

iFarmer: The tech-enabled one-stop solution for smallholder farmers

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Bangladesh is home to about 16.5 million farmers, constituting about 28% of the country's 170 million population. Agriculture alone contributes to 40% of the national employment, and citizens of all classes are dependent on naturally grown rice, wheat, jute and vegetables for daily sustenance. Most local farmers are smallholders with less than 1 hectare of land which they can use to cultivate crops, but often lack the sufficient means to yield high-quality output or retain enough revenue to properly sustain their livelihoods. Furthermore, over 70% of local farmers do not have access to banking systems or own a personal bank account, which leads to them relying on microfinance firms or loan sharks to pay heavy rates of interest. The absence of proper training or financial assistance also means the farmers are dependent on intermediaries - a process that usually costs more than the farmers can afford to spare.

To aid smallholder farmers and give them a chance to compete in the ever-engaging marketplace, iFarmer offers them both the financial solutions to fill in existing gaps and the means to secure a high-quality production chain. The experts at iFarmer also teach the local farmers how to make more informed decisions regarding market demand and supply, production technique and the use of agricultural inputs such as seed, fertiliser and nutrients to achieve an optimum output while simultaneously improving their personal livelihoods. As agriculture is a



major proponent of Bangladesh's GDP, by providing local farmers such invaluable support, iFarmer is making its mark in the development of this country's MSMEs.

Launched as a side project in 2018, iFarmer initially catered to rooftop farms in urban Dhaka and Chittagong. After a few months, the startup realised the infeasibility of such an approach - eventually shifting their focus to the current model: helping the local farmers with the finance, farming knowledge and advice, high-quality agricultural input, access to fair market and technology they require. Their first step was to source low-cost financing for the interested individuals who could choose which farms they want to support and could fund those farms, while being able to track the progress of the farms through the

mobile app.

According to iFarmer, the biggest challenge they still face is the low adoption of smartphones and internet usage in rural Bangladeshi areas. While tech usage has certainly increased among people from all walks of life in the last few years, there are still remote communities that aren't as well-equipped with remote technology - which makes regular contact with them difficult. As such, iFarmer uses an assisted model where it has agents also known as field facilitators located in farming communities to keep a steady connection with the local farmers scattered all across the country. This helps smallholder farmers, even those lacking smartphones or mobile internet, stay connected with iFarmer at all times.

The success of iFarmer is in many ways thanks to its two signature apps: Sofol and their newest addition, KriShop. Launched in September 2020, the Sofol app connects verified farmers with the company's field facilitators. The app allows farmers to file financial requests, monitor and track farm updates, conduct farmer KYC and collect other data points which enables iFarmer to create a unique profile for every farmer. The app also helps generate a risk score for the farmers, which eventually helps them to source more financing even from financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies. Since a lot of the farm financing requests come from remote areas with little to no internet connectivity, the app even works offline.

Kri-Shop, the newest addition to iFarmer's app, is a digital platform for input retailers, offering them door-to-door

delivery of high-quality materials necessary for their business. Using Kri-Shop, an input retailer can order items from a customised pricing list based on their geographical locations. They can also choose to pay by cash or by credit, and like other delivery apps, can track the delivery as it is on the way. The Kri-Shop app also has a helpline that assists these retailers in the last-minute customisation of orders. The iFarmer field facilitators connect the farmers with this retailer network so that farmers can access the best quality agriculture input.

iFarmer works by providing proper credit facilities to local farmers with the support of financial institutions, thus creating access to high-quality inputs and improving access to marketing as well as information and knowledge. iFarmer is also developing new



agriculture insurance products, satellite and sensor-based advisory services and farm mechanisation services - all of which would make iFarmer a true one-stop solution for smallholder farmers.

By relying on iFarmer, the farming-based MSMEs can stop depending on middlemen and traders and thus save up on a lot of long-run costs - which can then be used to improve not only the quality of the yield but also the revenue of the farmers. iFarmer is currently managing a network of over 87,000 farmers and has thus far facilitated over \$24 million in financing to local farmers. With 2023 being the company's 5th year in the local market, iFarmer continues to promise an improved livelihood for farmers and better agricultural yield for all Bangladeshis.



Zaynax Health: Health super app eliminating gap in Healthcare access

One night, Rokeya Afsari, a housewife from Gazipur, found her 6-month-old baby suffering from a severe breathing problem. Although she was nervous at first, she instantly remembered the app called Zaynax Health and connected with a doctor immediately through the app. And she knew that even if her baby needed to get admitted into a hospital the next day, she wouldn't have to worry much about money as she would get hospitalisation cashback afterwards, thanks to the package she bought from Zaynax Health.

