

**National Workshop on “Doubling Farmers’ Income by 2022”
2-3 November 2016, MANAGE, Hyderabad, India
National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)**



This workshop was a concerted effort by participants having different perspectives in identifying issues and laying out directions to double farmers’ income. Dr. Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee and Dr. Saravanan Raj participated in this workshop and share their observations here.

CONTEXT

Since independence, a major focus in Indian agriculture has been to increase the production and productivity. Policies were production and productivity focussed and the Government initiatives were mostly around implementing various schemes and programs for the same. However, the farmers were ignored in the process and the income of farm families took a hit.



In recent times, though, focus shifted to farmers and their holistic well-being. The honourable Prime Minister of India while addressing a farmers’ rally in Uttar Pradesh took up a challenge to double farmers’ income by 2022. During his address at the Bloomberg India Economic Forum, New Delhi (The Economic Times, 2016), he laid out seven key points to strategize and plan on the same. In this context, a national workshop with the theme “Doubling farmers’ income by 2022” was

jointly organized by National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) (<http://www.nird.org.in/>), Hyderabad and National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) (<http://www.manage.gov.in/>), Hyderabad during November 2-3, 2016 at MANAGE.

THE PROGRAMME

The two days' workshop was attended by the Directors of line departments from different states of India, Directors of SAMETIs (State Agricultural Management and Extension Training Institute), former Vice Chancellors and present Heads and faculties from SAUs, Heads and faculties of EEIs, and by the international participants from different South East Asian, Middle Eastern, and African countries. The participants included institutional heads and faculties from ICAR institutes such as the following:

- Indian Institute of Rice Research (IIRR) (<http://www.drricar.org>)
- Indian Institute of Millet Research (IIMR) (<http://www.millets.res.in/>)
- Directorate of Poultry Research (ICAR-DPR) (<http://www.pdonpoultry.org/pdpnew/>)
- Indian Institute of Oilseed Research (IIOR) (<http://www.icar-iior.org.in/>)
- Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) (<http://www.crida.in/>)
- National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) (<http://naarm.org.in/home/>)

Inaugural session

Smt. V. Usha Rani, IAS, Director General, MANAGE, opened the discussions by focusing on importance of strengthening community level extension. She talked about skill development of 'para-extension workers' and 'farmers' friends', institutional credit system, agricultural information delivery, market intelligence, and introduction of agribusiness concept. Shri Suresh Chanda, IAS, Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Government of Telengana, emphasized on large investment in producing quality inputs like seeds, livestock breeds, etc., reducing cost of production by investing in technology, streamlining technological innovations to suit the needs of



Dignitaries during the inaugural session

marginal and small farmers, introducing practically applicable solutions to existing unique problems at micro level, and making agriculture economically viable by regulating cost of land and inputs. Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog (<http://niti.gov.in/>), identified irrigation, technology, and policy as focus points to tackle farmers' problems and drew attention to the three-pronged strategy (state level marketing reforms, land reforms, and forestry reforms) of NITI Aayog for short run to increase farmers' income.



Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog delivering his talk

Technical sessions

The technical sessions had four presentations on the following topics:

- i. Policy changes required on issues concerning with farmers by Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog
- ii. Doubling farm productivity and income through precision way by Dr. E. Vadivel, Former Director of Extension, TNAU (<http://www.tnau.ac.in/>), Coimbatore
- iii. Multi-sectoral approach and smart agriculture for doubling farmers' income by Dr. W.R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRD&PR
- iv. Importance of value chain, linkages with private sector – experience and prospects by Shri. Pravesh Sharma, IAS (Retd.), Former MD - SFAC (<http://sfacindia.com/>)

Day 2 followed with two technical presentations, followed by presentations from representatives of five states Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Jharkhand, and Orissa. The topics of technical presentations were:

- i. Doubling farmers' income: Issues and challenges by Dr. S. Galab, Director, Centre for Economics and Social Studies (CESS) (<http://www.cess.ac.in/cesshome/cessmain.asp>), Hyderabad
- ii. Doubling farmers' income: Options and opportunities by Prof. C. Ramasamy, Former Vice-Chancellor, TNAU, Coimbatore

