

Vol III Issue XI Aug 2014

ISSN No : 2249-894X

*Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal*

*Review Of
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

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POLICES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE GOVERNMENT TO EMPOWER FARMERS IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

Agriculture provides food security, price stability and livelihood for the majority of Indians. The economic development lies in the development of agriculture in India. Even today, In India, the age old dictum that 'farmers live and die in debt' is true. Hence the government since independence has strived to empower farmer to rejuvenate the agriculture sector. Whether the resource poor farmers are becoming poorer, or otherwise due to various policies and programmes has to be probed and hence the present paper aims to look into various polices and programmes of the government to empower the farmers in India.

The generation and application of agricultural knowledge is increasingly important, especially for small and marginal farmers, who need relevant information to improve, sustain and diversify their farm enterprises.

Government at centre and state provided good polices and programmes to empower the Indian farmers. They also spent crores of rupees for providing farm infrastructure. The policies and programmes were framed well but unfortunately there was failure in the implementation of these policies and programmes. The farmer though constituted majority failed to organize themselves and demand the rights which was rightfully theirs. The Schemes though in plenty reached only large and lucky few farmers. The rest, who were in majority belonged to marginal and small farmers were neglected. The basic infrastructure of agriculture and the land reforms had to be improved and implanted and only then the Agriculture will become productive and the farmer empowerment is possible in real terms.

KEY WORDS:

sustainable Agriculture, farmer, Green Revolution, New Agricultural Policy, Agriculture Extension, Farmers right, Agricultural Programmes and policies,

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture provides food security, price stability and livelihood for the majority of Indians. The economic development lies in the development of agriculture in India. Even today, In India, the age old dictum that 'farmers live and die in debt' is true. Hence the government since independence has strived to empower farmer to rejuvenate the agriculture sector. Whether the resource poor farmers are becoming poorer, or otherwise due to various policies and programmes has to be probed and hence the present paper aims to look into various polices and programmes of the government to empower the farmers in India.

Title: "POLICES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE GOVERNMENT TO EMPOWER FARMERS IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS", Source: Review of Research [2249-894X] N. Manjunatha¹ and S. R. Keshava² yr:2014 | vol:3 | iss:11

POLICES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE GOVERNMENT TO EMPOWER FARMERS IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS

Nehru's tryst with destiny speech on the eve of India's independence gave the clear goals for India. One among them was to eradicate poverty in rural India and improve the standard of living of Indian farmers. His first five-year plan gave agriculture the prime priority. Under the Nehru vision, the Indian National Congress passed a historic resolution on the future of Indian agricultural development: '.....All permanent residents of the village, whether owning land or not, should be eligible for membership of the village cooperative which should promote the welfare of its members by introducing progressive farming methods and improved techniques of cultivation, developing animal husbandry and fishery and encouraging cottage industries. In addition to providing credit and other servicing functions, it will arrange for pooling and marketing the agricultural produce of the farmers and for storage and godown facilities for them. Both the panchayat and the cooperative should be the spearheads of all developmental activities in the village and, more especially, should encourage intensive farming with a view to rising the per acre yield of agricultural produce....'

The much-hyped land reforms were introduced, but the lobbying and protest from the wealthy agriculturalists and industrialists within his Congress party like MR Masani successfully derailed the Nehru's land reforms. Finally, with Nehru's death in 1964, re-distributive Indian land reform was abandoned. But the silver lining did appear with the green revolution.

GREEN REVOLUTION

Initiated in 1966-67, Green Revolution technology is also called as seed – water fertilizer technology. It mainly involved the use of HYV (High yielding Varieties) seeds, especially of wheat and rice. This helped in improving the productivity significantly. Presently about 90% of area under wheat and about 70% of area under rice is covered by HYV seeds. The total area under HYV seeds is about 70 million ha.

Impact of Green Revolution are 1) the annual output of food grains increased from 81 million tonnes in IV plan to 118 million tonnes in V plan and further to 155 million tonnes in VII plan. The output of wheat and rice increased substantially. 2) It was confined (at least initially) to few areas and few crops (Rice and wheat).

