

EMERGING ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING EXTENSION IN INDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF WTO AND GLOBALIZATION

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The term 'Agricultural Marketing Extension' (AME), often perceived as "Market Oriented Agricultural Extension" (MOAE), is quite different from "Marketing of Agricultural Extension" (MAE). While the former implies broadening the scope of existing agricultural extension system oriented towards enhancement of agricultural production in physical terms, the existing extension system has been devised and operationalized at the beginning of planned era, with the sole objective of bridging the huge demand supply gap existed with respect to various agricultural commodities. For all these years, the orientation remained more or less the same with changes in extension strategies in transferring the technologies.

The last decade witnessed shift in the development strategies leading to changes in consumer preferences and making alternative choices available to the consumers. The consumer goods sector was quick to respond to these changes and introduced required re-orientation in the strategies at macro level, but agricultural sector was very slow to respond in this respect which may be attribute to such factors as agro-climatic conditions, soil-crop relationship, the gestation period needed in the evolution and dissemination of technological interventions and a host of other socio-economic factors.

In the wake of economic liberalization initiated in 1991 and our accession to WTO in 1995 leading to globalization, the question of economic return from agricultural activities has acquired added importance. The market forces are no more confined to the domestic territory. The process of globalization of trade, liberalization of economy and the revolution in information technology gave rise to the concept of *global village*. Hence, the need for re-orienting our agricultural extension system to meet the emerging challenges and to grab the ensuing opportunities has become a matter of paramount importance. Consequently, both 'Market-Oriented Agricultural Extension' and 'Marketing of Agricultural Extension' approaches have assumed very high significance. However, this paper focuses mainly on the issues related to 'market oriented agricultural extension, which remained hitherto a less priority area for the managers of agricultural extension.

Indian Agriculture has registered spectacular progress as a result of strategic approaches based on generation and dissemination of agricultural technologies, network of agricultural institutions and policy interventions. By all norms, these approaches paid rich dividend to the agricultural sector in terms of enhancement in quantity and quality of agricultural products. Today, Indian agriculture has become vibrant, buoyant and resilient as a result of Green Revolution

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in food crops production, White Revolution in milk and milk products, Blue Revolution in fish and marine production and Yellow Revolution in oilseed crops production. The commodity based Technology Missions also helped to accelerate the process of growth in the production of commodities like oilseeds, pulses, etc.

Today, India is the largest producer of milk, jute, tea and pulses and second in wheat, rice, groundnut, vegetables, fruits, onion, sugarcane, tobacco, etc. in the world. We have transformed our agriculture from a deficient to a surplus one in many agricultural products. It is not only that the absolute production of these commodities has gone up, but the per capita availability of most of these has also increased tremendously. Agricultural technology which brought many revolutions is now set for a Rainbow Revolution or Ever-green Revolution. However, adequate efforts have not been made to market the entire increased surplus produce efficiently, which has created new problems in agricultural marketing.

In the wake of economic liberalization, globalization of trade & revolution in IT, there is a need to re-orient agricultural extension system to meet the emerging challenges in agricultural marketing.

MARKETING POLICY FRAMEWORK—A RETROSPECT :

Growth of Agricultural Marketing—The current agricultural marketing policy framework and institutional structure is the outcome of different experimentations carried out at different points of time. The history of government intervention in agricultural marketing goes back to the British time. The extent and form of interventions, however, changed over the period in response to the problems experienced and solutions attempted.

Regulation of the Practices of Buying and Selling was the First attempt Introduced by the Government for protecting the interests of some sections of the society viz., users of agro-raw materials, farmers and consumers. The overriding concern of agricultural marketing during pre-independence period to protect the interests of the industry, was substituted by the concern for consumers as well as for the farmers in the post-independence era.