The six topics dealt with diverse issues and consequent changes needed to increase farmers' income. The major focuses of those discussions were:

i. Policy changes on:

- a. Land titles and computerization of land records to reduce litigations and property disputes that cause major distress to farm families. Other aspects include, introduction of long term tenancy laws, and introduction of Model Land Lease Law
- b. Water and irrigation as depleting ground water, deteriorating water quality, and drying up of canals and dams needs prioritization of watershed development, command area development and optimum use of water to materialize 'more crop per drop'
- c. Institutional credit and crop insurance to encourage long term lending and increasing the amount of loans for small and marginal farmers with effective implementation, and ensuring flexible insurance plans for crops
- d. Environmental stress causes major distress in smallholders and to cope with this, pre-active and pro-active policies are needed in place
- e. Marketing to introduce lighter regulation of APMC and to free contract farming, sell directly to consumers, encourage issuing of All India Trading License, training farmers in post-harvest processing to combat underemployment in lean period, and encourage organized retail. Market intelligence development also needs increased focus.
- f. Agribusiness to make farmers managerial and increase the ease of investing in agribusiness and marketing of agricultural produce, which is very much restricting and discouraging for investors.
- g. Forestry since import of non-fuel timber is very high in India and farmers are not interested in growing trees as cutting trees currently require multi-level permissions to curb illegal trade.
- h. Public private partnership (PPP) to identify, reach out and effectively collaborate with and learn from various innovative efforts for farmers' development. Also, private sector contributes to a major portion of value chains in high value sectors like dairy, poultry, grapes, buffalo meat, etc. and these linkages can be encouraged countrywide.
- i. Supporting feminization of agriculture as more women are getting involved in farming because of socio-economic reasons, which needs special measures to assist them in the profession.
- j. Financial restructuring under schemes and programs to ensure timely release of funds directly to the implementing agencies.



Dr. E. Vadivel, Former Director of Extension, TNAU, Coimbatore
addressing the audience

- k. Shift to high value sectors as it contributes to 75% of agricultural GDP and can increase farmers' income manifolds with right measures and incentives, and focusing on global food habit trends, move from 'production' to 'value'.

ii. *Use of research and technology for:*

- a. Sustainable and eco-friendly technology development
- b. Quality control of seeds to ensure better productivity
- c. Revisiting soil health testing systems and study impact of Soil Health Card to curb indiscriminate use of fertilizers increasing input cost.
- d. Make disease and pest diagnosis more efficient and reduce use of avoidable chemicals on agricultural lands.
- e. Suitable machinery development and service centres to cater to the needs of smallholders.
- f. Effective monitoring of relevant technology development by public research institutes, bring changes at institutional level, and change focus from incremental research to transformative research.
- g. Develop suitable precision farming techniques to increase the productivity of farmers and collect relevant farmers' innovations.
- h. Risk aversion in agriculture with high precision technologies like drones, geo tagged mobile pictures, crop modelling, etc.
- i. Contingency planning to mitigate the effects of climate change on agricultural production.
- j. Using ICTs to revisit the extension system of the country that has become quite redundant with work burdens not related to extension.

iii. *Human resource development:*

- a. To capacitate and mobilize contractual community level service providers (in line of Farmers Friend under ATMA, Anganwadi workers all over India, and *Kaushal Mitra* in Maharashtra)
- b. To mobilize farmers and sensitize them leading to better farmer innovations
- c. For forming greater social capital by farmers through Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs), Producer Organizations (POs), cooperatives, associations, etc.
- d. To increase managerial capability and entrepreneurial skills of the farmers for better farm and supply chain management through 'Krishi Business Kendras' at state or district level
- e. For increased control of farmers on input markets and control input cost
- f. For R&D allocation to develop appropriate technology for smallholders



