



e-ISSN : 2347 - 9671

p- ISSN : 2349 - 0187

June 2014 Vol - 2 Issue- 6

VIPANI: A TOOL FOR EMPOWERING AGRICULTURALISTS

Santhosh. J¹ & Anu Varghese²

¹HSS, St. Mary's HSS, Kizhakkekkara, Kottarakkara, Kerala.

²Asst. Professor, Department of Commerce, ST. John's College, Anchal, Kerala

ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Nearly 70% of Indian population being dependent on agriculture. But in this global scenario when there are modern changes in every field of activities, agriculture cannot also escape from this. Still in Indian economy, the agriculture sector growth is lagging behind in comparison to industry sector service sector. The problems of agriculturalists are numerous; however, lack of market infrastructure and price fluctuation seems to be major bottleneck in the sustained development of agriculture production. Agricultural support services need to be reformed to empower farmers. In the light of the above facts the present study focuses on marketing problems of agriculturalists and the role of vipani in Kottarakkara thaluk of Kollam district.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture, Agriculturalists, Empower, Vipani

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Nearly 70% of Indian population being dependent on agriculture. In the ancient days farmers sold their goods directly to the consumers against cash basis or barter exchange. But in this global scenario when there are modern changes in every field of activities,

agriculture cannot also escape from this. Still in Indian economy, the agriculture sector growth is lagging behind in comparison to industry sector service sector. Agriculture continues to be the engine of economic growth in most developing countries of the region. In India, it still accounts for nearly one-third of the GDP and

provides livelihood to two-thirds of the population. Indian agriculture is characterized by a preponderance of small and marginal landholdings. More than 70 percent of India's farmers own less than 2 ha of land. From the mid-1960s onwards, as a result of the Green Revolution the agriculture sector in India registered spectacular growth transforming the scenario of food deficiency into one of self-sufficiency. In addition to food grains, oilseeds, fruits, vegetables, sugarcane, milk, fisheries and poultry recorded impressive gains. The success of the Green Revolution was experienced in several Asian countries where the rapid adoption of modern agricultural technology resulted in dramatic gains in productivity. However, despite significant achievements in food production, problems of food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and regional imbalances still persist.

Development of agriculture sector is vital for economic growth and development. Adequate finance is a panacea for this. Presently under priority sector, Govt. and RBI are guiding to commercial banks channelizing more and more funds to farmers at easy terms. Financial inclusion is the need of hour. Commercial banks are extending financial inclusion in rural areas directly hitting poverty alleviation in India. Though financing of agriculture by commercial banks has proved its value in changing the economy of farmers by increasing their income yet the system is not free from some problems.

Small farmers in India have several common features in being (1) seasonal producers, (2) fragmented buyers and suppliers unable to exploit economies of scale and (3) dominated by household economics where functions such as consumption, investment, work and social activities are undifferentiated and unspecialized. In contrast, buyers and service providers who operate in the market tend to be large-scale operators, commercially-driven, and able to exploit economies of scale. Small farmers,

especially in the rain fed areas, are faced with constraints in the production process, in access to inputs and credit, marketing and value addition. Their production level is limited by the small size of their holdings, weaknesses in the land tenure system and unequal access to irrigation water. They often encounter difficulty in procurement and application of modern technologies because of the high cost and greater risk involved.

Government-provided agricultural support services need to be reformed to enable small farmers to take up commercial farming through sustainable practices. Empowerment of farmers implies undertaking land reforms, ensuring equitable access to irrigation water and its efficient management and promotion of watershed development with community participation in dry land rain fed areas. Extension services will need to be radically restructured to make technology dissemination responsive to small farmers. Innovative institutional arrangements would need to be evolved to make the extension system farmer-driven and farmer accountable. Credit and thrift societies operating at farm level offer an effective mechanism of credit delivery to small farmer with low transaction costs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems of agriculturalists are numerous; however, lack of market infrastructure and price fluctuation seems to be major bottleneck in the sustained development of agriculture production. The agricultural marketing problems in rural areas have not been studied in a systematic way even though number of studies has been conducted in the country. Presently, development of marketing infrastructure to solve the problems of agriculturalists in rural areas is the primary concern of the government. Intensified efforts are needed to identify the specific problems related to agriculture marketing. In the light of the facts

above present study focuses on marketing problems of agriculturalists and the role of vipani in Kottarakkara thaluk of Kollam district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on following specific objectives:

1. To ascertain the socio-economic characteristics of rural agriculturalists
2. To enlist the problems of agriculturalists and obtain their suggestions.
3. To highlight the importance of vipani in agriculture marketing

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design:-

The study was designed as descriptive in nature based on the survey method. Both primary and secondary data was used for the study.\

Sampling design:-

Since it is difficult to contact the entire population, sampling technique was adopted. The respondents were interviewed using convenience sampling techniques.

Area of study:-

This study was conducted in Kottarakkara thaluk of Kollam district.

Sample size:-

Sample is around 80 agriculturalists selected on convenience basis.

Sampling techniques:-

Convenience sampling technique was used to collect information.

Sources of data:-

The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Primary data:-

The primary data were collected through structured interview schedule.

Secondary data:-

The required secondary was collected from books, magazines and web-sites.

