



Increasing Self-Esteem to Attract and Retain Farmers in Agriculture Profession

Sujit K. Nath

Senior Scientist & Head, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (OUAT), Deogarh, Odisha, India
Email id: sujitnath75@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Agriculture, Brand, KVK, Model, Perception, Self-esteem

<http://doi.org/10.48165/IJEE.2022.58213>

ABSTRACT

Besides income, prestige also plays a major role in selection of profession. Lowering of self-esteem is perceived as one of the major setbacks for reducing attraction towards farming by the current generation. Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Deogarh, Odisha developed a strategy and worked upon it during 2018-19 and 2019-20 to increase the social status of farmers by increasing their human values. The selected farmers were branded as experts in certain fields before a public gathering. Their role and success story was highlighted through different mass media. The effect of such action was observed and recorded. The branded farmers felt their increased social status after branding by KVK. These young farmers served as a medium for technology transfer in their locality. Increasing of self-esteem was perceived as the greatest effect of branding by the farmers. The studied farmers were of the opinion that even after recognized by government, they had the least opportunity to easily avail government schemes. This novel approach was found a successful step towards encouraging farmers, rural agripreneurs as well as transfer of farm technologies. The model can be replicated successfully in agriculture and other such areas for a wholesome development.

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of farm sector to gross domestic product (GDP) of the nation has reduced from 17.03 per cent to 15.96 per cent during last decade. After the adoption of liberalized economy, the share of service, industry and manufacturing sectors in national (GDP) started growing rapidly reducing the share of farm sector. This also encouraged large scale migration of human resources from farming sector to non-farm sector. Gradually farming lost its attraction in the rural communities. The total workforce engaged in agriculture was observed to get reduced from 51.52 per cent in 2010 to 41.49 per cent during 2020. Most of the small and marginal farmers of the nation (86%) are now felt struggling with a profession having lower and unstable income, highest insecurity and with least prestige from the society (Nath, 2020). Singh et al., (2021) remarked that worldwide agriculture has witnessed a shift in the last few decades and extension mechanisms need to stay ahead and equip farmers by enhancing their management capacities. Maslow (1954) in his hierarchy of need structure stated that self esteem is the higher

grade need of a human being in the society. O'Boyle (2011) in his study opined that enough studies have not yet been taken up to find out the effect of such attributes on farm outcomes and its effect on society. In this back ground, it was felt that the extension approach should be focused to tackle the poor prestige associated with farming.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra is working in all the rural districts of India in the field of extension research for holistic development of the farm families. They are one of the key extension systems and integral part of National Agricultural Research System (NARS). Without any sanctioned post of grass root level extension worker at village level and with limited number of scientific posts, KVK has been given the mandate to test location specific frontier technologies in agriculture and allied sectors and provide self employment avenues to the resource poor farm families (Nath & De, 2015). Doubling of farmers' income programme (2016) is perceived as an incentive to check professional migration from the farm sector. But no specific action has ever been taken exclusively to recognize the human values of the farmers by increasing their social prestige. Keeping the things

in view, KVK Deogarh, Odisha adopted a novel practice during 2018-19 and 2019-20 to enhance the social prestige of young farmers who will be the flag bearers for the fellow farming community in transfer of technologies in their respective areas. This study had the objectives to find out the effect of this approach in establishing and recognizing human values of the farmers, increase their self-esteem which will make farming profession attractive.

METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken during the year 2018-19 and 2019-20 in the purposively selected agriculture predominated Deogarh district of Odisha. About 83 per cent of total farm families (55,000) of the district were small and marginal farmers. Besides the traditional agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and pisciculture, minor forest produces collection was their major means of livelihood support. From about 55000 farm families, more than seven thousand young rural youths have gone outside in search of employment in non-farm sector, as reported by district labor office, Deogarh. Poverty, malnutrition and unemployment were perceived as the main reasons of youths for migration from rural areas. Agriculture was not regarded as an alluring profession for them anymore. KVK, Deogarh took steps during the study period to encourage the specialised progressive farmers with an objective to make the profession attractive. Sixteen farmers belonging to different categories were selected purposively during the study period who was felicitated by KVK in different occasions. They were designated with some brands as per their domain of specialisation. Information was collected from those branded farmers in a semi-structured interview schedule. Their socio-economic status was studied. Perception of the farmers on the effect of branding was quantified in a 3 point continuum to come to a conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

KVK, Deogarh after identifying the progressive farmers, recognized their potentials and designated them as ambassadors of those specific practices. The brand names were selected according to their traditional profession or the activity which the farmer adopted following latest technical know-hows. These farmers were performing excellently in their sphere and earning more than the others using the latest available modern technologies. However, still they were treated as a poor farmer with low social prestige.

