



United we attain *Individually we lose*

From a joint family to the United Nations we have a good experience of the benefits derived of being organized. There are organized unions for every sector all over the world. In India, we have farmers unions right from the district level to the national level. But to my utter desperation, the benefits the farmers had ever got are too less, when compared to other industrial trade unions. Based on my experience, I feel that one of the reasons could be the inability of a farmer to spend his/her time in protests and agitations owing to many responsibilities which he/she has towards managing their farm and farm animals. If they are not maintained properly for a single day, they have to face irreparable losses or damages. This problem has become more acute in the last 50 years as joint family systems no longer exist. In the year 1954, I lived in a joint family which had 94 persons. I also know of a family near Dharwad which has 187 people living together.

In nuclear family systems, many times we do not find time to meet our parents or friends. Therefore, it is very important that farmers organize themselves at the family level, at the village level and at the national level. This is to plan, avail benefits from the government for production, procurement, processing and marketing, and thereby get better income for the produce. One thing I cannot understand with our unions in the country as to why they join together and mount pressure on the administration. It could be more due to their personal interest than the welfare of fellow farmers. In my opinion, it is better that 15-20 farmers from one or two villages organise themselves into producer societies, share their technologies and experiences to produce, procure, process and market directly to consumers regularly, at a better price. Further, we can pool resources like seed banks, agricultural implements, prepare inputs together like plant protection preparations from locally available herbs and seek financial support as a group. Already many third sector institutions are engaged in promotion of farmer's organizations to empower them with all necessary requirements.

Farming is facing acute labour scarcity all over the country after the commencement of Rural Employment Assurance Scheme. Contrary to the views of the local politicians and government officials, the scheme has benefitted neither the poor labourers nor the farming community. If the funds are spent through the farmers organizations, the poor farmer will be benefitted and the nation's agriculture production shall improve, which is fast dwindling from year to year.

Another major problem facing Indian agriculture is the loss of seed biodiversity, the seed being controlled by a few multinational companies. Crop diversity is the most important factor in providing food security for humanity and all the creatures in the nature. Farmers organizations' can play a major role in creating seed banks to preserve, produce, share and distribute many species of seeds locally available at an affordable price, and save the country from the clutches of multinational companies.

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