

ELIMINATING RAGGING

Efficient Agricultural Marketing Management

The vicious practice of ragging has not only become rampant in our educational institutions but also acquired hideous proportions costing the sanity of the institutions and life of some of the students. Even today, students from the rural areas have a lingering fear when they go to cities for higher studies. To dispel such fears, colleges should prominently display a banner saying their campus is free from ragging. Those who indulge in ragging look for temporary pleasure but end up destroying many lives. Students alone can put an end to it. Anti-ragging steps should be strictly enforced. Parents and teachers are equally responsible for eliminating the virus. Service organizations and NGOs should too launch awareness campaigns against the menace in educational institutions. The cantankerous behaviour of some students in colleges is often the offshoot of indiscipline in the schools in which they studied, and uncaring families. Instead of attempting to classify the acts of ragging as "soft" and "hard," we should employ the guidelines of the committee in letter and spirit. If faculty members communicate more informally with them, a healthy academic environment can be created.

Ragging and abetting the crime on the college campus will remove the lurking fear in the minds of freshmen, especially those who opt to stay in hostels. The authorities should not stop with just making rules but take effective steps to implement the same and highlight the ill-effects of ragging through the visual media. The move will implant fear and discipline in the minds of senior students who indulge in ragging. Even today, students from the rural areas have a lingering fear when they go to cities for higher studies. To dispel such fears, colleges should prominently display a banner saying their campus is free from ragging. Those who indulge in ragging look for temporary pleasure but end up destroying many lives. Students alone can put an end to it. Anti-ragging steps should be strictly enforced. Parents and teachers are equally responsible for eliminating the virus. Service organizations and NGOs should too launch awareness campaigns against the menace in educational institutions. There was not much awareness in those days and ragging in the past was one way of familiarising freshers with senior students. But now, the increased incidents of ragging have exposed the errors in our education system which may be successful in churning out academically brilliant students, but has failed to inculcate proper values in them. The cantankerous behaviour of some students in colleges is often the offshoot of indiscipline in the schools in which they studied, and uncaring families. Instead of attempting to classify the acts of ragging as "soft" and "hard," we should employ the guidelines of the committee in letter and spirit. If faculty members communicate more informally with them, a healthy academic environment can be created. It is also noticed that those who indulge in ragging do not plan in advance. On most of the occasions, things go out of control. The guilty should not only be expelled but also barred from admission to any other college. Looking to the increase in ragging incidents, active involvement of media and the civil society is essential in tackling the problem of ragging. The mindset of the student has changed and now we need to focus in on enforcing stringent measures like rustication of a student, withholding of scholarship, debarring a student from appearing in any test. If possible students who involve in ragging must be put in jail instead of just being suspended or expelled. An example needs to be set.

OFF 'D' CUFF

MAGIC OF MOTHERHOOD

The moment we want only the best for others, motherhood is born in us.

For nine months in the womb, she does not know the nature of the child, who it may be — her love precedes both name and form. When unconditional love springs forth, motherhood is born in us.

The mother keeps a family in harmony by gluing together people of diverse mindsets. When including and involving everyone becomes more important than doing what you think is right, then motherhood is born in us.

A child experiences love for the first time when it looks into the mother's eyes. The child explores freely knowing that his mother is there to take care. A child is so carefree because it has complete faith in the mother. When we can inspire such freedom and a sense of security in another, motherhood is born in us.

Adi Shankara says, 'Kuputro jaayet quachidapi kunata na bhavati' — there may be a bad son but there can never be a bad mother. When it is impossible to harbour any harmful intent or ill feeling for another, motherhood is born in us.

My grandmother would say, "The sweet box is full, we have to buy from the shop...." She would not say, "We have no sweets at home." When this innate sense of abundance is cultured in our being, then motherhood is born in us.

Once it happened that a simple milkmaid in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's kingdom scaled the walls of a fort and climbed down dangerous cliffs just to be by the side of her baby. When the innocence in others

inspires great valour, confidence and the joy of protecting in us, then motherhood is surely born.

