



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF 21ST CENTURY ON AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA AND GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

There is ample evidence that combating hunger and extreme poverty requires a renewed and expanded improvement in agriculture and rural development in developing countries. The overall objective of the study is to examine the challenges of 21st Century on agricultural sector and rural development. Specific objectives of the study are to study issues of poverty, hunger, agricultural development, to examine the correlation between trade and reduction of poverty. To examine the future of rural areas in an urbanizing world, to know the future of agriculture in a globalizing world, to know the Environmental challenges to agricultural development and food security. Nature and source of data: The study made with the help of secondary data and information obtained through journals, reports, periodicals and internet which is the limitation of the study.

Keywords: *Food Security, Environmental Challenges, Rural Development, Reduction of Poverty, Hunger, Trade.*

Introduction

There is ample evidence to tackle hunger and extreme poverty requires a modified and Renewed improvement in agriculture and rural development in developing countries. Overall, some 70 percent of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas and lead their livelihoods from agriculture directly or indirectly and unfortunately hunger is the major problem in these countries. No sustainable reduction in poverty is possible without improving the living conditions of rural people. Economic growth originating in agriculture can have a particularly strong impact in reducing poverty and hunger. Increasing employment and incomes in agriculture increases the demand for non-agricultural goods and services, providing a boost to non-farm rural incomes as well.

Methodology

The overall objective of the study,

To examine the challenges of 21st Century on agricultural sector and rural development.

Specific objectives of the study,

- To study issues of poverty, hunger, agricultural development.
- To examine the correlation between trade and reduction of poverty.
- To examine the future of rural areas in an urbanizing world
- To know the future of agriculture in a globalizing world
- To know the Environmental challenges to agricultural development and food security

Nature and Source of Data

The study made with the help of secondary data and information obtained through journals, reports, periodicals and internet which is the limitation of the study.

Limitation of the Study

Due to time constraint author did not conducted survey and collected primary data and information. Hence for the analysis of the results secondary data and information utilized.

Implications of the Study

The challenges of 21st century towards the agricultural development and rural development is very crucial aspects to know. When we get the information about the same it is possible to overcome the existing problems in the agricultural sector and rural areas in Indian Economy. Then only it is possible to reach our developmental targets. Which will be surely helpful for Indian Economy to become developed nation by 2020.

Agricultural growth plays a critical role in enhancing food security and reducing poverty in developing countries. Hunger reduction is a prerequisite for fast development and poverty reduction. Poverty is a causal factor of hunger, but it is equally true that hungry people will always be poor. Hungry people cannot take full benefits of a pro-poor development strategy because hunger negatively affects health, nutrition conditions , labour productivity and investment choices, perpetuating



poverty. Poverty reduction is faster when carefully targeted programmes, such as food for work, provide immediate hunger relief. As another example, school mid-day meal programmes resulted in long-term inter-generational gains in poverty reduction.

Technology can make a difference but under the Right Conditions

Improved technology, especially for small-scale farmers, has helped a lot for poverty reduction through increased crop yields and higher incomes. The decline in food prices, in real terms, has benefited poor consumers, including the rural poor. However, poor farmer access to technology has been hampered by gaps in infrastructure, seed and input markets, extension systems, and very often their ability to afford these inputs. A great deal needs to be done to alleviate small farmers' constraints to technology access and profitable use. Technologies that build on and complement local knowledge tend to be particularly effective in meeting the needs of poor farmers in marginal environments.

Trade can lead to substantial reductions in hunger and poverty. Trade offers opportunities for the poor and food insecure by acting as a catalyst for change and by promoting conditions in which the food insecure are able to raise their incomes and live longer, healthier, and more productive lives. Trade can also have adverse effects, especially in the short run as productive sectors and labour markets adjust. Opening national agricultural markets to international competition – especially from subsidized competitors – before basic market institutions and infrastructure are in place can undermine the agricultural sector with long term negative consequences for poverty and food security. Some households may lose, even in the long run. To minimize the adverse effects and to take better advantage of emerging opportunities, such as those arising from agriculture diversification to bioenergy and other non-food products, governments need to understand better how trade policy fits into the national strategy to promote poverty reduction and food security. Expanding the benefits of trade for the poor requires a range of other factors, including market infrastructure, institutions and domestic policy reforms.

Public Investment Fails to Reflect the Importance of Agriculture

Public investment in infrastructure, agricultural research, education and extension is essential in stimulating private investment, agricultural production and resource conservation. But actual public expenditures for agriculture and rural development in the developing world do not reflect the importance of the sector to their national economies and the livelihood of their populations. In fact, government expenditures on agriculture come closest to matching the economic importance of the sector in those countries where hunger is least prevalent. For the group of countries where undernourishment is most widespread, the share of government spending devoted to agriculture falls far short of matching the sector's importance in the economy. The trends are also discouraging, throughout the 1990s public investments targeted towards agriculture have been declining in countries where the prevalence of undernourishment is highest. Private investment, including farmers' own investment, tends to follow the trends set by the state. Rural communities have typically not benefited from privatization of infrastructure in the way that urban dwellers have and there is little, if any, evidence of the effective use of public private partnerships to provide new rural infrastructure.

