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Problems Faced by the Nursery Owners in Seedling Production

Iffat Jahan Heera^{1*}, Md. Forhad Hossain² and Md. Sekender Ali³

¹Department of Agriculture, Rabindra Maitree University (RMU), Kushtia, Bangladesh; ²Department of Agroforestry and Environmental Science, SAU, Dhaka, Bangladesh; ³Department of Agricultural Extension and Information System, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU), Dhaka, Bangladesh.

*Correspondence: iffatjahanheera@gmail.com (Iffat Jahan Heera, Lecturer, Department of Agriculture, Rabindra Maitree University (RMU), Kushtia, Bangladesh).

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to determine the problem faced by the nursery owners in seedling production and also to explore the relationships between the selected characteristics of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production. The study was conducted in Savar Upazilla under Dhaka district. Data were collected from randomly selected 30 nursery owners by using an interview schedule as the sample of the study from a population of 120 nursery owners of Savar Upazilla under Dhaka district. Twelve problems of the nursery owners in seedling production were selected. The selected characteristics were: age, level of education, nursery area, training exposure, annual income, marketing facility, capital investment, input availability and organizational participation. Scale score was used to determine nursery owners' problems in seedling production while a problem faced Index (PFI) was used to make a comparison among the 12 selected problems. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) was used for the statistical analysis. Three fourth (76.7 percent) of the nursery owners were found faced medium to high problems while 23.3 percent of the nursery owners faced little problem in seedling production. The findings also revealed that training exposure, annual income, marketing facility, capital investment, input availability and organizational participation had negative significant relationships with the problem faced in seedling production. On the basis of problem faced Index (PFI) "Lack of suitable area for seedling production" ranked first followed by "Lack of technical knowledge", "Lack of skilled labour", "Disease infestation", and "Insect infestation".

Keywords: Nursery owners, Savar upazilla, SAU, Problem faced index (PFI), and Seedling production.

INTRODUCTION:

Growing of seedlings in the nursery is the most common practice for raising planting stock and the use of plants produced from the nursery is generally the most efficient and effective way of establishing a forest plantation. Quality of the plantation depends largely on seed source and seed health of the seedlings. There is a great demand of timber, fruit, ornamental and medicinal plant seedlings throughout the country. This demand is being met up by the government and non-government organization insuffi-

ciently. Moreover, the demand of different sapling is increasing day by day. Nursery has a vast role on plant conservation.

Bangladesh is an agro-based country where 85 percent people live in rural areas. They have mostly nutritional deficiency. In order to meet the nutritional demand of increasing population of the country, huge amount of fruits and vegetables need to be produced. The government of Bangladesh has, therefore, given special emphasis for planting different fruit trees and medicinal plants over the country. In

this situation, improved variety of fruit and medicinal saplings/seedlings are very essential for distribution among the farmers and other enthusiastic people. A huge number of private, NGOs, and government plant nurseries have been established in different parts of the country and are playing an important role for successful implementation of tree plantation as well as forestation program in the country. Unfortunately, except some economic studies (Islam *et al.*, 1998), no study has been conducted for this plant nursery management or nursery business. Therefore, detail information about the plant nursery business would help the researchers as well as policy makers for the improvement of the business (Hossain *et al.*, 2023).

Nurseries have proven essential in ensuring availability of Quality Planting Material (QPM) at local level, ensuring their multiplication but also providing technical assistance to farmers. To foster exchanges and strengthen their business, nursery owners have over the course of the years formed upazila level associations: the Upazila Nursery Malik Samities (UNMS). As their capacities and organizational strength grew over time, the UNMS have organized themselves at district level and formed the DNMS (District Nursery Malik Samities). Nursery plants need to be protected from extreme environmental influences until they are strong enough to withstand them. To ensure high quality of seed-lings & provide more opportunities (income, technology transfer) for local people, we encourage villagers to establish small-scale community nurseries.

Objectives of the Study

The following specific objectives were formulated to give proper direction to the study:

- To determine the extent of problems faced by the nursery owners in seedling production
- To determine and describe selected characteristics of the nursery owners
- To explore the relationships between the selected characteristics of the nursery owners & their extent of problem faced in seedling production
- To compare the severity among the problems faced by the nursery owners in seedling production.

