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“Faren Nala”, A Long Time Ally Of The Rajdhani Villagers.

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Abstract: On hearing the name of the drain, the picture of dirty, polluted water sources comes to mind, but the villagers have both negative and positive images in their minds about the "Faren Nala" flowing next to the Rajdhani Gram Sabha of Gorakhpur district. Around the year 1950, the villagers used to grow a good crop of "Boro Dhan or Boro Paddy", also known as "Glutinous Rice", on the lands around "Faren Nala". It did not require any additional chemicals or fertilizers. The villagers had to do only one thing, every year the drain (Faren Nala) was dammed with the help of bamboo, due to which its water spread all around, thereby preparing land suitable for the cultivation of "Boro Dhan", After which the villagers harvest the paddy without any additional help and get good yield without the need for fertilizer, irrigation and any other extra expense. In later years, when the Agriculture Department started trying to organize the Faren Nala, its depth was increased and making their proper way, the work of damming of Nala became difficult, laborious and time consuming, so the villagers shifted from "Boro Dhan" cultivation towards "Berseem" farming for animal fodder. After cultivating Berseem in the bed of the drain and the surrounding land for many years, now the villagers have started cultivating wheat, even though they get only one crop in a year but they get good production of wheat without any extra expense. Presently, some villagers are also growing vegetables and along with this, the villagers also get fish and snails from "Faren Nala", which is a major part of their diet. Therefore, if seen from the perspective of the villagers of the Rajdhani, "Faren Nala" has been active participants in their economic upliftments as well as in arranging food for himself and their animals both.

Key words- Faren Nala, rajdhani, villagers, friendly.

INTRODUCTION

It is true that any drain carries within itself the filth of the city, all kinds of chemicals, pathogen of diseases, sewage waste, factory waste, agricultural waste, garbage, etc. Along with many diseases, drains are also the main cause of pollution. Sometimes people living around the drain get benefits. At the same time, that drain also proves helpful in arranging their food.

Rajdhani is a small community situated in the Brahmpur Block of the Gorakhpur District in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. Adjacent to Rajdhani Gram Sabha, whose total population as per 2011 census is 12807, a drain named "Faren Nala" flows which come from "Sardar Nagar" side and next to Rajdhani village (Fig. 1). Flowing from, it joins the "Gorra River" (Fig. 2).



Figure 1: Faren Nala.



Figure 2: "Faren Nala" adjoining with "Gorra River".

Although this drain is like normal drains, but around 1950, the villagers of Rajdhani cultivated "Boro Dhan or Boro paddy" on the vacant land adjacent to this drain and got good yield from it. For the cultivation of paddy, the villagers used to dam the water of the drain with the help of bamboo, due to which the flow of the drain was stopped and its water spread on the surrounding land, due to which land was prepared suitable for the cultivation of Boro paddy. On which the villagers could produce "Boro Dhan" crop without any extra cost.

Rice stands as the primary agricultural food source in India, accounting for approximately one-fourth of the total agricultural land and feeding roughly half of the nation's population¹. The adoption of new, short-duration, high-yielding rice varieties and hybrids, along with the development of irrigation systems through shallow wells, has led to the expansion of boro rice farming into areas that were previously not suitable¹. Boro rice is grown in three main types of environments: areas that rely on rainfall and are prone to flooding; areas that are irrigated and prone to flooding; and areas that are irrigated but not prone to

flooding². Boro rice is grown in areas that are waterlogged, low-lying, or have medium elevation, traditionally in the river basin deltas of Bangladesh and Eastern India, including the Eastern U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam³. In these areas, water is collected during the monsoon season and remains stagnant during the winter season⁴. The Boro Rice system benefits from the leftover moisture after the harvest of the kharif rice. These areas, which have a high capacity to retain water, include low-lying ditches where water is stored or accumulates, areas near canals and roads, Chaur-lands/Tal-lands, etc⁴.

Table-1: Major Areas Growing Boro Rice in different states of India.

State	Districts	Cultivation area	Reference
Eastern U.P.	Ballia, Basti, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Gazipur	Lake, rivers, <i>nalahs</i> , etc.	5
Bihar	Purnia, Katihar, Madhepura, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Saharsha	Low-lying <i>chours</i> and <i>chauri</i>	6
West Bengal	Baredwan, 24-pargana, Nadia, Midnapur, Bhankurh	Low-lying areas of coastal belt	7
Orissa	Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara	Low-lying areas of coastal belt	8
Assam	Nawgaon, Karimganj	Lake areas	9

In later years, when technology gradually started developing and the government machinery started becoming aware, the Irrigation Department, Flood Control Department etc. tried to give a systematic form to the "Faren Nala" and also try to increase their depth, an attempt was also made to determine a definite path for its flow. Because of this, securing the drain with bamboo turned out to be hard, requiring a lot of effort and time. Over time, because there was a shortage of manual labor, the villagers' interest in growing Boro paddy started to decline. Instead, they began to focus on growing "Berseem" crops, which were better suited for feeding their livestock.

Trifolium alexandrinum, also known as Berseem, stands as a significant source of feed for livestock, earning the title of "king of forage." It plays a crucial role in enhancing animal growth and milk output. Despite originating from Egypt, it is abundantly cultivated in India, earning it the moniker "indigenous of India." Berseem is both palatable for animals, boasting a protein content of 17% and a fiber content of 25.9%, along with a digestible nutrients range of 60-65%. However, feeding it excessively to ruminants can cause bloat¹⁰. These plants are also effective in preventing soil erosion and curbing weed growth. Their fibrous roots help store nutrients deep within the earth. Berseem performs exceptionally well compared to other types of clover in conditions with high water levels or poor drainage during winter. Utilizing Berseem in crop rotation can lead to improvements in the soil quality of the main crop¹¹. It serves as an ideal method for increasing soil organic matter and reducing the necessity for nitrogen fertilizer for the next crop¹¹.

Currently, they also grow wheat. Even though it's only done once a year, their yield is still high, although not on a large scale. In addition to this, some villagers are growing vegetables as well. While their wheat and animal feed production is satisfactory, the use of drain water for irrigating vegetables is not ideal for public health¹². Eating vegetables in their raw state can pose significant risks to human health, as the water contains a mix of chemicals, bacteria, eggs, and pollutants. These contaminants can lead to liver issues and a range of other illnesses, including cancer.

Eating vegetables is a natural component of human nutrition because they are easily accessible and provide a wealth of vitamins and minerals. Both leafy greens and root vegetables tend to hold more heavy metals than the rest. Research indicates that vegetables grown with wastewater often have a greater amount of heavy metals^{12, 13, 14}. Studies on the effects of these heavy metals on the body show that they can cause cancer, birth defects, mutations, and damage to the nervous system¹⁵. Because the Faren Nala is connected to the Gorra River on the other side, hence during the rainy season, when Gorra is at its peak, its back flow brings enough water into the Faren Nala, along with which many different types of fish also come. Therefore, people of the Rajdhani and surrounding villages collect fish and snails in abundance from the Faren Nala, which they not only sell but also use as food.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, according to the residents of Rajdhani Village, "Faren Nala" has been continuously helping them in farming, increasing their economic self-reliance and making arrangements for food for them and their animals.

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