

## **AN OVERVIEW OF PEASANT FARMING**

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### **Abstract**

Peasant farming is a farming method that using small farming land from crop production without expensive technologies. As compared to commercial farming, it requires less machinery and small land for farming. There are various advantages of peasant farming including better supervision, more employment, greater productivity and possibility of quick decision in frequent weather and climate changes. Peasant farming is closely tied with more sustainable agriculture methods including hobby, organic, biodynamic and permaculture farms. Peasant farming plays a crucial role with an ever increasing demand for better food and the rise of health and wellness. By considering the importance of peasant farming, this review article discussed about the different aspects of the peasant farming such as peasant farmers, peasant seeds, merits and demerits followed by challenges associated with the peasant forming. Growth of the peasant farming will help to provide employment in rural areas and will also help in food productivity and quality.

**Key words:** Farming, Farms, Peasant, Peasant Farming, Peasant Seeds

### **Introduction**

Agriculture has been the foundation of society for thousands of years, thanks to the food it provides, its ability to exploit natural resources, and its ability to shape the landscape. The social relationships that it promotes (in particular control over land). Agriculture, more than any other activity, feeds the imagination and shapes people's cultures, so it's important to approach the evolution of agriculture with caution. Peasant farming is a small-scale agricultural method that operates on a small piece of land[1]. Since the farmers do not have enough capital, this form of farming is practiced in poor communities. It is concerned with providing for the family's basic needs. Farming operations are carried out without the use of machines, instead using crude tools such as a cutlass, hoe, or spade; the farmer often relies on and works with family labor; and the overall yield from the farm is typically poor, with little or no surplus for sale or capital investment.

Peasant farmers are the majority of those who practice this form of agriculture, and the cost of production is very low. Since no machines are used, the practice offers direct employment for a large number of people. It also ensures that the ecosystem is free of contaminants and that the risk of environmental destruction is reduced. The vast majority of farmers in local government areas are still peasants who cultivate small plots of land, typically in marginal environments, using conventional and subsistence methods for their consumption due to low capital for production and the use of crude implements[2]. These farmers are poor in nature and live in rural areas, so their standard of living is low. Despite these characteristics, peasant farming continues to play an important role in the agricultural sector. As a result, strategies for motivating peasants to deal with such issues must be sought.

It is also linked to issues such as land ownership, soil type, input availability, and manpower availability, all of which discourage farmers from pursuing large-scale development, farm products, and mostly subsistence farming. As a result, the farmers are unable to meet their standards. This review paper provides an overview of peasant farming and its diverse factors.

## **Plesant Farmers And Peasant Farming And Its Characteristics**

A peasant farmer is a small-scale farmer who grows crops for both personal consumption and market trade, employing family labor in the farming process. Peasants live in villages; they interact with neighboring farmers face to face; they have a wide range of cultural and religious values and practices; and they are members of a variety of social networks and civic organizations.

Peasant farming is use to produce food on small scale specified by ten intertwined laws, including able to perform all task related to cultivation on the land, give respect to the local communities and surrounding environment and conserving scarce resources like gas and water. Via volume allocations of high-quality goods generated with full disclosure, this agricultural mode aims to provide producers with a decent income on a long-term basis. Farmers prefer a labor-intensive model to a highly mechanized one because they want to give value to their work[3]. They want to shrink the average farm size while also improving financial independence and transferability. Peasant farming, in contrast to the industrial agricultural model, is a political initiative whose participants want to establish an alternative agricultural system. To eliminate intermediates, supply routes are reimagined within the territory, and products are sold in local food systems that tend to be self-sufficient within the territory. As a result, agricultural territorialization is a critical value. Farmers decided to use and cultivate local animal and vegetal organisms, as well as peasant seeds, to maintain biodiversity on the farm. This form of farming is dedicated to the long-term global consideration of a system that protects the environment, fosters rural stakeholder unity, and ensures the economic viability of the products[4]. This agriculture, like sustainable farming, aims to respect all aspects of sustainable development and is thus a form of alternative agriculture. This development model takes an agroecological approach, which implies the use of traditional practices and skills.

