

Women's Dairy Entrepreneurship in Rural Bangladesh

Analysis within the Framework of Enterprise Development Programme
in the Lens of Gendered Enterprise Market

*Conducted under the Assignment Titled “Developing and Executing an Influencing Strategy/Advocacy Strategy
for Gendered Enterprise Markets (GEM) and Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) Component”*

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Oxfam GB has been implementing a development component titled “Scaling up Inclusive Dairy Markets” under REE-CALL framework (Resilience through Economic Empowerment, Climate Adaptation, Leadership and Learning Framework) since May 2014. Under this initiative producer groups (PG) have been developed. All the PGs are women-led. Under the Gendered Enterprise Markets (GEM) and Enterprise Development Programme (EDP), Oxfam in Bangladesh Programme wants to build its influencing strategy. For developing and executing such an influencing strategy for GEM and EDP components under REE-CALL program, Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) has conducted background research works and the accompanying report is output of those works.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Artificial Insemination
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BAU	Bangladesh Agricultural University
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BKB	Bangladesh Krishi Bank
BLRI	Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute
CBO	Community Based Organization
CLDDP	Community Livestock and Dairy Development Programme
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAE	Department of Agriculture Extension
DCI	Data Collection Instrument
DFID	Department for International Development
DLS	Department of Livestock Services
EDP	Enterprise Development Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FI	Financial Institute
GAF	Gender Analysis Framework
GEM	Gendered Enterprise Markets
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GUK	Gono Unnayan Kendra
HCS	Household Care Survey
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
HH	Household
IFC	International Finance Corporation
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
IS	Inclusive Sourcing
KII	Key Informant Interview
MCC	Milk Collection Centre
MFI	Microfinance Institute
MIS	Management Information System
MMS	Manab Mukti Sangstha
MRA	Microcredit Regulatory Authority
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium sized Enterprise
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NLDP	National Livestock Development Policy
PG	Producer Groups
PKSF	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation
PNGO	Partner Non-Government Organization
POP	People Oriented Planning
POS	Point of Sale
RB	Responsible Business
RCA	Rapid Care Analysis
SBC	Sadharan Bima Corporation
SEED	Social Equality for Effective Development
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMS	Short Message Service
SWOT	Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat
ULDC	Upazila Livestock Development Center
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Value Chain Assessment
WAP	Wireless Application Protocol
WEL	Women's Economic Leadership
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In the remote and hard-to-reach areas where opportunities for women to get involved with income earning activities is comparatively low than other areas of the country— dairy activities in a micro and small scale are an efficient instrument for economic empowerment. Policy and non-policy factors, especially technology, have direct and positive impact on the growth of dairy sector. The cattle density in this country is high, but current milk production is very negligible in amount. The optimism remains as Government of Bangladesh has recognized many problems associated to this sector in its 7th Five Year Plan (FY 2016-FY 2020).

Oxfam GB has been implementing a development component titled “Scaling up Inclusive Dairy Markets” under REE-CALL framework (Resilience through Economic Empowerment, Climate Adaptation, Leadership and Learning Framework) since May 2014. Under this initiative Producer Groups (PGs) have been developed. The PGs are women-led. Under the Gendered Enterprise Markets (GEM) and Enterprise Development Programme (EDP), Oxfam in Bangladesh Programme wants to build up a powerful and realistic influencing strategy. For developing and executing such an influencing strategy for GEM and EDP components under REE-CALL program, Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) has assiduously conducted a background research and the accompanying report is the outcome of that effort. In this assignment, four key components have been considered; the components are—(1) Access to finance; (2) Access to extension services; (3) Inclusive sourcing and responsible business; and (4) Care work.

Access to Finance

Lack of a pro-poor and gender sensitive financing system for entrepreneurs: There are policies emphasizing women’s empowerment by improving their access to financial services with an intention to make them able to run income generating activities and create employments. However, one major reason that hinders the dairy development process is lack of an appropriate financing system for poor women entrepreneur which can meet up all their needs accordingly and appropriately. Most of the micro and small scale farmers in the rural areas are less able to retrieve the financial supports and benefits from the banks and other financial institutions, even from the NGOs operating in the rural areas. Access to banks’ physical outlets is lower and one-size-fits-all type loan of NGOs is barring the access of dairy farmer to finance, and more particularly the access of the marginal potential women farmers. Institutions providing credits are not favorable for the poor due to their collateral and other policies particularly, NGOs’ weekly installment. Inability to insure the cattle by Insurance Policy or Compensation fund for the cattle is another crucial area which makes the dairy project risky. However, along with the other supports, access to finance is a must to marginal farmers in order to start and scale up the dairy farming effectively. Together with other supports and an easy access to financial resources can make the initiatives successful.

