



Sustainable Career in Agriculture and Agri Businesses

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Last a few years have been very tough for most of us, especially our well educated young ones who after completing their studies struggled to get a quality job to meet his/her family's expectations as well as their own plans. Reasons could be hundreds, a few political and many economical, affecting entire industries who were known for offering maximum employment opportunities to young qualified people.

As I mentioned, reasons could be political and economical, defective plans & strategies which have got direct impact on the industries earnings, thus hiring are either stopped or reduced.

It's also a fact that to some extent external factors like global economy directly affects industrial policies of the Govt. and some times an unprecedented global corona pandemic like situations reverse

entire economic activities to save lives as priority as we all saw it impacting our lives in worst possible manners , throwing all Govt or industries plan for a toss. Who knew a tiny virus N corona19 would take lacs of lives or damage global economy like never before? Factories, Plants, Airlines, Railways, Hotels, Malls, schools and colleges all closed. Not for a day or two but for months pushing global economy in tatters.

India was not exception when lockdown -shutdown killed economy to great extent and pushed millions to poverty as they were either out of jobs or lost their other means of livelihoods. Migrant workers and their plights are not hidden to anyone, workers who leave their homes or states in search for employment. But it was also found that many who were years ago migrated to other cities for a bread, were from villages





and most of them had some agriculture land too. Hence they decided to get back to cultivation rather than returning back to cities to resume their activities.

It was a self realisation for many and an opportunity in the time of disastrous situation when they found new vistas in agriculture based activities, which bring back smiles on their faces and give peace and happiness in the families. Many of those, mostly young ones with some agricultural land or having strong desire to rebuild their lives within their own villages and remaining with family and friends in more respectful manner, agriculture was the great option. In fact many of them learnt new ways of sustenance, while remaining confined to four walls during waves of Corona. They found new opportunities too like on-line services so that lives don't halt.

We knew that human minds are the strongest thing which always find new, better, more effective ways of survival and this Corona made us wiser to the great extent.

The success stories of many who had lost opportunities or employments but instead of cursing their fate, fought with the adverse Corona pandemic situation, they found new horizon of great successes.

Please note I am not writing this to boast my claims but lacs of winners of this pandemic admit that agriculture and agriculture based industries can bring global economy back to glow with better, peaceful, satisfying life. What other experts or leaders said in the past, I am not going to repeat but I firmly believe that if we go back to agriculture and agriculture based industries, we can make this world more healthy, peaceful & happy in real terms. Remember, I am not asking to reverse our other industrial activities or our headway in science and technology, rather I am seriously recommending fullest utilisation of our agricultural resources which will generate millions of job opportunities near our own proximity. Hence issues of migrant workers plights or miseries can be addressed.

You must have noticed that any kind of adverse situation arising for whatsoever reasons including Pandemic or world wars, more people die of hunger or diseases than bullets. Just see the latest Corona pandemic cases, despite advance medical and science & technology, millions died and we couldn't save them. It was quite clear that except imposition of strict regulations like lock down or shutdown, Administration had no other options to save lives. If we look at the interesting statistics like world population, hunger index, healthy life style, life expectancy and finally economy, you will find agriculture can offer highest employment opportunities with sustainable career.



It may sound a bit odd but data are in favour of my claim of sustainable careers in agriculture and agri businesses. Perhaps readers are aware that the world population grew many folds, from 1 billion to 7.7 billions in the last two Centuries. Where as we lost agricultural land to other industries as well as for housing purposes as population grew. So also the demand for food, dwellings and other requirements also proportionately grew, putting serious stress on food supplies at affordable costs. Thus people lived in hunger and remained under fed especially in African & Asian countries which also face regular natural Calamities adding to woes of poor people. A Few Asian countries like China (1.44 billions) , India (1.32 billions) , Indonesia (.28 billions), Bangladesh & Pakistan and African countries like Nigeria, Morocco and a few Latin American countries like Brazil, Mexico just to name a few amount to more than 3/4 of the world population are always suffering from hunger and poverty. Though there are many other industries to support their economy but fail because they have not utilized their agriculture resources to the fullest extent in the balanced way.

If we look at the world population growth rate unlike past century where it used to be 2.25 % it has reduced to around 1.05%. Primarily the growth has been more in Asian , African or Latin American countries whereas European countries have seen declined trends. China, in the contrary has been able to hold their population growth due to their strict 1child policy where as India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines have seen massive population growth pushing the economy in bad shape.

Some defective Govt vote bank policies added to neglection of agriculture and made people less industrious which are definite reasons of decline in economic conditions of its large population. Similarly continuing with conventional, outdated, unscientific ways of farming with very low output also to be blamed for people shifting to cities as workers rather than remaining as farmers to generate livelihoods with self esteem. When density of population and it's distribution becomes uneven, and villages becoming less attractive in terms of employment opportunities for its young mass, poverty was sure to rise.