In terms of market regulation, raw cotton was the first farm product to attract the attention of the government. In 1886, under the Hyderabad Residency Order, the first regulated market (Karanjia Cotton Market) was established in the country to arrange the supply of pure cotton at reasonable prices to the textile mills in Manchester (UK). The first legislation, the Berar Cotton and Grain Market Act of 1897, empowered the British Resident to declare any place in the assigned district a market for the sale and purchase of agricultural produce and to constitute a committee to supervise the regulated market. This Act became a model for application elsewhere: the Indian Cotton Committee in 1917 also recommended the regulation of cotton markets in India and in 1927, the Government of Bombay Province enacted the Bombay Cotton Market Act to evolve fair market practices.

An important Landmark in the agricultural marketing scene in the country was the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) which called for the regulation of marketing practices and establishment of regulated markets; these were subsequently endorsed by the Central Banking Enquiry Committee in 1931. In 1935, a Central Marketing Department, later renamed as Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI), was established for advising the government on improvement of primary agricultural produce markets. In 1938,

the Directorate circulated a Model Bill among the States. Though, this led to the enactment of legislation in many states for the regulation of agricultural produce markets, not much headway was made till independence. Since then, the regulation programme got momentum and the number of regulated markets went upto 5695 by March, 1985 and further to 6836 by March, 1995.

Though agricultural marketing is a State subject, the Government of India has been playing a crucial role in terms of laying down general policy framework, prescribing quality standards and providing technical and financial support to the States for creating infrastructure and administrative set-up. The DMI, apart from encouraging the expansion of regulation programme, carried out commodity surveys, promoted grading and standardization of farm products and their derivatives, improved the level of market information and intelligence network and upgraded the skills of marketing personnel by conducting training programmes for them. With the expansion in the regulation programme, **agricultural marketing boards were established and separate agricultural marketing departments were created in several States.** Most of the wholesale assembling markets have been brought under the ambit of the regulation programme.

The basic objective of these interventions in agricultural marketing was to ensure remunerative prices to the growers and to prevent exploitation and malpractices by the intermediaries. These programmes paid rich dividend to the agricultural sector in terms of hike in agricultural production.

EMERGENCE OF WTO :

The General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) came into effect on 1.1.1948 with 23 member countries including India. Gradually many other countries joined GATT. The GATT was formed with five-fold objectives: (i) to avoid discrimination in trade between nations; (ii) to prohibit quantitative restrictions in trade among nations; (iii) to provide a stable basis for trade; (iv) to provide a platform for consultation among nations on matters related to trade, and (v) to foster multilateral trade.

In all 8 rounds of talks were held under GATT, successively at different places viz. *Geneva* in 1947; *Annecy (France)* in 1949; *Torquay (England)* in 1951; *Geneva* in 1956; *Geneva* in 1960-61; *Geneva-Kennedy* round in 1964-67; *Tokyo* in 1973-79; and *Uruguay (South America)* in 1985-95.

THE GATT 1994 :

The 8th round of GATT negotiations among 110 nations, which continued for 2631 days, is the largest ever-bargaining exercise attempted in human history to streamline multinational trade practices. The key principle of GATT embodies each signatory to commit itself to treat all other signatories according to the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) standard. The MFN clause is the essence of GATT which imposes on the contracting parties an obligation to grant each other equality of treatment and outlaws the practice of discrimination in matters related to trade. Out of the 8 rounds of GATT negotiations held since 1948, the first six rounds concentrated on reducing tariffs. The seventh round moved on to tackle non-tariff barriers.

With only 23 member countries in 1948, GATT has now 146 countries accounting for more than 90 per cent of the world trade. Accession of new members requires a two-third majority. No country has the veto power. The seemingly democratic structure of GATT, however, hides the real power of U.S., EC and Japan which influence the course of negotiation.

