



PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE

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Abstract:

Indian Agriculture is called as the backbone of Indian Economy and it is also considered to be one of the prime moving factors of Indian economy and is responsible for generating vast income in the form of revenue. Due to high growth rate of Indian economy, it is still not in good shape, there are many issues and challenges that are paid too attention. India is one of the chief suppliers of items like spices, pulses, saffron and milk, it contributes a major chunk to the GDP of nation, it impacts the lives of majority of Indians, and however the figures are coming down. This paper has to identify the major problems and challenges of Indian agriculture and what can we do for the possible solutions.

Key Words: Problems of Indian agriculture, Challenges, Issues, Solutions

Introduction:

Indian economy is mostly depending on agriculture. There are 70% of Indian population is involved in the agriculture sector or any kind of farm activity which is related to agriculture sector. In these activities it includes horticulture, dairy farming, Floriculture or animal husbandry. One cannot deny the fact that after the infusion of Green Revolution, production of crops has tremendously increased. A huge slice of Indian population still lives below poverty line and is somehow facing malnutrition. Most of the regions which receive scanty rainfall are yet to experience decent

improvements in productivity and rural income. People who reside in remote and backward areas still suffer from problems and challenges in Indian agriculture from lack of access to basic services like finance, extension and inputs. This has resulted a distress among rural population. Farmers are confined to small holdings of land and this has led to the increase in small and economically non feasible holdings. This is responsible for producing more food from limited sources. There are lacunae that need to be fulfilled to minimize the burden on limited and stressed natural resources. The infrastructure too does not support in the

increased yield. Although for the last few years, there has been a diversification of high value varieties of fruits and vegetables, yet the rising demand for food items has led to a phenomenon of food inflation. What adds to the existing stock of challenges for Indian farmer's is increasing deregulation of trade. They are compelled to sacrifice on quality and prices of products before exporting to domestic and foreign markets.

Objective:

1. To study the Problems and Challenges in Indian agriculture.

Methodology:

This research paper is based on secondary information. In this research paper the data has been collected from various secondary hand sources like research papers, newspapers, journals, magazines, articles, libraries and secondary sources.

Major Issues of Indian Agriculture:

The problems faced by India agriculture are either natural or manmade; some of the problems that Indian agriculture faces are listed below:

1. Small Land Holdings:

The biggest threat to the Indian agriculture is the unorganized sown area that is distributed into seemingly small and

scattered pieces of land, this is difficult to manage. The problem does not seem to end here as small holdings continue to occupy land and make the whole system disturbed. This problem is more rampant in thickly populated areas like Kerala, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The reason for such a sorry state of affairs is inheritance laws where small piece of land is distributed among many sons. This is one of the major reasons of low agricultural productivity. The entire process becomes very time consuming in moving manure, fertilizers, seeds and cattle from one piece of land to another. Another reason is that of irrigation which an issue in small fields becomes. A huge portion of fertile land gets wasted in this process. This problem can be solved by integration of these small land holdings and creating farms that are big instead of small patches of land. This problem can be solved by pooling the land together by farmers and collectively working on them. They can share the profits later.

2. Lack of HYV Seeds:

In order to attain good yield of crops, one of the basic requirement is that of quality seeds. Seeds are crucial for attaining good crop yield; it is unfortunate to note that most of the farmers do not have access to quality seeds which affects their produce. The seeds are priced high and marginal farmers do not afford at such

hiked rates thus quality is compromised. To counter this problem, Government established NSC and SFCI to augment the selling of quality seeds to farmers. Also an initiative in the form of launching High Yielding Variety Programme (HYVP) in 1966 was introduced to increase the production of food grains in country. Improving seed variety can better the production and help achieving diversity in varieties that meet the needs of myriad climatic zones of India.

