



Reviving the Roots: A Wake-up Call to Glorify Agriculture

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Introduction:

There was a time when Agriculture used to be the primary occupation of man. Gradually people started to take up diverse and complex job roles with the demand of society. They were more inclined towards salaried jobs or other profitable businesses. But whatever they do was for a plate of food. Only difference was that the farmers could produce their own food, while the rest had to depend on the farmers. Now, when a large section of people is switching over to non-agricultural field seeking money and comfort, it is going to be an alarming situation soon.

While the number of farmers is decreasing, the demand for food is increasing manifold. Previously, when everyone was farming, one had to cultivate for its own share only. Everybody was self-sufficient back then. Now, the farmers have the responsibility to feed others as well. Unfortunately, this comes at the cost of hard-labour with minimal return. So, it is high time to glorify the most important profession of human being. If we can't produce our food ourselves, we should at least encourage the ones having potential to do it for us.

Seeding Agriculture through Rhymes or Poetries:

The memorizing capacity of our brain reduces with age. So, it is necessary to give the basic knowledge of agriculture at an early age. Recitation of rhymes is a common practice in the initial phase of schooling. We still remember so many rhymes or poetries from our early school days. Those rhymes indeed helped us in learning the vocabulary of language but those poems have hardly any application in our professional lives now. So, if we can include a few poetries or rhymes related to Agriculture in the school books, it will be a treasure for the kids in future.

In the socio-cultural life, across all languages, there are various Proverbs, which play a pivotal role in preaching special life-lessons. Among those, there is a special category of Proverbs prevalent in Assam and West Bengal, called “*Dakor Boson*” or “the verses of Dak”. These verses preach vital information on social ceremonies, agriculture, health and well-being, etc. The origin of such verses cannot be traced as it is being flourished verbally from one generation to another.

So, such proverbs based on

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Agriculture, which are scientifically proven, can be introduced in school books. Measures should be taken to create more such proverbs in the line of “*Dakor Boson*”, which are informative as well as rhyming in nature.

Nurturing Agriculture through Education:

A doctor’s son aspires to become a doctor, an engineer’s son an engineer, an actor’s son an actor, but a farmer’s son never dares to even think of farming. Why is it so? In India, choosing Agriculture as a profession is a suicidal attempt towards poverty. This is the opinion of most of the Indian farmers. Farmers’ most common advice to their children is to study hard and take up a job, else they will also have to do farming.

In contrast, the traders or the businessmen have a different advice for their children. They suggest their kids to study hard and carry over their family business. This is the reason why they blindly choose Commerce stream in 10+2 and then pursue relevant degree like MBA, if necessary. The central idea is to gather knowledge and skill so as to run their business in a better way. In fact, education is like a long-term investment for them.

Education is the key to development. The scenario of agriculture would have been different if a farmer’s son could take up higher education in Agriculture for the betterment of farming instead of general course for a

mediocre job. The farmers alone cannot be blamed for their plight. Nobody wants their children to face the same kind of hardships as faced by them. The education system needs to be reformed.

In India, free and compulsory education is offered to all age-groups from 6 to 14 years, which is basically up to Class X. But during all those years, are the children taught Agriculture as a subject? Even if it is there, it is not compulsory but elective, whereas we are taught Economics and Commercial Arithmetic compulsorily from Class VII or even earlier.

The students belonging to poor section of society normally drops out of school before Class X, as they are forced to earn daily bread for their family. In the long run, the education so acquired becomes meaningless to them. Had they been taught agriculture from pre-primary level of education, it would have been of great help. It is certain that there is a provision to opt for different vocational courses in school level, but it generally comes at a very later period of study.

Any kind of vocational course is not rocket science. It cannot be covered with mere 10-12 chapters through just two books in two years. A student should be taught the basics of all the essential vocational courses from an early period of study. It would help them to develop interest for a particular subject among

them. Later, in higher classes, they may opt for that subject as specialization.

Manuring Agriculture through Cinema:

Cinema is not a mere source of entertainment, it is also one of the most influential media for the masses. At times when there was no mobile or internet connectivity, people used to learn many new things through movies in the name of entertainment. With the advent of smartphone, we can gather information on whatever we want to know, within a few seconds. But the problem is that people are more inclined towards entertainment than information. They would rather prefer to watch a feature film over a documentary film.

So, what if we infuse a few elements of Agricultural information in the storyline of feature films? For this, the film need not be based on Agricultural theme. If the film is based on rural life, adding a few dialogues on farming during casual conversation is more than enough. One such example is the Hindi film “*Laapataa Ladies*” directed by Kiran Rao, which gave a small message on pest control method using Yellow Sticky Trap. The film also gave a glimpse on studying Agriculture as a discipline.

Recently, we have come across so many good films and web series showcasing hostel-life, but hardly have we found any story which depicts an Agricultural University.

