

## Co-operative Farming in Bangladesh: Experiences and Potentials

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### Abstract

*This article intends to analyze the limitations and potentials of co-operative farming sector in Bangladesh under free market. It is now increasingly recognized that the co-operative system in Bangladesh has the capacity and potentiality to neutralize the adverse effects emerging from the process of globalization. After economic liberalization under the new economic environment, co-operatives at all levels are making efforts to reorient their functions according to the market demands. The failure of the public sector in several cases is a troublesome trend. Privatization has also failed to make an impact in the rural areas. Therefore there is great hope on the co-operative sector. The paper examines the performances of co-operative farming, failure reason of co-operative farming, and highlights the emerging role and challenges of the co-operative farming sector in Bangladesh. In comparison to the step-motherly treatment of the past, co-operatives are now considered an important plank of development. The co-operatives have inherent advantages in tackling the problems of poverty alleviation, food security and employment generation. Co-operatives are also considered to have immense potential to deliver goods and services in areas where both the state and the private sector have failed. The paper focuses on several pitfalls and shortcomings of previous experimented co-operative farming in Bangladesh, like: the shortage of godowns, lack of drying machines, pacca drain and threshing floor, poor infrastructure, lack of quality management, over-dependence on government, dormant membership, absence of professionalism, etc. It suggests evolving strong communication and public relations strategies which can promote the concept of co-operation among the masses. It should also push forward by developing effective strategies to overcome existing weaknesses and for continuing growth of the sector. The paper makes an assessment of the future prospects of the co-operative farming sector in Bangladesh.*

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## 1. Introduction

Co-operative is a voluntary contractual organization of persons having mutual ownership interest in providing themselves needed services on a non-profit basis. It is usually organized as a legal entity to accomplish an economic objective through joint participation of its members. In a co-operative the investment and operational risks, benefits gained or loss incurred are shared equitably by its members in proportion to their use of the co-operative's services. A co-operative is democratically controlled by its members on the basis of their status as member users and not as investors in the capital structure of the co-operative (Savage & Volkin, 1965). Co-operative is an integral part of the capitalistic system of business enterprise. The co-operative movement, which sets itself the objective of strengthening the position of economically weaker groups in the society, can make a real contribution to the progress of the national community. But as a movement it has conceived and developed in various countries in different ways. In the Western Europe the movement has assumed great significance under market economy situation and initiative generated from the members whereas, in developing countries co-operative was looked upon, first by the colonial governments and then by the new post-independence authorities, as an appropriate vehicle of economic development for indigenous population and a means of accelerating the pace at which the agricultural population could be brought into a money based market economy (Kashem, 1989).

As a colony of the British, the Co-operative Movement was introduced into India by the Government as the only method by which the farmers could overcome their burden of debt and keep them away from the clutches of the money-lenders. The Co-operative Credit Societies Act, 1904 was passed by the Government of India and rural credit societies were formed. Within a short period, the Government realized some of the shortcomings of the 1904 Act and, therefore, passed a more comprehensive Act, known as the Co-operative Societies Act of 1912. Bangladesh also inherited the colonial legacy like other countries of the sub-continent. The credit co-operative societies were established here since 1904.

However, Co-operative farming is generally understood as a more complex form of agriculture co-operation where co-operative action is extended beyond the supporting functions to the actual field operations involved in growing crops, raising livestock, or producing other farm products. In its most natural form, co-operative farming was practiced in very primitive agriculture where extremely low productivity of labor compelled people to work together and share the produce equitably (BARD, 1972). Under modern settings co-operative farming is

deliberately planned with a view to achieve economy of scale; to adopt highly effective technology of production; and to eliminate exploitation of labor by capital.

In a community of individually owned-operated farms extensive co-operative action is very difficult. If each of the farmers in the community has his choice as to when, how, what crops he will grow in which plots of land, a large number of factors need to be co-ordinate in any co-operative action, it may not even be possible to act jointly. Moreover, co-operative use of certain practices such as mechanized cultivation, plant protection, irrigation etc. may be quite expensive or ineffective unless the individual farmers work under a single management plan. If, however, the individual farmers agree to pool their land, labor and capital under a single management plan, if they create a single farm by combining many individual farms, the constraints on extensive co-operative action is greatly reduced. Then it becomes easier to extend co-operative activity over all the farming operations.

