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06

|| Index ||

01) LIFE SKIL EDUCATION
Dr. Kirti B. Sadar, Nagpur || 08

02) APPLICATION OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY IN LIBRRY AND INFORMATION CENTERS
Dr. S. P. Nimbhorkar, Dist. Yavatmal || 10

03) Scope and Advantages of GST
Dr. Vijay Annaso Mane, Hupari. || 14

04) DIASPORIC SENSIBILITY IN V.S. NAIPAUL'S THE MAGIC SEEDS
Mr. S.D. Rajratna, Kolhapur || 18

05) Role and Challenges of Agriculture Sector
Vinod Hanumant Awaghade, Hupari. || 24

06) RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK IN NISSIM EZEKIEL'S POETRY
Nishigandh Prabhakar Satav, Warvat Bakal || 30

07) Realities of Women's Status and Human Rights
Sandeep M.Hadole, Darapur || 34

08) Natural Disasters & Hazards in India
Dr. Kundan Ajabrao Alone, Darapur || 38

09) A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND TOOLS OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Dr. A. P. Wadwale,pusad. || 42

10) भारतीय वस्तू व सेवा करप्रणाली
Dr. Vidya P. Channe, Pulgaon || 49

11) धनगर समाजाला सामाजिक प्रबोधनाची नितांत गरज
प्रा. डॉ. तानाजी ज्ञानदेव पाटील, सातारा. || 52

12) विधवा महिलांना उद्भणाऱ्या सामाजिक व शासकीय योजनेचा लाभ घेतांनी येणाऱ्या समस्याचे अध्ययन
प्रा. डॉ. लोकेश बी. नंदेश्वर, वर्धा || 54

05

Role and Challenges of Agriculture Sector

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• INTRODUCTION:

The modem advances that are both helping to better feed the world's people and better protect the environment. Perhaps the chief paradox of agriculture's abundance is the fact that many of its enormous successes are providing the basis for new challenges. The sector must boost its capacity significantly in a relatively short period of time so that output grows by perhaps 70% or more over the next four decades, meets continuing future challenges in terms of protecting the environment and dealing with changing climates and does all this within a new economic and social setting growing competition for resources from Indian infrastructure and industrial users. This drumbeat of criticism has seeped into the public consciousness in many cases and created a perception of a food system no longer held in high esteem by the general public despite the enormous benefits it has delivered over time. its objectives and the policies that should govern it. We also occupy the first position in milk production globally. India ranks second in fish culture and third in capture fisheries. We have been able to build substantial buffer stocks of food grains in spite of increasing demand due to rising population. The per capital food grain availability has also increased by one and a half times. The vital importance of food to physical, economic and cultural development, together with the importance of efficient, sustainable production makes modem techniques crucial in fact, there is strong evidence that only such approaches have any significant Chance of meeting the world's basic food needs in the next few decades. In addition, they offer by far the world's best perhaps only prospect of dealing with growing future challenges to protect the environment and to deal with global climate change. Finally, modern techniques offers the only prospect of extending the food choices now available to the wealthy to the world's growing middle class.

Objective of the Study

1. To Know and Understand the role of Indian Agriculture
2. To study the importance of Agriculture sector.
3. To study the challenges of Agriculture sector.
4. To study the types of Farming

Methodology:

Present study is based on secondary source of data. The secondary data has been collected from various books, journals, magazines, and web sides.

• Role of agriculture in Indian economy

Agriculture is the main sector of Indian economy which is amply powered by the following points:

1. Share in National Income: The contribution from agriculture has been continuously falling from 55.1% in - 1950-51 to 37.6% in 1981-82 & further to 18.5% in 2006-07. But agriculture still continues to be the main sector because it provides livelihood to a majority of the people.

2. Largest Employment Providing Sector: In 1951. 69.5% of the working population was engaged in agriculture. This percentage fell to 66.9% in 1991 & to 56.7% in 2001. However, with rapid increase in population the absolute number of people engaged in agriculture has become exceedingly large.

