

**Indian Farmer**

Volume 13, Issue 09, 2026, Pp. 454-461

Available online at: www.indianfarmer.net

ISSN: 2394-1227 (Online)

Popular Article

Pusa Krishi Haat: A Living Model of Agricultural Marketing and Farmer Entrepreneurship

Subhash Kumar Saurav^{1*}, Anjali Pandey² and Chhanda Charana Mahananda³

^{1&3}Ph.D. Research Scholar, Division of Agricultural Extension, ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, New Delhi

²B.Sc. (Hons) Community Science, Division of Agricultural Extension, ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, New Delhi

*Corresponding author: subhashksrv@gmail.com

Received: 25/08/2026

Accepted on: 03/09/2026

ABSTRACT

The gap between what a farmer earns and what a consumer actually pays for genuine, unadulterated produce remains one of the persistent weaknesses of Indian agricultural marketing. The Pusa Agri Krishi Haat, developed within the campus of the ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, offers a working example of a marketing model built around fair returns for farmers and pure, traceable produce for consumers. From a foundation stone laid in December 2018, it has grown into a marketplace of sixty shops and stalls run by farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations, self-help groups and agri-entrepreneurs, offering everything from fresh produce, dairy and millet foods to organic groceries, ayurvedic and herbal wellness products, and handloom and artisanal crafts. This article traces the Haat's origin, examines how its marketing model protects farmers from exploitation while giving consumers confidence in what they buy, surveys the range of products and services now available there, highlights its informal role in agricultural extension, and discusses the awareness and visibility challenges that continue to limit its reach, before considering how the model could be scaled beyond a single campus.

Keywords: Fair pricing, Consumer trust, Farmer welfare, Value addition, Agricultural extension

INTRODUCTION

For most Indian farmers, the journey of produce from field to fork is longer and costlier than it needs to be. Between the farm gate and the consumer's plate stands a chain of commission agents, wholesalers and retailers, and at each stage there is room for the farmer to be underpaid and for the consumer to be sold produce of uncertain origin, freshness or purity. This gap between what a farmer earns and what a consumer can trust has long been recognised as one of the central weaknesses of Indian agriculture, and the price a farmer ultimately receives can vary sharply

depending on which marketing channel is used, with mandi sales outperforming private trade for some crops and underperforming it for others (Villacis *et al.* 2024). Against this backdrop, the Pusa Agri Krishi Haat, developed within the campus of the ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in New Delhi, offers a small but instructive example of a marketplace where farmers are protected from exploitative pricing and consumers can buy with confidence in the purity and source of what they take home. What began as a foundation stone laid in December 2018 and was inaugurated on 9th March 2022 during the Pusa Krishi Vigyan Mela by Union Minister of State Shri Kailash Chaudhary has grown into a functioning marketplace of sixty shops, stalls and kiosks, run largely by farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), agri-entrepreneurs and rural artisans. This article traces that journey, from its founding to its present-day marketing model, value addition, extension role, farmer stories and the challenges it still faces.



An Innovative Marketing Model Built on Trust

Pusa Krishi Haat is designed around a simple assurance: what a consumer buys here is genuine, and what a farmer sells here earns a fair price. The platform accommodates a diverse range of participants, including individual farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations, women self-help groups, rural entrepreneurs, agri-startups and producer collectives, each trading under a single, government-backed roof that lends the marketplace a credibility informal roadside vendors cannot easily match.

What sets the Haat apart from a conventional market is that the vendor is not a distant trader but someone directly accountable for what is sold, whether that is a farmer selling their own crop or a retailer sourcing closely from known producers. In traditional marketing chains, consumers seldom know whether their food is fresh, unadulterated or fairly sourced, and farmers are frequently left with little say over the price a distant commission agent decides to pay; the Haat narrows both gaps at once. Consumers gain confidence in the origin, freshness and purity of what they purchase, while farmers are shielded from the kind of distress pricing that comes from having no direct stake in the final sale. Retailers and vendor-stalls within the Haat function less as middlemen extracting a margin and more as a trusted bridge, curating and presenting farm produce honestly to urban buyers while ensuring producers are not shortchanged. This shift reflects a broader change under way in Indian

agriculture, where farming is increasingly treated not merely as production but as an enterprise built on accountability, from field to shelf.