### **1. Characteristics of Peasant Farming:**

- The land farm tasks related to farming performed by family members and by near ones and all farming operations are performed manually.
- Generally, peasant farming done by the small scale farmers who doesn't have enough capital that is why they mostly utilize simple tools in order to perform various tasks of the cultivation.
- In order to improve the fertility, organic substances are utilizes for improving the fertility.
- In order to feed family members, peasant farming usually used to produce crops like vegetables and fruits. Mostly follow the rotatable crop production, they doesn't depend on production of single crop.
- There are variations in cultivation method. In order to produce crops, shift cultivation generally replace by intensive subsistence and sedentary farming.
- The produced food by peasant farming, generally consumed by the owner or farmer of the land and their family members.
- In peasant farming, the main crops produce in the given region are similar.
- For the production of the food, generally small piece of land utilizes for the cultivation.
- In some cases, the yield is low in peasant farming.
- Since in peasant farming bio fertilizers are utilizes in order to produce the crops that is why most of the farmers have animals like chickens, cows, ducks and goats in order to provide bio-substances that can used in farming.
- The main types of crops that are generally produce in peasant farming are vegetables, maize, millet, beans and fruits.

### **Peasant Seeds**

In relation to plant seeds, peasant seeds refer to all or part of a plant organ (seed, tuber, cutting, etc.) that is used for reproduction. The seeds of peasants come from farmer-managed plant populations, which are picked, sorted, and stored before being sown, hence the word "peasant seed." The selection of seeds is both a selection by the farmer and a natural selection in the fields. As a result, peasant seeds allow reproduction and "peasant" varieties (or population varieties)[5]. These seeds are the meeting of the biological entity and the farmer's related knowledge: the farmer therefore knows who to use them for and what to expect from them. These seeds aren't always local; they may come from exchanges between farmers who are spread out across the country. Local seeds are associated with a biogeographical area, but they are not usually picked. Peasant seeds and farm seeds

are often mixed together. Farm seeds, on the other hand, are essentially commercial varieties whose seeds are harvested each year to reseed the fields.

The farmer who chooses peasant seeds would have a diverse population. This population is made up of people who have similar features but have different genetic backgrounds, which gives them an evolutionary advantage. It does not give them the stability and homogeneity requirements that are needed for inclusion in the European Official Catalogue of Commercial Varieties. Peasant seeds aid in the preservation or even expansion of cultivated biodiversity. They've evolved in tandem with the climate and cultural traditions. Their adaptation to low-input crop systems is the result of this coevolution. As a result, they are a valuable resource for the advancement of agro-ecological systems. Social movements defending food sovereignty and peasant agriculture have brought the recognition of peasant seeds into the public spotlight.

### **Merits Of Peasant Farming**

Every farming system in the agriculture sector has advantages as well as disadvantages on the other side when it is compared to the other farming systems. (Shown in Figure 1).



Figure 1: Schematic Representation of Advantages of Peasant Farming

#### **1. Better Supervision:**

Unlike in manufacturing, a worker in agriculture has a very wide area of activity. Job supervision has always been a challenge. If the farm is small, the owner can effectively supervise the laborer's work and guide and direct him to perform his duties in a specific manner. On the other hand, since the farm is large and many employees must carry out their duties over a large area, personal control of their work will become difficult. For purposes of supervision, the farm owner may have to depend on different supervisors and managers, and it is likely that the supervisors and managers will not work with complete dedication and responsibility.

#### **2. More Employment:**

When compared to other farming systems, peasant farming offers more opportunities for work on the farm. This is due to a variety of factors. Firstly, since the farm is small, using machinery becomes expensive and thus restricted. As a result, there is no displacement of labor. Second, the farmer uses and handles his own family's labor as free labor. As a result, it employs this labor to the point that its marginal output equals zero[6]. On the other hand, in an agricultural system that employs hired labor, it is only employed when its marginal output

equals the wage it is paying. When opposed to peasant farming, employment on farms under several systems other than peasant farming is significantly lower.

### **3. Greater Productivity:**

Peasant farming more productivity per acre than other farming systems, despite the fact that the farms are typically larger. The main reason for this is the higher cropping rate, which is attributed to the greater use of labor per acre on small farms compared to larger farms. Productivity is high on small farms due to the greater use of labor (which is a main aspect of peasant farming)[7]. A deep desire to feed one's family from a small plot of land increases the standard of domestic labor. The fact that small farms have higher productivity per acre has been amply demonstrated by farm management studies conducted in India in the 1950s.

### **4. Tenacity of Small Farms:**

The fact that small farms are an important aspect of modern farming is a boon from another perspective as well. In the event of an emergency, such as a storm, etc. A small farmer with a sufficient labor force can better withstand the onslaught than a large farmer. Furthermore, since small farmers seldom buy inputs from the market and rarely sell their produce, they are prone to price fluctuations in various inputs and crops.

### **5. Possibility of Quick Reaction:**

A farmer's immediate decisions are necessitated by frequent weather and climate changes. Such decisions are easier to make and execute when the farm owner operates the farm himself and when the farm is relatively small. Late decisions may have a negative impact on crop yield. Farmers in peasant farming actively engage in crop production and maintain close observation, which allows them to make swift decisions in the face of changing weather and environment.

