

Role of Krishibhavan in revamping the Agriculture: Reflections from the Field

Mr Lims Thomas & Dr Jeryda Gnanajane Eljo

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Vimala College (Autonomous), Thrissur,
Kerala

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli,
Tamil Nadu

Introduction

The Ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of Human Being - Masanobu Fukuoka

The well said statement clearly explains the role of agriculture in Human Development. The humanity got into the present shape through the agriculture. Farming has become their culture throughout their life and they have shared the culture and tradition to the new generations. Agriculture occupies an important role in the Indian Economy. Over 58 percent of the rural households depend on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood. Agriculture, along with fisheries and forestry, is one of the largest contributors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As per estimates by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the share of agriculture and allied sectors (including agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery) was 16.1 percent of the Gross Value Added (GVA) during 2014–15 at 2011–12 prices. During Q1 FY2016, agriculture and

allied sectors grew 1.9 percent year-on-year and contributed 14.2 percent of GVA. In other terms, we used to say that the prosperity of Indian agriculture is also the prosperity of the Indian economy.

On the other hand, due to rapid industrialization and globalization, the agriculture has been losing its momentum even it caters a huge number of population in India. World Bank (2011) explains in their report as Slow agricultural growth is a concern for policymakers 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 regulations.

These problems led the farmers into poverty and an extended form of Suicide. According to figures from the Ministry of Agriculture, the total number of suicides committed by farmers for agrarian reasons in the last three years stands at 3313. That also from Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala (*Hindu, 2015*). Maharashtra has recorded 20,504 farmer suicides since 2001 (*Hindu, 2015*). The data is getting worse while comparing with each state in our country which are mostly depending upon the agriculture.

Even in these situations, it's very important to understand the role of Krishi Bhavan in promoting & sustaining agriculture and its activities. Many of the farmers as well as the common man did not aware of the various services provided by the Krishibhavan for the upliftment of agriculture. Let's have a look at it.

Krishibhavan

The concept of Krishi Bhavan was introduced by the state Government in 1987. The basic premise for the initiation of this concept was the realization of authorities about the need to make planning and agricultural development more location-specific by taking the panchayat as the basic unit for a

development work. Under this principle, the Development of agriculture was reorganized with the panchayat as the basic unit. By establishing one agricultural unit for every panchayat it was hoped that production inputs and integrated service available to farmers in the time of production and productivity of crops would be enhanced.

All the agricultural activities covering extension and development were included under the jurisdiction of these base units. Through this arrangement, provision of a single window approach for agricultural development in the state, by integrating and coordinating the existing agricultural development activities which were scattered

Objectives of the Krishibhavan

- ❖ The basic objective of initiating the Krishibhavan concept was to improve the production and productivity of crops in the state.
- ❖ One of the major objectives of the Krishibhavan was securing of remunerative prices to farmers by providing better marketing facilities to them.
- ❖ Krishibhavan helps the Departments of Agriculture in

implementing the agricultural programmes successfully.

- ❖ The awareness about scientific cultivation practices is an important indicator of extension activities of the Krishibhavan.
- ❖ Successful implementation of plan schemes.
- ❖ Organizing programmes for the development of infrastructure facilities to improve the productivity of the crops.

Functions of Krishibhavan

The major functions of Krishibhavan are as follows.

- ❖ Transfer of technology to farmers is an important function of the Krishibhavans.
- ❖ The Krishibhavan act as a link between the research organizations like Kerala Agricultural University and farmers through a number of farmers' organizations like the different crops based samithies.
- ❖ The Krishibhavan supplied various inputs like seeds, planting materials and plant protection chemicals to farmers at subsidized rates under various schemes and also at market rates.

- ❖ Helping farmers for the scientific application of fertilizers and chemicals.
- ❖ Organize seminars, Melas, Exhibitions, etc. and help in the disbursement as well as repayment of loans.
- ❖ The Krishibhavan supplied pump sets, providing facilities for the construction of tube wells and dug wells for irrigation purposes under different schemes and for different crops.
- ❖ Fungicides and insecticides are also distributed through Krishibhavans at subsidized rates and market rates.
- ❖ Krishibhavan acts as a source of information for almost on the aspect.

Facilities of Krishi Bhavan:

- ❖ **Testing of mud:** The person must be a farmer under the particular panchayath. The farmer should submit the sample of mud along with the prescribed form. Usually, they will get responses in 30 days. In case of delay, the farmer can approach Principal Krishi officer for further assistance.