Like Rokeya Afsari, more than 67,000 people are now taking the services of Zaynax Health, Bangladesh's first Health Super App that aims to provide all spectrums of healthcare under one single platform, thereby empowering the underprivileged communities to take charge of their health. Bangladesh has seen tremendous progress in recent years in terms of economic growth and development.

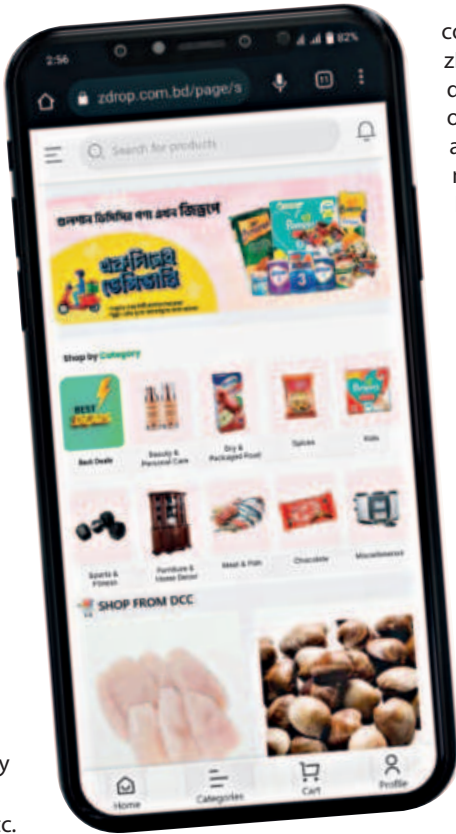
However, this progress has not been evenly distributed, with rural and underprivileged communities still struggling to access quality healthcare services. This is where Zaynax Health comes in, working towards removing health disparities and inequalities in Bangladesh.

Zaynax Health has revolutionised healthcare in Bangladesh through its telemedicine service, providing more than 30,000 doctor consultations thus far. With around 400 partners (hospitals and diagnostic centres), it also offers cashback up to Tk. 2,00,000/- to people for hospitalisation and lab tests. Moreover,

people can also order for home sample collection and buy anything related to health from the portal. Additionally, the app also has online specialist doctors, instant doctor calls, discounted lab tests and many more under one roof - making it truly a super app that people can browse for anything relating to healthcare.

During its journey, Zaynax Health has created a positive impact on the targeted communities with around 67,000 registered users of which over 16,000 are RMG workers. The organisation has also come up with a customised packages model by partnering with corporates, NGOs and relevant associations such as BGMEA so that it can reach out to the targeted group effectively. Nevertheless, the company has been working closely with paramedics to communicate its services and arrange health camps, medical training, etc. to carry out the mission offline.

Overall, Zaynax Health has been making a significant contribution towards providing the underprivileged communities quality healthcare alongside achieving the sustainable development goals (SDG) in terms of inclusion and equality - helping Bangladesh to accelerate in healthcare.



zDrop: When trust and transparency are the way to go

With a population of over 170 million people, the growth of e-commerce business in Bangladesh has been phenomenal in recent years. However, trust among customers has been a major issue in the e-commerce industry in Bangladesh. But zDrop, a new e-commerce platform, is determined to change this by offering a trustworthy platform for both the customers and merchants.

zDrop has been designed with a customer-first mentality and has implemented various measures to ensure its accountability towards its customers. The platform offers cash on delivery on all products, ensuring that customers only pay for the products they receive and thus eliminating the risk of fraud from any party and giving customers peace of mind. Additionally, zDrop's prompt and responsible customer service is available 24/7 to assist customers with any issues they may encounter, further ensuring that the customers can rely on the platform for any issue.

Transparency is also a key factor in building trust among customers. zDrop is determined to remain transparent regarding its policies, delivery process, and the information provided by its merchants. The platform provides complete and accurate information about the products and their delivery, so customers know exactly what they are buying and when to expect their deliveries. This honesty and transparency help build trust and loyalty among customers.

Alongside maintaining transparent communication with the customers, zDrop also focuses on product diversity and quick service. zDrop not only offers a wide range of goods, but also some direct-to-home services making the platform one of a kind. From fashion and electronics or household items and groceries to wedding solution packages, zDrop is a one-stop shop for customers. The platform is constantly expanding its offerings, ensuring that customers have access to the products they need. This wide range of products, combined with its trustworthy policies, makes zDrop an ideal choice for customers in Bangladesh.

zDrop is also aware of the importance of following government rules and guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of its customers. The platform is fully compliant with all local and international laws, ensuring that customers and merchants are protected at all times.

In conclusion, zDrop is creating a revolution in the e-commerce business in Bangladesh, establishing itself as a leader in the e-commerce industry in Bangladesh in terms of trust and service. The platform strongly believes that honesty is the only way of doing business and further emphasises its commitment to building trust and loyalty among its customers. And in doing so, zDrop has been effectively revitalising the e-commerce business in the country.