3. Provision of Food Surplus to the Expanding Population: Because of the heavy pressure of population in labor-surplus economies like India & its rapid increase the demand for food increases at .a fast rate. Therefore, unless agriculture is able to continuously increase its surplus of food-grains, a crisis is likely to emerge. Experts foresee that by the end of the five year plan (i.e., 2011-2012), the demand for food-grains is expected to increase to 280.6 million tons. Meeting this demand would require 2% growth per annum, The challenge facing the country is clear as during the last 10 years the food-grains have been growing at a meager 0.48%.

4. Contribution to Capital formation: There is a general agreement on the importance of Capital Formation in economic development. Unless the rate of Capital Formation increases to a sufficient high degree, economic development cannot be achieved. Agriculture can play a big role in pushing the Capital Formation in India. Rural sector can transfer labor & capital to the industrial sector which can be effectively used to increase the productivity in the latter.

5. Providing Raw Material to industries: Agriculture provides raw materials to various industries of national importance. Sugar industry, Jute industry, Cotton textile industry, Vanaspati industry are examples of some such industries which depend on agriculture for their development.

6. Market for Industrial Products: Since more than two-thirds of the population of India lives in rural areas, increased rural purchasing power is a valualile stimulus to industrial development.

7. Importance in International Trade: Agriculture constitutes about 75% of the total exports of the country. Such is the importance of agriculture as far as earnings of foreign exchange are concerned. -

Types of Farming In India

Some of the major types of farming are discussed below:

1. Commercial Farming : Commercial Farming is just the opposite of subsistence farming. In this case, most of the produce .is sold in the market for earning money. In this system, farmers use input like irrigation, chemical fertilizer insect ides pesticides & High Yielding varieties of seeds etc. some of the Major commercial crops grown in different parts of India are cotton, jute, sugarcane, groundnut etc. Rice farming in Harayana is mainly for commercial purpose as people of this area are predominantly wheat eaters, However in East and North-Eastern states of India, rice cultivation would be largely of subsistence type.

2. Subsistence Farming Majority of farmers in India practices subsistence farming. This means farming for own consumption. In other words, the entire production is largely consumed by the farmers and their family and they do not have any surplus to sell in the market. In this type of farming,, landholdings are small and fragmented. Cultivation techniques are primitive and simple. In other words there is a total absence of. modern equipments like tractors and farm inputs like chemical fertilizers; insecticides and pesticides. In this farming, farmers mostly cultivate cereals along with oil seeds, pulses, vegetables and sugarcane.

3. Intensive Farming : Intensive Farming records high production per unit of land. Best example of intensive cultivation is in Japan where availability of land for cultivation is very limited. Similar kind of situation can be observed in the state of Kerala in India.

4. Extensive Farming The basic difference between these two types of farming is the amount of production per unit of land. In comparison with temperate areas of USA, Canada, and former USSR, India does not practice extensive, cultivation, When we use large patch of land for cultivation then we call

it extensive farming. Here, total production may be high due to larger area but per unit production is low. In India extensive cultivation can be observed in Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh.

5. Plantation Farming : Most of these crops were introduced in. India by the British in the 19th Century. Plantation farming is an artificial and established form. It is an estate where a single cash crop is grown for sale. This type of agriculture involves growing and processing of a single cash crop purely. meant for sale. Tea, coffee, rubber, banana and spices are all examples of plantation crops.

6. Mixed Farming : It s a situation in 'which both raising crops and rearing animals are carried. on simultaneously. Here farmers engaged in mixed fanning ate economically better off than others. All classifications ate based on nature and purpose far doing It may overlap.. For example: Banana' is a Elongation type of farming. It can also be classified as commercial farming.

Importance of Indian Agriculture

1. Share in national income-Although the share of agriculture in the total national income has been gradually decreasing on account of the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors, it still contributed about 18% of nation income in 2006-07.(in 1950-51. it was 59%)

2. Source of employment-In India, agriculture is the main source employment. Even in 2004-05, more than 56% of the total labour force of India is engaged in agriculture and depend on it for their livelihood (1950-51) 69.5%. It becomes evident from this fact that other sectors of the economy could not generate enough employment for the growing population.

