

Title Tropical and subtropical fruits in Bangladesh-in areas of nutrition, economy, women participation, and poverty reduction

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Abstract

Bangladesh economy is predominantly dependent on agriculture. So, the importance of horticulture in the National economy has been well justified. The Horticultural crops, particularly fruit is playing a vital role in crop diversification, nutrition, economy, environment, with an ultimate goal of balanced diet, food self-sufficiency and poverty alleviation. Our Government has paid much emphasis on fruits, vegetable, spices and flowers production as our diet is rice based. Although there has been considerable success in variety development and technology generation but their application are not adequate. Improved varieties of fruit like mango, guava, jackfruit, litchi, pineapple and banana are available in Bangladesh. The paper deals, with mainly achievements, constraints and opportunities of horticultural crops (fruits) in Bangladesh. The paper also deals with the present status of production of temperate fruits in Bangladesh a strictly tropical country. A number of temperate fruits are now growing in Bangladesh. They are also contributing in nutrition and poverty alleviation of our land scarce, malnutrition affected and poor peoples. Bangladesh Agricultural University also established the largest fruit repository including a number of temperate fruits here in Mymensingh. Export and import situation are also addressed in the paper. In Bangladesh, lots of underutilized fruits grown largely in the homestead, fallow, forest areas as well as in the road/rail sides with less care. Those fruits are well adapted to the local climate. highly nutritious and contributing in the poverty reduction, household food security of rural peoples. Huge number of tribal peoples are also depended on the underutilized fruits. Under utilized fruits also contributing significantly in herbal medicine. Underutilized fruits trees like river ebony, velvet apple, *Garcinia cowa*, ber are contribute to protect natural disaster and balancing the coastal ecosystem. Contribution of the fruits in the nutrition of poor people and to alleviate poverty in coastal, hunger prone (monga) and flood affected areas also addressed. Plantation of underutilized fruit ber (Jujube) cv. BAU Kul 1 tremendously contributes in the poverty reduction and natural soil reclamation from saline to non-saline condition. Almost every year Bangladesh facing serious flood and other natural disaster in about one third of the area where serious food shortage, nutrition problems, poverty enhancement happened. Similarly, in the extreme northern part of the country (about one tenth of the country area) periodic serious food crisis due to shortage of employment, no crops harvest in that time causes disaster which is popularly called as Monga. In all these areas

under-utilized fruits contribute a lot as risk buffers, ensure household food security. The paper mainly deals the contribution of underutilized fruits for food, nutrition, rural employment, women participation and risk managements. Finally, the paper focuses on the future policy of the managements of fruits in Bangladesh for economy, nutrition, food and sustainable development.