

Agriculture and development

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



Agriculture is in many parts of the world is the main source of food and income of households. The role that agriculture plays in development has been debated during the last decades and the views about it are very diverse. Today, many authors consider agriculture as an essential factor for development and an important instrument for poverty alleviation. In my opinion access to land and water is an indispensable condition to ensure the livelihood of the poor.

The current market conditions and the economic liberalization process make it difficult for small farmers to compete with the international sphere, which led many people to move out of agriculture. Also, the market-driven economy has serious environmental consequences, which leads to the investment in the research of more sustainable agriculture methods. In this essay, we provide a situational analysis of agriculture in the third world, which warrants our interest in the same.

1. Different views about Agriculture and Development.

For some authors agriculture is a provider of raw material for the rest of the economic sectors and it is seen as a mere contributor to fuel economic development. This simplistic vision contrast with that of those who see agriculture as an essential instrument for industrialization, allowing the transfer of capital to urban areas, stimulating the market and, thus, resulting in economic development. According to Norton (2004), most of economic theories of the last 50 years support industrialization as the basis of economic development.

Many governments supporting this theory saw liberalization of agricultural goods as the key for economic growth, without taking into account the effect

of dependency that the new system would create. 2. The effects of the market on rural agriculture. The case of Kenya, The global economy and liberalization has deep effects on agriculture, and especially on the economy of smallholder's farmers in the Third World. New market arrangements have brought opportunities for some farmers, but also had negative impact on others, who cannot compete with the low prices established by a liberalized trade.

An example of this is the case of Kenya, which as many countries in Africa, suffered from a strong economic crisis during the 80s. The new international terms of trade and the increase of the world interest rates, together with internal causes (such as one of the worst drought periods of its history and political mismanagement) led to disastrous consequences on its agriculture. International market arrangements greatly influence the rural poor livelihoods as it establishes the rules that may not allow them to play in the market.

These rules are designed to benefit exclusively large commercial farmers, instead of rural smallholders farmers who have experienced a reduction in their incomes. Food prices are intimately connected to the world market in areas where the poor live. 3. Agriculture research for development. Smallholder farmers produce food, which will be consumed by the poor, so rural agriculture, is a key for the livelihoods of the majority of the world's poorest people (Kydd, 2002).

Therefore, agriculture is a central question of development and it needs the adoption of convenient technologies for the different rural population's needs. The idea is that smallholder farmers will be able to increase their

capacities to improve their living standard through their own efforts. Thus, rather than addressing the symptoms should be better to address the causes of poverty through the application of more appropriate agriculture methods to rural farmers. The commercialization of agriculture has also led to a set of agriculture practices completely different from those of the last century.

These changes are basically imposed by the new market demands and by the producers' attempts to answer it. The new agricultural patterns involved a change in the research methods carried out by private organizations searching for more efficient production practices. In this context, advances in biotechnology in the last decades have focused on profitable markets, especially orientated to large commercial agriculture. According to Norton, (2004), irrigation alone cannot be the only basis to supply food to an increasing world population.

Important advances have been made in GMO as a new alternative to food production in order to feed future generations. “Participatory technology development”, where the farmers acquire the control and play a crucial role on agricultural development. Like in the years before industrialization, small farmers have again in his hands the tools for technological change in agriculture, although this new participatory process is still in its development stage. 4. Gender considerations.

Due to the essential role that women are playing today on the economy of the household in developing countries, agriculture development research cannot ignore gender issues when designing new programs. Women in many countries produce a large part of the food crops of the households and they are essential for the family's food security (IFAD, 2001). . References.

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Bibliography. Duncan, A. & Howell, J. (1992). Structural Adjustment and the African Farmer. London and Portsmouth: ODI, James Currey Ltd. & Heinemann Educational Books, Inc. o Search Top of Form