



Assessing the standards of organic farming in Bangladesh: Comparison with European Standards

Md. Nazmul Hoque¹ and Prof. Dr. H. Boland²

1. Introduction: Bangladesh agriculture is on the way to move from subsistence to commercial. For this reason, farmers are using chemical fertilisers and pesticides with the increasing rate. Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and 14 non-govt. organisations (NGOs) have been supporting and trained smallholder farmers to introduce ecological as well as organic farming methods for limiting the use of chemical inputs. Many trained farmers have adopted this approach on their homestead land but they are not always able to do it on major farming land because of the lack of consumers' trust. So, international standard should be followed which can give trust for the local consumer as well as earning foreign currency.

2. Objectives of the Study: to assess GO and NGO efforts to launch organic agriculture, what standards are maintained by their contact farmers and compare them with European standards.

3. Methodology:

Data have been collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews with 25 key informants including 4 Government and 7 NGO officials, 1 private farms and 10 influential contact farmers.

Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours in length and have been recorded by using digital voice recorder.

Organizations: BARI, DAE, Proshika, UBINIG, Kazi and Kazi tea.



Figure 1: Every Nayakrishi farmer make Compost from organic sources



Figure 2: Kazi and Kazi Tea farm use medicinal plants instead of insecticides and pesticides

4. Result:

Land Conversion: Proshika and Nayakrishi farmers converted their land into organic from 12 to 15 years while BARI farmers – 7 years, Kazi tea – 5 years.

Use of Fertilizer: Proshika, Nayakrishi, BARI farmers, Kazi and Kazi tea don't apply any chemical fertilizer. They use cow dung, vermi compost, quick compost, sesbania, household waste, trees leaf.

Manure: Proshika and BARI farmers are not considering the origin of manure but Nayakrishi farmers and Kazi tea farm are composting manure in household which are originated from organic sources. So, only Nayakrishi farmers and Kazi tea farm can be compared with EU standard.

All conscious farmers try to follow: Choice of appropriate varieties, mulching, crop rotation, mixed cropping, cover cropping, green manuring, composting, mechanical eradication of weeds, traps and barriers for pest control – a package of techniques for **soil fertility, disease, pest, weed and growth management.**

Extension workers of DAE suggest farmers to apply chemicals followed by four conditions as last resort – **right insecticide, right time, right doses and right method.**

Soil and Water conservation: Proshika, Nayakrishi and Kazi farm believe: soil and water resources should be handled in a sustainable manner to avoid erosion, salinization, excessive use of water and the pollution of surface and ground water.

Animal husbandry: Nayakrishi farmers and Kazi tea maintain EU regulations like: sufficient free movement, sufficient fresh air and day light, protection against excessive sunlight, temperature, rain, wind; enough lying and resting area and access to fresh water and feed.

5. Conclusion: It is clear from the above situation that NGOs are trying more than govt. to adopt organic farming in Bangladesh. It may be concluded that Kazi tea and Nayakrishi farmers are very near to EU standards. Proshika and BARI farmers are slight far. If we follow the Rogers' 5 stages of adoption process, then Kazi tea farm and Nayakrishi farmers are in adoption stage, Proshika and BARI farmers are in trail stage. If farmers can be certain that they will get high price, it is possible for them to maintain EU standard but certification is obligatory to export and it is costly which is not affordable for individual