

The Role of Smallholder Farmers in Creating Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains: A Bangladesh Perspective

Ikram Hasan¹, Md. Mamun Habib²

¹Graduate School of Business, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

²The University of Texas at Arlington, USA

¹ h.ikram217@ur.unirazak.edu.my, ² mohammad.habib@uta.edu

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Smallholder farmers play a crucial role in achieving sustainability in agricultural supply chains, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh. These farmers, who typically own small plots of land and rely on family labor, contribute significantly to the nation's food security and rural livelihoods [1]. However, they face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to adopt sustainable practices and integrate into global value chains. This article discusses the importance of smallholder farmers in promoting sustainable agricultural supply chains in Bangladesh, the challenges they face, and potential solutions to support their livelihoods and promote sustainable practices.

Challenges Faced by Smallholder Farmers in Bangladesh

- **Limited access to resources:** Smallholder farmers in Bangladesh often struggle to access essential resources such as high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and water for irrigation, which can limit their productivity and ability to adopt sustainable practices [2].
- **Lack of knowledge and training:** Many smallholder farmers lack formal education and training in sustainable agricultural practices, making it difficult for them to adopt new technologies and farming methods [3].
- **Climate change and environmental degradation:** Smallholder farmers in Bangladesh are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as erratic rainfall, flooding, and rising sea levels, which can negatively affect crop yields and threaten their livelihoods [4].
- **Market barriers:** Smallholder farmers often face challenges in accessing markets and obtaining fair prices for their products, which can limit their income and ability to invest in sustainable practices [5].

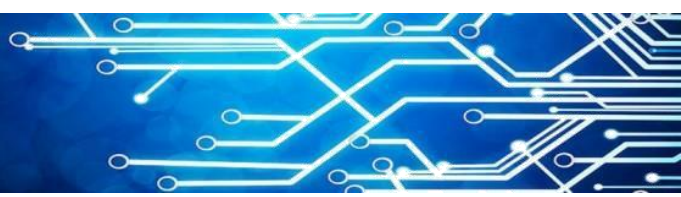


Potential Solutions to Support Smallholder Farmers in Bangladesh

- ***Strengthening farmer cooperatives and organizations:*** By forming or joining cooperatives, smallholder farmers can pool their resources, access better agricultural inputs, and negotiate better prices for their products. This can help them overcome market barriers and increase their bargaining power [6].
- ***Capacity building and knowledge sharing:*** Providing smallholder farmers with training and education in sustainable agricultural practices can empower them to adopt new technologies and farming methods, which can improve their productivity and reduce their environmental impact [7].
- ***Climate-resilient agriculture:*** Supporting smallholder farmers in adopting climate-resilient agricultural practices, such as crop diversification, conservation agriculture, and agroforestry, can help them adapt to the impacts of climate change and promote sustainability in the agricultural supply chain [8].
- ***Access to finance and credit:*** Facilitating access to affordable credit and financial services can enable smallholder farmers to invest in sustainable agricultural practices and technologies, improving their productivity and resilience [9], [10].
- ***Promoting sustainable certification schemes:*** Encouraging smallholder farmers to participate in sustainable certification schemes, such as Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance, can help them access new markets and obtain premium prices for their products, providing an incentive to adopt sustainable practices [11].



Figure. Aubergines are a staple in Hason Ara's community of Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar [12].



Smallholder farmers play a vital role in creating sustainable agricultural supply chains in Bangladesh. By addressing the challenges they face and implementing targeted interventions, such as capacity building, climate-resilient agriculture, and access to finance, stakeholders can support the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and promote sustainable practices in the agricultural sector. This will contribute to a more resilient and sustainable food system in Bangladesh, benefiting both the environment and the country's rural population.

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