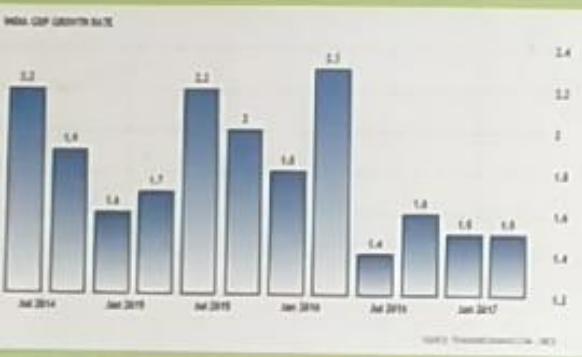


Emerging Issues in India



Editor
Ravinder Singh

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Problems of Punjab Agriculture

Dr. Manita Jaiswal

1. Introduction

Technological changes play catalytic role in the development of an economy. Technological changes bring rise in per capita income and standard of living of the people either by some increase in per unit of output or by creating more output by given amount of input. In other words technological changes refer to change in input output relation of production activities. The importance of agriculture sector in the process of economic development is indispensable. In the recognition of this fact, Indian planners have emphasized on the development of agriculture and allied sector right from beginning of the economic planning process in India. In the last few years, Indian agriculture has significantly contributed in terms of income and employment generation. Even today 24 percent of the total GDP originates from the agriculture sector and 45 percent people find direct and indirect employment in the agriculture in India. Internal evidence is indicative of the fact that agriculture revolution has alarming signs for the country also.

Falling water table and ground water overdraft has become a serious problem in the state. Unplanned and unmeasured ground water extraction can cause considerable damage to the ecologies. Literary reviews on the topic suggest that over doses of pesticides and chemicals created poisoning effects on approximately thirty thousand workers in Punjab. The indiscriminate use of pesticides in agriculture has created health and environmental problems in Punjab. In this the very human existence of mankind is facing extreme danger.

Punjab is top state in the consumption of chemical fertilizers and pesticides per hectare. Presently in Punjab only 1.67 percent of geographical area is consuming 16 percent of pesticides and more than 9.2 percent of chemical fertilizers in India. The paper is an attempt to analyze ecological fallout of agriculture model followed by the state.

2. Problem of Depleting Ground Water Resources

Unplanned and unmeasured ground water extraction can cause considerable damage to fragile ecologies. Agriculture in Punjab is primarily an artificial irrigation based. Intensive cultivation on wheat, rice has lead to a serious imbalance in use and availability of ground water. With ever growing demand of the country, food grain production has been increased by increasing productivity through intensive use of water. The adoption of this strategy raised serious imbalance in the use and availability of ground water resources. Table (1) is indicative of the fact that only 27.38 percent of the total area is irrigated by surface water or canals and rest of the area than 70 percent area is irrigated by tube-wells and wells. The historical dependence on canals as other sources of surface water has gradually being reduced in favor of groundwater. In present there are only two major sources of irrigation, canals and tube wells.

On the eve of Green Revolution, there was an equal dependence on both the sources of irrigation. The net area irrigated came down to 44.53 in the year 1970-71 to 42.23 percent in 1980-1981. It slightly rose to 42.47 percent in the year 1990-91. It has drastically gone down to 24.92 percent at the end of decade of 2003 and in 2006-07 and 2009-10 it has gone down to 21.5 percent and 27.38 percent respectively. On the other hand, because of easy availability of electricity or free electricity, the dependence on groundwater has drastically increased especially during the summer months.

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