Now the question is how agriculture and agri businesses can offer sustainable career and employment opportunities? It's worth reminding that I am writing this article as a career consultant, not as Agronomist or agriculturist . So my write up should be read in that perspective only. As I mentioned earlier, that agriculture is a complete industry in it self. It's not just farming or toiling hard in the field as most youngsters feel whereas it is a very lucrative, profitable and Enjoyable career option. A few countries which are ranked very high in quality of life and happiness index are not industrialised nations, such as, Austria, New Zealand, Australia, Spain, Sweden, Brazil, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, Iceland, Ireland, Finland,



Columbia, Cuba and hundreds of islands who are rated as most peaceful countries in the world. All they have one thing in common, i.e., they have largely agriculture based economy. Japan, South Korea, Israel, China like nations have kept balance between agriculture and industries and thus are not affected like ours during pandemic when industries were virtually put on hold for months.

Agriculture can be divided into many segments like Cultivation of farm produce, Horticulture, floriculture, Sericulture, Aqua culture, dairy, Poultry and many more. Similarly if we get into farming, we have grains, fibers, staples, cash crops like vegetables, medicinal plants, spices and others, all with excellent earning scopes.

The next one is the food processing based economy where SMEs or MSMEs can get into with limited capital and govt subsidies, a lot of technical support from various govt agencies including agriculture or horticulture deptts. Even MNCs have their business interests in food processing. They set up their units for bulk production and marketing thus creating good number of employment opportunities. Right from Mechanical, electrical, civil, electronic, Engineers, plc operators, packaging, Logistics, commercial, Accounts, Admin, HR, management, sales, marketing professionals just to mention a few, for production, operations and plant maintenance, food technologists, R&D, or ultimately business development are required to run food processing units.

Let's analyze, while farmers get their produce sold to near by food processing



units at best Price, loss of crops (as these are mostly perishable items), wastage in transportation, time wasted in selling and receiving payments are minimized.

What's more important is to get optimum farm outputs like in Israel, Japan, China or other countries, where farmers are using newer, safer, and better quality farm produce, and are getting their income far more than our farmers.

It's simple, as we know less farm produce means less income, less income as compared to investment means less interest of farmers. Reasons? Our farmers are still lagging behind in adopting new technologies to increase their yields.

There are few new methodologies, such as, Drip irrigation, Hydroponic, Aquaponic, vertical farming, organic farming, medicinal plants farming, hybrid seeds or high yield producing seeds farming, dwarf plants farming, etc. which are adopted by farmers of other nations. Our farmers can adopt such options.

I am with the opinion that Farmers of India must stop looking at Govt for financial support like today's Govt are following, converting farmers into beggars like who are depending on financial support rather than





becoming contributors to the society with their high quality farm produces. Another factor which I believe is detrimental to great extent in detaching farmers from farming is regular losses due to external factors like perennial natural calamities which cause irreversible debt cycle for the farmers.

I have seen many of highly qualified professionals including some IITians, MBAs who got into scientific farming adopting organic methods and using soil less technologies like hydroponic farming or Aquaponic or vertical farming and enjoying their lives. Unlike 2-3 crops which most Indians farmers are used to harvest, new generation farmers are maximizing their income by using farm land in various cash crops, veggies organic farming, spices farming and selling through E-commerce or on-line and generating far more income than other professionals.

Time has come to adopt agriculture as more attractive, profitable, secure and safe career option than any other jobs. Here you are the boss and master of your own business, Here you can create hundreds of employment opportunities for your people. Exporting of farm produce is not new. India is the 2nd largest fruit producer in the world after China, followed by Brazil, USA, Indonesia, Russia and others. Similarly in

spices, India is the world leader. However in Tea, coffee or something other produces like Vanilla, medicinal plants including some which are used in restricted manner like narcotics or contraband items used as medicines, India has good scope.

It's high time when youngsters instead of searching for 9-5 jobs, should get into farming to build sustainable career with no loss of job or salary or promotion. Just enjoy your life with little serious involvement in farming.

Last but not the least, while world population is growing, requirements of food and food items are always increasing. It will never decrease. So are the choices of various new food items, fruits and quality veggies will grow.

Interesting point is those who didn't have enough land but had space in their court yards or roof tops and had strong will power, started farming at small level and then through contract farming, could earn handsome income. Even many left highly paid jobs to pursue farming and have no regrets for doing so. So it's right time to getting into agriculture and agri business and have sustainable & satisfying career.

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