

Impact of Agriculture in the Development of Rural Economy- Its Fact

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Introduction:

India is known as an agricultural country, as most of the population of villages depends on agriculture. Agriculture forms the backbone of the country's economy. The agricultural sector contributes most to the overall economic development of the country. For centuries together, the Indian village has been a self-sufficient and self-contained economy. During the past forty years, rural reconstruction and development have been the major thrust of economic planning, which has caused a rapid transformation in the Indian rural economic structure. These changes have taken place in spheres, such as land reforms, agriculture, animal husbandry, supplies and marketing, village industries, rural leadership, village administration, etc. With the help of the rural development programmers, a cultivator is able to take advantage of the modern technological facilities in his agricultural operations. These cultivators are now using modern agricultural implements and high-yielding varieties of seeds and fertilizers. Several other welfare services were introduced, such as opening up of schools, primary healthcare centers, improving the means of transport and communication, and spread of mass media services to rural areas, etc. These welfare services have materially affected the rural life.

The Indian agriculture sector accounts for 18 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs just a little less than 50 per cent of the country's workforce. This sector has made considerable progress in the last few decades with its large resources of land, water and sunshine. India is presently the world's largest producer of pulses and the second largest producer of rice and wheat. The country is also the largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices and spice products in the world and overall in farm and agriculture outputs, it is ranked second. From canned, dairy, processed, frozen food to fisheries, meat, poultry, and food grains, the Indian agro industry has plenty of areas to choose for business. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation under the Ministry Of Agriculture is the nodal organization responsible for the development of the agriculture sector in India.

Objectives:

To know the importance of Agriculture in Rural Development.

To study the challenges for Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural economy Development.

To Study the present and future Indicators of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development.

Research Data: Secondary Data -The primary source of the information in this research study is the secondary data. The available information on internet used to complete the dissertation report. All the available Journals, Articles, papers, Books provided necessary information to the research study.

Mile Stones in Indian Agriculture: The policies considered to be a mile stone in Sustainable agriculture development of the country are :

Green Revolution (1968): This revolution includes packages of programs like, Intensive Agriculture District Program (IADP) which eventually led to the Green Revolution. The National Bank for Agriculture Development (NABARD) was set up. The emphasis was on high yielding varieties along with other modern inputs like chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and mechanization and also on how productivity could be raised in agriculture sector without having substantial influences on increasing area under cultivation.

Ever Green Revolution (1996): The conservation of biodiversity, maintaining soil fertility, increasing the climate resistance of food crops combined with better and more education and technological innovation are the key to the ever green revolution. The main aim of this revolution is to produce more using less land, less water and less fertilizer. In the recent visit US President in New Delhi in March 2010, announced a new partnership with India in an agriculture sector for an ever-green revolution to achieve global food security.

White and Yellow Revolution: white revolution or operation flood relates to the rapid development in milk production that took place in India after mid 1960s. The growth, development and adoption of new varieties of oilseeds and complementary technologies nearly doubled oilseeds production from 12.6 mt in 1987-88 to 24.4 mt in 1996-97, catalyzed by the Technology Mission on Oilseeds, brought about the Yellow Revolution.

Blue Revolution (Water, Fish): It has been brought about in part by a trend towards healthier eating which has increased the consumption of Fish. Additionally the supply of wild fish is declining. This revolution could give landless laborers and women a great opportunity for employment which empowered them.

Bio-Technology Revolution: India is well positioned to emerge as a significant player in the Global Bio-tech Arena. Agriculture biotech in India has immense growth opportunity and the country could become the fore runner in the transgenic production rise and several other genetically engineered vegetables by 2010. In this sector India has been growing at a blinding rate of 30% since the last five years.

Features of Rural Economy: Some of the distinguished features of the present day rural economy are as follows:

i. Commercialization of Agriculture:

In the present days, a large part of rural economy has been opened up, which has made commercialization of agriculture possible. The extent of commercialization of agriculture in rural economy marks the stage of its development.

The major factors contributed to the commercialization of agriculture are as follows:

High production and productivity gains have turned out agriculture to be a profitable proposition.

Increase in production was possible due to the use of advanced technology in agricultural operations.

- c. Massive expansion of road transport has reduced the distance between rural and urban areas.
- d. Development of regulated markets and cooperative marketing structure have helped the farmers to break away from village system of moneylenders and middlemen.

ii. Rural Society under the Impact of Urbanism:

The past five decades has witnessed the rural society of India in getting exposed to the waves of urbanism. Most of the features of urban areas have been modified and diluted into the rural society. This has led to a new way of urbanism called rural-urbanism. Urbanism has induced the disintegration of traditional joint family, disappearance of neighborhood, sophistication, emergence of individualism, etc. Urbanism also created new social institutions, which were absent in the traditional rural set up. Urbanism has also brought about modernization.

Contacts between the rural and urban areas have been increased due to the development of the means of transportation. Similarly, the means of communication such as radio, transistor, television and telephones have brought the remote villages nearer to the urban towns. Increase in the contacts between the rural and urban areas has enabled a quick assimilation of rural areas with the mainstream of urban life.

Earlier, the demand of rural India to the industrial goods was limited only to the basic necessities. However, the situation has changed now. Today, rural India is seen as the potential market to the industrial goods. Observing such a situation, many industries have been flourished in rural areas, which are rich in the resources needed for the setting up of industries.

