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## **PLIGHT OF INDIAN FARMERS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

**भारतीय शेतकऱ्यांच्या व्यथा वेदना, दशा :  
समस्या व आव्हाने**

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# INDEX

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Page No.
1.	Disaster Management In Indian Agriculture In A Legal Perspective.	Asmita Patil	1-4
2.	Overview Of Agriculture In The Netherlands	Amar V. Salokhe and Haejin Park	5-8
3.	Agriculture Labour-Problems And Remedies	Dr.Rahul Nivruttira Dhumal.	9-13
4.	The Effects of Modern Agriculture on Human Health - An Evaluative Study	Mr. Amit Mane	14-16
5.	Agricultural Laws in India With Special Reference to Labour Laws In Agriculture Sector.	Dr. Asha R. Tiwari	17-21
6.	Sustainable And Inclusive Agriculture Development In Maharashtra From 2010 To 2017 (With The Reference To The Rainfall, The Agriculture Productivity, The Use Of Chemical Fertilizers And The Pesticides)	Prof. Wadgave Venkat Janardhan	22-27
7.	Reflection Of Agrarian Culture In The Play Tempest By Shakespeare	Mr. Nangare Dinkar Ramchandra	28-30
8.	Farmers Suicides In India : Some Issues	Patil Vijay Ramchandra	31-37
9.	Irrigation and Change In Cropping Pattern Kanher Dam In Satara District	Dr. Shankar. P. Hajare	38-42
10.	Agricultural Development And Farmers	Dr. Mrs. Madhavi Pawar	43-44
11.	Review on Agriculture And Rural Development	Wanole S. N , Yelve M. M. Hattalli A. D.	45-50
12.	Impact Of Modern Agriculture On Health	Dr. Pratibha S. Desai	51-53
13.	Government Policies And Schemes For Agriculture In India	Miss. Nilakhe Amruta Shital	54-58
14.	Importance Of Food Security And Public Distribution System In India	Dr.Sujata J.Patil	59-62
15.	'Sadanand Deshmukh's Baromass As Realistic Picture Of Agrarian Culture'	Dr. S. I. Noorani Dr. Patil U. A.	63-64
16.	Role of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme In Rural Employment: A Study of Bhudargad Tehsil in Kolhapur District of Maharashtra State	Mr Sandip Tukaram Patil	65-69
17.	Agricultural Marketing In India	Mrs. Pooja Sachin Khopkar	70-73
18.	An Inclusive Role of Women in Sustainable Rural Development	Dr. Shilpa Puranik	74-77
19.	The Role Of Women In Agriculture	Dr. A. M. Pradhan	78-79
20.	Women Labor In Indian Agriculture	Prof. Smt. Patil Sharada Shamrao	80-83
21.	History Of Indian Agriculture	Dr. Ganpat G. Gaikwad	84-87
22.	Farmers Suicides In India	Dr. Palwe Ajaykumar Madhukar	88-91

