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## Medicinal plants supply chain innovations for producer surplus: Relationship integration to benefit the rural agripreneurs in Bangladesh.

### Abstract

This paper assessed the medicinal plants production related entrepreneurial and management aspects with a focus to the present medicinal plants-based supply chain of Bangladesh. It delineated the overall supply chain and the extent of benefit that the plant-producing agripreneurs derive out of the existing system of the chain. The key objective was to put forward innovative supply chain strategies that can leverage the benefit of the rural farmer-entrepreneur of medicinal plants. A field-based investigation was carried out in Natore district of northwest Bangladesh where a total of 225 farmers and households from eight villages were engaged in the production of medicinal plant species. The research had a survey with the agripreneurs of two of those villages and focus group discussions at a union level to gather information about the price, buyers, seasonality, and overall supply infrastructure and trading mechanisms of the plant products. The research also gathered explanations on the overall supply chain system of the plants and plant-based processed products through key informant interviews with the local and regional selling agents, stockists, wholesalers, and secondary processors. The findings revealed that, in the existing supply chain system, the primary and wholesale secondary markets were mostly dominated by middlemen causing market distortions and price manipulation due to lack of coordination between the producers and the processors. The discoordination and inefficiencies in the supply chain system could be offset by the producer-processor relationship integration that could result in a multitude of benefits to both the parties in terms of price, quality, lead time and overall control of the supply chain. Therefore, to ensure growth of medicinal plants production, the industry users, secondary processors, and policy stakeholders should ensure that the primary producers get the fair share of the benefit; the producer-processor relationship integration in the supply chain offers to ensure that fairness with maximum producer surplus.

### Biography:

Dr. Shahidullah's research interests centre around socially responsible and ecologically sustainable modes of entrepreneurship. Drawing on his expertise in business management and experience with industry and non-profits he explores entrepreneurship in agricultural and informal sectors. He is keen to interpret and advance knowledge on community-based entrepreneurship and its various manifestations for human wellbeing, namely, social entrepreneurship, cooperative entrepreneurship, indigenous entrepreneurship and others. In addition, his research also deals with the business strategies of community-based enterprises, especially to explore and address issues underlying supply or value chain and diversification potentials of new and existing enterprises.

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