



Farming Crisis in India: A Wake Up Call for Rational Farm Policy

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No aspect of culture had a greater impact on human history than did Agriculture. As agriculture developed, social, economic and cultural practices also led the civilization. For example, human progress in the adjacent agriculture and then the major urban societies with the first crop hunting strategies. In other words, the society moved from agriculture economy to transition economy and then into a developed economy. Unfortunately, in a modern global context, it is believed that the economy is more developed when the proportion of people working in agriculture falls to around 10 percent. However, a debatable issue about the Human Development Index (HDI) against the GDP is still prevalent. US Economic crisis of 2008, clearly shows that GDP is not a solution to welfare. It can be certified through a certain level of per capita income, with time spent with the family, socializing with friends in family and time spent with nature, etc. According to the National Statistics Office, United Kingdom, farmers are among the most satisfied workers of the country. A new list of happiness found that those who work in fields (agriculture, fishing and forestry) were happy with their fate. This is because a positive relationship between HDI and happiness and HDI and positive satisfaction with life were established, but not per capita GDP.

In our country today, we are witnessing a major confrontation because continuous governments are negligent about farmer's interests. Perhaps we have failed to create a society which lies in the knowledge and integral development of the farmers. The reason for the political failure is that the farm policy is based on imported Western models. As a result, its confusing implementation expanded the economic inequalities, the intensity of rural urban divide and increasing suffering for farmers across the country. According to Vandana Shiva, a leading critic of modern agriculture, Indian civilization is based on gratitude towards all the people who contribute to our farmers and our creatures. Unfortunately, the major policies of agriculture are governed by the global corporations

and the result is a rapid development of social and ecological imbalance, which threatens our farmers. Many farmers are stressed, frustrated. They commit suicide due to debt for the purchase of expensive non-renewable seeds and unnecessary toxic input. Is it a reward that they deserve to feed humans? For the past 10000 years "Annadata Sukhibhava", the farmer remained backbone to a prosperous India to produce nourishment for the soil and society.

As a scientist, every time I met the farmers, the smiling faces will always be happy to practice agriculture, but our children are not interested in continuing this profession. They want to start a simple enterprise by selling a piece of land. Why is this kind of attitude growing up? Is agriculture not profitable? The answer probably is that today's farming is met with uncertainties and exploitation to the mercy of middle man traders.

Of course, an important aspect of agricultural policy is to ensure the sustainability and protection of the environment being promoted by the government in the form of biological farming in a variety of names: organic, zero budget, permaculture, biodynamic, vedic krishi, natural farming etc. However, they still need a lot to update their skills in an organized manner. It is also not denied that both the Central and State Governments often provide loans and provide access to finance and MSP, but it is not necessary for more productivity and progress in agriculture. In fact, agriculture and related areas have been developed from many factors, including adequate irrigation, access to markets, rational plans for value support, cold chain (especially for fruits and vegetables) and continuous innovation "More crop per drop". Now, to ensure their welfare a completely new and far-sighted agro-specific policy should be implemented to ensure that there is absolutely no reason for a single farmer to commit suicide. Such region and farm specific policy based on climate and available resources and nearby market. It would enable the farmers to practice bio-organic

farming and participate in different markets without debt or suicides. Simultaneously, it is sorry state of affair that agriculture and allied departments are not properly equipped in term of drudgery reduction machinery, crop planning and budgeting policy and even market assistance. The extension agencies are mere seed availability center. However, they need to be completely transformed into a village based resource centres that pools all available resources, machinery and other inputs besides technical and financial support system. This will reduce the costs of production to zero through natural, ecological, organic farming and saving, selecting, breeding, and exchanging indigenous open source seeds. Another important framework of this policy would be creating market network: The biggest issue cropping up these days is that farmers are vulnerable and exposed to volatile money markets. They are forced to throw and destroy their produce due to less price being offered to them. The time has now arrived for agriculture planning and budgeting wherein they are encouraged to diversify their production as per market requirement so that a glut is never created and they can get regular income from diverse sources. We can learn from the Moshav model of Israel agriculture in this direction. Secondly they need to be encouraged for appropriate production timing through technology interventions when they can sell their produce at suitable rates. Thirdly, the most needed step is allowing them to create their own markets in nearby town/cities without any hindrances from government. Let the farmer sell the produce on their own. I have personally visited these kind of successful models commonly termed as SHUK in Israel where the produce is branded from particular farm and not corporate. This can end up exploitation they meet from vegetable and fruit mandi traders. Moreover they can increase net incomes by saving on unnecessary expenses for toxics, including toxic seeds and growing diverse, healthy, nutritious, chemical free crops for diverse markets as well. Government can also facilitate their online shopping portals within municipal limits. The policy should focus on their holistic development from producers to seller level.

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