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Page No.
23.	Biggest Problems Faced By Farmers In India	Prof. Dr. Hashim Walandkar	92-94
24.	The Reflection Of Farmer's Plights In Indian Literature: A Comparative Study	Dr. Kalindi Kailas Shinde	95-97
25.	Agriculture : Challenge And Opportunity	Dr. Samadhan K. Patil	98-101
	Pearl Buck's The Good Earth: A Portrait Of Universal Farmer	Dr. Advait. D. Joshi Dr. Manisha. M. Mujumdar	102-105
26.	Agroecology The Scientific Paradigm For Sustainable Agriculture.	D.S. Patil	106-109
27.	Reflection Of Agonies Of Farmers In Literature With Special Reference To V. V. Hadap's Marathi Novel, 'Mother India, Awake' (Bharatmata Uth)	Mrs. Shobha Bajirao Patil	110-113
28.	Reflection Of Farmers Agonies In Marathi, Hindi And English Literature	Mr. Waghadare D.S. Prof. Dr. B.P. Naik	114-118
29.	'Disappearing Farmers': Portrayal Of Farmers In Mainstream Hindi Cinema	Dr. Gagare Ajit Shankarrao	119-123
30.	Organised Agro-Food Retailing In India	Mrs. Pranita A. Jadhav	124-127
31.	Study Of New Trends In Indian Agriculture Sectors	Dr. Ashwini Vatharkar	128-132
32.	A Study Of Agriculture Sector In Indian Economy	Prof. Supriya Alhat	133-142
33.	Review On Effect Of Electromagnetic Radiation (EMR) From Cell Phone Towers And Wireless Devices On Honey Bees	Golvankar .G. M. Gholape S. M.	143-149
34.	Sustainable Agriculture In Relationship To Climate Change	S.C. Phuge S. M. Gholape	150-156
35.	Trend And Inequality Analysis Of Operational Land Holding In India (1990-91 To 2015-16)	Dr. Santosh Barale	157-160
36.	Agricultural Problems In India	Shriram Abhishek D.	161-164
37.	Role Of Women In Organic Farming And Rural Development	Prof. Shobhatai S. Patil Dr. Raj P. Chavan	165-169
38.	Land Alienation And Marginalization In Ngugi's Petals Of Blood	Dr. Balkrishna Dada Waghmare	170-172
39.	Impact Of Climate Change On Rice Production In Kolhapur District, Maharashtra: A Geographical Anylisis	Prof. D. A. Sardesai	173-175
40.	Opportunities And Problems In Agro Tourism Industry For Farmers In Maharashtra	Dr. Kishor Lipare Prof. Jagadale D.M.	176-179
41.	Plight Of Mandeshi Farmers: A Bitter Social Reality.	Dr. Jayant Anant Kulkarni.	180-183
42.	A Study Of Problems Of Agricultural Labourers In India	Mr. Siddhanath M. Gade Miss. Mayakumari M. Purohit Mr. Salman A. Kaktikar	184-186

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Page No.
43	Farmers Suicides In India	Prof. Dr. Megha Vijay Patil	187-189
44	Sustainable Development In Commercial Agriculture	Shri Pathan Dastagir Ramjan	190-196
45	Baromass: A Gripping Tale Of A Farmers Family	Mr. Mukesh V. Kamble	197-200
46	Woman Farmer- An Ignored Factor In Agriculture	Smt. Teja Dilip Samant	201-204
47	A Study The Scenario And Role Of Women In Agriculture	Mr. Vishal Madhukar Kurane Mr. Rohit Dinkar Barsing	205-208
48	Suicides Of Indian Farmers: Reasons And Remedies	Dr. Amar L. Powar	209-212
49	Women In Agriculture : Marching Towards Success...	Prof. Amruta Sawant	213-215
50	Farmers' Suicide In India: Issues And Concerns	Mrs. Manisha Yogesh Kale	216-219
51	Causal Analysis Of Agricultural Productivity Of India	Mr. Sutar K.G.	220-224
52	Various Themes Reflected In Sadanand Deshmukh's Novel Baromaas	Dr. A. S. Arbole	225-229
53	Agricultural Marketing In India : Problems And Prospectus	Dr. Mrs. Varsha Maindargi	230-233
54	Issues And Its Solutions Of Agriculture In Indian	Shri Suresh V. Ingale	234-238
55	Impact Of Urbanization On Agriculture Sector In South Maharashtra	Dr. Ramjan Fattukhan Mujawar	239-242
56	Farmers Suicides And Agricultural Crisis	Dr. Netaji Vishwas Powar	243-246
57	Plights Of Farmers : Reasons And Remedies	Dr. Mrs. Megha Dixit	247-249
58	Problems Of Floriculture Business In India	Dr. Chhaya Shamrao Mole	250-254
59	Displacement Of Farmers Reflected In Indian English Literature	Dr. Mrs. Manik Shantinath Patil	255-258
60	Review Of Government Efforts Towards The Farmers Welfare	Vrushali Vishwasrao Patil	259-264
61	India's Current Status Of Agriculture Trade	Dr. B. S. Kamble	265-268
62	Farmers Suicides In India With Reference To Karnataka: Causes And Remedies	Shri. M. S. Vanaki Shri. V. M. Magadum	269-272
63	Reflection Of Agonies Of Farmers In Literature	Miss. Shruti Mohan Lohar	273-276
64	E-Nam : One Nation One Mandi	Dr. Kailas Sunil Patil	277-281
65	Utilization Of Betel Leaves Waste From Paan Shop	Megha Waingade	284-283
66	Role Of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana In Indian Agriculture	Mr. Ashish Bhasme	284-287
67	Agricultural Development In India After Independence	Dr. Somnath Vishnu Kale	288-291

