

State Level Agriculture Conference

25th -26th November 2013

Jaipur (Rajasthan)

A Report by Manish Kumar Singh



**Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre
P-1, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme
Jaipur-302005**

1. Introduction

Agriculture, being mainstay of our country with three fourth of population dependent on it, has a profound role in wellbeing of the society. In recent decades the sector has come under severe stress due to stagnation in agriculture production, loss of fertile land and farmer's suicide due to indebtedness. Rajasthan state has a large rural population dependent on agriculture and allied sectors. To discuss and build an understanding on problems plaguing agriculture sector in the state a state level convention was organised on 25th and 26th November, 2013. The event was organised in the serene environs of Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. Large participation of farmers from all over the state made the event a success.

Mr Narayan Singh Member, State Farmer Commission was the chief guest of the inaugural session. In his inaugural speech he praised the role of women in safeguarding traditional agriculture knowledge and need to revisit the traditional knowledge system to adapt to the changing climate and challenges of globalisation. He called farmers to adopt better seeds and increase the agriculture production. Seed replacement rate is merely 20-25% at present. In case of crops like peanuts it is not even 2%. He also asked farmers not to forget their traditional knowledge and try to adopt them in their daily agricultural works.

He raised the issue of challenges posed by globalisation and bio piracy in the agriculture sector. He asked farmers to be entrepreneurial in their strides and add value in agriculture products at the farm level itself. Mr Singh also highlighted the need for organising such events more frequently particularly in the area of agriculture as Rajasthan's geographical diversity and farmers' diverse needs get addressed by such events. He was particularly delighted interacting with farmers who had come from distant parts of Rajasthan.

Prof V S Vyas Deputy Chairperson of State Planning Board, Rajasthan Government and Member of Economic Advisory Council of Prime Minister, Government of India was one of the esteemed speakers. He chaired the closing session of the convention and raised concerns about the risk and uncertainty involved in the high input agriculture in wake of climate change. He advocated for comprehensive crop insurance scheme that could safeguard the interest of the farmers in a situation of calamity. He proposed a risk fund to help the farmers in the times of distress. The fund can be raised by levying a cess on agriculture input

companies which provide fertiliser, seed and pesticide to farmers. He also advocated for a mandatory extension officer by these companies to ensure proper utilisation of the agriculture inputs. He also called for collective efforts to ensure that the agriculture land remains fertile and does not turn barren and degraded. The Convention was organised with insightful sessions on rain fed agriculture, organic farming, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Land Acquisition Act 2013 and impact of climate change on agriculture.

Mr Nilachala Acharya of Centre for Budget and Government Accountability chaired the session on Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and Mr Mahendra Singh Rao of BARC Jaipur gave presentation on District level Budget Tracking Study of RKVY in Rajasthan.

Farmers were acquainted of the procedural aspects of the organic farming by Mr Pritam Tivadi of Morarka Foundation in a session on organic farming. Capt Deep Singh Sekhawat from Nawalgarh raised issues of sustainability of agriculture in the state given the rapid industrialisation and land acquisition. Renewed interests in mining and proposed infrastructure corridor have put more pressure on agriculture land. He also highlighted the inherent weakness of Land Acquisition Act 2013 in addressing the concerns of farmers.

Progressive farmers like Mr Kalu Khan and Mr Jagdish Parik shared their innovative farming practices with the participants. Mr Alok from Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON) discussed Climate change and GM crops in the open session. Farmers raised questions about ineffectiveness of weather based insurance service and changed norms of Kisan Credit Card. Nesar Ahmed Coordinator of Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre, Jaipur proposed vote of thanks to participants and farmers who had come from distant places in Rajasthan. The event was coordinated by Bhupindra Kaushik of BARC. The present report summarises the discussions on various themes in the convention.

2. Rain Fed Agriculture

Rajasthan has a predominant arid and semi-arid climate with extreme variations in annual precipitation. Populations living in these areas have to depend on dryland farming to sustain their livelihood. Dryland farming involves judicious use of scanty moisture available in the soil. It is characterised by climatic risk, low cropping intensity and diversification in crop

selection. To ensure sustainable livelihoods in dryland areas dependency only on agriculture is not desirable. Livestock rearing also form an integral part of the rainfed agriculture.

