Agricultural Economics Research Association (India)

26th Annual Conference, 2018

on

Agriculture and Sustainable Development Goals

at

ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI)
Karnal, Haryana

Agricultural Economics Research Association (India) is organizing its 26th annual conference on '**Agriculture and Sustainable Development Goals'** at National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal, (Haryana) in November 2018. The focus of the conference is to understand and assess the potential of agriculture and allied activities such as animal husbandry and fisheries towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For long, alleviating hunger, poverty, and malnourishment have been the top priority for most countries especially the developing countries. The nations joined hands and made collective efforts under the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) to address these challenges by 2015. The goals were achieved partially. The incidence of poverty reduced by more than half in most countries between 1990 and 2010 though in varying proportions. In 1990-92 Asia had 740 million poor people, their number reduced to 565 million in 2010-12. China set an example reducing the incidence of poverty from 60% in 1990 to less than 10% in 2008. South Asia has largest concentration of poor people, nearly 304 million, of which an estimated 71% are in India. India, though, was successful in meeting some of the targets under MDGs, it lagged behind China and some other Southeast Asian countries.

The real challenge is not only to eliminate poverty but also to combat the problem of poor nutrition that accounts for 45% of the deaths in children below five years of age. More than 1 billion people in the world live on less than $1 a day and almost half of the world's population lives on less than $ 2.50 a day. The intergovernmental resolution has set a post-2015 bigger plan to eliminate poverty and ensure prosperity for all by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are 17 aspirational "Global Goals" with 169 targets. A goal on reduction in inequality within and among the countries is also included in view of the growing income disparities that may potentially influence sustainability of economic growth and adversely affect the efforts poverty reduction.

Agriculture is crucial and significant for key SDGs, viz. 'No Poverty', 'Zero Hunger', 'Climate Action', and 'Life on Land. In India, agriculture is the main determinant of hunger and nutrition, and the main source of livelihood for about half of the population. Thus, the challenge of meeting the SDG targets depends to a great extent on the performance of agriculture as a supplier of affordable, nutritive and healthy food in an efficient manner. However, agriculture faces several threats on account of climate change, degradation of natural resources, viz. water and land, declining size of land holdings, rising input costs and falling profitability of many crops.

The government of India is committed to the UN Summit 2015 development agenda. Accordingly, the Prime Minister has accorded high priority to agriculture to make it more productive, more paying, better connected to markets and less vulnerable to climatic risks. Several programmes have been proposed to double farmers' income by 2022-23, to conserve soil and water resources, and to improve resilience of agriculture. Large investments are in progress under the Pradhan Mantra Krishi Sinchai Yojana (Prime Minister Irrigation Program), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (Prime Minister Agricultural Crop Insurance Scheme), National Horticulture Mission, National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, e-NAM and so on. The budget 2018 has announced several measures to give boost to farmers' income and agricultural growth. It is, therefore, pertinent to analyse

and examine how various initiatives and strategies adopted by the central and state governments are delivering desired results and contributing towards achieve various SDGs.

The paper writers may discuss one or more of the following issues:

- Map existing state of poverty, hunger, undernutrition, natural resource degradation, climate risks, and dimensions of inequalities in agriculture and rural development relating these to the policies and programs initiated towards SDGs.
- Pathways through which agriculture and agricultural research can contribute towards ending hunger and poverty, reducing malnutrition, arresting degradation of land and water resources and mitigating climate risks.
- Assess potential of existing and frontier technologies (varieties/hybrids and management practices, farm mechanization and traditional practices) in enhancing farm income, reducing production cost and risks, and improving food quality and nutrition.
- Strategies to make small and marginal land holdings viable from the perspective of improving farmers' income and reducing income inequalities.
- In what ways institutions (extension, credit, collectives, contract farming, etc.) can play a role in accomplishing SDGs? The paper writers can examine the existing institutions with a focus on agriculture-nutrition linkages, gender disparities and natural resource management.
- How can development of markets and value chains contribute towards improving farmers' income and reduce poverty and malnutrition?
- How can government programs, e.g. mid-day meal scheme, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, direct benefit transfer, etc. contribute towards reducing the incidence of malnutrition?
- Assess trends, drivers and factors underlying inter-personal and regional inequalities in economic and social indicators, and their implications for technology, institutions and policy in the context of SDGs. In this context, social protection measures, universal basic income, education and skill development need special focus.
- Document experiences of other Asian countries in reducing poverty and incidence of undernutrition, and suggest economically feasible, and socially and politically acceptable options for their replication in India.

The contributors should focus on empirical analyses of the strategies rather on descriptive narratives, and their technological, institutional and policy implications for accomplishing the SDGs. The papers may be submitted by 31 July 2018 to the Chief Editor, Agricultural Economics Research Review on line at: ceditoraerr@gmail.com, and a copy at: aeraindia@gmail.com.