



Role of Fairs and Festivals in Agriculture and Rural Development

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Abstract:

Agriculture is the backbone of India which contributes approximately 14 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product . The diverse agro-ecosystem and varying climate of the nation provides very limited opportunities for the small and marginal farmers to diversify. Government of India is making tremendous efforts to support farmers through various central schemes, states schemes, subsidies, technologies etc. but still the benefits are being taken by the few end users. This paper deals with Role of fairs and festivals in agriculture and rural development.

Keywords: Fairs, Fstivals, Employment ,Agriculture, Rural Development

Introduction:

At present Indian agriculture is under tremendous pressure due to feed the ever increasing population of the country. Although the food grain production has crossed 250 million tonnes but it is well below the reach to feed the exploding population. It is expected that our country's population will surpass China in the next two decades. With increasing population and climate change if proper measures in terms of production and productivity of crops are not taken then our future generations can face severe food shortage. The average productivity of our major crops is lower than the world average which indicates the gap and scope of improvement. Agriculture provides not only the food and raw material but also provides employment to the huge proportion of population of India. The production and productivity of crops is lower than the yield potential. The agricultural development programmes are successful not only due to the contents of the programme but also on the basis of the extension methods for the dissemination of the technologies and implementation of the programme. While planning a programme emphasis is given on choosing the best methods of extension. The individual and group methods help to build rapport and getting firsthand information from the farmers. The message disseminated through these methods are very effective, unbiased and without distortion. But they are time consuming, expensive and do not cover the farmers at the mass scale.

It is necessary to choose the right combination of individual, group and mass contact methods to convince the majority of farmers. Illiterate and literate farmers should be equally considered. The mass mobilising method for the learning and recreation is said to be Kisan Mela or Farmers Fair. Farmer fair is an effective method for creating awareness on different technologies for the farmers, scientists, officers from agriculture and allied departments, NGOs, private agencies etc. who come at a common place where different

items related to agriculture and allied sectors etc. are displayed for the public with an objective of education, entertainment, sales etc. There is immense scope for the extension personnel to reach the unreached. There is need to choose the appropriate individual, group and mass contact methods for the dissemination of agricultural technologies to the farmers. There is a dire need to convince majority of the farmers for the adoption of new agriculture development technologies so that the production can be increased. The mass mobilizing method utilised for the purpose of learning and recreation is normally termed as farmers fair.

Objectives:

- 1) To Know the importance of fairs and festivals.
- 2) To study the deferent between fairs , festivals and rural development.

Various agricultural institutes and allied sectors organise such type of events for the benefits of the farming community. This is organised for one day or few days depending on the necessity of the crowd and business. Very less is known about the history of farmers fair but the records are seen in 500 BC in the book of Ezekiel. An account of fair was written in 588 BC describing the 'Tyre' as an important market and fair centre. In the beginning farmers fairs were held for the commercial purpose in which the sellers used to sale their produce with one another. It is also said that the people in Athens, Mecca and Rome used to gather for worship. Later on the worshipped places became the great commercial cities. It is said that fair word is derived from the Latin word 'Feria' means a holy day. In early Christian era it has been observed that the Churches took a lead role to generate a source of revenue by organising fairs and festivals and in 1700s many small fairs were held in French Canada. After that in 1765, Winsdor had its American Fair. Elkanah Watson, a New England Patriot and farmer is said to be the Father of the US American Fairs for organizing the exhibition event in 1811. After that most of the European countries started to organisex such farmers' fairs. From 1900, every country has been organizing the agricultural farmers' fairs.

In present era farmers fairs are playing a pivotal role for the dissemination of agricultural and allied sectors information with the objective to create awareness and to educate the farming community. Farmers fair is an attempt to demonstrate the technologies developed by the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), line departments, Non-Government Organisations' (NGOs), private agencies etc. Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu also organises such types of farmers fair to create awareness on modern agricultural technologies. On 15th April, 2016 Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Reasi also organised a farmer's fair which was attended by the Union Minister Dr. Jatinder Singh. Farmers fair is also a platform for the progressive farmers to show their produce to their fellow farmers and is also a place for the socialisation. It is also the best place for the people to learn who hardly visit outside to learn. These fairs also provides opportunities for the farmers to share their experiences with the gathering and improve their knowledge by "Seeing is believing" principle by visiting the different stalls, experimental farms, Kisan Ghosties etc.

