

An Investigation into the Conceptualisation of Agricultural Marketing: A Driving Force Behind Rural Marketing in India

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Abstract— India is commonly thought of being a nation that focusses on agriculture. Since gaining independence, providing food for the newly born people has been India's top priority, and the country has been able to achieve its agricultural goals. Developing agriculture and agricultural marketing is the primary goal since, given the country's large population, there is a pressing need to increase the food supply. The majority of Indians still call rural or village life home. Put another way, out of a total population of almost 833.33 million, 68.84% call one of 6,40,867 localities home. The sheer magnitude of this rural Indian market speaks much about its potential. Even though the rest of the world's economies were in a deep slump, the Indian rural market managed to stay afloat. The marketing gurus determined the tagline "Go rural" after studying the socio-economic shifts in rural areas. In one way or another, agriculture is the lifeblood of rural communities. Improving the marketing of agricultural products is now a top priority, as this will ensure that farmers receive the largest possible portion of consumer spending. Agricultural marketing is at the core of rural marketing, which is essential for the advancement of the country. This study aims to emphasise the significance of agricultural marketing in rural India's progress. In addition to exploring potential solutions to the challenges faced by agricultural marketers, this study delves into the ways in which rural communities might improve their marketing environment.

Index Terms- Rural Market, Agricultural Marketing, Challenges & Opportunities, Government initiatives.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural marketing involves two main concepts: agriculture and marketing. The first concept of agriculture is to produce agro-food items using natural

resources for human benefit. Totally dependent on natural processing. The second notion is marketing, which involves businesses promoting their products and services to targeted clients. Creating strong customer values in the organisation can attract and retain targeted customers in marketing. Successful market surveys, market trends, superior customer service and happiness, customer focus, and persistent follow-up make it possible.

From production to retail, agriculture marketing encompasses several operations. Production planning, cropping, harvesting, warehousing, grading, transportation, and distribution are involved. Many agro products are produced for internal and export usage. The agricultural marketing chain includes producers, suppliers, functionaries, importers, exporters, external benefactors, and customers.

Rural marketing includes agricultural, industrial, and service marketing. Rural India cannot develop without good rural and agricultural marketing. Limited attention has been dedicated to rural and agricultural marketing. Rural and agricultural marketing involve marketing goods and services from urban to rural and rural to urban areas, respectively.

Buying and selling agricultural products is agricultural marketing. The farmer sold his produce directly to the consumer for cash or barter in the past, when the village economy was more or less self-sufficient, making agricultural marketing easy. Today, farm produce marketing is different. Modern marketing

involves several transfers before agricultural produce reaches the customer.

II. AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

Planning, growing, harvesting, grading, packing, storage, processing, advertising, and selling agricultural products are all part of agricultural marketing. According to the National Commission on Agriculture, agricultural marketing involves producing saleable farm goods, including pre- and post-harvest operations, assembly, grading, storage, transportation, and distribution. This divides agricultural markets into primary, secondary, and terminal or export. These markets have government, cooperative, and private outlets.

The National Commission on Agriculture defines agricultural marketing as a decision to produce a saleable farm commodity and includes all aspects of market structure or system, both functional and institutional, based on technical and economic considerations, pre- and post-harvest operations, assembling, grading, storage, transportation, and distribution.

Previously, selling agricultural produce was easy. Either direct sale or barter. It was selling, not marketing. However, middlemen, commission brokers, and new technology have complicated agricultural marketing. Many dangers come with agriculture marketing. Season, perishability, demand, and supply determine agricultural commodity prices. Agriculture is vital to India's economy. Rural marketing is often confused with agriculture. The vision is erroneous. Rural marketing comprises two primary components. Marketing manufactured goods. II) Agriculture marketing.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural and agricultural marketing are complementary. Rural and agricultural marketing is underdeveloped compared to urban markets. Traditional farmer's markets can host marketing booths to raise rural consumers' awareness, observability, relevance, and trialability. Successful segmentation requires various product, communication, and distribution strategies. Consumer buying habits are influenced by culture.

Marketers must understand consumer demographics, values, and lifestyles for market segmentation, product planning, and promotions. Marketers segment consumers by lifestyle. The study says rural market potential can be realised if ICT barriers are removed and farmers are educated about its value. Indian rural market has huge potential, however rural clients' traits and mindsets must be understood. With the rise of IT, internet, globalisation, and education and income, rural people are changing their routines, lifestyle, buying patterns, and consumption.