The sixteen farmers were the known faces in their locality for their specialization in the mentioned areas. Farmer professor designation was given to the farmer with a well maintained pond based IFS. His knowledge in farming as a whole was recognized in his locality. Integrated Farming System (IFS) is regarded as a panacea for small and marginal farmers against various biotic and abiotic problems (Nath et al., 2016). As it is comprised of crop and non-crop components, the expert farmer was aware of a number of technologies, so he was designated as farmer professor. Kisori Pradhan, a farmer of Reamal block was an expert in freshwater prawn culture as well as composite pisciculture. His expertise in aquaculture, i.e. the blue revolution was the factor for which he was designated as blue farmer of the district. Likewise, Ganduru Minz was designated as plant doctor seeing his knowledge in pest and disease management. Mrs. Sukumari Sahoo was the farmwoman producing highest quantity

Table 1. Process of branding and recognizing farmers

S.No.	Name of the farmer	Excelling area	Brand name given	Felicitated by	Newspaper publication (No.)	TV telecast (No.)	Farm Journal (No.)	Spl Govt. recognition
1	Debdra Dhal	Pond based IFS	Farmer professor	Chairman, ZP	2	1	1	Govt trainer
2	Kishori Pradhan	Pisciculture	Blue farmer of the district	DFO	-	-	-	Fish trainer
3	Ganduru Minz	Khariif Tomato	Plant doctor	State A& FW minister, QRT- ICAR	2	5	1	Udyan sathi
4	Pravash Mishra	Poly house	Hi-tech farmer of the district	CDAO	2	-	-	-
5	Randip Pradhan	Banana cultivation	Young farmer of the district	State A& FW minister	2	1	1	-
6	Arun Kumar Naik	Farm machineries	Farm Engineer	KVK	-	-	-	First SPRT
7	Amit Biswal	Seed production	Agripreneur of the district	KVK	-	-	-	Seed producer
8	Gosain Minz	Improved goat farming	Farmer Innovator	Dist Administration	1	1	-	-
9	Pradip Lakra	Khariif Tomato	Farm Captain	State A& FW minister	4	3	-	-
10	Reena Dwibedi	Organic Farming	Smart lady farmer	Agriculture University	-	-	-	OLM Coordinator
11	Geetanjali Behera	Organising lady farmers	Smart home maker	Chairman, ZP	3	1	1	Swatchha gram
12	Prasanna Pradhan	Sweet orange cultivation	KVK Bandhu	OUAT	2	1	1	Watershed asst.
13	Sukumari Sahoo	Mushroom cultivation	Mushroom lady of the district	KVK	2	2	1	Trainer
14	Chandan Kr Sahoo	Composting, dairy	e-farmer of the district	KVK	-	-	-	-
15	Kasturi Pradhan	Mushroom and veg. cultivation	Mahila Gaurav	DPM, OLM	3	-	-	-
16	Lalit Mohan Sahoo	Medicinal plants	People's doctor	Asst Director, Hort	3	1	-	-

of mushroom in the district. She was also catering mushroom to the district headquarter market throughout the year. She was the only lady in the district, producing mushroom around the year. She was designated as mushroom lady of the district. Prasanna Pradhan, a young sweet orange grower was taking all the latest technologies from KVK and disseminate them in the locality, hence designated as KVK Bandhu. Mrs Gitanjali Behera, a house wife made her village the *swatchha grama* of the district uniting all the women. Kasturi Pradhan set an example in leading the fellow women of her village and persuading them for mushroom cultivation. She herself was earning about 0.8 lakh rupees from mushroom cultivation only. She was conferred with the title of Mahila Gaurav Samman. All other farmers mentioned in the Table 1 were given the brands in similar way.

Table 1 also revealed the information how a progressive farmer became a brand ambassador of the society after recognised by the persons belonging to higher hierarchy of the society. It was observed that their names in the print media and electronics media gave recognition to them as a special person in their locality which encouraged them to adopt new technologies and become resource person in their profession. Major part of Deogarh district is under Complex-Diversified-Rainfed (CDR) agriculture production system, therefore the adoption rate of modern technology was obviously very poor. However some of the branded farmers were already recognized by the society for their innovativeness. During the survey, it was found that the income and uniqueness in farming had given them a special position among their farming community. Following model, i.e. Nath's model for harnessing human values (Figure 1) was followed during the study to select, designate, branding and highlighting the farmers to harness their human values.

