

Employment Branding in the Agriculture Sector of India: A Challenge in the Globalization

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Abstract—The objective of the paper is to analyze the need of the branding employment in agriculture sector of India. The employment branding or employer branding is not a new trend in the human resource management. This strategy is very popular in the IT sector, which helped them to attract best talent towards the sector. The agriculture sector of India which provides the employment to 60% of the population is moving towards its declining. In India 40 percent farmers are willing to quit farming for various reasons, and large labor force from rural areas is migrating towards the urban areas. This migration creating social as well as economical unrest in the country. Thus Government need to design special plan to retain the farmers in their own profession because sustaining agriculture as a profession is extremely important for national food security. The study suggests that a future road map for high-value agriculture development should focus on branding of the employment in this sector.

Keywords—Agricultural Output, Agriculture Sector, Employment Branding, Gross Domestic Product, Household Migration

Abbreviations—Dun & Bradstreet Information Services India Pvt. Ltd (D&B), Food & Agriculture Organization Statistics (FAOSTAT), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), National Sample Survey (NSS), World Trade Organization (WTO)

I. INTRODUCTION

AGRICULTURE in India has a significant history. Today, India is second worldwide in farm output. A number of centrally sponsored schemes are being implemented for the enhancement of agricultural production, productivity and income of the farming community in India. But the economic contribution of agriculture to India's GDP (Gross Domestic product) is steadily declining with the country's broad-based economic growth. Slow agricultural growth is a concern for policy makers as some two-thirds of India's people depend on rural employment for a living. Current agricultural practices are neither economically nor environmentally sustainable and India's yields for many agricultural commodities are low. Poorly maintained irrigation systems and almost universal lack of good extension services are among the factors responsible. Farmers' access to markets is hampered by poor roads, rudimentary market infrastructure, and excessive regulation. Most important is that India with 600 million farmers, of which 40 percent are willing to quit farming for various reasons. Thus rate of migration of the farm labors and small farmers to the urban areas are increasing.

In this scenario not only the expenditure on the agriculture sector or different schemes will help to boost the growth, but needs conscious branding efforts. Our economy needs to change the attitude of the framers and agriculture labors towards employment in agriculture sector. Thus this sector also needs to design employment branding strategies like other sector and motivate people to stay and contribute towards its growth. As agriculture is demographically the broadest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic fabric of India.

II. OVERALL SCENARIO OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN INDIA

1. India is second in the World in terms of the agriculture output. Table 1 depicts the details.
2. India's arable land area of 159.7 million hectares (394.6 million acres) is the second largest in the world, after the United States. Its gross irrigated crop area of 82.6 million hectares (215.6 million acres) is the largest in the world. India has grown to become among the top three global producers of a broad range of crops, including wheat, rice, pulses, cotton, peanuts, fruits, and vegetables. Table

- 2 depicts the details [Praduman Kumar & Surabhi Mittal, 2006].
- Agriculture and its allied activities accounted for about 13.9 percent of the GDP in the period 2011-12 as compared to 14.5 per cent in 2010-11. In terms of individual composition, out of a total share of 14.5 per cent in GDP in 2010-11, agriculture alone accounted for 12.3 per cent, followed by forestry and logging at 1.4 per cent, and fishing at 0.7 percent. [RBI, 2012].
 - The total planned expenditure for the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has increased by 18 per cent from Rs 17,123 crore in 2011-12 to Rs 20,208 crore in 2012-13.

Table 1 – List of Countries by Agricultural Output in Year 2011

Rank	Country	Output in billions of US\$	Composition of GDP (%)	% of Global Agricultural Output
—	World	4,249.237	6.1%	100.0%
1	China	737.113	10.1%	17.3%
—	European Union	316.398	1.8%	7.4%
2	India	303.382	18.1%	7.1%
3	United States	181.128	1.2%	4.3%
4	Brazil	144.589	5.8%	3.4%
5	Indonesia	126.006	14.9%	3.0%

Source: FAOSTAT, Website for Data relating to Food and Agriculture for some 200 Countries. Website <http://faostat.fao.org> [Ramakumar, 2011; FAO Statistical Yearbook, 2012]

Table 2 – India Major Producer

Product	Volume (Millions of Tones/ Heads)	Worldwide Rank
MILK	92	1
LIVESTOCK	482	1
TEA	9	1
WHEAT	72	2

Source: FAOSTAT [Ramakumar, 2011; FAO Statistical Yearbook, 2012]

III. CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR AGRICULTURE SECTOR

India facing a lasting crisis in agriculture and a serious threat to its food security. India's key economic reforms of the early 1990s centered on liberalization favouring the manufacturing and services sectors. These were might be successful at certain extent but little was done for agriculture. China, on the other hand, starting its key reforms earlier, focused first on agriculture.