Dr. S. Galab, Director, Centre for Economics and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad (right) and Prof. C. Ramasamy, Former Vice-Chancellor, TNAU, Coimbatore addressed the audience on the second day of workshop

- g. For institutional and human resource infrastructure in tribal areas for production of high quality value added products to be supplied all over the country

Strengthening the extension system

The common thread running across all the discussions and presentations was the need of a strong extension mechanism to make the above strategies actually work. Agriculture is highly fragmented and situation specific, which makes the extension personnel most suited to understand the changing needs of farmers and respond accordingly. Similarly, the extension system is also strategically placed to most effectively implement technological innovations and policy changes making them the link between planning and implementation, which if weak or missing, will not result in any significant change irrespective of the most outstanding research/policy changes. The most critical actions suggested - market orientation of the farmers, organizing them into groups, transfer of technology, sensitizing on high value crops and value chains, discussing on farm related problems, and collaborating with private sectors at micro level – are all basic extension functions.

Strategies discussed to make a strong extension system were:

- a. Development of community extension workers and increased focus on community based extension to strengthen the village level extension functionary base. Educated village youth selected as 'para-extension workers' and trained on specific aspects can address the growing extensionist: farmer ratio.
- b. Increased focus on Producer Organizations (POs) to move towards 'Extension Plus' and beyond TOT.
- c. Use of ICTs (low cost technologies like social media and mobile applications and high cost technologies like sensors) for better outreach.
- d. Identification of thrust areas like gender and youth needs to be identified and focussed on to ensure complete coverage of target population at micro level.
- e. Capacity development of both public and private extension personnel to make them more efficient and effective by developing leadership skills, communication skills and better understanding of rural society.
- f. Convergence of extension efforts from public and private sector through specific and guided efforts for effective extension delivery and avoiding repetition in efforts.

Presentation by state representatives

Representatives of the states presented upon the identified unique strength and focus sectors of their respective states for doubling farmers' income soon. Maharashtra focused on POs and micro-irrigation with specific region, group, and commodity based strategies. Tamil Nadu identified strategies like System of Rice Intensification (SRI), whole village concept, organic farming, and dryland farming as priority areas and research and extension with increased focus on ICTs. Focus areas of Gujarat were institutionalization of farmers, reduction in cost of cultivation, increase in irrigated area, remunerative prices, and reduction in post-harvest losses. Jharkhand has built strategies around soil conservation, horticulture, animal husbandry, and fisheries, while Orissa,

being a coastal area, has identified brackish water farming and inland fisheries as focal points to increase farmers' income.



State representatives discussing with participants post-presentation

Visit to Rural Technology Park, NIRD&PR

Rural Technology Park, NIRD&PR was built to uplift the rural people in all aspects of life. Twenty technology units in allied sectors provide training to rural people and help them be self-dependent through capacity building, women empowerment, rural employment generation, and enhancement of economic status.

OUR IMPRESSIONS

The presentations by the dignitaries and the following Q&A sessions opened up a lot of issues that needs to be focused on to increase rural farm income (real income of individual farmers from farm sources was the focus, as Prof. Ramesh Chand specified). Importance of access to national and international markets, land title needs of farmers, identification of high value crops and establishment of value chains, and recognition and collaboration with private sector were the common themes reflected upon by all the speakers. They also expressed their concerns on the manpower and resource constraints of the extension system. It was an interesting workshop as policy makers, researchers, academicians and field level extension functionaries interacted with the representatives of premier research and development institutions of the country about steps that need to be taken to increase farm based income of rural families. Shri. Pravesh Sharma's take on the need of increased focus on organizing farmer groups and linking them to the markets rather than focusing merely on increased productivity was an interesting one. Further value might have been added to the discussions by including Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) and farmer representatives to get their perspective on the issue. But real change can come only through

making these ideas practical and for that, committed individual efforts at the grassroots level with collective accountability is very important. Overall, it was an illuminating two-day event and MANAGE played a perfect host for the two-day event.

