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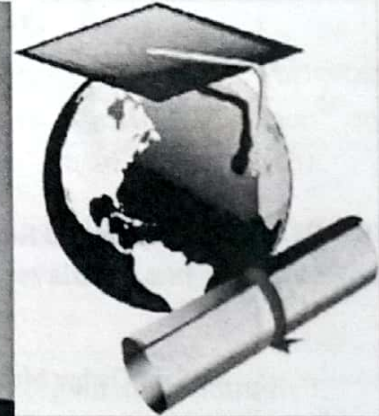
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Indian Agriculture And Farmers – Problems And Reforms

Prof. Vivek Mohan Morey

Assistant Professor Department of Commerce
Arts, Science & Commerce College, Chikhaldara Dist:- Amravati

Introduction:

In olden days, agricultural technique was eco-friendly but didn't yield high crop comparing now. Anyway, that is enough for those people as there was less population. Those farmers were seen as GOD but now it is in contrast. Only governments are respecting farmers and that too only for those belong to their state or country. Even, farmer's families do not give respect if they have low income or if their crop failed. Some parents resisting their children in choosing agriculture as their career field due to their disrespect towards farmers but they do not understand that without farmer, it is impossible to survive in this world. It is horrible to see that even farmer do not prefer to see his son as farmer due to influence of this society. Now days, many farmers left their farming work and went to some nearby industries. Also, some committed suicide and the reason is that their crops are failed due to unavailability of water sources. There is another case also that some farmers who have few acres do some research on their own and finding new techniques so that they can achieve maximum crop yield. These farmers arrange private water sources and also earn more. These farmers are selfless as they also publish about their work with no charge. Anyway, some are eco-friendly and some not. If we focus deeply in it, day by day farmers are discouraging by this helpless society and we can understand that farmer's conditions are based on their experience and also on their determination. However, it is a shame to see that states of our country act as envy countries for lending their water sources for agriculture. In India, we are following many modern techniques to increase crop yields. Either it is eco-friendly or not, we continue giving importance to improve the crop yield to withstand the increasing population.

Therefore, we lost the uniqueness of olden day's agriculture as these modern techniques reduce the strength of the crops and also reduce land's fertility. Anyway, these farming techniques are necessary as day by day farming lands are converting into apartments and factories.

Importance of agriculture in Indian economy:

India is mainly an agricultural country. Agriculture is the most important occupation for most of the Indian families. In India, agriculture contributes about sixteen percent (16%) of total GDP and ten percent (10%) of total exports. Over 60 % of India's land area is arable making it the second largest country in terms of total arable land. Agricultural products of significant economic value include rice, wheat, potato, tomato, onion, mangoes, sugar-cane, beans, cotton, etc. Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Though, with the growth of other sectors, the overall share of agriculture on GDP of the country has decreased. Still, Agriculture continues to play a dominant part in the overall economic scenario of India. Food is essential for life. We depend on agricultural outputs for our food requirements. India produces large quantity of food grains such as millets, cereals, pulses, etc. A major portion of the food-stuffs produced is consumed within the country. Our farmers work day and night to feed our population that counts over 1.21 billion. Besides agriculture with a commercial bias, subsistence agriculture with its emphasis on the production of food for the cultivator's family is widespread. Traditionally, Agriculture is followed as the simplest method of obtaining food for the family. Agriculture in India is more a 'way of life' than a 'mode of business. India exports excess food and agricultural products. A large proportion of India's export trade is based on the agricultural products, such as jute, tea, tobacco, coffee, spices, and sugar. It helps in increasing the foreign exchange. India is ranked seventh in terms of agricultural exports.

Characteristics and Problems of Indian Agriculture:

The Indian agriculture, however, has its own characteristics. Some of the important characteristics and problems of Indian agriculture have been described briefly in the following section:
1. Heavy Pressure of Population: The Indian agriculture is characterised by heavy pressure of population. About 70 per cent of the total population of the country is directly or indirectly dependent



on agriculture The fast growth of population industrialization and urbanization are putting enormous pressure on arable land.

2. Predominance of Food Grains: In both the Kharif (summer) and the rabi(winter) seasons, grain crops occupy the greater proportion of the cropped area. In fact, rice, maize, millets, bajra, ragi, and pulses are the dominant crops in the kharif season, and wheat, gram and barley occupy over three-fourth of the total cropped area in the rabi season.

3. Mixed Cropping: In the rain-fed areas of the country, mixed cropping is a common practice. The farmers mix millets, maize and pulses in the kharif season and wheat, gram and barley in the rabi season. In the areas of Jhuming (shifting cultivation), ten to sixteen crops are mixed and sown in the same field.

4. Limited Intensive Agriculture: In India, only about one-third of the total cropped area is under double and multiple cropping. Increase in the double cropped area is difficult unless heavy investment is made in development of canal and tube-well irrigation.

5. Primitive Technology: Most of the farmers of the country, especially in the rain fed areas, use draught animals (bullocks, male buffaloes and camels) for ploughing and other agricultural operations. The health and efficiency of draught animals is low which often retards the timely operations of sowing, weeding, and harvesting.

6. Indian Agriculture is Labour Intensive: In India, agriculture is a labour based enterprise in which most of the agricultural operations, like ploughing, levelling, sowing, weeding, spraying, sprinkling, harvesting, and threshing are carried on mainly by human hands. The use of machinery is still confined only to the rich fanners of Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, plains of Uttarakhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.

