Towards Viksit Bharat@2047
Technological Innovations and Policy Options for Eastern Region

भाकृ अनुप
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CONTENT

Policy Measures for Tenant farmers of Bihar

Period of development: 2019 - 2021

Developers:

Ujjwal Kumar, DK Singh, Kamal Sarma, RK Raman, AG Navaraj

Background:

Tenant farming refers to a system where a farmer, known as the tenant, rents land from a landowner in exchange for a share of the produce or a fixed cash rental payment. This practice is prevalent in many parts of India. In Bihar, significant area under agriculture is cultivated by tenant farmers who are largely small and marginal farmers having very less or no land holding and very limited resources. Tenant farmers are highly vulnerable to environmental risk and uncertainty. Since they don't have legal rights over land, they don't get benefits of centra or state government schemes.

Description of the technology:

The study was conducted in 3 districts of Bihar *viz.* Bhojpur, Vaishali and Muzaffarpur using various tools of social sciences research *viz.* survey method using structured interview schedule, focused group discussion and personal observation by team of experts. It was observed that out of total area owned by household. Around 31% area was leased in which suggested that tenant-based agriculture is a prevalent practice in study area with nearly one third of area under tenancy. More than 85% tenant farmers of the study area of Bihar were either landless or marginal. This was indeed a major problem since, fragmentation of land holding is a hindrance to commercial farming as well as mechanization of agriculture. Three major types of tenancy were found to be prevalent in the study area tenants fixed cash, fixed produce and sharing of produce in some proportion. Sharing of produce (50:50) or Butaidari system was more prevalent in Bihar followed by fixed cash system. In case of cash-based system, land owner demanded Rs. 10,000-15,000 per acre from tenant for one year, based on quality of land. All the leasing was based on verbal consensus between land owner and tenant farmers.

Commercial potential:

The technology can be offered through consultancy services to State Agricultural Department, policy makers, FPOs, NGOs, and farmers' groups.

Impact:

It is a policy level recommendation based on primary field study conducted in Bhojpur, Vaishali and Muzaffarpur district of Bihar using various tools of social sciences research related to tenancy farming in Bihar. It was found that tenant farmers are mostly marginal farmers and landless labourers who face a lot of problems during cultivation. Without ownership of land, they don't get benefits of government schemes in case of crop failure due to natural disaster like flood and drought. The state Government should protect the rights of tenant farmers, since, as per findings of this study they were more vulnerable group who can be evacuated from the land by owner at any time without giving any reason.

Provision for a lease document can be made which can act as legal document in absence of ownership of land. This document can be utilized by poor tenants for access to government schemes like subsidy on inputs viz. seed, fertilizers, tools and implements; credit, crop insurance, compensation of loss caused by flood/drought/diseases/pests etc minimum support price etc.

Agro-ecoregions suitability:

Bihar

References (Publication):

Status of Tenancy and Child Well-Being in Bihar, Technical Bulletin No. R-65/Patna-37, ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna.