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## **PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FARMERS**

**Dr. Arpita Sharma**

Assistant Professor

Deptt. Of Agricultural Communication, College of Agriculture

GBPUA&T, Pantnagar-263145

### **Abstract**

Agriculture is main source of income in rural areas of India. Indian agriculture contributes 48 per cent of the total National production in the last two decades. Around more than half per cent of rural population in India depend on agricultural related activities as their main means of livelihood. Government has initiated various programme for development of rural people. Researches revealed that most of the people were not aware on many aspects. Thus, a participatory medium can aware and inform the community.

**Key words :** Participatory approaches, farmers

### **Introduction**

Agriculture has great importance to run the Indian economy smoothly. About 50 percent of India's geographical area is under agriculture, which proves that India is an agricultural country (**Arjun, 2013**). Agriculture plays an important role in meeting the basic needs of humans and animals. India has a wide variety of geographical conditions, which are unique to agriculture as well as provide a wide range of favorable conditions. Various favorable conditions encourage farmers to do agriculture related work throughout the year. It is an important source of raw material supply for many agro-based, small and large industries. The use of science and technology in India for the betterment of the agricultural sector is also commendable, which is constantly making inventive efforts. The use of science and technology is playing an important role in increasing production as well as saving farmer's time.

In India, agriculture sector accounts of 15.2 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and it provide employment to more than half population of the country directly or indirectly. More than half population in India directly and indirectly depends on the agriculture. According to **Kekane, 2013**, the food grain production has risen from 51 million tonnes (MT) in 1950-51 to 250MT during 2011-12 highest ever since independence. India is one of the largest producers of many crops in world such as wheat, sugarcane, rice, pulses, and cotton, as well as the highest producer of milk and second-largest producer of fruits/vegetables (**Deshpande, 2017**). In India, Agriculture supplies the raw material like jute, cotton, sugar to various agro based industries. All food processing industries are directly dependent on agriculture. Agriculture sector is providing high employment opportunities to the unemployed people and labour force that reduce the high rate of unemployment in the developing countries. In India Agriculture contributes to economic development leading to increased national income levels as well as the living standard of people have been improved.

The impact of agriculture and agricultural activities plays an important role in developing countries and strengthening the economy. The activities related to agriculture are many but production of fruits and vegetables is the main among them.

### **Importance of Vegetable in India**

Vegetables in India are counted as an important food crops for food trade. Due to the wide variety of climatic conditions available in India, different types of food products (grains, fruits, vegetables,

legumes, seeds, etc.) are available in sufficient quantity for consumption at any time. The fruit and vegetable sector is acting as a driving force for India's agricultural sector. It plays an important role in India's economy by increasing the income of rural people (Neeraj *et.al*, 2017). In the world rankings, India continues to be the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables. Exports have played an important role in India's economy. Exports affect the economic growth, employment, and balance of payments of the country. India has a lot of ability to export vegetables, due to which it is also a good source of earning foreign exchange and increasing annual income of farmers. People from rural areas continue to get regular employment opportunities due to the inclusion of intensive cultural activities, from sowing of vegetables to marketing. Vegetables are used in the processing industry. Demand for commercial products (sauces, jams, jellies, pickles, etc.) in the market has steadily increased over the past two decades. Therefore, the processing industry can emerge as a new income option among farmers. Due to shortage of raw materials, changing lifestyles, and lack of new agricultural techniques, Indian farmer is committing suicide today. Keeping these problems in the middle, the Government of India has started working on some policies to reduce these barriers. In view of the huge demand of vegetables, some important decisions have been taken by the Central and State Governments in the last few years to improve agriculture and agriculture related activities like setting up community canning centers, setting up centers for training, research centers and promotion of commercial production etc. At present, agriculture and agriculture related activities have attracted the attention of people as a result of the steps taken by the Central and State Governments.