3. Provision o food grains-In a developing country like India where a very large proportion of income is spent on food and the population is increasing rapidly, the demand for food grains has been increasing at a fast rate. Agriculture In India has played an important role in meeting almost the entire food needs of the people. The production of food grains in India has increased from 51 million tones in 1950-51 to 208.3 million tones in 2005-06, i.e. by a little more than 4 times since 1950-51. This has enabled the country to overcome the problems of food grain shortages, The country is almost self-sufficient in food grains and it no longer depends on import of food grains.

4. Supply of raw materials to industrial sector: Agriculture plays an important role in industrial development. Many industries like cotton industry, jute industries, sugar industries, food processing industries, etc. depends on agriculture for their raw material requirements. Moreover, workers engaged in various industries depend on agriculture for their food requirement.

5. Market for industrial product- Agriculture provides markets for a large number of industrial products. Since about two thirds of India lives in rural areas, there is a large rural purchasing power which has created a large demand for all types of industrial products. Green revolution has considerably increased the purchasing power of the large farmers substantially in the recent years. Thus for the demand for various products like soaps, detergents, clothes, cycles, scooters, radios, television, torches, lead batteries, etc. has witnessed a marked increase. Likewise, the demand for a variety of agricultural inputs like chemical fertilizer, tractors, pump-sets, pesticides etc. has increased sharply. This has stimulated the development of industries producing these inputs.

6. Earner of foreign exchange- Agriculture plays an important role in Indian economy as an earner of foreign .exchange through exports of agricultural commodities like tea, cotton, coffee, jute, fruits, vegetables, spices, oil, Kerala out 70% of the export earnings of the country. However, with economic

development and consequent diversification of our exports, the share of agriculture in total exports has come down to about 10% in 2005-06. All these exports bring valuable foreign exchange to pay for the increased imports of machinery and raw materials required in the non- agricultural sector.

7. Significance for trade and transport- Agriculture helps in the development of tertiary (or service) sector. For example various means of transport like roadways and railways get bulk of their business from the movement of agricultural commodities and raw materials. A significant part of internal trade constitutes mainly of agricultural products.

8. Source of revenue for the government- Through the direct contribution of agricultural taxes to the central and state governments is Lot significant, they get a significant part of their totl revenue in terms of land revenue, irrigation charges, taxes imposed on the commodities purchased by the cultivators etc. central government also earns revenue from export duties on agricultural production. Freight charges imposed by Indian Railways for carrying agricultural product generate huge revenue to the central exchequer. On over all view, India has always been benefited by agriculture. Though the future of India is industrialization, the contribution of agriculture ire would always prove to be vital for making India a powerful and stable economy in the future.

- **Challenges of Agriculture**

The main driver of global food demand in the future is the expanding purchasing power of middle- class populations in developing countries who are demanding higher quality diets.

- **Population :-**

Today, the world has more than 6 billion people, with more than 5 billion of those in developing countries. Developing country populations are projected to continue to grow relatively rapidly 1.2 percent annually to 2030 before declining to a 0.9 percent annual average to 2050

- **Global Wealth:-**

While world population growth will be important to future markets for food, economic growth will be much more important. Not only has the rate of economic growth in developing counties come to outpace that in developed areas, but it has made them increasingly

- **Traditional systems**

The most important difference between the categories is the way farmers see themselves and their roles. Traditional farmers, for example, often say that they seek to work effectively with resources at hand. That is, they use the land, rainfall, seeds, tillage methods and power sources they have to produce what nature offers. Conventional processes are used to till the land, select and plant seeds, protect plants from competing plants and animals and their the harvest. Surpluses are marketed through nearby outlets. Such producers frequently report only limited capacity to change these processes and some seek to avoid change.

- **Modern agriculture:**

In modern agricultural systems farmers believe they have much more central roles and are eager to apply technology and information to control most components of the system, a very different view from that of traditional farmers. In contrast to the isolation inherent in traditional arrangements, modern agriculture tends to see its success as dependant on linkages access to resources, technology, management, investment, markets and supportive government policies. As a result, much of the success of modern systems depends on the development and maintenance of soil fertility through the specific provision of nutrients when they are depleted; of machine power and technology to create soil conditions necessary to promote plant growth with minimal disturbance and minimal soil loss; of the use of improved genetics for crops and livestock to enhance yields, quality and reliability.