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Page No.
68	Performance Of Agriculture In The Post-Reform Period And Status Of Indian Farmers	Prof. Rohini Girish Deshpande	292-296
69	Review Of Agricultural Policies In India	Amit Babaso Patil	297-301
70	Impact Of Modern Agriculture On Human Health	Mrs. Komal R. Oswal	302-305
71	Agriculture And Rural Development In Maharashtra: Through Various Schemes And Programme	Miss. Sarika Vishwas More	306-310
72	The Indian Farmers Great Tradition And The Present Scenario Of Farmers Through The Indian Literature	Mrs. Megha Pradip Nikam	311-313
73	Rural Indebtedness In India	Dr. Kiran Shankar Pawar	314-317
74	Suicides Of Indian Farmers: In Selected Novels Of Indian English Literature	Dr. Mrs. Poonam N. Shelake Dr. Mr. Sunil D. Thorat	318-321
75	Agribusiness : Importance, Challenges And Opportunities In India	Dr. Mrs. S. S. Kadam	322-325
76	The Causes Of Farmers Suicides In Maharashtra	Ajit Mahadev Gaingade	326-329
77	Hydroponic Farming: New System For Fodder Production	B. S. Thorat S. M. Pandav	330-333
78	Role Of ICT In Indian Agriculture	Mrs. Rashmi A. Godhi	334-337
79	India: Issues And Priorities For Agriculture	Dadasaheb B. Mane	338-341
80	Environmental Changes And Its Effect On Agricultural Sector In Kolhapur District: - A Case Study.	Dr. A. G. Magdum	342-344
81	Farmers' Solemn Declaration - 'How Far To Be Or Not To Be'?	Dr. R. G. Panhalkar	345-348
82	Agricultural Labour In Maharashtra : Problems And Remedies	Dr. Vijay A. Pawar Mr. Rajendra Ghadage	349-351
83	Kamala Markandaya's Nectar In Sieve: A Miserable Depiction Of Tenant Family	Dr. Kamble Sanjay Pandit	352-355
84	Agricultural And Rural Development In India	Rohini Shankar Kale	356-359
85	Depiction Of Farmer's Life In Kamala Markandaya's 'Nectar In A Sieve'	Dr. Suresh Pandurang Patil	360-363
86	Farmers Suicide In Marathwada Region Of Maharashtra:-Causes And Remedies	Manisha B. Shelake	364-367
87	Retailing In Agricultural Products -Review	Smt. Aarati J. Kanire	367-371
88	Displacement Of Farmers In Na D'Souza's Dweepa	Dr. Namdev Kashinath Patil	372-374
89	Plight Of Farmers In India: A Sociological Perspective	Shahu Dhanu Gawade	375-377
90	Multiple Issues Of Plight Of Indian Farmers	Dr. Smt. Pathak Anagha V.	378-380

## AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

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### Abstract:

Agriculture is the most important sector of Indian Economy. Indian agriculture sector accounts for 18 per cent of India's gross domestic product (GDP) and provides employment to 50% of the countries workforce. India is the world's largest producer of pulses, rice, wheat, spices and spice products. India has many areas to choose for business such as dairy, meat, poultry, fisheries and food grains etc. India has emerged as the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world. India remains among main three as far as production of different agricultural things like paddy, wheat, pulses, groundnut, rapeseeds, natural products, vegetables, sugarcane, tea, jute, cotton, tobacco leaves and so on. On the other hand, on advertising front, Indian agribusiness is as yet confronting the issues, for example, low level of business sector reconciliation and integration, availability of dependable and convenient information needed by farmers on different issues in farming.

