

Article Id
AL04173

ROLE OF AGRICULTURE IN TRANSFORMING LIVES

Email

snandal15@yahoo.com

¹Sunil Kumar*, ¹Lalit Kumar, ¹P. Punia and ¹L R Meena

¹ICAR Indian Institute of Farming System Research, Modipuram –
250110, Meerut, India

Since nearly 70% of Indian population still remained dependent on Agriculture for their livelihood survival hence it can be considered a vital part of sound economic management of the country. Early man domesticated several crops such as cereals, fruits, vegetables and animals and evolved a settled agriculture system from a nomadic pastoral life. In this course of agricultural development man preserved many species of crops and animals those being selected on the bases of high nutrient content and their reliable harvests. Presently, the agricultural system got fully developed and is being supplying stable food items to the huge population of the world that kept the people away from starving. Apart from so many innovative agricultural technological developmental processes, in recent years, mass information through media changes in agriculture and allied industry has also been accelerated. Now a day's the role of information technology in rural economic management has become quite evident and its extensive application in rural agriculture system successfully revealed its effective role in promotion and development of rural economy. However, as compare to other sectors of economy the development in Indian agricultural sector is still relatively slow due to lack of proper infrastructure. Since it has been seen, that information technology has effectively improved the efficiency of agricultural production system. Therefore, the Agricultural economic management information is taken as the pivotal theme of this study vis a vis the traditional agricultural economic management as the control group. This article emphasizes the requirements of developing agricultural economic management system and its impact on the growth of a nation.

Agriculture and Poverty:

In India, nearly 70% of the farming households adopted agriculture and its allied activities for their primary source of income. Progress in the field of agriculture and allied occupations has not only been revealed to stimulate economic development in respect of

industrial sector but also leads to create additional jobs and overall growth upliftment of the peoples. Per unit increased in agricultural productivity not only found to link with raising farm incomes, increases food supply, reduces food prices but also provide greater employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas. Higher incomes may be a boon in increasing the consumer demand for goods and services produced by sectors other than agriculture. Hence, such linkages (or the multiplier effect) between growth in the agricultural sector and the other economic sectors has enabled developing countries to divert their work force to work in other sectors where growth is higher and wages are better. Such kind of diversion of peoples from agriculture sector to other industrial sector is also important for overall development of a developing country. Moreover, such kind of diversion is more relevant in case of rural areas where nearly 70% of the rural population is bound to live below poverty level.

Role of Agriculture in Economic Growth and Transition of India

The role of agriculture in India's economic growth and its contribution toward social hierarchy has always been remained crucial since the beginning of civilization. A brief history of its development through the ages is given below.

Early Stage

In earlier days, agriculture contributed a large share in gross domestic product (GDP) of the country during those days' poor's used to spend a high percentage of their income on food items. As soon as the agricultural productivity increases simultaneously the nonfarm sector also got developed that caused less dependency on agriculture sector worldwide except those areas where the nonfarm sector did not developed properly. Hence, constant growth in agricultural sector played a key role toward wider growth of the country as well as poverty reduction however the degree of growth remained dependent on the changes in productivity status of a farm as well as the size of farms. For adequate growth there should be increases in land and labour productivity and initially land and labour productivity must rise to reduce poverty thereafter land productivity should raise at faster rate so that it could create additional employment on a farm to benefits the poor as well as to create demand for nonfarm goods and services. As soon as the growth increases it create more employment opportunities in other economic sectors too and labour moves outside of agriculture sector that caused rise in labourers wage rates. Once this stage is achieved then increase in labour productivity is essential to maintain regular food supplies as well as the prices rise. Hence, higher

productivity in agricultural sector is proved to be an initial step or engine of growth that can leads to greater income for a country. Though, historically it is evident that no one of the poor countries has reduced poverty only through agriculture but in the first instance almost none have achieved it without increasing agricultural productivity. Thus agricultural growth is an essential complement for growth of other sectors.

Modern Agricultures Opportunities

Depending on their location farmers, in begging grew a large variety of foods viz., cereals, fruits, vegetables and animals but presently due to advent of rail and other rapid transport facilities in the 19th century this habit of farmers eventually got changed and as a result a shifting in farming methods took place. Now a day's more emphasis is being given by farmers on production of high yielding varieties of few reliable grain crops thereby a reduction in global hunger could be achieved. Today, agriculture also relies on global trade. Since the human population in world would approach nearly to 10 billion of people by 2050 therefore, to meet out the demand of food of such a huge population a continued growth in agricultural sector is essential. According to an estimate over 60 percent of world population either directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture and its allied activities viz., farm equipment manufacturers, food processing plants, transportation, milk and milk produce industries, infrastructure and manufacturing units etc for their livelihood survival hence agriculture sector offer grave opportunities in developing nations to lift out people from poverty.

