

**Research Note :**

## **A STUDY OF THE FACTORS PROMOTING FARMERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE INSTITUTIONALIZED INTERVENTION**

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The mother dairy started its fruit and vegetable (F & V) scheme in 1994 with the main objective of linking producer to the consumer without the intervention of middlemen. This project has been set up to provide a direct link between the fruit & vegetable growers on one hand and the consumer on the other. From procurement to marketing, the project handle the entire range of operations. The project was initially funded by the National Dairy Development Board. But now it is fully managed at the Mangolpuri head office under the leadership of general manager. The project management structure includes 12 departments, the major one being personnel, Human resources, procurement, marketing operations and finance, having sectional heads for each department.

Based on crop plans worked out in discussion with farmers, produce from villages around Delhi and many others states are received at the cold storage complex at Delhi. Farmers are given remunerative prices for their produce. Payment is made by cheque on the basis of quality determined by weighing the produce at the complex. Standards are being defined for each fruit and vegetable so as to link price to quality. Procurement specialists and trained field staff help the farmers in crop management and protection. Efforts are being made to introduce new seed varieties and scientific method of agriculture to increase the yield and improve the quality of produce. Seed multiplication and demonstration farms are also planned.

The fruit and vegetable growers do not have any problem regarding pricing, marketing and

distribution of produce as this is looked after by a professional at the head office. It is made sure that at least 55% profits reach the actual growers. NDDB is catering to the village level farmers. NDDB encourages co-operative by farmers' association so that they manage affairs of their own, to protect their interests and regulate activities of their own.

Thus, the fruit and vegetable project which is a pilot-project, has seen gradual expansion in from of 178 booth over the past 4 year. The Authorities have plans of further experience with the target of 200 booths in the city in the near future. Since the project has the primary objective of providing good quality of fruits and vegetable at reasonable rates to the consumer.

This study focuses on the role played by Mother Dairy's the fruit and vegetable schemes in meeting the farmers- consumer demand. Keeping these possibilities in view the present investigation was designed with following objectives:

1. To explore the factors promoting farmer's participation in the institutionalized endeavor.
2. To study the farmers' views and suggestions to improve commercialization of vegetable cultivation.

### **METHODOLOGY :**

This study was conducted in two villages namely, Palla and Bakhatawarpur of Alipur block of Delhi where the mother dairy is in operation. This area has the more than 60% area under vegetable cultivation in the state. Thus, the Alipur Block was selected purposively for carrying out this study.

There are two fruit and vegetable producers societies located at Palla and Bakhatawarpur village respectively in Alipur block. There were two categories of respondent's 50 non-member vegetable growers (25 from each village). they were selected randomly and interviewed by using per tested structured interview schedule about their feeling and observations about the fruits and vegetables marketing scheme. The factors promoting farmers participation in the institutionalized intervention was assessed through participatory techniques and the views and suggestions to improve commercialization of vegetable cultivation were content analyzed. The data so collected, were coded, tabulated and used for statistical analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Issues Emerged During the Group Discussion held with the Farmers of Village Palla and Bakhtawarpur:

(1) Availability of Labour was a constraint with vegetable cultivation. In case of vegetable the cropping patterns was very intensive and most of the operations required human labour. Hiring of labour is very expensive; hence the cultivation is generally carried out with family labours. Most of the families one nuclear, hence there was a serious labour constraint.

(2) Mother dairy had opened Bakhtawarpur collections center for spinach (palak) and Palla for Radish through they also take some quantities of other vegetables like, Cauliflower, Knol-knol etc. Thus these outlets were available only for part of their produce. Even in case of the specified vegetables like Palak and Radish. Mother Dairy is able to purchase a limited quantity. Many times the total produce was much greater than outlet the purchases. Hence, the Mother Dairy system was quit inadequate in meeting the market needs of the growers.

(3) Mother dairy had fixed indent for the vegetable for each center, they generally do not lift larger than the in dusted quantity.

(4) The sale through Mother Dairy centers was about 10% of the total production in winter season. The rest of the produce was being still

supplied to Azadpur Mandi through their established channel-truck owner-Arhati-Sale by Arhati (self in some cases) and payment after deductions made for the service changes, platform rent etc.

(5) The vegetable collection and supply centers were operated by a villager's Association, which was unregistered. It was managed by a group of villagers in private league with the Mother Dairy sale point functionary. Secretary is a villager who exercises his authorities in his own way in league with the president of the Association and a few influential villagers.

(6) 1.75 percent handling change is made to the Association to meet cost of go down, salary, telephone etc. President of Association receives and disperses amount to farmers weekly. Many of them need the payment daily.

(7) The village association managing the collection center is a close group of villagers, some of whom were said to be even landless villagers. They did not allow other villagers to buy membership of the Association since purchase of vegetables from the members reverie priority over the non-members.