### Introduction:

Agriculture has been an integral part of the Indian economy, before and after independence, despite its decline in share of GDP. Half of India's population depends on agriculture as a livelihood. India is 2<sup>nd</sup> in farm output. It is the largest producer of coriander, spices, millets and many more second in fruits such as mangoes and papaya, and third in rapeseed, tomatoes and coconuts. Yet 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Indian population is under poverty line. The portion created further imbalance. A major part of India's population was under poverty line. It laid out a set of goals to be implemented by adopting a package approach. Most of the national goals included land reclamation, land development, consolidation, control of prices and forward thinking, mechanization of industry development, chemical fertilizers were widely created. Diversification of crops was also observed and non-traditional crops such as soybean and peanuts gradually gained importance. The growth strategy of Indian agriculture evolved with time in several stages, aims were to eradicate socio-economic constraints through land reform, change in the village power structure, recognition of the rural poor into cooperatives and better participation in planning.

### Objectives:

1. To study the status of agricultural sector and trends in Indian agriculture
2. To study the development of Indian agriculture sector after independence.

### Research Methodology:

For this research paper only secondary has been used and the data is collected from secondary sources.

### Nature of Indian Agriculture:

At the time of independence, India's agriculture was in a state of backwardness. Productivity per hectare and per worker was extremely low. The technique employed were age old and traditional. Because of low productivity, agriculture merely provided subsistence to the farmers and had not become commercialized. Approximately 45% of total consumption of farmers came from their own production in 1951-52. This highlights the low importance of money in the village economy. So, Indian agriculture backward and qualitatively traditional in

nature on the eve of the first five year plan. For this situation various factors was responsible for that, like as, land relations, size of holdings, agricultural techniques, irrigation facilities, wide spread rural indebtedness role , role of moneylenders in rural economy etc.

#### **Role of agriculture in Indian Economy:**

Indian agriculture had reached the stage of development and maturity before the now advanced countries of the world embarked on the path of progress. At the time, there was a proper balance between agriculture and industry and both flourished hand in hand. This situation continued till the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The indifference from the alien British government and its deliberate policy of throttling the village handicrafts and cottage industries destroyed the fibre of balance and the economy of the country was badly shattered. British pursued typical colonial policy in India and did nothing to develop agriculture. Instead, they created a class of intermediaries known as zamindar who sucked the very blood out of the rural poor. Thus Indian agriculture in the pre independence period can be correctly described as a subsistence occupation. It was only after the advent of planning that some farmers started adopting agriculture on a commercial basis

Role of agriculture in Indian economy: It can be explain through the following points

1. **Share in National Income:** at the time of first world war, agriculture contributed two third of national income. However, after the initiation of planning in India, the share of agriculture has persistently declined on account of the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy from 53.1 percent in 1950-51, the share of agriculture and allied activities in GDP at factor cost decline to 29.6 percent in 1991 and further to 13.9 percent in 2013-14.
2. **Largest employment providing sector:** in 1972-73, 73.9 percent of the working population was engaged in agriculture and allied activities. This percentage fall to 64.8 percentages in 1993-94 and 48.9 percentage in 2011-12 with rapid increase in population, the absolute number of people engaged in agriculture has become exceedingly large.
3. **Provision of food surplus to the expanding population:** because of the heavy pressure of population in labor surplus economies like India and its rapid increase, the demand for food increase at a fast rate. The existing levels of food consumption in these countries are very low and with a little increase in per capita income, the demand for food rise steeply. Therefore agriculture is able to continuously increase its marketed surplus of food grains; a crisis is likely to emerge.
4. **Contribution to capital formation:** there are general agreements on the importance of capital formation in economic development. Unless the rate of capital formation increases to a sufficiently high degree, economic development cannot be achieved. Since agriculture happens to be the largest industry in developing countries like India, it can and must play an important role in pursuing up the rate of capital formation. If it fails to do so, the whole process of economic development will suffer a setback.
5. **Providing raw materials to industries:** agriculture provides raw materials to various industries of national importance, sugar industry Jute industry, cotton textile industry etc. are the examples of some such industries which depend on agriculture for their development. Therefore, unless agriculture develops these industries will also remain backwards.
6. **Market for industrial products:** Since more than two thirds of the population of India lives in rural areas, increased rural purchasing power is a valuable stimulus to industrial development. If expand agriculture output and productivity, the income of the rural sector will increase causing, in turn, an increased demand for industrial products the process of industrial development will also receive a boost up.