Dryland agriculture is also characterised by the migration of population and change in occupation when agriculture and related activities fail due to poor monsoon. Poor resource base and limited livelihood options further aggravate such conditions. In dry land regions diversification to non-farm activities results in enhanced capacity to cope up with climatic extremities. Possible area of intervention could be technological research in dryland farming and strengthening of institutional infrastructure in rural areas.

Government has taken stock of the situation with specific plans for rainfed areas. The 12th plan document has suggested for a pilot “Rainfed Farming Systems” program with about Rs.700 cr in place of the Macro Management of Agriculture program under NMSA. This program if taken up will help in streamlining another 2800 crores from the ongoing schemes into a relevant framework (a total of Rs. 3,500 cr. investments over the plan period). But the need is to continue with the Rainfed Areas Development Program (RADP) and integrate its investments with the proposed Rainfed Farming Systems Program.

A session was organised on Rainfed Agriculture in which Nilachala Acharya from Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability and Narendra Pratap Singh from CIDS gave insightful presentations. Mr Chauhan from Aravali chaired the session and Nesar Ahmed of BARC moderated the session. Shri Narayan Singh also gave his insightful comments.

N P Singh of Centre for Environment and Development Studies, Jaipur gave a lecture on Dry land Agriculture issues and options. Amongst agro-ecological regions of India arid region cover a 22.7% of total area. Major areas of Rajasthan fall in arid or semi-arid regions. He talked about dry land farming, livelihood and diversification of livelihood. Diversification of livelihood by way of livestock rearing, dairying and pastoral herding leads to supplementing of farm income and acts as an insurance against the crop failure.

In a presentation titled ‘Rainfed Agriculture: Neglected Priorities’, Nilachala Acharya of Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), New Delhi discussed about the rainfed agriculture and government’s strategy towards it. Mr Acharya showed that in Global Hunger Index India’s position is in lower rung with a rank of 65. He also showed that India’s per capita grain availability has declined to 439 grams in 2010. Per capita calorie and protein intake is also declining but fat intake is increasing.

Mr Acharya discussed about the problems of rain fed agriculture. Focus on irrigated agriculture of successive governments, rainfed agriculture has been side-lined in the budgets. Incidences of farmer's suicides have also increased from 13622 in 1997 to 15964 in 2010. He discussed about the technology fatigue that has led to a decelerating yield of agriculture and increased chemical fertiliser usage supported by huge subsidy to chemical fertilisers that goes against the rainfed agriculture.

Another issue highlighted was of policy paralysis because of one singular agriculture policy for entire country that creates problem, as it fails to address diverse needs and demands of local communities. It has been noticed that agriculture policy and budget expenditure has inherently become biased towards irrigation external inputs. This makes the agriculture capital intensive. Mr Acharya showed his study which he conducted in the six districts of India with Rajsathan's Alwar and Barmer being two of them. He found that water harvesting and micro irrigation were not given due focus rather government focus was on large irrigation schemes. A need for differentiated and enhanced investments is felt in the relevant framework for rain fed area. Further, there is a need for moving towards the block rather than village as a unit of planning for irrigation schemes.

Another area is of soil health management that is of crucial importance for agriculture. Focus should be on increasing the organic content of the soil. Government needs to recognise the variability of the natural resource base and promote appropriate productivity enhancing practices. Knowledge-centric interventions that invest in people to enhance their capabilities are needed rather than technological approaches packaged through external inputs alone.

For unlocking the potential of rainfed agriculture in ensuring food and nutritional security at local and national level due priority should be given to it in planning itself. It has the potential to check groundwater crisis that has become common due to high subsidies on drips & sprinklers fuelling groundwater extraction.

A program under Micro-Irrigation/ NMSA should be initiated on protective irrigation for farmers without having access to irrigation. Such program can be started with a budget allocation of Rs.100cr during the current budget only. Present focus on soil testing labs, fertiliser subsidies, micro-nutrient subsidies tilt the policy support against the organic farming, rather focus should be on vermi-compost units, compost pits that results in addition of soil organic matter and incentivize farmers to add more organic matter.