### **Issues Associated With Peasant Farming**

Apart from various advantages of peasant farming, there are some drawbacks also associated with the peasant farming. The issues related to the peasant farming are discussed in the Table 1.

Table 1: List of Issues Associated with Peasant farming and their Explanation

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Difficulty in Using Improved Practices and Improved Inputs	When farms are small in scale, agriculture transformation is more difficult. Some farm improvements, such as fencing and irrigation, are not possible. Crop rotation is complicated. On small farms, construction of farm buildings is more expensive. The cost of digging a well is prohibitive. Due to financial constraints, it is difficult for the peasant owner to arrange for the procurement of modern farm inputs.
Low Marketable Surplus	A small farm's output is just enough to fulfill the farmer's domestic needs. They have a surplus of food grains that he wants to sell at the auction. As a result, the development of the industrial sector is hampered because it becomes difficult to support those who work off the farm in industrial production.
No Optimum Use of Available Resources	A peasant farmer has a pair of bullocks, which provide enough labor for the farmer to use optimally due to the

	limited size of the farm. The farmer's resources are then either underutilized or misutilized. The issue of hidden unemployment, especially on small farms, is well-known.
Weak Commercial Motive	Small farmers are largely absent from the market. A peasant farmer does not buy any input from the market, nor does he sell any surplus. As a result, changes in market forces have little impact on them. As a result, crop patterns do not change in response to price changes and often remain unprofitable.

### Difference Between Peasant Farming And Commercial Farming

Peasant farming is most common in developing countries, and food is produced for the farmer's immediate family. Subsistence farmers grow crops to feed themselves and their families, rather than to make a profit. Commercial farming is more common in high income countries as well as high population contains countries, where crops are produced on large scale to feed whole populations while making a profit[8]. There five main factors that differentiate commercial farming or industrial farming from peasant farming (shown in Figure 2).

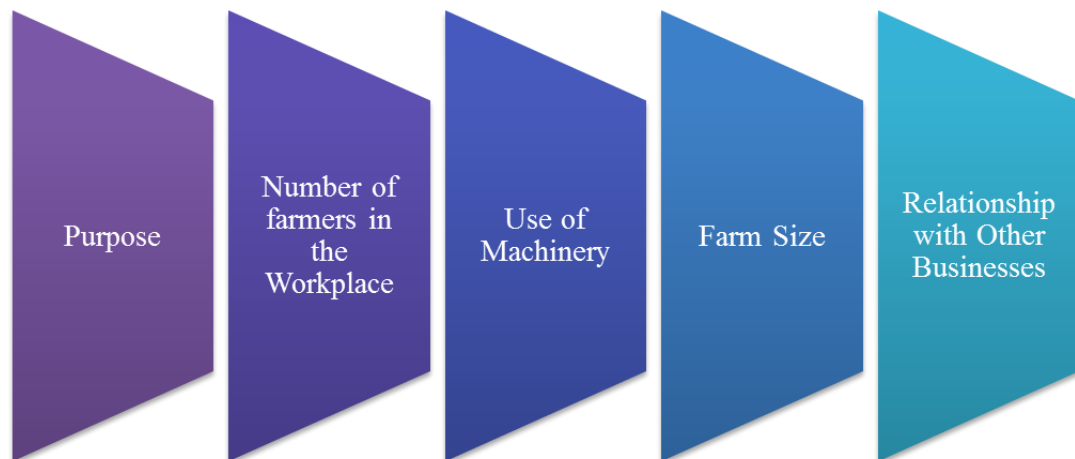


Figure 2: Schematic Illustration of Five Main Parameters that Distinguish Commercial farming from Peasant Farming

Commercial farming and peasant farming is different based on the different parameters. These parameters make both farming system to fulfill the need of food for different class of the peoples. Commercial farming generally influences by profit and on the other hand peasant farming done in order to feed families of the farmers and near ones. Both farming system fulfill different purposes. The detail of the factors that distinguish commercial farming from peasant farming has been discussed in the Table 2.

Table 2: List of Parameters that Distinguish Commercial farming from Peasant Farming and Their Detail

Parameter	Detail
Purpose	Farming is a must for peasant farmers. They just grow crops for themselves and their immediate family to eat.

