

Indian Agriculture Reinvigorating The Sector



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Agriculture in India has gone through significant transformation and several game changers have emerged in the Indian agriculture ecosystem that have contributed to the growth and development of the sector. Let us discuss the game changers in Indian agriculture ecosystem and how they are revolutionizing the sector.

Micro Irrigation Systems: Micro irrigation systems have revolutionized the way farmers use water for irrigation. These systems deliver water directly to the roots of crops, reducing water wastage and increasing crop yield. Micro irrigation systems have played a significant role in drought-prone areas, where water is scarce.

Precision Farming: Precision farming involves using sensors and other advanced equipment to monitor and manage crops. With the help of precision farming, farmers can optimize the use of resources

such as water, fertilizer, and pesticides. It also helps in reducing the environmental impact of agriculture and increases the yield of crops. Companies like Mahindra and Mahindra and John Deere are providing precision farming solutions to farmers in India.

Organic Farming: Organic farming has emerged as a game changer in the Indian agriculture ecosystem. Organic farming practices promote the use of natural fertilizers and pesticides, which are environmentally friendly and reduce the health risks associated with chemical-based agriculture. Organic farming has also provided an opportunity for small farmers to enter the market and increase their income. Organic farming involves the use of natural resources and avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

Contract Farming: Contract farming is a game changer for small farmers who lack the resources to invest in their land. Under this model, farmers sign contracts with agribusiness companies to grow crops, providing them with the necessary inputs and technical assistance. Contract farming guarantees a market for the farmer's produce, enabling them to focus on farming while the company takes care of marketing and distribution. This helps in reducing the risks faced by farmers and also ensures a steady income. Companies like ITC and PepsiCo are actively promoting contract farming in India.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs): KVKs are agricultural research and extension centres established by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). These centres provide farmers with technical support and training, enabling them to adopt modern farming practices. KVKs have played a vital role in disseminating information on new agricultural technologies and practices to farmers in remote areas.

Agri-Tech Startups: Agri-tech startups are using technology to solve the problems faced by farmers and are revolutionizing the way agriculture is done in the country. For instance, startups like AgroStar, Ninjacart, and CropIn are using technology to provide farmers with information on crop management, weather forecasting, and soil health. They are also helping farmers in selling their produce directly to consumers, thereby eliminating middlemen and increasing their income.

Government Initiatives

GOI has launched several initiatives to promote and support agriculture in the country. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, and Soil Health Card Scheme are some of the initiatives that have been implemented to provide better facilities and infrastructure to farmers. These initiatives have not only helped farmers in reducing their risks but have also helped in increasing their income and productivity.

Neem coated urea is a very good scheme which has been initiated to regulate the use of urea and enhance its availability to the crops and also reduce the cost of fertilizer application. Soil health card scheme was introduced in 2015 to assist state governments to issue health cards to all the farmers in the country which provides information to the farmers on nutrients available in the soil along with recommendation on proper doses. National agriculture market (E-NAM) is a Pan-India electronic trading network to connect existing APMC mandis for improving the price realisation to the farmers and improving the availability of every produce uniformly in the country.

Pradhanmantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) has been formulated to extend irrigation to all the fields and use of water more efficiently. The biggest game changer of all is the Pradhanmantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Under this, the GoI aims to pay rupees 6000 per year to the farmer. This aid helps in reducing the cash crunch of the farmers and day today requirements of the farming community would be met with the launch of this scheme.

Major Initiatives For Boost

India's agriculture sector has been witnessing robust growth with an average annual growth rate of 4.6 per cent over the last six years. This has enabled agriculture and allied activities sector to contribute significantly towards country's overall growth, development and food security. Further in recent years the country has emerged as the net exporter of agricultural products, with exports in 2021-22 touching a record US \$ 50.2 billion. Recently, in the union budget, Government announced that an 'Agriculture Accelerator Fund' would be set up to encourage Agri start-ups founded by young entrepreneurs in rural area. Additionally, the government also announced that the agricultural credit target will be increased to Rs 20 lakh crore with a focus on animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries.

Through these targeted initiatives, government aims to increase farmers' income furthermore with the focus on boosting high-value crops and allied sub-sectors. Continued focus on providing support, building proper physical infrastructure, steps to build digital Agri infrastructure, boost to Agri-tech ecosystem can further enhance agriculture in India and increase the value-added from the sector.