



CONDITION OF AGRICULTURE IN BIHAR: GROWTH STRATEGIES, TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Satyam Saurabh

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ABSTRACT

Since ages, India has been known as a Land of Peasants. Its because the Indian population has been engaged in the activity of Farming. Back into the history, if we closely observe, the most important source of livelihood of the Harappan people, of the Aryan population and of the pre-independent Indian mass was agriculture. Till this date also, more than 65 percentage of Indian population is involved in farming. The distribution of population in India can be observed as a function of certain agricultural conditions, some of the most important amongst them are :

- presence of fertile soil;
- abundance of pure water for irrigation;
- favorable climate for irrigation;

So, we can now understand why has there been a presence of dense population in states like Bihar, West Bengal, Orrisa, Uttar Pradesh in the East as well as North Eastern Indian states; Punjab and Haryana in the North Indian states. Its simply because of the presence of Fertile land (alluvial soil), and presence of water by rivers by the Ganges, Ravi, Satluz, Mahanadi, etc.. Rain also is a boon for these reasons. Mathematically, we can thus represent the above relation as:

$$\text{Population Density}^1 = f(\text{Fertile Soil}^2, \text{Water}^3, \text{Favorable Climate}^4)$$

Bihar is no exception according to the above deduction. Bihar is rich in terms of natural resources, has availability of fertile land which is irrigated by rivers like The Ganges, Gandak, Kosi. Thats the reason its the Third (3rd) most populated state of India. Earlier the agricultural production was in much better state compared to now. Some of the unfavorable conditions, including the unfavorable climatic as well as seasonal conditions glued with the non-scientific approach of farming has led to the deterioration of agriculture in Bihar, and hence the production followed a downward, negative trend. In Bihar, the percentage of population involved in agricultural activity is around 81%, still it is counted as the state affected by poverty in the worst manner. What Bihar needs is a well-planned, market driven based farming and also the implementation of new agricultural techniques which for sure would lead to the economic development of Bihar. The introduction of scientific methodologies and new advanced techniques of farming can increase the productivity and hence improve the economic condition of the farmers.

¹ Keyword : Population Density

² Keyword : Fertile Soil

³ Keyword : Water

⁴ Keyword : Favourable Climate

INTRODUCTION

Bihar can be seen geographically divided into two parts by the river Ganges. The Northern Part and the Southern Part. Because of the river Ganges, the nearby plains have been made fertile and are useful in the cultivation of a variety of crops. All these Gangetic regions are plain alluvial regions, which are very much fertile. The principal crops of Bihar are rice, wheat, maize, paddy, potato, sugarcane, tobacco, oil seeds, pulses, etc. Rice, maize and wheat are the major crops produced in Bihar. Although the State is rich in soil as well as water resources, its average yields of Rice, Maize, Wheat and Sugarcane are only about 32, 40, 44 and 38 percents of the potential yields, respectively. Bihar has the potential to establish itself as the top rank state in terms of the production of sugarcane. Presently, Bihar's share in the country's production is 4 to 4.5 percent and ranks 10th among the sugarcane producing

states in all over India. The districts of Bihar with their unique productive items are shown below in the given diagram.

(Fig. 1, Districts of Bihar representing the particular legend which is produced there in major quantity.)

Although in Bihar, we have a large number of cattle and other livestock, which can help farmers meet their daily needs and also help in meeting the demand of the market. The only point of concern is the health and the well being of these livestock.

On the other hand the availability of the water resources is a boon for the farmers dealing with the aquaculture. Fish, crabs, etc. and many other aquatic flora and fauna can be a good source of income. Just like the many costal states, the sea foods can be a good source of income, as the fishes, crabs are the preferred aquatic foods in demand in the market.



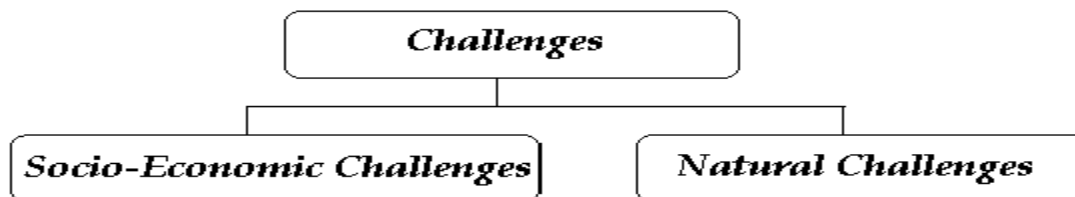
CHALLENGES & POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Bihar is a very poor state in terms of the per capita income of its population. The farmers here are far away from the modern advances introduced in the field of agricultural methodologies. They are also not aware of the scientific farming which can also be accomplished by the implementation of general day to day resources. The optimized utilization of land, cattle, and manure can change the course of growth from negative to the positive trend. The fact is that, the Bihar farmers not only face problems only because of the economic factor but also from the environmental factors. The natural calamities like the heavy rain, frequent rains and floods not only kill the crop and

wash away the farmers' efforts but also leave them in a severely miserable condition. We can point out the challenges faced by the farmers in Bihar. These challenges can be categorized into two parts, namely Socio-Economic Challenges, and Natural Challenges.

