31	14	0	0
	Low	145	67	0	0
	Medium	40	18.5	106	49
	High	0	0	110	51
Medicare facilities	Very low	68	31	0	0
	Low	128	59	0	0
	Medium	20	9	162	75
	High	0	0	54	25

Annual expenditure: As cities develop as it improves opportunities for jobs, housing and transportation, effects can include a dramatic increase and change in costs management to run the family. Urbanization also increasing farming inputs purchasing capacity. Among 216 respondents most of the respondents (86%) said that their family costing status now raised medium from only 10% compared to 5 years back. Data shows that before 5 years back which family costing was very low to low later on it increase to medium and then to high (Table 3). The similar scenario was observed in case of purchase capacity of agricultural inputs which is the symptom of receiving modern technologies, cultivation of high yielding varieties and high valued crops.

Livelihood improvement: Higher standards of living and urbanization have led to an enormous change in the awareness of the people. The agricultural and industrial revolutions of the preceding centuries had resulted in

socio-economic changes involving increases in nutrient intake and improvements in sanitation, food safety, water supply and transportation infrastructures. These factors along with development of organized public health systems have been vital in bringing about the decline of infectious disease. Among the respondents, 66% reported that the status now rose in medium which was only 15% at 5 years back (Table 4). As a result of rapid urbanization and in coming of mass educated population in urban areas, all types of educational institutions are increasing in number. For the urbanization, the role of the current generation of adults is to educate and empower the next generation (starting with the youth and children of today) to be able to find jobs in factories rather than becoming farmers like their parents. Because they believe that there is no alternative of education to maintain the digital life like using mobile communication, mobile banking, side business, even fertilization to crops on the basis of nutrient

content to the fertilizers prescribed by extension personnel. Data presented in the Table 4, shows the reality of the situation. Based on the availability of sources of drinking water sources, respondents were classified into four status group and now nobody availed very low or low status of drinking water sources that means now nobody use non authentic water sources (pond or river water) for their drinking purposes. This is an evidence of their awareness about water contaminated diseases which indicated their consciousness about health care system that is an indicator of modern urbanized livelihoods. The change is encouraging and might be due to extension efforts of both the GO, NGO and health programmes undertaken for the urban people. Similar trend was found in case of toilet condition and the condition was found to be improving with the passage of time and it would be further improved in the near future due to urbanization. Now a days, all the people availed medium to high Medicare facilities from two ways where as it was only 20% before 5 years back (Table 4). One is from governmental support that is establishment of new hospital or improvement of the older one and another is rising up of private clinic. Urbanization can not be stopped but it should be maintained by proper planning, application laws, recycling industrial wastes, patient softness to environment. Policy should be geared towards the protection of prime agricultural lands that serves as main source of livelihood. It is necessary to ensure that land use is in conformity with prescribed standards so that its fertility will be maintained to provide the needs of mankind.

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