
Economic Reforms and Agrarian Crisis in India

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Preface

India's agricultural sector, despite being the largest source of livelihood for the majority of its population, has been grappling with a persistent and deepening agrarian crisis. This crisis is not merely the result of recent policy missteps but is deeply rooted in historical inequities, structural inefficiencies, and a policy framework that has often prioritized economic liberalization over agrarian welfare. The growing discontent among farmers, rising input costs, stagnating incomes, rural indebtedness, and waves of farmer suicides are stark reminders that something is fundamentally broken in the way agriculture is practiced and governed in India.

This book emerges from an urgent need to understand and critically examine the factors that have led to the contemporary agrarian distress in India. It provides a rigorous analysis of the socio-economic, policy-driven, and global factors that have shaped the trajectory of Indian agriculture since independence, with a particular focus on the period following the economic reforms of 1991. These reforms, while aimed at enhancing the overall efficiency and global integration of the Indian economy, had unintended consequences for the rural agricultural sector—many of which were detrimental to small and marginal farmers.

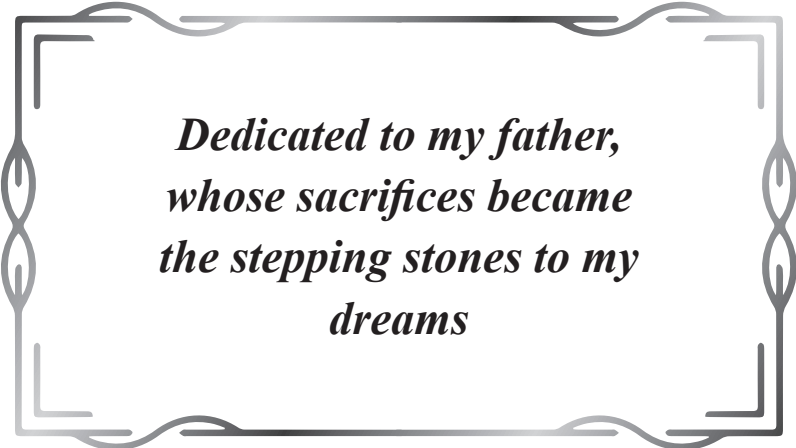
Through a blend of historical insight and empirical research, this study investigates the core causes of the agrarian crisis. It uses various statistical tools such as compound growth rates, regression analysis, principal component analysis, and the construction of a composite index of agrarian crisis to present a robust, data-backed understanding of the situation. The research also considers the impact of international trade agreements, specifically WTO's Agreement on Agriculture, which exposed Indian farmers to unfair competition from heavily subsidized agricultural products from developed countries.

This book also outlines the limited efficacy of various policy measures implemented by the Indian government, such as the National Agriculture Policy, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, and others, and suggests that while these initiatives may have offered short-term relief, they have failed to address the deeper structural causes of distress. The conclusions drawn from this study are not only important for academic discourse but also carry significant implications for policy formulation and future interventions.

Ultimately, this work is a contribution to the ongoing dialogue around India's agricultural transformation. It aims to inform scholars, researchers, policy analysts, and decision-makers by providing an integrated view of the agrarian crisis—one that combines statistical evidence, historical context, and ground realities. The goal is not merely to document the crisis but to move toward constructive and inclusive solutions that can restore dignity, sustainability, and profitability to Indian agriculture.

Author

Dr. Sandeep Kaur



*Dedicated to my father,
whose sacrifices became
the stepping stones to my
dreams*

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