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# EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION IN INDIA

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***ABSTRACT***

***The dictionary meaning of 'legislation is a law or set of laws suggested by a government and made official by a parliament'. Agricultural legislation or agricultural laws deals with the agricultural production, marketing, and distribution of agricultural commodities. As it's a broad area it goes out of the box due to its complexity and it includes labor laws, commercial and environmental laws, etc. Our today's well-structured law and order system didn't come directly. It's a result of corrective measures taken throughout the evolution process since the origin of agriculture practices. We can observe significant contributions since the Indus valley civilization period and milestones like the Vedic period, contributions of Chanakya, Mughal period, reforms made by the British during pre-independence and systematic reforms made by the Government of India to social justice of all the cultivators. The post-independence agricultural legislation can be broadly classified as follows; (a) Land legislation and reforms, (b) Legislation reforms of input management, (c) Labour laws in agriculture, (d) Legislation on agricultural marketing, (e) Legislations in the livestock sector, (f) Legislation of agriculture credit and finance and (g) Legislation in the co-operative sector. All the agricultural acts, orders passed are under these categories. Understanding these laws by the people who are working with the farmers for them it would be easier to create awareness among farmers. Through the awareness it's possible to help them to protect themselves from exploitation.***

***KEYWORDS: Agricultural Legislation, Government of India, Farmers & Agricultural Production***

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## INTRODUCTION

The dictionary meaning of 'legislation is a law or set of laws suggested by a government and made official by a parliament' (www.dictionary.cambridge.org). The legislation is one of the three common functions of government. Legislations started to take a formal frame when the legal acts and laws are framed by passing them through legislative houses. In agriculture, we have reached a stage where sometimes we have to deal with the issues of agriculture under the jurisdiction of the court. However, agricultural legislation or agricultural laws deals with the agricultural production, marketing, and distribution of agricultural commodities. The laws, rules, and regulations for different activities are framed and standardized under this. It includes labor laws, commercial and environmental laws, *etc*. The objective of this is to ensure efficient production and smooth distribution of agricultural commodities in the country. The violations do offer penalties, punishments, *etc*. (www.justia.com).

The well-established agricultural legislation system didn't flash in a single day. It has a remarkable history. Therefore we need to look into the roots since its origin for a better understanding. Agriculture does not evolve in a single place. It has been evolved at different places in different ways like the cultivation of wet rice started in the Asian region, cattle rearing evolved in the case of American region and production of wheat started by the people in European regions, *etc*. (www.britannica.com).

**Worldwide Civilization in Agricultural History**

About 11700 years ago during the last Pleistocene glacial period (also known as ice age), the agriculture started to develop with supportive global climate changes. The Epipaleolithic people who were existed in that period started rearing sheep and goats. Many plants (like wild barley) were collected intensively. An independent evolution process was found to be started at different times in Southwest Asia, America, East-Asia, and European regions. In Asia, different regions of agricultural development found to be started in different regions viz., China, Korea, Japan, and Indian subcontinents (www.britannica.com).

**Indus Valley Civilization**

The evolution of Indian agricultural history has its own pace. It came across many great civilizations and dynasties of great rulers. The ancient and the great Indus valley civilization of the Bronze Age on the bank of river Indus was well known for its modernized well-built cities. The Indus River allowed this civilization's establishment and development in a better way of utilizing water and rich fertile lands. The people used to take up crop cultivation in the fertile lands created by floods of Indus River. Agricultural production was more than their requirements. The barter system was popular in this period for the transactions of all kinds. There found to be many regulations in agriculture that may look simple now. Those great thoughts had served their purposes in those days in a greater way. They also gave chances for further developmental corrections using felt experiences. They used to collect the grains as tax from farmers and the distribution of wages also in terms of grains only. The proper system was there to secure the ownership right of grains with the help of clay tags (www.harappa.com).

**Vedic Period**

After this Indus civilization, the next prominent era that could be found in the Vedic period can be observed between 1500 B. C. to 500 B. C. It’s also known as Iron Age in India. People used to take up crop cultivation (agriculture) for their livelihood. They worshiped crop cultivation more than considering it as just a social process of growing food. The little comparative advancement could be found in this era in handling systems of agricultural lands, resources, and activities of the cultivation process i.e., rules and regulations.

