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Agriculture Reforms In India: Examining Government Initiatives

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Abstract

Today India is consistently progressing and moving forward to attain newer heights in numerous sectors such as infrastructure, innovation, space technology, resource conservation and so on. India has been making remarkable strides towards developing into a modren nation while retaing its strong tradtional roots. Today, no industrialised nation can survive withoutagriculture .especially India where sixty percent of India's population lives in rural areas and mostly engaged in agriculture. This sector keeps a significant role in providing livelihood, ensuring food security and impetus to the growth of industries and service sectors. Agriculture is the primary sources of livelihood support to more than two third of the rural population. Agriculture sector and allied services growth rate have been fluctuating is a cause for concern in overall agenda for food &security. With the structural changes in agriculture, there is a need to broaden the range of agriculture activities to improve productivity to achieve the vision of doubling farmer's income by 2022. In this paper I examine the government initiatives through secondary sourcesin agriculture &other farm related activitiesin form of widerange of programmes/policessuch as Gramin Agriculture Marketing (GRAM),(e-NAM)-linking with electronic farmermarketplace, National Centre for Cold-Chain Development (NCCD),Prime Minister Fasal Bema Yojna(PMFBY), prime Minster Krishi Sinchai Yojna (PMKSY) and many more steps to make this sector develop, attaractive and profitable.

Keywords: Agriculture Reforms, Indian Agriculture, Government initiatives for agriculture.

Introduction

Agriculture has a significant role in India. Majority population depends on agriculture and allied services activities for their livelihood. According census two thousand eleven agriculture is the primary source of livelihood in Indianeconomy. It accounts fifty 54.6% of the population engaged in agriculture and allied sectors .in gross value added it contributes 17.4%to the country. India ranks first with one seventy nine point eight million hectares of net cropland area. (9.6 % of global net cropland area)

The share of agriculture in the GDP has been shrinking. The growth rate at 1.5% in 2012-13,5.6% 2013-14,(-0.2%) in2014-15 '0.7%in2015-16and 4.9% in 2016 -17. During 2017-18total food grain production in the country is estimated at 284.83 million tonnes which is higher by 9.72 million tonnes than the previous year production of food grain of 275.11 million tonnes in 2016-17.The production during 2017-18 is also higher by 24.66 million tonnes than previous five year's average food production.

The slowdown performance of agricultural sector in recent years is a cause of cencernespecially reference of food and security of people depend on agricultural .there are still more challenges in agricultural sectorlike fragmented land holding ,market size problem feminisation in agricultural , irrigationbottleneck's, unfavourable monsoon,crop failure , lack of capital seed related problems, excessiveuse of chemical fertilizerdue to ignorance , soil defects storage and market issues small farmers insecurity and many more problems demand urgent solution to makesustainable agricultural

The government of India has taken several steps for the development of this sector. several initiatives in the form of policies to solve different problems like women centric activities, soil fertality through soil health card scheme, prime minister krishi vikas yojna, prime minister fasal bima yojna, Kisan credit card, seed village programme nutrient based subsidy, new urea policy 2015 mega food parks,rashtriya gokal mission, diary processing and infrastructure development fund, prime minister

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sampada yojna agriculture export policy, new procurement policy , pension yojna etc. with aim to doubling the income of farmers to counter the challenges in agricultural and alliedsector.

Fragmented Land Holding

Small land holding is the cause of obsolete technology, result farm income comedown.majority of the farm family hold less than two acres of land. Restrictions on formal and transparent land leasing in agriculture cause of fragmentation of farms and low production. Digitization and updating of land records is another problem in this sector.

Government Initiatives

To deal with the problem of fragmentation NITI Aayog prepared a Model land leasing law based on the recommendation of T. Haque committee.

National Land Records Modernisation Programme

It aims to build a transparent and integrated system of real time land records based on land surveys, updating of survey and settlement records.It also aim to computerisation of land records and registration ,modernizing of record rooms and setting up of record management centres.