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WTO AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE (AOA) :

The **Dunkel proposal**, emerged out of 8th round of negotiation, contained institution of an apex organization to further negotiate and settle issues between countries on multinational trade. The emerging set-up, known as World Trade Organization (WTO) came into force during mid-nineties. Agriculture, which was not an item of negotiation under GATT, was taken up for the first time in 8th round held at Uruguay (1985-95) and separate agreement on agriculture was signed by member countries in 1994 as a part of the final act of multilateral trade regulations which came into force on 1.1.1995. The major agreements on agriculture under WTO are briefly discussed below:

(i) Market Access—The replacement of all non-tariff barriers such as quantitative restriction, export-import licensing etc. by tariffication to provide equal level playing ground for all the players and also fixing of a minimum level of import of agricultural commodities by the member countries are important components of market access. All the tariffs taken together are to be reduced to a simple average level of 36 per cent over six years by developed countries and 24 per cent over ten years by developing countries under the clause on tariffication. However, exemptions are allowed to countries with very poor balance of payment situation and India is among them. Still, India has undertaken a commitment to bind its tariffs on primary agricultural products by 100 per cent, processed foods by 150 per cent and edible oils by 300 per cent. Similarly, the import level prevailed in 1986-88 period is to be maintained by the member countries and wherever the level of import is negligible, the minimum import access should not be less than 3 per cent of domestic consumption. The level of imports were required to be raised from 3 to 5 per cent upto 2000 by developed countries and upto 2004 by developing countries. The market access provision is not applicable to traditional staple food for developing countries.

(ii) Domestic Support—Since the level of domestic support in agricultural sector has gone up drastically in many countries, unacceptable trade support to the farmers was opposed by developed countries. The mechanism being put forward under the label 'Aggregate Measure of Support' (AMS) is a means of quantifying the aggregate value of domestic support or subsidy given to each category of farmers.

The AMS has two components : (a) product specific subsidy (like minimum support price to crops) and (b) non-product specific subsidy (like subsidy to power, fertilizer, irrigation etc.). Reduction in AMS was envisaged for developed and developing countries. Besides, exceptions were allowed for support measures such as (i) Government assistance for research, training, domestic and public support for food security (buffer stock), relief for natural disasters, environmental assistance etc. which is called **Green Box Measures**, (ii) Investment subsidies, available to agriculture in developing countries, and agricultural input services to low income and resource constrained group of producers. It is called **S&D Box** Special and Differential Treatment and (iii) Where the total Government support is less than 10 per cent of agricultural GDP, reducing the level of support by the developing countries was not needed. It is called **Blue Box Measures**.

(iii) Export Subsidy—The Agreement is intended to reduce several types of export subsidies being allowed mostly by the developed countries. India, does not have any major subsidy on

export. However, developing countries are free to allow export-based subsidy like export marketing cost, domestic and international transport and freight charges etc. For industrial products, provisions existed for prohibition of export subsidies under the earlier GATT agreement.

The export subsidy being allowed by the developed countries was a major factor in depressing and destabilizing world market prices for agricultural commodities. Therefore, the Eighth round of negotiation registered radical departure from the earlier GATT clause in the area of agricultural export subsidies to a level of 36 per cent below the 1986-90 base period level over six years of implementation period. The quantity of subsidized export is to be reduced by 21 per cent over the same period. In the case of developing countries, the reductions are two-third of those of the developed countries over a period of ten years. No such reduction is required by the least developed countries.

(iv) Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Measures (SPS)—The agreement concerns the application of sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures for food safety and animal and plant health regulations. The agreement recognizes the right of the governments to such measures but they are to be applied only to the extent necessary to protect human, animal and plant life or health. However, these should not be arbitrarily or unjustifiably applied between members where identical or similar conditions prevail. In order to harmonize sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures on as wide a basis as possible, members are encouraged to base their measures on international standards, guidelines and recommendations, important of which are listed below:

- ❖ Principles of plant quarantine as related to international trade, 1995.
- ❖ Guidelines for post risk analysis, 1995.
- ❖ Code of conduct for the import and release of exotic biological control agents, 1995.
- ❖ Requirements for the establishments of pest free areas, 1995.
- ❖ Determination of pest status in an area, 1998.
- ❖ Guidelines for pest eradication programmes, 1998.
- ❖ Guidelines of phyto-sanitary certificates.
- ❖ Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests.
- ❖ Guidelines for surveillance for specific pests; citrus canker.
- ❖ ISPM No.2 Guidelines for pest risk analysis
- ❖ Systems approaches for risk management
- ❖ Pest listing

(v) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)—It seeks to ensure that technical negotiations and standards, as well as testing and certification procedures do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade. However, it recognizes that countries have the right to establish protection, at levels they consider appropriate. The agreement encourages countries to use international standards but does not require them to change their levels of protection as a result of standardization.