### **Vegetable production in Uttarakhand**

Uttarakhand is primarily a mountainous state. Further 78 % of its total population dependent on agricultural-related activities for livelihood. Agriculture is an important sector in the state's economy and it contributes 15.5 per cent to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). The yield from field crops is not very high in the hilly areas and it is mainly due to the mountainous terrain that makes it difficult to adopt mechanized modern agriculture techniques and methods in these areas. Thus, these crops are produced in hilly areas mostly to fulfill the subsistence needs of farmers, and sectors like horticulture (fruit and vegetable) have a comparative advantage in the region due to its agro-climatic conditions.

There are various constraints faced by the farmers in commercial farming of potatoes in Uttarakhand state viz. unavailability of quality seeds, pest management, lack of farm machinery, Field management, lack of post-harvest management techniques, marketing problems, lack of transportation facility, irrigation facility, lack of storage facilities, lack of technical knowledge for scientific cultivation, lack of extension workers and lack of research, technical guidance and sufficient capital. Vegetable production improves the economy of the country as it is a very good source of income and employment, as well as providing nutritional benefits. India is second-largest producer of vegetables and the presence of India in global market is considered significant. Today, exports of fresh vegetables like onions, peas and potatoes are increasing from India which can bring new opportunities for India. The geographical features and climatic conditions of the state provide an ideal climate for the production of vegetables. Potato, cauliflower, tomato, onion, brinjal, peas, cabbage and ladyfinger are grown mainly in Uttarakhand. During year 2015 -16, total production of vegetables was 9.45 lakh metric tonnes in an area of about 0.898 lakh hectare in the state, which increased to 9.89 lakh metric tonnes in 2017-18 in an area of about 1.0006 lakh hectare (**Horticultural Statistics at a Glance 2018**).

As we know, the proportion of extension workers per farmer in India is very less, which is a big challenge of the present time. Keeping this challenge in mind, it becomes important to seek a

participatory approach in the process of building strategy to meet the farmers' own information needs. The biggest problem of the farmers is the information gap. To fill this gap, it is necessary to provide services as per their requirement through the participation of the farmers at the grassroots level. Media can prove to be a good tool to make these services available to farmers. The mass media and agricultural sector are interlinked. Mass media has disseminated many agricultural programs and information especially for the farmers through radio, printed media, television, and internet (**Gorg, 2001**). Printed media has its own power to disseminate the valuable information.

The role of media is widely accepted in terms of providing information but information dissemination role is not sufficient for development related activities. Decentralization of media is very important to connect with people at grassroots level. Through participatory media, people get an opportunity to share their problems, needs, culture and aspirations with others. The development of people at the grassroots requires need assessment, message designing and use of information through the participation of people in media production (**Sharma, 2013**). In participatory media, Message is designed by the participation of the people thus making the development process effective.

**Needs of Participatory Communication** : According to **Uphoff, (1985)**, generally, the following types of participation can be observed in most development projects. The four ways of participation are given below:

1. **Participation in decision-making** : people initiate, conceptualize, discuss, and plan activities that they will do as a community.
2. **Participation in implementation** : people are highly encouraged, motivated, and mobilized to take part in implementation of project. Responsibilities are also distributed among them with set objectives.
3. **Participation in benefit** : encourage people to take part and enjoy output of project, such as establishment of community radio station, water from hand pump, hospital facilities, roads, transportation, education facilities etc.
4. **Participation in evaluation** : after completion of a project, people are invited for feedback on its success or failure.

The use of posters, leaflets, newsletters, and other publications as part of the participatory approach proves to be an important tool. Complete information about a recently changed situation or a recent event is called news. In another word, Information that is published in newspapers and broadcast on radio and television in country or world or about activities in a particular region is called news.

### Conclusion

On the basis of above discussion, this can be concluded that Participatory community media can empower the vegetable growers. Vegetable growers are facing many problems due to lack of knowledge on many aspects. Thus, there is an urgent need to develop extension and communication strategy to disseminate information among vegetable growers.

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