In the dryland agriculture districts due priority have not been accorded to expenditure on items like animal husbandry and dairy development. Expenditure on Fisheries (particularly inland fisheries in Alwar district) should be given top priority within the cluster of expenditure. Low utilisation of funds has been reported in both the districts, across programmes (DDOs). It has been found that huge amount of funds that has been accounted by passing treasury route like funds on MGNREGS etc. should be brought under the purview of State Budgets. From the Budgetary expenditure point of view, agriculture sector seems to be not in the list of priorities within the overall budget for the district. Expenditure on rural roads and other infrastructure (within the ambit of agriculture sector investment) constituted the top priorities. Further, animal husbandry has remained the focus part of expenditure, when it comes to budgetary expenditure on agriculture sector. A need is to move towards “Block” as a unit of program rather than district.

Chair of the session Shri Singh commented on negative approach towards policy analysis. Citing evidences from Rajasthan he brought to notice only few cases of farmer suicide in the state attributing it largely to the continuing of traditional agriculture practises by Rajasthan’s farmers. Traditional practices of Rajasthan like crop rotation, growing of ‘Dhencha’ ‘Sanal’ as green manure and integration of animal husbandry has helped farmers in coping with the agriculture distress that globalisation has brought. Domestic animals also play an important role in the Rajasthan’s rural economy.

3. Organic Farming

Growing demand for food and limited land resource has led to a rapid increase in the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. This has affected the entire food chain with degradation of fertility of land over a long term. Organic farming without any use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides has emerged as a viable option for sustainable agriculture. Organic farming uses less water and is particularly suited for dry and arid regions. Given the importance and future prospects of organic farming in the state third session of the convention was organised on organic farming and related issues.

Pritam Tiwari from Morarka Foundation gave presentation on technical aspects of organic farming and certification process. Progressive farmers Jagdish Pareek and Ms. Sahu also discussed their experiences, doing organic farming. The session was chaired by Shri Narayan Singh Member Farmer Commission Rajasthan.

Mr Tiwari in his interactive presentation on the need and evolution of organic farming stressed the need to control growing land pollution, presence of fertilisers in food chain and cancer menace. It demands revisiting traditional agriculture practices that are easily adaptable and are environment friendly. Organic farming is the name given to such agriculture practices that have become relevant in the present time.

He discussed about the organic certification process in detail. A special significance of the certification comes from the fact that premium demanded by farmers and high prices paid by buyers for organic products, rests on the stringent certification process. He explained the procedural aspects of the organic farming and technicality involved in the certification. Before certifying a field as organic a three years certification period is required as transition period. Certifying authority also gives the brand mark to agriculture products that helps in marketing of the organic products. Facility such as Trace Net provides transparency to the organic farming practice as the buyer can identify the particular farm from which the agriculture produce is coming. No doubt, it gives recognition and respect to individual farmers.

Mr Tiwari also discussed about different organic farming standards practised in the world and in this context brought out in detail the unique features of Indian standards in organic farming.

Organic farming covers all aspects of farming and related practices. Extensive Documentation, rigorous inspection and testing of the produce is done to ensure that only genuine products enter in market. Organic farming forms a link between farmers and global markets and provides farmers an opportunity for enhanced income.

Mr Tiwari even facilitated the farmers to voice their apprehensions and concerns about organic farming. Farmers from different parts of state shared their success stories and problems they face while doing organic farming.

Jagdish from Ajitgarh tehsil in the state grows organic vegetables. He shared his success story as an organic farmer with participants. He owns 20 bigha of land and has 8 milch animals that provide manure for his fields. He is a member of Honeybee Network and a successful organic seed producer. Kumarappa foundation active in the region played an important role in motivating and forming a cohesive group of organic farmers. He also shared

his innovative methods of rain water harvesting. But he voiced his concerns regarding costly certification process involved in organic farming and lengthy documentation.

Kallu Khan from Jhevri village in Laxamangarh, Sikar district shared his experience of growing Aloe vera crop in his unirrigated land. It gives him a steady income with minimal investment. The crop can with stand even a drought and has a good demand in the market.

Lady Farmer and seed innovator Ms Sahu from Kuchaman in the state has developed an organic seed of cauliflower. She was also present in the convention. She shared her experiences of developing a pest resistant seed of cauliflower. From a marginal farmer she has become a seed vendor and a role model for the local women folk. She expressed her gratitude to local leader from Kuchaman Suna Ram who played an important role through NIF in supporting her endeavours.

Sehdev who has eight bigha of land grows barley, tomato and tobacco in his fields. He showed his eagerness to start organic farming but he is quite wary of long gestation period involved in the process.