National Mission on Agriculture Extension & Technology

The sub mission on agriculture extension is being implemented with an objective to restructure and strengthen the agriculture extension machinery with an enhancement in quailty through domain experts and regularcapacity building.interactive methods of information dissemination innovative use of information and communication technology, mass media, federation of groups and convergence of extension related efforts under various schemes and programs of government of Indiaand state governments. Under these schemes grant in aid released to state government with an objective tosupport state's government efforts of revitalization of the extension system and for making available the latest agricultural technologies in different areas like farm trading, demonstration exposure visits, kisan mela, mobilization of farmers, groups and setting up farm school. Through these schemes ,latest agricultural technologies are disseminated to farmers of the country .

National Gender Resources Centre in Agriculture

(NGRCA) women play an important role in agricultural and allied sectors including in the main crop production,livestock production , horticulture, post harvest operation , foresty ,fisheriesetc.with the incresing number of women in agriculture sector government of Indiahas been taken several measure to bring women in main streaming.

NGRAC

Reflects the national commitment for empowerment of women through strategy of main streaming and agenda setting. The centre addressing gender dissemination to agriculture policies rendering advocacy advisory services to the states union territory to internalize gender specific interventions for bringing farm women in the mainstreaming of agricultural development.

Budget allocation

Earmarking at least 30% of the budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all going scheme.

Women Self help Group

To connect them to micro -credit through capacity building activities and to provide information and ensuring their representation in different decision making bodies.

An Internal complainant committee

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Prevention of harassment of women employee acommittee has constituted by department of agriculture cooperation and farmer welfare. This committee comprises six members including chairman out of which five members are women.

WomanFarmer's Day:

Ministry of agriculture and Farmers Welfare has declared 15thOctober as women farmer's Day.

Irrigation

The government of India aims to promote sustainable agriculture through devising appropriate adaptations strategies. National mission for sustainable agriculture is envisaged as one of the eight missions outlined under national action plan on climate change .65% of the net sown area constitutes rain fed crop demonstrating the over reliance on monsoon for crops. Fresh water resources consumes rampant in Indianagriculture.In the wake of failure of monsoon ,efficient irrigation technologies are inevitable for enhancing water and crop productivity and are vital for achieving higher water use efficiency .

Government Initiatives

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana

Launched in 2015-16 to improve irrigation system. An amount of Rs8923.18 crore has been realsed to states from 2015-16to 2018-19.

In 2017-18,an area of 10.48 lakh hactare was under micro irrigation. The main objectives of this scheme to achieve more crop more drop, har keth ko pani, jal sinch anto promote micro irrigation in the form of drips , sprinkles, rain guns inthe farm.

National mission for sustainable agriculture: it has been formulated for enhancing agriculture productivity especially in rainfed areas focusing on integrated farming, soil health management and synergizing resource conservation. National mission on micro irrigation to improve methods of irrigation for better use of water. The aim of government to avoid over irrigation, select crops and cropping system based on available water supply, Mixed cropping system etc.

Agriculture Insuran Ceinitiatives:

Crop Failure Issue

Agriculture sector development in India depends on monsoon. Irregular monsoon is an important feature of Indian agriculture, due to late monsoon resulting poor production, another crop failure due to pest attack and weeds. Due to pests, weeds attack India loses 15-25% potential crop output, weeds do enormous damage to wheat, rice, and groundnut and soya bean crop. Weedsit result directly depletes soil nutrients, other biotic agents rats, mice cause damage to standing crop. Keeping in view the risks involved in agriculture and to ensure the farming community against various risks. Ministry of agriculture and farmers introduced crop insurance schemes in 1985 and thereafter, brought improvements in erstwhile schemes from time to time. Brief explain of major policies regarding crop insurance are being implemented by government of Indiagiven below:

PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YO JNA (PMFBY)

After discussion with different stake holder government of India had formulated the new crop insurance scheme Prime Minister Fasal Bema Yojana which is being implemented in various states union territories of the countrythrough 18 general insurance companies to help the farmers against crop failure. It covers all food and oilseeds, annual commercial Horticulture crops. It covers on the basis of Area approach for each notified crop for widespread calamities. The government of Indiarealsed funds during last year 2018-19under various crop insurance schemes is 11426crore.