Socio-Economic Challenges

These type of challenges point toward the social as well as economic backwardness of the farmers. Because they are not economically sound, so they would no or nil knowledge of the scientific agriculture methodologies introduced and because of economic backwardness they would not be able to have access to new tools and advanced equipments used in farming. Farmers would be using the trivial, old age techniques as well as old tools of farming.



Use of scientifically produced manures & fertilizers, and of the seeds can give good production. Banks are now providing loan facilities to the farmers, but those who are aware of these facilities are countable in fingers. The remedy to this problem can be through the joint program by the state as well as central agencies, NGO's, etc. Its the responsibility of these agencies to make the farmers aware of the facilities, modern techniques, hybrid seeds, etc.

Natural Challenges

As can very easily be guessed from the name that these type of challenges can only be avoided but can not be win over. The problem of flood, and heavy rain can destroy the crops and can bring heavy economical loss. The weather forecast organizations can alert the farmers in advance of the possible coming natural problems, hence give the farmers to take proper step in selecting the type of crop which which productivity before the calamity hits. Government should construct dams and/or control the flow of water released by the Nepal. This can save lives as well as the crops of Bihar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For a prosperous Bihar, agriculture can only be the key to make the dream come true. These are the Bihari laborers who go to other states like Punjab, Haryana, Gujrat, etc. and lend their hand in the development of these states which today rank at the top in terms of overall development. What a day would be that one when these hands would shape their own state. Following recommendations can be useful for improving the condition of agricultural gap in Bihar. Some of the key points amongst them are:

- *Development and Maintenance of the Agricultural Infrastructure,*
- *Financial support to the farmers,*
- *Use of Scientific methodologies and techniques for agriculture,*
- *Use of hybrid seeds, artificial manures and fertilizers,*
- *Market Driven Farming of crops and entities,*
- *Revival of Old and establishment of new sugar mills, and*

- *An effective Disaster management unit.*

What the above mentioned points are trying to point out is that, if the effort of the farmers are met with right guidance in the wrapper of modern techniques and methodologies, can result into the increased productivity of the state. At the core of all these things lies the development of the agricultural infrastructure. The peasants need to be made aware of the modern techniques introduced in the farming, use of modern, scientifically prepared seeds which give a high yield. Also the peasants have to be made aware of the demands of the market. If the production of the appropriate crop fulfills the prevalent demand of the market, then the farmers can have good income generation. The natural calamities although cannot be stopped from occurring, but the damages possibly to be caused by them can be avoided. The Risk and Disaster management team has to all time alert, to forewarn the farmers as well as the general public of the possible natural calamity. The intensity of harm from these calamities can be reduced considerably. Together with these things, if the sugar mill factories are restarted and also new sugar mills are set up, then the sugar production can be of the top level in all over India, as Bihar is the state where the soil is of such a quality that can only support high level of sugar cane production. The production of sugarcane and the establishment of sugar mills can revolutionize the growth and development of farmers and farming style in Bihar. What Bihar needs is a strong determination backed up with modern scientific techniques glued with religiously done effort.

CONCLUSION

Bihar is rich in terms of man power, natural resources, agricultural fertile land, abundance of water supply, but its still lagging compared to those states which lack these bliss. Only major possible reason for all these can be the socio-economic backwardness. The farmers are not aware of the new scientifically introduced methodologies. The introduction of hybrid crop seeds are far away from the reach of farmer. Economical backwardness, illiteracy, unawareness, and slackness from the side of Government makes the condition even more worse. If the government agencies are going to tighten their belt then all the agricultural



problems can be resolved. We need to understand what the states like Punjab and Haryana government implemented, which made their state prosperous and what our government agencies missed, which broke the only backbone (agriculture) of our state, Bihar. We need to reconsider about our position, and need to take proper steps to rectify these mistakes and make our state prosper and grow. If proper care, guidance and help is given to the farmers, then no doubt the conditions of the miserable farmers can be improved. With proper guidance and implementation of modern techniques of farming the state can surprisingly present an unmatched productivity. If all goes well with a mix of religiously done good effort in farming, **Bihar can become the “Granary Of India”**.

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