



Non-food crops:

Rubber: rubber is an equatorial crop. But under special conditions, it is also grown in tropical and sub-tropical areas. It requires moist and humid climate with rainfall of more than 200 cm. and temperature above 25°C. Rubber is an important industrial raw material. It is mainly grown in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andaman and Nicobar islands and Garo hills of Meghalaya.

Fibre crops: cotton, jute, hemp and natural silk are the four major fibre crops grown in India. The first three are derived from the crops grown in the soil. The latter is obtained from cocoons of the silkworms fed on green leaves especially mulberry. Rearing of silk worms for the production of silk fibre is known as 'sericulture'.

Cotton: India is believed to be the original home of the cotton plant. Cotton is one of the main raw materials for cotton textile industry. India is the one of the producer of cotton in the world. Cotton grows well in drier parts of the black cotton soil of the Deccan plateau. It requires high temperature, light rainfall or irrigation 210 frost-free days and bright sun-shines for its growth. It is a kharif crop and requires 6 to 8 months to mature. Major cotton-producing states are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Jute: jute is known as the golden fibre. Grows well on well-drained fertile soils in flood plains where soil are renewed every year. High temperature is required during the time of growth. West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa and Meghalaya are the major jute producing states. It is used in making gunny bags, mats, ropes, yarn, carpets and other artifacts. Due to its high cost, it is losing market to synthetic fibres and packing materials, particularly the nylon.

Technological and institutional reforms:

It was mentioned in the previous pages that agriculture has been practiced in India for thousands of years. Sustained uses of land without compatible techno-institutional changes have hindered the pace of agricultural development in spite of development of sources of irrigation most of the farmers in large parts of the country still depend upon monsoon and natural fertility in order to carry on their agriculture. For a growing population, this poses a serious challenge.

1. Agriculture which provides livelihood for major proportion of its population, needs some serious technical and institutional reforms. Thus, collectivization, consolidation of holdings, cooperation and abolition of zamindari, etc. were given priority to bring about institutional reforms in the country.
2. 'Land reforms' was the main focus of our first five year plan. The right of inheritance had already led to fragmentation of land holdings necessitating consolidation of holdings.
3. The green revolution based on the use of package technology and the white revolution (Operation Flood) were some of the strategies initiated to improve the lot of Indian agriculture.



4. Provision for crop insurance against drought, flood, cyclone, fire and disease, establishment of Grameen banks, cooperative societies and banks for providing loan facilities to the farmers at lower rates of interest were some important steps in this direction.
5. Kissan credit card (KCC), personal accident insurance scheme (PAIS) are some other schemes introduced by the government of India for the benefit of the farmers.
6. Special weather bulletins and agricultural programmes for farmers were introduced on the radio and television.
7. The government also announces minimum support price, remunerative and procurement prices for important crops to check the exploitation of farmers by speculators and middlemen.

Contribution of agriculture to the national economy, employment and output:

Agriculture has been the backbone of the Indian economy though its share in the gross domestic product (GDP) has registered a declining trend from 1951 onwards; yet its share in providing employment and livelihood to the population continues to be high.

The declining share of agriculture in the GDP is a matter of serious concern because any decline and stagnation in agriculture will lead to a decline in other spheres of the economy having wider implications for society.

The government of India made concerted efforts to modernize agriculture. Establishment of Indian council of agriculture research (ICAR), agriculture universities, veterinary services and animal breeding centers, horticulture development, research and development in the field of meteorology and weather forecast, etc. were given priority for improving Indian agriculture.

Food Security:

Food is a basic need and every citizen of the country should have access to food which provides minimum nutritional level. If any segment of our population does not have this access, that segment suffers from lack of food security. The number of people who do not have food security is disproportionately large in some regions of our country, particularly in economically less developed states with higher incidence of poverty. The remote areas of the country are more prone to natural disasters and uncertain food supply. In order to ensure availability of food to all sections of society our government carefully designed a national food security system. It consists of two components (a) buffer stock and (b) public distribution system (PDS).

PDS is a programme which provides food grains and other essential commodities at subsidized prices in rural and urban areas.

India's food security policy has a primary objective to ensure availability of foodgrains to the common people at an affordable price. It has enabled the poor to have access to food. The focus of the policy is on growth in agriculture





production and on fixing the support price for procurement of wheat and rice, to maintain their stocks. Food Corporation of India (FCI) is responsible for procuring and stocking foodgrains, whereas distribution is ensured by public distribution system (PDS).

The FCI producer's foodgrains from the farmers at the government announced minimum support price (MSP). The government used to provide subsidies on agriculture inputs such as fertilizers, power and water. These subsidies have now reached unsustainable levels and have also led to large scale inefficiencies in the use of these scarce inputs. Excessive and imprudent use of fertilizers and water has led to waterlogging, salinity and depletion of essential micronutrients in the soil. The high MSP, subsidies in input and committed FCI purchases have distorted the cropping pattern. Wheat and paddy crops are being grown more for the MSP they get. Punjab and Haryana are foremost examples. This has also created a serious imbalance in inter- crop parities.

The consumers are divided into two categories: below poverty line (BPL) and above poverty line (APL), with the issue price being different for each category. However, this categorization is not perfect and a number of deserving poor have been excluded from the BPL category. Moreover, some of the so called APL slip back to BPL, because of the failure of even one crop and it is administratively difficult to accommodate such shifts.

Each district and block can be made self sufficient in food grain production if government provides proper agricultural infrastructure, credit linkages and also encourages the use of latest techniques of concentrating only on rice or wheat. The food crop with a better growth potential in that particular area must be encouraged. Creation of necessary infrastructure like irrigation facilitates, availability of electricity etc. may also attract private investments in agriculture. The focus on increasing food grain production which should be on a sustainable basis and also free trade in grains will create massive employment and reduce poverty in rural areas.

Impact of globalization on agriculture:

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. It was there at the time of colonization. In the nineteenth century when European traders came to India, at that time too, Indian spices were exported to different countries of the world and farmers of south India were encouraged to grow these crops. Till today it is one of the important items of export from India.