7. Rain-fed Agriculture: In the greater parts (over 56%) of the country, agriculture is largely dependent on rainfall, especially the summer monsoon. Unfortunately, the behaviour of summer monsoon is highly erratic. Consequently, the variability of rainfall is high which affects the agricultural return adversely. Only about 55 per cent of the total cropped area is under irrigation in which the farmers are more confident about their agricultural returns even at the failure of monsoon, as it happened in 2009.

8. Less Area under Leguminous and Fodder Crops: The nitrogen fixing crops like pulses are getting less area under their cultivation. Consequently, the natural fertility of the soil is depleting and the soils are losing their resilience characteristics. Moreover, less than

4 per cent of the cropped area is under fodder crops. **11. Tradition Bound:** By and large, the Indian agriculture is tradition bound. Established several centuries ago, the structures of a self-contained rural economy were founded in caste-derived occupational land tenures, made complex by absentee and parasitic landlords. These institutional factors and tradition bound institutions are a major obstacles in the path of innovations and modernisation of agriculture.

9. Low Productivity: One of the main problems of Indian agriculture is its low productivity. In comparison to the other agricultural countries, the Indian agricultural yields are among the lowest in the world (Table 9.4 and Table 9.5). The main cause of low yield per hectare is the low fertility of soil and less care to replenish it through green manure, fertilisers, fallowing, and scientific rotation of crops.

9. Lack of Definite Agricultural Land Use Policy: In the absence of a definite land use policy, the farmers grow crops according to their convenience. This sometimes leads to excess of production and sometimes scarcity. Many a times the farmers have to burn their sugarcane crop and often get less remunerative price of vegetables (onion, and other vegetables).

10. Low Status of Agriculture in the Society: In greater parts of India, agriculture is not considered as a dignified and honourable profession. This leads to disappointment and lack of enthusiasm among most of the farmers. The younger generation of farmers prefer a petty government job to agriculture.

11. Land Tenancy: In many parts of the country, there are absentee landlords and the tillers are not having the rights on agricultural land. The big landlords who own big farm houses are rich urbanites. The tillers and share croppers who actually cultivate the land of absentee land lords are not much interested in the development, proper management, utilisation of agricultural land, and modernisation of agriculture

12. Poverty and Indebtedness of the Farmers: Although cultivators indebtedness is universal in subsistent farming, its impact is perhaps nowhere as crushing as in India. Unfortunately, over 85 per cent of all the cultivating families are under debt



Farming Corporatization would be a Solution:

An idea of corporate farming is that let a corporate own a farming of a village. Let them take the land of farmers on a lease for 5 years or 10 years depending upon his investment. The corporate can give the lease amount either quarterly or monthly to the land owners. Then he can employ the farmers (land owners or not) for his intended crop depending upon his planning. The corporate would provide all the technologies, infrastructures (like cold storages, food processing units etc). Finally the corporate would take back all the crops. If there is more profit, he can distribute bonus among land owners and farm labourers. This would end the problem of investment, technology and other problems which government can't afford. Agriculture productivity, end stress among farmers (landowner or not) and address the farm suicide very effectively. There are some problems also.

Precision Agriculture would also be the Solution to the Problems: A small sugarcane farmer in western Uttar Pradesh, Shri Raghuvir Singh and his family, own about four hectares of land. He has two sons who are both graduates and work in Gurgaon. When I asked him why he did not make his sons farmers, he says that farming is hard work, is non-remunerative and it is difficult to get labour. Besides he also thinks that farming is not glamorous, a farmer's son is a non-marriageable commodity and that his sons have a better life in Gurgaon. Shri Singh is getting on with age and is thinking of selling his land to the highest bidder and moving out of farming and even going and staying with his sons in Gurgaon. Village after village and state after state, this is the story of most farmers in India. They want to sell their land and move out of farming. Indian agriculture is in crisis. No matter how advanced or rich we become, all of us have to eat food. We cannot eat money, mobiles, software or nuts and bolts. We feel wealth and security of the country comes from its land and hence what is needed is sustainable, high-tech and high productivity agriculture which will be remunerative and help provide both food and energy security. Precision agriculture, which can provide precise inputs like water, fertilizer, insecticides at the right time to crops, can help bring in the next green revolution. number of suicides.

Conclusions:

The critical issues that plague Indian agriculture at present are the knowledge deficit and infrastructure deficit, especially in the rural areas. Problems related to irrigation infrastructure, market infrastructure and transport infrastructure add significant cost to farmers' operations. Another issue is lack of delivery mechanisms. There are a number of schemes aimed to bring development in agriculture. We do not have effective delivery mechanisms that can translate into effective facilitation in terms of increasing productivity or decreasing cost or increasing price realization at the ground level. Indian agrarian sector in fact requires very innovative ideas for uplifting of this sector. Also, without mechanization, farming is hard and back-breaking work. This has resulted in most farmers' children quitting farming and going for other vocations. Farmers get more money in selling their land to builders, malls and factories. This has put more pressure on farmland, thereby requiring technologies to increase the productivity so that shrinking farmland can feed billion plus people of India in the future. India, though one of the biggest producers of agricultural products, has very low farm productivity, with the average only 33 percent of the best farms world over. This needs to be increased so that farmers can get more remuneration from the same piece of land with less labour. View publication stats