A study on perception of the branded farmers on effect of branding was done in a three points scale where 0, 1, 2 scores were allotted to disagreed, partially agreed and totally agreed respectively. The mean score of each parameter was calculated and mentioned as Table 2.

From the Table 2 it is revealed that farmers perceived increasing of self esteem was the greatest effect after branding which scored the highest. During the survey, it was also found that their profession was recognized by the co-farmers which encouraged other farmers to follow them, thus paving a way for a fruitful farmer to farmer extension. The performance of the awarded farmer and social recognition accrued for this, had an impact on the fellow farmers. It promoted technology adoption in their farming practices. It supports the study of Froh (2004) which indicated positive psychology plays a major role in adoption of innovations. Makinen (2013) from his study also stated that attitude of farmers were associated with 25 per cent of the variation in farm performance. Most of these farmers were of the opinion that this branding hardly helped them to avail government schemes or providing schematic benefits to their co-farmers. They were treated more as resource persons by their co-farmers for the new technologies. Nath & Nayak (2008) in their study found that 92 per cent of farm families received knowledge on farming from their co-farmers only. Farmer to farmer extension is proved as the most effective technology transfer than the others (Meena et al., 2016; Franzel et al., 2019). Sarnaik et al., (2020) also indicated that in this era of globalization, effective, reliable and quick