Mr Pritam from Morarka foundation talked about some projects by Government of Rajasthan to promote organic farming. But the apprehension of farmers about possible loss and marketing of the organic products remains some of the issues that have to be addressed. Farmers also voiced the fact that public awareness about the organic products is there but premium demanded by such products is impeding there sale. Organic farming also demands animal husbandry as they provide the input for farming. This entails substantial cost to farmers who have less land. Farmers also were not happy with governmental support for organic farming.

Chair of the session Shri Singh also advocated organic farming as a strategy to cope with the vulnerability posed by climate change. Organic farming should not be done in isolation but coupled with animal husbandry it should be used as a livelihood strategy.

4. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna

An additional central assistance scheme that aims at achieving 4% annual growth in the agriculture sector during the XI Plan period. The scheme has been continued in the 12th plan

also. It aims to ensure a holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors and to incentivise States to draw up plans for their agriculture sector more comprehensively, taking agro-climatic conditions, natural resource issues and technology into account, and integrating livestock, poultry and fisheries more fully.

Nilachala Acharya of Centre for Budget and Government Accountability chaired the session and Mr Mahendra Singh and Mr Narendra Singh Rao of Budget Analysis and Research Centre Jaipur presented their study on Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna titled District level Budget Tracking Study of RKVY in Rajasthan.

The study was carried out in two districts of Rajasthan Alwar and Jhunjhunu to know the implementation and fund utilisation at district level. Data was collected as the flow of funds at four levels from district to panchayat level. State, district, sub division, block and panchayat level. Their study used only the department of agriculture expenditure as major fund goes to that department. They showed a fund flow map from Union level to beneficiary level.

Their study pointed that the major expenditure under the scheme is done in the last quarter. It shows that ad hoc nature of work is being done to spend the amount within a financial year. The selection of work is done by the Zilla Parishad it gives the scheme a top down implementation mechanism with no role of the stakeholders; thus it defeats the stated purpose of the scheme. Further, Tribal Sub Plan and Schedule Caste Plan guidelines are also missing in the scheme.

In their study the authors looked into the expenditure in the agriculture department only although the scheme gives fund to other departments also but agriculture department being the major spender it served the research objective. Authors felt that the poor infrastructure and insufficient staff in the agriculture department remained a major impediment in the implementation of the scheme. The scheme is also fraught with undue political influence as the agricultural department comes under the panchayats. Considerable capacity building is required at the sub district level to make the scheme a success.

Shri Chauhan discussed about the RKVY budget allocation. He contended that rainfed regions budget should be compared as a ratio of total area of agriculture by it in the state rather than a stand-alone item. He also argued that difference in expenditure in the Kharif and Rabi during a year should be analysed in the context of Rabi being more prone to crop failure and need for a focused expenditure.

5. Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture

Climate change has been existent from time immemorial but the rate of change has increased in present time demanding adaptation for the marginalised. Oceans have become flash points of such climatic variability. Climate change has raised the concern of countries world over. With rising mercury and sea level it has implication on every aspect of our lives. Agriculture not only provides substantial employment and contribution to GDP but it is related to the food security of the nation. Rajasthan being dependent on rain fed agriculture, change of climate not only affects the production of agriculture products but it affects the livelihood of millions of farmers. Climate change mitigation has got a lot of focus but adaptation particularly in agriculture has not got due focus.

A session on issues related to impacts of climate change on agriculture in the state was organised in the convention. The session was chaired by the Mr Ajay Jha of Pairavi. Mr B K Sharma and Yash Sethia of Foundation for Ecological Society gave their presentation. Ajay Jha started his presentation by underscoring the fact that a developing country like India has to bear the brunt of climate change as variability in climate affects poor and marginalised more.

Agriculture sector is most vulnerable to climate change and little has been done in this regard. Water run-off has increased due to urbanisation and deforestation. Degradation of soil affects agriculture adversely. Crops are an important part of our culture milieu and eating habits result from complex socio-cultural factors. Thus threat of climate change has a bearing on our culture and customs.

