Rural Transformation

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RURAL TRANSFORMATION

(A Socio-Economic Perspective of Indian Context)

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AUTHORS

ABOUT THE BOOK

After surpassing the twin stages of agriculture sector, viz., food security-based agriculture till the advent of Green Revolution and self-sufficiency in food crops after the Green Revolution, India's modern agriculture is at present specialized agriculture to some extent poised towards commercial entrepreneurial agriculture besides facing multiple concerns and challenges. This is necessary, but not a sufficient condition in achieving rapid rural transformation in the country. It calls for an urgent need for new initiatives to revive and rejuvenate Indian agriculture from subsistence to commercial farming and also to transform the life of vulnerable section of the rural people from mere poverty to near prosperity through adoption of innovative thinking and yield augmented technologies with cost-effective approach.

The present book provides comprehensive study of agricultural strategies/technologies being adopted in India and abroad and their impact on rural economy including problems and prospects to evince rural transformation. Success stories have been incorporated which serve as an imperative for the planners and policy-makers to make effective policies and programmes in future to bring out economic growth of the entire nation in general and rapid rural transformation in particular.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr.Shaik Haffis is a Senior Technical Officer (Agricultural Economics) with experience of 29 years in the field of Dryland Farming Research at Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture, Hyderabad. He has over 100 research articles/ papers of different themes in national and international journals of repute

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Dr. Y.S. Ramakrishna completed his Graduation, Post-Graduation and Ph.D. from Andhra University. He joined at CAZRI (ICAR) at Jodhpur and worked for longer period there. He joined as Project Coordinator (Agrometeorology) at CRIDA and is the Director of CRIDA at present. He published more than 350 papers in different journals/conferences/workshops/ seminars. He got awards for his innovative research contributions.

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INTRODUCTION

Seventy per cent of the people in India are living in rural areas. Many of them are still dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Unless the rural economy is improved, the burden of poverty cannot be reduced nor migrating working population from the villages can be curtailed. This can be warded off through rural development/transformation.

Rural transformation is the real indicator of economic growth of a nation, which is also the main aim of our government. It can be evinced as and when the status of rural people of the developing country of ours is at par with non-urban people of developed nations by means of creating wealth, bestowing food security, reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of the rural people through adoption of different enterprises/enterprise combinations including farm and non-farm sectors. Having agriculture as the backbone of Indian economy, India could have satisfied the first two objectives through adoption of available technologies. But, unfortunately, the standard of living of rural poor in India has not yet risen to a satisfactory level. We are still lagging behind in developing appropriate technologies to suit our system for developing commercial agro-enterprises in India while countries like Israel and Netherlands have gone far ahead when compared to other countries in the world in agri-

business sector. India, due to its varied and tropical climate and availability of labour, is reported to be higher comparative advantage in floriculture production and export, compared to other major flower producing countries in the world like Netherlands. But, the advantage varies from region to region in India. For example, climate for floriculture production, in terms of energy saving, is more favourable in southern states, which also enjoy advantage of availability of labour over Punjab. Hence, it is better to concentrate floriculture in southern states of India than in Punjab in order to achieve rapid rural transformation in India.

It is sure that India has made rapid strides in foodgrains production sector but not in commercial crop production sector during the last three and a half decades. Policy support, production strategies, public investment in infrastructure, research and extension for crops, livestock, fisheries *etc.*, have significantly helped to increase food production and its availability in the country. India's foodgrain production has more than doubled i.e. 102 million tonnes in the triennium ending (TE) 1973 to over 206 million tonnes in the triennium ending 2002. This has resulted mainly from yield gains rather than expansion of area under cultivation. Rice, wheat, total foodgrains, total pulses, total oilseeds, milk, eggs and fish have registered the highest growth rates of production during the period 1979-80 to 1989-90. Jha (2001) found that coarse grains, pulses, oilseeds, fibres and vegetables have registered a positive growth in the total factor productivity which is mainly due to favourable monsoon as well as implementation of development programmes, such as, National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Agriculture (NWDPRA), Special Rice Production Programme, National Oilseeds Development Project (NODP), Oilseeds Production Thrust Project (OPTP), Technology Mission on Oilseeds (TMO), *etc.* However, the growth rates of production of foodgrains and non-foodgrains during the nineties (1990-91 to 2000-01) has

declined as compared to the preceding decade, *i.e.* 1980-81 to 1989-90 (Table 1.1). This is mainly due to the drought effect, lack of drought tolerant varieties, *etc.* Thus, weather has a leading role to play *albeit* other factors in improving and increasing production and productivity of crops.

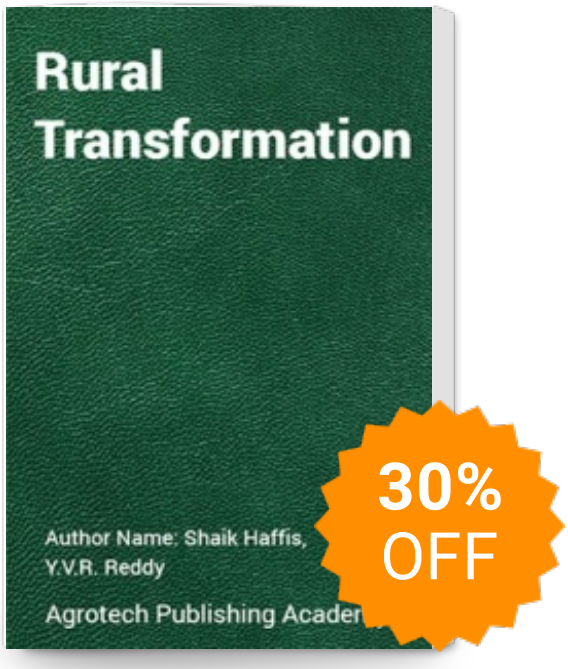
Table 1.1: Growth rates in production of foodgrains and non-foodgrain crops in India

Crop	Growth rates (per cent per annum)	
	Pre-reforms period (1980-81 to 1989-90)	Post-reforms period (1990-91 to 2000-01)
Foodgrains	2.85	1.66
Non-foodgrains	3.77	1.86
All crops	3.19	1.73

Source: Economic Survey, 2001-02

Now, we have larger food buffer stocks. Despite the fact that India has achieved self-sufficiency in foodgrains production, what is intriguing to note is that it is still home to the world's largest number of poor people. About 250 million people are below poverty line, India accounts for about one-fifth of the world's poor. Child mal-nutrition has been at alarming stage which also extracts its highest toll. The depth of hunger among the undernourished is also high. There is immense need to reduce the rural poverty in the country in particular and urban poverty in general. Public investment in rural roads and agricultural R&D on the one hand, government spending on rural development and employment programmes on the other, may cause decline in rural poverty as in the cases of Green Revolution led agricultural growth that was responsible for the decline of poverty in 1970s, and the growth in rural non-farm employment and public expenditure which

Rural Transformations



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