In this discussion of co-operative farming the individual members contributing land may retain de-jure ownership rights on land, and may receive interest or dividend on land as decided by the body of the membership. The nature of contribution by the member is not restricted. Depending on his ability, a member may contribute land, or labor, or capital, or any combination of these items. The nature of the co-operative organization and the method of sharing profit or surplus are determined by the basic principles of co-operative activity.<sup>1</sup>

The article is based entirely on secondary sources and qualitative in manner which encompass extensive use of different research reports, scholarly journals, website information, newspaper articles, relevant acts, rules & regulations, different books, seminar reports, and case studies etc. A large body of literature was reviewed and previous experimented projects were assessed to measure the causes of failure as well as existing challenges of co-operative farming, recent trends & practices and potentials of co-operative farming in Bangladesh.

The general objective of the article is to analyze the experiences and potentials of co-operative farming in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the article are:

- a) to identify the limitations of previous experimented co-operative farming projects and
- b) to furnish some recommendations for revitalizing co-operative farming considering the present situation.

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<sup>1</sup> For details please see the document “Co-operative Principles in a Modern Setting”.

## **2. Rationale of the Article**

Committed to a set of rural development functions (under the Basic Democracies Order, 1959), the Comilla Kotwali Thana Council emerged in April, 1960 under a special notification in the East Pakistan Government Gazette. The Academy (presently named BARD) visualized that the orientation of this new public sector effort was pregnant with many possibilities if a private sector could be built to be equally responsive to meet the challenge of rural development jointly with the farmer (Khan, 1969). After stepping into the possibility, the Academy found itself in the midst of a formidable task. This private sector development obviously involved the rural people (mostly farmers) and their preparation for the application of 'self-help' and 'mutual help' through some well-organized socio-economic institutions to overcome the limitations to which they are subjected in a bid for responding to the challenge of modernization growth and development. The main limiting factors in East Pakistan rural setting were lack of organization and honest leadership, lack of self-confidence, initiative and self-activity among the villagers, lack of education, training and skill, lack of capital and rural infrastructure, lack of credit, lack of technical guidance, lack of services and supplies of modern input, lack of grass-root planning and lack of efficient marketing system and knowledge of business management etc (Khan, 1969).

In this respect, the Academy thought in 1960 that the village-based co-operatives federated to the Central Association at the Thana for credit, services, supplies, training and education offers a good solution to overcome the afore-mentioned problems and limitations and it started working in a pilot project set up in the Comilla Thana given to it by the government for using it as its laboratory area. In that time, by the leadership of Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARAD) conducted co-operative experiment in Comilla falls within the decade (1958-1968).

At the last stage of 1960s, the initial central organization (KTCCA Ltd.) with two intermediate Central Associations, the Agricultural Societies Federation (ACF) Ltd. and Special Co-operative Societies federation (SCSF) Ltd. had developed into a vast and complex organization with a sizeable development of all the programmes initially undertaken and a number of new ones added: seed multiplication, cold storage, creamery, poultry, dairy etc. The primary societies with considerable extension of modernization of farming practices, irrigation, mechanization, storing and marketing, utilization of supervised credit, business and professional skills and modernized tools were scattered with reasonable evenness throughout the Thana. However, during 1968-73 the Academy experimented some Co-operative Farming Projects in different

Samabay Samity throughout the country. The main objectives of these Co-operative Farming Societies are given below:

- Individual farmers face a lot of difficulties in adopting improved methods of agriculture, which is the key to increase food production. Co-operative farming has been thought to be an answer to the problem.
- Co-operative farming facilitates the procurement and distribution of credit, machines, equipment and other inputs.
- To recapitulate, the long range objective of co-operative farming, however, is not only to increase farm efficiency but also to ensure equity and social justice especially to the agrarian community.
- Co-operative farming has also been viewed as a practical step towards the establishment of distributive justice for the landless farmers and sharecroppers.
- It will help checking unfettered growth of capitalism thereby paving the way of a peaceful transition into socialism.

