

Unearthing the Plight: Challenges Faced by Indian Farmers in Agricultural Sustainability

Prof. Rajesh Shah and Diana Das

Assistant Professor and Research Scholar

St. Rock's College of Commerce and Science, Borivali (W), Mumbai, India

Abstract: *This paper provides a critical insight into the different factors responsible for indebtedness and feelings of distress among farmers in India. Natural factors (drought, cyclones and floods), along with institutional factors (inputs, credit, markets, etc. contribute to the capital dependence of farmers. The situation of small marginal and large-scale farmers is discussed. After elaborating on the existing conditions, the authors suggest measures that could be taken by government and offer recommendations for overcoming the crisis, such as forming farmers' groups, reducing input costs by adopting non-pesticide management, rectifying market anomalies and providing counselling and confidence-building measures in distress "hot spots ".*

Keywords: Agriculture, Farmers, Indian, Farm, management, soil, fertilizer, economy, farming

I. INTRODUCTION

The agriculture sector plays a significant role in the Indian economy. Around 60% of the total Indian population is engaged in agriculture, contributing about 18% of the country's GDP. Farmers are plagued by several issues. These directly or indirectly affect the farmer's life. From procurement of inputs to marketing and post-harvest activities, farmers face a lot of challenges. However, the problems faced by farmers go often unnoticed. Here are some major problems faced by farmers in India.

Farmers in India have been facing a multitude of concerns and challenges that have gained significant attention in recent years. These concerns include issues related to land ownership, access to credit, water resources, and the overall economic viability of farming. Additionally, farmer protests and the demand for fair pricing have brought the spotlight to issues like Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and agricultural reforms. These concerns have sparked debates and discussions about the sustainability and livelihoods of India's vast agricultural community, which forms the backbone of the country's economy.

In 2016, agriculture and allied sectors like animal husbandry, forestry and fisheries accounted for 17.5% of the GDP (gross domestic product) with about 41.49% of the workforce in 2020. India ranks first in the world with highest net cropped area followed by US and China. The economic contribution of agriculture to India's GDP is steadily declining with the country's broad-based economic growth. Still, agriculture is demographically the broadest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic fabric of India.

The history of agriculture in India dates back to the Neolithic period. India ranks second worldwide in farm outputs. As per the Indian economic survey 2020 -21, agriculture employed more than 50% of the Indian workforce and contributed 20.2% to the country's GDP

Agriculture accounts for 22% of India's total gross domestic product (GDP) and provides livelihoods for 58% of its population. Agriculture is a way of life, a tradition, which for centuries has shaped the thinking, outlook, culture and economic life of the people of India. It is characterized by the predominance of small and marginal farmers. India is one of the world's largest producers of farm commodities. Its different agro climatic regions make it well suited to producing different varieties of fruits and vegetables almost all year round. In spite of the huge potential, Indian agriculture is constrained by several issues. In particular, the current investment in agriculture is only 1.3% of total GDP. Reports of farming crises are widespread.

Every year lots of farmer die due to they are unable to pay the loan which they have took. From last few years we hear many case regarding farmers suicide and death. Actually main reason for this our countries law. For example a who

buys a car is given 7% interest and a farmers who take loan gets 13% this make a huge differences. And this is the main reason to the death of farmers.

A farmer is a person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials. The term usually applies to people who do some combination of raising field crops, orchards, vineyards, poultry, or other livestock. A farmer might own the farm land or might work as a laborer on land owned by others. In most developed economies, a "farmer" is usually a farm owner (landowner), while employees of the farm are known as farm workers (or farmhands). However, in other older definitions a farmer was a person who promotes or improves the growth of plants, land or crops or raises animals (as livestock or fish) by labor and attention.

Farming dates back as far as the Neolithic, being one of the defining characteristics of that era. By the Bronze Age, the Sumerians had an agriculture specialized labor force by 5000–4000 BCE, and heavily depended on irrigation to grow crops. They relied on three-person teams when harvesting in the spring. The Ancient Egypt farmers farmed and relied and irrigated their water from the Nile.

Animal husbandry, the practice of rearing animals specifically for farming purposes, has existed for thousands of years. Dogs were domesticated in East Asia about 15,000 years ago. Goats and sheep were domesticated around 8000 BCE in Asia. Swine or pigs were domesticated by 7000 BCE in the Middle East and China. The earliest evidence of horse domestication dates to around 4000 BCE.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shah (2016): Literature often highlights the issue of water scarcity in Indian agriculture, emphasizing the need for sustainable water management practices and modernization of irrigation systems.