Relationship between Economic Growth and Employment

The size of employment in a country depends to a great extent on the level of development. Therefore, when a country makes progress and its production expands, employment opportunities grow. In India, during the past three decades or so, production has expanded in all the sectors of economy. However, during the planning period, unemployment in absolute terms has increased. This has happened because during the first three decades of economic planning, trend rate of growth was considerably lower than the targeted rate. Therefore, jobs in adequate number were not created. Further, economic growth by itself does not solve the problem of unemployment. Prabhat Patnanik has succinctly remarked, "A higher arithmetical figure of growth rate is neither a necessity nor sufficient condition for alleviation of unemployment".¹ In fact, there exists a real conflict between the objectives of economic growth and employment in the early phase of economic development.

Role of fairs and festivals in agriculture and rural development

Festivals and special events are known to play important roles in destination development as attractions, image makers, animators of static attractions, and catalysts for other developments¹. In addition to the economic benefit that is derived from the increased number of tourists, festivals and special events also expand the tourist season of the destination², provide cultural and educational opportunities, foster a feeling of community pride³, help conserve sensitive natural, social and cultural environments, and contribute to sustainable development⁴. Event and festival tourism is one of the fastest growing forms of tourism. It is becoming increasingly popular in rural areas as a means to revitalize local economies. Advancing technologies and changing weather patterns (i.e. increase in droughts and floods/storms) have brought about the need for diversification of industry in areas previously reliant on traditional industries such as farming, or narrowly focused tourism industries. Events and festivals have been used with great success in many such areas as a means to draw people to regions that traditionally have a seasonal tourist appeal⁵. According to a survey conducted by the International Festival and Event Association (IFEA), the special events industry is estimated to include some 4 to 5 million regularly reoccurring events and has a significant economic impact globally

.The advantages of festivals and special events are demonstrated more explicitly in rural settings, particularly in boosting local economies, continuing employment, and rural destination promotion

- Increased expenditures
- Creation of employment
- Increase in labor supply
- Increase in standard of living
- Increased awareness of the region as a travel/tourism destination
- Increased knowledge concerning the potential for investment and commercial activity in the region
- Creation of new accommodation and tourist attractions
- Increase in accessibility
- Construction of new facilities
- Improvement of local infrastructure
- Preservation of heritage
- Increase in permanent level of local interest and participation in types of activities associated with event(s)
- Strengthening of regional values and traditions
- Increased local pride and community spirit
- Increased awareness of non-local perceptions
- Enhanced international recognition of region and values
- Development of skills among planners

. Kisan Ghosties and special lectures by the experts are really the boon for the farmers during the fair. Farmers' fairs are the best extension methods for the dissemination of new agricultural technologies to the farmers. It is expected that with the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) farmers' fairs will take us even in the far flung areas of the nation. The ICTs can deliver the new agricultural technologies in a rapid and user friendly manner to the ultimate users. Through m-Kisan portal the farmers are registered and then the agricultural advice is given to the farmers through mobile SMSs. Through m-Kisan and various apps, it is very easy for the agricultural scientists to present their demonstrations skill and send to the connected farmers from different parts of the country.

Conclusion:

In the end of the event farmers are encouraged by providing the awards for their produce. It is a common forum of the farmers, scientists and organisational firms for exchanging the experiences and information about the modern agricultural technologies. Farmers' fairs provide a cost effective method for imparting education through demonstrations, farmers' feedback and by interaction between farmers and scientists in the most convincing manner. It also gives opportunity for sale of agro-inputs and products and to the display latest agricultural and allied sectors technologies

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