



Problems in Indian Agriculture – Remedial Measures

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Abstract : *The Indian Economy is primarily an agricultural economy and agriculture plays a predominant role in all economic activities in the country. The development of the Indian economy depends on the development of agriculture and its allied activities. Ours is a developing mixed economy and has become the world's fastest growing economy. The contribution of agricultural sector to GDP is 13.32 percent about 47 percent of people depend on this sector. Out of the total farmers 86 percent are marginal and small farmers. The share of the agriculture in national income is often taken as an indicator of economic development. Without agriculture the processing industry cannot survive. This sector occupies a central place in the national economy as a whole and it is the backbone of the economy. The green, blue, yellow and white revolutions have been the important milestones in Indian agriculture. Since 1951-52 (the beginning of First Five Year Plan) the Government of India launched various schemes and policies from time to time to improve the agricultural production and productivity, even though there are some teething problems in this sector. Small and uneconomical farm size, farmer's illiteracy, water problems, un-remunerative prices, middlemen intervention, poor connectivity of roads malpractices in weighing are some of the problems in agriculture. Due to excessive of debt burden farmers are committing suicide. It seems that the Indian farmers are "born in debt die in debt".*

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Economy is primarily an agricultural economy and agriculture plays a predominant role in all economic activities in the country. The development of the Indian economy depends on the development of agriculture and its allied activities. Ours is a developing mixed economy and has become the world's fastest growing economy. The contribution of agricultural sector to GDP is 13.32 percent about 47 percent of people depend on this sector. Out of the total farmers 86 percent are marginal and small farmers.

The share of agriculture in national income is often taken as an indicator of economic development. This sector has

been providing food required to the increasing population and contributes to capital formation, providing raw material to agro-based industries like Cotton and Jute, Textiles and Vanaspathi. Without agriculture the processing industry cannot survive. In our country since about 68.8 percent of people live in the rural areas, increased rural purchasing power contributes a lot to industrial development. Agricultural products like Cotton textiles, Jute and Tea account for more than 50 percent of the export earnings of our country.

This sector occupies a central place in the national economy as a whole and it is the backbone of the economy. It has shaped the thought, the outlook of culture and the standard of living of the people of the



country. Rapid growth of agriculture is essential not only to assure self reliance at national level but also for household food security and to bring equitable distribution of income and wealth resulting in a drastic reduction in the poverty levels.

The green, blue, yellow and white revolutions have been the important milestones in Indian agriculture. The growth trends in agricultural production have been commendable since 1950-51. Abnormal rise has taken place not only in the principal crops i.e., rice, wheat, jowar, bajra, maize and others cereals, but also in pulses, oil seeds, sugarcane, cotton, jute etc.

Green revolution enhanced the agricultural production of the country remarkably and benefited the economy in two ways. One is building up the social status and self-confidence and the other is the excellent boom in rural development.

India has the largest area under cultivation of rice and wheat in the world and is one of the largest producers of these crops. But in terms of productivity its rank in the world is only 52nd and 38th respectively. In pulses its world rank is 138th. Since 1951-52 (the beginning of First Five Year Plan) the Government of India launched various schemes and policies from time to time to improve the agricultural production and productivity, even though there are some teething problems in this sector.

Problems :

- 1) The farm size is extremely small and uneconomical. The marginal and small farmers are the victims as they are always in financial crunch.
- 2) The erratic interruptions in power supply have become a great hazard to agriculture.
- 3) Water is a crucial resource for agriculture. Due to untimely and uneven rainfall, farmers are facing problem of water uncertainty to their crops.
- 4) Silt formation and poor maintenance of tanks reduce the water storage required for irrigation.
- 5) Large numbers of farmers are not in a position to repay the amount borrowed from financial institutions as well as other sources.
- 6) In case of all crops the quality of seeds is the deciding factor of farm output as well as the income of the farmer. Due to some known and unknown reasons farmers are not getting qualitative seeds. Availability of good seeds has become a challenge to the farmer.
- 7) Farmer's illiteracy has become the root cause of all the problems. Most of them are illiterate.
- 8) Agriculture is always in the clutches of the monsoons. Unfavourable climate has become a curse to the farmers particularly at the time of harvesting.
- 9) Even after 70 years of independence, the farmers are forced to depend upon moneylenders and mahajans to meet their financial requirements every time of drought, floods, crop damage, consumption needs and other unproductive purposes.
- 10) Traditional money lenders and commission agents are playing a pivotal role in rural finance. They charge exorbitant rates of interest on



the borrowed money. They also collect the produce at farm level at the time of harvesting. They fix very low price to the produce which is unremunerative.