- ❖ When the farmer directly giving the mud sample by themselves for the mud testing, he has to submit the mud sample, application form & fee of 50/- to the district mud testing lab. The farmer will get results within 3 days. In case of delay, they can approach the principal Krishi officer.
- ❖ **Mobile Mud testing lab:** The farmers should submit the application form and mud samples to the mobile mud testing centre. They will report you back the farmer as soon as they finish their work up to the first 50 samples and rest of the samples, they will get a report back in 7 days.
- ❖ **Machinery for rent:** The machinery can be given to the farmers or assisting workers. The form should be submitted to the district panchayath and the rates will be depending on the availability of machines. Assistant executive engineer (agriculture) is the in charge of availing this machinery.
- ❖ **Membership in the State agriculture insurance:** The farmers can get insurance facilities under the state agriculture insurance. To avail this facility, the farmer should submit the prescribed application form along with cultivation details of crops comes under the coverage of insurance. After scrutinizing the application form & paying the first premium, within one month, they will get the insurance coverage. To avail this coverage, the farmer should submit the documents to prove that their crops got ruined to the Krishi Bhavan within 15 days of damage & the insurance compensation will receive within the 3 months of time.
- ❖ **Financial assistance due to the natural disasters:** The farmers should submit the application form along with the receipt of tax payment to the Krishi Bhavan. The financial assistance will be distributed based on the priority and availability of funds.
- ❖ **To provide advice on scientific methods in agriculture and protection of crops:** The farmers can directly approach the Krishi Bhavan and discuss about the issue in detail. The field officer will visit the place & necessary arrangements

- ❖ **Advice on Training & development:** They can directly contact to the Krishi Bhavan, discuss with the officer over there & collect the data required form Krishi Bhavan
- ❖ **To start Nurseries:** The farmer should have the basic requirements to start a nursery along with the help of a person who holds Bachelors or diploma in agricultural science.. The application form along with the tax payment receipt & other documents should be submitted to the Krishi Bhavan. After scrutinizing the application, Krishi officer will give the licence to start a nursery
- ❖ **Regarding seeds, plantation equipment, pesticides and fertilizers:** They can directly contact to the Krishi Bhavan, discuss with the officer over there & collect the data required form Krishi Bhavan
- ❖ **Regarding the sale of seeds, plantation & other equipment:** The farmers can approach the Krishi Bhavan & buy directly from there.
- ❖ **Getting the certificate of electricity for irrigation from Krishi officer:** It is applicable only those farmers who own at least 30 cents of land and has either well, pond, pump set or pump house. They should submit the form, receipt of tax payment to the Krishi Bhavan.
- ❖ **Electricity for the irrigation:** It is applicable to those farmers who own at least 30 cents of land and has either well, pond, pump set or pump house. The selected person's electricity bill will be paid by the electricity board and it comes to the responsibility of the assistant director of agriculture.
- ❖ **Testing of water used for irrigation:** To avail this facility, the sample should be submitted by the farmer to the mud testing lab. They will get the results within 3 days and it is the responsibility of assistant soil chemist.
- ❖ **Licence to produce pesticides:** To avail this facility the person should submit the form to the Krishi officer with fee 2000/- rupees for each pesticide and get the license from the joint director

from agriculture directorate within 45 days

- ❖ **License for the wholesale distribution of pesticides:** The respected person should submit the form to the Krishi Bhavan with the fee 500/- rupees for each pesticide and they get it within 45 days from the deputy director of agriculture.
- ❖ **Testing the quality of seeds:** To access this facility, seeds have to be submitted to the laboratories at Alappuzha or Trivandrum, with the fee for each sample 10 rupees. They will get the result within 30 days.
- ❖ **Distribution of Bio-control agency:** The person can directly contact the biocontrol agency situated in Mannuthy, Thrissur. No specific application form or fee for this service.
- ❖ **Distribution of friendly insects;** To get this facility there is no particular form or fees, but the person should access to the friendly insect's production institutes at Trivandrum, Kollam, Ernakulam,. Kottayam, Thrissur, Kozhikode, and Kasarkodu.
- ❖ **Public participation in Agriculture Programmes:** Public

participation is highly essential for successful implementation of agricultural development programmes. The participation of the public in the development endeavours will help in promoting the bottom-up approach of the planning process and also help in creating more transparency and accountability and facilitate more equity in the sharing of resources and benefits. Besides these, public participation help in the faster diffusion of the best practices among farmers, community-based actions and encouraging farmers, especially disadvantaged sections like women and SC/STs to participate in the developmental process. To ensure public participation in Krishi Bhavan activities, the Karshika Vikasan Samithies were constituted in each Krishi Bhavan. Besides these, to create awareness about agricultural development programmes, Farmer's day, workshops, seminars and honouring will be undertaken under this programme.