Civil society which is considered as the sentinel of the society has given scant focus on impact of climate change on agriculture. Presence of a large number of small farmers further outlines the need for an adaptation strategy which can make agriculture more resilient in wake of climatic vagaries. One important dimension that is often not given due attention is the adaptation measures done by large farmers. Focus on small farmers misses the larger picture as large farmers have substantial share in food production. The need is to include large farmers in the adaptation effort as they have a profound effect on environment and implications on food security.

Agriculture sector gets subsidy world over due to the nature of the sector and its implication on food security. But present agriculture subsidies are not equitable with the demands of the climate change adaptation.

Water conservation has a special significance in the State having majority of the area getting a scanty rainfall. Water's demand from other sectors like industry and households has increased manifold, this has resulted in the severe strain on the water resources. Climate change would further aggravate the situation. Conflicting demands have already started coming up with water for urban household use getting priority over the agriculture. Bisalpur dam in the state; water of which was also meant for agriculture use, has been usurped by the potable water demand of urban areas of Jaipur and Ajmer. Besides providing drinking water to three districts, the dam provides water for irrigation to about 260 villages from Tonk to Sawai Madhopur district.

Introduction of hybrid varieties of seed to increase the production has also played havoc with the environment. Rajasthan is a leading producer of pearl millet in the country. This can partly be attributed to the introduction of hybrid varieties of the crop in the state. These varieties although give a good yield but demand excessive water and provide less fodder for the milch animals. State has one of the largest livestock populations in the country. Although livestock population in the state has increased over the years but it is mainly due to increase in the number of goats. This clearly indicates the paucity of fodder in the state.

Canal irrigation in the north western regions of the state has brought economic development and prosperity but it has led to changed cropping patterns in the Indira Gandhi Canal command areas. It has affected the soil health adversely leading to soil degradation.

Paucity of Water is a major problem in the state. Out of 237 blocks in Rajasthan only 31 are safe other are fluoride affected or have some other problem. Generous subsidy for pump sets has led to lowering of water table and contamination of ground water by fluoride and salt.

Yash Sethia of Foundation for Ecological Society discussed about the role of forest and wild life on sustainability of agriculture. Rajasthan has 19 endemic varieties of flora which are found in Rajasthan only. Many species of butterflies and fauna are still not documented and not known. Species like Tiger which were present throughout the dry deciduous landscape of Rajasthan, has got limited to a few protected areas only. Pollution, climate change and invasive species are the major reasons for the extinction and dwindling of indigenous species. Tiger being apex species of the food chain has ramification on the entire food chain and fall

in prey base makes them man eater. Bees and many species of pollinator also have a profound role in agriculture and play an important role by way of ecosystem services.

Energy demand has increased manifold in the rural areas and has led to cutting of forests. Need is for a focus on agro forestry and horticulture. A local nursery of endemic species is required to arrest the deforestation. Soil and moisture conservation, building of vegetative barriers, contour bunding coupled with afforestation and reforestation would help in carbon sequestration. Sequential restoration of dunes in Thar Desert is also required as it covers vast area of the state. Strengthening of village institutions and planning by a bottom up approach is required to ensure a sustainable agriculture. It is also an imperative as Rajasthan forest policy has a target of bringing 20% of forest area under forest and tree cover.

Agriculture's dependence on weather and climate makes it more vulnerable to the climate change. Farmer's traditional knowledge has come under challenge in wake of climate change. A traditional farmer accustomed to droughts is not able to cope up with the flash floods. Climatic variability at national level is already getting manifested by more frequent droughts in Assam and news of flash floods in Rajasthan. To cope with climate change, first there is need to go for mitigation to cut emission and second is adaptation to it. Over a period of time urban areas have a dominant influence in the policy arena rather than rural areas. This can be inferred by the declining contribution of agriculture in the GDP and state policy to lower the dependence of people on agriculture.

Government's apathy towards the issue of climate change is also based on low level of commitment in multilateral agreements and low per capita emission in the country. State like Rajasthan although prepared an action plan on climate change but it falls short of the efforts required addressing the issue. The document remains a hollow promise as the strategies devised in it are still not given the form of scheme with budgetary allocation. Further, the document fails to live up to the expectation of the general public as stakeholder participation was not there in the formulation of action plan. Another issue that remains unaddressed is the non-availability of the State Action Plan in hindi. Hindi is widely spoken in the state and no copy of the action plan in hindi keeps large population of the State unaware of the government's strategy. The Action plan remains a good compilation of data in a single document about industry, agriculture and forest in the state. Action Plan remains a factual jugglery in absence of innovative bottom up practical action strategies.