(8) In lean season when market prices high, farmers in general are less interested in sale through Mother Dairy center they get higher or at least the same price on daily cash basis in the mandi. During the period plenty of production and lower sale price prevailing in mandi, they compete and even fight with others to sell their produce-through Mother Dairy sale point due to reasons (a) price stability (b) guarantee of sale/supply (c) economy due to saving of saving of transport cost and labour otherwise required if sold in Azadpur Mandi.

(9) Mother Dairy indent for purchase was quite inadequate in quantity and variety and hence was not big incentive for the farmers to go far vegetable cultivation. Their dependence on 'Mandi' is as used heavy and Mother Dairy sale arrangement is only margined market support to the trade.

(10) Service provided by Mother Dairy was supply of seedlings on payment and free advised provided by experts for plant protection etc. on demand.

(11) There was mistrust amongst villagers. The managers of Mother Dairy Procurement centre and even employees of Mother Dairy organization were considered dishonest and exploiter by many villagers without any valid reason. Many of them were also unreasonable in expecting benefit for the Mother Dairy arrangement. Some of them expect a share even in the handling charge (1.75%) paid by Mother Dairy for functioning of the centre.

(12) Co-operative spirit among villagers was seriously lacking. They appeared to be highly self entered with absolutely no concern for others and social responsibilities.

**Farmers view and Suggestions to Improve Commercialization of Vegetable Cultivation :** An attempt has been made to analyze the data collected on farmer's views and their suggestions to improve commercialization of vegetable cultivation using content analysis.

The results are being given below :

(1) All vegetable growers expressed their view about role of irrigation network and facilities to improve the commercialization of vegetable cultivation. More than two-third gave their opinion in favour of regular supply of electricity. However, 31 percent of the vegetable growers were partly satisfied with the present supply of electricity.

(2) As many as 98 percent of the vegetable growers had expressed their dissatisfaction over the quality of their critical inputs as well as its exorbitant cost. However, few vegetable growers (21 percent) were found content with the availability and use of critical inputs. To overcome this problem most of the vegetable growers suggested opening of government shops of centers in rural areas and ensure their adequate and timely supply and availability of quality critical inputs at reasonable rates. About 80 percent vegetable growers emphasized the need to have better control and check over the private shops of critical inputs.

(3) Similarly, vegetable growers expressed their views and offered suggestions on the availability of human labourers to pave way for vegetable commercialization. As many as 87 percent

vegetable growers expressed their concern for scarcity of labour to work on their farms. To overcome this problem, as many as 80 percent respondents suggested that optimum wages should be decided by the government and same should be uniformly paid to the labourers to check their migration from rural to urban centers.

(4) The vegetable growers had also expressed their views and offered their suggestions on the easy and cheap availability of farm machinery and equipment that would lead to commercialization of vegetables. More than half of the vegetable growers had on access to modern of improved agricultural implements for vegetable cultivation. However, remaining others had access to it. They also felt that these implements and machineries were quite expensive and should be made available at subsidies rates or sold at cheaper rates near their villages. On fifth of the vegetable growers were unable to procure modern implements due to their high cost. Similarly, one-fifth of them had no skill to make use of these new implements. In view of this, they suggested for organizing the training programme on the maintenance and handling of new implements.

(5) All respondents were not happy with present infra-structural post-harvest facilities in their areas. Due to inadequate facilities, vegetable growers could not fetch remunerative price for their farm produce. All the vegetable growers wanted to have vegetable processing units in their area. They also suggested that some agencies like Mother Dairy should come forward for establishing processing units in their area so that farm produce can be sold directly to such agencies. Ultimately this will lead to minimize the post-harvest losses and in turn improvise vegetable commercialization.

(6) All vegetable growers were dissatisfied with present marketing facilities. Half of the vegetable growers wanted that government should arrange for a separate space in the market (Mandi) for the sale of their produce and to get better price. They also expressed their concern for better marketing information, optimizing transportation cost, proper storage and processing facilities as well as control and check over middlemen or graders.

(7) The vegetable growers emphasized creating training centers in their areas so that training could be imparted on various aspects of vegetable production technologies in enhancing vegetable production and productivity. It was also expressed by most of the farmers that there was a need to strengthen extension agency had to play vital role in creating awareness about the scientific way of vegetable farming, helping them to gain knowledge and improve skill on various relevant agro-techniques of vegetable production. They also demanded to strengthen linkages and have better ties with Mother Dairy and Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi for providing farm advisory services to them.

(8) Nearly two-third of the vegetable growers reported that they had an access to the credit

institutions, mostly nationalized banks in the area. However, procedures of getting financial assistance to them were quite complex and more time consuming. Therefore, majority of them were reluctant to avail credit facilities. Most of the farmers offered their suggestions to simplify the procedure or official formalities for, getting loan or any kind of financial assistance from these banks. They also expressed their views to lower down the interest rates and modify the mode of repayment pattern so that they could find it easier to clear up their loans taken from banks, if these problems were resolved by the credit institutions, it would help the vegetable growers to invest effectively in vegetable farming leading to higher commercialization of vegetable cultivation.

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