

FROM CHALLENGED BEGINNINGS TO STANDING TALL

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The relentless efforts and achievements of our farmers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Nutrition Situation Report, production of staple food grains in the country has increased three to five times in the 50 years since independence. Bangladesh is among the top 10 countries in the world in the production of 12 agricultural products. Along with these successes, the last 10 years have seen a major evolution of agriculture. Once upon a time, people set up garment factories as a big investment-oriented industry. Looking for more profits in other industries. Now those investors are coming forward with big investments in agriculture. They may be building a modern technology based agricultural farm in the shed of a garment factory. This trend of industrial oriented agricultural enterprise is far ahead now. But there is a big challenge. The real marginal farmer is moving away from farming. The family tradition of agriculture is breaking down.

One major reason for this is the modernisation of agriculture and dependence on technology. Agriculture is now more technology, market and trade oriented. Following the family tradition, there is barely any opportunity to make profit by farming. The farmers who had enough lands are selling those off or giving lease to the big entrepreneurs. As land ownership becomes a short-term issue, the emerging agro-entrepreneurs are coming forward by building modern agricultural farms. On the one hand vertical expansion process is going on, and on the other, cultivation has started in a controlled environment. Smart farming is now showing its many faces. Many are now familiar with new agricultural practices, such as aquaponics and hydroponics. Our country has achieved remarkable success in the production of vegetables and fruits. Some vegetables and fruits are being grown in greenhouses like I have seen in Europe, USA and in different countries of the Middle East. And the biggest role in getting higher yields is the imported seeds.

Different private companies and development organisations have been playing an important role in coordinating domestic and foreign research, use of improved seeds and seedlings, training of farmers and raising awareness of farmers to capitalise best from the market. Needless to say, mass-media has also been working for a long time to help farmers by highlighting their great works. I have been a witness to all these for at least four decades.

Agriculture has now become a more investment-oriented commercial enterprise. New information technology is being added for more profit and productivity. The digital revolution, which began on the basis of the Second and



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND ASSETS OF RMG WORKERS



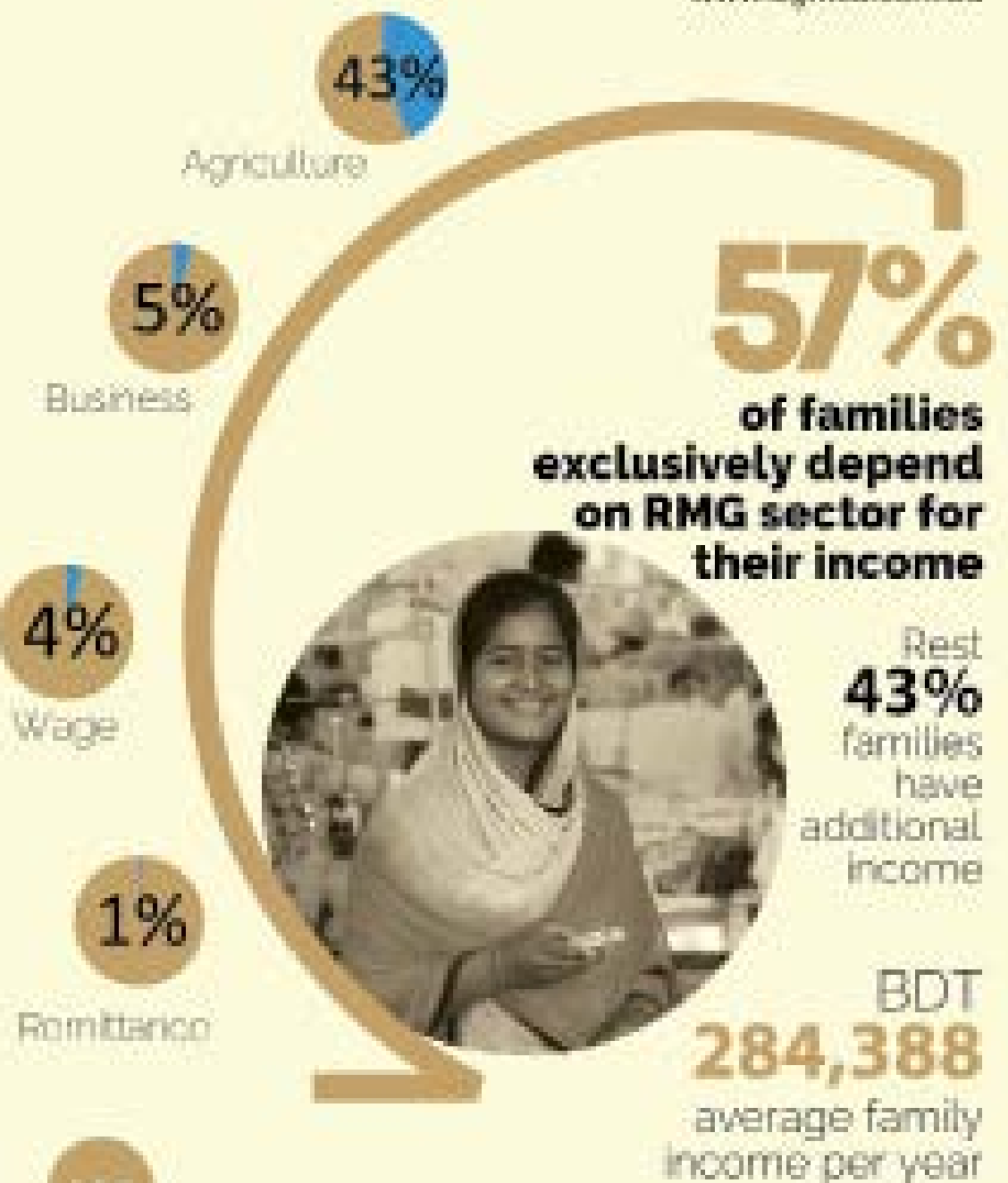
EARNING MEMBER IN A FAMILY

17%

63%

20%

FAMILY ASSETS



ASIAN CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT

*A Survey Report on the Workers of Garment Sector of Bangladesh, 2008