

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CAN TRANSFORM THE SMALL SCALE FARMERS' OF INDIA

Ankit Pathania¹ and Dr. Samriti²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Business Management,
Dr YSP UHF Nauri, Solan (HP)

²Assistant Professor, Shoolini University, Solan (HP)

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship, value chains, and market linkages are terms that are being used more and more when talking about agriculture and farming. Many small-scale farmers and extension organizations understand that there is little future for farmers unless they become more entrepreneurial in the way they run their farms. They must increasingly produce for markets and profits. Becoming more entrepreneurial can be a challenge for small-scale farmers. They required help from extension workers and other institutions for entrepreneurial activities. An entrepreneur is someone who produces for the market. An entrepreneur is a determined and creative leader, always looking for opportunities to improve and expand his business. An entrepreneur likes to take calculated risks and assumes responsibility for both profits and losses. An entrepreneur is passionate about growing his business and is constantly looking for new opportunities. Entrepreneurs are also innovators. They always look for better and more efficient and profitable ways to do things. Being innovative is an important quality for a farmer-entrepreneur, especially when the business faces strong competition or operates in a rapidly changing environment.

Can small-scale farmers become entrepreneurs? Yes. Small-scale farmers all over the world have shown a remarkable ability to adapt. They look for better ways to organize their farms. They try new crops and cultivars, better animals, and alternative technologies to increase productivity, diversify production, reduce risk and increase profits. They have become more market-oriented and have learned to take risks to open or create new markets for their products. Many small-scale farmers have many of the qualities of an entrepreneur. For small-scale farmers to become entrepreneurs they need all of these qualities and more. They need to be innovative and forward-looking. They need to manage their businesses as long-term ventures to make them sustainable. They need to be able to identify opportunities and seize them. Some small-scale farmers do have these qualities, but they still focus on maintaining their traditional way of life. Their production decisions are based on what they need not on what is possible. The farmer-entrepreneur produces a clear picture in his mind of what is possible and the future he wants. He knows that what is possible is determined by the market. The farmer-entrepreneur is always looking for new opportunities. He knows that new opportunities are found in the market.

Small-holder farmers usually farm for any of the following reasons:

- Exclusively for home consumption with rarely any surpluses produced.
- Mostly for home consumption, but to sell surpluses on the market.
- Partly for the market and partly for home consumption.
- Exclusively for the market.

Farmers' entrepreneurial environment

The farmers-entrepreneurs operate in a complex but unstable and dynamic environment. They are part of a larger collection of people including other farmers, suppliers, traders, transporters, processors and many others. Everyone is having an important role in producing products and moving them to the market through the value chain. Each one needs to be an entrepreneur and work in an integrated manner to make the whole system work better and to be more profitable in their business. Not only in developing alternative sources of employment, but entrepreneurship can also help radicalize farming techniques and bring innovation to improve yields per hectare.

SECTORS WHERE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAN HELP THE FARMERS:

1. Food processing: Food processing is the transformation of agricultural products into food, or of one form of food into other forms. Food processing includes many forms of processing foods, from grinding grain to make raw flour to home cooking to complex industrial methods used to make convenience foods. Modern supermarkets would not exist without modern food processing techniques. Processed foods are usually less susceptible to early spoilage than fresh foods and are better suited for long-distance transportation from the source to the consumer.



2. Floriculture: Floriculture is an age-old farming activity in India having immense potential for generating gainful self-employment among small and marginal farmers. Farmers can utilize a part of their land to cultivate seasonal flowers alongside regular conventional crops. But, this needs markets in the vicinity of processing and preservation units. Entrepreneurs knowing flower cultivation and marketing can set up parallel industries in fertile rural lands.

3. Pisciculture (Fish farming): It is practiced by a lot of farmers to augment their incomes. However, they do such practices on a small scale basis. A conscious business effort to develop small pond fish farms in rural areas can enable pisciculture to become a valuable sector in the rural economy. Fish cultivation on the market scale needs some knowledge and boosting entrepreneurship in the sector can make a difference, as done in western countries.

4. Farm technology: Dependence on outdated and inefficient technologies leads to poor productivity and low income. While large scale farmers have adopted modern technology on a major scale in India, most small farmers still rely on age-old farming techniques with mostly manual methods.

5. Beekeeping: It is the rearing of honey bees for the production of honey and other beneficial products while utilizing commercial methods. Beekeeping has grown in popularity in recent years and is practiced throughout the world. It does not involve any land ownership and it can be started with simple tools that can be obtained locally. As a business enterprise, it offers not only good returns but also plays an important role in crop pollination. Moreover, bee products improve family nutrition and offer traditional health care remedies.

6. Sericulture (silk farming): It is the production of cocoons that are used to produce silk. Sericulture has taken up an important role as a cottage industry and a supplemental income source for agrarian Indian communities. The returns are immediate because the whole process takes a month to harvest thus giving farmer's real-time money within a very short period and it's not capital intensive like other farming which requires a lot of farm inputs.

7. Mushroom Farming: Mushroom cultivation in polyhouse is one of the most profitable agribusinesses that can be started with minimum investment and space. Mushroom production has tremendous potential as an income-generating activity. Mushroom is important not only from the nutritional and medicinal point of view but for export also. It requires little space or land and hence it is of great importance for landless and marginal landholders.

8. Poultry farming: Poultry farming is the form of animal husbandry that raises domesticated birds such as chickens, ducks, turkeys, and geese to produce meat or eggs for food. Poultry in India has made a transition from backyard poultry to highly organized business activity over four decades. Egg and broiler production in the country is increasing at a rate of 8-10% per annum. Rural poultry farming provides livelihood and food security for local rural populations while promoting the agrarian economy of the country

9. Organic farming: Farmers, as well as urban individuals, are adopting organic farming practices and reaping more benefits. The importance of organic farming is growing very fast particularly in the international market. This sector provides great business opportunities to agro-based entrepreneurs. The area under organic farming is increasing but is unable to meet the demand for organic produce.

DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURS IN AGRICULTURE CAN IMMENSELY BENEFIT THE INDIAN ECONOMY BY:

- ✿ Reducing the burden on agriculture and boost productivity and profitability in the agriculture sector.
- ✿ Generating employment opportunities for rural youth, supplement traditional farm income in a big way and create alternative sources of income.
- ✿ Reducing the need for migration from rural to urban areas, thereby reducing pressure on urban cities, etc.
- ✿ Increasing individual and national income.
- ✿ Flourish the growth of agro-based industries in rural areas.
- ✿ Bring transformational change in the agribusiness sector to augment incomes, create more sub-industries within the agricultural sector and help the rural poor add to their agricultural resources.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector is the need of the hour for making the agriculture sector more attractive and profitable and enhancing the income of farmers. Sectors that can benefit hugely from the entrepreneurial intervention are food processing and packaging, preservation of seasonal fruits and vegetables, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, seed processing, flower farming in addition to crop farming, etc. The potentiality of the country can be tapped only by effective management of agriculture elements such as soil, seed, water and market needs. The farmers who can bear the risk and having a quest for the latest knowledge and techniques can prove to be right agripreneurs. Entrepreneurship also has a large potential to contribute to the national income while at the same time providing direct employment and income to the numerically larger and vulnerable section of the society. Entrepreneurship in agriculture is not only an opportunity but also a necessity for improving the production and profitability in the agriculture and allied sector and chasing the goal of doubling farmers' income.