Challenges Emerging from Changing Patterns of Trade in Food

Developing countries are increasingly net importers of food and many have negative net agricultural trade balances. A trend that is likely to continue (even if OECD countries eliminate their agricultural protection and support policies). The net imports of the main commodities in which the developing countries as a group are deficient (mainly cereals and live stock products) will continue their rapid rise. At the same time, the net trade surplus in traditional agricultural exports (tropical beverages, bananas, sugar and vegetable oils and oilseeds) is expected to rise less rapidly or to decline.

Increased developing country imports of cereals and livestock products are due to increased demand combined with the low competitiveness of their domestic agriculture, though the relative weight of these factors varies across countries. Low competitiveness is often the result of inappropriate policies and of insufficient resource mobilisation for the enhanced competitiveness of poor rural communities, the sustainable use of natural resources and for adequate provision of market infrastructure and research. Due to the differences between countries with regard to competitiveness and trade positions, some developing country exporters would benefit from the liberalization of OECD agricultural policies, others would lose as their food import costs rise. However, the greatest benefits for developing countries come from liberalization of agricultural trade among themselves.

Modelling studies consistently conclude that between 70 and 85 per cent of the potential benefits for developing countries from trade liberalization is the result of their own domestic policies in agriculture. The primary endowment of the poor is their labour, so domestic policy reforms aimed at improving labour markets are central to hunger reduction. Examples include policies and public investments to help train, educate and provide information that allow labour markets flexibility, information and mobility.



Exports of processed agricultural products are expanding significantly faster than semi processed and bulk commodities, now accounting for one half of global agricultural trade.

Processed goods offer more possibilities for product differentiation and more opportunities for adding value. However, lack of capacity to engage in value added production on the part of primary producers and the presence of tariff escalation in the importing countries both contribute to the loss of potential export revenue. Capacity limitations are particularly felt in markets where access depends on increasingly strict sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards.

The share of agricultural trade among developing countries in total agricultural exports has increased sharply during the past decade, due partly to the emergence of regional trade agreements and partly to the fact that developing countries are the key growth markets for agricultural goods. Income growth, urbanization, and expanding numbers of women in the labour force are creating new opportunities for trade among developing countries especially in processed food.

The share of intra-developing country agricultural exports has increased sharply during the past decade, due partly to the emergence of regional trade agreements and partly to the fact that developing countries are the key growth markets for agricultural goods. Income growth, urbanization, and expanding numbers of women in the labour force are creating new opportunities for intra-developing country trade especially in processed food.

As agriculture is integrated into the world trading system, there is also an increasing need for food safety and related human safety regulation. Trade allows the rapid transmission of unsafe foods, animal and plant diseases across borders, so traceability and other regulations have become more important to ensure food safety. The unequal application of standards can be a barrier to successful production and trade, for example, when developing country producers strive to meet developed country standards relating to animal welfare, their products may become uncompetitive.

The Future of Rural Areas in an Urbanizing World

The existence of hunger in the developing world means that ensuring adequate and nutritious food for the population will remain the principal challenge facing policy makers in many developing countries in the years to come. However, the rapid transformation of diets and the changes in food systems at all levels (production, processing and distribution/retail) pose a number of important additional challenges to food security, nutrition and health policy in the developing countries.

Urbanization is likely to increase the “effective demand” for food safety and quality. In developing countries such as India the informal sector is often a significant producer, processor, distributor and preparer of food and food products (e.g. street foods). On one hand, there is a need for greater regulation and food safety control. On the other, public systems to ensure food quality and safety suffer from lack of organization and adequate funding. When imposing standards that are difficult and costly to achieve, policy makers need to be wary of the implications for low-income food producers, sellers and consumers.

The Future of Agriculture in a Globalizing World

The global economy is becoming increasingly integrated through information systems, investments and trade, and agriculture is part of this trend. For some countries, agricultural trade expansion – sparked by agricultural and trade policy reforms – has contributed to a period of rapid pro-poor economic growth. Indeed, some of the countries that have been most successful in reducing hunger and extreme poverty have relied on trade in agricultural products, either exports or imports or both, as an essential element of their development strategy. Many of the poorest countries however, have not had the same positive experience. Rather, they are becoming more marginalized and vulnerable, depending on imports for a rising share of their food needs without being able to expand and diversify their agricultural or non-agricultural exports. For the least developed countries, the benefits from trade reform will only come with a complementary effort in domestic policy and institutional reform and with substantial investment in physical and human infrastructure.

Environmental Challenges to Agricultural Development and Food Security

Over the past fifty years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history, largely to meet rapidly growing demands for food, fresh water, timber, fiber, and fuels. As a consequence many ecosystem services are being degraded or used unsustainably, including fresh water, capture fisheries, air and water purification, the regulation of regional and local climate, natural hazards, and pests. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment concludes that the degradation of ecosystem services could grow significantly worse during the first half of this century and is a barrier to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For example, observed recent changes in climate, especially warmer regional temperatures, have already had significant impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, especially in dry land environments such as the African Sahel.



Degradation of ecosystem services is exacerbating the problems of poverty and food insecurity in the developing world, particularly in the poorest countries. Global climate change is taking place against a natural environment.

Conclusion

Agricultural sector and rural areas in India now also facing problems. Agricultural sector is facing productivity problems and rural areas are facing lack of literacy and lack of advanced technology. To overcome these problems Modernization in agricultural sector has introduced and efforts made to bring proper attention to build infrastructure facilities made. As a result of the Central and State government efforts we have found solution for the problem of agricultural sector and achieved rural development which is the Gandhian view.

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