(vi) Agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)—The agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) calls for introducing national treatment for foreign investment and removal of quantitative restrictions. It identifies five investment measures which are inconsistent with the GATT provisions. These are measures which impose on the foreign investors the obligation to use local inputs; to produce for exports as a condition to obtain imported goods as inputs; to balance foreign exchange out go on importing inputs with foreign

exchange earnings through export; and not to export more than a specified proportion of the local production.

(vii) **Other Agreements**—There are other agreements under WTO related directly or indirectly to agriculture which include agreement on customs valuation, pre-shipment inspection, import licensing procedures, safeguards, intellectual property rights (IPRs), etc.

EXIM POLICY :

The commerce minister presented the **new export-import policy for five years 1997-2002 on March 31, 1997**. The main objectives of the policy were :-

- (i) To accelerate the country's transition to a globally oriented vibrant economy to derive maximum benefits from expanding global market opportunities.
- (ii) To stimulate sustained economic growth by providing access to essential raw materials, intermediate components, consumables and capital goods required in augmenting production.
- (iii) To enhance the technological strength and efficiency of Indian agriculture, industry and services and improving their competitiveness while generating new employment opportunities and encourage the attainment of internationally accepted standards of quality.
- (iv) To provide consumers with good quality products at reasonable prices.

EXIM Policy 2002-07 contains policies in foreign trade i.e. with respect to import and export. Adequate attention has been given to export production. The Exim policy 2002-07 came into existence w.e.f. 1.4.02 and shall remain valid up to 31.3.07 (co-terminus with 10th FYP). It is sub-ordinate of foreign trade Act 1992.

The thrusts of final EXIM policy 2002-07 announced by Govt. of India are : To capture 1 % of global share of trade by 2007 from the present 0.67% ; Export of services and goods at internationally competitive prices & Involvement of State Govt. is anticipated.

Agricultural Export Zones (AEZ)—It is a part of our EXIM policy. With a view to promote agricultural export from the country and remunerative returns to the farming community in a sustained manner, AEZ would be set up for end to end development for export of specific products from a geographically contiguous area. AEZ would be identified by the State Government who may evolve a comprehensive package of services provided by all State Government agencies, State Agricultural Universities and all institutions and agencies of the Union Government for intensive delivery in these zones. Such services which would be managed and coordinated by State Government would include provision of pre and post harvest treatment and operations, plant protection, processing, packaging, storage and related research and development etc. APEDA will supplement, within its schemes and provision, efforts of State Government for facilitating such exports.

Units in AEZ would be entitled for all the facilities available for export of goods in terms of provisions of the respective schemes. The Central Government aims to encourage manufactures and exporters to attain internationally accepted standards of quality for their products.

WTO AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING :

There has been radical changes over the years in the marketing of agricultural commodities. So long as the supply of agricultural commodities through domestic production did not outrun the demand, and the free import was restricted, producers enjoyed a fair degree of advantage in

freely selling their products at remunerative prices amidst a strong price protection mechanism through minimum support price policies. Occasional problems in marketing of agricultural commodities like sugarcane, vegetables and coarse cereals were reported in different states but these were resolved with mass movement and timely political intervention. Thus, the *production-oriented agricultural marketing* dominated the country for quite a long period. However, the question pertaining to the realization of remunerative prices and net gains from agriculture continued to be disputable for all these years.

The new economic policies implemented from early nineties and the process of globalization initiated from mid-nineties have thrown a series of new challenges on Indian agriculture. Agriculture sector is becoming more and more commercialized. It is confronted by forces both within and outside the country. So also, it is open for opportunities from within and outside the country.