RECENT INITIATIVES

Several significant initiatives have already been taken by the government to increase the agricultural production and to find sustainable solutions for strengthening the farmers' livelihood and income. Some of these important initiatives include: (i) Bharat Nirman; (ii) National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme; (iii) National Horticulture Mission; (iv) Expansion of Institutional Credit to Farmers; (v) Establishment of the National Bee Board; (vi) Establishment of the National Rainfed Area Authority; (vii) Establishment of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB); (viii) Watershed Development and Micro Irrigation Programmes; (ix) Reforms in Agricultural Marketing and Development of Market Infrastructure; (x) Revitalization of Cooperative Sector; (xi) Agri-business Development through Venture Capital Participation by the Small Farmer Agri-business Consortium; (xii) Reform and Support for Agriculture Extension Services; (xiii) National Rural Health Mission; (xiv) National Food Security Mission; (xv) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to incentivise the states to invest more in agriculture; (xvi) Integrated Food Law; (xvii) Legislative Framework for Warehousing Development and Regulation; (xviii) Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Act, 2001; (xix) National Bamboo Mission and (xx) Knowledge Connectivity through Common Service Centers (CSC) and IT initiatives.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The Government of India approved the National Agriculture Policy during 2000, aimed to achieve annual growth of more than 4 per cent in the agriculture sector on a sustainable basis, through the efficient use of natural resources and combination of other measures. But unfortunately, the annual growth rate achieved during the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002–03 to 2006–07) averaged around 2.3 per cent. The national policy on agriculture seeks to support faster agricultural development, promote value addition, accelerate the growth of agro businesses, create employment in rural areas, secure standard of living for their farmers and agricultural laborers and cultivators.

The salient features of the New Agricultural policy are

- 1) over 4 percent annual growth rate aimed over next two decades
- 2) to allow the private sector participation through contract farming

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- 3) price protection for farmers
- 4) national agricultural insurance scheme to be launched
- 5) rational; utilization of country's water resources for optimum use of irrigation potential
- 6) high priority development of animal husbandry, poultry, dairy and aquaculture
- 7) capital inflow and assured markets for crop production
- 8) exemption from payment of capital gains tax on compulsory acquisition of agricultural land
- 9) minimizes the fluctuations in commodity prices
- 10) Plant varieties to be protected through legislation
- 11) Adequate and timely supply of quality inputs to farmers
- 12) High priority to rural electrification
- 13) Setting up of agri-processing units and creation of off-farm employment in rural areas.

NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS

The national commission of farmers, ministry of agriculture, Government of India has prepared the national policy for farmers in 2006. The important goals of the National Policy for Farmers are:

(i) to improve economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of farmers and to ensure that agricultural progress is measured by advances made in this income. (ii) to protect and improve land, water, bio-diversity and genetic resources essential for sustained increase in the productivity, profitability and stability of major farming systems by creating an economic stake in conservation. (iii) to develop support services including provision for seeds, irrigation, power, machinery and implements, fertilizers and credit at affordable prices in adequate quantity for farmers. (iv) to strengthen the bio-security of crops, farm animals, fish and forest trees for safeguarding the livelihood and income security of farmer families and the health and trade security of the nation (v) to provide appropriate price and trade policy mechanisms to enhance farmers' income. (vi) to provide for suitable risk management measures for adequate and timely compensation to farmers (vii) to complete the unfinished agenda in land reforms and to initiate comprehensive asset and Aquarian reforms. (viii) to mainstream the human and gender dimension in all farm policies and programmes. (ix) to pay explicit attention to sustainable rural livelihoods. (x) to foster community-centered food, water and energy security systems ensure nutrition security at the level of every child, woman and man. (xi) to introduce measures which can help attract and retain youths in farming and processing of farm products for higher value addition by making it intellectually stimulating and economically rewarding. (xii) to make India a global outsourcing hub in the production and supply of the inputs needed for sustainable agriculture, products and processes developed through biotechnology and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). (xiii) to restructure the agricultural curriculum and pedagogic methodologies for enabling every farm and home science graduate to become an entrepreneur and to make agricultural education gender sensitive. (xiv) to develop and introduce a social security system for farmers. (xv) to provide appropriate opportunities in adequate measure for non-farm employment for the farm households.

FARMERS RIGHT

India is among the first countries in the world to have passed legislation granting Farmers' Rights in the form of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 (PPVFR). India's law is unique in that it simultaneously aims to protect both breeders and farmers. The Indian case assumes immense importance due to the country's lead in establishing a legal framework on Farmers' Rights, its international contribution

to negotiations on Farmers' Rights, and the complexities of agriculture in India within which the country is attempting to implement these rights. India's case is also significant as the Indian gene centre is recognized for its native wealth of plant genetic resources.

NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY MISSION

The NFSM, launched in 2007 by Government of India, it is a crop development scheme, aims at additional production of tons 2011-

12. The scheme was approved with an outlay of ` 4,883 crore for the period from 2007- 08 to 2011-12. The Mission interventions consist of a judicious mix of proven technological components covering seeds of improved variety, soil ameliorants, plant nutrients, farm machines/implements, and plant protection measures. In addition, a special initiative under the name of the accelerated Pulses Production Programme

was initiated in 2010 to boost the production of pulses by active promotion of technologies in 1,000 clusters of 1,000 ha each.

MACRO MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURE (MMA)

The Macro Management Agriculture scheme was revised in 2008 to improve its efficacy in supplementing/complementing towards enhancement of revised MMA scheme in the form of grants: loan to the states/UTs on 90:10 ratio basis, except in case of the north-eastern states where the central share is 100 per cent grant. It also provides opportunity to draw upon agricultural development programmes out of ten sub-schemes relating to crop production and natural resource management, and give it the flexibility to use 20 per cent of resources for innovative components.

RASHTRIYA KRISHI VIKAS YOJANA (RKVY)

The -08 with an outlay of 25,000 crore in the Eleventh Plan. The main aim of the scheme was in agriculture and address felt needs of the farmers and to achieve 4 per cent growth rate in agriculture period. sub-schemes include

Region; Integrated Development of 60,000 Pulses Villages in Rain fed Areas; Promotion of Oil Palm; Initiative on Vegetable Clusters; Nutri-cereals; National Mission for Protein Supplements; Accelerated Fodder Development Programme; Rain fed Area Development Programme; and Saffron Mission. The RKVY links agriculture and allied sectors.

INTEGRATED SCHEME OF OILSEEDS, PULSES, OIL PALM, AND MAIZE (ISOPOM)

Oilseeds are raised mostly under rain fed conditions and are important for the livelihood of small and marginal farmers in the arid and semi-arid areas of the country. The centrally sponsored ISOPOM have been under implementation during the Eleventh Plan in 14 states for oilseeds and pulses, 15 for maize, and 9 for oil palm. The pulses component has been merged with the NFSM with effect from 1 April 2010.

NATIONAL MISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE (NMSA)

The NMSA aims at enhancing food security and protection of resources such as land, water, biodiversity, and genetic resources by developing strategies to make Indian agriculture more resilient to climate change. The has approved the Mission in September 2010 and the Ministry of Agriculture has initiated activities under this Mission.

Extension Reforms Scheme

The Support to -06, as well as accountable to farmers by providing for level to operationalize the extension reforms. The ATMA has active participation of farmers/farmer groups, non government organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders operating at district level and below. Gender concerns are being mainstreamed by mandating that 30 per cent of resources on programmes and activities are utilized by women farmers and women extension functionaries.

National Horticulture Mission (NHM)

The NHM scheme was launched during the period of Tenth Plan for At present, 372 districts in 18 States and 3 UTs National Horticulture Mission in India. The horticulture sector includes a wide range of crops, such as fruits, vegetables, roots and tuber crops, flowers, aromatic and medicinal plants, spices, and plantation crops, which facilitate diversification in agriculture. The growing horticulture crops production is now an ideal

option to improve livelihood security, enhance employment generation, attain food and nutritional security, and increase income through value addition..

National Bamboo Mission (NBM)

The National Bamboo Mission is a centrally sponsored scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture with total outlay of 568.23 crore in 27 states. This Mission envisages promoting holistic growth of the bamboo sector by adopting an area-based, regionally differentiated strategy to increase the area under bamboo cultivation and marketing.

During 2011- 12, 9,349 ha of forest and 5,526 ha of non-forest area have so far been covered under bamboo plantation and 1,074 ha of existing bamboo plantation have been improved for higher productivity. Agro-forestry trials comprising bamboo grown along with agricultural/ horticultural crops and medicinal plants under different agro-climatic conditions in various states have been initiated.