Developments in Farming Sustainability

Though, in one way modern agriculture provide some short of food security but huge reliance upon few crops also invites some of the challenges and crop failure due to climate change is more important. Now a day's modern farming approaches are also focus to fight against malnutrition and obesity besides the various human health and food security aspects to accomplish this better crop diversity is needed and this would also lead to create markets for new crops. In order to secure the food and water supply more environmentally friendly farming techniques of set climate challenges developed by inclusion of drought tolerant crops, and encourage better livestock health is needed to protect local ecological systems. It is observed that sustainable farming methods not only create better food diversity but also preserve water with more efficient manner. In this way organic agriculture could be a way forward for sustainable food supplies and to safeguard our environment. Farmers engaged in

organic farming work to improve soil fertility by rotating crops, using cover crops and tilling the soil and remained less dependent on pesticides and other chemicals thereby quality and cleanliness of shallow ground water also got maintained. Hence organic farming not only encourages biodiversity in crops and maintain more natural environments in and around farms but also create better habitats for flourishing of flora and fauna in field.

Agriculture Improves Farming Communities

In present day scenario rapid expansion of farmers markets is also a positive development in agriculture. Farmers market not only offers better opportunity for small farmers to interact directly with consumers but also eliminates the need for long distance transportation thereby the food system remains within the local economy moreover locally grown food demand rises due to its cheaper and healthier food options. This kind of market facility not only found beneficial to local consumer but farmers also get benefitted by being getting new opportunities to sell their crops moreover their children can also learn from this transaction as first hand experience. This kind of farmer's interaction with market machinery can also be beneficial to entire communities to whom they serve. Agriculture always plays an essential role in the economy of entire world it's not only provide foods for the entire population of a country but also offers opportunities to farmers to connects and interacts with all the related industries of that country. It is usually believed that in countries where agricultural sector is very stable the country is more social, political and economically stable. However, it was also seen that in developing countries where peoples are much more depend on agriculture for their living beings are much poorer as compare to those where they work in other sectors of the economy. Therefore, to improve the economic condition of agricultural force in these nations there is a need to bring out improvement in agricultural sector because it had grave ability to create job opportunities to its citizens. In case of under developed and developing countries agriculture not only contribute to nearly 30-60% of their total GDP but also employs about 70 percent of the total work force of that country. Therefore, in developing countries agriculture industry can be considered a major source of employment as compare to other sector of economy and further improvement in this sector would definitely benefit in decreasing their unemployment rate. This increase in job opportunities is not only on farms but also in processing, advertising and packaging industries of agriculture product. Apart from job opportunities the agriculture sector also helps to fully utilize the unused land. However, in cases of most of the African countries viz., Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia, only 12% of arable land is being cultivated and a huge portion of land remained unused. For

development of this unused land though the African Union (AU) has appealed to the governments of various African countries to allocate 10 percent of their total spending for agriculture development but unfortunately only 4 or 5 countries have successfully reached that target. Obviously, developing countries do not have enough money to develop the unused land. Due to low crop area coverage these countries neither to have the enough food to feed their population nor have enough foreign exchange to replace the shortfall by purchasing foods from the international market. If any kind of natural disaster that caused losses of crops and livestock or high food prices in the international market occurred the situation got worsen and government live the people to starve. Thus, in order to feed people in a big way, agriculture must strengthen as it can reduce hunger as well as increase the food security of developing countries. Food security is an immediate and future main concern for all developing countries. A stable agriculture industry also plays a crucial role in insuring food security of the nation. This is an issue that related to the whole society and sufficient action must to be taken from now on. In other words, agricultural sector is the major source of employment and livelihood survival in most of the developing countries.

Conclusion

To provide enough food as well as the job opportunities to galloping population of the world it is highly imperative to evolve and develop the agriculture sector by including both agriculture as well as the allied industries not only in the developing countries but also in the countries of entire globe. Countries in those agriculture sectors is under developed not only come out to have a very low GDP but also suffers with widespread chronic mal nutrition in their population. Citizens of those countries could not meet out their basic needs for food items for their daily life. Therefore, economic progress in the agriculture based industries is very imperative to boost out the incomes and enhancing the food supplies to the poor. A further development in agricultural sector can only be possible if everyone in the society willing to take the responsibilities to sustain a society that have sufficient food supply for our future generation. Since, the food security issue relates to the whole society therefore necessary and efficient action in this direction should be taken immediately without further delay. It has been seen via various reports that information technology can effectively make up for the lack of economic information management in agricultural production. In addition, government should increase capital investment in personnel training to promote agricultural economic management information.

Reference

Bresciani, F. and A. Valdés (2007), *Beyond Food Production: The Role of Agriculture in Poverty Reduction*, FAO, Rome.

DFID (2004), “Agriculture, Growth and Poverty Reduction”, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/agri-poverty-reduction.pdf>

Ravallion, M. and G. Datt (2002), “Why Has Economic Growth Been More Pro-Poor in Some States of India Than Others?”, *Journal of Development Economics*, 65: 381–400.

UNDP (2009), Human Development Index Database

World Bank (2008a), “The Growth Report: Strategies for Sustained Growth and Inclusive Development”, Commission on Growth and Development, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank