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PROBLEMS OF AGRICULTURISTS IN INDIA - A STUDY

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Abstract

Modern agricultural practices and the relationship with environmental depletion have been assessed. Some of the developmental challenges faced by the Indian agriculture sector in particular and developing nations in general-illiteracy, poor socio-economic conditions, lack of technical knowledge and awareness, small land holdings, modernization leading to barren land and disasters leading to rural poverty, weather-dependent farming systems, low per capita income, underdeveloped physical infrastructures and inefficient bureaucratic procedures associated with the comparatively high cost of agricultural production. Natural disasters and human-induced environmental degradation are closely associated with improved farming systems. This is an attempt to understand the Indian agriculture sector, its changeover from traditional to agricultural problems faced by the farmers in India.

Key Words: Environmental, Agriculture, Technical, Disasters and Farmers.

Introduction

Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy. Over 58 per cent of the rural households depend on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood. As per the 2nd advised estimates by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the share of agriculture and allied sectors (including agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery) is estimated to be 17.3 per cent of the Gross Value Added (GVA) during 2016-17 at 2011-12 prices. The Indian food industry is poised for huge growth, increasing its contribution to world food trade every year due to its immense potential for value addition, particularly within the food processing industry. The Indian food and grocery market is the world's sixth largest,

with retail contributing 70 per cent of the sales. The Indian food processing industry accounts for 32 per cent of the country's total food market, one of the largest industries in India and is ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth. It contributes around 8.80 and 8.39 per cent of Gross Value Added (GVA) in Manufacturing and Agriculture respectively, 13 per cent of India's exports and six per cent of total industrial investment.

The growth rate for the agriculture and allied sectors is estimated to be 4.1 per cent for 2016-17¹. Increasing production of rice, wheat, pulses and cereals through area expansion and productivity enhancement in a sustainable manner in the identified districts of the

country; restoring soil fertility and productivity at the individual farm level; and enhancing farm level economy (i.e. farm profits) to restore confidence amongst the farmers. To improve the quality of life of farmers' especially small and marginal farmers by offering a complete package of activities to maximize farm returns for enhancing food and livelihood security. Indian farmers need to be both innovative and competitive in the global market. It is the task of government, policy-makers, educators, researchers, and extension workers to ensure they have the tools, technologies, and new farming systems that enable them to increase the productivity.

The problems of Indian farmers are even bigger than what government anticipates. No one thinks agriculture as a respectful profession anymore. Gone are the days when people used to prefer farming over government job. Now even farmers don't want their kids to become a farmer. Young people going away from farming. Many farmers are not in farming by choice but because it is the only way they can earn their bread. Many have no knowledge of recent agriculture developments. They still rely on the knowledge passed over their ancestors. So awareness about new developments is very much necessary. Government has started many programs to spread awareness including time to time "krishimela" but active participation of farmers are also required for its success farmers lack motivation. It becomes quite clear from the fact that sometimes they do have the knowledge but they don't want to try any new crop because they think what if this crop turns out bad. They want to be on safer side. They don't want to take risks. Small farmers can't even afford risks. In this scenario assurance from government comes as great help.

There are schemes but the implementation is not proper. Recently Union government has announced that farmers can claim insurance even if only 30 per cent of crop is damaged, previously it was 50 per cent. This is indeed a good step which will definitely help the farmers but it is more important to ensure that they get the insurance money in time. A small farmer invests all of his money in the hope that this season he would have enough grain to go through the year but when the crops goes bad, he loses everything so it's necessary to ensure that he gets the money before the next crop.