Promoting Value Addition and Farmer Entrepreneurship

One of the most significant contributions of Pusa Krishi Haat lies in encouraging value addition without compromising on purity. Instead of limiting themselves to selling raw agricultural produce, many participating farmers diversify into processed and branded products such as honey, millet-based foods, spices, pickles, jams, bakery products, mushroom products and other processed commodities, each carrying the trust of a known, traceable source. Value addition not only enhances the market value of agricultural produce but also generates additional employment opportunities within rural households. Women entrepreneurs and self-help groups, in particular, have found new avenues for income generation through the preparation and marketing of processed food products.

The Haat also motivates farmers to adopt improved packaging, attractive product presentation and quality standards that are increasingly important in competitive markets. Exposure to consumer expectations enables producers to continuously improve their products and develop entrepreneurial confidence, while reassuring buyers that quality has not been compromised anywhere along the chain.



A Platform for Agricultural Extension

Beyond its role as a marketplace, Pusa Krishi Haat doubles as an informal channel of agricultural extension. Its location within the IARI campus places vendors just steps away from the scientists and research plots behind the seeds, bio-fertilisers and technologies shaping their produce, creating a rare feedback loop between farmers and researchers.



Visiting consumers, too, get a glimpse of the science behind what they buy, from biofortified varieties to solar-powered storage innovations. Events like the Pusa Krishi Vigyan Mela reinforce this further, pairing market days with farmer fairs, technology demonstrations and advisory camps. In effect, the Haat extends the role of a Krishi Vigyan Kendra, using the pull of a working market to draw farmers into regular, informal contact with research and advisory support.

Products and Services at the Haat

The breadth of what is on offer at Pusa Krishi Haat reflects its underlying promise of purity and fair value. On the food side, vendors sell fresh fruits, eggs, fish and frozen fish products alongside organic groceries, organic cereals and pulses, dalia and khichdi mixes, and sweeteners such as jaggery powder and khandsari brown sugar. Dairy stalls offer ghee and sweets sourced from the model dairy plant of the National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Karnal, a pedigree that gives consumers an added assurance of quality, while cow-based "uple" (dung cakes) cater to households still relying on traditional fuel. For health-conscious buyers, there is a wide selection of millet cookies, millet flours and multigrain millet diet snacks, roasted seeds, makhana, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and sea buckthorn cookies, alongside pickles made from a range of fruits and vegetables, murabba, chutneys and spices, and organic mustard and groundnut oils. Beverages include coffee, chocolate milk, soups, teas and green teas, herbal juices, fruit virgin mojito, fruit smoothies and fruit lassi.



The Haat's café outlets extend this same wholesome approach to prepared food, serving sandwiches, dosa and pastas, including spinach pasta and rava pasta, alongside rava momos, rava-base pizza, and oats-based options such as waffles and crepes, all positioned as guilt-free alternatives to conventional fast food.

Wellness and Ayurveda form another significant strand of the marketplace. Visitors can access naturopathy, acupressure and an "any cure" centre, alongside ayurvedic products, essential oils, herbal powders, bio-enzyme-based products, plant-derived herbal remedies, chandan face packs and rose water. A specialised consultancy service also advises on commercial organic farming, herbal, kitchen and terrace gardens, and landscaping, and the Haat supplies herbal and medicinal

plants directly to interested growers, extending its role from retail into practical guidance for home and commercial cultivation alike.



Beyond food and wellness, the Haat houses a bookstore, and retail stalls selling sarees and handloom textiles, earthen utensils, and wooden and bamboo handicrafts, giving rural artisans the same direct, trusted access to urban buyers that farmers enjoy. A distinctive line of handmade incense cones, sticks and dhoop, crafted in a range of aromatic flower fragrances from flowers recycled from temple offerings, adds a sustainability dimension to the retail mix. This flower-recycling initiative also generates employment for local women, turning what would otherwise be temple waste into a small but steady source of rural income, another expression of the trust, purity and fairness that runs through everything sold at the Haat.

Farmer Entrepreneurship in Action

What distinguishes Pusa Krishi Haat from a policy document is that its impact can be observed in individual stories. Vendors at the Haat, several of whom describe themselves as first-generation agri-entrepreneurs, report that low rents and a steady footfall of urban consumers have allowed them to earn a fair, undiminished price for stock that would otherwise have moved through multiple hands, and multiple margins, before reaching a buyer. Such accounts echo a broader body of

research on Farmer Producer Organisations, which finds that collective, farmer-owned institutions improve bargaining power, reduce per-unit transaction costs and protect small producers from the price-setting power that concentrated trader networks would otherwise hold over them (Nikam *et al.* 2019). The Haat, in effect, functions as a physical, place-based extension of this same logic: instead of a single farmer negotiating alone with a commission agent who has little incentive to pay fairly, a cooperative of vendors trades under one roof, sharing footfall, infrastructure and, to some extent, reputation. For women vendors and artisans in particular, the market also offers a rare combination of formal, government-backed premises with direct access to discerning urban buyers who value authenticity, a combination that is uncommon in India's largely informal retail landscape for agricultural produce.

Challenges: Awareness and Visibility

Despite the strength of its underlying model, Pusa Krishi Haat continues to be held back by a problem that is more about communication than infrastructure: most residents of Delhi-NCR simply do not know it exists. Vendors and visitors alike point to a persistent lack of awareness about the market, with little signage or word-of-mouth recognition beyond its immediate neighbourhood, so that even people who drive past the IARI campus regularly remain unaware that a farmer-run haat operates within it. This is compounded by a lack of publicity: unlike private farmers' markets or curated organic bazaars that invest in social media promotion, influencer visits and recurring event calendars, Pusa Krishi Haat has relied largely on institutional channels and occasional press coverage tied to its inauguration or mela season, leaving long stretches with no active outreach to draw in new footfall. This mirrors a wider pattern in India's rural retail landscape, where informal haats already account for a substantial share, by some estimates over 40 percent, of the country's total marketable agricultural surplus (Saha *et al.* 2024), underlining how much potential remains untapped simply for want of visibility.

Future Prospects

Looking ahead, much depends on closing the awareness gap alongside physical expansion. Completing planned facilities like the food plaza and conference hall could make the Haat a destination in its own right, while a stronger digital presence, maps listings, social media, and recurring events such as seasonal harvest or millet food fests, could draw steadier footfall at low cost. Growing ties with Pusa Krishi's startup incubation programmes also point to a natural next phase: as more agri-tech and food-processing startups graduate, the Haat could shift from a produce market into a showcase of value-added, science-backed products, strengthening the link between IARI's research and the shelf. If replicated at other ICAR institutes and agricultural universities, this low-rent, research-linked format could extend its impact well beyond Pusa's two acres, showing that with sustained visibility, fair pricing and consumer trust can anchor a genuine alternative marketing channel, not a one-off model confined to a single campus.

CONCLUSION

Pusa Krishi Haat represents an important step towards building a more inclusive marketing system, one where farmers are not exploited by opaque pricing and consumers can trust the purity and source of what they buy. By promoting fair returns, value addition, entrepreneurship and honest

exchange between producers, vendors and consumers, it addresses several challenges associated with conventional marketing channels. More importantly, the initiative demonstrates how agricultural research institutions can extend their role beyond technology generation to actively support fair market access and enterprise development. As India moves towards more resilient and market-driven agricultural systems, initiatives like Pusa Krishi Haat offer valuable lessons for protecting farmers' livelihoods while ensuring consumers have access to safe, pure and high-quality agricultural products. The continued promotion and replication of such models can contribute significantly to a competitive, sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector where fairness, entrepreneurship and trust form the foundation of rural transformation.

REFERENCES

- ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute. (2022). 'Pusa Agri Krishi Haat' to enable direct marketing of farmers' produce. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.
- Nikam, V., Singh, P., Ashok, A., & Kumar, N. D. (2019). Farmer producer organisations: Innovative institutions for upliftment of small farmers. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 89(9), 1383–1392.
- Saha, S., Sinha, C., & Saha, S. (2024). Agricultural marketing in India: Challenges, policies and politics. *South Asian Journal of Macroeconomics and Public Finance*, 13(1), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/22779787231209169>
- Villacis, A. H., Kopp, T., & Mishra, A. K. (2024). Agricultural marketing channels and market prices: Evidence from high-value crop producers in India. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 81, 1308–1321. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2024.02.004>