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UnderPMFBY,a uniform maximum premium of only two percent of sum insured is paid by farmers for all kharif crops and 1.5%for all the crops. And for annual commercial and horticulture crops, the maximum premium to be paid by farmers is only 5%.the premium rates to be paid by farmers are very low and balance of actual premium is being borne by government, to be shared equally by state and central government. Efforts are being made to make the scheme technology driven with the primary objective to reduce the delays in claim payments to farmers.with a view to ensure better transparency ,accountability and timely payment of claims to the farmers, government has comprehensively revised the operational guidelines of the scheme recently which have become effective from October 2018 and inter-alia, includethe following :

1. Provision of twelve per cent interest rate per annum to be paid by the insurance company to farmers for delay in settlement claims beyond ten days of prescribed cut off date for payment of claims.
2. State government has to pay12% interest rate for delay in release of state's share of subsidy beyond three months of prescribed cut off date submission of requisition by insurance company.
3. Increased time for change of crop name for insurance up to two working day prior to cut off date for enrolment instead of earlier provision of one month before cut off date.
4. Time for intimation of loss due to localized calamities and post harvest loss has been increased from forty eight hours to seventy two hours.
5. Stratified grievance redressed mechanism with district level grievance redressal committee state level grievance redressal committee.
6. Detailed plans for publicity and awareness zero point five percent of gross premium per company per season earmarked for the purpose.

Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme

It's aimed to mitigate the hardship of insured farmers against the likelihood of financial lost on account of anticipated crop loss resulting from adverse weather conditions relating to rainfall temperature wind humidity etc.

Credit Facilities

Government has initiated several measures to improve the institutional credit system to make them more responsive to the needs of farmers. Governmenthas taken many policy initiatives for strenthingon farm credit delivery system for providing credit at lower rates of interest to support the resources requirements of the agriculture sector.The emphasisof these policies has been on providing timely and adequate credit support to focus on small and marginalfarmers. Some of the important measures ate as under:

Agriculture credit: Target and achievement:

Agriculture credit flow has increasedconsistently over the years and it reached 11,68,503 crore against the targetof 10,00,000 crore during 2017-18.

Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS)

The government has been implementing the interest subvention scheme under which short term crop loans upto Rs 3 lakh for a period of one year are provided by the leading institutions to farmers at concessional intrest rates of 7% per annum,which in case of timely repayment gets reduced to 4% per annum.

Kisan credit card

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Its aim to providing short term formal credit to farmers on attractive rates of intrest recent initiatives for KCC include animal husbandry &fisheries, removalof inspection ledger folio charges and processing fee of loan under KCC.

Joint Liability Groups (JLGs)

To bring small, marginal, tenant farmers into the fold of institutional credit,JLGs have been promoted by banks.National agriculture and rural development Bank is an apex body in innovating and reaching out to BhoomiHeen Kisan through JLG scheme.

Seed R elated Initiatives:

Seeds are the basic and critical input for agricultural production. Distribution of assured quality seed of all crops to farmers is mandatory for better production. Sothereare theresponsibilitiesof governmentinclude:

Formulation and implementation of policies and programmes on quality seed production.

To recommend support for import and export of seeds and planting material.

To support the efforts of state union territories in production and distribution of certified quality seeds.

Government Initiatives Schemes

Submission On Seed And Planting Material

SMSP under central sponsor scheme national mission on agricultural extension and technology is under implementation with the objective to develop/strengthen seed sector and to enhance production and multiplication of high yielding certified quality seed of all agriculture cropsand making it available to the farmers that affordable prices.the existing components of the SMSP schemes are under:

National Seed Corporation

The establishment and maintenance of seed bank programme has been restructured as national seed reserve bank. The basic objectives of the scheme are to meet the requirement of seeds of short and medium duration crops varieties to farmers during calamities and unforeseen conditions.this

is the central sector scheme. Its aims to establish an effective system for the protection of plant varieties the rights of farmers.

Seed Village Programme

Trained group of farmers are involved in production of seeds of various crops and cater to needs of themselves in a village.its aim to increase the seed production. financial assistance of Rs fifteen thousand per group (50-150 farmers each group) is provided for farmers training on seeds production. To encourage farmers to develop storage capacity of appropriate quality financial assistance is available to former for purchasing seed storage bins. Through this seed is available at the door step of farmer at an appropriate time at affordableprice.