The new export-import policies (EXIM policy 2002-07) made Indian agriculture more volatile and the concern for economic return is becoming the central consideration in place of increased production alone. In other words, the emerging global market forces are now very crucial for Indian agriculture. In fact the planning for production viz. 'what is to be produced' and 'how much to produce' has to take its thread from the market. Hence, the market-oriented agricultural extension has become the need of the time.

The **supply pool** for agricultural commodities is no more confined to domestic production alone. The countries having competitive edge in cost of production are looking for opportunities to dump their output anywhere in the world where it is produced less efficiently. Despite our complex and diversified agriculture, it is yet to pass the test for comparative advantage in terms of cost effectiveness of many important commodities. Unless, we succeed in inducing cost-effectiveness having locational advantage, it may not be possible for us to harness the benefits of WTO through export of agricultural commodities. Besides, we have to face a number of emerging threats including unrealized opportunities in agricultural marketing; unwarranted imports by other countries; under-exploited export opportunities for Indian products and distortion in domestic markets.

The planning for production- 'what is to be produced' and 'how much to produce' has to take its thread from the market.

CHANGING CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION :

Challenges offered by sustainability (depleting natural resources) and trade fronts, World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement, the changing nature of agricultural technology (from public to private goods), rapid developments in IT and a changing development agenda (stakeholder participation, decentralization and faster reduction of poverty) have prompted a re-evaluation of the role of extension in many countries, including to a limited extent in India.

Politico-economic context of farmer decision-making—Public expenditures on agricultural extension and its control have been justified on the ground that support for agriculture leads to reduced food prices and increased food security, which benefit the whole population. More recently, additional rationales were offered for public extension which include poverty alleviation, employment creation, environmental conservation, etc. although these have not been explicitly mentioned in Indian policy documents. In a climate of market liberalization for the maintenance of costly public extension systems, important questions are raised as to who should

fund and deliver extension particularly agricultural extension which has to play various roles ranging from provider to coordinator, facilitator, arbitrator, regulator and guarantor.

Changing needs of Information and Advisory Support—Farmers need to be supported with information, knowledge and the skills to adopt improved technologies that result in improved farming characterised as productivity enhancing, vulnerability reducing, employment creating and surplus generating for improving the livelihood in a sustainable fashion. However, the requirements of farmers and rural families go beyond agricultural production technologies following increasing penetration of markets into rural areas and the emergent need to tailor products to stringent market requirements.

The extension support must now address a broader range of farmer objectives which inter alia include : choice of technological options appropriate to available land, capital, labour and knowledge resources; management of technologies, such as the optimal use of new inputs; decisions about how and when to change enterprise or farming system, such as diversifying from crop production to mixed farming or vegetable or animal production; assessing both domestic and foreign market demand for products and product quality criteria within these markets, such as food safety and organic criteria; sourcing reputable suppliers of inputs and forging trust-based alliances with them; cooperation between small-scale producers to increase their presence and power in the market; sourcing readily accessible and accurate information on an on-going basis; assessing the feasibility of off-farm and non-farm income generation opportunities to provide long-term benefits; and assessing the implications of farm enterprise in relation to changing policies on input subsidies and trade liberalization.

Besides, publicly funded extension in India in the 1990s added new goals of natural resource management (especially watershed management, participatory irrigation management, etc.) and diversification. However, the need for a group approach to extension and the importance of producer groups (farmer interest groups, commodity associations etc.) for higher returns through assured market is yet not recognized. Moreover, many of these changes remained confined to planning and rhetoric. Reducing poverty, or the vulnerability of the farmer has never been explicitly stated as a goal of extension, nor there exist any specific extension programme that target the marketing needs of the farmers.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING EXTENSION :

As India has entered in global market and signed WTO, it is necessary to change our outlook on agricultural marketing system. It is all the more important keeping in view Exim Policy, existing dynamics in domestic markets and the agricultural policy. Market oriented agricultural extension is the need of the time, which is a real challenge for our public sector dominated agricultural extension system. Following factors prompt us for a sound agricultural marketing extension for the sustainable agricultural development:

- (i) **Farmer-Agro-industry-Consumer Linkages**—There is a need to have strong linkage between agricultural marketing and agricultural production system as ‘what to produce’, ‘how much to produce’ and ‘how to produce’.
- (ii) **Shift in Physical Output to Value Realization**—Ensuing shift in the approach from increased physical output to increased value realization by the producers is the need of the time.