Assumptions of the Study

"An assumption is the supposition that an apparent fact or principle is true in the light of the available

evidence" (Goode, 1945). The researcher had the following assumptions in mind while undertaking this study:

- 1) The respondents included in the sample for this study were competent enough to furnish proper responses to the queries included in the interview schedule.
- 2) The researcher who acted as interviewer was adjusted to social and environmental conditions of the study area. Hence, the data collected by him from the respondents were free from bias.
- 3) The responses furnished by the respondents were valid and reliable.
- 4) Views and opinions furnished by the nursery owners included in the sample were the representative views and opinions of the whole population of the study area.
- 5) The findings of the study might have general application to other parts of the country with similar personal, socio-economic and cultural condition of the study area.

Review of Literature

The aim of this Chapter is to describe the review of past researches conducted in line of the major focus of this study. Literature having relevance to the present study has been reviewed in three sections. The first section deals with the literature on problems faced by the farmers in producing various crops, the second section deals with review of studies dealing with the relationship of selected characteristics with problem faced. Finally last section of this chapter deals with the conceptual framework of the study. Unfortunately, very little studies were found which dealing with the problem faced by the nursery owners in seedling production. However research work related to problem confrontation by the farmers in different aspects of agriculture is presented below:

Ismail, (2001) conducted a study on farm youth of haor area of Mohangonj upazila. Study revealed that there were six top problems in rank order were (i) no arrangement of loan for the farm youth for fishery cultivation, (ii) lack of government programs in agriculture for the farm youth, (iii) absence of loan giving agencies for establishing farm in 1-10 daily, (iv) general people face problem for fishery due to government leasing of Jalmohal, lack of government programs for establishing poultry farm, (vi) lack of agricultural loan for the farm youth. Uddin, (2004) in his study identified five aspects of constraints in

commercial cultivation of vegetables viz. seed constraints, disease and insect infestation constraints, field management constraints, marketing of vegetable constraints and extension work constraints. Among these aspects of constraints he revealed disease and pest infestation constraints severely faced by the farmers. In case of Relationship between selected characteristics of the respondents and their problem faced:

Aziz, (2006) found that age of the farmers had no significant relationship with their constraints faced in potato cultivation in Jhikargacha upazilla under Jessore district.

Hoque, (2006) found that education of the farmers had highly significant negative relationship with their problem faced in using integrated plant nutrient management. Basher, (2006) found that sugarcane cultivation area of the farmers had significant negative relationship with their problem faced in mushroom cultivation. Van den Ban, (2003) conducted a study and found that there was significant relationship between training exposure of the nursery owners and their problem confrontation in seedling production. Hoque, (2006) found that annual family income of the farmers had no significant relationship with their problem faced in using integrated plant nutrient management. Aalbaek, (2001) conducted a study and found that there was a very high significant negative relationship between marketing facility of the nursery owners and their problem confrontation in seedling production. Hazra, (2006) conducted a study and found that there was a very high significant negative relationship between capital investment of the nursery owners and their problem confrontation in seedling production. No literature was found related to relationship between input availability and problem faced by the nursery owners. Aalbaek, (2001) conducted study and found that there was a very high significant negative relationship between organizational participation of the nursery owners and their problem confrontation in seedling production. This study was concerned with the problem faced by the nursery owners in seedling production. Thus the problem faced on seedling production activities was the main focus of the study. It is not possible to deal with all characteristics in a single study. It was therefore, necessary to limit the characteristics, which include age, education, nursery area, training exposure, annual family income, marketing

facility, capital investment, input availability and organizational participation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The principal method used in this study was field survey using structured interview schedule. In any scientific research methodology plays an important role. To perform a research work systematically, careful consideration of appropriate methodology is a must. It should be such that it would enable the researcher to collect valid and reliable information to arrive at correct decisions. The methods and procedures followed in the conducting these studies have been described in the following sections.

