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COVID 19 IMPACT: PROMOTING AGRICULTURE AND RURAL ECONOMY

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Abstract

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and 70% of the population of India is living in rural areas. Agriculture is the main driving force for ensuring food and nutrition security, increasing employment in rural areas and sustainable socio-economic development of farmers. Farming and allied activities major contributing to the rural economy, it contributed about 15 percent of the national GDP and the capital is agricultural products for the production of certain sectors. The pandemic situation in the country COVID-19's socio and economic implications has catapulted agriculture into the mainstream discourse, pandemic impacts directly affecting our farming and food supply and increase unemployment for rural areas. In this situation, our people need food and nutritional security and also employment. Ensuring food and nutrition security and creating employment is a challenge for India, given its huge population. Considering the above facts the researcher has chosen this topic, the main aim of this paper promoting agriculture and rural economy. The information collected from the primary and secondary sources, primary information collected previously year and secondary information collected currently through internet source. Conclusion of these papers, the solution to the current economic downturn and sustainable economic growth should be to increase agricultural production, prioritize agriculture, and convert small-marginal farmers to agro-entrepreneurs, increase agricultural industries in rural areas, trained in the technical aspects of value-added products from agricultural production and give priority to a rural industry. Further, Integrating Indigenous Farming Systems, it is a potential way to food and nutritional security and will create employment opportunities for rural people. The current need to upgrade the export of agricultural products abroad is essential to restructure existing agriculture. Adopting traditional farming methods and integrating livestock farming and fish culture with incorporate modern technologies to increase agricultural production and produce high-quality value-added products to export. Hence, policymakers, scientists, and researchers need to developing farming strategies and policy recommendations in the pandemic period for farming development.

Keywords: Agriculture, COVID 19 impacts, Promoting agriculture and rural economy

Introduction

Agriculture is very important for Indian economy and society both. It is the means of livelihood for half of the population, if we also count in the ancillary activities. According to the Socio- Economic and Caste, SECC in 2011, out of 24.39 crore households in the country, 17.9 million households live in villages and are mostly dependent on agriculture. Looking at the current scenario of agriculture in India, 69 % of the farmer families have less land than one hectare land. 17 % of the families have land between one to two hectares. Economic Survey of 2015-16 states that 48.9 percent of the total workforce population is contributing only 17 percent to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and in the current financial year, the growth rate of agriculture and allied sectors is expected at 2.1 percent (Naresh Sirohi, 2018).

Paramasivan C, Pasupathi R (2016) has suggested that Agro-based industries can play an important role to a large extent in solving the problem of poverty, unemployment and inequality in India and can significantly contribute to the overall development of the economy by efficiently utilizing the local raw materials which consequently may result in increase of gainful employment opportunities to poor people mainly landless, marginal and small farmers. This paper discuss in the performance of agro based industries in India.

The Indian economy is predominantly rural and agricultural and agriculture has responsibility of providing national as well as household food and nutritional security to its spilling over millions. The current situation in the country COVID-19's economic implications has catapulted agriculture into the mainstream discourse, corona virus impact directly affecting our farming and food supply. Further, COVID 19 impacts increase unemployment for rural areas because already migrated

village people return to the village from the city. This situation in India calls for an integrated effort to address the emerging issues. The best way to address this urgent need is to use social safety then extensively to stabilize their lives with food and nutrition and employment. In this situation this paper outcome may be contributing for rural people livelihood and ensuring food and nutritional security.

Agriculture sector for Rural Economy

India's economic growth in financial year 2019 is estimated at 6.8 percent. Agriculture accounts for nearly 18 percent of GDP and employs almost half of country's total workforce. Agriculture and allied sector play a vital role in Indian economy. The importance of agriculture and allied sector is brought out by the fact that as per census 2011, of the 313 million main workers in the country, 166 million were engaged in these activities (H.L.Sharma, 2018).

Revamp in Agriculture

High economic growth in India has certainly reduced the number of rural poor from 50 percent of the total rural population in 1993-94 to 28 percent in 2011-12, yet it has not been able to reduce the gap between the rural and urban areas. The policy approach to agriculture since the 1990s has been to secure increased production through subsidies on inputs by increasing the minimum support price and improving credit for small land holders. We need to build efficient irrigation systems and water conservation strategies in rain-fed region, through conjunctive use of surface and groundwater (Naresh Chandra Saxena, 2016).

Rural agro-industries to increase rural economy

Agro based industries role very important for rural development. Agro processing industries should be viewed as industrialization of agriculture and a joint process leading to a new industrial sector. The Economic survey (2014-15) recommended bringing a new paradigm in

the approach towards agriculture for getting more from less. One of the critical areas that can enhance the income of the rural households is to provide higher opportunity in agro based food and non- food activities. Agro food processing industries have the potential to generate directly significant employment in production activities and also indirect employment through its forward and backward linkages. This employment will be in rural areas where these industries have to be located near the source of raw materials, especially perishable agricultural products. Agro based industries would help in reducing post harvest losses and wastes as well as in using by products more efficiently (J.P. Mishra, 2019).

Integrated Indigenous Farming system

Indigenous farming is not just farming practiced by indigenous people. It is the product of indigenous cultures that are deeply connected to particular places (Katie Pace, 2015). Indigenous farming also called traditional farming, organic farming and natural farming. Indigenous farming doesn't need pesticides or chemicals and because of this, the farmers save a lot of money, these methods of farming through five main practices such as Agro forestry, Crop rotation, Mixed-/Inter-cropping, Polyculture and Water harvesting. Indigenous farming system provides an opportunity to increase the yield and economics / unit time by virtue of intensification of crop and allied enterprises. Many research reports from India have shown significant improvement in livelihood of small and marginal farmers through indigenous farming system. IFS helps to reduce the risk involved in farming especially due to market price crash as well as natural calamities (N. Ravisankar and A.S. Panwar, 2018).

Conclusion

Agriculture and allied sector play vital role in a developing rural economy

like India by reducing poverty, unemployment and inequality, ensuring food security and achieving rural economy development. Rural areas are undergoing a considerable change. Rural India is becoming less and less agricultural and allied activities are now a very important part of the livelihood strategies. The allied agricultural sector like livestock and horticultural crafts contributes significantly to economic growth, income diversification, rural employment and poverty reduction. Adopting indigenous farming methods and integrating livestock farming and fish culture with incorporate modern technologies to increase agricultural production and produce high-quality value-added products to export. The solution to the current economic downturn and sustainable economic growth should be to increase agricultural production, prioritize agriculture, convert small-marginal farmers to agro-entrepreneurs, increase agricultural industries in rural areas, train rural women to produce value-added products from agricultural products and give priority to a cottage industry. There is no doubt that India's agricultural economy will be a major part of the world in the future.

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