

Background :-

- India is the 2nd largest country with arable land (3 percent of land is agriculture land) after USA.
- India has variety of climates and ecological factor to support the growth of various crops.

Importance of Agriculture for India's economy :-

- From the beginning, agriculture is contributing a major part in India's total income. It has major share in India's GDP. Agriculture accounts 17.32% of India's total GDP at present.
- Agriculture, now provides livelihood to 65 to 70 percent of the total population(directly and indirectly).
- We depend on agricultural outputs for our food requirements. India produces large quantity of food grains such as cereals, pulses, etc.
- Agriculture in India, provide raw materials to various important industries of India. Cotton and Jute textiles, sugar, agro-based cotton industries collect their raw material from agriculture. This highlights agriculture is the key to India's prosperity.
- Indian Agriculture plays an important role both in internal and well as in external trade of the country. Approx. 50 percent of total exports come from agriculture products such as Coffee, tea, spices, cashew-nuts etc.
- Agriculture is good source of revenue too. Government gets substantial income by rising land revenue.
- It plays a major role in economic planning as a good crop brings a good amount of finance (steady) to the government for meeting its planned expenditure. Similarly, a bad crop can lead to failure of economic planning. Thus agriculture sector is the key to India's prosperity.

The present situation of Agriculture in India :-

- Small and fragment land-holdings by the farmers in the rural areas. With the output, they can fulfill their needs only, but if the crop gets spoiled then it becomes difficult too.
- Only one-third of the cropped area is under irrigation even after sever schemes.
- In some of the areas there is absence of sound marketing facilities, the farmers have to depend upon local traders and middlemen for the disposal of their farm produce which they buy at cheap rates.
- Storage facilities in the rural areas are either totally absent or grossly inadequate

because of which they have to sell their crop after harvest.

- Unorganised crop farming and unstructured agriculture sector is still there.
- Not every farmer or rural areas are aware of the schemes of government because of which they didn't get their shares.

Steps taken by government to improve the situation :-

- Various schemes launched by the present government till now to improve Agriculture sector. These are:
 1. Pradhan mantri krishi sinchai yojana, to improve irrigation in India and enable the agriculture to become resistant to the vagaries of Indian monsoon.
 2. Pradhan mantri fasal bema yojana, with the aim to stop Farmer's Suicide and give them compensation after the failure of crops.
 3. Soil Health Card scheme, under this farmers can know the exact value of nutrients of their soil. This will make-sure proper use of fertilizers and eventually save money.
 4. NAM (National Agriculture Market) scheme to promote agriculture marketing sector through electronic trade portal.
- Provided relief to farmer's in Input Subsidy. Farmers will get input subsidy if 33 percent of their gets damaged, which was 50 percent before.
- With an aim to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture, the Government of India is introducing a new AGRI-UDAAN program to mentor start-ups.
- The Maharashtra State Agriculture Marketing Board (MSAMB) has operational 31 farmer-to-consumer markets in the state. Several states implemented this method.
- Availability of hybrid seeds on subsidised rates to boost production.
- Fixed prices of crops in markets, which enable farmers to get paid well and now can directly sell their crops in markets.
- Agriculture subsidies given to farmers by government to reduce their financial loads.
- Kissan Credit Card (KCC) and Personal Accident Insurance Scheme (PAIS) are some other schemes introduced by the Government of India for the benefit of farmers economically and to prevent farmer suicides.

What still needs to be done :-

- Government should appoint skilled farmers in panchayat level worker to train other farmers.
- Government must cut the use of chemical fertilisers as they are not good for the long term aspect and use organic fertilisers.
- Set up demonstration farms, so that the farmers can learn and adopt new, suitable and latest farming techniques.

- Spread awareness about irrigation techniques as many still depends on seasonal monsoon. And farmers are not ready to use modern methods.
- Government needs to continuously check changing climate and come up with better policies to help farmers.

Conclusion :-

Agriculture can help reduce poverty, raise national incomes and improve food security for 60% of India's poor population, who live in rural areas and work mainly in farming. The agriculture sector in India is expected to generate better momentum in the next few years due to increased investments in agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation facilities, warehousing and cold storage. And apart from so many barriers agriculture is the key to boost Indian Economy and this is the main source of livelihood of our nation.

On a more positive note, it's a major source of export earnings for countries across the development spectrum. If government managed to properly carry-out all the launched schemes, we can see the major rise in the agriculture sector in the near future.

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