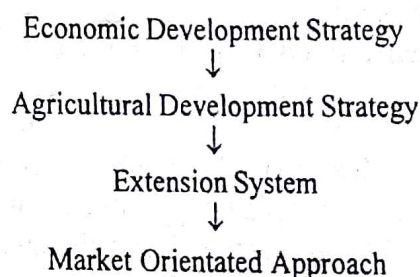
- (iii) **Agro-processing and Value Addition of Agricultural Produce**—India has great potential for expanding its export of processed products in view of the increasing production of fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meat and marine products, etc. Processing facility for such commodities need to be augmented.
- (iv) **Grading and Packing**—In view of tremendous potential for export of fruits and vegetables, it is necessary to give greater attention to grading and packaging of these commodities by creating required infrastructural support.
- (v) **Diversification of Agriculture**—India has large inherent potentials for diversification and scope to introduce new areas in agricultural production such as hi-tech horticulture, precision farming, organic farming, etc.
- (vi) **Augmented Infrastructural Facilities**—A strong infrastructural support has to be developed in terms of cold storage chains, transport, credit support, market information and insurance to fully exploit opportunities.
- (vii) **Cost-Effectiveness**—The country's agriculture has to become more cost-effective to meet the growing challenges and opportunities arising out of WTO agreements and the consequent globalization impacts. For this, future growth of agriculture has not only be yield based but should be tilted towards ensured demand in the national and international market.
- (viii) **Export Promotion**—There is a great need to orient our agricultural production system for enhanced export promotion.
- (ix) **Global Market Research and Information Centre**—An apex centre at the national level for market research, international price analysis, global demand, availability and also to pass on this information to the concerning authorities is very much required.
- (x) **Upgrading of Human Resource Through Trainings**—There is a need to train the farmers in the areas like product planning, marketing information, preparation of produce for marketing, improved marketing practices, rules and regulations, input-marketing, etc.
- (xi) **Involvement of Private Sector**—Under the atmosphere of liberalization and economic reforms in the country, efforts should be made to involve private sector in creating necessary marketing infrastructures.
- (xii) **Marketing Information Network**—Easy access to timely and relevant information to farmers, traders, policy planners and other marketing agencies to enable them to have proper marketing decisions is very much needed. Application of IT in this area is still a mis-link.
- (xiii) **Marketing of Agro-inputs**—Regarding marketing of agro-inputs like seeds, it is necessary to streamline and simplify seed certification procedures, modify the Seed Act and enforce it strictly, create an efficient seed marketing and delivery system and encourage greater participation of private sector, cooperatives and NGOs in the production and distribution of seeds.
- (xiv) **Complex Clauses on Agreement on Agriculture Under WTO**—The implication of clause on required minimum import, reduction in subsidy under 'Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS)' causing hike in input prices and subsequent increase in the cost of production of agricultural commodities; reduction in export subsidy in developed countries and to harness the benefit of comparative advantage through export for which we have cost-effective edge as compared to other countries; the sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures leading to quality assurance in exportable commodities and other clauses are to be well perceived at national, state, regional, village and farm level.

- (xv) **Declared EXIM Policy (2002-07) by Government of India**—The knowledge on freely exportable and importable commodities, restricted as well as non-exportable/importable commodities must penetrate at various levels as it has implication on the marketing of agricultural products.

The new economic environment will necessitate SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) for various marketing issues. Similarly, we have to enter in quality management system through trade support services i.e. ISO series. Also time is to popularize “MADE IN INDIA” brand in the world market using information technology.