After analyzing the above mentioned objectives it is observed that though the mission of Academy was good but these Co-operative Farming Projects did not succeed due to various reasons that have been discussed later on. As a result, the projects had to be closed. But some shortcomings or limitations were come out from the first experimented projects to overcome the situation for further expansion or continuing. It was like 'cutting head when bad headache occurs'. After falling the attempt, from 1970s to till no visible initiatives like this type of projects has been taken. Though during these periods there were various NGOs, donor agencies and government took various steps for improving the rural life but we don't get expected outcomes. On the other hand, our rural people are becoming poor to ultra poor. The capitalists are exploiting the farmers from their actual payment due to lack of scattered life of rural poor farmer. They don't get brave to protest the money-lenders. As a result, rural poor or medium farmers don't get reasonable price of commodity. Besides, individual production cost is unmanageable for the rural farmers and individual marketing channel is also not favorable for them. Now a days, the cost of deep tube well and installation of other machineries is very expensive and it is undoubtedly unmanageable for the individual rural farmer. We all are informed that Bangladesh Government is providing a lot of money as subsidy on agriculture sector during last two or three decades. But in maximum cases it is observed that this subsidy money don't receive to the real poor farmers. On the other hand, NGOs and donor agencies invests their

capital purposively. For that regards, if government takes decisions to revive co-operative farming after overcoming the previous shortcomings and if the govt. provides all kinds of supports and facilities to the co-operative farm directly, then the expected outcomes must be ensured. So, it is high time to revive co-operative farming after overcoming the shortcomings of previous experimented co-operative farming projects in Bangladesh considering our observations and recommendations.

### **3. Definition of Co-operative Farming**

The concept of “Co-operative Farming” has a much wider meaning than is commonly understood. Simply Co-operative Farming means “pooling of land under a joint management” (BARD, 1972). Under a pure socialist system of collectivization, the ownership right of the individual farmers to land ceases to exist but the management of the farm may be done under a central direction either through a production bridge or a body of Management constituted by the members. But under a capitalist system, the individuals may or may not retain their ownership right to land but they voluntarily agree to surrender their individual rights of decision making in respect of farming enterprise and its management to a centralized authority constituted by the members themselves.

Under co-operative farming, three essential features are worth noting viz, (i) Pooling of land loosely or tightly (ii) Joint cultivation (iii) Single management where profits and expenses are treated as arising out from a single firm (BARD, 1972).

According to Prof. Gadgil, former chairman of the Indian Planning Commission, Co-operative farm concept bears a close analogy with the concept of firm and plant in economic theory. If the firm concept is applied in the area of management, this will imply that all major economic decisions and the calculation of profit and losses and the underlying risks are of all the units constituting the co-operative farm together. But when judged in terms of the plant concept, variation in the operation of the constituents of the firm is conceivable.

To sum up, as far as the definition of co-operative farming in the context of a capitalist system of economy like ours is concerned, it may be concluded that a co-operative farm means a pattern of organization in which land of the individual farmers is voluntarily put for joint use under a single management.

### **4. Co-operative Farming Experiences in Bangladesh**

Co-operatives were introduced in the sub-continent in the wake of the Famine Commission Report of 1901 which recommended mutual credit societies to deal with the problem of farmer’s indebtedness (Hye, 1993). Financial insolvency of the majority of farmer’s had earlier led to virtual

collapse of agricultural production and made the farmers easy prey to the exploitation of money-lenders. The crisis in the agrarian economy which led to farmers' unrest was identified as having its origin in the lack of access to agricultural credit on easy terms. During the British rule, Nicholson a British Officer in India suggested to introduce Raiffersen model of German agricultural credit Co-operatives in India. As a follow-up of that recommendation, the Government, therefore, began the organization of co-operative credit societies in 1904 under the Co-operative Credit Societies Act to facilitate farmers' access to institutional credit and thereby reduce their dependence on traditional money-lenders. The 1904 Co-operative Societies Act was repealed by 1912 Co-operative Societies Act, which provided formation of Co-operative societies other than credit. Under 1919 Administrative Reforms act, Co-operatives was made a provincial subject making each province responsible for Co-operative development. In 1942, the British Government enacted the Multi-Unit Co-operative Societies Act, 1942 with an object to cover societies whose operations are extended to more than one state.