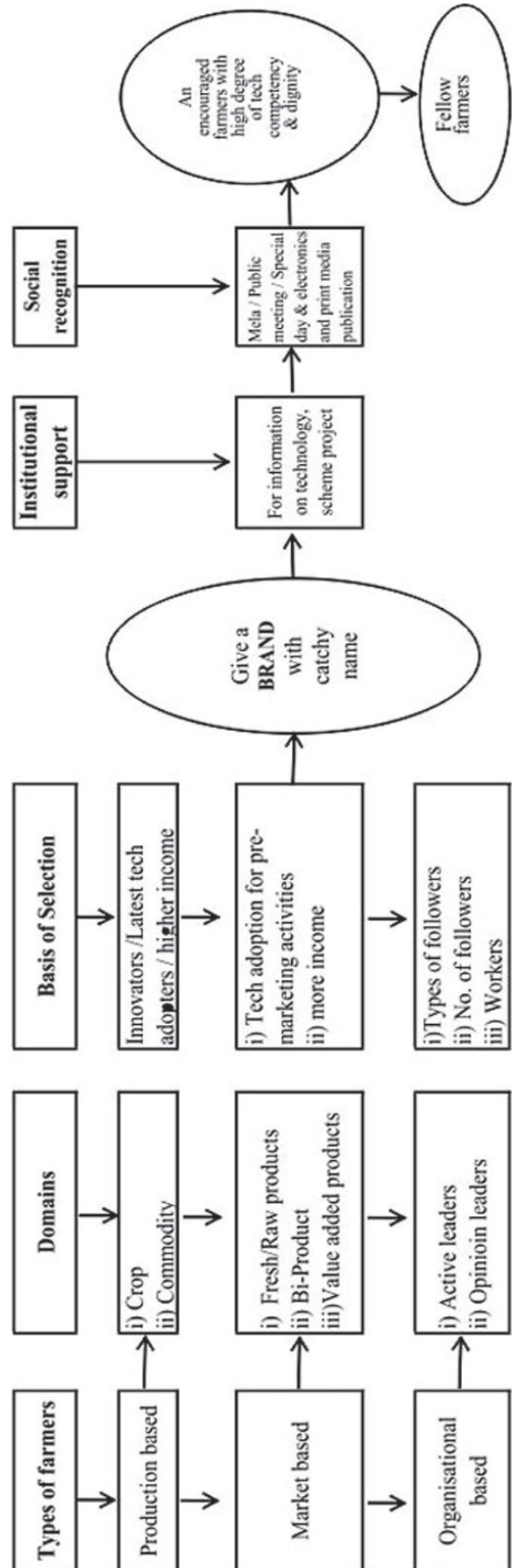


Figure 1. Nath's Model for Harnessing Human Values

Table 2. Farmers' perception on effect of branding

S.No.	Name of the farmer	Brand	On self				On co- farmers				On the Society				
			Social recognition	Cosmopolitaness	Govt. scheme availability	Self esteem	Resource person on techs.	Information get scheme	Input availability	Contact person	Encouragement to the people	Increase in area	Adoption of technology	Increase in income	
1	Debendra Dhal	Farmer professor	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
2	Kishori Pradhan	Blue farmer of the district	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
3	Ganduru Minz	Plant doctor	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
4	Pravash Mishra	Hi-tech farmer of the district	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
5	Randip Pradhan	Young farmer of the district	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0
6	Arun Kumar Naik	Farm Engineer	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0
7	Amit Biswal	Agripreneur of the district	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
8	Gosain Minz	Farmer Innovator	1.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
9	Pradip Lakra	Farm Captain	2.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
10	Reena Dwibedi	Smart lady farmer	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
11	Geetanjali Behera	Smart home maker	2.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
12	Prasanna Pradhan	KVK Bandhu	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
13	Sukumari Sahoo	Mushroom lady of the district	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
14	Chandan Kumar Sahoo	e-farmer of the district	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
15	Kasturi Pradhan	Mahila Gaurav	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
16	Lalit Mohan Sahoo	People's doctor	2.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Mean score		1.63	1.19	0.88	1.69	1.44	0.88	1.25	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.44	1.50	1.50

transfer of technologies to end users is important for increasing productivity. However, the effect of branding on the society in technology transfer was satisfactory with an average score of more than 1.44. It helped in horizontal and vertical spread of the technology as well as increasing in income from farming in the locality as a whole. It corroborates the findings of Boyle et al., (2010).

CONCLUSION

KVK, Deogarh had taken an innovative step of encouraging farmers by branding them who were the carriers of latest agriculture information. Branding farmers with a nomenclature highlighting their sphere of specialization boosted their morality, self-esteem and encouraged their work aptitude. It not only made them popular but also made their adopted technologies and innovations trustworthy by the fellow farmers. Nath's model of harnessing human values became successful in giving recognition to different types of farmers. Technology transfer through this model was easier and with least cost involved. It is expected that other agencies working for the benefit of rural society will adopt such novel extension approach to transfer technologies in agriculture and allied sectors.

REFERENCES

- Franzel, S., Kiptot, E., & Degrande, A. (2019). Farmer-to-farmer extension: A low-cost approach for promoting climate-smart agriculture. In: Rosenstock, T., Nowak, A., Girvetz, E. (eds) The climate-smart agriculture Papers. *Springer*, Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92798-5-24> .
- Froh, J. J. (2004). The history of positive psychology: truth be told. *NYS Psychologist*, 16(3), 18-20.
- Makinen, H. (2013). Farmers' managerial thinking and management process effectiveness as factors of financial success on Finnish dairy farms. *Agricultural and Food Science*, 22, 452-465.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Harper and Brothers Publication.
- Meena, M. S., Kale, R., Singh, S. K., & Gupta, S. (2016). Farmer to farmer extension model: Issues of sustainability and scalability in Indian perspective. *Proceedings of ISEE National Seminar RSVKVV*, Nov 28-30, Gwalior.
- Nath, S. K. (2020). Effect of a novel extension approach for attracting rural youths in agriculture. *Journal of Extension Education*, 25(1), 51-56.
- Nath, S. K., & De, H. K. (2015). Role of KVKs in strengthening livelihood security of resource poor farm families of rural India. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 51(34), 29-33.
- Nath, S. K., & Nayak, U. S. (2008). Training need of farm women in rice cultivation of Balasore district. *Journal of Extension Education*, 13(1&2), 1-5.
- Nath, S. K., De, H. K., & Mohapatra, B. K. (2016). Integrated farming system: Is it a panacea for the resource poor farm families of rain-fed eco system? *Current Science*, pp 969-970.
- O'Boyle, E. H. (2011). The relation between emotional intelligence and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32, 788-818.
- Sarnaik, S. D., Bhole, P. P., Mankar, D. M., & Tekale, V. S. (2020). Perception of farmers towards effectiveness of extension services of KVK. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 56(4), 43-48.
- Singh, G., Singh, P., Tiwari, D., & Singh, K. (2021). Role of social media in enhancing agricultural growth. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 57(2), 69-72.
- Umesh, R. C., & Tekale, V. S. (2019). Aspiration of rural youths towards agriculture. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 55(2), 25-30.