SUGGESTED MODEL OF MARKET ORIENTED AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION:

It is beyond the capability of any extension system to come out with a unified model to resolve all the problems of such a complex and diversified agricultural system prevalent in the country. It is recognized that approaches like farmers participation, institutional linkages, system management approach, policy reforms, capacity building, empowerment of farmers and farm women, use of media and information technology and a host of other suggestive approaches may go a long way in making our extension system more vibrant. We can perceive the market oriented extension system as a sub-set of overall economic development strategy as shown below:-



The desired goals of Indian agriculture should include self-reliance, food security, nutritional security, conservation of bio-diversity, environmental safety, risk minimization, sustainability, export orientation, growth with stability, etc.

The available resources at our disposal to achieve these goals include human, land, water, climate, energy, agricultural research system, agricultural extension system, agricultural infrastructure, input delivery system, output marketing, etc.

The broad agricultural activities may consist of crop production (all commodities), livestock production, agro-processing and agricultural services.

The following steps are suggested for market oriented agricultural extension strategy:

- (i) Identify all agricultural activities which are compatible to natural and man-made resources of the area.
- (ii) Short-list agricultural activities which are compatible to natural and man-made resources and satisfy as many as possible stipulated goals.
- (iii) Out of (ii) short list the activities which produce demand-driven commodities having accessible output markets.
- (iv) Promote such short listed activities with technological and other extension support.

It is Important to Popularize “MADE IN INDIA” Brand in the World Market using Information Technology.

The agricultural development strategy in the present context must ensure adequate interface of the resource base including market infrastructure with the agricultural activities while striving to achieve the set desired goals. Such an approach may ensure sustainable development of agriculture where-ever market orientation is a feasible option.

SUMMARY :

The new domestic economic policies and the international trade regime have thrown a lot of challenges for economic development in general and agriculture development in particular. Besides, there has been a paradigm shift both in the development goals and strategic approaches for accelerating the process of development. During the planned era, process of agricultural development was directed solely towards achieving self-reliance in agriculture and therefore all plans, strategies, and programmes including mechanism for institutional linkages were geared up towards achieving enhanced agricultural production. However, in subsequent plans, the concept of food security, which implies both availability and accessibility in food supply including equity in purchasing power, became a matter of serious consideration. Equally important has been the nutritional security concept which warrants bio-diversity conservation and diversification of agriculture. Environmental safety is also emerging as a non-compromising goal which again manifests the importance of areas like organic farming, green-food production, precision farming, etc. The sustainable agriculture is yet another concept of vital importance. The need to induct export orientation as a motive in our agricultural system prompts us to attach adequate importance to quality aspect and value addition to our agricultural products.

The agricultural extension strategy initiated to achieve self-reliance in agriculture has to be re-oriented and made market-centered. Such a shift in extension strategy has become inevitable owing mainly to strong backward linkage that agricultural marketing has with agricultural production as 'what to produce' and 'how much to produce'; ensuing shift in the approach from increased physical output to increased value realization by the producers; changes in agro-processing and value addition for agricultural products; potentials for diversification and new areas in agricultural production such as hi-tech horticulture, precision farming organic farming etc; emergence of glut in market in the wake of surplus production of certain agricultural commodities; complex clauses on WTO agreement; declared EXIM policy (2002-07) by the Government of India, listing freely exportable and importable commodities (restricted as well as non-exportable/importable commodities) and lack of accessibility to Information Technologies due to vast area, illiteracy and the like.

Friends, in a competitive environment of today and in the wake of rising expectations from the consumers, the hall-mark of coming decades will be quality, innovations and efficiency in every sphere of business activity. By setting standards and enforcing commercial laws, government has fostered economic growth and provided the framework within which a modern economy can function. It is high time that we take stock of the existing situation, improve upon it, adopt and adapt it according to the exigencies of the circumstances. We are running a race and we must run faster in order to improve our relative position in the global market.

I am sure deliberations made in this congress would certainly act as a lighthouse for us to move ahead in the right path for meeting the global competitiveness in the agricultural sector.

-Jai Hind

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