

Editorial

Agriculture and Family Farming: The Eternal Bond

AB Sharangi*

Faculty of Horticulture, Bidhan Chandra KrishiViswavidyalaya (Agricultural University), India.

***Corresponding author:** Dr A B Sharangi, FAScT FISRD FSAB MNAsc, Professor and Head, Spices & Plantation Crops, Faculty of Horticulture, BCKV (Agricultural University), Mohanpur, WB, India. Email: dr_absharangi@yahoo.co.in.

Citation: Sharangi AB (2016). Agriculture and Family Farming: The Eternal Bond. J Agr Agri Aspect 2016: JAAA-103.

Received Date: 23 November, 2016; **Accepted Date:** 10 December, 2016; **Published Date:** 17 December, 2016

Some 10,000 years back, the clans of human civilization got off to a new process of production and management which enabled them to move from hunting economy to production economy. The Neolithic mankind upgraded themselves into a new humanity capable of multiplication of seed, selection of edible types, training of wild breeds and adding values to the green produce, the most ancient process of value addition. In this primitive agriculture, the clan and the family had to perform the role of cultivator, researcher, mentor and innovator too. From the primitive era of agriculture down to the modern and mechanized agriculture, the role of family farming is still remains with its flamboyant entity. In Asian and African countries, family farms are the main conveyer as well as purveyor of agricultural production, value addition and marketing processes. The due recognition by the UN of 2014 as the Year of Family Farming draws upon the attention of the global population to segregate the problems of family farming from that of state-aided or cooperative farming and also to discriminate between corporate farming and family farming. The proficiency of family labour, the dovetailing of family functions to the sources of information, the health and nutrition of children and farm women of a family, the entitlement and egalitarian access at gender scales are equally important and integral to family farming.

It is precisely a productive unit where the family members are involved directly in the production processes. It is the basis of food security and food sovereignty, of environmental management and of the preservation of the socio-cultural heritage of rural communities and nations. 1, 5 billion of women and men farmers, often small-holders, work on 404 million small scale farms of less than 2 hectares. Between 100 and 200 million are pastoralists, 100million are small-scale fishers and 370 million belonging to indigenous communities. The women and men engaged in family farming produce 70% of the world's food.

Family farming needs both operational and conceptual approaches to uniquely identify the concept from that of cooperative or corporate farming. The main challenges faced by family farming throughout the world are declining productivity, weak and

fragile infrastructure, increasing price of inputs, vagaries of nature and climate change, non-remunerative enterprises and off course the high seasonality nature of income and livelihood generation, lack of policy support and unabated rate of migration to and from specific countries. These have compelled the policy makers to think over the several approaches in supporting family farming to a desirable scale and accepted momentum like strengthening family farmers' organizations, access to local and regional markets, access to sustainable use and conservation of natural resources, access to financial resources and protection against risks, appropriate, applied and accessible technology and research, including local knowledge, gender equity in agrarian policies, agrarian policies for young farmers, etc. The term "farmer" has a dynamic meaning ranging from landless agricultural labourers, sharecroppers, tenants, small, marginal and sub-marginal as well as cultivators with larger holdings, fisher men and women, dairy, sheep, poultry and other farmers involved in animal husbandry, as well as those rural and tribal families engaged in a wide variety of farming related occupations such as sericulture, vermiculture, production of bio fertilizers and bio pesticides, and agro-processing. There should be a holistic approach to address this entire humanity related to this sector and their profession. A sustainable solution may thereby be offered not only for their survival in this beautiful globe but also to live happily. The very concept of agriculture was started with family in the pre-civilized stage when societal ideas were growing. Afterwards this juvenile stage starts turning into youth by continuous growth and intensification of this bond between family and farming. And the bond is inseparable, exquisite and eternal.....

The present issue of Journal of Agronomy and Agricultural Aspects will focus on different agricultural issues in general and the issues like production, protection, improvement, value addition, processing, automation, economics, biodiversity, ecology, rural, urban and social involvements on agriculture, horticulture, dairy, animal science, aquaculture, food science and forest crops inclusive of the possible roles of family farming in particular.