Two reasons can be attributed to such a situation. Firstly, contacts with the urban areas have created awareness among the rural masses about consumer goods. Due to green revolution, the income levels of the rural people have increased, which encourages such consumption of goods possible.

Secondly, the new agricultural technology has resulted in the green revolution. It supplies the industrial goods such as fertilizers, machinery, etc. There is also an increasing demand for the repair services and workshops, which is inevitable, when there is a supply of industrial goods. Thus, the

above mentioned reasons have created an increasing demand for industrial manufacturers in rural India.

Role of Agriculture:

Indian agriculture is at crossroads and is one of the concern areas for the policy makers. The human resource base for the agriculture sector is weak and is one of the neglected components of the sector. The programmes and initiatives are being initiated, under the recently launched National Skill Development Mission, can provide an interface for development of human resource for the agriculture sector. The ODL can play a pro-active role in human resource development for agriculture sector and successful implementation of the Skill Development Mission through interventions like: development of competency based curricula and multi-media training modules, designing and implementing the testing and certification mechanism and development of qualification framework. It can also facilitate in creating a value added ICT enabled system. Implementation of skill development mission in area of agriculture through ODL shall ensure wider participation in equity mode. The paper analyses the present agriculture scenario, status of vocational education and skill development in the area of agriculture, potential of Open and Distance learning (ODL) in skill development skill development and issues involved in development and planning of Qualification Framework. It is envisaged that efforts in building the human resource, through a structured and certifiable system shall bring in significant change in the growth of the sector.

i) Share in national income:

Agriculture is India's big economy. Although the share of agriculture in the total national income has been gradually decreasing on account of development of the secondary and tertiary sectors its contribution continues to be significant. IN 1950, the share of agriculture was 57% but it is only 26% now. The more developed a country is the lesser is the contribution of agriculture.

ii) Source of Employment:

Today almost 60% of the population depends directly or indirectly on agriculture. The greater independence of working population on agriculture indicates the underdevelopment of non-agricultural activities in the country.

iii) Importance in industrial development:

Agriculture provides raw materials to pour leading industries such as cotton textiles and sugar industries. Not only this the workers in industries depend on agriculture for their food. Agriculture also provides the market for a variety of goods.

Skill Development in the area of Agriculture:

Weak Agricultural HRD Base: The concept of HRD in agriculture sector remained a far cry for a considerable period, compared with industrial and service sector. Its weak human capital base and lopsided growth corroborates it i.e. - education is least among agricultural labourers; half of

those engaged in agriculture are illiterate; proportion of educated workers (secondary and higher levels) in profession is quite low (just 5% have completed Higher Secondary); only 5-6% of the total graduates are catering to the agriculture system and ratio of para-professionals to professionals is quite low. The system does not exist for preparing middle level human resource i.e. technicians/ supervisors/ entrepreneurs. Even families operating farms now suffer from much smaller holdings and farming members in such families are twice as likely to be illiterate as non-farming members. Ensuring food security and farmer welfare thus require support systems to extend technology and scale benefits in a sustainable manner to a huge existing workforce in agriculture that lacks non-farm skills.

Vocational Education and skill development Programmes: The Vocational Education and Training (VET) concept beginning from “*Nai Talim*” has been advocated in all the policy formulations, yet the output in terms of productive human resource is marginal. The VET system in our country is fragmented and its implementation is weak. The focus has been given on the Vocational Education Programme (VEP) at the school level, under the programme of Vocationalisation of Higher Secondary Education, in general education institutions. The PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education, an institute under the NCERT, has been providing academic support to the VEP programme. Thirty-two **competency based curricula for vocational courses** in the discipline of agriculture are available in the areas of: Agri-business, Agriculture Chemicals, Agro-based Food Industries (Animal Based), Agro-based Food Industries (Feed Based), Agro-based Food Industries (Food Based), Crop production, Dairy Technology, Dairying, Farm Mechanic, Fish Processing Technology, Fish Seed Production, Fishing Technology, Floriculture, Landscaping and Bee-keeping, Horticulture, Inland Fisheries, Marine Fisheries, Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Industry, Plant Protection, Plantation Crops and Management, Post Harvest Technology, Poultry Farming, Processing of Agro-forest Produce, Repair and Maintenance of Power Driven Machinery, Rural Construction Technology, Seed Production Technology, Sericulture, Sheep and Goat Husbandry, Swine Production, Vegetable Seed production, Veterinary Pharmacist-cum-Artificial Insemination Assistant, Veterinary Pharmacist-cum-Technician and Watershed Management. These are offered, with limited success, in various States implementing the VEP.

Conclusion:

Importance of agriculture sector in Indian economy cannot be undermined. The sector along with its significant achievements in form of Green, Blue and White revolution has developed certain stress points over a period. The human resource base for the agriculture sector is weak and there is a growing gap between scientific know-how and field levels do-how. This knowledge deficit should be overcome speedily in order to enhance the productivity and profitability of the small farm. The agricultural technology needs to move from production oriented to profit oriented sustainable farming.

The conditions for development of sustainable agriculture are becoming more and more favorable because of rural Development. New opportunities are opening the eyes of farmers, development workers, researchers and policy makers like agri related businesses, dairy farming, poultry farming, cattle farming and fisheries. Now the time is to see the potential and importance of these practices not only for their economic interest but also as the basis for further intensification and ecological sustainability. To conclude, a small-farm management to improve productivity, profitability and sustainability of the farming system will go a long way to ensure all round sustainability and rural development.

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