Population and Sampling

The nursery owners being involved in seedling production under Savar upazilla were considered as the population for this study. An updated list of 120 nursery owners was prepared by the present researcher's own effort with the help of horticulture wing of DAE. Out of 120 farmers, a sample of 30 nursery owners was selected by following random sampling method. Simultaneously a reserve list of 5 farmers was prepared to use in case of non-availability of sampled farmers. In order to collect relevant data, an interview schedule was prepared keeping the objectives of the study in mind. The schedule contained both closed and open-ended questions. Simple and direct questions were also included in the schedule in order to avoid the ambiguous questions. The schedule was pre-tested with 3 nursery owners of the study area excluded the sample. Necessary correction, alternation and modifications were made in the interview schedule on the basis of the pretest. The modified and corrected interview schedule was then printed in final form for data collection. In this study nine selected profiles namely age, level of education, nursery area, training exposure, annual income, marketing facility, capital investment in nursery, input availability and the organizational participation were selected as the independent variables. Problem confrontation by the nursery owners was the dependent variable of this study. For measuring problem confrontation in nursery management by owners if problem were selected after consultation with the relevant experts, researchers and from other available sources. The nature of responses of the respondents to each of the 12 problems were 'severe problem', 'moderate problem', 'little problem' and 'no problem' and scores were assigned as 3. Thus,

the possible score of the problem confrontation in nursery management of a respondent could range from 0 to 36 while 0 indicating no problem and 36 indicating very high problem faced in the nursery management.

Statistical Procedures

The data were analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study. Qualitative data were converted into quantitative data by means of suitable scoring technique wherever necessary. The statistical measures such as range, means, standard deviation, number and percentage distribution were used to describe the variables. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used in order to explore the relationships between the concerned variables. Five per-cent (0.05) level of probability was used as the basis for rejection of any null hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the findings of the present study. The first section deals with the selected characteristics of the nursery owners, while the second section deals with the problem faced by the nursery owners in seedling production. Relationship between the selected characteristics of the nursery owners and their problem faced in seedling production has been discussed in the third section. The fourth section deals with the comparative severity among the problems faced by the nursery owners in seedling production.

Selected Characteristics of the nursery owners

Nine characteristics of the nursery owners were selected for this research. The characteristics include: age, level of education, nursery area, training exposure, annual income, marketing facility, capital investment, input availability and organizational participation.

Age

The age of the respondents ranged from 25 to 63 years with an average of 41.03 and a standard deviation of 9.45. On the basis of their age, the beneficiaries were classified into three categories. Three fifth (60.00 percent) of the nursery owners were middle aged while 33.30 percent of them were young aged and only 6.70 percent old aged.

Education

The level of education of the respondent ranged from 0 to 16. The average being 8.93 and standard deviation

was 4.08. Based on their education scores, the respondents were classified into three categories. Data indicate that 66.60 of the nursery owners had secondary to above secondary level of education while 30.10 percent had primary level of education.

Nursery area

Nursery area of the respondents ranged from 0.068 to 0.96 hectare and the average being 0.36 hectare and standard deviation of 0.24. Depending on nursery area the respondents were classified into three categories. Data contained in indicates that the highest proportion (60 percent) of nursery owners had medium nursery area compared to 23.30 percent having small and 16.70 percent large nursery area.

Training exposure

The score of the training exposure of the nursery owners ranged from 0 to 30 days, the mean being 10.83 and standard deviation of 12.25 based on training exposure.

Annual income

Annual income scores of the respondents ranged from 100 to 1500. An average of yearly income score of the respondents was 435.50 and standard deviation of 354.48. It was observed that the highest portion (46.6 percent) of the farmers had medium annual family income compared to 36.70 percent having low and only 16.70 percent had high annual family income.

Marketing facility

The score of the marketing facility of the nursery owners ranged from 1 to 3, the mean being 2.40 and standard deviation of 0.56. Based on marketing facility, the nursery owners were classified into three categories. Data indicates that the above two fourth (53.40 percent) of nursery owners had medium marketing facility compared to 23.30 percent had high marketing facility and 3.30 percent had low marketing facility.

Problems Faced by the nursery owners in the nursery management

In this study, the computed problems faced by the nursery owners in nursery management scores ranged from 11 to 25 against the possible 0 to 36.

The mean score was 17.00 and standard deviation was 4.46. Based on the problems faced scores, the nursery owners were classified into three categories as shown in below **Table 1**.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to problems faced in nursery management.

