



# Measures taken to improve the condition of farmers by Dr. Rajendra Prasad

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## Abstract

Agriculture is the main contributing factor in the Indian economy where majority of our country's population is employed. Compared to the secondary and tertiary sectors, the primary sector is lagging behind. Farmers still do not have access to financial credits and knowledge to take their farming to a next level with the growing technology. Developments had been happening all around the country but the agricultural sector is lagging behind.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad's contribution to help this sector and the farmers has been phenomenal in the Indian history. He brought a revolution in the agriculture by improving the condition of farmers at that time. Though a lot is yet to be done, his efforts surely took the condition of farmers and agriculture to a path of progression. This paper will talk about the contributions of Dr. Rajendra Prasad for improving the condition of farmers.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Farmers, Revolution, Progression, Primary

## Introduction

Dr. Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963) was born in Ziradei which falls in the Siwan district of Bihar. He was an independent activist, scholar, lawyer and then became the first President of India after its independence. He was a major leader from Bihar and was a part of Indian National Congress party. Mr. Prasad was a part of the major movements started against the British Rule like Satyagraha and Quit India movement during the struggles for independence. He held the ministry of Agriculture in 1946 elections and since then his contributions for the agricultural sector had been notable.

Agriculture was highly dependent on weather during those times and the productivity was uncertain. Farmers were using the old techniques for farming and their method was not scalable for large productions. Mr. Prasad was a visionary leader and he had envisioned the future of India with the population doubling in decades and he knew that then this old method of farming might not fill the stomach of all the people in the country. He had decided to work in this area and make the farming inclusive with the strategy designed to keep the future of the

country in mind. Moreover, the people were earning mainly from primary sector at that time which still holds true but that time the impact of secondary and tertiary sectors were even lesser. To utilise the capacity of Indian lands and farmers to the optimum level, he started working on the upliftment of the conditions of Indian farmers.

### **Background of Indian Agriculture**

With the development of society, everything has changed utilising the modern way of doing things. Indian agricultural history dates back to the Indus valley civilisation where age old method of farming was used and the communities used to be isolated and self sufficient. Trading was not that prevalent and communities did farming mainly to feed the people of their family. This type of farming was suitable for communities living independently and in isolation. But as we moved towards the advanced era where the exposure to different communities, states, regions and countries increased, people started interacting and trade started. Then people instead of doing all the work to support their family started specialising in one job and then took the help of others for rest of the requirements. This practice created a need for the major change in the farming method.

The requirement of large scale production came up with time and the small scale house productions were no more sufficient to the increasing demands of the society. People started experimenting with the farming techniques and got success to a certain extent but the gap still remained. The lack of knowledge during those times was a huge road block and farmers did not have any easy access to the information needed for agriculture. Governments made policies time to time to take care of the farming conditions but none of them were effective considering the poor implementation of those policies. India is a very large country and implementation of any policy would require strict discipline and sincere efforts.

### **Condition of Farmers – A Comprehensive Study**

Farmers in our country are the real heroes who do all the hard work to produce food for the country's large population. Their contribution and job has always been undermined and understated. A lot has been done for the development of society including the upliftment of the weaker sections but when it comes to agriculture all the efforts taken has gone in vain as the gap is huge between the requirements and the work done. India having its major population working in agricultural sector in different regions has a huge scope for development. Any policy made by the government until now has been very slow in bringing any considerable change in the farmers' condition because of the huge scale and level of execution. The policies made need to be executed at the national level which becomes a tedious and a huge task to be done.

Farmers' have been trying to come out from this loop of poverty and exploitation by the other sectors of the society with the help of government but the process is very slow and has taken time over the period of years. Dr. Rajendra Prasad had set up many institutions in Bihar to spread the knowledge in the agricultural field and develop research works to help this sector. A lot has been done and said, but before that let us have a look at the condition of farmers in our country since independence:

**Impact of climate:** The climate on earth has been changing with the increasing population and the increasing intervention of mankind with nature. For example green house emission has led to global warming and has increased the overall temperature of the environment which now requires more effort to save the crops with

every passing decade. Other pollutants and carbon emissions are decreasing the productivity of farming. With the changing environment, the uncertainty of rainfall has also increased adding to the woes of the farmers.

