

Agricultural Education and Research in India: Challenges and Way Forward

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Abstract : Agricultural Education and Research in India needs a transformation to serve the needs of the farmers and that of the nation. The fact that Agriculture and allied activities act as main source of livelihood for more than 70% population of rural India reinforces its importance in administrative and policy arena. As per Census 2011 of India it provides employment to approximately 56.6 % of labour. India has achieved significant growth in agriculture, milk, fish, oilseeds and fruits and vegetables owing to green, white, blue and yellow revolutions which have brought prosperity to farmers. Many factors are responsible for these achievement viz conducive government policies, receptivity of the farmers and also establishment of higher agricultural education institutions. The new breed of skilled human resources were instrumental in generating new technologies, and in its assessment, refinement and finally its dissemination to the farming community through extension methods. In order to sustain, diversify and realize the potential of agriculture sectors, it is necessary to develop skilled human resources. Agricultural human resource development is a continuous process undertaken by agricultural universities. The Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) coordinates and promotes agricultural research & education in India. In India, agricultural universities were established on 'land grant' pattern of USA which helped incorporation of a number of diverse subjects in the courses as also provision of hands-on practical exposure to the student. The State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) established through the legislative acts of the respective states and with major financial support from them leading to administrative and policy controls. It has been observed that pace and quality of technology generation and human resource development in many of the SAUs has gone down. The reason for this slackening are inadequate state funding, reduced faculty strength, inadequate faculty development programmes, lack of modern infrastructure for education and research etc. Establishment of new state agricultural universities and new faculties/colleges without providing necessary financial and faculty support has aggrieved the problem. The present work highlights some of the key issues affecting agricultural education and research in India and the impact it would have on farm productivity and sustainability. Secondary data pertaining to budgetary spend on agricultural education and research will be analyzed. This paper will study the trends in public spending on agricultural education and research and the per capita income of farmers in India. This paper tries to suggest that agricultural education and research has a key role in equipping the human resources for enhanced agricultural productivity and sustainable use of natural resources. Further, a total re-orientation of agricultural education with emphasis on other agricultural related social sciences is needed for effective agricultural policy research.

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