

Towards a Sustainable Agriculture: Special Reference to Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

National Agriculture Policy of India accords high priority to the sustainability of agriculture. Sustainability is often defined as resting on three pillars – environmental, social and economic sustainability. Agriculture is a globally occurring activity which relates directly and powerfully to the present and future condition of environment, economies and societies. While agriculture has provided for basic social and economic of people, it has also caused environmental degradation which has prompted a growing interest in its sustainability. In the present times sustainable agriculture is garnering increasing support and acceptance with mainstream agriculture. It is a viable option for meeting food security needs and addressing climate change challenges. New incentives and policies for ensuring the sustainability will be crucial if we are to meet the present demand without compromising environmental integrity. The present paper throws light on the needs of sustainability agriculture with special reference to Jammu and Kashmir and also recommend certain ways to achieve Sustainable Agriculture.

Keywords: Sustainable Agriculture; Need; Policies etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

The state of Jammu and Kashmir comprises three distinct climatic regions : cold arid deserts of Ladakh, temperate Kashmir valley and the humid sub-tropical region of Jammu.. It falls in the great northwestern complex of the Himalayan Ranges with marked relief variation, snow-capped summits, ancestor drainage, complex geological structure and well heeled temperate flora and fauna. Within its hectares of heavily forested mountains, low lands wet lands. The variety in physiographic features, agro-climatic variations, existence of cold arid, temperate, intermediate and sub-tropical zones within a small geographical area of 2.22 lakh sq. km. The large diversity in agro-climatic conditions of the state is favorable for the spread of diversified farming system. The terrain at the same time is tough and accessibility to a greater part of the region is poor and rich fertile soil well drained by rivers and streams, yields rice, saffron, vegetables and a variety of fruits. It accounts for 3.2 percent of the total geographical area and 1.04 percent of the total population of the country.

2. SECTORAL COMPOSITION

J&K's GSDP consist of three main components- Agriculture and Allied sectors, Industry and Manufacturing and Services. In the year 2011-2012, the contribution of agriculture and allied sector were 19.35%, Industry and Manufacturing were 26.41% and Services contributes 54.34%. It is observed that services sector is emerging as an important growth driver and manufacturing sector is relatively stagnant while agriculture productivity has decreased significantly. It is a point of concern that the combined contribution from primary and secondary sectors is becoming less than the alone contribution from services sector which is a very unhealthy condition for sustaining growth in the long run. This situation reflects that there occur challenging implications for the sustainability of agriculture in J&K

3. CURRENT SCENARIO OF AGRICULTURE IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Agriculture constitutes an important sector of the State economy as around 65 percent of the population of J&K derives its income directly or indirectly from this sector. Majority of its population revolves around the agriculture allied sectors for their livelihood. The food grain production of India for the year 2010-11 estimated at 24156 thousand tones while in J&K total food production during the same period was 137.15 thousand tones which reflects the very low share of 0.6 percent ranks 20th in the list of contributing states. The net sown area under agriculture 7.52 lakh hectare in the year 2004-05. Over 70 percent of the net sown area is under food crops and a little over 13 percent is under fruits.

For the sustain growth of agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir focus not only on the attaining food and nutritional security while also on the concerns of declining productivity, environmental degradation and ecological unsustainability.

Agricultural policy of the state aims at 4 percent growth with the achievement of sustainability. It reflects that it deal with the two challenges –

- Increasing Agricultural productivity and profitability to keep a pace of growth with changing demand.
- Promoting long term sustainability of agricultural production.

In order to deal with the challenges, steps can be taken in the form of adoption of HYV seeds, irrigation and intensive use of fertilizer etc. along with these in the present time the importance of sustainable agriculture cannot be denied.

In context of sustainability whether agriculture will be able to meet future food demand without adversely affecting the resource base. The sustainable agriculture is also essential to provide sufficient food and also act as an engine of poor growth despite resource constraints.

4. NEED OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The diverse climatic conditions and hilly regions suffers from inaccessibility, marginality and fragility in terms of poor soil conditions and a short growing season. The survival of agriculture as a viable activity depend upon the ability to address the downsides of shrinking crop land, water scarcity, technological fatigue, institutional support, opportunities for marketing. The soil erosion is severe problem that has an adverse effect on the soil productivity in the shiwalik foothills regions. Shiwalik is a part of Himalayas range that has been neglected for the long time is now under the threat of erosion and floods. Soil erosion has converted most of the fertile soil of the Shiwalik foothills regions into barren follow and degraded lands. About 32 percentage of the total geographical area of Jammu & Kashmir is found to be highly degraded. As far as the irrigation facilities are concerned only 42 percent of area under irrigation and around 90 percent of available ground water unutilized. In context of environmental concerns, farm practices like overgrazing also contributes in the depleting soil nutrients contents.

The economic concerns in the state realized the need of sustainable agriculture are low crop productivity which reflects in the low average size of holding, here 94 percent of the holding fall in the size of less than 2 hectare and around 81.5 percent is less than 1 hectare. Along with these, the agrarian economy of Jammu and Kashmir has been facing the problem of credit which is required for both productive and non- productive business needs of the cultivators. In the year 2011-12, credit supplied in J&K was share of public sector banks 21.82 percent, commercial banks credit 68.63 percent and rural regional and cooperative banks supplied near about less than 10 percent. Marketing facilities in the state are not satisfactory, no new techniques are used for providing better market facilities to the agricultural produce. Capital inadequacy, lack of infrastructural support and agriculture being carried out as a subsistence option of livelihood have influenced the economic viability of the agriculture sector resulting in new generation of farm youth moving away from agriculture and looking for urban areas.

5. SUGGESTIONS

In order to sustaining agriculture growth for meeting food requirement policies and strategies need not only meeting food grains and buffer stock requirement but also to ensure livelihood security at time of socio-economic constraints, efforts will be made to combine the tradition and innovation method.

- Differ agro-climatic condition in agricultural, efforts will be made to promote diversification in crops and other agricultural activities.
- Promote sustainable use of natural resources and adoption of practices that conserve soil, water and biodiversity.
- Skill development programme and human resource program me will be given to farmer.

- Encourage farmers to adopt organic farming in the hilly areas which help in reducing health hazards.
- Strategic knowledge on climatic change given to the masses.
- Stimulating investment initiatives for promoting agriculture research and development in the state.
- Promoting water use efficiency in Irrigation.
- Developing mechanism to enhance the flow of agricultural credit.
- Convergence and coordination among the key ministries and department at all levels.

6. CONCLUSION

The present paper discussed the scenario of agricultural economy of the Jammu and Kashmir state, tried to address the need of sustainable agriculture and tied to broader issues of economic and social concerns which stressed to produce abundant food without depleting the natural resources or polluting its environment.

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