When Pakistan Academy for Rural Development at Comilla started functioning in 1959, the First Five Year Plan of Pakistan was drawing to a close and the Second Five Year Plan published in 1960 pointed out the disappointing failures in the key sector of agriculture and stressed the need to attach higher priority to increasing agricultural production (Hye, 1993). There was considerable debate over the appropriate institutional framework and social organization to achieve the goal of increased agricultural production.

However, the two-tier co-operatives popularly known as 'Comilla Co-operatives' are one of the components of 'Comilla Model'. This system having primary societies at village level and central association at Thana level duly supported by other administrative and physical infrastructure was considered as one of the basic components for the solution of rural problems. This was a quite new idea of co-operative at a time when there were Union Multipurpose Co-operatives Societies (UMCS) at the union level and the Central Co-operative Bank (CCB) at the Sub-Divisional level.

The pioneers of the Academy believed that primary agricultural co-operative societies, set up at the village level, would most genuinely represent local interests, that a thana level central association could most effectively support the requirements of the villagers in services, training and provision of credit: and that a parallel public organization would assist most appropriately in creating the sorely-needed rural infrastructure.

During the decades of 1960s when the seed-irrigation-fertilizer technology was being introduced for mechanization of agriculture the subject of co-operative farming had been much discussed and BARD took Co-operative Farming as one of its action research projects. The project continued for two consecutive crop seasons during 1968. After the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country, the similar experiment was tried for three consecutive crop seasons during 1972 and 1973 (Ahmed, 1995). The co-operative farming that had been talked of during those days assumed the idea that if small peasant owners pooled their little plots, put the land under expert management, and used machines, then the production would increase, costs reduced, and owner share holders would earn larger incomes than they used to earn by individual farming.

BARD persuaded Deeder Village Co-operative Society to implement the project. Later the Agricultural Co-operative Federation (ACF) promoted co-operative farming experiment in another village, Bamoil, within Comilla Kotwali Thana. An agreement between the farmers (those who agreed to hand over possession of their land to the co-operative society for the experimental period) and the respective village co-operative society was signed explaining the details of the experiment. Another agreement between the village co-operative society and the ACF was signed wherein the latter agreed to provide inputs and services (including credit) to the village society needed for the experiment.

According to the experiments, in the first experiment done by the Deeder Village Co-operative Society (for two Boro crop seasons during 1968 and 1969), the farmers surrendered their lands to the society on contract that they would receive 20 maunds of paddy per acre for each crop. The costs of cultivation would be borne by the society with profits and losses. Under the second experiment conducted by Bamoil Co-operative Farm, for three consecutive crop seasons (Boro 1972-73, Amon 1973, Boro 1973-74), the farmers agreed to receive the share of the crop in proportion to their land after deduction of the costs. (Ahmed, 1995)

Both experiments were conducted and managed by the respective village co-operative societies. For the purpose, a small committee of management was selected by the concerned village co-operative society and was given the responsibility for management. One member of the committee was engaged as the full time farm manager. He was responsible for the day to day operation of the farm, procurement of goods and services and the overall management. He managed the farm under the guidance and supervision of the committee of management. He was paid a token salary on monthly basis. Besides, there was also a paid

accountant who maintained details of accounts and other records of the farm.

The faculty members from BARD provided technical guidance on the farm operations. The Federation (ACF) supplied credit, fertilizers, insecticides, fuel and oil etc. on payment and assisted in running the tube well in good condition. The members of the committee of management used to hold regular meetings and discuss relevant issues and problems. The manager, on behalf of the management committee, used to report and discuss all issues and problems with general members in the regular weekly meetings of the village co-operative society. As per contract signed between the farmers and village co-operative society, and that of the agreement between the federation and the village society, the committee of management took the responsibility of the co-operative farming project.

The designated manager, on behalf of the committee and on advice from the BARD faculty, implemented the whole project. The preliminary work was done with the federation regarding the supply of agricultural inputs including the credit and the operation of the deep tube wells for irrigation. All agricultural operations from the preparation of seedbed, cultivation of land, transplantation, application of manures and fertilizers including topdressing, spraying of insecticides, weeding, harvesting, threshing, winnowing, drying and marketing were done by hired labors on payment under the supervision of the manager. During these operations, if there were any problems these were discussed either with management committee, general members or with Academy experts. The final outcome of the experiments was also discussed with the general members in their weekly meetings.