Since the target audience for such web series is basically the students, it can bring to the notice of students that a professional degree called B.Sc. (Agriculture) also exists. The film or series need not be based on Agricultural degree, but even a glimpse of an Agricultural College is enough to create an impact on the viewers.

Let me recall a particular scene from a commercial South-Indian film. In that scene, a woman asks a girl about her qualification, she replies that she did B.Sc. (Agriculture). The reply was quite simple and had nothing to do with the storyline, but it can have a huge impact on audience, especially the students or even parents. This is because that particular scene can strike our sub-conscious mind to think about Agriculture as a discipline later on. Such type of creative and deliberate inclusions is necessary to glorify Agriculture through films of any genre.

So, the Government may take initiatives to introduce some policies such as incentives for films promoting agriculture. This will definitely help in promoting the agricultural sector.

Weeding in Agriculture through Advertisement:

“*Do Boond Zindagi Ke Liye*” – a classic Advertisement by veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan, that whispered through the ears of every Indian mothers. That was a

revolutionary step taken by the Government of India against eradication of Polio virus. If we really want to push forward our farmers, such impactful Advertisements should be made through influential persons.

Now-a-days, a few Government initiated Advertisements are being repeatedly shown in the Cinema Halls. One is the Akshay Kumar's Advertisement on "Sanitary Pad" and the other being "Smoking causes Cancer". It is beyond doubt that these Advertisements are very important from health perspective. However, awareness on excessive usage of Pesticides is equally important from health perspective. The environment polluted through sprinkling of pesticides or the residues found in the food crops are equally responsible for causing Cancer. The effect of pesticides is first seen in the households of farmers, which gradually spreads to the households of consumers. The residues mixed in air, water and land can have a direct impact on the farm families. So, initiatives should be taken to create and play such Advertisements in the Cinema Halls.

In the Golden Era of Doordarshan, a series of Advertisements were aired on DD National TV channel under the Campaign "Jago Grahak Jago", creating awareness on Consumer Rights and fighting against unfair trade practices. The importance of such Advertisements has increased manifold in

modern times. There have been so many instances of food adulterations and use of chemicals in fruits and vegetables to make them look fresh and shiny. So, awareness is necessary to detect such adulterations and to spread knowledge on how to get rid of residual chemicals in fruits and vegetables.

In a nutshell, if we can bring the farmers and consumers on the same track through creative Advertisements, we can build a healthy and pesticide-free Nation. This will help in promoting Organic Agriculture among the farmers. Besides, it may also provoke the general public to go for kitchen garden, rooftop farming, etc. subject to availability of land and space. It may be noted that such Advertisements can also be sponsored to play in different mobile Apps, video games, YouTube, OTT platforms, etc. targeting the youths.

Breeding Agriculture through Endorsement or Special Recognition:

Sometimes, we see celebrities posing pictures of farming activities in their farmhouses. The celebrity may not be actually working in farm, but it spreads a special message among the youths to take up agriculture. Similarly, we could see a notable Assamese singer Zubeen Garg being roped in as the brand ambassador of Assam's Agricultural sector way back in 2020. He appealed the youths of Assam to take up

agriculture as a profession and pave the way for entrepreneurship through marketing.



Fig.: Actor Salman Khan planting rice at his Panvel farmhouse

A son of a farmer practising Agriculture is a usual scenario. But there are instances where someone coming from non-agricultural family background is taking up Agriculture. One such example is the Assamese Agri-graduate, Mr. Samir Ranjan Bordoloi, who is the son of an IAS officer. As we see a Doctor using the prefix “Dr.”, Engineer “Er.” in front of their names, he likes to use the prefix “Farmer” in front of his name. This is in order to change the mindset of those youths who did not feel the pride to be called a “Farmer”. Quitting his secured job at Tata Chemical, he has been working on zero-budget organic farming and advocating the cultivation of indigenous crops.

Farming is not a glamourised profession. So, initiatives should be taken to glorify the works of those farmers who are turning agriculture into a profitable venture. In

the age of internet, it is not a difficult task to seek farming ideas or solutions. All one needs is the courage to take up agriculture as lucrative profession with pride. There is a greater need to recognize such progressive farmers and bring into limelight their works among the youths. This will inspire the youths to break the stereotype on taking up Agriculture as a viable or secure career option.



Fig.: Farmer Samir Bordoloi at his Spread NE Food Forest, Sonapur, Assam

Conclusion:

Agriculture is the most underrated profession in India. The Government has been initiating schemes, incentives, etc. for the farmers since Independence, yet unable to reap the benefits. There are Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Agri-clinics, etc. for the farmers, but only a few visits them. Most of the farmers still rely on age-old practices. They mostly gather knowledge through peer farmers or the progressive ones from the locality. This leads to improper or indiscriminate application of technology, which can actually do harm in the long run. So, a direct channel or medium is



required to deliver proper knowledge to the needy from time to time. For a developing country, it is necessary to invest money in the promotion of Agriculture – the basic building blocks of development.