Indian farmers don't have land at one place. It's distributed over a wide range. As a solution of this problem, farmers whose lands are in one particular place should make a committee that will arrange the farming activities. It should plant same crop on the whole land and the profit would be divided based on their land share. This way many agriculture expenditure like labour wages, irrigation, cost of fertilizers, transportation of crop to the market can be decreased greatly. Recently agriculture industry is facing a grave problem of labours. In small villages most of the labours have fled to city to earn a better livelihood. So a balanced involvement of machinery is need of the hour. The Unpredictable nature of monsoons has caused extensive damage to agriculture. A crop like paddy requires water at least three times. In many states farmers mostly rely on diesel pumping sets for irrigation which is more costly. So irrigation along with fertilizers and labour costs takes a big chunk of agriculture expenditure. In many areas there are canals but they are poorly managed. Sometimes even when the rivers have sufficient water still there is no water in canals because somewhere in the way the canal is blocked and hence not operational anymore.

India was recognized for its agriculture industry for a long time but agriculture is losing its importance in modern India. India has 70 per cent of its population depend on agriculture and related in jobs or industry. History of Indian agriculture dated back to **Indus Valley civilization**, a lot of festivals like Holi, Baisakh and Sankranthi were based on significant agricultural events. Cotton, Sugar, Rice, Wheat are the mostly exported crops from India. At present India is producing a good amount of grains, rice, wheat vegetables to complete Indian population need. Agriculture and related industry support a big chunk of Indian GDP, but still, there are a lot of problems present in the Indian agriculture industry.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is problems faced by the agriculturist in India.

Problems faced by the Agriculture Sector Seeds

Seed is a critical and basic input for attaining higher crop yields and sustained

growth in agricultural production. Distribution of assured quality seed is as critical as the production of such seeds. Unfortunately, good quality seeds are out of reach of the majority of farmers, especially small and marginal farmers mainly because of exorbitant prices of better seeds.

Manures, Fertilizers and Biocides

Indian soils have been used for growing crops over thousands of years without caring much for replenishing. This has led to depletion and exhaustion of soils resulting in their low productivity. The average yields of almost all the crops are among the lowest in the world. This is a serious problem which can be solved by using more manures and fertilizers.

Irrigation

Although India is the second largest irrigated country of the world after China, only one-third of the cropped area is under irrigation. Irrigation is the most important agricultural input in a tropical monsoon country like India where rainfall is uncertain, unreliable and erratic. India can not achieve sustained progress in agriculture unless and until more than half of the cropped area is brought under assured irrigation.

Undeveloped infrastructure and policies leads to slow agricultural growth

Slow agricultural growth is a matter of concern as most of India's population is dependent on rural employment for a living. Current agricultural practices are neither economically nor environmentally sustainable and India's yields for many agricultural commodities are low. Poorly maintained irrigation systems and lack of good extension services are among the factors responsible. Farmers' access to markets is hampered by poor roads, rudimentary market infrastructure, and excessive regulation. India has inadequate infrastructure and services because of low investment. Farming equipment and infrastructure are scarce in India. Because many of the farms are small, the farmers cannot afford irrigation systems that would increase productivity. Most big farms are family-owned and run and do not take advantage of economies of scale - the concept that the cost per unit falls as output quantities increase, because the problem of land absenteeism in big farms which hinders the development of land to increase productivity because the tenant who cultivates the land has

little care for its development or productivity. Low investment in big and small of farms leads to lower production, inefficiency and higher costs, one of the causes of food inflation in India.

No proper management of Irrigation

There are a few major problems with surface irrigation. Irrigation facilities are inadequate and there is no effective system management for how much water is stored, how much is used for irrigation or what value can be added to this water. Consequently, farmers depend on rainfall, specifically in the Monsoon season. A good monsoon results in robust growth for the economy as a whole, while a poor monsoon leads to sluggish growth. With groundwater, the major problem is of equity.

Dependence of Agriculture on Weather

Agriculture in India and many other developing countries depends on the monsoon because irrigation facilities are not fully developed. If the monsoon fails or it rains heavily or untimely, it ruins agricultural production. Agriculture is also a gamble with temperature. Too high a temperature negatively affects the productivity of a crop. The present insurance system in India does not cater much for any loss of crop due to unfavorable and unavoidable climatic conditions or pest epidemics. Small farmers who have taken loans to raise crops fall into heavy debt in such situations and if this continues, the poor farmer may starve and sometimes even commits suicides in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and in some other states.