For both experiments, the respective village co-operative societies drew up budget estimates for different crop seasons. The Central Co-operative Association provided loans to both societies for the conduct of the experiments. The project activities were monitored by the co-operative societies as well as by the beneficiaries themselves almost on a daily basis. The committee of management met every week on a regular basis to see the progress of work and discuss issues and problems, and put them on writing.

In the first experiment, Deeder Co-operative Society pooled 44 acres of land (17 acres with IR-8 and 27 acres with Taipei). The average yield of paddy was 53.50 maunds per acre. Cost was Tk. 1169 per acre, the return per acre was Tk. 1069. There was thus a net loss of Tk. 100 per acre. In contrast, an average village farmer produced 45 maunds of IR-8

and 38 maunds of Taipei per acre with a profit of Tk. 600 and Tk. 400 respectively.

In the Boro season of 1969 the same society pooled 10 acres of land with similar agreement with the land owners. This year the farm grew 5 acres under IR-8 and 5 acres under Taipei. This time the co-operative farm suffered a loss of Tk. 128 per acre while the individual farm earned a profit of Tk. 340 per acre.

For the Bamoil co-operative farm operated during Boro 1972-73. The per acre production of the farm was 33 maunds of dry paddy while that of individually operated farms averaged 56.7 maunds of dry paddy. Net per acre return from the co-operative farm was Tk. 452. Net per acre return from the individually operated farms averaged Tk. 1,715. This was almost four times as much as the return from the co-operative farm. Individually operated farms proved economically more rewarding.

During Boro 1973-74, the co-operative farm and the individual farm produced an average yield of 28 maunds and 30 maunds of paddy per acre respectively. The individual farmers lost an average of 5.15 maunds of paddy per acre due to lack of drying facilities during excessive rains which the co-operative farm could overcome by prior installation of drying facilities. Still then the individual farmers could gain a higher profit of about 30% through better marketing of their produce. (Ahmed, 1995)

Besides of these two projects, another eight co-operative farming projects were experimented in different co-operative organizations during this decade and for the continuation of these two projects others eight projects also did not get success for various reasons that would be discussed later on.

The major co-operative farming projects in Bangladesh which had already experimented in different areas during 1968 to 1973 were Deeder Co-operative Farming Project, Bamoil Project in Comilla Kotwali Thana, Shimla Co-operative Farming Project, Chittagong Model Farming project, Salla-Diraj Project, Gumai Beel Project at Rangunia, Kulkurmai Agricultural Cooperative Society, Paharchanda Jautha Khamar Krishi Samabaya Samity Ltd. under CURDP, Experimental Cooperative Farm of Kotwali Thana in Comilla like Joypur Krishak Samabay Samity, Srinibash Krishak Samabay Samity, Chartha Krishak Samabay Samity Ltd., Kalikapur Krishak Samabay Samity Ltd., Bishanpur Krishi Samabay Samity Ltd., Murad Krishi Samabay Samity Ltd., Faridpur Farmers Co-operative Ltd., Bamoil Krishak Samabay Samity Ltd. and The Gurudaspur Project.

## **5. Limitations of Experimented Co-operative Farming Projects in Bangladesh**

BARD organized a national seminar on Co-operative Farming in April, 1972 which was the first seminar of its kind in Bangladesh. The second workshop on Co-operative Farming was held at the Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh on February 26, 1973 whereas third workshop held in Rangunia TCCA, Chittagong on May 07, 1973. The main objectives of these seminars were to 'discuss the subject of co-operative farming from different angles and examine its ideological, theoretical and practical aspects with a view to develop an experimental program on Co-operative Farming in Bangladesh'. Through these three workshops, activities and performances of major co-operative framing projects in Bangladesh were discussed and some recommendations were come out from the workshops for future corrections. Though the seminar did not come out with an agreed set of recommendations, but some existing problems and observations were come out.

