

CAUSES OF LOW PRODUCTIVITY IN INDIAN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND REMEDIAL MEASURES

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Abstract

India is an agrarian economy. Agriculture is the backbone of the country. It can decide the standard of living of the people of India. The sector is known for multi-functionalities. The development of India directly or indirectly rests on the progress and prosperity of agriculture and its allied activities like poultry, fisheries, dairy etc. This sector's contribution to GDP is nearly 12.4 percent. About 48 percent of the people depend on agricultural sector to meet their livelihood. In this sector 86 percent farmers are marginal and small farmers. This sector has been providing food required to the growing population and also providing raw material to the Agro-based industries. The Government of India has launched many schemes and policies to uplift the productivity in agricultural sector. The revolutions like green, blue, yellow and white are the most important revolutions taking place in Indian agricultural and allied sectors to enhance the standard of living of the farmers. The productivity levels of some crops like wheat, rice, maize etc is very low when compared to the countries like UK, China, USA. In the case of rice productivity rank in the world is 52 and in the case of wheat the rank is 38. In the case of Pulses the rank is 138th in the world. Due to huge geographical variations in India, a single MSP (Minimum Support Price) for a particular crop might not take into consideration the production of crops in different regions. Availability of quality seeds is a bottle neck in agricultural productivity. Rapid rise in prices of complex fertilizers are forcing farmers to use fertilizers in a skewed manner. Financial constraints of the farmers are one of the hurdles in optimizing productivity. Minimum Support Price (MSP) should not use "one size fits all" model. Instead it can be region specific in nature so that regional disparities can be addressed. While deciding MSP the required stakeholders like farmers and local self governments should be involved. The procurement by Food Corporation of India should not be limited to two or three months in a year. Farmers should be allowed to sell their farm produce throughout the year.

Agricultural development is central to the economic development of the country.
- Tenth Five Year Plan

India is an agrarian economy. Agriculture is the backbone of the country. It can decide the standard of living of the people of India. The sector is known for multi-functionalities. The development of India directly or indirectly rests on the progress and prosperity of agriculture and its allied activities like poultry, fisheries, dairy etc.

This sector's contribution to GDP is nearly 12.4 percent. About 48 percent of the people depend on agricultural sector to meet their livelihood. In this sector 86 percent farmers are marginal and small farmers. This sector has been providing food required to the growing population and also providing raw material to the Agro-based industries.

In our country the processing industry very much depends on this sector. Rapid growth of agriculture is most essential for self-reliance and also for food security in the country. This minimizes the income and wealth distribution inequalities in the country. The Government of India has launched many schemes and policies to uplift the productivity in agricultural sector. The revolutions like green, blue, yellow and white are the most important revolutions taking place in Indian agricultural and allied sectors to enhance the standard of living of the farmers.

Due to some structural changes that have taken place in the country, the contribution of this sector to GDP slowly has fallen down from 53.71 percent to 17.4 percent in during 1951-2018. Agriculture and Industrial sectors both are inter-dependent. They support each other to achieve rapid development in the country. After independence, the production of agriculture and allied sectors has gone up because of the various schemes introduced during the Five Year Plans. Per capita availability of food grains also increased in the country. India is exporting various commodities from agriculture and its allied activities. The country is earning huge amount of foreign exchange which is useful to the development of the country. The productivity levels of some crops like wheat, rice, maize etc is very low when compared to the countries like UK, China, USA. In the case of rice productivity rank in the world is 52 and in the case of wheat the rank is 38. In the case of Pulses the rank is 138th in the world.

Causes of Low Productivity in Indian Agriculture :

- Due to huge geographical variations in India, a single MSP (Minimum Support Price) for a particular crop might not take into consideration the production of crops in different regions.
- The size of land holdings is reducing drastically due to fragmentation and subdivision.
- Interruption in power supply.
- Agriculture is depending on erratic monsoons leading to low productivity.

- Without using proper technical expertise, maintenance of already existing irrigation system (tanks) has become unviable.
- Availability of quality seeds is a bottle neck in agricultural productivity.
- Most of the farmers are still illiterate and unable to use latest techniques of production.
- Bad roads lead to wastage and delay in the transport of agricultural produce.
- Unscientific management of soil and improper use of fertilizers and pesticides is leading to the reduction in soil quality.
- Continuous soil erosion due to practices like podu-cultivation in tribal areas.
- Financial constraints of the farmers are one of the hurdles in optimizing productivity.
- Rapid rise in prices of complex fertilizers are forcing farmers to use fertilizers in a skewed manner.
- Some measures to enhance productivity:
- Minimum Support Price (MSP) should not use “one size fits all” model. Instead it can be region specific in nature so that regional disparities can be addressed.
- While deciding MSP the required stake holders like farmers and local self governments should be involved.
- Land reforms should be implemented properly. Community farming and contract farming should be promoted for efficient use of land.
- Uninterrupted power shall be ensured to the farmers.
- Irrigation facilities have to be extended to a large extent.
- The quality and availability of seeds should be maintained by thoroughly monitoring the supply chain of seeds.
- Lab to land policy shall be implemented to improve agricultural productivity.
- Soil erosion should be reduced by practicing various soil conservation techniques.
- Accessibility to interest free loans, immediate relief in case of crop loss and extension of crop insurance scheme help in raising agricultural productivity.
- Optimum use of fertilizers and pesticides should be encouraged.
- MGNREGS can be utilized for creating employment of farmers in the off seasons.
- The procurement by Food Corporation of India should not be limited to two or three months in a year. Farmers should be allowed to sell their farm produce throughout the year.
- Tenants also shall be provided loans, inputs etc.
- Crop rotation, multi-cropping system etc can be used to increase productivity.
- As of now green revolution has been concentrated in certain parts of the country. Extending it to other areas can improve agricultural productivity.

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