- ❖ **Farmer's Day observation:** To recognize the role of farmers in

agriculture development, and also to honour best performing farmers, Farmer's Day will be celebrated on Chingom 1st at Krishi Bhavan level as done in previous years. The farmer's day celebrations may be organized by conducting public meetings, arranging group discussions/seminars and also by honouring the best farmer's of the area in the public function. The function may be organized with the full participation of farmers, people's representatives, Karshika Vikasana Samithi members, MLAs/MPs and other stakeholders involved in the agricultural development programmes in the area. An amount of Rs.1,500/ can be utilized to conduct of Farmer's day in each Krishi Bhavan.

- ❖ **Conduct of district level and Grama Panchayat level Karshika Vikasana Samithi meetings:** The advice of Karshika Vikasana Samithies constituted at the Krishi Bhavan level and district level may be utilized for the effective implementation of agricultural development programmes. To facilitate this, Karshika Vikasana Samithi

meetings may be convened once in a month at Krishi Bhavan level and once in two months at the district level. More number of meetings may be conducted under special circumstances. For the conduct of the meeting, an amount of 200/- for Krishi Bhavan and 500/district/annum can be utilized.

Observations

While we are looking into the services of the Krishibhavan, we're able to understand that the investment which put forward by the government through Krishibhavan for the farmers. But sadly, only 1 – 2 percent of the entire farming population was utilizing these services. This is one of the major drawbacks of the society as well as govt.functionaries Another Major area to be addressed is lack of people's participation in the execution of schemes & programmes. They consider that those programmes were developed by the government and also for the government. They don't like to participate as well as utilize the resources which are available for improving the agriculture. In some cases, the complex procedure demanded by the Krishibhavan made the farmers to leave the Krishibhavan facilities.

While talking about the accessibility of the services, the authorities lack the database of farmers in that particular region. If they're not aware of the beneficiaries of Krishibhavan, how we think that the beneficiaries will be aware of the services as well as access to the services. This issue creates a multitude of problems among the farmers. The authorities will not be able to create customized plans or schemes for a group of common farmers. They will not be able to impart services to the beneficiaries properly because of this inadequate database. In some cases, they may be able to identify the beneficiaries properly, but could not be able to deliver the services and facilities on time. It may be because of the lack of funds, government approvals, lack of personnel, etc. But farmers think that the authorities could not be able to deliver the services on time. This is also one of the problems to be addressed.

P.V. Jinraj (1999) attempted to examine the efficiency of the Krishi Bhavan on the basis of its principal objective, of the transfer of technology in the form of input-linked extension activity. The effectiveness of technology transfer is studied based on the following parameters: (i) source of information about major cultivation practices; (ii) level of awareness and the extent of adoption of

farmers; (iii) participation of farmers in agricultural seminars; and (iv) exposure to agricultural literature. Krishi Bhavan as an agency for technology transfer was found to be ineffective since it could motivate only a marginal proportion of farmers. The case studies of two Krishi Bhavans reveal that their functioning was largely confined to routine administrative work and that the quality of extension work was poor. Lack of time for extension work, untimely arrival of funds, frequent transfer of officials, poor quality of planting materials supplied to farmers, and lack of proper database required for preparing plans and schemes were found to be major constraints. Perception of farmers on the quality of services provided by the Krishi Bhavan was found to be poor. The study suggests the need to transform the Krishi Bhavans into regional agro-clinics so as to effectively tackle the problems of pests and outbreak of disease.

Conclusion

While Concluding this article, the above paragraphs clearly show that Krishibhavan can play a vital role in the sustainable agriculture. The government has allocated so many services to the farmers and those services will be implemented through the Krishibhavan. At times, lack of awareness

about these services leads to underutilization of these allocated resources. In other cases, the untimely arrival of funds, frequent transfer of officials, poor quality of planting materials supplied to farmers, and lack of proper database required for preparing plans and schemes were found to be major constraints to provide adequate services to the farmers. The efforts should come from both sides ie from the side of govt.officials as well as the farmers. We should develop a system that the farmers can inform, access and avail all the possible benefits for their agriculture. The govt. officials must take necessary steps to access and avail all the benefits to the farmers. This mutual cooperation & responsibility will definitely increase the sustainable agriculture in Kerala and make the Krishibhavans are the inevitable part of agriculture.

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