State considers UNFCCC's REDD+ scheme as a strategy to earn revenue from forest. The land that would be used for afforestation is the village is grazing land. This will create a conflicting situation with Panchayats as no revenue sharing model has been envisaged. It will shift the focus of the forest department from restoring the natural landscape to ensuring maximum carbon sequestration by way of artificial means.

Participants concluded that farmer themselves are perceiving climate change and they are responding to it on their own. But the traditional knowledge and capacity to cope with climate change is limited to a few farmers rather than widely known to many.

6. Land Acquisition Act 2013

Globalisation and liberalisation of economy in the last two decades has resulted in the expansion of industries and fresh demand for agricultural land by other sectors of the economy. This has led to a conflicting situation in the many parts of the country. Rajasthan being a mineral rich state with good prospects of industrialisation, agriculture land in the state is particularly vulnerable to acquisition.

Land Acquisition is forcible acquisition of land from an unwilling seller and is distinct from a land purchase from a willing seller. In this context farmer's livelihood security becomes very important and it has to be addressed while doing any land acquisition. Erstwhile Land Acquisition Act 1894 had emergency provision to acquire private land. This led to many conflicts over land acquisition.

To explore the good features and drawbacks of the Land Acquisition Act 2013 a session was held in the convention. Captain (Retd.) Deep Singh, a noted social activist and Nesar Ahmed of Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre discussed about the act. Motilal Mahamallik of IDS, Jaipur chaired the session.

In the new act there are changes in the definition, from land owners to a more broad based term 'affected family'. It makes rehabilitation and resettlement more inclusive. Presenters pointed that in the new act private companies shall provide for rehabilitation and resettlement if they purchase or acquire land, through private negotiations, equal to or more than 100 acres in rural areas and 50 acres in urban areas.

To save fertile agriculture land a maximum of five per cent of irrigated multi-cropped land may be acquired in a district, with certain conditions. The provision of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) by an independent body followed by a preliminary notification and a final

award by the District Collector makes the act a game changer. But the farmers expressed their displeasure over the provision. They held the view that in case of large scale acquisition entire villages gets uprooted destroying the age old customs and social practices. In such cases it is a mockery to do SIA exercise.

In the case of urgency, the act mentions that the appropriate government shall acquire the land after 30 days from the date of the issue of the notification (without SIA). This clause may be used only for defence, national security, and conditions arising out of a national calamity.

The compensation for the land acquired shall be based on the higher of (a) the minimum land value, specified in the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 for the registration of sale deeds; and (b) the average sale price of the higher priced 50% of all sale deeds registered in the previous 3 years for similar type of land situated in the vicinity. This amount is further doubled in case of rural areas. The value of the assets (trees, plants, buildings etc.) attached to the land being acquired will be added to this amount. This total amount reached will then be multiplied by two to get the final compensation amount; in case of the urgency clause, an additional 75% of the market value shall be given. Such generous compensation norms make the acquisition process quite beneficial for farmers monetarily. But it would be detrimental to agriculture in general.

If an acquired land which is transferred to a person for a consideration, is left unutilised for a period of 10 years from the date it was acquired, it shall be returned to the Land Bank or the appropriate government. The Bill proposes that in cases where the ownership of an acquired land is sold to any person, without any development made, 20 per cent of the profit made shall be shared among all the persons from whom the land was acquired.

Captain Deep Singh of Nawalgarh raised the issue of acquisition of fertile agriculture land in Nawalgarh. More than 60000 residents of adjoining villages would have to be rehabilitated for the upcoming cement industry. He pointed that in our country we have fixed percentage of land for forests, wildlife but not for agriculture.

In the present Act to do the acquisition it is not mandatory to seek the consent except in tribal areas where Panchayat's permission is mandatory. But the consent is taken only of the pass book holder of the land in the land revenue department. This leads to conflicting situation in

case of land jointly inherited by family members. Further it weakens the say of women in the decision making as generally land is registered in the name of a male member of the family.

Further the Act gives enough leeway to the government by way of vague definition of Public interest and limits of the city in case of compensation. The issue has a particular relevance as mining is making inroads in Rajasthan with renewed demand for minerals world over.