In the Valmiki Ramayan, Ram says, 'Janani janmabhumishcha swargadapi gariasi' — the one who gives us life, gave birth to us and the land from where we come forth are more valuable than heaven itself. Celebrating and honouring life and the giver of life, motherhood is born in us. Scriptures say: Matr Devo Bhava. Our mother is our first teacher. Through our mother, we get a glimpse of the love that the Divine Mother has for every being in creation. She helps us take our first step in our journey from personal to universallove. In his blog as an ode to his mother in her 100th year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi says, "A mother not only gives birth to her children but also shapes their mind, their personality, and their self-confidence."

Motherhood is not just a biological phenomenon. Motherhood is also the ability to shape society with care and concern, infuse it with human values and lead the way to a cultured and refined nation, seeing its every subject as one's own child. Motherhood is an inherent sign of a responsible and caring leader.

The Skanda Purana, in very definite terms, declares: 'There is no shade like a mother, no resort, no one to depend on like a mother, no security and saviour like a mother, no other ever-giving fountain of life.

Motherhood brings forth an ocean of good qualities. We see that she is powerful and playful, nourishing and guiding, caring, protecting and loving unconditionally.

-Bhanumathi Narasimhan

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Agricultural marketing is the study of all the activities in the procurement of farm inputs by the farmers and the movement of agricultural products from the farms to the consumers. Agricultural marketing is a link between farm and non-farm sectors. All the persons associated in agricultural marketing are interested in having an efficient marketing system. An efficient marketing system is an effective agent of change and an important means of raising the income levels of farmers and satisfaction of the consumers. The movement of goods from producers to the consumers at the lowest possible cost, consistent with the provision of services desired by the consumers can be termed as efficient marketing. An efficient marketing system for farm products ensures an increase in the farm production gets transformed into an increase in the level of income thereby increasing the additional income. Consumers get the satisfaction when they get the goods at the least possible cost. An ideal marketing system aims at giving remunerative prices of produce to consumers, uninterrupted supply of goods to the consumers at reasonable prices. Agricultural marketing is important in economic development due to following facts: When we go to purchase a pen in the market, the shopkeeper does not reduce its cost but whenever a farmer comes in the market to sale his farm produce, generally everybody likes to reduce his product price. Ultimately he does not get proper price for his hard earned farm produce. So, there is dire need to contemplate over the issue because if we have to increase the income of the farmer, we need to provide the proper price for his farm produce. Even if a farmer increases his production, he can't increase his income until and unless he gets the full price of his farm produce. The word market has been derived from the Latin word 'Marcatus' which means merchandise or trade or a place where business is conducted. Generally market is a place where commodities are bought and sold, maintaining pace of increased production through technological developments and assurance of remunerative prices to the farmers for their products to sustain the growth of non-agricultural sectors. An efficient marketing system leads to the optimization of resources use and output management. Marketing system can effectively distribute

the available stocks of modern inputs and thereby sustain a faster growth rate in agricultural production. An efficient marketing system ensures higher level of income to the farmers by reducing the number of middlemen, regulating marketing services and providing better prices for the products. An efficient marketing system widens the market for the product by taking them to remote corners of the country by having better transportation and communication facilities. An improved agricultural marketing system helps in the growth of agro-based industries, stimulates their production and brings overall development in the economy. Better marketing system helps in the adoption and spread of new technology among the farmers and farmers get more returns by selling produce. The additional returns got by the farmers can be invested in agricultural sector and this will help to disseminate the technology among the farmers. Employment can be created in the economy by developing different marketing activities. Marketing activities add value to the products and this helps to increase GNP and NNP of the country. By efficient marketing system better living standards can be provided to the people by the producers by making food available to the consumers at low prices. Creation of utilities in the products viz. place, time, form and possession. Utilities increase the price of the farm produce. All these facts indicate that an agricultural marketing system plays an immense role in the economic development of any nation. More efficient the agricultural marketing system more would be the economic development of the nation. India is an agricultural country and one third of its population depends on this sector directly or indirectly. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy since time immemorial.