However, most of the co-operative farming experiment in Bangladesh had failed for various reasons. For that regards the researchers have tried to identify some major reasons considering on this issue from the findings from seminar/workshop reports, case studies and reviewing various secondary literatures that are discussed below:

- Most of the farms suffered heavy loss due to the lack of two facilities like shortage of godowns and threshing floor though the yield was quite high. The estimated cost of these two items was very expensive. As a result, the organizers were unable to meet this expenditure.
- In respect of some projects, Nematode disease broke out in the seed bed when the seedlings were only two weeks old.
- In some cases, rent for the tractor was deposited in advance as per rules, but its services could be obtained one month after the scheduled date. As a consequence transplantation was delayed.
- The expected quantity of water did not well up owing to the prevalence of drought conditions. As a result, the fields could not be kept under water all through. In many cases, the fields cracked.
- In respect of Comilla Kotwali Thana Projects, the member-owners were bound by the contract referred to above the receive wages for their labor and payment for the services of other inputs supplied by them either in cash or in kind after the harvest. In practice however they had to be paid before the harvest owing to their financial difficulties. This compelled the farm committee to borrow a larger sum of money than was initially planned.

- In respect of Comilla Kotwali Thana Projects, for want of *pacca* drain much water was lost to the low lying neighboring land, whereas the field under the scheme remained famished for water.
- Some projects was faced few initial difficulties in matters of procuring capital, inputs etc. The local co-operative society was not so much developed though it had been able to provide support. Systematic training of the members was also needed.
- In respect of some cases, mechanical troubles in deep tube wells caused delay in the implementation of the scheme and sometimes threaten to jeopardize the entire plan.
- Most of the cases, scarcity of petrol, diesel and mobile oil often present insuperable difficulties for the management.
- Sometimes tube wells were thrown out of commission for want of spare parts causing disruption in the production programme. Procurement of these things was often a time consuming job.
- In respect of some cases, all the land under the *Khamars* could not be cropped largely for want of power pump, fertilizers etc. (collectively known as service and supplies) was quite disturbing.
- In few cases, the Action Committee could not excavate the necessary canals and was unable to supply the required quantity of water to the farmers.
- Research and Evaluation are two indispensable ingredients of all experimental projects. But in some project, no competent institution or individual had yet come forward to undertake the job. The University of Rajshahi by virtue of its location might have been the first institution to come forward, but unfortunately it had not shown enough interest in the matter.

Besides the above mentioned problems, there were some observations from the seminar findings and reviewing various literatures on different co-operative farming projects are as follows:

- It was observed from the analogy of two cases of Bamoil and Shimla that good local leadership was initially needed for the organization and management of co-operative farms. Service Co-operatives can provide such leadership and also provide basic organizational support at the initial stage.
- The agreements signed between the beneficiaries of Bamoil Project and ACF Ltd. had not been registered. It was pointed out that the document should be registered to avoid any major trouble in future. Execution of such agreements is essential for all co-operative-farming projects.

- It was learnt that a research team formed by the BAU, Mymensingh, would study the Shimla project. It was suggested that the team should be so composed as to study the management aspects of the farm also.
- Both in the cases of Bamoil and Shimla, the beneficiaries had decided to share the produces in proportion to the lands contributed by individual farmers but no bonus or extra benefit will be given to the laborers beyond the daily wages. Some of the participants expressed the view that the question of distributive justice should be extended to the laborers also through mutual consent of the beneficiaries.
- A point was raised whether co-operative farming could serve the interests of the *Barga-Chashis* (Crop Sharers) and whether they responded favorably to the organization of co-operative farms. It was observed that no resistance came from them in the case of Bamoil and Shimla. But strong resentment was observed in Rangunia where a joint farming venture had earlier been initiated and failed.
- In Shimla one big absentee land-holder (holding about 50 acres out of the 200 acres farm) was known to have been evincing keen interest in the organization of the farm. Some of the participants were curious to know the real motive behind his joining the co-operative project.
- Experience in the Rangunia Project has taught that paid farm managers were more efficient than those who put in voluntary service payment makes them more responsible and encourages them to take their job more seriously. Moreover people having competence and experience in farm management can be attracted, if they are paid.
- A common experience in almost all projects was the resistance of the big landowners out of their unfounded fear that the government may eventually expropriate them. This fear is the product of peculiar socio-economic structure, cultural heritage and political institutions in our country. It may be overcome by vigorous motivational efforts or by application of varying degrees of coercion.
- Most of the co-operative societies had to face difficulties for want of adequate financial resources. To make them self-financing, some mechanism must be present for the creation of their own fund. One way of doing this is to retain a portion of the produce as savings instead of distributing the entire produce among the beneficiaries. This is exactly what was being practiced in Gurudaspur.
- Winter crops were mainly dependent on the supply of water and hence if power pumps and tube-wells frequently went out of order and could not be quickly repaired, the implementation of production plans became almost impossible. Many projects had to drastically curtail the

