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Declining Trend of Agriculture Production due to Constriction of National Highway and Railway Line Through the Fertile Agriculture Land in Kashmir Valley: A Study on its Ill Effects on Agriculture and Measures to Regain the Agriculture Production

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ABSTRACT

This article furnishes information about the declining trend of agricultural production as a result of large scale construction of railways and national highways. Also it inform about the environmental problems caused by such constructions. The paper also suggests some measures concerning the regain of agricultural productivity.

Key words: agriculture production, railways, national highways.

1 Introduction

Transportation is an important pillar of service sector development to satisfy the basic needs of society. Railways and national highways are an important means of land transport that ply a very crucial role in building the economic structure of a country. The construction of railways and highways has revolutionized the whole world with its appreciative outcome. However, in spite of having a number of amazing advantages, it has impacted the environment to an irresponsible extent.

Nearly one billion people worldwide live in rural areas without access to national paved road networks (*Sam Asher et al., 2019*). The world's population continues to rise. Today's population of around 7 billion is expected to increase to about 9 billion by 2050 (*United Nations, 2009*). By this time, one billion tonnes of cereals and 200 million extra tonnes of livestock products will need to be produced every year (*Bruinsma, 2009*). The imperative for such agricultural growth is strongest in developing countries, where the challenge is not just to produce food but to ensure that families have access that will bring them food security (*Earthscan, 2011*). FAO's vision is of a 'world free from hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner' (*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome, 2017*). Today, in the developing nations, roads play important part of infrastructure of country. Any damage may cause lots of inconvenience to the transportation system which ultimately will affect the future growth of countries.

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2 Research methodology

Secondary source of data has been used for study like books, journals, newspapers, and various search engines. The construction of railway line and NH44 between Anantnag to Srinagar has been taken as area of study.

3 Discussion

Kashmir economy is known as agrarian economy because more than 60% of population is dependent on agriculture, and most of the population is inhabitant of rural areas and their primary occupation is the agriculture, both consumer crops and cash crops are cultivated in Kashmir valley. So the main source of income in Kashmir valley is agriculture.

As we know constriction of railways and highways requires clearance of major agricultural lands and sometimes even forests leaving devastating effects on natural environment. This clearance of fertile agricultural lands for construction purpose has led to the decline in the agricultural production owing to the low contribution of agricultural towards the GDP of the state. The constriction activities have led to the environmental degradation. Large scale encroachment of agricultural land has left farmers with small farm size holdings and cultivation on such minimal holdings only meet family requirements with no additional output. This implies a decrease in the agricultural production. The construction of railways line and national highways has degraded the composition of land because of the heavy equipments and machinery used in these processes resulting in the loss of fertility of soil, thereby making land unfit and unsuitable for agricultural purposes. Thus, becomes the biggest reason for the decline in the agricultural production. Establishment of this network of railways and national highways involves displacement of people from their dwellings and there by leaving their farms behind. Thus the land remains uncultivated which in turn results in no produce or output. All these factors become responsible for the declining trend of agricultural production.

As per study the construction of railway line and new national highway from Anantnag to Srinagar which is go through Pulwama district (famous for saffron). These two ways of transport are mostly drawn through the agriculture land, like rice fields and apple orchards which are our primary occupation and the source of income. It's a thumb rule in agricultural economics, that construction has inverse relation with the agriculture production, also it shrinks down the cultivated land. Huge area of cultivated land has come under the railway line and national highway which reduction the production of food grains and also shows the negative effects on ecosystem. At the same time it has its positive impacts on Kashmir economy, but the point here is the cultivated land in Kashmir has already limited and it depend upon the imports from other states before these huge constructions. So it is clearly understood that we become more and more depend on imports in terms of agriculture goods like rice (staple food of Kashmir) after the shrinking of agricultural land. As per primary survey most of the big farmers become the land less now, instead of their land they have been paid huge amounts by the government and the amount is spend mostly on non economic activities like construction of houses etc.

4 Conclusion and remedial measures

What measures to regain the agricultural production? Proper steps should be undertaken to overcome the various problems that have led to the decline in the agricultural production. Most of the rural areas in different parts of the world rely on agriculture as their source of livelihood. So government

must come in action to solve this problem and frame such policies that could help in regaining the agricultural production.

Following initiatives should be taken to minimize the loss:

Government should supply qualitative fertilizers to farmers at the reasonable rates for increasing the fertility of soil. With the increasing the fertility of soil, agricultural productivity will ultimately increase.

Government should play a lead role in the implementation of land reforms so that the existing agricultural system is modified and new techniques are incorporated for the regain of agricultural production.

Use of high yield variety of seeds and proper irrigation system can also help in increasing the agricultural production.

Techniques like multiple cropping mixed cropping can also be used to compensate the loss.

Steps should be taken to reclaim the waste and barren land into cultivable land. So, that the agriculture is practiced on such land and production is increased.

Government should provide compensations to the farmers.

Farmers should be provided with proper education and awareness regarding the adoption of modern methods and machinery to increase the production.

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