Quality food is the growing demand of the increasing population. Adequate production and its proper marketing has become a high priority global concern. The Indian agricultural system has made tremendous progress in the recent past. The increased agricultural production has made new challenges to the Indian agricultural marketing system. An efficient agricultural marketing system is the need of the era. Marketing has been described as the most important multiplier of agricultural development. Agricultural marketing plays crucial role in accelerating the pace of economic develop-

ment of any nation. Its dynamic functions are of primary importance in both agricultural and economic development. Marketing is as critical to better performance in agriculture as farming. Market reforms need to be an integral part of any policy for agricultural development. The National Commission on Agriculture emphasized that produce must be satisfactorily marketed. Marketing involves a series of activities in moving the goods from the point of production to the point of consumption. It is a complex subject. An important landmark for improvement of agricultural marketing system in the Indian economy dates back to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1928 which pertained to regulation of marketing practices and establishment of regulated markets. Though agricultural marketing is estate subject, the Government of India has been playing a far-reaching interventionist role in terms of laying down general policy framework, framing of quality standards and providing technical and financial support to the states for creating infrastructure and administrative set-up. The Government interventions in agricultural marketing in India have taken of the following forms:

(a) Regulation of buying and selling practices by establishing regulated markets. (b) Administration of prices at different levels of marketing. (c) Promotion and creation of infrastructure and other facilities.(d) Direct entry of government or cooperative societies as buyers and sellers in the market with a view to influencing the demand or supply of the products.(e) Regulation of imports and exports of agricultural commodities with a view to influence the supply and demand. All these measures introduced by the government improved the marketing system and helped the farmers in getting better prices. Agricultural marketing scenario has undergone a sea change in India over the last four decades especially after the onset of technological revolution in the country. There has been a rapid increase in the marketable and marketed surplus of different agricultural commodities. This has been on account of increase in agricultural production and also due to the increase in the marketed surplus-output ratio of commodities. Overtime the marketed-surplus-output ratio of agricultural commodities has increased. The farmers of the WTO mem-

bers' countries are free to market their products in these countries and hence have increased competition. India is now an important member of WTO countries. As such the role of agricultural marketing in India has widened from the existing i.e. sell whatever is surplus on the remunerative prices to produce only those commodities which have good demand in domestic as well as in the international market and sell them in the form and at place where prices are high. The marketing organizations should assist the producers in increasing the production of those goods which are in demand. For this the various marketing functions related to marketing of various products should be performed efficiently. Marketing organizations especially the regulated markets can help the farmers by taking new initiatives and extending the provision of credit facilities to the farmers. This will develop a loyalty among the producers-sellers towards the regulated markets. This facility will increase the freedom of producer-sellers to dispose of their produce profitably in the market. There is a need to develop channels for supply of agricultural inputs to the farmers in the market. This can be done by allotting shops to the input suppliers in the market and developing adequate channels for movement of agricultural inputs along with arranging easy availability of seeds varieties demanded by the farmers. There should be transportation provision to carry the produce from production places to the consumption places. This can be done by operating transport system to help small farmers on cooperative basis. Market extension service should be provided to the farmers to guide them about the enterprises and varieties to grow in the area based on market demand. Strengthening of market intelligence activities in the mandi to advise the farmers as and where to sell the produce. Study the profitability of enterprises, marketing costs, margins and price spread so as to guide the farmers. Strengthening of storage system in the market can be done by encouraging the private entrepreneurs to construct more number of Godowns in the rural areas. Involving Non Government Organisations (NGOs) and Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) actively in the marketing activities can help to make the marketing system easier.

