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Indian Agriculture since Independence

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- **Abstract:** Not long ago was Indian agriculture in such distress and, pain that it demands today expensive and, comprehensive reforms to overcome the underlying challenges. This paper does traverse to historical reckonings in finding some finest examples on account of agriculture. While we deal with productivity concerns, depleting groundwater, rising toxicity levels, water crisis, lack of funds and, irrigation potential, the government of India has come up timely with governance measures like Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Program, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana, etc, to improve the scale of Indian agriculture.
- **Keywords:** Agriculture, Productivity, Production, Governance, Schemes
- **Run up to the Indian Agriculture since Independence:** The magnificent Indian past had great moments to appreciate; ancient urbanizations, medieval mysticism and, modern scientific outlook. We have the most comprehensive unraveling mysteries before us during our long-severing history involving the valorous kings of ancient and, medieval India, the world's prosperous economic systems and, most of all, a resolute control over the world's systems of production and, productivity. Dating back to pre-historical records and, archives what we have managed to learn is the ceaseless endeavor at the hands of the then population to live a surplus and, healthy life. However, the inadequacy of urbanism, capitalism, liberalism and, technology didn't give them insights upon methods and, ways to do but they did accomplish in overcoming the shortages posed by natural barriers like climate change, not knowing about the concepts of agriculture or business. Time did fly and, we saw the 1st neolithic settlement propping in modern day's *Baluchistan* advancing domestication of animals and, initial attempts at agriculture. Some historians and, basically anthropologists regard it as the beginning of the **Agricultural Revolution**. All that matters after that is history. The human being survived the ferocious threats coming towards him like a professional and, witnessed the 1st urbanization in the form of *Mohenjodaro* and, *Harappa*. The primary occupation of the people in Indus Valley Civilization was agriculture and, there did not seem any doubt as numerous pieces of evidence are suggesting one of the most exceptional grains of wheat and, barley from their storage vessels. When human beings did realize about significance of agriculture, it was like a golden key as they brought in wealth, prosperity, art and, culture, leisure and, what not to mention, the greatest empires in the history of Indian Civilization. It won't be wrong to say the agricultural practice and, knowledge of fertility did bring them the power and, authority to rule. If such was the demeanor and, the grandeur of those times, how could they just wipeout in the air in years or centuries? It would be handy to call the succinct mistakes and, errors that human beings, then contend with and, brought down curtains over themselves.
- In the modern age, after the advent of the nation-state by the Treaty of Westphalia, what European countries envisioned the trade routes and, desire to occupy the Oriental lands. Geography has mechanisms and, strengths to determine the shortest and, the quickest route to reach any destination. However, those foreigners had in their minds, the renowned misconceptions about India and, it's luxury. They had not thought about the treasuries in their brains, had medieval stalwarts like

Ala-ud-din Khilji, Sikander Lodhi, Akbar and, Aurangzeb not incorporated the Mansabdari System and, provisions for the rural areas to self-govern. What is promoted in the world in contemporary times was very well known to these *Sultans* and, *Badshahs*. They regularly had continuous mapping of the land in their kingdom and, finalized the tariffs for peasants *progressively*. These practices, indeed, provided India, at one point in time in history, even when the British were capitalizing on the economic drain, the rank of the largest exporter of textiles and, the ablest agricultural methods. Slowly, the degeneration of society was at a rapid scale and, engulfed comprehensively all about India, the primary sector and, the secondary sector. We had nothing but the ruinous and, exploitative systems like **Zamindari**, **Ryotwari** and, **Mahalwari**. It was very soon catapulted that once an owner of the land, the same peasant did convert into agricultural labor or bonded labor, due to the British taking regressive tariffs and, exploiting not even considering the climatic hardships. At the stroke of Indian independence on August 15, 1947, we had nothing, but a hungry, divisive, illiterate, poverty-stricken, unemployed and, with a failed agricultural state of affairs humongous population.

