

Critical Issues of Agriculture and Rural Development in India

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Livelihood security of population is largely depend upon on agricultural sector in rural Indian economy [1,2]. Agriculture is a most dominant activity of rural Indian economy and it provides the jobs to around 44% rural population of India. Hence, agricultural sector may be considered as a backbone of Indian economy [1]. In India, agricultural sector did contribute around 16.77% share in India's GDP, while 47.20% population engaged in agriculture and allied sector in 2016 (WDI, World Bank, 2016). Thus, for India to increase the share of agriculture sector in India's GDP is a critical challenge for Indian policy makers. Also, around 66% of Indian population is dwellers of rural India (WDI, World Bank, 2016). Therefore, there would be a critical challenge for national and regional policy makers to take an effective action to boost the growth of rural economy through agricultural development. In contrary, agricultural and allied sector of India are facing numerous problems like decreasing share of agriculture sector, decreasing crop yield, productivity of natural resources, and decreasing cropped area under food-grain crops (i.e. land, water and soil) [1,3,4].

Climate change is another significant challenge for Indian agriculture sector and rural economy. Yield of food-grain and non-food-grain crops are expected to be declined due to climate change in India [3,5-9]. Further, it is projected that production and yields of food- grain crops may be declined by 2025, 2040, 2050, 2075 and 2100 in India [4,5,10,11]. Hence, climate change may be caused to reduce income of farmers and jobs in rural economy. Climate change also may have a negative impact on agri-based industries [1]. Thus, what must be effective and conducive climate policy action to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change in Indian agricultural? Also, around 60% arable land of India is depend upon monsoon seasons [1]. Moreover, agriculture sector of India will be in alarming position due to extreme events like drought, floods, hailstorm and other natural disasters [1]. Hence, it is a critical challenge for Indian policy makers to maintain farming activities in presence of natural disasters and extreme variation in climatic factors.

Moreover, it is previously mentioned that agricultural productivity and production of food- grain crops (rice, wheat, barley, sorghum, millet and pulses) are expected to be declined due to climate change in India [5,10]. So, to maintain food security of rural and urban dwellers will be another challenge for Indian policy makers [9,10,12-17]. So, what may be alternative plan to resolve the issues of food insecurity in India would be another challenge? Additionally, yield of non- food-grain crops (i.e. sugarcane, cotton, potato) are expected to be declined due to climate change in India. Consequently, it may be caused to destroy agri-based industries in India [18]. Hence, how India can create jobs for rural dwellers in India will be a significance challenge? Moreover, as agricultural sector provide the seasonal jobs for rural dwellers [1]. Thus, how rural economy would be effective to create additional jobs to strengthen the rural economy in India? At present agriculture is not a profitable occupation for farmers due to rising cost of cultivation and mechanization, risk due to climate change, cost of fertilizer and pesticides, decreasing productivity [1]. So farmers are moving from agricultural sector to non-agricultural sector for their livelihoods [1,8]. How Indian government can increase the trust of rural farmers to be engaged in farming activities would be a critical challenge for India?

Livestock rearing business may be a suitable solution to create greater possibilities in job creation in rural India. However, non-agricultural sector is unable to create jobs in rural India due to high imbalance in demand and supply-side factors of rural economy. Hence, what must be proper way to maintain the balance in demand and supply side factors of rural economy in India? Indian farmers do not receive suitable price of their crops. Thus, ineffective implementation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) is another challenge for farmers and rural economy in India. Hence, what must the solution for better implementation of MSP in India? Water resources are being deteriorating due to overutilization of it. Thus, to maintain water resource sustainability would be a critical challenge in India. Also, water is prime factor for farming sector, therefore to maintain agricultural sustainability would be a challenge for Indian farmers and policy makers to boost rural economy [7,10]. Agricultural sustainability may be defined as efficient and optimum production of food- grain and non-food-grain crops which may not have negative impact on environmental and ecosystem services, and it do not have adverse impact on human health. Also, it have a positive impact on economic and social capacity of farming community [7]. Soil quality and actual nutritional contents are declining due to wide application of fertilizer in farming, thus it would be caused to reduce nutritional contents of food, and therefore human health would be in risk. Thus, what may be alternative plan to maintain agricultural productivity in way that it can feed to present and future generation with providing proper health security to rural and urban dwellers in India? To maintain green environment would be a critical challenge for rural economy in India [19]. Extensive use of fertilizer would be caused to increase environmental destruction, thus it would create more obstacles to maintain environmental sustainability in India [1,3].

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