

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES DURING FIVE YEAR PLANS

The agriculture in India during five-year plans has registered a phenomenal growth. At the time of Independence, partition of Indian sub-continent on communal lines, resulted among others in acute shortage of food and raw material for her industries.

Therefore, during first five-year plan (1951-56) the highest priority was accorded to increase of agricultural production. Nearly one third or 31 per cent of total plan funds were allocated to agriculture sector. River valley projects were taken up. Irrigational facilities and fertilizer plants were established. Consequently, production of food-grains increased by 36 per cent in a short span of five years.

The second five-year plan (1956-61) was focused on industrial growth and only 20 per cent of plan allocation was devoted to agriculture. Still food-grains production exceeded the target due to extension of irrigation facilities and use of chemical fertilizers.

During the third Five Years Plan (1961-66), the priorities were on self-sufficiency in food grains, meeting the raw material needs of industries and increase in ex-ports. During this period, Green Revolution programme was started on a small scale. But this plan failed to meet the target due to Chinese aggression (1962), Indo-Pak war (1965) and severe and prolonged drought during 1965-66. There was a great crisis of food that forced the Prime Minister L. B. Shastri to appeal to people to observe fast once a week. During next three annual plans (1966-69) agriculture recorded 6-9 per cent annual growth under the impact of Green Revolution. The production of food grain touched 94 million tonnes.

The Fourth Plan (1969-74) aimed at 5 per cent annual growth in food grains. High Yielding Variety (HYV) of seeds, fertilizer use, new agriculture techniques and irrigation facilities provided to expand area of Green Revolution. The production of wheat increased sharply but growth in rice, oilseeds and coarse grains were nominal resulting in only 3 per cent annual growth against the target of 5 per cent.

During Fifth Plan Period (1974-79) emphasis was given to self-sufficiency in food production and poverty eradication. Stress was laid on the extension of irrigation, expansion in cultivated area under HYV seeds and grant of loans and subsidies to farmers. Dry farming was propagated. This plan achieved its target successfully with 4.6 per cent growth. Almost all food grains except pulses witnessed increase in production.

The Sixth Plan (1980-85) emphasized on land reforms, use of HYV seeds, chemical fertilisers and groundwater resources and improving post harvest technology as well as marketing and storage facilities. The annual growth rate was 6 per cent, highest ever during plan periods. The food-grain production reached 152 million tonnes.

The highest growth in food-grain, pulses and coarse cereals was recorded during Seventh Plan (1985-90) showing over all annual growth rate of 4 per cent. The areas of Green Revolution were expanded during the period.

The Eighth Plan (1992-97) witnessed a tendency of stagnation in foodgrain production while oilseed registered a rapid growth.

The Ninth Plan (1997-02) witnessed a mixed success. There were fluctuations in the foodgrain production. During this plan period National Agricultural Policy, 2000, was framed and several measures were announced including, watershed management, development of horticulture, agricultural credits and insurance scheme for crops.

In the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) focus is placed on (i) sustainable management of water and land resources, (ii) development of rural infrastructure to support agriculture, (iii) dissemination of agriculture technology, (iv) credit flow to agriculture sector, and (v) agricultural marketing reforms. The New Agricultural Policy The Government of India has announced (28 th July 2000) a new National Agricultural policy, 2000, in the light of changes arising out of economic liberalization and globalization. The main aims of the policy are (i) achieving more than 4 per cent per annum growth rate in agriculture sector, (ii) growth based on efficient use of resources and conservation of soil, water and biodiversity, (iii) growth with equity-in region and among the farmers, (iv) growth that caters to domestic market and maximizes benefits from exports of agricultural products and (v) technologically, environmentally and economically sustainable growth.

The main features of this policy are:-

- (1) privatisation of agriculture and price protection of produce,
- (2) land leasing and contract farming by private companies,

- (3) raising the ceiling of land holdings,
- (4) involving national livestock breeding strategy to meet requirement of milk, meat, egg and livestock products.
- (5) protection of plant varieties and improvement of horticultural crops, live-stock species and agriculture.
- (6) liberalization of domestic market by dismantling of restriction on movement of commodities in the country.
- (7) improving the domestic and international marketing system.
- (8) facilitating the flow of credit to farmers against pledging of their products and providing them most other facilities available to manufacturing sector.
- (9) keeping agriculture outside the regulatory and tax collection system.
- (10) encouraging consolidation of land holdings and speeding up tenancy re-forms to recognize the right of the tenants and sharecroppers It may be noted that the policy are intentions of Government, thus, its success depends on the commitment of the Government to convert it into reality.

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