- Increasing fertilizer usages
- Reducing arable land
- Fragmentation of agricultural land
- Agricultural indebtedness
- Low soil fertility
- Climate change
- Increasing farm labor costs

- Negative attitude towards the people towards the occupation

Among the above list, the last point which is most important challenges because if the farmers and farm labors develop the positive attitude towards the occupation, they will bring more constructive innovation in the field. As why India Information Technology (IT) is most innovate and admired sector worldwide? Because it attracts talent of the country. IT Brands the employment in the Sector and project best among the other employment.

Thus Indian youth should be attracted for farming. They must take it up as a career. Agricultural graduates who come from farming background and have an aptitude for agriculture can be encouraged to undertake commercial farming on their own or leased land and/or to establish agro industries and agro-services from which they can earn far higher income than in salaried employment. Our agricultural scientists are interested in taking up a job in either an agro-university or in research centre. This talent should be diverted to the core agriculture through the proper employment branding strategies.

IV. NEED OF THE BRANDING THE FARMING OCCUPATION

It is already sated in the paper that India with 600 million farmers, of which 40 percent are willing to quit farming for various reasons. This will create the more economical as well as social unrest in the country [Pohare, 2011]. Thus immediately we should take up the measures to alleviate the status of this occupation and give proud feeling to the farmers that they are the most important for the human development.

There is immediate need to brand the employment in agriculture because:

- Migration from rural to urban areas.
- Decline in the growth rate of agriculture leading the poverty.
- Agriculture contributes low in the GDP but high in the Employment.
- Opportunity in massive growth in food demand.

4.1. Mass Migration from Rural to Urban Areas has increased Rapidly

The figure indicates that in 1951, the urban population in India was 62 million people, 17 percent of the total population. By 2011, the urban population was 377 million, or 31 percent. By 2025, 42.5 percent of the population will be urban. Between 1991 and 2001, 73 million people have migrated from the rural areas to elsewhere. Mass migration is a phenomenon that is a consequence of various problems in the rural India. The Table 3 depicts that the most of the rural population migrates in search of employment. This migration is also rising slums in cities and contributing in the poverty rather than development. Poverty in India is widespread, with the nation estimated to have a third of the world's poor. In 2010, World Bank stated, 32.7% of the total Indian people

fall below the international poverty line of US\$ 1.25 per day while 68.7% live on less than US\$ 2 per day. [India Labor Report, 2012]

Poor's, "a traditional development model would call for a transition from agriculture to industry, and later to services. But in India, we are moving directly from agriculture to the service sector, a sector that creates only skilled jobs. Industry, for its part, is not growing fast enough to absorb the droves of farmers."

This growth rate of the agriculture sector is also declining which is also reason for the migration of the farmers specially small farmers and farm labors. The Table 4 depicts the growth rate of the agriculture sector. This non-absorption of agricultural workers by the other economic sectors, concentrated in the cities, has led to the formation of megapolises. This is affecting India's development potential in a variety of ways, the most significant of which is related to the transfer of resources; rising inequalities and poverty give rise to a certain number of direct costs (related to social welfare as well as crime-fighting expenditures) and indirect costs (growth of the informal economy and rising crime). These costs and expenditures are sapping resources that would be better used elsewhere, for example as investments in the private sector and infrastructure.

Table 3 – Reason for Household Migration from Rural Areas Distribution (per 1000) of Migrant Households by Reason for Migration (2007-08)

Sr. No	Reason for Migration	Migrant Households
1	In search of employment	168
2	In search of better employment	175
3	Business	43
4	To take up employment/better employment	106
5	Transfer of service/contract	48
6	Proximity to place of work	12

Source: National Sample Survey (NSS) Report No. 533: Migration in India: July, 2007-June, 2008 [National Sample Survey, 2008]

Table 4 – Growth of the Different Sector in Percentage

Year	Agriculture	Industry	Service
2005-2006	5.1	9.7	11
2006-2007	4.2	12.2	10.1
2007-2008	5.8	9.7	10.3
2008-2009	-0.1	4.4	10.1
2009-2010	0.4	8	10.1
2010-2011	5	8.1	9.6
2011-2012	4.11	8.7	9.9

Source: D & B's key Macroeconomics Forecast [David Malone, 2009; India Outlook, 2011-2012]

According to the data analyzed in document, employment in the agriculture sector in absolute terms was 237.67 million in 1999-2000 which increased to 258.93 million in 2004-05 and then fell to 244.85 million in 2009-10. This decreasing employment in the agriculture sector gives call to attract more youth towards the sector [Papola & Partha Pratim Sahu, 2012].