Due to the green revolution, government initiatives, and bank financing facilities, agriculture production and consumption are rising. Now rural clients have considerable disposable income, which benefits marketers. Additionally, rural markets add almost one million new consumers annually. India's rural market is hugely promising. But tapping this market skilfully is crucial. Rural marketing is new and has enormous promise. Rural marketing has unique aspects compared to urban marketing, and rural prospects are attractive for marketers. Myth: rural shoppers aren't brand and quality conscious. Innovative techniques and promotions are needed. Innovative strategies include Colgate Palmolive India's Project Jagruti, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.'s 700,000 Mahindra Tractor customers, and 400+ dealer network. Marketing tools in rural areas include fairs, haats, and markets. Mandals and village fairs promote brands, and radio and TV reach rural clients. This study examines rural village distribution in India. Farmers and agricultural workers who aid each other form a rural corporative society. It helps financially and otherwise. India's corporative movement began in 1904. Small and marginal farmers and agri-laborers dominate India's economy. Due to credit shortages in farm service & supplies, they must approach numerous organisations for financing. Commercial banks work, but corporative banks finance rural people. Rural finance is crucial for productivity and poverty reduction in India. A comprehensive policy that considers bad monsoons and natural disasters is needed to give farmers sensible relief. Marketing and rural financing are crucial to agri-productivity, production, and consumption. Global attention has been drawn to Indian consumers. Consumer spending habits have evolved in recent years. IT revolutions like the internet and social media are changing consumer

behaviour rapidly. Although consumer behaviour is complex, consumer awareness and sophisticated metropolitan lifestyles are changing rural consumer behaviour. Celebrity influence, online trends.

The popularity of eco-friendly items cannot be disregarded when examining customer behaviour. Rural India relies on agriculture for revenue, which depends on healthy monsoons, irrigation, seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, pesticides, and other inputs like tractors and threshers. The world's largest tractor industry is Indian. India uses 3% of the world's tractors, ranking 8th. Arable land in India is 12% of the world. Tractor demand is affected by agricultural expansion and dual use. Improve technology, fuel efficiency, and tractor implements by encouraging manufacturers to build new models and partner with foreign manufacturers. The Indian agriculture industry is vital to its economic growth. As an agricultural nation, India produces some of the world's most wheat, paddy, pulses, and vegetables. Green revolution sparked industry, followed by white and yellow revolutions. Indian agriculture is unorganised (42%), organised (25%), small-scale (13%), and low-tech, labour-intensive, and competitive.

Objectives of the Study

1. To highlight the importance of rural and agricultural marketing.
2. To investigate the problems of agricultural marketing.
3. To show up the opportunities of rural and agricultural marketing in India.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sources of Data:

Secondary data-Literature from articles published in journals.

- Literature from reference books.
- Literature from websites.

Research design-Descriptive research design has been used.

Functionaries in Agricultural Marketing:

Functions involvement in agricultural marketing has categorized under three market stages.

- **Primary Market Functionaries:** The producer/farmer/cultivator, pre-harvest contractor, itinerant merchants, transport agents.
- **Secondary Market Functionaries:** Financial agents and processing agents are involved in secondary market in addition to primary market functionaries.
- **Terminal or Export Market Functionaries:** in addition to primary and secondary market functionaries commercial analyst and shipping agents are also involved in this market stage.

Functions of Agricultural Marketing:

The major marketing functions involved in agricultural marketing are:

- **Concentration:** The foremost function to be performed in agricultural marketing is to collect the agro produce ready to sale in a central place for economic buying purpose.
- **Grading of Agro Produce:** Grading is the process of segregating the huge amount produce into different categories on the basis of variety, quality, size, etc. This can help to establish standards for those produce.
- **Processing:** It is the stage where the farm products are transformed into consumable products. For example: paddy into rice processing.
- **Warehousing:** Warehousing is storing the products from production till its final consumption. This helps to preserve the products from spoil, contamination, etc.
- **Packaging:** Packaging of products is another essential function for easy handling, preventing from deterioration, attracts customers, etc.
- **Distribution:** The last function performed in all marketing is distribution of products from the place of warehouse to retail outlet for final consumption.