Soil Health Initiative

Lack of awareness of farmers about the balanced use of fertilizersresult soil fertility, loss of micro nutrients.Over use of urea has caused ground water pollution along with the decline in soil fertility. Government has been taken several measures to improve soil health are as under:

Soil Health Card

SHC provides every farmer, soil nutrient status of his land and advice him accordingly on the dosage of fertilizer and essential soil amendments that should be done for good soil health.

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Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana

Launched in 2015 it is an extended component of soil health management under the centrally sponsored schemes national mission on sustainable agriculture. The aim of this yojana to produce agricultural products free from chemical and pesticide residues by adopting eco friendly low cost technology. Disseminate latest technologies in organic farming, shop aims to achieve organic farming in turn resulting in improvement of soil health.

New Urea Policy (2015)

This policy was approved with multiple objectives of maximizing indigenous urea production and promoting energy efficiency in urea units.

Neem Coated Urea

It is made mandatory by the government for all domestic producer of urea to produce under percent as Neem coated urea. The benefit of this leads to more gradual release of urea helping plants gain more new nutrients and resulting in higher production.

Storage Initiatives

Post harvest loss majority region is usually storage problem. Traditional pattern of storage of crops without any scientific design cannot protect crops against pests and decay. Government has been taken some measures as under:

Mega Food Park

Under this scheme ultimate aim is to provide a mechanism to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together farmers processors and retailers to ensure maximizing value addition minimising wastage increasing farmers income and creating employment opportunities.

Cold Chain

To provide integrated cold chain and preservation infrastructure facilities without any break from the farm gate to the consumer in order to reduce post harvest losses of horticulture and non horticulture agriculture produce. This will enable linking groups of producer to processor and market through a well equipped supply chain and cold chain.

Marketing Initiatives

In two thousand eighteen government approved a new procurement policy with focus on compensating oil seeds farmer if rates fall below the MSP.

Price Deficiency Payment

Suggested by NITI Ayog , a new policy has been framed to protect oil seeds farmers only.

Price Deficiency Payment System

Under this plan compensate to farmers by paying them the difference between the government - prescribed Minimum support price and the actual market price for certain crops. Farmers will get benefits up to a certain percentage of the difference between the market price and the msp. Through this it could be more effective in making the cropping pattern in the country more responsive to consumer needs in comparison to MSPs.

Pradhan mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)

Price Support Scheme

Physical procurement of pulses, oil seeds and copra to be done by central nodal agencies along with the state government. The central government will bear procurement expenditure and losses due to procurement up to 25 percent of production.

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Model Agriculture Produce And Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act,2017.

This act strives to assist farmers to directly connect with buyers to enable them to discover the optimum prices for their commodities. The main aim of this act to create a single agriculture market with the single sense in which agriculture produce and livestock would be traded. Creation of a conducive environment to enhancecompetition among different markets, to promote it reading to improve transparency in trade operations and integration of markets across geographiesthrough this act to give freedom to the agriculturalist to sell their produce to buyers and at the place and time of their choice.

e-NAM (National Agricultural Market)

To achieve the aim of uniformity in agriculture market this scheme launched in 2016 is a pan-India electronic trading portal for farm produce which creates a unified national agriculture market aim to provide a single window sevice for all APMC related services and information, such as commodity arrivals and prices, provision for responding to the trade offers, buy and sell trade offers etc. Modelcontract act 2018 is a step to integrate farmers with bulk purchase for better price realization.

Conclusion

Indian agriculture sector has been going under structural changes with respect to achieve the aim of sustainable development . To realize the aim of doubling farmers income by 2022 government of india has been taken several initiative on the recommendation of Ashok Dalwai committeeset up in 2016,to look into the entire gamut of Indian agriculture ecosystem,including input and risk management, post harvest and marketing strategies and issues relating to sustainability.the government of india is fully committed to make farming the attractive occupation.sevral policies /schemesformed to improve crop productivity ,reduced cost cultivation through rational utilisation of input ,cropping intensity ,diversification to farm horticulture livestock ,fisheries and non farm activities value addition and agro-processing ,divert surplus labor from agriculture to skill building,for promoting farmers interest imposing import duty on oil seeds and pulses. "farmers first mera gaon mera gaurav,rashtriya gokul mission for conservation and development of in the genus breeds in a scientific manner, tomato, onion and potato schemes for agriculture processingand many more schemes to grow agriculture sector to make more prosperous our farmers which lead to country sustainable development.

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