**Impact of poor infrastructure:** Rural sectors are very less developed compared to cities. Lack of proper roads impacts the supply of raw materials and the harvest leading to losses. Irrigation system and lack of proper water supply is another problem which leads to crop failures. Lack of cold storage to store the harvest and its delay in reaching the markets also impacts the overall earning of farmers.

**Low productivity:** Inefficient farming methods do not let the farmers produce in bulk and gain profits. Small land holdings do not allow the farmers to use the benefit of scalability in the farming and leads to very less profit margins.

**Diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purpose:** With the urbanisation, many farmers are forced to sell their lands at low prices to the builders where modern infrastructures are built. Farmers used to find that a good deal earlier as they did not know the exact worth of their land. To improve their condition with the money that the builders used to provide, many of them willingly sold their lands and supported the decreasing trend for farming.

**Poverty and poor access to financial credits:** In the old times farmers did not have a proper access to credit to scale their farming and they had to rely on whatever money they had to buy the raw materials and equipments for the farming. Later small cooperative banks were set up to cater to this problem and then the farmers had a provision for bank credits.

### Efforts Taken By Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a pioneer in establishing the knowledge centres for helping the farmers in getting awareness about the best practices for their farming. Coming from a middle class family in a small district from Bihar, he could relate himself with the problems of the farmers. He had spent his entire life living very close to the primary sector earners of Indian society and has seen the challenges and developments in this field. He knew the scope it had for development and was aware about the possibilities to achieve that goal. He understood the deep rooted problems in the agricultural sector and was determined to work in this area to improve the condition of farmers' by helping them in improving their farming yield. He was a well educated and well informed citizen of our country who had the exposure of both modern and traditional societies. He wanted both to complement each other. He believed that change is the only constant and we should change our techniques of work with the changing time.

Dr. Prasad was a scholar and a lawyer and was very much aware about the possibilities and work to be done in this sector which could have helped the farmers. He utilised his knowledge and then helped in setting up an agricultural University in Bihar. The university has evolved now and is called as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central agricultural University situated now in Pusa, Samastipur, Bihar. He then did major contributions to the agriculture through this university with the aim of creating educated individuals to work in the agricultural sector. His efforts were fruitful in the long run when graduates in agriculture started working in this sector and slowly brought improvement in this area.

The university was earlier called as Rajendra Agricultural University to respect the efforts of Mr. Prasad in this field. This India's first agricultural institute was later named as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University. Mr. Prasad knew the power of education and had understood that the root cause of all the roadblocks existing in agricultural sector is primarily illiteracy. He believed that educating people about agriculture would bring a systematic development in this sector and would eventually empower the farmers to develop their farming methods. He also wanted the support of tertiary sector to enhance the existing situation of farmers and wanted to set up services like banking and knowledge centres which would have helped the farmers in the long run.

His vision for the farmers was for the long term and he wanted to work on the roots rather than just making policies without doing a proper ground work on the basic problems faced by the farmers in our country. He not only worked on the primary sector development, but was insightful to make advancements in the tertiary sectors as well to make both these sectors work in tandem and create jobs for each other. His plans were long term and effective in solving the crisis situations of droughts and floods where the farmers used to be in huge problem. His institutes and centres are continuously working for the development of agricultural sector and helping the farmers grow slowly but steadily. Though the impact of this long term planning is still going on and would now need more reforms in this direction. But the initial work done by Mr. Prasad has laid the foundation for the development and has established a revolutionary path for the future work to be done in this area.

### Future Scope

Agriculture has a very big contribution to our economy and even to the lives of people in our country where the majority of population is involved in primary sector. A lot of measures have been taken to improve the condition of this sector and make the farmers utilise the latest available techniques for farming. Government has made policies which has lacked the quality in execution due to large population and existing diversity. This challenge needs to be overcome in the upcoming efforts to improve the condition of Indian farmers. The task now would be to utilise this large capacity and population in the favour of our country's growth and development instead of lagging behind.

Society needs a major change in the mindset as well where farming needs to be considered as a major contributor in our economy and more educated people should take initiative and work in this sector. The condition of farmers will improve when policies would be made considering the practical conditions and ground reality in mind instead of just drafting it on paper without proper research work. The need of the hour is to continuously work in this area to see a notable development in this regard. To have a vision of a developed nation for our country, agriculture needs to be given special attention as agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy.

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