

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR BETTERMENT OF FARMERS

SUNIL KUMAR YADAV*

**Research Scholar, Department Of Commerce and Business Administration, L. N. Mithla University,
Darbhanga*

ABSTRACT

Agriculture and allied sectors accounted for 13.7% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2013 and near about sixty percent of population depend on this sector. All these facts reveal that agriculture plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic development of India, as it is the main source of income for people. India exported \$39 billion worth of agricultural products in 2013, making it the seventh largest agricultural exporter worldwide, but in spite of that economic contribution of agriculture to India's GDP it is steadily declining, which shows there are some gaps in achieving desired output by agriculture sector. This paper tries to make a brief overview of Government initiatives taken for betterment of farmers.

Keywords: Agriculture, ICT based Services, Kisan Call Center, Natural e-governance Plan in Agriculture, National Policy for Farmers

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been feeding entire world's population and it has been at the focal point of rural life for centuries. The rural economy was almost exclusively determined by agricultural activities at the time of India's independence. As the country moved on an economic growth path in the post-independence era and the rural economy diversified, the dominance of the agricultural sector in the overall economy has slowly declined over the years. Yet, the socio-economic structure of India can be observed from the fact that the majority of the country's population depend on agriculture for their livelihood. According to Census 2011, 68.9 percent (83.3 crore) population is still rural. The agriculture sector contributed more than half the output of the Indian economy when the country embarked on its First Five-Year Plan in 1950-51. Over a period of seven decades, the share of agriculture has gradually declined to less than 15 percent. Despite its shrinking share in national income and

losing dominance in rural income, the performance of the agriculture sector remains a matter of central concern to policymakers and the public at large. There has been a continuous decline in the share of agriculture and allied sectors in the GDP from 14.6 percent in 2010-11 to 13.9 percent in 2013-14. The table below shows the declining trend of agriculture's share in total GDP.

Table 1: Share of Agriculture in Total GDP at Factor Cost (2004-05 prices)

Year	Gross Domestic Product (Rs. Crore)	Agriculture and Allied Sector (Rs. Crore)	Share of Agriculture and Allied sector to Total GDP (%)
2001-02	2474962	554157	22.39
2002-03	2570935	517559	20.13
2003-04	2775749	564391	20.33
2004-05	2971464	565427	19.03
2005-06	3253073	594487	18.27
2006-07	3564364	619190	17.37
2007-08	3896636	655080	16.81
2008-09	4158676	655689	15.77
2009-10	4516071	660987	14.64
2010-11	4918533	717814	14.59
2011-12	5247530	753832	14.37
2012-13	5482111	764510	13.95
2013-14(P)	5741791	800548	13.94

Source: Central Statistical Organisation (CSO)

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR FARMERS

Agriculture in India is varied, diversified and prone to a variety of risks. Most farmers are small and marginal ones. In most areas, agriculture is rain fed, leading to a greater degree of yield variability and risk. To prevent the risks and incidents of suicide among farming community and to instill confidence in them, the Government of India has taken various initiatives by announcing packages and insurances to the farming community:

NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS:

The policy announced in 2007 had provisions, including asset reforms in respect of land, water, livestock, fisheries, and bio-resources; support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies; agricultural bio-security systems; supply of good quality seeds and disease-free planting material, improving soil fertility and

health, and integrated pest management systems; support services for women like crèches, child care centers, nutrition, health and training; timely, adequate, and easy reach of institutional credit at reasonable interest rates, and farmer-friendly insurance instruments; use of information and Communication Technology and setting up of farmers' schools to revitalize agricultural extension; effective implementation of MSP across the country, development of agricultural market infrastructure, rural non-farm employment initiatives for farm households and integrated approach for rural energy, etc. Many of these provisions are being implemented through different Government Departments and Ministries through different schemes and programmes.

An inter-ministerial committee has been constituted to monitor the progress of the plan of Action for the implementation of the NPF.

The government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme “**National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture**” in the entire country. This centrally sponsored Mission Mode Project was introduced during the last quarter of the 11th Plan Period from 2010-11 in 07 selected States (Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh) in phase-I of this Project and have now been extended to cover all the remaining 22 states and 07 UTs during the current Plan Period starting from 2014-15. The Programme aims to achieve rapid development of agriculture in India through ICT enabled multiple delivery channels such as Internet, Government Offices, Touch Screen kiosks, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Kisan call Centres, Agri-Clinics, Common Service Centers, Mobile Phones (Broadcast, IVRS, interactive messaging using unstructured Supplementary Service Data and Voice Recognition for ensuring the farmers of the country. A number of applications in agriculture and allied sector have been developed under the project for providing integrated ICT based services to farmers.

SCHEMES DURING THE 12th FIVE YEAR PLAN:

In order to maintain the targeted growth rate of 4% in agriculture, during the 12th Five Year Plan, to ensure focused approach and to avoid overlap, all the schemes of the Department has been restructured into five Missions viz. National Food Security Mission, Mission for integrated Development of Horticulture, National Mission on Oil Seeds and Oil Palm, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture and National Mission on Agricultural Extension & Technology and four Central Sector Schemes viz. National Crop Insurance Programme, Integrated Scheme on Agri-Census & Statistics, Integrated Scheme of Agriculture Marketing and Integrated Scheme of Agriculture Cooperation; and one state Plan Scheme Viz. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.

RECENT INITIATIVES

In addition to the existing missions/schemes, following four new schemes have been introduced in the year 2014-15:

- Soil Health Card scheme
- PradhanMantriKrishiSinchaiYojana
- Price Stabilization Fund for cereals and vegetables
- National Agri-tech infrastructure fund

CONCLUSION

Agriculture needs continuous infusion of innovation and technology in ensuring global food security, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011, released in 2015 also indicates that out of 24.39 crore households in the country, 17.91 crore lived in villages and among these, 10.69 crore were considered as deprived households. Agriculture is still the backbone of rural India as the date of SECC indicates that 31.26 per cent of the total rural households are still broadly identified as poor where the main earner has an insecure and uncertain source of income. Increasing urbanization, globalization and demand for high-value products have dramatically changed the global context for agriculture. Agriculture is critical for those who live below the poverty line, as there is an uncertainty form the harvesting point of view. We may finally conclude that agricultural development can only be complete when welfare of farmer is also ensured adding that the government will formulate schemes keeping in view some of the personal problems that are faced by the farmers.

REFERENCES

1. Ganguli, Barna (2015), Agrarian Policies and Programmes- A Solution for Strengthening Rural India, Kuruksheetra, Vol.63, No. 08, June, pp.3-7
2. Gautam, Harendra Raj (2015), Innovations and New Technologies Needed to Accelerate Agriculture Growth, Kuruksheetra, Vol.63, No. 11, September, p-3
3. National Policy for Farmers, 2007
4. Socio-economic and Caste Census, 2011
5. Website of Central Statistical Organisation, Government of India, New Delhi.