Abstract

This present thesis entitled 'Agriculture and Human Development Linkage: A Case Study of Barak Valley' aims to study linkage between agricultural performance parameters and their role to promote human development and also to evaluate the importance in reducing poverty. Both agricultural performance and human development are vast in scope and both play significant role in the development of the country or region.

The linkage between agricultural performance with rural development and human development arises from the fact that: (i) substantial land and human resources are tied to this sector; and (ii) the sector contributes significantly to food security and gross domestic product. Agriculture is still a major source of livelihood for the majority of population in Barak Valley and remains the engine of growth. More importantly, the growth of other economic and social sector is heavily dependent on the agriculture and rural sector, including those which contribute most to human development. Arising from previous analyses improved and sustained agricultural performance and development and progression in the knowledge and skill of farmers are required to be directly addressed.

The major objectives undertaken are

1. To study the relation between agricultural performance and human development in Barak Valley.
2. To analyze the incidence of poverty in relation to agricultural performance.
3. To study the role of agriculture in the development of health, education and standard of living.
4. To identify the factors those influence the level of human development in the valley.

The hypotheses taken up in course of the study are:-

1. There exists a positive relationship between agricultural performance and human development.
2. There exists an inverse relationship between agricultural performance and incidence of poverty.
3. Performance of agriculture is directly related to development of social sector

The Methodology used in this study was by collection of both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was applied to study the agro-human development situation and rural poverty in the valley. From the field level survey, samples for statistics were taken from heads of rural households in selected Agricultural Development Circles of three districts of Barak Valley. The sample consisted of 450 Households from three agricultural subdivisions of three districts.

Each component of agricultural performance is analyzed with the help of factor indices. The factor indices assist to understand the actual scenario of agricultural situation. A number of indices have been constructed to address the objectives of the study which include: (a) Agricultural Performance Index (API), (b) Human development by Quality of Life Index (c) Wealth Index, (d) Health Index, (e) Education Index and (f) Multidimensional Poverty Index. All these indices have been constructed at the household level. Moreover, suitable statistical, regression techniques and econometric models have been used to analyze the relationship among concerned variables of the study.

Chapter One deals with introduction to the research problem, theoretical and conceptual framework, rationale of the study, objectives and hypotheses, methodology of the study and organisation of chapters.

Chapter Two deals with review of related literature which includes books, journals, various reports published by International and National organisations like UNO, UNDP, FAO, Planning Commission, Government of India etc. It studies those

literatures and endeavours to find out major contribution to the objectives of the present research and major thrust areas.

Chapter Three is concerned with the profile of the study area. It endeavours to sketch an agricultural and human development picture of the Valley which gives background knowledge about the study area. Secondary data collected from different government sources have been used to study geographical, economic and social characteristics of Barak Valley.

In Chapter Four data interpretation and analysis is done for the data and information collected during the field survey in different villages under ADO circles. The Agricultural Performance Indices and characteristics, Human Development Indices and characteristics have been studied in details along with necessary tables, graphs and statistical analysis.

In Chapter Five, econometric models and graphs have been used to study the objectives of the research and test the hypotheses. The econometric results and findings are analysed in this chapter in details.

The Chapter Six the summary of entire research work have been discussed while major factors which are responsible for the present scenario of Barak Valley have been highlighted. Conclusion has been drawn; suggestions and policy implications have been prescribed in this chapter.

Agricultural Performance is an essential component for raising Human Development, achieving food self-sufficiency, increasing income of the rural mass, having more access to basic amenities of life and alleviating poverty and food insecurity among smallholder farmers. The infrastructure and institutions such as irrigation, input and product market, credit and extension services found to be poorly developed. The technologies people use, play a significant role in determining how fast agricultural productivity grows and how that growth affects the poor and the condition of natural resources. The development of agricultural technology for both food and non-food crops, the dissemination of assets and information, developing agricultural research and extension facilities targeted

towards the smallholder farmer, all work together to promote long-term agricultural productivity. The results show that emphasis on development and extension of rural services and enhancing production resources of the farming community lead to improvement in quality of life and have considerable influence on agricultural sustainability.

The research indicates that the Agriculture and Human Development in Barak Valley are found to be affected by policies that influence both economic and social factors. The study of factors determining the of agricultural performance shows that social participation factors play the greatest role in the sustainability of agricultural system. By and large factors such as education, health, infrastructural support services, ecological factors etc have the greatest contribution to enhancement of sustainability in the agricultural system of the region under investigation.

Correction of infrastructural bottlenecks, alleviating hindrances of marketing and promoting agricultural education among the farmers along with efficient extension services can solve the problem of farmers of Barak Valley and contribute the most to enhance the living standards of the rural people so that human development ranking of the region and the country improves. So long as these backward pockets of the country are being neglected and their problems are not being separately addressed, the human development of the nation, in true sense of the term will not uphold.

Shamintra Ghosh