ACTION POINTS FOR MANAGE

The intensive discussions in the workshop brought out some pertinent challenges in Indian agriculture that needs immediate attention. The need for providing effective extension and advisory support to farmer was an important area of concern raised in this workshop. Being a national level organization for agricultural extension, MANAGE should try to address some of these challenges.

- a. Understanding the generic problems in scaling up of successful pilot projects and combining extension with appropriate technology to address the problems of the farmers. The guidelines of National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology can prove to be benchmark to work on
(http://agricoop.nic.in/Admin_Agricoop/Uploaded_File/Chapter%20on%20NMAET%20for%20all%20Guidelines.pdf)
- b. Developing sustainable models of community extension with suitable stakeholders to effectively respond to location specific problems and include farmers in development dialogues.
- c. Capacity development of extension professionals with special emphasis on functional skills (networking, facilitating, advocating, reflective learning) for bringing change in work culture of the extension system and make extension functionaries more effective at micro level.

Interesting reads on the topic

1. Chand, R. (2016). Why doubling farmers' income by 2022 is possible. The Indian Express. Published on 15 April, 2016. <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/why-doubling-farmers-income-by-2022-is-possible-2754028/>.
2. Chandrasekhar, S. and Mehrotra, N. (2016). What would it take? Doubling farmers' income by 2022. Economic and Political Weekly, 51(18), 30 April, 2016. <http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/18/commentary/doubling-farmers-incomes-2022.html>.
3. Gulati, A., and Saini, S. (2016). Farm incomes: Dreaming to double. The Indian Express. Updated on July 28, 2016. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/farm-incomes-dreaming-to-double-2939405/>.
4. IANS. (2016). Doubling farmers' income by 2022 will prove Herculean. Business Standard. Published on March 30, 2016. http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/doubling-farmers-income-by-2022-will-prove-herculean-special-to-ians-116033000447_1.html.
5. The Economic Times. (2016). Modi outlines 7-point strategy to double farmers' income. The Economic Times, The Times of India Group, New Delhi. Published on March 28, 2016. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Modi-outlines-7-point-strategy-to-double-farmers-income/articleshow/51587682.cms>.

- d. Due to its position, MANAGE can be an active voice for policy advocacy for better and more efficient extension system by engaging with policy makers to influence change at every level of decision making.
- e. Increased focus on value chain extension to provide end-to-end support to the farmers.

- f. Knowledge management through interactive web portals, databases, social media, and publications across the themes.

Doubling farmers' income in a period of 6-7 years is a Herculean task as it would take an increase in agricultural growth by around 12%. To achieve this target, national institutions need to move beyond discussion and get into serious action with identification of their own action points based on organizational mandate to achieve the success intended by organizing workshops and training programs.

FINAL REMARKS

The two-day workshop on doubling farmers' income can be best summed up paraphrasing the words of Smt. V. Usha Rani, IAS, Director General, MANAGE, "Leadership and vision, technology, forward looking policy, committed officials, and comprehensive planning are the determining factors that make real difference at both macro- and micro-level and states need to adopt the appropriate strategies to focus on effective implementation as that is what makes the difference in the long run.

Working to ensure progress in spite of all the problems and challenges and each individual making a difference at their own sphere of work can ultimately go a long way in fulfilling the goal of increasing farmers' income in the near future."



Smt. V. Usha Rani, IAS, Director General, MANAGE
delivering her closing remarks

Disclaimer: The opinions and viewpoints expressed here by the authors are their personal and do not reflect the opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints of MANAGE or the workshop organizers.

Dr. Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee is MANAGE Fellow, Centre of Agricultural Extension Innovations and Reforms, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad – 500030, Telangana (suchiradipta@hotmail.com). Dr. Saravanan Raj is Director (Agricultural Extension), National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad – 500030, Telangana (saravananraj@hotmail.com).

**AESA Secretariat: Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP),
Road No 10, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, India
www.aesa-gfras.net Email: aesanetwork@gmail.com**