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Vol XVII  
No. 2

ISSN 0019-5014

CONFERENCE  
NUMBER

JANUARY-  
MARCH  
1962

# INDIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



INDIAN SOCIETY OF  
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS,  
BOMBAY

# INDIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Vol. XVII

JANUARY—MARCH 1962

No. 1

## WELCOME ADDRESS

By

SHRI S. D. PANDE

*Secretary, Birla Education Trust*

and

*Chairman of the Reception Committee*

As Chairman of the Reception Committee, it gives me great pleasure to extend a very cordial welcome to you all to this seat of learning. We have, in the past, had the opportunity of convening here a number of Conferences on Education, Teaching Methods, Geography, Mathematics and the like, but it is the first occasion for economists to meet here for their deliberations. The credit for this goes to Dr. S. M. Mitra, our energetic and esteemed Principal of the Birla College, who took the initiative to request the President of your learned Society to hold the Conference here this year. We are very grateful to your distinguished President, Prof. D. G. Karve, for giving us the opportunity of welcoming the members of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, delegates and other eminent men who have responded to the invitation of the organizers of this Conference. I do hope you will enjoy your brief stay here. On behalf of the Reception Committee, I crave your forgiveness for the shortcomings in our arrangements, which, believe me, are due only to our limitations and not to any lack of warmth in our hearts.

We are very grateful to our Chief Minister, Shri M. L. Sukhadia, for having agreed to inaugurate this Conference. In him we have a dedicated personality, striving hard for raising the living standard of the masses in this part of the country which was classed as a backward area a few years ago. He and his Government are doing their best to accelerate the pace of social, political and economic advancements of the masses in this State. I extend a most hearty welcome to him on this occasion.

We are happy that an eminent economist of the stature of Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao is presiding over the deliberations of this Conference. I hope under his able guidance, the Conference will arrive at conclusions of far reaching importance to the agricultural development of our great country.

The nucleus of the Birla Vidya Vihar was created in 1901 in the form of a Pathshala by Seth Shiv Narainji Birla, the grandfather of Shri G. D. Birla. This Pathshala grew into a High School, then to a College known as 'Birla College' which later on multiplied to several Colleges which we have now here. We have provision for the education and training of the pupils right from the infant stage to the highest University degree. Special facilities

have been provided for research in science, technology and humanities. In particular, we have facilities for research in physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, mathematics, commerce, economics, Hindi and electronics. A large number of problems are being investigated. In the field of agricultural economics and finance which may be of special interest to you as agricultural economists, I am happy to say that several regional studies have already been completed with special reference to the rural and agricultural problems of the surrounding areas and some more are in progress on agricultural, industrial and State finances. A study of socio-economic effects of Rajasthan land reforms sponsored by the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission is also in hand.

The Birla Education Trust is making serious efforts to provide necessary facilities and qualified research staff for giving the best type of education and training to the youth of the country. It will take some time before we can determine if our efforts are bearing any fruit. We welcome you very cordially to our Campus and after you have gone round, we will appreciate any advice and guidance that you may deem fit to give us to attain our objective.

During these three days of the Conference you will be discussing many important problems connected with agriculture, rural economics, development programmes and agriculture in the Third Five-Year Plan period. May I request you also to consider the problem of how to afford facilities to the farmers in the village to learn the know-how of scientific agriculture to enable the country to grow more food than we have grown so far to feed the hungry millions and save the country a large amount of foreign exchange? The only obvious way to do it is to improve our agriculture. This requires better knowledge of scientific agricultural methods by the tillers of the soil. The farmer of today has not realized the potentiality in relationship of science to agriculture and unless this is realized and unless the farmer is adequately trained and given facilities to use improved methods of agriculture which have made other countries prosperous, our progress in food production is bound to be slow. We have to prove to the common man that we can profitably apply science to common purposes in life, and this can only be done by actual demonstration not to a few but to millions of our farmers. We may have, therefore, to establish in rural areas agricultural centres in which young men and women could acquire such practical education that will make them good farmers, good dairy-men and good farm-workers.

We have further to find ways and means to make available to the farmer the results of researches in agriculture which lead to the improvement of yield of land and improvement of the quality of live-stock. At present, these do not reach them. The agricultural extension services need to be improved so that the farmer may make use of new methods evolved by scientists and workers in the field of agriculture.

In this context, may I also place before you some other problems facing today this country as also the world at large? We have had a decade of planned development with a national government. All our plans and policies, aims and objectives have been ideal and well-conceived but so far the common man has not benefited to the extent desired. We have not succeeded in implementing the plans as successfully as we should have done. We have not

been able to give our best to the attainment of our objectives. Due to deterioration in the moral fibre of the society, inefficiency and corruption have made large inroads into our body politic. We are facing a crisis of character. No society can survive without a sound moral order. The allegiance of the individual to commonly approved moral and spiritual values is the crying need of the hour. No social innovations, however ingenious, no improvements in our Government structure, however prudent, no enactment of laws, however lofty their aims, no amount of discussions and deliberations, however wise their conclusions, no amount of planning, however broad and liberal its objectives, would solve our problems unless we have personal integrity, honesty and self-discipline in not only the men at the helm of affairs, but in each and every individual constituting our contemporary society. So, in the ultimate analysis, the progress of our society hinges on the moral and spiritual strength of our people. While discussing our problems, I think, we must accord the highest priority to the moral and spiritual regeneration of the community. There is also an urgent need for reorientating the contents and the direction of our education. Even in this age of science and technology, what the world needs most is a moral and spiritual base in the people. Though our planned development has taken care of education and other social services, the emphasis is more on the growth and development of material resources rather than on the development of human personality. I suggest that greater attention should be paid to the proper education of the youth in line with our spiritual heritage. I am confident, while discussing the implementation part of the problems under discussion, your Conference will not ignore these aspects.

I have already encroached much upon your time. In conclusion I wish all success to your Conference. Eminent economists from various parts of India have assembled here. I am sure the quiet atmosphere here would enable you all to tackle these questions successfully in a detached way. I do hope your deliberations would be of utmost importance to our country so as to make a constructive contribution to the solution of the intricate problem of raising the standard of living of our people, both material and spiritual.

I now request Shri Sukhadiji to kindly inaugurate the Conference.