- **Indian Agriculture before Green Revolution:** The freedom fighters turned politicians and, makers of the Indian future had a daunting task ahead in shaping the Indian economy and, feeding the world's most poor population in those circumstances. We had tough calls and, choices to make and, it was revealing and, satisfactory to know that the leaders proactively did initiate several programs and, efforts, indeed handy and, reformist which, all, could improve the living standards of people. The Community Development Programs (CDPs), making of Block Development Officers (BDOs), initiating Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were steps in the right direction under the leadership of PM Jawahar Lal Nehru. Not to forget the feature of planning we took from the Soviet Union, it did tilt our winds towards unaccepted Socialism in the world that was divided into two warring camps then. The decisions at International diplomacy then, like Non-Align Movement, Panchsheel Agreement, etc, assured the Indian population and, elites that our focus during the initial years of development would be to redefine Indian economic patterns and, subdue inherent injustice and, inequality; social, economic and, political. The freehand for leaders was an opportunity that they did not want to miss upon.
- The 1st Five Year plan had a conventional amount to be spent in reforming the clocks of annihilated Indian Agriculture. The past under colonialists had a severing and, fuming impact upon the agricultural situation as there were intrinsic levels of mass injustice and, economic inequalities. The big capitalist farmers or *Zamindars* had full control over resources which was diminishing and, further maddening the fragile agricultural system. The need was felt for reforms, **Land Reforms** which could revamp and, instill a new zeal of confidence among the producers of the country. The reforms did comprise of **the Abolition of Zamindari**, **Tenancy Reforms** and, **Land Ceiling Legislation**. Had they been successfully implemented and, executed upon, the miraculous situation of the Indian Agriculture could have seen new currency and, light. Nehru in the mid-1950s did express his despair on the lack of implementation of his cherished reforms of CDPs, BDOs and, PRIs. The similar fate was ready for the land reforms as well despite their introduction then had some tremors under the bellies of landlords and, tormenting middlemen. Indian system of agriculture was expecting a landmark decision from leaders which could have mitigated the enduring pain and, unsophisticated attempts to revitalize the poor system. Notwithstanding the wars of 1962 with China and, 1965 with Pakistan, draining Indian treasury resources, followed by a long climatic hurdle, the five-year plans had to find solace, as they call in the economy - *Plan Holiday*. The new, young, dynamic, profound and, energetic leadership had kicked in the form of Indira Gandhi and, during those times of distress and, pain - she did come up with a band of solution makers that could finally eradicate ills and, wills surrounding Indian agriculture at that time.
- **Indian Agriculture after Green Revolution:** During the planned holiday and, in times of exigency, India was importing the food grains from America under **PL - 480** scheme, eroding the hard-earned foreign reserves and, a moral blot upon Indian psyche. In such times of sheer hardness, there was this plan of **Green Revolution**, capitalizing upon the network of canals in Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, North Eastern Rajasthan and, Coastal Tamil Nadu. These areas had a very planned

and, suitably built irrigation network that could match with the input-intensive seeds imported, **High Yielding Variety (HYV)**. That being said and, done, the ruling regime then did face unending criticism at the hands of rival political parties for taking up such a big decision. There are reports and, accounts, though emanating after some 10 years or so of Green Revolution that it was appropriate and, only decision to lift subsuming morale of Indians and, stop flowing of Foreign reserves. Adding to that, the choice of areas was a well-articulated plan as they were the only places in the country to have the possible continuous irrigation network in the country at that time. This decision to implement was a turning point in the Indian Agricultural set up as it did seem like it got new wings after that which was evident with regimes after that deploying attention, finance and, resources. Indira's regime another big decision at nationalizing banks in 1969 ended the *class banking* and, furthered *mass banking*. **Area Development Scheme** and, **Service Area Approach** did incline themselves in improving banking access in rural areas, thereby adding a layer of direct finance to *Small and, Marginal Farmer*. Though, in the new millennium and, shortly before that widespread focus was given in making sure that peasants and, marginal farmers had access to finance avoiding the clutches of exploitative middlemen. Land reforms, due pending was another bone of contention that did demand successful implementation to remove the bottlenecks surrounding Tenants, Small and, Marginal Farmers and, Bonded Laborers.

- The 1980s and, early 1990s gave us technological footprints which we did use in digitalizing land records to avoid forceful acquisitions and, leakages. Simultaneously, with the green revolution in the past and, increasing knowledge about agricultural practices our basket of food grains kept on increasing. The successive governments did come up with new governance measures to reduce the incessant hurdles in reforming Indian agriculture. A whole lot of schemes and, governance mechanisms rely on implementation and, successfully including the needy and, carefully excluding the undeserved.
- The state of affairs of Indian agriculture after independence has significant stories to offer. The lessons which we have learned from our past need to be disseminated. Once the Green Revolution of the late 1960s, feeding the empty stomach of the Indian population did bring new challenges today at the forefront. To maximize the capacity, productivity and, overall production of Indian agriculture, the standing and, inherent problems around Indian farmers and, peasants demand redressal. The *High Yielding Variety* seeds require greater inputs which were easy for the big capitalist farmers in the chosen areas to provide benefitted mostly the superior class. It left off the small and, marginal farmer as he/she could not afford these high input intensive variety seeds. Bonded laborers without any piece of land were not even in the mediated loop. All these two segments of the population, basically comprising more than 85% of the chunk of agricultural fraternity, had to do was serve the capitalist farmer again. The benefits and, the hope of transformation of agriculture did not encompass these marginalized people. They were still under the grip of ferocious middlemen who were charging hefty tariffs for the funds they had provided. The whole chain of reducing disparities got broken down into fragments leaving the status quo unchanged and, unmodified.
- With new millennium approaching and, a shift in the strategy of Five Year plans visible, **targeted planning** and, **direct disbursement** were the norms gaining appreciation and, attention. **BHARAT NIRMAN** program during UPA I proved immensely impactful as it instilled a new wave of energy towards improving not only agriculture but allied sectors like *rural roads, rural connectivity, rural water supply, rural sanitation* and, *rural economy*. By this time, we had an insignificant amount of food grains with Food Corporation of India so that we can assure the long pending dream of the *Fathers of Indian Nation* and, *Sustainable Development Goal* of ending the mass hunger and, promising **Food Security**. We did pass the National Food Security Act, 2013 which assured Food Security for Indians. This decision was complementary to the running Targeted Public Distribution System by which we distribute food grains at affordable prices to left off and, vulnerable sections.