Agricultural Insurance

There are various major crop insurance schemes in the country namely (1) (2) Modified NAIS (MNAIS) (3) (WBCIS)

National Agricultural Insurance Scheme

The NAIS is a government-sponsored central-sector crop insurance scheme being implemented in the country since 1999-2000 season with the objective of providing financial support to farmers in the event of failure of crops as a result of natural calamities, pests, and diseases. is Scheme.

25 states and two UTs. During the last 23 crop seasons, i.e. from rabbi 1999- 2000 to rabbi 2010-11, 1,762 lakh farmers over an area of about 2,685 lakh ha have been covered, insuring a sum amounting to about 2,21,307 crore.

Modified NAIS (MNAIS)

Modified NAIS (MNAIS) is started with the aim of further improving crop insurance schemes. The scheme has been notified by 17 states in a total of 50 districts for rabbi 2011-12 season.

Pilot Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS)

The WBCIS is also being implemented as a central-sector scheme from kharif 2007 season. The scheme is intended to provide insurance protection to f such as deficit and excess rainfall, high or low temperature, and humidity that are deemed to adversely impact crop production.

National Mission on Extension and Technology Management

The extension system of State agricultural departments is the weakest link in the chain between research and the farmer. Large number of vacancies of extension workers in the State Agriculture Department was one of the gravest concerns expressed by the Eleventh Plan document. During The Eleventh Plan, efforts were initiated to improve extension services by extending Central support to State extension reforms. This has resulted in 604 Agriculture Technology Management Agencies (ATMAs) to be established across the country with 21000 new posts sanctioned with Central assistance at State, district and block levels. Also, since a continuous problem plaguing extension has been lack of organic link between the research system and the extension machinery, R&D linkage guidelines were jointly brought out by the DAC and ICAR and sent to all States and SAUs. The basic thrust of these guidelines were to get ATMAs and KVKs to work together at the district level and below, keeping in view the priorities reflected in Comprehensive District Plans. Although neither has delivered full results, there is now much greater acceptance that things must be done together.

Agriculture extension initiatives in India

The generation and application of agricultural knowledge is increasingly important, especially for small and marginal farmers, who need relevant information to improve, sustain and diversify their farm enterprises.

Agriculture extension, primarily driven by the civil society organizations, farmer producer organizations and agri-business companies helped disseminate better practices. These organizations composed of local community members, acting as agents of agricultural extension (Rural Development Report 2013)

In India, there are different methods of extension system information and technology India, but in rural India it will always difficult to reach because of remoteness of the places and level of consciousness. In order to solve these problems in India, many ICT measures are adopted for agriculture extension such as Kisan Kerala, AGRISNET, e-krisi, ASHA, Rice Knowledge Management Portal, Mahindra Kisan Mitra, IFFCO Agri Portal, Agrowatch Portal, Village Knowledge Centres, Farmers Call centers (Kisan Call Centers), Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Digital green, e-sagu, e-Arik, Knowledge share centers etc.

Kisan SMS Portal

Kisan SMS portal is integrated farmers portal for farmers were created by the department of Agriculture and cooperation, Government of India in 2013. The main aim of the SMS portal is to giving relevant information, giving topical and seasonal advisories and providing services through SMSs in language of state.

The main features of the Kisan SMS portal are

- 1)The farmers can register to this portal by calling kisan call centers. They can register their quires about weather report, soil type, prospects and problems of market etc.
- 2)the relevant information will be provided to farmers in their regional languages
- 3)This portal will also integrate existing farmer database of the farmers.

Agriculture Technology Mission

The Agriculture Technology Mission as the umbrella organization for the planning, direction and implementation of the all policies relevant to agriculture and allied sectors and welfare of the farmers and agricultural laborers. It should be a permanent body of coordinating the activities of various departments.

The main objective of the ATM was to create and revive public institutions in the rural areas and implement policies which will immediately reduce agrarian distress, and over time provide protection to farmers, encourage the most productive and sustainable forms of land and water use, provide stable livelihood and employment to the rural population and improve the incomes of the rural population.

It is holistic approach to the problems of agriculture in the state, addressing the problems with in region and to encourage cooperation between activities of various states and central government dependent agencies and local level intuitions. It was focused on empowering the farming community with active involvement of Panchayats and grama sabhas.

AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (ATMA)

programme of setting up farm schools, training, demonstration and exposure visits in most districts. ATMA works at block level and in 2010 introduced a 'farmer friend' system foe every two villages. ATM provides at rain fed areas funds for extension services. Small and marginal farmers must also have 50 percent representation at farm schools (Rural Development Report 2013)

Institutionalized Credit facilities to Farmers

Ever since independence, there was a demand for the nationalization of the commercial bank in India. In Nationalization phase I, the Imperial bank of India was rechristened as State Bank of India and it was nationalized in the year 1955. recommended the merger of the State Associated Banks with as its subsidiaries so that Group could become strong enough to carry out the social banking task successfully. In second phase the

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Government of India nationalized 14 major Indian banks in the private sector having deposits of Rs. 50 crores and over each as on June 1969 with effect from 19th July 1969. Again on 15th April 1980, six more banks, whose demand and time liabilities exceeded Rs. 200 crores as on 14th March 1980, were nationalized.

Lead Bank Scheme

LBS Was developed in 1969 to fulfill the credit needs on the basis of the local credit needs. The Local Bank did not envisage a monopoly of banking business in the allotted districts, but to act as a group leader for coordinating the efforts of all credit institutions in the district for the rural economy.

NATIONAL BANK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (NABARD)

NABARD was established by the act in 1982. NABARD became central to the rural credit system. It provides credit for the promotion It provides the refinance to Cooperatives, Commercial banks and RRBs. It also give Training, do research and consultancy relating to

But the issue of the overall national rural credit policy and issuing directives on Rural Credit remained . NABARD accordingly operates within this policy framework.

Regional Rural Banks

The Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) were set up in the year 1976. Specifically to meet the credit requirements of small and marginal farmers, landless laborers, rural artisans and others weaker sections in rural areas today there are 64 RRB's in India. The share of agriculture credit to total credit has come down to 57 % in 2012-13.

Multi Agency Approach

India has adopted the multi-agency approach viz., cooperatives, Commercial Banks and RRBs in the field of Agricultural Credit. To examine the various issues involved in the Problems of overlapping in multi agency approach a Working Group was formed under the Chairmanship of C.E. Kamath in 1976 By RBI. The committee recommended the use of the agricultural pass-book to overcome the problems associated with multiple financing. It also insisted on the periodical verification of land records and the production of non-encumbrance certificate by institutional leading agencies for granting loans.

Local Area Banks

In August 1996, RBI permitted for the establishment of Local Area Banks in the private sector. Initially nine such banks were established in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. LABS were directed by RBI to give 50% of loans to priority sector lending of net bank credit. The interest rates on advances of LABs are deregulated similar to RRBs. However the LAB was not of great success as only four banks out of nine were functional. They are Coastal Local Area Bank Ltd – Vijayawada, Capital Local Area Bank Ltd – Phagwara, Krishna Bhima Samrudhi Local Area Bank – Mehboobnagar, Subhadra Local Area Bank Ltd – Kolhapur.

KISAN CREDIT CARDS (KCC)

In 1998-99, the KCC scheme was introduced to smoothen the flow of credit to the farmers. It was to overcome the problems arising out of procedural delays in sanction and release of loans. The farmers eligible for production credit of Rs 5,000 and above were eligible to apply for a Kissan credit card and a card-cum-pass book is issued. Revolving cash credit facility involving any number of withdrawals and repayments within the credit limit is allowed. Credit limit is fixed after taking into account the entire production credit needs for the full year plus ancillary activities related to crop production. Limit is fixed on the basis of operational land holding cropping pattern and scale of finance. It is proposed that allied activities and non-farm credit needs also should be considered. The RBI norms are applicable for security

margin and rate of interest.

CONCLUSION

Government at centre and state provided good policies and programmes to empower the Indian farmers. They also spent crores of rupees for providing farm infrastructure. The policies and programmes were framed well but unfortunately there was failure in the implementation of these policies and programmes. The farmer though constituted majority failed to organize themselves and demand the rights which was rightfully theirs. The Schemes though in plenty reached only large and lucky few farmers. The rest, who were in majority belonged to marginal and small farmers were neglected. The basic infrastructure of agriculture and the land reforms had to be improved and implanted and only then the Agriculture will become productive and the farmer empowerment is possible in real terms.

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