

Geographic Concentration and Development Potential of Poultry Microenterprises

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Bangladesh's economy is agricultural with a poor industrial base. Consequently, the incidence of unemployment and poverty is high. Creation of employment is a prerequisite for poverty reduction. There is a growing potential for development of microenterprises (MEs), created through extensive collateral free lending of microcredit to the poor for small business by several non-government organizations (NGOs) throughout the country, and thus to create employment opportunities for the unskilled poor. The poor do not have access to loans from formal banking institutions since they lack collateral. The term 'microfinance' is often used interchangeably with 'microcredit'. Microfinance is financial services of any sort provided in very small (micro) amounts to meet the unique financial needs of the poor and allow them to improve the status of their living. Progressive micro-credit borrowers are provided larger loans. Microenterprise refers to a small business or activity that is independently owned and operated with small investment and has much opportunity for further expansion and creation of employment. In recent years, many commercial poultry MEs have flourished in rural areas in Bangladesh and thus created employment for a significant number of poor population, so playing a significant role in poverty alleviation. The poor entrepreneurs have extensively developed these MEs, utilizing their homestead land with the help of microfinance. But not all of these MEs are located in favorable places, which results in poor input supply and marketing facilities for their products in most cases, and thus causes higher production costs and less profit. So, this paper tries to explain the geographic concentration and development potential of poultry MEs in relation to the suitable sites for poultry MEs delineated through Geographic Information System (GIS) using factors like flood-free land and infrastructures. In this paper, geographic concentration of poultry business in Gazipur district has been analyzed using primary geo-referenced data collected from government livestock department and to determine spatial inequality to realize the potential sites for poultry MEs development, the most important criteria were identified based on interviews with the microentrepreneurs through a field survey by the author and the literature review. The most important criteria are basically the infrastructures required for the poultry subsector development and physical environment of Gazipur district, such as (a) spatial economic criteria like highways and roads, location of market places, sources of support services, (b) physical factors like land and flooding, and (c) constraints like rivers and water bodies, and the location of forests. Digital data were collected from different institutions to consider these different determinant factors for analysis using GIS software.

Dhaka Division accounted for more than 50 % of commercial poultry, as the demand and consumption of commercial poultry meat and egg is high among the capital city dwellers in Dhaka. Gazipur District, a 1741.53 sq.km. stretched area located near the capital city of Dhaka, has the highest concentration of poultry farms. In Dhaka Division, out of sixteen districts, Gazipur district ranks first in commercial poultry production producing almost 23.9 %. The result of the GIS analysis reveals that a huge area (1253 square kilometers, 69%) is considered to be highly suitable in Gazipur district, as these areas have very suitable infrastructural potential with regard to proximity to roads and highways, proximity to government livestock offices and markets, and land free from regular flooding. While, a small percentage (149 square kilometers, 8.22 %) of area is unsuitable/ marginally suitable for poultry MEs development.

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