Categories (score)	Respondent farmers		Mean	Standard Deviation
	Number	Percent		
Little problem (up to 12)	7	23.30	17.00	4.46
Medium problem(13 to 24)	20	66.70		
High problem (above 24)	3	10.00		
Total	30	100		

Data contained in **Table 1** indicates that majority (66.70 percent) of the nursery owners had medium problem while 23.3 percent of the nursery owners had low problem and 10.00 percent had the high problem.

Relationship between the selected characteristics of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production

Coefficient of correlation was computed in order to explore the relationship between the selected characteristics of the nursery owners and their problems faced in nursery. The selected characteristics constituted the independent variables and problems faced in seedling production by the nursery owners constituted the dependent variable. In order to determine the relationship between nine selected characteristics of the nursery owners viz. age, level

of education, nursery area, training exposure, annual income, marketing facility, capital investment, in-put availability and organizational participation and the dependent variable i.e., Problems faced by the nursery owners in seedling production. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used. Co-efficient of correlation (r) has been used to test the null hypothesis concerning the relationship between the variables.

Five percent level of significance was used as the basis for rejection of any null hypothesis. The summery of the results of the Co-efficient of Correlation indicating the relationship between the selected characteristics of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Co-efficient of Correlation (r) showing relationship between the respondents' selected characteristics and the problems faced in seedling production.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Computed value "r"	Tabulated value of "r" with 130 df at	
			0.05 level	0.01 level
Problems Faced by the nursery owners in nursery	Age	-0.340 ^{NS}	0.361	0.462
	Level of education	-0.235 ^{NS}		
	Nursery area	-0.314 ^{NS}		
	Training exposure	-0.830**		
	Annual income	-0.379*		
	Marketing facility	-0.609**		
	Capital investment	-0.654**		
	Input availability	-0.687**		
	Organizational	-0.744**		

NS: Not significant; * Significant at the 0.05 level; ** Significant at the 0.01 level

Relationship between age of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production

Relationship between age of the nursery owners and their problems faced in Seedling production was determined by testing the null hypothesis: "There is no relationship between age of the nursery owners and their problems faced seedling production".

The computed value of the co-efficient of correlation (r) between the concerned variables was 0.340 as shown in **Table 2**.

The following observations were made regarding the relationship between the two concerned variables on basis of the Coefficient of correlation (r).

- 1) The relationship showed a negative trend.
- 2) The computed value of 'r' (0.340) was smaller than the tabulated value 'r' (0.361) with 28 degrees of freedom at 0.05 levels of probability.
- 3) The concerned null hypothesis would not be rejected.

The findings demonstrate that age of the nursery owners had no significant relationship with their problems faced in seedling production. This indicated that age of the nursery owners was not an important factor for their problems faced in seedling production.

Relationship between level of education of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production

Relationship between level of education of the nursery owners and their problems faced in nursery was determined by testing the null hypothesis:

“There is no relationship between level of education of the nursery owners and their problems faced in nursery”.

The computed value of the co-efficient of correlation (r) between the concerned variables was 0.235. The following observations were made regarding the relationship between the two variables on basis of the Coefficient of correlation (r).

- 1) The relationship showed a negative trend.
- 2) The computed value of ' r ' (-0.235) was smaller than the tabulated value ' r ' (0.361) with 28 degrees of freedom at 0.05 levels of probability.
- 3) The concerned null hypothesis would not be rejected.

The findings demonstrate that level of education of the nursery owners had no significant relationship with their problems faced in seedling production. This indicated that level of education of the nursery owners was not an important factor for their problems faced in seedling production.

Relationship between nursery area of the nursery owners and their problems faced seedling the production

Relationship between nursery area of the nursery owners and their problems faced in nursery was determined by testing the null hypothesis:

“There is no relationship between nursery area of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production”.

The computed value of the co-efficient of correlation (r) between the concerned variables was -0.314. The following observations were made regarding the relationship between the two variables on basis of the Coefficient of correlation (r).

- 1) The relationship showed a negative trend.
- 2) The computed value of ' r ' (0.314) was smaller than the tabulated value ' r ' (0.361) with 28 degrees of freedom at 0.05 levels of probability.
- 3) The concerned null hypothesis would not be rejected.

The findings demonstrate that nursery area of the nursery owners had no significant relationship with their problems faced in nursery. This indicated that nursery area of the nursery owners was not an important factor for their problems faced in seedling production.

