



Focus on farmers' issues, agriculture sector in India & long-term planning is the need of hour



Vijay Pratap Singh Aditya

It'd be a real tragedy if the mainstay of our economy i.e. agriculture is seen as less profitable and farmers get caught in debt trap, feel that agriculture is no longer viable. Thousands of suicides annually, suggest that situation is not well, at all.

The agriculture sector is Indian economy's major pillar and it needs serious attention. Right now, major challenge is to ensure that the rise in farmers' income should be in proportion with the inflation rate.

While the input cost is high, in this ratio, the farmers' income is not going up.

This is one of the reasons behind the farm distress. The income can't be raised well, until the rate at which crop is sold, remains less.

In such scenario, agriculture will remain profitable if production is high. Else, its net loss, farmers rotate credit & just manage to survive.

But this is not sustainable. If there is major loss of crop or drought, then it badly hits the farmer's family. Insurance data gives indication.

The farmers' suicide is also a symptom of the plight of farmers. It is for this reason that Agriculture survey needs to be conducted, with due diligence. If the baseline of data is outdated, the real picture can't emerge.

On the basis of questionable data, large production can be claimed but it doesn't change the situation on the ground.

Even if claim is made that the farm income has risen, harsh truth is that serious study has not come out of big institutes.

Empirical data [based on proper sample size] is always not available.

One example is that when a particular data was fact-checked, many people who were believed to be real farmers, came out as involved in work other than agriculture. Lack of R&D is a major issue. In agri-sector, research has multiple aspects that include crop varieties. But there has hardly been an effort to commercialize the seeds.

Yet another area of concern is farm economy. Use of technology is must. Other sectors or factories get long-term financial support, it is different with farm sector.

Seed research and training of farmers in new and modern crop practices, is lacking.

Long-term planning, research is a must but less priority is given to it.

Owing to lack of funds, research in the entire sector gets affected. Just remember that the Agriculture bank of China is the second largest bank of the world, not just among agriculture banks, but all banks. Shouldn't we have such a bank. Despite the fact that agriculture is the dominant sector, real focus is missing.

[Vijay Pratap Singh Aditya is CEO, Ekgaon group. The views are his personal]

As many as 18 crore or 180 million people are directly involved in farm sector in the country.

From the middlemen to money lenders, farmers in India, suffer on various fronts.

Either it's the planner or the politician, all are more into talk and tokenism, than real and concrete steps, proper efforts to save the sector.

Agriculture financing is an area that too needs attention. Short term loan is not helping the sector.

Instead of serious efforts to improve the farmers' economic situation, the farmer is not getting proper assistance but the system is which that they get caught [in debt trap] is difficult to come out from.

Disposable income is less and, hence, the farming community is in distress. Unlike other commodities that have MRP or maximum retail price, agriculture has Minimum Support Price or MSP.

The young generation is not as much interested in farming—that's the sense one gets even from middle-aged and elderly farmers.

All these factors have serious implications on the future of agriculture.

It is necessary that the policymakers consider all these issues and come up with the solutions.

“The agricultural land is now eyed by colonizers and many others. In fact, it'd be a disaster if the farmer who holds his land holding close to his heart, feels that there is no way but to part with the land and sell it”

India's external affairs minister Jaishankar visits Pakistan, holds talks with the country's PM and raises the issue of extremism too

It was after several years that an External Affairs minister from India, has gone to Pakistan.

The Asian Tribune

S Jaishankar has met the Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his visit to the neighbouring country. This is the first such visit of an EAM to Pakistan in nine years. He shook hand with Sharif and thanked him for the hospitality and courtesies.

Jaishankar visited the country for the SCO summit. In his posts on X, he mentioned that the SCO Council of Heads of Government, and that he had a productive meet, there. The Union minister' visit is significant. Also addressed delegates in the meeting and talked about multiple issues.

The Asian Tribune



In his address, he talked about the need for SCO to be alert and able to respond to the challenges faced in the current world.

Jaishankar stressed in his speech that combatting extremism and terror is important for India and it is crucial.

He put on record India's point and concerns, clearly. Earlier, it was in the year 2015 when former Union minister Sushma Swaraj went to Pakistan for attending a conference on Afghanistan.

Apart from India, Pakistan and Russia, the other countries that are members of SCO include China, Iran and the Central Asian nations.

Shehbaz hosted a dinner and Jaishankar met him. This was the 23rd meet of SCO Council of Heads of Government.

Asia

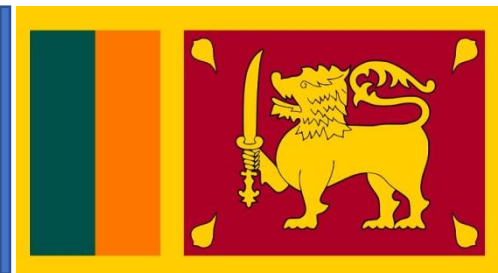
Sri Lanka is all set to go ahead with application to request for its BRICS membership

The Asian Tribune

Sri Lanka is ready to make a formal request for joining the BRICS group.

The island nation will make its claim at the upcoming meet of BRICS in Kazan, Russia.

Clearly, the decision of Sri Lanka to make a formal request for the membership, shows that the BRICS has been gaining clout and more countries have been aiming to join it.




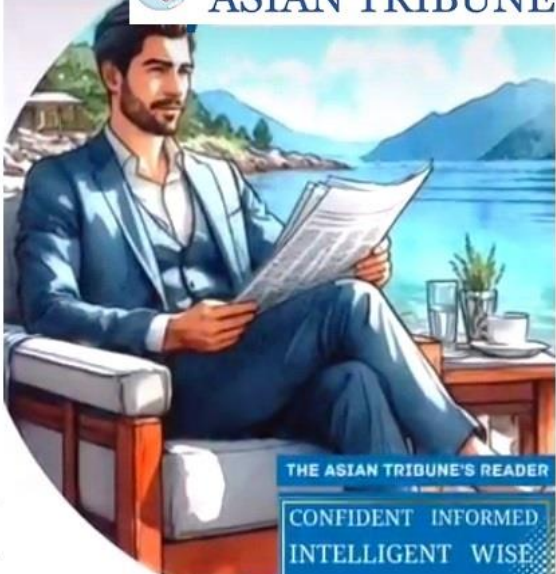
Several countries have joined the BRICS in last one year or so.

Pakistan and other countries have also shown their interest in joining it.

The body was initially termed BRICS due to the founder members.

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have been the original members.

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