

Introduction

The world today faces a dual challenge: feeding a rapidly growing population while minimizing the environmental impact of agriculture. According to the FAO, one-third of all food produced globally is wasted, resulting in a staggering \$1 trillion in economic losses each year. Meanwhile, millions of smallholder farmers, who are crucial to global food security, struggle to make ends meet, often trapped in a cycle of poverty.

While AI tools like ChatGPT are making waves across various industries, it's important to recognize how technological advancements and visionary approaches can truly transform the lives of approximately 2 billion people living in rural and agricultural economies worldwide.

Who We Are

Harvesting Farmer Network (HFN) is a rapidly expanding network dedicated to empowering small-scale farmers in India by leveraging technology to improve their livelihoods. In a relatively short span, HFN has connected with over 3.7 million small-scale farmers across the country. By establishing direct connections with farmers—both digitally and on the ground—HFN offers expert advisory services, high-quality and affordable inputs, and better pricing for farm produce, all with the goal of uplifting farmers and ensuring that no one is left behind. Our network spans across Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

Through a combination of mobile marketplaces and offline centers, HFN supports farmers from seed to market, providing a comprehensive solution to the challenges they face.

How HFN Benefits Farmers

India is a global agricultural powerhouse, producing crops worth over \$275 billion annually. Yet, small-scale farmers capture only a fraction of this value. The information asymmetry between farmers and other stakeholders in the agricultural value chain often forces farmers to bear losses at every step, from seed to market.

Smallholder farmers play a crucial role in ensuring food and nutrition security, as well as in promoting sustainable rural development. However, they face increasing challenges, particularly due to climate change. With extensive industrialization focused on maximizing production, current agricultural policies often fail to recognize how crop choices, input costs, and supply chains are interlinked, perpetuating the marginalization of small-scale farming. Additionally, producing more food alone is not the ultimate solution to employment or supply chain issues.

Smallholder farmers face numerous obstacles in sustaining their livelihoods, including unpredictable weather patterns and the challenge of finding regular buyers. The global food market's demand for consistent produce throughout the year, regardless of seasonality or climate challenges, adds to their difficulties. Without adequate information or government

support to combat climate change, farmers are often left to adapt on their own, sometimes resorting to maladaptive practices just to survive.

Harvesting Farmer Network (HFN) has been instrumental in supporting small-scale farmers by providing innovative solutions that help increase productivity, reduce costs, and improve access to markets.

HFN - Key Focus Areas

1. HFN Kisan Saarthi Program: HFN aims to upskill rural entrepreneurs by equipping them with the skills needed to support their local communities and facilitate trade. These skills include product training, farm data capturing, crop training, marketing, and more. HFN identifies individuals from villages who have basic education, an understanding of mobile devices, a working SIM network, and a desire to learn and earn by leveraging HFN's products and services. Currently, HFN has a network of 10,000 Kisan Saarthis across eight states in India.

2. Improving Access to Finance: Small-scale farmers often struggle to access finance needed to invest in their farms. HFN addresses this challenge by offering innovative solutions that make farmers more self-sustainable. Through the HFN app, Kisan Saarthis can complete certain tasks and earn additional income, helping them manage cash flow and invest in their farms.

3. Facilitating Direct Market Access: Traditionally, small-scale farmers have relied on middlemen to sell their produce, often resulting in lower prices. HFN provides digital platforms that connect farmers directly with buyers, eliminating the need for intermediaries and enabling farmers to secure better prices for their crops. HFN supports farmers across India in selling their produce directly to buyers, enhancing their market access and profitability.

4. Improving Productivity: HFN leverages technology such as precision farming, data analytics, and IoT sensors to help small-scale farmers improve their productivity and reduce costs. We also provide farmers with expert advice on the best inputs, pesticides, seeds, and other essential resources, ensuring they can make informed decisions about their farming practices.

5. Empowering Farmers through Digital Literacy: Many small-scale farmers lack the digital literacy skills needed to fully benefit from technology-based solutions. HFN provides training and support to help farmers become more digitally empowered, enabling them to take advantage of modern tools and resources.

6. Providing Access to Information: Access to information about modern farming techniques, weather patterns, market prices, and more is often limited for small-scale farmers. HFN uses technology to bridge this gap, providing essential information through mobile apps, SMS services, and online platforms like Twitter and WhatsApp.

HFN Kisan Center- HFN Kisan center is a local meeting point where farmers get input, free agri advisory and also bring their produce for sale. It is a one stop solution for their Agri needs be it inputs, output or advisory.

Farmers save on the logistic cost, get their crop properly quality assessed, and receive payments directly to their bank accounts within a day.

For More information visit our website - www.harvesting.co or reach out to us at our toll-free number 1800-891-8903.

For more insight into our work, check out this video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUbPsgs8tOY>

Through these initiatives, HFN continues to make a significant impact on the lives of small-scale farmers, helping them navigate the complexities of modern agriculture and build a more sustainable and prosperous future.

HFN CEO profile

Ruchit Garg, the founder and CEO of the Chandigarh-based agritech startup Harvesting Farmer Network, is a seasoned entrepreneur with a track record of successful tech ventures. A science graduate from Lucknow University, Ruchit earned his master's degree in computer applications from Meerut University in the early 2000s.

His passion for coding and technology led him to create India's first text-to-speech system in Hindi in 2001 while working with a young company. Ruchit also played a key role in developing an IVR system for one of Japan's leading banks.

In 2005, Ruchit joined Microsoft R&D in Hyderabad and later moved to Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington, in 2008. There, he contributed to the development of Xbox, Windows 7, and Windows Phone. In 2011, Ruchit left his secure position at Microsoft to launch his first company in the U.S., 9Slides Inc., a user-friendly cloud-based presentation platform. In 2016, 9Slides Inc. was acquired by Limeade Inc., a Bellevue, Washington-based employee engagement platform.

Ruchit hails from a family with deep agricultural roots, and he was eager to leverage his

technical expertise to support smallholder farmers globally. Despite his success in the tech industry, he felt a strong pull to return to his roots and make a difference in agriculture.

Smallholder farmers, who feed 80% of the world's population, are among the most underserved communities globally. Ruchit recognized that empowering smallholder farmers is essential to addressing global food security and climate change. In 2016, he founded Harvesting Inc. with the mission to ensure that no smallholder farmer is left behind.

Through a high-tech yet human-centric approach, Harvesting has reached millions of farmers in India, helping them secure better prices for their crops, access affordable farm inputs, and obtain financial services like loans and insurance. The company is backed by prominent investors, including Chamath Palihapitiya's Social Capital, Peggy Dulany, and Elliott Donnelley, among others.

In addition to his work with Harvesting, Ruchit serves as an advisor to technology startups and has been a distinguished speaker at several national and international forums.

He can be found on twitter as @ruchitgarg