

Workshop-H : Role of Parliamentarians in Advancing the Transfer of Agricultural Technology and Research

**Hon'ble Delegates,
Namaste,**

For the past decade as Indian Industry went places, recording a hearty rate of growth, the story of Indian agriculture remained and also ran. Successive governments have put in plenty of effort but the results were still weak. This is surprising as in the same period, except for 2008, the monsoon went through one of the longest periods of regular annual rainfall pattern. Despite this favourable initial condition, the rate of growth of the agriculture sector has been low. The one spoilsport in the agriculture story was of course the stagnant rate of public investment. The state hamstringing by vastly competitive demands on its resources, initially and also by the realisation that public investments in agriculture irrigation and others were not yielding quick results, moved the money elsewhere.

The Parliamentarian has to play a great role which of late they realised and are playing instrumental role in Advancing the Transfer of the Agriculture Technology and Research and probably this one of the reason that in the aftermath of the global meltdown, the consensus of informed opinion has switched to the view that consumption demand from rural India has been the great stabilizer for industry. The impetus for that rural consumption demand has to come from rising productivity in agriculture. In turn rising productivity can only come if adequate investment is made at all stages of agricultural operation. Not surprisingly the push for these improvements has come from one of the longest spells of rise in prices of food products - the persisting inflation in food that has just begin to soften. So there is a fortuitous combination of circumstances that if harvested, can create huge value up-gradation for the Indian Agricultural sector and in turn for the entire economy. The components of these improvements are well known at macro level like advancing the transfer of agricultural technology and of micro level like seed technology, better management of post harvest operations like preservation of produce in ware houses and of agricultural marketing.

So even though it may seem oft repeated but the parliamentary intervention has brought the time for an agricultural revolution in India. Probably the most important element of that will be the plans for a second green revolution. The government has already indicated that it is very keen to start it off in the dry land areas of the south and in the rich but weakly tapped soils of the eastern Indian states. A debate is already raging in the country if such a rise in productivity will also necessarily entail a movement towards genetically modified crops. Here parliamentarian has to play a very important meaningful role in advancing the transfer of agricultural technology and research. In the state of Bihar, India, from where I come, the State Govt. has already drafted and implemented a policy for the transfer of agricultural technology and research. There are two Agricultural universities and one technical university with well known, internationally acknowledged Agricultural Scientists who are working whole heartedly to transfer the Agricultural technology farmers through their multifaceted research as innovative research based activities. The Srividhi agricultural practices adopted in Bihar has been globally acknowledged. The agricultural production of Bihar went up manifold through Srividhi method. Similarly women engaged in agricultural activities have been given 50 % reservation in Panchayati Raj institution which empowered them not only socially and politically but also agriculturally and economically. If you like I can give you more details about my constituency. The best example of parliamentarians intervention in advancing the Transfer of Agricultural technology and research is of Srividhi Agricultural Technology.

We don't talk or hear as much about Agriculture as we used to because its employment base has declined so much over the time in order to Sustain labour force for agriculture programmes like MGNREGA and various other such programmes are being run in rural India. But that decline is a sign of its success Rather than its failure. Fewer and fewer people are producing more and more because of astounding gains in productivity.

Agriculture in India is the pivotal sector for ensuring food and nutritional security, sustainable development and for the alleviation of poverty particularly in our country, which basically evolved as agrarian society. It is still considered the mainstay of Indian economy and key sector for generating employment opportunities for the vast majority of the population in the future also, the continued existence of our nation will depend on the capacity

and ability of our agriculture to meet the growing nutritional needs of an expanding population.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy, Agriculture and allied sectors contribute nearly 15.7 percent of Gross Domestic product (GDP) while about 59.7% of the population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. It provides direct employment to about 234 million people (cultivators and agricultural labourers) and forms the backbone of the agro based industry. The agricultural output however, depends heavily on monsoon as nearly 55.7 percent of the area sown is dependent on rainfall. Production of food grain is estimated at 218.20 million tones in 2009-2010.

India supports 17 percent of the world's population, with less than 5 percent of world's water resources and 3 percent of global land. Per capita availability of resources is 4 to 6 times lesser compared to world averages.

India has one of the largest public funded national Agricultural system (NARS) comprising 108 Agricultural Research Institutions, National Research centres under the Indian council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), 50 Agricultural universities (AU) and also other universities having agriculture, related faculties. Several new machineries and tools to improve efficiency in agriculture production have been developed like tractor operated farmyard manure spreader etc.. Women friendly tools and implements have been introduced and a women involvement index has been worked out. Suitable tractor operated three row weeder with reduction in human drudgery and higher coverage has also been developed. For cutting edge research across disciplines and commodities a National institute of Abiotic stress Management has been established in Maharashtra and is already operational. A DNA Bank has been established cutting across plant and animal kingdom, so that desirable traits could be incorporated while evolving new varieties, hybrids, breeds etc.

The Government of India has taken an important initiative by introducing constitution one hundred and eleventh Amendment Bill 2009 for the purpose of empowering Co operatives through voluntary formation, autonomous functioning democratic control and professional management.

The Seeds Act 1996 provides for legislative framework for regulation of quality of seeds sold in the country Responding to the changes that have taken place in the seed sector, the existing Act is proposed to be replaced by a suitable legislation to create an enabling climate for growth of the seed industry.

The New pesticides Management Bill, which is intended to replace the insecticides Act, 1968, which provides for a more effective regulatory frame work for the introduction and use of pesticides in the country was introduced in the parliament on 21st October 2008. The parliamentary standing committee on Agriculture has placed its report on the bill in parliament on 18th February 2009. The recommendations of the standing committee have been examined and taking these into account, the official amendments to the pesticides management will be brought by the Government.

Parliament of India is the Supreme law making institution the country which symbolizes its democratic strength and brings together the representatives of each and every region of the union. Parliamentarians thus have the crucial responsibilities when it comes to their role in supporting the cause of agriculture.

The Parliamentarians have a crucial role to play in the formulation, implementation and regulation of plans, programmes, laws etc related to various aspect of Agriculture.

Parliamentarians, through their statements in the media, questions in the house, participation in the debates etc, brings into sharp focus the seriousness of various issue relating to agriculture and generate debate and discussion on the same.

It is well know that parliamentarians are responsible for ensuring accountability on the part of the Executive as far as the implementation of different provisions of the policy to benefit the Agriculture community is concerned.

Besides parliamentarians across the globe benefit through meaningful exchange of view's and experiences at various international conferences. These exchanges are useful in acquiring a deeper Perspective about the problems and challenges before us and facilitate in fostering regional and international Co-operation to develop a common approach to tackle these grave challenges.

Jai Hind.