- 1) The following observations were made regarding the relationship between the two variables on basis of the Coefficient of correlation (r).
- 2) The relationship showed a negative trend.
- 3) The computed value of ' r ' (0.609) was larger than the tabulated value ' r ' (0.462) with 28 degrees of freedom at 0.01 levels of probability.
- 4) The concerned null hypothesis would be rejected.

The findings demonstrate that marketing facility of the nursery owners had significant negative relationship with their problems faced in seedling production. This meant that the nursery owners having more marketing facility faced fewer problems in seedling production.

Relationship between input availability of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production

Relationship between input availability of the nursery owners and their problems faced in nursery was determined by testing the null hypothesis:

“There is no relationship between input availability of the nursery owners and their problems faced in seedling production”.

The computed value of the co-efficient of correlation (r) between the concerned variables was -0.687.

The following observations were made regarding the relationship between the two variables on basis of the Coefficient of correlation (r).

- 1) The relationship showed a negative trend.
- 2) The computed value of ' r ' (0.687) was larger than the tabulated value ' r ' (0.462) with 28 degrees of freedom at 0.01 levels of probability.
- 3) The concerned of the null hypothesis would be rejected.

The findings demonstrate that input availability of the nursery owners had significant negative relationship with their problems faced in seedling production. This meant that the nursery owners having more input availability faced fewer problems in seedling production.

Comparative severity among the problems faced by the nursery owners in seedling production

The observed Problem Faced Index of the problems ranged from 21 to 61 against the possible range of 0-90.

Problem Faced Index (PFI) of the selected problems is shown in **Table 3**.

On the basis of PFI, it was observed that “Lack of suitable area for seedling production” ranked first followed by “Lack of technical knowledge”, “Lack of skilled labor”, “Disease infestation”, “Insect infestation”, “Lack of quality seed”, “Lack of required inputs”, “Irrigation problem”, “Damage by cattle”, “Feeding by cattle”, “Germination problem”, “Seedling theft by thieves”.

Table 3: Rank order of the problem faced by the nursery owners in seedling production.

SL. No	Problem items	PFI	Rank order
1	Lack of suitable area for seedling production	61	1
2	Lack of technical knowledge	59	2
3	Lack of skilled labor	58	3
4	Disease infestation	57	4
5	Insect infestation	52	5
6	Lack of quality seed	46	6
7	Lack of required inputs	34	7
8	Irrigation problem	33	8
9	Damage by cattle	32	9
10	Feeding by cattle	30	10
11	Germination problem	28	11
12	Seedling theft by thieves	21	12

CONCLUSION:

Following conclusions were drawn on the basis of findings, logical interpretation and other relevant facts of the study: Above three fourth (76.70 percent) of the nursery owners had medium to high problem and Lack of suitable area for seedling production ranked the first problem followed by lack of technical knowledge and lack of skilled labor. An overwhelming (90 percent) of the nursery owners had very low and medium training exposure, while there was a negative significant relationship between training exposure of the nursery owners and their problem faced. Therefore, it may be concluded that the nursery owners having more training exposure faced fewer problems in seedling production. An overwhelming (83.3percent) of the nursery owners had small to medium annual income while there was a negative significant relationship between annual income of the nursery owners and their problem faced. Therefore, it may be concluded that the nursery owners having more annual income faced fewer problems in seedling production. More than half (53.40 percent) of nursery owners had medium marketing facility while there was a negative significant relationship between marketing facility of the nursery owners and their problem faced.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the nursery owners having more marketing facility faced fewer problems in seedling production. Above two third (70 percent) of nursery owners had small to medium capital investment while there was a negative significant relationship between capital investment of the nursery owners and their problem faced. Therefore, it may be concluded that the nursery owners having more capital investment faced fewer problems in seedling production. An overwhelming (93.3 percent) of the nursery owners had medium to high input availability while there was a negative significant relationship between input availability of the nursery owners and their problem faced. Therefore, it may be concluded that the nursery owners having more input availability faced fewer problems in seedling production.

An overwhelming (83.3 percent) of the nursery owners had low to medium organizational participation while there was a negative significant relationship between the organizational participation of the nursery owners and their problem faced. Therefore, it may be concluded that the nursery owners having the more organizational participation faced fewer problems in the seedling production.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

There are no potential conflicts of interest to publish the present research work.

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