In India, with the spread of green revolution to more and more areas in recent years, income of large farmers have increased considerably whereas their tax liabilities

are negligible. This has increased their purchasing power substantially with the result that the demand for industrial goods in the rural markets is witnessing marked increase

7. **Importance of international trade:** for a number of years the three agriculture based exports of India- cotton textiles, Jute and Tea -accounted for more than 50 percent of export earning of the country with economic progress and consequent diversification of the production base, the share agriculture goods in total exports has consistently fallen for instance, the share of agricultural exports was 44.2 percent in 1960-61. This fall considerably to 30.7 percent in 1980-81 and 12.7 percent in 2014-15. As far as composition of imports is concerned capital goods industrial machinery petroleum and petroleum products and maintained imports have accounted for the bulk of imports. However during certain years, the country had to face severe drought conditions and large scale imports of food grains had to be restored to India also imports dairy products, fruits, vegetables, animal, vegetable oils and raw materials
8. **Role of poverty reduction:** agriculture presently contributes less than 15 percent of India's GDP. Yet it continues to employ more than half of the workforce. Moreover, an average Indian still continues to spend almost half of its expenditure on food. Since agriculture continues to a source of livelihood and food security for a vast majority of low income, poor and vulnerable sections of the society, its role in poverty reduction is self evident. In fact, the experience of BRICKS indicates that a one percent growth in agriculture is at list two to three times more effective in reducing poverty than the same growth emanating from non agriculture sectors. Thus, agriculture has to be kept at the centre of any reforms agenda or planning process in order to make a significant dent on poverty and malnutrition, and to ensure long term food security for the poor.

Year	GDP	Share of Agriculture and allied sector	% share	Growth Rate
1955-56	333766	166906	50.01	-0.86
1960-61	410279	195482	47.65	6.74
1970-71	589787	245699	41.66	7.09
1980-81	798506	285015	35.69	12.89
1990-91	1347889	397971	29.53	4.02
2000-01	2342774	522795	23.27	2.67
2010-11	4937006	713477	14.45	7.69
2012-13	5503476	752746	13.68	1.79

Source : CSO, Advance Estimates.

Above table illustrate that, share of income from agriculture and its allied activities was 50.01 percent in 1955-56, it is decrease to 29.53 in 1991 and after implementation new economic policy it is continuously decreasing and it is reached to 13.68 percent in 2012-13. Whether in year 1955-56 growth rate of agricultural sector was -0.86 percent. After that it is continuously declined and eventually it is reached to 1.79 percent in 2012-13

The above analysis indicated that even somehow consistency in the quantitative growth of Indian agricultural development there is need to arrange some extra strategic efforts. Following steps were taken by the government to boost this sector

- a. Improving the system of agricultural marketing through the establishment of regulated markets and introducing a variety of measures.
- b. Initiation of steps to improve the economic condition of agricultural workers.
- c. Promotion of agricultural research and training to discover new high-yielding varieties of seeds, optimum utilization of soil and water resources, development of techniques for increasing productivity of soil, etc.

- d. To meet the demand for bringing in more crops into the purview of crop insurance extending its scope to cover all farmers and lowering the unit area of insurance
- e. A Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) was set up within NABARD in 1996-97 to provide credit for medium and minor irrigation and soil conservation projects.
- f. Most of the restrictions on agricultural exports have been removed.

**Conclusion:**

Most of the Indians are directly or indirectly depending on the agriculture. Some are directly attached with the farming and some other people are involved in doing business with these goods. Agriculture makes the highest contribution to India's GDP. Agriculture contributes almost about 13.7 percent to the country's GDP. Agriculture continues to be the backbone of Indian economy by providing livelihood for more than half of her total population. The primary sector of the economy also acts as a significant contributor to GDP. Changes elsewhere in the economy will also continue to put pressure for changes in the agricultural sector. It has been seen in the last few years that the input of the agriculture sector has been declining, but it is still the biggest contributor. Agriculture occupies a prominent position in Indian policymaking not only because of its contribution to GDP but also because of the large proportion of the population that is dependent on the sector for its livelihood. However it is clear that India's agricultural sector has made huge strides in developing its potential.

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