Problems in Agricultural Marketing in Developing Countries:

- **Product Quality:** Many of the farmers are not aware of the need for quality seeds and fertilizers. The poor quality seeds and fertilizers used in land will result in poor product quality.
- **Market Information:** The literacy rate of farmers in developing countries are comparably low than the developed countries. The farmers of developing countries may not have the updated knowledge of

the market trend and activities. Hence they may be unable to achieve the real price of their product.

- **Product Quantity:** In some places improper measuring of products are still in practice. This will result in loss for the farmers at the time of buying or selling of agro produce.
- **Functionaries Participation:** The functionaries in the marketing process hold a major share of profit in the form of commission.
- **Lack of Transportation Facility:** Many of the rural areas don't have proper road facility. This creates a barrier in transporting the agro produce to the market place.
- **Inadequate Storage Facility:** The inadequacy of storage facility may lead to unwanted wastage of products.

Causes for poor marketing of agricultural products in India:

Indian system of agricultural marketing suffers from a number of defects. As a consequence, the Indian farmer is deprived of a fair price for his produce. The main defects of the agricultural marketing system are discussed here.

- **Improper Warehouses:** There is an absence of proper warehousing facilities in the villages. Therefore, the farmer is compelled to store his products in pits, mud-vessels; store houses etc. these unscientific methods of storing lead to considerable wastage. Approximately 1.5% of the produce gets rotten and becomes unfit for human consumption. Due to this reason supply in the village market increases substantially and the farmers are not able to get a fair price for their produce. The setting up of central warehousing corporation and state warehousing corporation has improved the situation to some extent.
- **Lack of grading and standardization:** Different varieties of agricultural produce are not graded properly. The practice usually prevalent is the one known as —daral sales wherein heap of all qualities of produce are sold in one common lot thus the farmer producing better qualities is not assured of a better price. Hence there is no incentive to use better seeds and produce better varieties.
- **Inadequate transport facilities:** Transport facilities are highly inadequate in India. Only a small

number of villages are joined by railways and Pucca roads to mandies. Produce has to be carried on slow moving transport vehicles like bullock carts. Obviously such means of transport cannot be used to carry produce to far-off places and the farmer has to dump his produce in nearby markets even if the price obtained in these markets is considerably low. This is even truer with perishable commodities.

- **Presence of large number of middlemen:** The chain of middlemen in the agricultural marketing is so large that the share of farmers is reduced substantially. For instance, a study of D.D. Sidhan revealed, that farmers obtain only about 53% of the price of rice, 31% being the share of middle men (the remaining 16% being the marketing cost). In the case of vegetables and fruits the share was even less, 39% in the former case and 34% in the latter. The share of middle-men in the case of vegetables were 29.5% and in the case of fruits was 46.5%. Some of the intermediaries in the agricultural marketing system are—village traders, Kutchha arhatiyas, Pucca arhatiyas, brokers, wholesalers, retailers, money lenders, etc.
- **Malpractices in unregulated markets:** Even now the number of unregulated markets in the country is substantially large. Arhatiyas and brokers, taking advantage of the ignorance, and illiteracy of the farmers, use unfair means to cheat them. The farmers are required to pay pledging charge to the arhatiyas, weight charge for weighing the produce, —palledaril to unload the bullock — carts and for doing other miscellaneous types of allied works, —gardal for impurities in the produce, and a number of other undefined and unspecified charges. Another malpractice in the mandies relates to the use of wrong weights and measures in the regulated marks. Wrong weights continue to be used in some unregulated markets with the object of cheating the farmers.
- **Inadequate market information:** It is often not possible for the farmers to obtain information on exact market prices in different markets. So, they accept, whatever price the traders offer to them. With a view to tackle this problem the government is using the radio and television media to broadcast market prices regularly. The newspapers also keep the farmers posted with the latest changes in prices,

however the price quotations are sometimes not reliable and sometimes have a great time lag. The trader generally offers less than the price quoted by the government news media.

