

Major Agricultural Problems in Pakistan

Introduction:

Agricultural sector is the backbone of our economy. But the growth of agriculture in Pakistan is facing a lot of problems. Due to various causes, per acre yield is very low in Pakistan as compare to other developed countries.

PROBLEMS OF AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Problems of agricultural sector are categorized as below:

A. TECHNO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

1) Limited Cultivable Area

The total area of Pakistan is about 79.6 million hectares, out of which only 23.7 million hectares (28%) area is used for agricultural purposes. About 8 million hectares area is idle and un-utilized. There is vast sub-division and fragmentation of land holdings, as a result modern technology cannot be applied in agriculture sector.

2) Water Logging and Salinity

Water logging and salinity are twin problems of agricultural sector due to salinity, deposits of salt in land have appeared on the surface of land and they have adversely affected the performance of agricultural sector. Water logging and salinity affect about 0.10 million acre of land in every year. It is not only waste of land but also reduction in productivity.

3) Slow Growth of Allied Products

Allied products refer to those productions, which are not agricultural but indirectly, help the farmer to improve his living standard. Pakistan is in-sufficient in the production of fruits, milk, poultry, fisheries, livestock and forestry. As a result not only our food quality is poor but also industries such as furniture, textiles and dairy cannot be developed.

4) Low Per Hectare Yield

The most important problem of agriculture is its low yield per hectare for almost every major crop. 45.0% of labour force is engaged in this sector in Pakistan while it is

less than 5% in developed countries. But, other countries of world are getting higher yield per hectare due to use of modern technology and trained labour.

5) Inadequate Infrastructure

Rural infrastructure like, roads, storage facilities, transport, electricity, education, sanitation and health facilities etc. is inadequate to meet the requirement of growth of agriculture. Total length of farm-to-market road is not only shorter but their condition is also poor. Many villages have no metal-led road at all. Electricity is available to only 3/4 rural populations.

6) Uneconomic Land Holdings

Due to increasing population and division of land under the law of inheritance, landholdings are subdivided over and over again. The result is that very large number of farmers has less than 2 hectares of area. Moreover holdings are scattered. It is difficult to use modern machinery on small pieces of land.

7) Old Methods of Production

No doubt, mechanization of agriculture is increasing in Pakistan, but in most of the areas, the old implements are still being used for agricultural production. Old and orthodox techniques of production cannot increase the production according to international levels.

8) Inadequate Supply of Agricultural Inputs

The supply of modern inputs like high yielding variety (HYV) seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, mechanized machinery etc. not only costly but also inadequate and irregular in Pakistan. Numbers of fertilizer producing units are just 10 in Pakistan.

9) Lack of Irrigation Facilities

Shortage of irrigation facilities causes a serious limitation in the expansion of crop area in Pakistan. The lower water supplies, losses from water course in the fields are the serious problems of farm sector. Actual surface water availability is 91.8 million acre feet.

10) Inadequate Agricultural Research

The average crop yield in Pakistan is very low as compared to the production levels of the advanced countries of the world. In order to raise the potential of agricultural

production, there should be continuous improvement in the research for agricultural growth. Total agricultural universities and colleges are only 16 in Pakistan.

11) Problem of Land Reforms

Land reforms have been implemented against the will of people. There is an urgent need to conduct a proper land reform for improving agricultural growth. Due to this problem agricultural production cannot increase to desired level.

12) Defective Land Tenure System

Defective land tenure system is also responsible for low yield per acre in agricultural sector. Landlords and feudal-lords live in posh urban areas while tenants and peasants have no or less incentive for their hard work. So, the productivity in agricultural sector remains low.

13) Subsistence Farming

Our farmer is attached with subsistence farming; a huge of portion of production is consumed at farmer's own house to support large family. Hence, less portion of the production is available for market supply. It causes low income of the farmers. Farming is not conducted at commercial level in Pakistan.

14) Low Cropping Intensity

Cropping intensity means the number of crops grown on a piece of land in one year. At the present stage of our development, there is low level of cropping intensity as compared to advanced countries. Cultivable area under double or multiple cropping is inadequate in Pakistan.

15) Improper Crop Rotation

Proper turning round of crops is essential to re-establish the fertility of the land. The constant cultivation of one crop or two; exhausts the fertility of the soil. Proper rotation of crops is necessary in order to restore the fertility.

B. NATURAL PROBLEMS

16) Various Plant Diseases

Various agricultural crops like cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, wheat and rice often come under attack of pests and insects. Pests and plant diseases reduce the annual productivity of agriculture.

17) Natural Calamities

Labour is in the hand of mankind but its result is in the hands of ALLAH in agriculture sector. So, growth of agriculture is dominated by nature. In case if there is too much rain, reduction in the productivity. There is 20% reduction in productivity due to unnecessary rain and unfavourable climatic situations in Pakistan.

18) Scarcity of HYV Seeds

Our poor farmers have to use lower quality seeds due to non-availability of High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds. On the other hand, if seed is available they cannot be purchased due to low income. Agricultural production is badly affected because of inferior quality of seeds.

19) Under Utilization of Land

Mostly poor population is attached with agricultural sector in Pakistan. They are using orthodox and traditional means of cultivation. Our farmer is not interested to use the advanced and modern means of farming, as a result area under cultivation remains under utilized, un-utilized or mis-utilized.

C. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

20) Consumption Oriented

Our farmers have no proper records of their incomes and expenses. Mostly, they spend more when they have more due to illiteracy. A huge part of the farmer's income is consumed on occasions of marriage, birth, death and several other rural ceremonies and festivals in Pakistan.

21) Farmer's Litigation

There are frequent and continuous litigations among the farmers directly or indirectly. They are often seen in courts, police stations, irrigation offices, revenue boards and other official problems. Due to mentioned problems, our farmer cannot devote his time, energy, efficiency and labour to agricultural productions.

22) Joint Family System

Joint family system is also a big problem in agricultural sector. Our farmer is poor; on the other hand he has to support his big family. It creates deficiency in saving and investment. A huge part of farmer's productivity is consumed at his own house.

23) Illiteracy and Ill-health

Most of the farmers, labourers and tenants in our country are illiterate. They are untrained and inefficient to boost up the agricultural productivity. On the other side, the health of our farmers is improper due to rural backwardness. Literacy rate is only 57.7 % in Pakistan. Economic Survey of Pakistan shows that literacy remains higher in urban areas (73.2 percent) than in rural areas (49.2 percent).

24) Political Instability

Political instability has affected development in all economic and social sectors. Unfortunately, the political situations in Pakistan are not stable. It creates unrest among the farmers to sell the productions to various industries as a raw material. On the other hand, people hesitate to invest in agricultural sector due to political unrest.

D. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

25) Lack of Credit

Basically our farmer is poor and he has low level of income. Agricultural credit facilities are not common in Pakistan. Credit that can facilitate agriculture is not available easily. Moreover non-institutional sources are available but these are not reliable due to high rate of interest. About 50.8% poor borrow from landlords in Pakistan.

26) Poor Financial Position of Farmers

It is a common saying about *our farmer that he borns in debts, grows in debts and dies in debts*. It means that financial position of Pakistani farmer is weak and poor. According to “Pakistan Human Development Report 2003” about 57.4% poor are working for feudal-lords without wages.

27) Instability in Market Prices

The price market of agricultural goods generally remains unstable in the country. Cobweb theorem is very popular in case of market prices; it means that a price of one commodity is much high in this year and much low in the next year and vice versa. The farmers, do not get due reward from the sale of their productions. So, they remain unsatisfied.

28) Shortage of Agricultural Finance

Agricultural credit facilities are not sufficient in Pakistan. Rate of interest on agricultural credit is high and loan is not provided in time. According to “Pakistan Human Development Report 2003” in Pakistan about 50.8% poor borrow from landlords at very high rate of interest.

MEASURES TO REMOVE THESE PROBLEMS

Following measures are suggested to improve the agriculture:

1) Supply of Agriculture Credit

Poor farmers cannot afford the expensive technology from their own resources in Pakistan. So, supply of agriculture credit at easy terms and conditions is very necessary. An amount of Rs. 85,177 million is disbursed by commercial banks in 2009 and Rs. 49 billion was distributed by ZTBL. ZTBL issued credit of Rs. 37.4 billions during 2010-11.

2) Water Logging and Salinity Control

Water logging and salinity destroys about one million acre of land every year in Punjab and Sindh. It reduces our cultivable area. For this purpose, installation of tube wells, repair of canal banks and drainage of water etc. are needed. The Ministry of Agriculture proposed to invest Rs. 18.5 billion with the objective of converting 2,00,000 acres of irrigated land to drip and shower irrigation system.

3) Construction of Dams

Sometimes, due to heavy unwanted rains and floods agricultural productivities destroys. To tackle this problem it is necessary to construct dams and bands on rivers.

4) Provision of HYV Seed

High yielding variety seed is not available at suitable price in Pakistan. So, farmers have to depend upon low quality of seeds that causes 20% reduction in total production. Government should provide HYV seed at minimum price in this case.

5) Mechanization

Farm mechanization is necessary to remove the problems to agriculture sector. Sowing, cultivation and harvesting of crops through agricultural machines increase the productive quality and quantity.

6) Agricultural Research

Agricultural research is compulsory to remove the backwardness of agriculture sector. Major agricultural colleges and universities are only about 16 in Pakistan. Government should increase the research work in the field of agriculture.

7) Agro-based Industries

Agro-based industries like poultry, fisheries, dairy and livestock should establish. These industries indirectly lead to improve the agricultural sector.

8) Tax Concessions

Mechanization is necessary to remove the problems of agriculture sector. Government should give tax concession on imports of agricultural technologies to enhance the process of farm mechanization.

9) Training of Farmers

Our farmers are illiterate and ill trained so, their efficiencies are poor. Government should start special education programme for farmers and give them training about farming.

10) Prices of Agricultural Productivities

Sometimes, our farmers receive low prices of their crops. There is no proper effective price policy of government. Government should set reasonable prices of agricultural productions to develop the living standard of farmers.

Conclusion:

Being an agrarian country, agricultural sector of Pakistan's economy is still backward. Use of modern techniques, provision of credit facilities, basic infrastructure and agriculture research facilities are needed to remove all the problems of agriculture sector.

Reference:

<http://ahsankhaneco.blogspot.com/2012/04/major-problems-of-agricultural-sector.html>