Middleman intervention creates immense loss to the farmers.

- 11) Unfortunately agricultural allied activities such as Dairy, Poultry are neglected by the farmers which can give additional income and nutritious food.
- 12) In recent times in agriculture labour, fertilizer and pesticide costs have become major components in the total cost of production. Hike in labour cost and fertilizer prices have become unbearable burden to the farmer.
- 13) Due to lack of warehouses and cold storage, the farmers are forcefully selling their farm products at poor unremunerative price.
- 14) Even now majority of the villages are not having proper connectivity of roads.
- 15) Technology is an engine of development. Even after 70 years of independence, the farmers are still using traditional methods in cultivation which lead to low productivity.
- 16) Due to illiteracy they cannot identify the malpractices in weighing at the time of sale of the output and while purchasing the inputs.
- 17) India is an agrarian economy. But unfortunately most of the farmers are committing suicide due to excessive debt burden which became the most disturbing phenomenon. The worst affected states in agriculturist suicides are mainly Maharashtra, Andhra

Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa etc. ***"It seems that the Indian farmers are born in debt die in debt"***.

Suggestions :

- ❖ Large extent of land is under tank irrigation in India. About 76 percent of agricultural land in the country remains unused for half of the productive period due to lack of access to meet the crop water requirement. Only 45 percent of cultivated land of India is covered under assured irrigation. Kautilya said that ***"Agriculture cannot be made solely dependent on rains which amount to gambling with nature"***. Silt formation and poor maintenance of tanks reduce the water storage levels to supply sufficient water to the fields. Silt removal and tank bunds maintenance is necessary (Neelanchal).
- ❖ The government should build community halls in rural areas and conduct some agricultural and its allied activities awareness programmes to the farmers at least once in a month. Appointment of special officers is necessary for this purpose.
- ❖ The availability of proper and suitable mechanism is necessary at low cost to the farmers to cut the costs at all stages.
- ❖ Majority of the farmers are in financial troubles. They are mostly depending on money lenders and commission agents who charge very high rates of interest. It is necessary to provide adequate timely credit through credit institutions like



- Commercial Banks, R.R.B's and Cooperative Credit Societies.
- ❖ To increase the income levels of the farmers, allied activities like dairy, poultry, fisheries etc have to be encouraged.
 - ❖ Supportive price system helps the farmers to uplift their financial position and stick on to cultivation.
 - ❖ It is better to follow multi-cropping system in their fields to increase the income levels.
 - ❖ The government must arrange more and more agricultural produce procurement centers at the time of harvesting.
 - ❖ It is better to appoint technical assistants to check the quality of the product at the farm level (moisture level).
 - ❖ It is high time to give priority to cooperative farming to protect the farmer.
 - ❖ It is better to conduct some awareness classes relating to financial management to the rural people to avoid unproductive expenditure.
 - ❖ In spite of a lot of efforts made by the government towards rural development, several villagers are not having proper road connectivity. So they are facing a lot of inconvenience. It is better to provide this type of roads immediately.
 - ❖ The government should provide warehouse and cold storage facilities to the farmer immediately.
 - ❖ Corruption must be checked.
 - ❖ Land reforms are necessary.
 - ❖ The government has to supply inputs at a low price and purchase the produce directly without any middlemen.
 - ❖ Uninterrupted power supply is of great help to the farmers. Better to adopt solar system.
 - ❖ Special agricultural zones (SAZs) are necessary which can improve production and productivity in agriculture. Lab to land system may be adopted.
 - ❖ Good agricultural practices as in Israel can be adopted, especially in arid zones.
 - ❖ G.M (Genetically Modified) crop (BT Brinjal, BT Cotton) can be adopted after getting adequate regulatory clearance.
 - ❖ Encourage organic farming to increase farm productivity with less ecological damage (Sikkim 100 percent).
 - ❖ Attracting the youth in agriculture and allied activities is necessary.
 - ❖ Rain water harvesting is necessary not only for agriculture but also for the survival of life on the planet.
- Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Father of Indian Agriculture Revolution, has suggested moving from Green Revolution to Evergreen Revolution. Here, evergreen revolution can be attained by integrating ecology and technology with agriculture for achieving high level of production and productivity.



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