Need of a harmonized support system: Harmonized support is a crucial area in dairy farming. Along with the finance to ensure technical and marketing support to make the project successful and ensure high productivity, profit and benefit for farmers a sound functional networking of dairy industries, financial institutions, extension service providers and other stakeholders have to be built.

Access to Extension Services

Demand driven extension services have not been created yet: On account of absence of commercial farming among most of the women entrepreneurs in rural areas, the need for extension services has remained at its primary stage. Thus, demand driven extension services have not been created for the micro and small scale farmers.

Providers: Government remains as the key service provider to this group of service recipients. However, due to lack of adequate policy guidance and uninterrupted supply of required logistics and trained human resources— the service recipients cannot get services properly, despite the fact that commitment from the ground level officials is ensured. The role of private sector is still limited in providing extension services to the farmers. These suggests that a Public-Private-Partnership and/or special incentives to the private sector is required to ensure their participation in providing extension services, especially in the hard-to-reach areas and towards the micro and small scale farms. Replication of learning through formation of Producer Group and Milk Collection Centre (MCC) in other parts of the country could be instrumental. This opportunity will only be realized when the linkages between public service provider and CBOs is sustained in an appropriate manner. Government coordination with the NGO intervention also needs to be strengthened.

Enterprise development should be an integral part: The idea of gendered market in dairy activities has not been perceived as expected at the family, community, society, and State level. Without ensuring economic development for women through a well-designed Enterprise Development Programme, it would be more difficult for women to establish their rights in the market for having an access to the extension services on a gender basis.

Inclusive Sourcing and Responsible Business

Why Responsible Business (RB) and Inclusive Sourcing (IS)? RB and IS are part and parcel in developing dairy sector in a country like Bangladesh, where public investment is insufficient and production-based as well as marketing-based entrepreneurships are constrained with techno-capital shortage of various forms and extents. National development policies explicitly and agro-business and industrial firms' policies implicitly refer to proactive policy supports to the flourishing of the dairy sector and development of the entrepreneurship capabilities of the female milk producers.

Where are the scopes? Considering the actual demand gap, scope of business responsibilities and inclusive sourcing are found 'large'. As the production sector is already populated with the poor and marginalized sections, especially from women community, the horizon for RB and IS in the dairy sector is much broadened. There are scopes for more dairy companies to join in RB-IS activities (horizontal augmentation), and the existing performers

have more scope for widening their role-scales (vertical augmentation). Needless to say, dairy companies usually are reluctant to operate their business in hard to reach areas, want to stay at comfort zones, do not share any risks (environmental, political, social etc.) or even do not compensate for any loss made by them. These usual practices of the private sector, gradually, can come to an end if the business responsibilities, including sourcing inclusiveness, become functional among the agro-based business and industrial communities. Hence, recommendations for making rapid and increased infrastructure investment, maintaining policy coherence and providing more policy support, designing incentive regime for private sector and incorporating humane development approach, incorporating social audit into the business development policies are put forward.

Care Work

Care work is not recognized: Like many other societies, the unpaid care works of women is unrecognized in Bangladesh. Due to non-recognition, the care works are neither valued in monetary terms nor legally or socially and these works are also less addressed in the National policies.

Care work scenario: The findings reveal that the PG members, whose average age is 38-39 years, have started the dairy business in a very small scale. About 81 percent of the PG members, who are basically homemakers, consider being 'dairy farmers' as their primary occupation. While programming the dairy farm activities, the PG members need to take many factors into consideration those are concerns of their care works. Most of the time the PG members need to take various decisions mutually with their husbands on many domestic matters and farm activities. However, the women being PG members, have now started to make decisions themselves (e.g., providing children's school fees) because of their earning status. Regarding household chores, it is observed that the men in the households (mostly husbands) do not provide any kind of assistance except fetching waters and looking after the children, but to a lesser extent. If the respondents had a chance to avail extra money and use it independently, most of them have opined to reconstruct and/or repair the kitchen and latrines according to their favorable condition.

The time allocation analysis: The analysis of the PG members and their family members based on their daily activities reveals that in almost every field of works, adult female respondents are spending much more time than adult male. This indicates the prevailing heavy burden of care works on women.