scale of operation in the last *Boro* season for lack of quick servicing facilities and delay in the procurement of spare parts. The above fact underlines the importance of immediately taking up the matter with the appropriate authorities and securing their farm commitment in this regard.

## **6. Policy Recommendations and Conclusion**

Finally it is said that co-operative farming is a compromise between collective farming and the peasant proprietorship and gives all merits of large-scale farming without abolishing private property. It implies an organization of the farmers on the basis of common efforts for common interests. Under this system, all landowners in a village form a co-operative society for tilling the land. The land is pooled, but each farmer retains the right of property. The produce is distributed by each. They are allowed to withdraw from the co-operative farm whenever they desire. In India, the exceedingly small size of holdings is perhaps the most serious defect in our agriculture. If agriculture has to be improved, the size of the holdings must be enlarged. The co-operative farming societies, thus, enable the cultivators to enjoy the economies of large-scale farming through the pooling of land management resources. Besides, Bangladesh has glorious past in co-operative sector specially Comilla region. During 1960s, the rural people of Comilla got rid of poverty from the money lenders by the co-operatives and they established an institutional set up in every village where the members were savings their capitals and shares. This type of organization is still alive. Side by side, during that period the Comilla Academy experimented co-operative farming in some areas. But matter of sorrows, after experimentation when it was identified that co-operative farming failed for several reasons then the initiatives did not come forward. Despite failures, the experience suggests to give further trails on fulfilling some recommendations. These are as follows:

- Funds for certain physical facilities like threshing yard, drying machines, *pacca* drain and godowns should be made available to the co-operative farms by the government before starting farm operations;
- Central management of the farm should have extra ordinary skills and expert advice;
- The terms of lease and share cropping should have to be more in favor of the co-operative farm than for the individual benefit etc.
- All credit facilities from government agencies should be given to the society and not to individual farmers. This step would help realizing the money from the farmers and tend to stop misuse of fund in unproductive ventures.

- Co-ordinate efforts should be made to evaluate the relative performance of the experimental projects and attempts to involve the universities in this task should be continued.
- Servicing facilities for pumps, tube-wells, tractors etc. should be made readily available and a smooth flow of inputs should be ensured.
- Attempts should be made to make the co-operative farms financially independent. The process of rural upliftment should transcend all pettiness of political conviction, and endeavors should be realistically related to the local fabric of social and political life.
- Paid labor should be ensured for operating the farm because they take more responsibility than voluntary workers;
- Institutional supports like insecticides, seeds, fertilizers, power pumps, and other various inputs should be timely supplied by the concerned authorities;
- Petrol, diesel, mobile oil and other necessary inputs must be supplied in time by the farm management;
- Technical guidance and various training on these issues must be ensured by the government;
- Teachers and students of local educational institutions should come forward to collect basic data about the rural economy. No specialized training will be necessary for the purpose, but it will immensely help trained researchers and may attract research institutions abroad to undertake more intensive research.
- Government should provide certain basic facilities to the co-operative farming projects to encourage the new ventures of the farmers and conduct experiments on co-operative farming in different parts of Bangladesh.

From above discussions, it is observed that it is high time to revitalize co-operative farming in Bangladesh after overcoming the all sorts of previous shortcomings and considering above-mentioned recommendations and observations to save the rural economy. So the government of Bangladesh, donor agencies, NGOs, and other concerned authorities should have keen interest to revive co-operative farming.

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