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Rising unemployment-a burden on economy

■ DR SATYAWAN SAURABH

Improving healthcare infrastructure will ensure more productive days for the young labor force, thus increasing the productivity of the economy. The success of schemes like Ayushman Bharat and the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) is essential. Along with the effective implementation of the Integrated Child Development (ICDS) program, there is a need to pay special attention to the nutritional status of women and children. The nation needs to create ten million jobs per year to add young people to the workforce. Promoting the interests of businesses and entrepreneurship will help in job creation to employ a large workforce. Data from the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy showed India's unemployment rate rose to 8.30 per cent in December, the highest in 16 months from 8.00 per cent in the previous month. The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09 per cent in December from 8.96 per cent in the previous month, while the rural unemployment rate declined to 7.44 per cent from 7.55 per cent, the data showed. In a jobless growth economy, unemployment remains high even as the economy grows. This occurs when a relatively large number of people have lost their jobs, and the resulting recovery is insufficient to accommodate the unemployed, the underemployed, and those first entering the workforce. There is currently growing concern that future growth may result in unemployment due to de-industrialization, de-globalization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and technological progress. According to the NSSO Periodic Labor Force Survey 2017-18, India's labor force participation rate for the age group of 15-59 years is around 53 per cent, i.e. almost half of the working-age population is unemployed. The increase in the working-age ratio is likely to be concentrated in some of India's poorest states and the demographic dividend will be fully realized only if India can generate gainful employment opportunities for this working-age population. Most of the new jobs that will be created in the future will be highly skilled and the skill shortage in the Indian workforce is a

major challenge. India may not be able to take advantage of the opportunities due to a low human capital base and skill crunch. India ranks 130 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index of UNDP, which is a matter of concern. Therefore, there is a need to significantly improve the standards of health and education to make the Indian workforce skilled and efficient. The informal nature of the economy in India is another hindrance to reaping the benefits of the demographic transition in India. The latest data revealed that there were 86 lakh vacancies across all civilian posts in the central government as of March 2020. The government recently announced the Agnipath scheme as four-year contract employment for the youth. But this measure will also be a recovery in the real economy, which has been in crisis over the past few years as a result of the effects of the pandemic. The country cannot afford to lose more years in its race to reap the benefits of its demographic dividend, and the push to provide jobs for those willing to enter the labor force, even if belated, will continue in the medium term will help ease matters for Real jobs in manufacturing, industries, and MSMEs are the key to reaping the demographic dividend. Skill development will also help the youth to get employment in the high-paying service sector. Investing in people through healthcare, quality education, jobs, and skills helps build human capital, which is critical to supporting economic growth, ending extreme poverty, and creating more inclusive societies. Skill development to enhance the employability of the youth population. The modern economy requires India's labor force to be empowered with the right skills. The government has set up the National Skill Development Corporation with an overall goal of skilling/skilling 500 million people in India by 2022. To increase the educational level by making proper investments in primary, secondary, and higher education, India, which has about 41 per cent of its population below the age of 20, can reap the demographic dividend with a better education system. Also, academia-industry collaboration is essential to syn-

chronize the demands of modern industry and the level of learning in academia. The setting up of the Higher Education Finance Agency (HEFA) is a welcome step in this direction. Improving healthcare infrastructure will ensure more productive days for the young labor force, thus increasing the productivity of the economy. The success of schemes like Ayushman Bharat and the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) is essential. Along with the effective implementation of the Integrated Child Development (ICDS) program, there is a need to pay special attention to the nutritional status of women and children. The nation needs to create ten million jobs per year to add young people to the workforce. Promoting the interests of businesses and entrepreneurship will help in job creation to employ a large workforce. Schemes like Start-up India and Make in India, if implemented properly, will yield desired results shortly. In the coming years, large youth and working populations will migrate to urban areas of their own and other states, leading to the rapid and massive growth of the urban population. How these migrating people can access basic amenities, health, and social services in urban areas need to be the focus of urban policy planning. Schemes like Smart City Mission and AMRUT need to be implemented effectively and carefully. If policymakers align developmental policies with this demographic shift, India is on the right side of the demographic transition, which offers golden opportunities for its rapid socioeconomic development. Proper investment in human capital by focusing on education, skill development, and health facilities is needed to reap the benefits of demographic dividends. The dedicated Shram Suvidha portal will allot Labor Identification Numbers (LIN) to units and register themselves under 16 out of 44 labour laws. Will allow online compliance filing for Government will mainly support manufacturing units and other establishments by reimbursing 50 per cent of the stipend paid to the trainees during the first two years of their training.