- Inadequate credit facilities: Indian farmer, being poor, tries to sell off the produce immediately after the crop is harvested though prices at the time are very low. The safeguard of the farmer from such —forced sales is to provide him credit so that he can wait for better times and better prices. Since such credit facilities are not available, the farmers are forced to take loans from moneylenders, while agreeing to pledge their produce to them at less than market prices. The cooperative marketing societies have generally catered to the needs of the large farmers and the small farmers are left at the mercy of the moneylenders.
- Unfair practices by middlemen: The middlemen engaged in the distribution of agricultural produce adopt several unfair practices, such as manipulation of weights and measures, manipulation of prices, taking always a large quantity of the produce as samples etc.
- Excessive marketing charges: The marketing charges required to be paid by the farmers for the marketing of their produce are excessive. They are required to pay heavy charges for loading, unloading, commission, etc.
- Unorganized farmers and poor staying power of farmers: While the merchants who buy the agricultural produce are well organized, the farmers who sell the produce are not at all organized. As they are not organized, they do not have bargaining power in marketing their produce. They have to dispose of their produce at the prices offered by the dealers.

The Status of Agriculture in India:

Table1.0: Agriculture’s Contribution in Total Employment

| Sector | 2004-05 | 2011-12 | 2016-17 |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Agriculture & Allied | 59.9% | 58.5% | 48.9% |
| Manufacturing | 16.4% | 18.2% | 24.3% |
| Service | 23.7% | 23.3% | 26.9% |

In Indian GDP, agriculture contribution is near about 24.7% and it contributes 13.1% in total export of the country. Agriculture sector provides employment to 48.9% of Indian population. So, it can be stated that development of India depends upon growth and prosperity of rural population and that in turn depends on growth of the agriculture. In India, cropping pattern in agriculture is continuously changing. The area of Ragi, Bajra, small millets, barley and coarse cereals area reducing instead of wheat, jowar, maize gram and pulses are taking more areas for yield. Thus, it shows a change in trend of cropping system.

Table1.1: All Indian Estimation of Area of Food Grain

| Crop | Eleventh Five Year Plan | | | | | Twelfth Five Year Plan | | | | |
|------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| Rice | 41176 | 42593 | 41907 | 43660 | 43814 | 43914 | 45537 | 41918 | 42862 | 44006 |
| Wheat | 25196 | 26595 | 26383 | 26484 | 27995 | 28039 | 27752 | 28457 | 29069 | 29865 |
| Jowar | 9300 | 9331 | 9092 | 8667 | 8473 | 7764 | 7531 | 7787 | 7382 | 6245 |
| Bajra | 7740 | 10612 | 9233 | 9581 | 9508 | 9571 | 8753 | 8904 | 9612 | 8777 |
| Maize | 6635 | 7343 | 7430 | 7588 | 7894 | 8117 | 8174 | 8262 | 8553 | 8782 |
| Ragi | 1415 | 1666 | 1553 | 1534 | 1177 | 1387 | 1381 | 1268 | 1286 | 1176 |
| Barley | 702 | 657 | 617 | 630 | 346 | 603 | 706 | 624 | 705 | 643 |
| Gram | 5906 | 7048 | 6715 | 6926 | 7494 | 7544 | 7893 | 8169 | 9186 | 8299 |
| Foodgrains | 113860 | 123447 | 120078 | 121600 | 123708 | 124608 | 122834 | 121334 | 126671 | 124755 |
| Pulses | 20496 | 23458 | 22763 | 22391 | 23192 | 23633 | 22094 | 23282 | 26402 | 24462 |

Source: Government of India- ‘State of Indian Agriculture 2016-17’, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Co-operation, New Delhi

Table1.2: All Indian Estimates of Production of Food Grain

| Crop | Eleventh Five Year Plan | | | | | Twelfth Five Year Plan | | | | |
|------|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| Rice | 718 | 885 | 831 | 917 | 933 | 966 | 991 | 890 | 959 | 105 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 20.2 | 26.0 | 31.7 | 93.4 | 55.3 | 92.9 | 82.5 | 92.9 | 79.9 | 311.0 |
| Wheat | 6578 | 72156 | 68636 | 69354 | 75806 | 78750 | 80679 | 80803 | 86874 | 94882 |
| Jowar | 7012.4 | 6681.4 | 7244.5 | 7629.6 | 7150.8 | 7925.4 | 7245.6 | 6698.6 | 7003.1 | 6006.5 |
| Bajra | 4178.9 | 12109 | 7931.3 | 7684.0 | 8423.5 | 9970.1 | 8887.1 | 6506.4 | 10369 | 10276 |
| Maize | 11151 | 14984 | 14172 | 14709 | 15097 | 18955 | 19731 | 16719 | 21725 | 21759 |
| Ragi | 1315.7 | 1965.2 | 2432.2 | 2353.3 | 1443.6 | 2152.2 | 2039.0 | 1888.5 | 2193.4 | 1929.5 |
| Barley | 1407.2 | 1297.6 | 1207.6 | 1220.6 | 1407.3 | 1327.9 | 1196.0 | 1689.1 | 1354.6 | 1618.7 |
| Gram | 4236.8 | 5717.4 | 5469.4 | 5599.2 | 6333.4 | 5748.2 | 7060.2 | 7475.9 | 8221.1 | 7702.3 |
| Food grains | 174771 | 213189 | 198362 | 208061 | 217282 | 230775 | 234466 | 218107 | 244491 | 259383 |
| Pulses | 11125 | 14905 | 13129 | 13384 | 14197 | 14761 | 14566 | 14661 | 18240 | 17089 |