Policies lead to Agricultural growth

Agricultural growth is a matter of concern as a most of India's population is dependent on rural employment for a living. Current agricultural practices are neither economically nor environmentally sustainable and India's yields for many agricultural commodities are low. Poorly maintained irrigation systems and lack of good extension service are among the factors responsible.

Poor Socio- Economic condition of Farmers

Illiteracy, the root cause of farmers' poor socioeconomic condition, should be tackled vigorously. Though the government is taking the initiative by adopting policies like universal education, a highly centralized bureaucracy with low accountability and inefficient use of public funds limits their

impact on poverty. Lack of technical knowledge and awareness are also responsible for low productivity, adding to the problem of poverty among farmers. Other causes are the slow progress in implementing land reforms inadequate or inefficient finance and marketing services for farm produce and inconsistent government policy. Agricultural subsidies and taxes often change without notice for short-term political ends.

Inadequate Infrastructure & low Investment

India has inadequate infrastructure and service because of low investment. Because many of the farms are small, the farmers cannot afford irrigation systems that would increase productivity. Most big farms are family-owned and run and do not take advantage of economies of scale the concept that the cost per unit falls as output quantities increase, because the problem of land absenteeism in big farms which hinders the development of land increase productivity because the tenant who cultivates the land has little care for its development or productivity. Low investment in big and small of farms leads to lower production, inefficiency and higher costs, one of the causes of food inflation in India.

Disasters leading to Rural Poverty

Rural poverty has two characteristics: the poverty of rural human beings and the poverty of weather prone rural areas. The degradation of natural resource may be caused by drought or flood because of global warming or by modern farming methods which affect the land negatively, ultimately making rural people poor. The first one leaves the land barren and the second one, though costly, leads to large scale economies. Because of high returns, farmers are tempted without giving thought to its ill effects. The poor who cannot afford it fall further into the trap of poverty because they cannot compete with rich farmers while casual laborers lose their jobs with the introduction of mechanization. To remove rural poverty, small farmers and women must be integrated into the development effort, so that they also contribute to the removal of poverty.

Average size of Land Holdings is small

The average size of land holdings is less than 20,000 m² and subject to fragmentation due to land ceiling acts and, in some cases, family disputes. Such small holdings are often

overmanned, resulting in disguised unemployment and low productivity of labour.

Use of Technology is Inadequate

Adoption of modern agricultural practices and use of technology is inadequate, hampered by ignorance, high costs and impracticality in the case of small land holdings. In India, farming practices are too haphazard and non-scientific and need some forethought before implementing any new technology. The screening of technology is important since all innovations are not relevant or attractive to all areas.

Agricultural Marketing

Agricultural marketing still continues to be in a bad shape in rural India. In the absence of sound marketing facilities, the farmers have to depend upon local traders and middlemen for the disposal of their farm produce which is sold at throw-away price.

Scarcity of Capital

Agriculture is an important industry and like all other industries it also requires capital. The role of capital input is becoming more and more important with the advancement of farm technology. Since the agriculturists' capital is locked up in his lands and stocks, he is obliged to borrow money for stimulating the tempo of agricultural production⁴.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the number of rural male total workers is slowly decreasing, while the number of rural female total workers is steadily increasing in India at the national, state as well as at the districts level, Thus, though the chunk of women labour are increasing, there are only a few government developmental programmes, which are of women specific, in the country as well as in the State. It is found that only privileged sections are benefited from these developmental programmes. The weaker sections are benefited only to a limited extent. The present paper reveals the low socio-economic status of these sections in spite of various developmental programmes of the government. Last but not the least, forget governments, schemes and celebrities. Youth of India has all powers at their disposal they just need to wake up and have the courage to fight back all odds. Rather than using the internet for downloading pirated songs and video clips, they need to learn about modern agriculture techniques, weather forecast. This

is the most important part of the solution, without youth of this nation none of above solutions will produce better results.

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