

# Innovations in Agricultural Marketing

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*Linking small farmers with modern markets such as supermarkets has been identified as one of the several pathways ways to make their farming viable. Here is the success story of two young educated agripreneurs who have ventured into direct marketing and reaping profit.*

## MBA graduate turns his organic farm into a profitable venture



Price fluctuation is one of the biggest challenges faced by farmers across the country and middlemen are blamed for this on most occasions.

An MBA graduate from Bengaluru city is beating this fluctuation by carrying out multi-crop organic farming on his 20-acre farm in Malavalli of Mandya district. He has made the profession profitable by adopting the direct selling model.

Instead of selling his farm produce to middlemen, he sells them directly to the customer, which is a win-win situation for both. Every day he earns Rs 2,500 as profit by selling fruits, vegetables and tender coconut grown in his farm.

Amogh S Jagthap, who pursued his MBA started his direct farm-to-customer centre on Malavalli-Mysuru road. His shop has been built next to his farm which is spread over 20 acres of land in Malavalli. After his MBA he decided to give a new touch to this farm.

Amogh divided the farm into several plots. These plots are dedicated for various crops. He has adopted organic farming. Instead of selling these farm products to middlemen, he opened a shop where all the products are sold directly to the customers. This is helping him earn good profit. Besides farming, he also adopted animal husbandry which has made agriculture a sustainable model for Amogh.

In farming, he hasn't incur loss since he is following sustainable model. According to Amogh, marketing the agriculture products is the key to make the profession profitable and he is doing the same.

## Online market place to connect farmers to agriculture resources

After spending almost 11 years in the US, Balamurali Govindan, a software engineer, from Coimbatore, Tamilnadu came back to his home town to pursue his interest in agriculture.

He bought four acres of agricultural land at Devarayapuram near Thondamuthur and went ahead with cultivation of coriander. Sadly, during the time of harvest, he found that the price of fresh produce touched rock-bottom levels and he was unable to realise his cultivation cost. He tried tomato and there too, but failed miserably. This made him think that if technology and IT intervention could bring in a sea change in other sectors, why not try it to solve farmers' issues? He wanted to address the concerns on the supply chain front. He wanted to establish a direct connect between the farmer and the buyer and thus was born Tara Blooms Private Ltd.

## Boosting supply chain

The start-up developed an online marketplace, a collaborative platform Farmer.Live, where the stakeholders in the agri supply chain — from grower, seller to buyer, dealer, or Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOs) can register for free.

This platform facilitates the farmer to sell his produce without any intervention by middlemen. There are more than 10,000 registered farmers and buyers on this platform, over one-lakh Facebook followers, 20,000+ mobile app

downloads and 100+ companies registered till date. The hit rate of the website is over 10,000 a month, notwithstanding App visitors.

Every registered farmer gets to access information such as best practices, daily market price, weather forecast, warehouse facilities and so on. Such information is sent to their registered mobile number or if the farmer has a smartphone, the same is shared as a notification.

### Export enquiries

Babu Shanmugam, a registered farmer on Farmer.Live, deals with herbal products and coconut. Shanmugam is a management graduate who took to farming. Until recently, he was only relying on the local market. After registering on this platform, he is getting enquiries from buyers in Gujarat and other places.

Govindan is looking to extend it to farmers in other States in a phased manner. The challenge was in connecting to farmers and not building the application. Measures are initiated for providing information in 13 languages. Exporters too have registered on this platform. Govindan Je has invested around Rs. 1.5 crore in this venture and has engaged a team of 25 young agri graduates to keep the platform live and going.



## Top 10 Apps Revolutionizing Indian Agriculture

Indian users comprise about 30% of the total volume of the global feature phone market, making it the second largest in the specified field. In 2015, India had 720 million mobile phone users, out of which 320 million were rural mobile phone users. This estimate also included 50 million Smartphone users with access to internet. According to 'The Rising Connected Consumer in Rural India', a study by the Boston Consulting Group, this share of rural India will jump to 48% by 2020. Steps taken by the Indian government may make this happen sooner than predicted. Digital India, launched in 2015 by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims

towards the promotion of digital literacy and creation of digital infrastructure for empowering rural communities. Considering that 58% of rural households depend on agriculture as one of their most eminent source of livelihood, the role of Digital Agriculture is given more importance within Digital India.

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support the transmission of localized information and services working towards making farming socially, economically and environmentally sustainable, while contributing to the delivery of nutritious and economical food for all – this comprises Digital Agriculture. This has also led to the rise and development of mobile apps which are helping existing government schemes, and other agriculture-based information to reach farmers in rural India. This digital change is acting as a game-changer for Indian agricultural conditions.



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