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डॉ. आर.एस. परोदा - JUN 27 , 2020

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Long-term policy necessary to connect youth with agriculture: R.S. Paroda

Dr. R.S. Paroda - JUN 27, 2020



Long-term policy necessary to connect youth with agriculture: R.S. Paroda



Only the need to add youth as farmers should be added as value chain developers. This will give them better economic opportunities. For this, the government should change the policies for long term investment, easy and cheap loans, subsidy to entrepreneurs, improvement in policies related to labour market, tax exemption on value addition done by youth in rural areas. This was stated by the former Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)

and the chairman of the Trust for Advancement of Agriculture Sciences, Dr. R.S. Paroda said this at a program of All India Agriculture Students Association.

He said that the National Mission on Youth in Agriculture should be formed for sustainable farming, effective dissemination of information, technical cooperation, developing new models of agribusiness and entrepreneurship and value chain development. Apart from this, the youth should be encouraged to connect with schemes like e-NAM, startup, standup, agribusiness enterprises and FPO etc. Youth in agriculture should be job seekers, not job seekers. He also talked about promoting agri clinics model in every district.

Promote the use of hybrid technology

Dr. Paroda used hybrid technology in maize, millet, sorghum and rice, cultivated GM crops of soybean, mustard, maize and brinjal, promoted micro irrigation and discouraged flood irrigation, promoted bioenergy / biofuel use and biofortified Crops (maize with good quality protein, rice containing iron and zinc, millet containing iron, wheat with zinc) were emphasized.

India becomes an exporter of agricultural importer

He said, there was a time when we had to depend to a large extent on the import of agricultural products, but today we are not only self-sufficient, we also export them. Agricultural products worth more than \$ 40 billion are exported every year. We showed the world that we can not only take care of 137 crore people of the country but can also meet the needs of other developing countries. This has been possible through green, white and blue revolution. Only 20 million tonnes of grain is exported. Today we have a buffer stock of over 50 million tonnes. Cereal production increased by six times from 50 million tonnes to 295 million tonnes and horticulture production reached 32 million tonnes. During this period, the population increased fourfold. The poverty rate has come down from 70 per cent to 20 per cent due to good agricultural performance. Life expectancy has also increased from 32 years to 68 years.

Despite the country being self-sufficient, the income of the farmers is low

He said that despite such increase in agricultural production, the income of farmers has come down. 80 per cent of the country's farmers are small holdings, they have less

than two hectares of land. Redevelopment of Indian agriculture is needed because farmers here are struggling with low incomes, youth are not taking interest in agriculture and farmers are not getting policy support either. There is a need to think afresh for sustainable and profitable farming. This requires diversification as well as attention to tasks such as post-production processing.

India will get benefit of young population

As far as the importance of youth in farming is concerned, by 2050 the world population is estimated to reach 900 crores, of which the youth will be around 20%. India is in a state of advantage as it has 35.6 crore youth in the age group of 10 to 24 years, of which 20 crore live in rural areas. India's population is expected to remain young for a much longer period than in China and Indonesia. The average age of Indians is 30 years while 40 are for Americans, 46 for Europeans and 47 for Japanese.

Needs to solve the challenges of youth

However, there are challenges before the youth. Due to their lack of access to information, they are unable to take new steps. They also have less land, lack of financial resources, have difficulties connecting with the market, have no say in the decision-making process. Apart from this, society's attitude towards agriculture is also not good and there is lack of infrastructure in rural areas. The way to move forward is that we keep thinking global but work local. The problem of youth engagement in agriculture was first discussed at the 2006 Global Conference organized by the Global Forum on Agriculture Research and Innovation (GFAR). After this, Young Professionals for Agricultural Development was formed under the aegis of GFAR. In later years, the importance of youth in agriculture was discussed in many forums.