- Post 2014 under ruling dispensation, PM Modi, brought in altogether a new phase of reforms in Indian Agriculture. The JAM agenda (Jan Dhan - Aadhar - Mobile) has increased brilliantly the banking penetration for a chunk of the Indian population by which it has become easy for the executive today to directly benefit the needy with subsidies and, incentives in their respective bank accounts, reducing the figures and, instances of corruption and, timely leakages. Aadhar enabled Payment System is a further addition to these set of reforms which has enabled Indian farmers to receive their governance benefits directly, saving upon finances, time and, energy. The mechanism of early and, accessible finance has also been provided by the government to avoid the clutches of middlemen for laborious peasants. With easy accessibility and, availability of finance and, required help - farmers, especially Indian agriculture has seen a transforming shift with the maximum number of food grains in the kitty of Food Corporation of India. Despite all these measures, we cannot miss upon the recurring and, increasing problems in Indian Agriculture like **decreasing productivity, groundwater depletion, falling production, lack of warehouses and, cold storage facilities, lack of timely finance, lack of crop insurance, lack of irrigation facilities, lack of proper and, appropriate MSPs for crops** and, **lack of integrated markets for farm produce**. The government of India with its declared motto of 'Minimum Government Maximum Governance' has come up with several measures of redressal for these recurring problems in Indian Agriculture.
- **Organic Farming, Zero Budget Natural Farming** and, **Green Manuring** would tend to reduce the rising toxicity levels in soil and, prevent productivity from falling. Also, **the Soil Health Card** scheme could test at first the required amount of fertilizers and, pesticides that soil needs so that farmers can save up the necessary finance and, reduce the cost of production. The less amount of toxicity in the soil would lead to better retention of water in the soil increasing soil porosity and, would improve the groundwater table. **Atal Bhujal Yojana** is specifically targeted at groundwater improvement. **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Har Khet ko Pani** and, **Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Program** would provide the fields with a water supply and, increase the irrigation potential of the country. **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** protects the farmer's crop from damages during harvesting and, even post-harvesting as well. The **e-NAM (Electronic National Agricultural Market)** would provide farmers to easily access the registered mandis and, borrowers where he can sell his produce at lucrative prices. The announcement of early MSPs on major crops has also enabled farmers to seek benefits and, capitalize upon the profits thereby fulfilling the standing aim of **PM Modi** of **Doubling the Farmer's Income** by 2022. The government is also trying to ramp up the capacity of warehouses and, cold storage facilities so that farmer's labor and, country's cultivated crops could not get damaged and, save the economy from supply shocks. The **Micro Finance Institutes, Cooperative Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks** and, **Mobile Banking** have all, collectively been readying and, preparing for easy, accessible and, affordable finance for farmers to eradicate the grip of moneylenders. These financial institutes are also working to simplify the complex and, the cumbersome procedure for availing cheap and, timely loans.
- Despite these measures of Government and, efforts by the **Farmer Producer Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, NGOs** and, **Volunteers** - there still are undeniable challenges and, problems which demand stringent action and, quick redressal of grievance. We have learned in the books of history, sociology, geography, economy and, other sciences that agriculture is the backbone of any economy and, the destitution of this backbone leads a nation into the abyss. No country in the world or empire in history has accumulated deep pockets of wealth without sustaining for themselves a sound, able, integrated and, productive agricultural sector. The lessons, forthcoming in Indian agriculture are demanding and, wanting, due to the continuous challenges of climate change and, water crisis, which demand proactive and, out of the box solutions to these unprecedented problems. History has shown us several glimpses of the golden age and, maximum productivity. It is time, we, as a community including academicians, scholars, teachers, students and, common populace and, government together take up the responsibility to fend off these problems, thereby stimulating and, reserving the spot for India, which was once **Vishwa Guru**.

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