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Check corruption from top to down hierarchy

■ VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

One would find that corruption is a deep-rooted menace, that it has eaten into the vitals of society, distorted all values and made mincemeat of morality, truth and virtue. Like the air we breathe, it has become all-pervasive and entered every sphere of life. It is now regarded as a fact of life and an evil that we have to live with. Sometime one wonders whether time has come to accept this menace as the price of socialism, progress and civilization. Our society has become extremely corrupt and we cannot hope to weed out corruption completely, we can simply minimize it. The opportunities of bribery and palm greasing have increased greatly with the dawn of independence and the growth of democracy and industry, the system of licenses and permits for setting up enterprises etc. The loud talks of anti-corruption measures, stringent laws and deterrent sentences have no meaning. The philosophy of corruption operates interestingly. As long as there are people to offer bribe, there are also people to take it, directly or indirectly. Promises and oaths of hon-

esty are soon made and forgotten. However, measures calculated to produce a social climate both among public servants and in the general public are essential. Poor salaries compel lower level officials to be corrupt. The standard of living is constantly rising, soaring prices of essential commodities have broken the back and we indulge in corrupt ways for our children's sake and since everyone else does it, why not us? Must we be the only angels on earth? Every man, it is said, has his price. When the entire economic and social set-up breathes of what is called 'Speed Money' to push things through, it is almost impossible to resist temptation-human beings are, after all, human beings. People accept bribes under the table, then come out to raise anti-corruption slogans at the top of their voice and urge others to be honest and pure. It is not difficult to locate the causes of corruption. Corruption breeds at the top and then gradually filters down to the lower levels. Our politicians have been making promises from time to time and pledging to do so many things but shedding only crocodile tears. If

there is corruption in the administration, the ruling party leaders or ministers are at first and finally responsible for it. Their philosophy is guide by the familiar saying, 'Touch one, touch all; therefore touch none'. If the ministers are honest they can prevent corruption in the whole administrative machinery of the government. Today the people's confidence is shaken. Everything is bogus, their representatives have no religion or faith or justice and fair play. False returns are filed. Taxes are not realized honestly. There is much waste and extravagance in public expenditure, people are burdened with fresh and heavier imports. Crimes are increasing at an alarming rate. Who is responsible for this? Corruption is primarily and ultimately responsible for all this. It is so deep-rooted that it is very much difficult to root it out completely. The fact is that everybody in the ruling party wants to be a minister or at least a member of some board or corporation to make money. The spirit of selfless service to the people has evaporated. The one thing that needs to be ensured is proper, impartial, and unbiased use of various

anti-social regulations to take strong, deterrent, and timely legal action against the offenders, irrespective of their political influences or money power. Several steps have been taken to make the bureaucracy more efficient, performance-oriented and accountable. The Government is committed to ensuring probity among public servants and to protect them from frivolous allegations. Firm and strong steps are needed to curb the menace and an atmosphere has to created where the good, patriotic, intellectuals come forward to serve the country with pride, virtue, and honesty for the welfare of the people of India. Corruption may also be controlled by openness, transparency and information costs, intergovernmental competition, localism, party competition, decision rules, collective action problems and public administration. Let us be honest and admit that our conduct and character lack that grace and strength which are the distinguishing marks of free people everywhere. Once we have realized this, it should not be difficult to end corruption at all levels of life.