Source: Government of India- ‘State of Indian Agriculture 2016-17’, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Co-operation, New Delhi

This Table 1.2 shows the Indian estimates of production of food grains. The both food grain tables show that basic food grain (rice, cereal, and pulses) have a consistent trend but other food grains have been a changing trend from traditional to economy crops. The source indicates that edible and non-edible oilseeds have a consistent trend over last 15 years.

Rural development is the process of increasing level of per capita income in rural areas as well as standard of living of people which is ensured with nutrition level, health, literacy and security. With passage of time, concept of rural development has got changed. Traditionally, it was fixed with maximum utilization of land intensive natural resources but now it states – overall holistic development of area, environment and its people. Rural development depends on growth of

farmers, rural artisans, shop-keepers, micro and small entrepreneurs and all other concerned with rural phenomena. The process of real rural development starts with farmers. So, facilities like credit, subsidies, IT training and new agri- inputs should be made available to them. If agricultural-activities run successfully, then the process of rural development can be actualized in real sense.

Opportunities for Rural and Agricultural Marketing

- More population- Indian rural population is more than that of urban. Percentage share of rural population 2011- has been more from 1991 to 2011. Now 68.84% of Indian population lives in rural areas. It means more demand for consumption items, clothes, textiles, automobiles, various electrical households’ appliances, education, health- facilities, hotels, transportation, and agro-based products will be in rural India. This gives marketers an obvious understanding to reach the rural market. By analyzing Indian population with percentage share of rural and urban, marketers will have conspicuous understanding about where to go and why. The given table will be of assistance in this context.
- More literates live in rural India- This is a very positive sign for rural development. The table given below shows the percentage literacy rates of urban-rural and Men- female.

Table1.3: Rural-Urban Literacy rates: 2008-2018

| T/R/U | 2008 | | | 2013 | | | 2018 | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F |
| Total | 64.87 | 76.56 | 52.32 | 76.88 | 85.67 | 67.03 | 82.91 | 89.82 | 75.48 |
| Rural | 55.52 | 69.74 | 40.96 | 70.36 | 81.93 | 58.40 | 77.90 | 86.39 | 67.38 |
| Urban | 79.20 | 86.41 | 70.87 | 85.48 | 91.03 | 79.09 | 89.84 | 93.79 | 85.44 |

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Economy development of the country depends on the development of its rural people and that depends on development of agricultural produce and productivity, rural and agricultural marketing as well. Today urban marketing is very costly and is facing saturation. That

is why, focus of marketers should be rural market and for effective utilization of potentials of rural market, marketers should facilitate agricultural marketing. They should invest in infrastructure and in all other facilities important for agricultural marketing. Because when farmers get good and timely marketing of their agricultural produce, then there will be more disposable income with farmers, artisans, shopkeepers and all other concerned with rural phenomena. More disposable income is a sign of marketing success for the marketers. So, the need of the hour is to develop all such activities, services, infrastructure- transport, distribution, storage- market knowledge, investment for innovations, credit-facilities, IT system, HRM in rural and agricultural development and essential steps should be taken for promotion of agricultural export to promote rural and agricultural marketing.

Managerial implications:

This study will help to eliminate all the myths about the rural market. After review of potentials and opportunities for rural and agricultural marketing, marketers can easily understand that vast earning-abilities lie in the rural marketing. But to develop rural market, development of agricultural marketing is must. Manufacturers and marketers should strive to reduce the production cost and to minimize distribution costs. Simultaneously, product price and durability should be given priority while entering in rural market. Marketers should invest in infrastructure and communication facilities. Thus, marketers can succeed in rural marketing for long run.

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