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Inter-Conference Symposium of International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) on Re-visiting Agriculture Policies in the Light of Globalisation Experience: The Indian Context: A Brief Report

BACKGROUND

The history of green revolution in India indicates that the farmers have capabilities to accelerate farm output with the available resources if the government's policies are favourable as they were in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The 1990s have witnessed a significant shift in the macroeconomic policy environment around the globe including India. Vacillation in policies on farm subsidies, market reforms, liberalisation of farm input sector, trade liberalisation, etc. are some of the policy changes after mid-1990s. The upcoming challenges at national level remain to be: need for more investment in infrastructure, soil nutrient management in the situation of exponential growth in fertiliser subsidy, considerable gap between the varieties released by the public sector institutions and the varieties adopted by the farmers, private sector research and seed industry focusing only on varieties and hybrids with large markets, rainfed crops getting less research attention, and misgivings about transgenic food crops, under-funding of agricultural research, cultivars with stress tolerance to climate change, under performance of extension agencies, frequent failure in timely availability of quality seeds, inadequate fodder availability and poor access to animal health to support dairy industry, lesser success in linking small producers with markets and urgent need for improving the productivity of common pool resources. To share the global experiences a Symposium was organised so that the outcomes of discussion can be useful to closely look into the agricultural policy issues.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Symposium were:

- To facilitate an interaction among researchers and stakeholders on agricultural policies in the context of globalisation.
- Document the problems emanating from globalisation that have not been seriously addressed by the government policies and strategies and suggest suitable policy options.

Organisation

The Symposium was jointly organised by the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Mumbai; National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad; Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University and Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad during October 12-13, 2014. The sponsors of the Symposium were International Association of Agricultural Economists, U.S.A; National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mumbai, Reserve Bank of India, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi.

To accomplish the objectives, the Symposium was divided into (a) plenary sessions; (b) technical sessions, (c) poster sessions and (d) round table session. Besides a special session was organised by International Rice Research Institute, on *Distribution and Impacts of Stress Tolerant Varieties in South Asia*. Eminent experts were invited to share their knowledge and wisdom during the plenary sessions. The technical sessions were developed in such a way that they cover the key theme of Globalisation, and were grouped as follows:

- (i) Policy-Productivity Relationship in Agriculture; markets and investments; and research, education, extension and infrastructure.
- (ii) Food Security and Commodity Sectors; retailing, processing and exports and rainfed agriculture.

There were about 17 lead papers and keynote papers highlighting the various issues in the context of globalisation. These covered topics by invited experts from different disciplines from various countries. More than 80 abstracts were submitted and posters were presented.

Participation

The Symposium was attended by more than 100 delegates representing different countries. They represented research managers, economists, policy advisers, donor organizations, media from different parts of the world.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Outputs and Recommendations

1. The farm size in Asia is declining and therefore an introduction of large scale mechanization is difficult in the presence of rigidities in land reallocation. There is need for partial land expansion to meet the future global food demands.

2. Ensuring food security and eliminating mass mal-nutrition is perhaps India's biggest and most serious development problem and challenge for policy makers.
3. The minimum support price policy in conjunction with other supportive measures such as appropriate technology, infrastructure and advance export policy can play an important role in accelerating the pace of diversified agricultural growth.
4. The agricultural extension system in India continues to face several challenges despite the serious efforts to develop strategies and intervention programmes to address and reform the system. An effective monitoring and evaluation system is called for whereby the farmers will receive the intended information and services.
5. In India irrigation water cost is not properly accounted by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)/farm management surveys. It is crucial to revise the methodology followed by CACP by properly accounting for cost of groundwater.