4.2. Agriculture Contributes Low in the GDP but High in the Employment

Indeed, the question is not how or why the share is declining, but how does this transformation impact the lives of the rural people? More importantly, has higher growth in the service sector or industry succeeded in reducing the dependence of rural people on agriculture? Apparently, it has not. According to latest census reports 68% of India's total population is still living in villages and the larger part of it is depending on agriculture for livelihood. That is, the growth outside agriculture has so far failed to generate employment opportunity for rural people. This would mean that with the fall in agriculture's share in GDP, the share of earnings of rural India too has declined and the rural-urban income divide has widened further.

What is probably more disturbing is that as the growth of agricultural earnings fails to keep pace with the overall economic growth of the country, the sector faced with an increasing fund shortage. This shortage is met through borrowing. According to the Organization's (NSSO) report, nearly half of the farm households in the country are indebted at various degrees.

This first of its kind study was conducted in 2003 but there is no reason to believe that things have changed much since then. The news of suicidal death of farmers for failing to repay loans is still coming from different parts of the country. Even the contribution of the agriculture sector in Overall GDP is declining (Table 5) but still agriculture is biggest source of the employment in India specially rural India. In rural areas, agriculture continues to be the dominant employer (52 per cent), followed by construction (7.2 per cent), manufacturing (6.7 per cent), and community services (6.3 per cent).

Table 5 – Components of GDP (%) of India

Year	Agriculture Sector	Industry	Service Sector
1951-52	55.4	15.4	29.3
1961-62	49.4	19.5	31.1
1971-72	43.1	22.5	34.5
1981-82	37.6	24.6	37.9
1991-82	30.3	25.6	44.1
2001-2	24.0	25.0	51.0
2009-10	14.6	28.5	56.9
2010-11	14.1	28.0	57.9

Source: Calculated from Reserve Bank of India Data [India Country Overview, 2011; Gulati, 2006]

4.3. Opportunity in Massive Growth in Food Demand

The UK Food and Agriculture Association estimate that the world population will increase 47%, to 8.9 billion, by 2050. That's a potentially huge food marketplace. That fact, more than anything, spells the reality that the agricultural industry is full of potential opportunity!

Simple fact: global agriculture must double in the next 30 years to sustain this type of population growth. Add this reality check: there is little new arable land in the world. The result is that existing producers will have to continue to focus

on smarter, better, more efficient growing in order to meeting demand.

If we revert the employment trend and motivate the Indian youth to opt for employment in agriculture sector than it is possible to bring economical and environmental sustainable innovation in the agriculture.

Growers that focus on innovation as a core value will find success; their innovation will focus on the triple-feature need for growth, efficiency and ingestion of new science. It will be by adopting new methodologies, products, partnerships and ideas that they will learn to thrive.

V. SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYMENT BRANDING IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Employment branding denotes an organization's reputation as an employer.

The term was first used in the early 1990s, and has since become widely adopted by the global management community Minchington defines employer or employment branding "the image of your organization / employment as a 'great place to work or great work to do'". Employment branding is concerned with enhancing company's brand or employment brand.

The agriculture sector needs to be organized and need similar kind of efforts to brand the employment in this sector. Following are the few strategies which will help this sector to enhance its reputation in the job market.

- Emphasis on agriculture education.
- Enhanced contribution of agricultural research to sustainable agricultural productivity, competitiveness, economic growth, food security and poverty eradication.
- Increased farmer access to relevant information, knowledge and technology through effective, efficient, sustainable and decentralized extension service coupled with increasing private sector involvement in line with government policy.
- Promote farmers' organizations and give it a industry status which will built up management, entrepreneurship, and group dynamics so they can engage in value-chain activities especially collective marketing. This Activity will defiantly attract more talent to it.
- Grade the framers on the basis of different criteria specially productivity and innovation. This grading provide them the status and act as the motivation factor for them.
- Develop quality standards for the farmers
- Emphasis on the training facility to the farmers & farm labors also (not any certification or degree)
- Need to Promote Agri-tourism in Rural Areas
- Marketing of successful case studies

The most important is overall social awareness about the food, water and environmental problems we are facing and will face in the future.

VI. CONCLUSION

Rejuvenating India's agriculture sector, which provides livelihood to nearly 60% of the workforce, needs to be made central to the inclusive growth endeavour. India's current policies for the agriculture sector are geared towards short-term solutions.

India is therefore paradoxical: a giant in global agriculture, the country is incapable of feeding its own population and meeting the challenges and issues that the 21st century holds. Will the strategy that India has adopted for international negotiations, at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in particular, enable it to meet those goals? Thus in the global scenario sustaining agriculture as a profession is extremely important for national food security.

Thus India needs to brand this profession and give international recognition. Three is opportunity for India to cash on the increasing need of global population. The paper work that is agriculture subsidies and schemes alone will not help, because Indian farmer does not love their profession.

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