Kumar et al (2018): Research underlines the impact of soil erosion, salinity, and nutrient depletion on agricultural productivity, promoting the adoption of soil conservation and organic farming techniques.

Gulati et al (2016): Studies have consistently shown that Indian farmers face challenges related to low and unstable income due to price volatility and lack of price support mechanisms.

Swarup and Pandey (2020): The literature supports the idea of crop diversification as a means to enhance food security and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Qaim, (2020): The adoption of digital technologies and precision farming methods is recognized as a way to enhance agricultural productivity and efficiency.

Kaur and Singh, (2019): Literature often addresses the critical issue of farmer distress, including suicides, and highlights the need for mental health support and intervention programs.

Saini and Kumar 2021): Government policies and agricultural reforms have been subjects of debate in the literature, with discussions on the effectiveness of various schemes and their impact on farmers.

2.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

- To investigate the impact of a new drug on the treatment of a specific disease.
- To identify existing farming systems in specific areas and assess their relative viability.
- To formulate farming system. Model involving main and allied enterprises for different farming situations.
- To ensure optimal utilization and conservation of available resources and effective recycling of farm residues within system.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is exploratory in nature and uses technique of secondary research for the same. Thus, the study use primarily based on secondary data collected from various sources viz. books, journals, internet, etc.

IV. FINDINGS

Income and Debt: Farmers often face issues related to low income and high debt. Fluctuating crop prices, rising input costs, and limited access to credit have contributed to this problem.

Land Fragmentation: Subdivision of agricultural land over generations has led to land fragmentation, making farming less profitable and sustainable.

Water Scarcity: Water availability for irrigation is a major concern, especially in areas with depleting groundwater resources. Sustainable water management is essential.

Lack of Modern Infrastructure: Many farmers lack access to modern farming equipment, technology, and infrastructure, which affects productivity and income

Climate Change: Changing weather patterns and extreme weather events have made agriculture more unpredictable, affecting crop yields and livelihoods.

Crop Insurance: The effectiveness and accessibility of crop insurance schemes have been a concern, as many farmers are not adequately covered in case of crop failures.

Price Fluctuations: Farmers are often at the mercy of volatile commodity prices, which can severely impact their income.

V. SUGGESTIONS

Reform Agricultural Policies: Review and reform agricultural policies to ensure fair prices for agricultural produce, reduce the exploitation of farmers by middlemen, and provide a supportive framework for the agricultural sector.

Invest in Irrigation: Invest in sustainable irrigation systems to combat water scarcity, focusing on efficient water management and rejuvenating water bodies.

Debt Relief and Access to Credit: Provide debt relief for farmers burdened with loans and improve their access to affordable credit.

Promote Cooperative Farming: Encourage cooperative farming models, enabling small and marginal farmers to pool resources and share benefits more effectively.

Technology Adoption: Promote the use of modern agricultural technology and practices to increase productivity and reduce dependence on manual labor.

Crop Diversification: Encourage crop diversification to reduce the risk associated with monoculture and align farming practices with local agro-climatic conditions.

Market Access: Develop efficient and transparent marketing systems to connect farmers with consumers and reduce their reliance on middlemen.

Skill Development: Invest in training and skill development for farmers to improve their understanding of new technologies and sustainable agricultural practices.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, India's farmers face a myriad of challenges and concerns that affect their livelihoods and the overall agricultural sector. These issues encompass economic, social, and environmental dimensions. To address these concerns effectively, comprehensive reforms and policies are required. These should focus on providing fair pricing, improving access to credit, promoting sustainable and technology-driven agriculture, enhancing market access, and mitigating the impact of climate change. Empowering India's farmers and revitalizing the agricultural sector is not only essential for their well-being but also crucial for ensuring food security and economic growth in the country. Collaboration between the government, farmers, agricultural experts, and other stakeholders is key to finding sustainable solutions to these challenges. It's important to note that the situation may have evolved since my last update in September 2021, so ongoing efforts and policy changes may have occurred.

The tragedy of farmers committing suicide highlights some of the social and ecological costs that are linked to the globalization of non-sustainable agriculture. But these are not crop-specific and have been experienced in all regions where there are commercially grown and chemically farmed crops (Shiva et al, 1999). Public investment, credit, improvements in infrastructure (such as the development of roads, transport and agro processing), stable markets and knowledge transformation of farmers are the five pillars upon which agrarian prosperity and rural development can be built. The real challenge of our times lies in making agriculture a worthwhile and decent proposition as a livelihood.

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