	<p>Sometimes, the crops they cultivate are their only source of nutrition. Any surplus produced by subsistence farmers could be sold to governments or exchanged among villagers. Commercial farmers produce vast amounts of crops and livestock for benefit rather than for their own consumption. Commercial goods are made in large quantities to feed whole populations. They don't sell their goods directly to consumers; instead, they send them to food processing firms. Items are then shipped to markets and supermarkets to be distributed to customers.</p>
Number of Farmers in the Workplace	<p>In commercial farming, farmers account for less than 5% of the workforce. Farmers make up only 2% of the workforce in some countries, such as the United States and Canada. In peasant farming, peasant farmers make up about 55 percent of the workforce[9].</p>
Use of machinery	<p>As the use of machinery has increased in commercial farming, the number of farmers has decreased drastically. Due to the use of farming technologies, a small number of farmers may feed a large number of people in commercial farming. Farmers in peasant farming must rely on manpower and animal strength to grow crops. Scientific advancements are often used by commercial farmers to increase their yield. Scientists have been able to develop new fertilizers, herbicides, hybrid plants, animal breeds, and agricultural methods, all of which have helped commercial farmers increase their yields.</p>
Farm Size	<p>Commercial farms, particularly in the United States and Canada, are relatively large. The majority of commercial farms are operated by families. Since the size of commercial farms is growing, the number of large farms is dwindling as the demand for more farms decreases. However, irrigation and reclamation have increased the amount of land used for cultivation.</p>
Relationship with Other Businesses	<p>Commercial farming has been done on large scale for business in order to make profits. In this regard, Commercial farming has relationship with other business in order to fulfill their business needs. On the other hand, Peasant farming doesn't need relation with other businesses because they are fulfilling their own needs.</p>

### **Challenges Of The Peasant Farming**

Part from advantages and disadvantages, peasant farming facing some own challenges [10]:

#### **1. Hard Physical Labor:**

In order to perform various tasks on the land farm, manual hard labor is required that can have different effects on the human body. A small-scale farmer must ensure excellent physical fitness and have a high level of resistance.

**2. High Risk:**

Being a farmer is always fraught with danger; what do you do if you get injured? While insurance will help you prevent some serious repercussions, it will never completely remove the risk.

**3. High Dependence on Unpredictable Factors:**

One of the most critical, but unreliable, factors in farming is the weather. A bad storm will completely obliterate your crop. Preparing for scenarios like these can be very stressful.

**4. Financial Uncertainty:**

The majority of small farms are run on a shoestring budget, leaving the farmer with little or no comfort. A family holiday is almost unlikely, and the farm will consume almost all of your time.

**Discussion**

To preserve soil fertility and manage pests, peasant farming operations usually use more sustainable methods than industrial farming systems. Polyculture, reduced tillage, rotation of crops, improved fertilization due to nutrient cycling, pests controlling based on biological substances and/or enhanced biodiversity, decrease in use of synthetic chemical pesticides and applications of fertilizers, mechanical cultivation, and other techniques such as mulching are among the techniques they use. The farmer's market is where peasant farmers typically sell their produce. Farmers' markets are also a great place to get fresh food and learn about local agricultural practices. Farmers markets are a place of meeting place for community engagement as well as encouraging localization of produce. Organic farmers on a small scale often sell directly to consumers. Community Supported Agriculture is another choice. The customers are also the producers in this scheme.

There are various advantages offering by peasant farming including:

**1. Reduced Emission from Transport:**

Currently, food is produced on a industrial level. Food is shipped across international borders. Tons of CO<sub>2</sub> are released into the environment as a result of the way food is transported.

**2. Food Quality:**

Another result is an improvement in the quality and taste of food. New, locally grown food is eaten almost as soon as it is harvested.

**3. Gastronomy:**

Furthermore, maintaining or renewing regional foodways, such as special localized production processes, indigenous knowledge, agricultural ecosystems, and local/regional varieties of crops or livestock that are rare or otherwise endangered. It's becoming more and more linked to the fight to protect farmland in areas where construction pressures are threatening these ecosystems.

**4. Local Economies:**

Locally grown food helps in the local economy by safeguarding small farms, helps in local employment, and local businesses, thus boosting food security.

**CONCLUSION**

Peasant farming often employs environmentally friendly farming practices that support the environment in a variety of ways. Soil quality improvement, growing a wider variety of plants, and utilizing less machinery systems all contribute to this protective effect. Small farms can achieve higher yields by using a more adapted growing method, such as Permaculture, and improving soil quality over time. Small farms also place a strong emphasis on output management, which helps to boost productivity even more. Peasant farming offers various advantages including builds up communities, improves health of communities, creates jobs, small farms improve soil quality, food security and better for the environment and more productive. Apart from the various advantages there are some challenges in front of the peasant farming such as hard physical labor, high risk, high dependency on unpredictable factors and financial uncertainty. In order to make peasant farming more effective and efficient, proper agricultural policies are necessary in order to support small scale farming.

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