

Topic of the week for discussion: 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Topic: Indian Farmer's Distress

**Agriculture Sector of Indian Economy** is one of the most significant part of India. Agriculture is the only means of living for almost two-thirds of the employed class in India. As being stated by the economic data of financial year 2013-14, agriculture has acquired 18 percent of India's GDP.

The agriculture sector of India has occupied almost 43 percent of India's geographical area. Agriculture is still the only largest contributor to India's GDP even after a decline in the same in the agriculture share of India. Agriculture also plays a significant role in the growth of socio-economic sector in India.

Hence the distress here is of the 2/3rd of India.

Apart from many, there are two main problems haunting farmer's in India in 2015:

- **Land Acquisition Bill & the ordinance**
- **Weather inconsistencies**

**Land acquisition** refers to the process where a government acquires land from land owners for any purpose. Generally, the purpose is related to development projects conducted either by PSUs (Public Sector units) or the private sector.

The issues against such land acquisition:

- a) No one, be it the land owners whose land was acquired (mostly farmers), nor those who may not have owned the land but whose occupations were dependent on the land acquired (mostly agricultural laborers), were compensated monetarily or otherwise as per this Act. No attempt was made for the rehabilitation or resettlement of those who had been affected by such land acquisition either.
- b) There was no requirement of any prior consent of the affected parties (those who will lose their land and/or their occupation or be affected by the pollution or environmental impacts of these infrastructure projects in future as they live nearby) for constructing any of these projects.
- c) Also, land could be acquired with just a notice by the Collector within a very short time frame where people who would be affected neither had a chance necessarily to challenge the acquisition legally, nor had a chance to find some alternate occupation or arrangements for their own. The government could acquire land in a manner it thinks fit.
- d) Most of the land was acquired in the name of India's development, but the local people found very little stake or benefits in the project. Not only were they not given much compensation or rehabilitated, they also did not get employment opportunities (which in many cases were promised to them) in the name of development of the area.

Topic  
Introduction

### **Weather inconsistencies**

As India's 2/3rd people are dependent on agriculture, similarly 2/3rd of India's farmers are dependent on rain for their cultivation and produce.

This year, due to untimely rain most parts of Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, in addition to Northern Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh are affected.

Untimely rains on Feb 28-March 1, have caused 10-20% damage to standing crops like wheat, mustard and gram. Some fruits like mango, cashew, orange and grapes have been affected. Crop loss in Maharashtra due to this unseasonal rain is Rs 1000 crores.

Though the govt is announcing special package for the farmers who suffered damages, yet there is no recognition that those affected are climate change victims, nor is there any attempt at providing justice to them for the impacts they are suffering for no fault of theirs. Moreover, there are predictions of a below average monsoon this year, which may worsen the situation.

### **Summary:**

Development is necessary but it should be holistic and long term and not at the expense of farmers. There is a need to safeguard the interests of people dependent on primary sector of India by relooking at land ordinances. Moreover, there is need for adequate provision for Crop Insurance and Weather based an insurance scheme which is far from the situation today. Instead of issuing only relief packages of thousands of crores (as in the case of Maharashtra), the government can also provide more benefits to farmers if its invests in robust weather based insurance, weather monitoring and forecasting and crop insurances.

### **Read further:**

<http://www.ibef.org/industry/agriculture-india.aspx>

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/land-acquisition-continues-alongside-debate-on-new-bill-115042300005\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/land-acquisition-continues-alongside-debate-on-new-bill-115042300005_1.html)

[http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/current-affairs/land-acquisition-bill-five-pointsdebatecontroversy\\_1313379.html](http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/current-affairs/land-acquisition-bill-five-pointsdebatecontroversy_1313379.html)

<http://www.cseindia.org/userfiles/VUM-CSE-Delhi-16-11-12.pdf>