



# The Financial Express

Changing farming pattern

## Agri labour may go by 2050: Study

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Farmhands or agriculture labourers in Bangladesh might disappear within 2050 following the changing farming pattern of the country, according to a latest study.

It says a gradual change in dynamics between landowners and their farms or sharecroppers has been developing a new kind of rural economy in a rapid urbanisation boom.

The observation was made from a study styled 'Disappearance of Bengali Family Farm: Future of Agrarian Bangladesh'.

Geof Wood, an emeritus professor at the University of Bath in the UK, conducted the study.

He presented the key parts of his study at a seminar hosted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in its conference room on Wednesday.

Planning minister MA Mannan, economist Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, former BAU VC Dr Abdus Sattar Mandol and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council ex-executive chairman Dr Wais Kabir, among others, spoke.

BIDS director general Dr Binayak Sen chaired the event.

Prof Wood says Bangladesh sees a changing trend in agriculture where bargaining power and real labour wage have been increasing, and relations between landowners and their land have been changing.

As a result, he predicts, farmhands may disappear by 2050.

He points out two core things for this change-break-up of clientelist production relations that earlier tied landlords to cultivators while internal logic of family farm threatened by separation between land ownership and management.

"Material domain [is] undermining the moral domain through individuation and intergenerational fracture."

For now, Prof Wood said, "Contract labour [is] not fully commodified, labour is hybrid and still clientelist in post-harvest and supply chain sector."

"But a moving picture, with the hybrid Bengali model currently prevailing but maybe en route to full corporate commercialisation of land management."

Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman highlights huge knowledge gap about rural Bangladesh.

"We have to first give up the elite perception of rural where they are just matter of food source or backwardness."

He suggests that extensive study and research be done to understand the current power dynamics of rural and their transformation.

Dr Mandol says Bangladesh's agriculture is being commercialised in its own way.

Small entrepreneurs from farm households have brought mechanisation successfully using shallow machine, power tiller, four-wheeler tractor and thresher, he adds.

*tonmoy.wardad@gmail.com*

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### **Editor : Shamsul Huq Zahid**

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Telephone : PABX : 9553550 (Hunting), 9513814, 7172017 and 7172012 Fax : 880-2-9567049

Email : [editor@thefinancialexpress.com.bd](mailto:editor@thefinancialexpress.com.bd), [fexpress68@gmail.com](mailto:fexpress68@gmail.com)

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