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POPULAR ARTICLE

Doubling Farmers Income: Challenges and Remedies (a brief)

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture's share in the Indian economy is about 17.9 per cent of GDP. In spite of it, there is very pity condition of farmers in India. This is due to either improper input management by the farmers, or due to insufficient knowledge of better farming practices. Government often tries to enhance the poor socio-economic conditions of the farming India. Either poor implementation policy or some other constraints comes into the picture. All over it can be only achieved by only through the specific strategies such as, agricultural policies, market management, post-harvest management, agricultural input management, diversified farming, IFS models, bridging yield gaps etc.

Key words: Doubling farmers' income, Agricultural policies, Post-harvest management, Diversified farming

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the foremost sector of the Indian economy. An optimal share (about 60 percent) of the population is still directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture (*F.A.O., 2013*). Agriculture and its allied sector are important as they play an important role in employment and income. However, the contribution of agriculture to national income has gradually declined from 18.2% in 2014-15 to 16.5% in 2019-20, reflecting the development process and the structural transformation taking place in the economy. Farmers have excess production in their granaries but no one to give them fair for their produce. As per the session 2016-17 budget, the Government of India has set a target of doubling the income of farmers by 2022. There is urgent need to address some of the

basic challenges in agriculture and its allied sectors. Government should aim at improving productivity and its marketing; efforts of farmers need to be supplemented with better coverage of direct income or investment support.

An annual growth rate of 10.41% in farmers' income is expected to double the actual income of farmers by 2022-23 from the base year of 2015-16. This means that the current and previously achieved growth rate of agricultural income will have to increase rapidly, so it will be empowered to exploit all possible sources to increase the income of farmers inside and outside the agricultural sector. Doubling income is certainly a discouraging task, for which advanced and better strategies are very important. Farmer's income cannot be doubled by paying attention to any one standard or point. This is possible through advance technology, better management, better compliance of government schemes and policies, proper knowledge of bank facilities and market etc.



CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FARMERS

- proper implementation of development policies
- reduction in average operational holding size
- non-availability of institutional credits when required
- inability to mechanize the farms due to fractioning of farms
- increased costs and over use of fertilizers and pesticides
- constraints in adoption of new technology
- risk mitigation
- lack of additional skills to diversify their source of income
- loopholes in marketing channels, price spread etc; and many more.

REMEDIES TO BE LOOKED INTO

- Development of linkages between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors
- Farm diversification (Integrated Farming System)
- Easy availability of credits
- Farm mechanization (transforms subsistence farming to commercial farming)
- Insurance coverage
- Irrigation facilities
- Access to market
- Reallocation of labor resources

- Exploring global market for agricultural commodities

Specific agricultural extension strategies for improving yield and income of households:

- ICT implementation in agriculture
- Public private partnership in agriculture
- Promoting farmers' organizations
- Agripreneurship development
- Introducing PPME Model (Procurement, Processing, Marketing and Export)

DISCUSSION

Since three fourth of the total agricultural population of India are marginal farmers who live in one hectare or less land and hence their income does not exceed ₹ 15000- ₹ 20000 per capita annual income. This shows how fundamental is the social and economic life of the farmers. Only 7% of marginal farmers produce high value by intensive farming on their fields and allot their land for high value yield. Achieving all this depends on their intelligence and knowledge of agriculture. As the small and marginal farms are significantly large in number so land reforms like freezing up land markets can help improve their income. Also allied sectors, such as animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries to be given a boost to provide an assured secondary source of employment and income, especially for small and marginal farmers.

Keeping focus on income, employment and nutritional security; livestock sector has a very important face. It is because a compound annual growth rate of nearly 8% over the past five years has been seen. So, it has become an important secondary source of income for millions of rural families and is important in achieving the goal of doubling farmers' income.

One of the key in doubling farmers' income is addressing the post-processing issues. Farm mechanization in India is only 40% whereas in china is 60% and in brazil 75%. It enhances food processing sector which ensures better return to the farmers and promotes employment. It will reduce post harvest losses and creation of additional market for farm output. Food processing industry is growing at an average annual growth rate of more than 5% over the last six years ended 2017-18. Increase in income of farmers is possible through various management practices in Integrated Farming System are mentioned below -

- Integrated Rice Fish Poultry Farming System.
- Integrated Rice Fish Vegetable Farming.
- Integrated pig / poultry fish vegetable farming system sampling, etc.

CONCLUSION

Farmers will have to find and adopt sources of income growth other than agriculture. Motivating landowners to engage in non-agricultural and allied activities is also a good option. Diversification of rural employment opportunities will have a possible impact on improving the marginal and small farmers' income. A household imparted with additional technical skills which would prevent them from depending on a single

enterprise. All of the above mentioned practices increase the intensity of the crop, saving productivity production costs. As there are two sources for increasing agricultural production; Area and productivity and land is a limiting factor that cannot be carried forward. Households with less landholding should invest more on productive assets like cattle, goats, sheep, machineries *etc.* which will be a sustainable source of income unlike farming which is highly uncertain. Therefore, by using the practices discussed above, income can be increased and social and economic aspects can be improved. So, better management practice, proper knowledge update, right policy at right door are the keys by which farmers conditions can be enhanced.

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