



A Study of Problems of Indian Farmers

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Introduction:

Agriculture is one of the oldest and most important occupations of man. It is generally understood to mean both the cultivation of plants and the raising of livestock. The beginning of agriculture did not just occur in one place but appeared almost simultaneously around the world, possibly through trial and error with different plant and animal or by long term experimentation.

In India, agriculture is the largest sector of economic activity. It provides not only food and raw materials but also employment to a very large proportion of the population. Being the dominant sector, the improvement or changes in the national output depend on the output in agriculture. Besides, population has been increasing at a rapid rate, leading to increase in demand for food and consumer goods, many of which have an agricultural base. There is a legitimate aspiration of the people in rural areas to improve their standards of living and to share the fruits of development. This point out the significance of agricultural development. The development of agriculture seems to hold the key to the progress of the economy. The industrial development depends upon the development of agricultural sector. Agriculture has a crucial role to play in the country's economic development. In other words, it can be said that the economic development of an under developed country largely depends upon the development of agriculture.

India. However, the share of agriculture in national income has been decreasing continuously because of the shares of manufacturing and service sectors are increasing. This should be happen in developing country. Comparison can be made between the position of agriculture in India with other countries as regards the share of agriculture in national income. The more developed country, the smaller is the share of agriculture in national output. Even today, agricultural sector has the dominant share in the national income of India.

Problems of Indian Farmers:

Agriculture is the dominant sector in Indian economy and it has to play a



dominant role in the economic development of the country. Therefore, a strong foundation of agriculture is necessary condition for sustain, and rapid economic progress and social development in India. There is close interdependence between agriculture and industry. The supply of raw and input from agriculture to industry and vice-versa the supply of wage goods to industrial sector, the supply of basic consumption goods to the agricultural population and the supply of the materials for the building up of economic and social overheads in the agricultural sector. Agriculture can contribute substantially to the improvement of rural as well as the overall economy.

Instability:

Agriculture in India is largely depends on monsoon. As a result, production of food-grains fluctuates year after year. A year of abundant output of cereals is often followed by a year of acute shortage.

Cropping Pattern:

The crops that are grown in India are divided into two broad categories: food crops and non-food crops. While the former comprise food-grains, sugarcane and other beverages, the latter includes different kinds of fibres and oilseeds. In recent years there has occurred a fall in agricultural production mainly due to fall in the output of non-food articles.

Land Ownership:

Although the ownership of agricultural land in India is fairly widely distributed, there is some degree of concentration of land holding. Inequality in land distribution is also due to the fact that there are frequent changes in land ownership in India. It is believed that large parcels of land in India are owned by a- relatively small section of the rich farmers, landlords and money-lenders, while the vast majority of farmers own very little amount of land, or no land at all. So the advantages of large-scale farming cannot be derived and cost per unit with 'uneconomic' holdings is high, output per hectare is hectare is low. As a result peasants cannot generate sufficient marketable surplus. So they are not only poor but are often in debt.

Division and Fragmentation of Holding:

Due to the growth of population and breakdown of the joint family system, there has occurred continuous sub-division of agricultural land into smaller and smaller plots. At times small farmers are forced to sell a portion of their land to repay their debt. This creates further sub-division of land. Sub-division, in its turn, leads to



fragmentation of holdings. As a result a major portion of land is not brought under the plough. Such sub-division and fragmentation make the efficient use of land virtually impossible and add to the difficulties of increasing capital equipment on the farm. All these factors account for the low productivity of Indian agriculture.

Land Tenure:

The land tenure system of India is also far from perfect. In the pre-independence period, most tenants suffered from insecurity of tenancy. They could be evicted any time. However, various steps have been taken after Independence to provide security of tenancy.

Conditions of Agricultural Labourers:

The conditions of most agricultural labourers in India are far from satisfactory. There is also the problem of surplus labour or disguised unemployment. This pushes the wage rates below the subsistence levels.

Neglect of crop rotation:

Successful conduct of agricultural operations depends upon a proper rotation of crops.-If cereals are grown on a plot of land its fertility is reduced to some extent. This can be restored if other crops such as pulses are grown on the same plot on a rotational basis. Most farmers in India are illiterate and do not understand this important point. Since they are not aware of the need for crop rotation they use the same type of crop and, consequently, the land loses its fertility considerably.

Inadequate use of manures and fertilisers:

Inadequate use of manures like cow-dung or vegetable refuse and chemical fertilisers makes Indian agriculture much less productive than Japanese or Chinese agriculture.

Use of poor quality seeds:

In India, not much use has been made of improved varieties of seeds. The main cereals (rice, millets and pulses) are still grown chiefly with unimproved seeds.

Inadequate Water Supply:

Farmers also suffer due to lack of irrigation facilities. Moreover, ordinary varieties of seed can be replaced by better varieties if there is an assured supply of water. The need for the construction of minor irrigation works of a local nature is both urgent and pressing. In fact, the total water potential in the country is more than adequate to irrigate the whole areas under cultivation. However, the present problem is one of discovering cheap and easy methods of utilising these vast supplies of water.



Inadequate use of efficient farm equipment:

The method of cultivation in most areas of India are still primitive. Most farmers continue to use native plough and other accessories. However, the problem is not one of shortage of modern machinery. The real problem is that the units of cultivation are too small to permit the use of such machinery.

Agricultural Marketing:

One of the major causes of low income of the Indian farmers is the difficulty in marketing their crops. Due to the small size and scattered nature of agricultural holdings, the productivity per acre is low. Consequently, the collection of these surpluses for the purpose of marketing presents a serious problem. Agricultural marketing problems arose due to the lack of communications, i.e., connecting the producing centres with the urban areas which are the main centres of consumption. The difficulty of communication prevents the farmer from marketing his own produce. So he has to rely on a number of middlemen (intermediaries) for the disposal of "his crops at cheap prices.

Conclusion:

In order to stabilize economic condition of farmers, is necessary to ensure that prices of farm produce by government from time to time. If agriculture is to be a viable long-term economic base for the farming community, it is important to recognise that the farmers' interests are better served by a more efficient system of production, rather than high prices. Planners should take note of this point.

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