



## BOOK REVIEW

**Current Issues in Indian Agriculture** by Jagannath Lenka. 2010. Serials Publications, Ansari road, Daryaganj, New Delhi. Pp.295. price, Rs.895.

The book is an edited volume based on papers presented in the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Indian Econometric Society organized by the Central University, Hyderabad and invited papers from the distinguished scholars. These papers highlight current agricultural issues relating to farmer's suicide, employment growth, productivity, technology, diversification, finance and market. It is expected that the book will be useful to the academics, researchers and the general readers interested in agricultural economics.

The present volume is an attempt to bring to the fore some of the inherent and recent issues in the agricultural sector. The author has selected fifteen papers for this volume which were presented by different scholars in the conference.

The first paper Agrarian Scenario in Post Reform India. A Story of Distress, Despair and Death by Srijit Mishra, has highlighted the complex picture of the present agrarian society. He is of the view that as per the 2003 assessment 40% of the farmers do not want to continue in the profession. They foresee a life of poverty and they would like to get out of this. The surge in farmer's suicides which is a symptomatic of a larger agrarian crisis seems to be spreading. The post reform agrarian scenario has been a story of distress, despair and death. For this he has suggested some good solutions like policy intervention should work independently to address all possible risks, farmers need support system from the state government, additional employment opportunities with good wage rate etc.

The next chapter Agricultural employment in India in Post Reform Period by Nayak and Pattanaik has focused on the issue of employment in agriculture sector which is on the decline in the post reform period which is of high concern.

The paper titled Agricultural Development in Haryana: An Analytical View has given a good picture of past and present of agricultural sector in Haryana. The authors of this paper Somra and Kuldeep concluded that the pattern of agricultural development among districts in the state largely goes in the favour of more developed districts; there seems considerable unevenness in the level of inter-district disparities of irrigation benefit in Haryana. Hence the development of agriculture in the state reveals the need for pulling up the agricultural economy and setting it on a path of sustained growth.

It is warranted to identify the reasons for the variations in agricultural income across the states for achieving equitable growth of income and employment in the rural farm sector. Therefore, papers four and five examine the extent of disparity existing in the agricultural sector across the fifteen major states of India, identifies the major factors in explaining this disparity and finally suggests policy interventions to narrow down the inequality among regions.

The sixth and seventh contributions are based on the study of the specific states respectively. In the paper Development of Agro-Based Orissa, Minati Malik has put an emphasis on Agro-Based industries that not only make use of local resources but also help generating employment and output catering to local demand and demand from outside. Raju Mandal in his paper Factors Behind the Extent of Crop Diversification in the Plains of Assam: A Spatial Analysis, has also very briefly described the policy implications that adequate steps should be taken to develop the irrigation infrastructure in the state to facilitate diversification of crops.

The eighth paper Dynamics of Cropping Pattern in Kerala Analysis by K.P. Mani has made an attempt to examine the spatial and inter-temporal shifts in cropping pattern in Kerala and the determinants causing the shift. The whole study is based on the secondary data collected for the purpose.

The author of the book has himself contributed a paper titled Crop Diversification in Orissa : An Econometric Analysis as paper ninth. In this paper he has elaborated that there is crop concentration rather than crop diversification in the state. Even after more than one and a half decades of economic reforms, commercial crops have not made any dent in the state except in some districts.

The next paper on Fertilizer Use and Its Constraints in Paddy Cultivation: A study on Madurai District is authored by S.N. Jothi, who has focused on the various uses of fertilizer and its efficient use in the agriculture sector.

The eleventh paper by Mani, Balchandran, Shah and Pandit has focused on technological change and factor substitution in Indian agriculture. This paper give us a feel of the present day needs because new technology is emerging to cover the hitherto uncovered crops, and regions uncovered or poorly covered by the new technology. If this trend in technology spread is consciously encouraged as a policy measure, the economy could be back on the dynamic growth path over the coming decades.

The main objective of the twelfth paper authored by Surath Nayak is to quantify the effect of education and skill on economic efficiency coupled with technical and allocative efficiency in the aquatic farms.

In paper thirteen, the author has very beautifully described the price dynamics in wheat market. The next paper, A valuation of Determinant and Benefits of Co-operative led Contract Farming: a case study of sugarcane cultivation in Orissa by B.B. Swain focuses on the uncertainty existing in the market in respect to sugarcane and for this company should procure the whole amount of sugarcane produced by the farmers at the right time.

Patra and Sahu in his paper Marketed Surplus Black Gram says that the variation in marketed and marketable surplus for different classes of households has significant influence on the availability of food grains.

On the whole the book is informative and provides a good picture on Indian agriculture. This will be very useful for all the people working in this sector.

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