7. Policy Recommendations

Agriculture sector in the post liberalisation period has witnessed neglect and apathy. Average annual growth rate has come down to 3.6% during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan for the agriculture and allied sector. Declining expenditure in the agriculture sector over a long period has led to stagnation in the sector. Farmer's indebtedness and distress can be realised from growing number of farmer's suicides. An important aim of the Convention was to facilitate the articulation of the unheard voices of the farmers in the state. Discussions and informed debates during two days resulted in the formulation of recommendations that could lead in a more informed policy making.

- Capitalising on its arid and semi-arid lands where traditional agriculture is practised from centuries Rajasthan government should promote organic farming in a big way.
- Organic farming certification process being lengthy and costly Government should provide a subsidy component for the same so that small and marginal farmer can also take advantage of organic farming.
- Organic farming should be promoted as a way of agriculture by combination of science and policy with adequate support. Science has to play an important role in popularising organic farming and scientists have to change the way they look at organic farming. Role of civil society has an important role in working as bridge between the farmers and the scientist.
- The growing risk and uncertainty in the agriculture, demands a comprehensive crop insurance cover. A 'risk fund' should be constituted to help farmers in the times of distress. The fund can be fed by levying a cess on fertiliser, seed and pesticide companies.
- Generic seed preservation by way of seed bank should be started with participation of community to safeguard the traditional varieties and germplasms.

- Crop loss estimation should be brought down from 50% to 20-25% for the compensation and its unit should be panchayat or village.
- Agro-ecological based vulnerability study should be done in the entire state as a strategy to cope up with climate change.
- Timely availability of weather related information to farmers is also not there despite availability of the ICT based solutions in the country. Frost loss can be easily averted by the timely availability of weather related information. ICT based low cost information dissemination system should be started in the state.
- Concentrated efforts should be made to develop innovative methods of irrigation that demand lesser water. Cooperation between agriculture and irrigation departments is an essential for efficient use of water. The agriculture and the irrigation departments must act together and in close coordination in a state like Rajasthan, which experiences extreme dearth of water.

State Level Agricultural Conference

25-26 Novemeber, 2013

Place:- Institute for Development Studies

Tentative Programme Schedule

25 Novemeber, 2013		
10.00 – 10.30	Welcome and registration	BARC Team
10.30 – 11.00	Key address	Shri Narayan Singh (Member, Rajya Kisan Ayog) Shri Surjit Singh ji (IDS)
11:00 – 11:15	Tea	
11.15 – 12:15	Rain fed agriculture and related issues	Chairperson – Shri Surjit Aingh ji (IDS) Shri Nilachala Acharya ji (CBGA) Shri Narendra Pratap (CEDS)
12.15 –01:30	Organic Farming and related issues	Chairperson – Shri Pritam (Morarka) Shri Jagdish Parik (Farmer) Shri Gangaram Kir (Farmer)
01.30 – 2.30	Lunch	
2.30 – 3.15	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna in Rajasthan	Chairperson – Shri Nilachala Acharya ji (CBGA) Shri Mahendra Singh (BARC) Shri Nagendra Singh (JVT)
3:15 – 04:00	Land Acquisition Act 2013: an introduction	Chairperson – Shri Motilal (IDS) Shri Nesar Ahmad (BARC) Capt. Deep Singh (Social worker)
4:00 – 04:15	Tea	
4.15 – 5.00	Agriculture and Scheduled Castes in Rajasthan: discussion	Shri Surjit Singh ji (IDS) Shri Mahendra Singh (BARC)
26 Novemeber, 2013		
10:00 – 11:15	Climate change in Rajasthan and related issues	Chairperson – Shri Ajay Jha (Pairvi) Shri B.K. Sharma (FES) Shri Yash Sethiya (FES)
11:15 – 11:30	Tea	
11:30 – 12:15	Open Session	
12:15 – 01:15	Closing Address	प्रोफेसर वी. एस. व्यास जी (उपाध्यक्ष. राज्य आयोजना बोर्ड, राजस्थान सरकार) (सदस्य प्रधानमंत्री आर्थिक सलाहकार परिषद, भारत सरकार)
01:15 – 01:30	Thank you note and conclusion	Shri Nesar Ahmad (BARC)
01:30	Lunch	

Budget Analysis Rajasthan Center, Jaipur