Questionnaire design:-

Interview schedule was designed in such a manner that it would facilitate the respondents to reveal maximum information. Primary data was collected by using questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Majority of the respondents (52 percent) belonged to the age group of 50-60.
2. It was found that 72 percent of the respondents are male and the rest are female.
3. The survey indicates that 50 percent of the sample respondents appeared only elementary school level, 40 percent secured high school or higher secondary education, 10 percent respondents are collegiate but still they are working in the unorganized sector.
4. The study shows that 45 percent earn an average annual income of above 40000, but rest of the agriculturalists earn only a meager income which is less to meet their requirements.
5. Major proportion (52 percent) of the selected respondents is agriculturalists since the last 20 years. This reveals that the majority was unable to find jobs in formal sector and thus they are confined to remain in informal sector.
6. Majority (90 percent) of the sample respondents cultivate vegetables, only 10 percent cultivate fruits. This shows that our land and climatic conditions are more favorable for vegetable cultivation.
7. The fertilizers being used by the majority of the respondents are a blend of organic and chemical fertilizers that means the combination of both the fertilizers can bring out good yield..

8. Most of the respondents (80 percent) stated that their income doesn't provide for their basic needs. This is one of the major challenges faced by them.
9. 83 percent of the sample respondents are a member of an agriculturalists organization. This shows that that vipani has a great influence on the farmers.
10. Government support is gained by the majority of the respondents (74 percent) through their agriculturalists organization known as vipani.
11. A major threat affecting the farmers is the rising cost of the fuel, as the fuel price increases cost of living also increases.
12. 94 percent of the respondents are totally disappointed as the price fluctuations affect their farming to a great extends.
13. Absence of innovative financing is found to be a problem faced by the sample respondents.
14. The major production problem faced by the respondents is the labour availability, non-availability of good planting material, insect pest incidence etc. Are also found to be the production problems.
15. The major economic problem faced by the respondents is the complex process of getting loan. Banks doesn't give prior importance to the farmers as they represent the informal sector. Some of the respondents have fear about the recovery process if they face loss.
16. The agro-ecological constraints faced by the majority of the respondents are lack of enough water for cultivation. Farming is dependent on the coming of monsoon.
17. The market related constraints faced by most of the respondents is the low support price fixed by the government, some are not aware about the market price, delayed payment is also found to be a problem, some faces the cheating of middlemen.

18. The major socio-economic constraints faced by the sample respondents are the lack of proper credit facility.

19. It was found that 83 percent of the respondents are totally dissatisfied with their current job, Only 7 percent are highly satisfied with what they do now and about 10 percent are moderately satisfied.

SUGGESTIONS

To ensure inclusive growth in all regions and in all sectors, Banks should come forward with various financial services to the agriculturalists. Banking institutions are not granting subsidies to the right person who is in need. A lot of formalities are to be covered by the farmers to get a loan, thus they become reluctant to apply for the same. Therefore banks should create new provisions for the upliftment of the farmers. Government should concentrate more for the empowerment of the farmers, that means they must protect their interest and have a close look on the various constrains faced by them.

The inclusion of middlemen in marketing of agriculture produces must be avoided as farmers are being cheated by them by giving a low price to their concerned products. In order to strengthen the unorganized sector all the people must come forward and join together to adopt new reforms, policies and procedures that may give rise to a consistent farming practices of variety of food items through group effort

Agriculturalists organizations such as vipani's must create awareness among the rural people to make them realize about the need of agriculture moreover they should encourage people to join their organization by improving their cultivation practices.

Young generation should use social networking sites for the promotion of agricultural development such as promoting self cultivation, awareness about exploitation of

middlemen in agrimarketing and the role of vipani in direct marketing, promote echopreneurship etc.

CONCLUSION

Agriculturalists are an integral part of the informal sector. They contribute significantly to the GDP of an economy. But still they face several constraints and economic barriers that create a temptation among them to withdraw farming and thus many of them concentrates on other jobs. The risk included in doing agriculture is so high but when the return from it is analyzed we can notice that the condition of agriculturalists is so worse. If we analyses past 50 years of agriculture we can clearly depict a downward trend among people who are only concentrating on farming, this is due to the lack of enough return from vegetable and fruit cultivation. Many of the farmers now concentrate on cash crops which are more beneficial than food crops. If this situation goes on consumption of good food items becomes a major challenge and we must have to pay huge amounts to other states for meeting our food requirement. The role played by the agriculturalists in the economy posses due consideration but they are treated as the least important entities in the informal sector. They are ignored and avoided to a great extent by higher authorities. They are subjected to face various constraints and challenges. This should change.

REFERENCE

1. Shakeel-Ul-Rehman, M. Selvaraj and M. Syed Ibrahim (2012): "Indian Agricultural Marketing- A Review", *Asian Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development*, Vol. 2, No.1, pp. 69-75
2. Shalini Yadav, (2010), "Economics of Cashew in India Report". Department of Economic Analysis and Research, NABARD, Mumbai., pp 76.
3. Bhalla, G. S. and Gurmail Singh (2009), "Economic liberalization and India Agriculture: a state wise analysis", *Economic and political weekly*, Vol. 22, No 52, PP- 56-63.
4. Venkataramana, M.N and Srinivasa Gowda, M.V. (2008)," Channel and Price Spread in Tomato marketing-A study in Kolar District", *Agricultural Marketing*, Vol.39(1):pp.42-44.
5. Agrawal A.N. and Lal, Kundan, (1996), *Agricultural Problems of India*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, pp 69-72.

WEBSITES

1. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Agricultural_ marketing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agricultural_marketing)
2. mandiboard.nic.in
3. www.agriculture.com
4. www.kau.edu
5. www.aleap.org/vipani

