The economics behind green revolution in india history essay

History, Revolution

In the year 1943, India faced one of the world’s worst recorded food disaster, known as the Bengal Famine. The famine took a toll of 4 million people in eastern India alone. The reasons forwarded for this famine was an acute shortfall in the food production in that area. However, the noted economist Amartya Sen believed that the hysteria related to the World War II was a more important factor which made food supplies a low priority for the British rulers.

After Independence also, India continued its emphasis on the food production scenario to feed its evergrowing population . To this effect India promoted the Green Revolution during the period 1967-78, focussing mainly on wheat, rice, corn and millets.

Prior to 1967, the efforts to achieve a higher level of food production were not very successful. Durng this period the main emphasis was on increasing the total area under food production. The results were nor very enthusiastic. People were still dying of hunger. The rate of growth of population was still higher than the rate of growth of food production. To prevent this government took drastic measures and announced the green revolution.

As we mentioned above, the total area under food production was being continually increased after 1947 and this continued to increase even after 1967 to meet the growing demands of food. However, this was not the most striking feature of Green Revolution.

Double Cropping of area already under production

The area under production was cropped only once a year prior to the green revolution. The government encouraged and developed means to double crop the existing farmlands. This was the most striking and important feature of Green Revolution in India.

The one cropping per season was being done owing to the single natural monsoon season in the country. For the double cropping to be successful, government built huge irrigation facilities. Dams were made to capture the huge amount of natural rain water which was earlier wasted.

Using improved seeds for production

This was made possible through heavy investment in Research and Development. The Indian Council for Agricultural Research was responsible for development of High Yielding Variety of seeds, mainly wheat and rice but also corn and millet. K68 variety of seed for wheat was the most noteworthy of all seeds developed. Developed by Dr. M. P. Singh, this seed was by far the most important contributor to Green Revolution, thus, Dr. M. P. Singh is rightly called the father of Green Revolution in India.

Logic of Green Revolution in Economic Development

Nationwide agricultural growth with productivity growth

The Green Revolution lead to a bumper rise in the overall production and productivity of foodgrains in India and wheat and rice in particular. The farmers were benefitted the most because of higher returns on their investment. They had a bumper produce due to the HYV seeds.

Uplifting income of majority of population (rural population) ‘ to a certain level’

The income of a majority of the farmers was increased due to the introduction of HYV seeds as the yields had increased. They were now better off than they were before they used the HYV seeds. Thus, the standard of living of Indian Rural population rose.

Thus creating a large ‘ market’ for non-agricultural products and services

With the sudden surge in the standard of living the rural population started demanding more of non agricultural products thereby raising their demand in the market which led to a surge in the production of these goods and services.

Development of non-agricultural sector in a sustainable manner

Thus, the development of agricultural sector gave way to the development of non agricultural sector also, contributing to the overall growth of the economy.

Economic Impact of the Green Revolution

As mentioned above, Green revolution had a major impact on the economic conditions of India. The major ones are explained below:

High yielding variety of seed needed more water, more fertilisers, more fungicides, pesticides and other chemicals. This raised the demand for these products and therby, led to a growth of the non agricultural local

manufacturing sector. This growth created more jobs and increased the country’s GDP.

Dams that were created for providing irrigation facilities by storing natural rain water were also used for generating hydro electricity. This created new jobs, boosted industrial growth and raised the standard of living of people in rural sector.

All the loans that India took from the World Bank and its affiliates were paid back because of the success of green revolution. This helped in making India creditworthy in the eyes of lending agencies and other countries.

The green revolution resulted in a huge demand for labour, thus, providing them more employment and, as a result, raising the overall standard of living.

Some developed countries, like Canada, were very impressed with the success of Green Revolution in India, they requested Indian Government to help them in implementing the Green Revolution in their country. Indian Government sent some farmers, who were already well versed with the techniques of Green Revolution, from Punjab and Haryana to Canada and got them settled there. This is the reason why there are so many Punjabi speaking Indian origin citizens in Canada today. These people also transferred a part of their earnings to India at that time, therenby, raising India’s foreign exchange earnings.

Statistical Results of Green Revolution

Green Revolution was a major hit in India and it had the following numerical results:

India produced 131 million tons of food grains in 1978-79. India was thus established as the world’s biggest agricultural producer. Not only this, India for the first time, became a net exporter of foodgrains during this period.

The yield of our farmlands grew significantly by 30 percent from 1947 to 1979.

The total crop area using High Yielding Variety of seeds significantly grew from 7% to 22% of the total cultivated area. Thus, adding to the overall production of food grains.