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PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN BIHAR

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INTRODUCTION

Indian farmers are unable to secure a fair deal at marketing and production stages of their produce and an average farmer is denied the full fruits of his industry. The farmers need the services of well- organized marketing system supported by marketing co- operatives, integrated means of transport and scientific storage facilities. For a long time, production and marketing conditions in India were primitive and farmers were exploited by the traders and middlemen. The farmers feel that they are not in a position to get competitive prices for their output as the prices are fixed by commission agents and retailers. They cannot fix sale price over and above their cost price. They face the problems of unsatisfactory irrigation methods, fertilizer prices, market prices of agricultural products etc.

Very few countries have experienced rapid economic growth without agricultural growth either preceding or accompanying it. Agricultural growth is a catalyst for broad based economic development in most of the low income countries. Over the last few decades, the share of agriculture in GDP has steadily declined in India from over 50 percent in the 1950s to 18.5 percent in 2006-07 and 4.1 percent in 2007 -12 . In contrast, the share of industry and services has increased to 26.4 and 55.1 percent respectively due to greater focus of Indian economy as nearly 72 percent of the population lives in rural areas and over 70 percent of the rural population depends upon agriculture and allied activities for livelihood. The National Agriculture Policy (NAP) of India envisages a growth rate of 4% per annum in the agriculture sector, so as to achieve a target of over 300 million tones of food grain production by the year 2020. Against the targeted production of 230 metric tones for Xth plan, the actual production has never crossed 212.9 metric tones. The gap in between the targeted production and the actual production continued in the XIth plan period also. Gap between the target and actual production is a matter of serious concern as the growth rate of Indian agriculture during the past decade has sharply decelerated from 3.2 % per annum during 1980- 81 to 1996-97 to an average rate of only 1.5 % thereafter against 4% as envisaged in the NAP. With about 16.8 % of the world's human population (1200 million, 2011 census) and 15% of the world's

livestock population, India has only about 4% of the of its area to meet the ever increasing demand of food static between 138 million ha to 142 million ha. Consequently, the size of land holdings is continuously reducing. Between 1971-72 and 2002- 03, it declined from 2.2 ha to 1.4 ha.

The proportion of small holdings (<2) ha in the total number of holdings increased from 68% to 86%, which in actual terms has more than doubled from 38 million to 87 million during this period. The steady growth on human as well as livestock population, widespread incidence of poverty, and current phase of economic and trade liberalization, are exerting heavy pressures on India's limited land resources for competing uses in forestry, agriculture, pasture, human settlements and industries thus leading to severe land degradation problems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The National Commission on Agriculture defined agricultural marketing as the process which starts with a decision to produce saleable farm commodities and it involves all aspects of market structure or system both functional, institutional based on technology and academic consideration including pre and post harvest operations, grading, storage, transportation and distribution. B. Bhushan defines agricultural marketing as performance of activities that direct the movement of agriculture commodities / services from the farm- gate to customer. India has variety of marketing systems starting from farmer markets, cooperative markets to contract markets and corporate markets. The small farmer's interests are protected through farmers market and co operative markets while the contract and corporate markets mostly cater the commercial farms and big holdings. At the other hand, Farm production is function of farm inputs. Coelli et al. (1998) defined production function as maximum output available from given level of inputs and for a given technology. Agriculture has to match the pace of the population growth of counter hunger and poverty in the world particularly in the developing countries (Gautam and Kumar, 2013).

Thakur (1973) analysed the performance of the Indian apple market, exploring the possibility of improving the efficiency and observed that there was scope for traders to earn high profit. Gupta and Ram (1979) analysed the performance of vegetable marketing in Delhi. The results revealed that producers received 38 percent of the consumer price, and those middleman margins were excessive give the level of risk and marketing activities. The analysis showed that the establishment of cooperative, at both producer and consumer levels was required and that it was the government's responsibility to make available more market information, storage facilities, and processing plants to increase in market efficiency of vegetables.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The economic development of a country depends on the development of the core industry in which the majority of its people have been engaged for quite a long time. Indian economy has been largely based on agriculture from time immemorial. Therefore, systematic package practices in agricultural production will greatly improve productivity and enable the farmers to reach the maximum benefits. Similarly, a well – organized marketing system for agricultural products will give a suitable reward to people actually participating in the system.

According to the estimates of the food and agricultural organization (FAO), agricultural production would need to grow globally by 70 percent by 2050 and more specifically by almost 100 percent in developing countries, to feed the growing population alone. Agriculture not only faces the challenge of how to increase productivity but also how to sustain. Some agriculture scientists say the main problem in agriculture pertains to sustainability of resources, use and indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. These problems have led to increasing awareness and a felt- need for moving away from the input intensive agriculture pursued during the Green revolution phase, to sustainable farming in different parts of the world. Better agriculture practices are needed to bring sustainability in Indian Agriculture in general and Bihar State in particular for desired results. Others argue that agriculture is suffering because of lack of good extension services to the farmers. In addition to the poor infrastructure in many rural areas, the inability of farmers to directly access markets has sustained the presence of a chain of middlemen through whom most agricultural commodities must circulate before finally reaching consumers.

Growth rate in NSDP Agriculture during 2004-05 to 2011- 12 at 2004- 05 prices in Bihar state is 3.32. Farmers are not satisfied with agricultural production and marketing of agricultural products.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Our study would try to

- 1 Examine the satisfaction level of production and marketing of agricultural commodities.
- 2 Analyze the satisfaction levels of farmers in production, marketing, government advice etc. and
- 3 Offer suggestions to improve the production and marketing of agricultural products.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

Agriculture is a predominant occupation in Darbhanga District and it occupies an important place in the district economy. Most of the labour force is engaged in agriculture and its allied activities. The paddy, makhana, sugarcane, crops are grown widely in the district. Fruits and vegetables are also grown rapidly in the district. Fruits and vegetables are a good source of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals. Fruits and Vegetables are easy to digest, free from fat and cholesterol and are also used as a medicine to cure several ailments. It helps in reducing the risks of heart diseases when used regularly. This study will help to formulate a suitable framework to analyze the various elements of satisfaction level of production and marketing of agricultural products. Such a study will ensure proper resource combinations to improve agricultural production and thereby increasing the profit.

CONCLUSION:

The challenge of ensuring a vibrant and dynamic agricultural sector capable of sustaining the economic growth in other sectors requires a deeper engagement with the agrarian issues going beyond the economic aspects.

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