3. Problems of Fertilizers:

Indian people have been growing crops on land for thousands of years and do not care much for its replenishment. This has led to the depletion and exhaustion of quality soils and often results in low productivity. Using quality manures and fertilizers can however solve this problem. Manures do the same role to soils that nutrition does to humans. Well-nourished soils can deliver great results in terms of improved productivity and it can lead to about seventy per cent of growth in terms of production. Most of the Indian farmers use cow dung as manures, chemical fertilizers are costly and poor farmers find it difficult to afford that. In order to maintain the quality of the fertilizers, 52 fertilizer quality control laboratories have been set up in different parts of the country.

4. Problems of Irrigation:

India holds the record of being second largest irrigated country after China. Irrigation is pivotal in a tropical country like India because people here cannot rely much on rains which is indispensable for sustained growth. There can be problems of over irrigation also and care must be taken to safeguard the harmful effects of over or under irrigation.

5. Problem of Labour Force:

Most of the parts of country yet to see the light of mechanization in agriculture. Dependence on humans for activities like sloughing, irrigating, weeding, harvesting or threshing is a barrier in achieving good results. It results in wastage of human labour as these jobs can be done with the help of machines in a better way. Mechanization of such operations is required to stop wasting labour force so as to make farming convenient and efficient. Mechanization improved significantly after independence and supply of uninterrupted power is needed to achieve his objective. This increase was the result of increasing use of tractor, power tiller and combine harvesters, irrigation pumps and other power operated machines.

6. Marketing of Agricultural Production:

Marketing of agricultural produce is still a big issue for rural India. The

absence of sound marketing facilities increases the dependence on local traders and agents for supplying the goods to designated markets and they charge huge prices. This causes the distressed sale of produce. To meet the needs of debt, poor farmers have to sell their produce at meager price which exploits them. In an organized marketing setup, private lenders and middlemen won't be able to dominate the markets which otherwise take away more than 45 per cent of price. Thus regulation of markets becomes imperative in this scenario and Government should come out with such regulations that help in eradicating malpractices and ensure standardized weights and measures.

7. Lack of Storage Facilities:

This problem is mostly found in rural India where storage facilities are inadequate. Farmers sell their produce soon after the harvest at the prevailing prices. Storage facilities are very important to avoid losses and to benefit both the farmers and the consumers.

8. Transport Problem:

The lack of efficient and cheaper means of transport is also one of the challenges faced by Indian agricultural setup. There are numerous villages at present that are not connected properly with highways or main roads. As a result of this, farmers cannot reach and explore the untapped markets that can fetch them

good prices and reaching out to places without having adequate means becomes a challenging task.

9. Inadequate Capital:

Running a successful agricultural setup requires capital, with the improvements in farm technology so the role of capital is becoming more important in agriculture development. Most of the capital is locked up in assets like land and stocks which make people borrow from others. Farmers approach lenders, commission agents which provide interest at exorbitant. So it create major problem in various regional development of agriculture.

New challenges to Indian agriculture:

Indian agriculture is still in doldrums, no matter a lot of effort and finances have gone into improving the conditions but a lot more needs to be done. One of the major challenges is that of climatic conditions. Farmers have to meet the growing demands of people in shorter span of time. They need to speed up their production in shorter span of time. In rural India, people are illiterate, conservative and superstitious, they are hesitant to adapt to new practices and technologies that can improve their produce. Also India is a thickly and densely populated country; the pressure on land is too much which is

responsible for further fragmentation of uneconomic holdings.

Conclusion:

From the above challenges, one can conclude that Indian agricultural set up is riddled with problems at present; however each problem can be tackled with planning, strategizing and prioritizing. Much attention should be paid towards making India self sufficient in terms of agriculture and steps should be taken to overcome all the problems mentioned above. It cannot be achieved in few months, but starting out is the key. Farmers can start out by growing crops that yield a higher produce and are easily available. Dependence on traditional crops can be lowered and seed banks can help farmers achieve this goal. Also, farmers should be supplied with timely and reliable market information supply chains should be improved, storage facilities should be

looked after to improve the overall agriculture in India.

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