There found to be a division of cultivation lands i.e., two types of lands found in Rigvedic period viz., ‘Apnasvati’ (fertile soil) and ‘Artana’ (arid soil). In the Rigvedic period ‘Grama' (village) was found to be a center for agriculture. All kinds of village settlements happened in farming, animal rearing, and iron technology. The same villages started to become administrative centers in the later Vedic times. Like this, the Vedic period provides its contribution to today’s system like panchayat raj employing ideas like settlements mentioned at village levels (https://www.insa.nic.in).

**Maurya Empire**

The most important and vast area occupied empire which attracts attention in this period is the Mauryan Empire. This was found by Emperor Chandragupta Maurya under the guidance of Chanakya. They ruled more than two centuries since 322 B.C. In this period, Agriculture was the primary source of livelihood in this empire. The landholdings were cultivated by the small landlords who were given lands to keep with them in exchange for tax paid by them to the king. The actual rights of ownership on lands were reserved with the king. The tax rate was 25 percent of their production, need to be paid by the farmers after every harvest of the crop. Farmers were completely exempted from participation in wars. (https://searchinginhistory.blogspot.com).

The well-known book entitled 'Arthasastra', which consists of Kautilya's views on management and enhancement of resources of a dynasty for its development. Artashastra has 15 books, in which the 14th chapter of the second book entitled 'Sitadhyaksha' (which means the superintendent of agriculture) is specifically for agriculture. In this chapter the measures to be taken by the superintendent of agriculture to improve productivity and production have been mentioned which applies even to general farmers. The current services provided by the state departments of agriculture were mentioned those days in Artashastra which were very similar (Nene, 2002). The remarkable suggestions about agricultural regulation practices by Chanakya in his book 'Artasastra' are not negligible

The Mughal Empire established who invaded India and occupied importance in Indian history through their unique contributions and administration strategies. It caught the attention through the observable advancements and developments made by them in most of the aspects including agriculture.

**Mughal Period**

In the Mughal empire, there was a great emphasis on irrigation and roads. These two services were the responsibility of the government. Though there was no technological revolution in agricultural tools and techniques until the termination stage of the Mughal Empire. Since Upanishad's time, there was an evolution of ocean trade commercial economy due to the arrival of western powers. With the help of irrigation systems and/or adequate rainfall, two crops (two seasons) were common in a year as noticed by Megasthenes. The Mughals ruled almost 300 years by the invasion that made remarkable reforms in Indian agricultural history. They introduced many new crops, gave tremendous importance to irrigation also like the repair of canals from Yamuna River in the time of Akbar and Shah Jahan built a new canal called 'Nahr-i-Bihisht' at Khizrabad (www.academia.edu).

The reward goes to Sher Shah who was the first Muslim ruler who took the initiation of a beneficial revenue system equally good for both state and farmers. The village was the smallest unit of administration even in Mughal Empire like the Vedic period. Division of lands according to Emperor Akbar was found to be as follows; 'Polaj' was land where two crops could be taken up in a year, 'Parauti' was land which used to left fallow after taking up two crops, 'Chachar' is the name given to unfertile lands cultivated once in three to four years and 'Banjar' was land which is not at all fit for cultivation purpose. Akbar also made efforts to bring more uncultivated lands under cultivation i.e., expansion of agricultural land. There are many other improvements found even in the cultivation practices of different crops. (www.academia.edu).

After the end of the Mughal Empire, the British rule took over India. They also built some land reform systems that could be seen in the history which undoubtedly have their contributions to the evolution of present legislation systems of the agricultural sector.

**Pre-Independence Period**

There was no good legislation system during the pre-independence period. British followed the tax system of Mughals more formally. For that purpose, following acts were passed by the British government during pre-independence viz., Land acquisition act (1894), Indian forest act in 1927, and 1930 Indian sale of goods act.

Land Acquisition Act came into force from 1st March 1894 and extended to the entire country except for Jammu & Kashmir. The land acquisition bill (2007) was passed again in Lok-Sabha in 2009 to protect the interests of poor farmers whose lands are acquired to set up industries (https://indiankanoon.org).

Indian Forest Act was passed in 1927 “An Act to prevent overexploitation and consolidate the law relating to forests, the transit of forest produce and the duty leviable on timber and other forest-produce” (Indian Forest Act). However this act also focused to protect wildlife and to check deforestation for agriculture and other purposes. But the British government was more interested in the tax from these forest produce (https://indiacode.nic.in).

Indian Sale of Goods Act was passed in 1930 to define and amend the law relating to the sale of goods (The Sale of Goods Act). This act is regarding rules and regulations of selling goods in the entire country except in Jammu & Kashmir enforced since 1930 (https://indiacode.nic.in).

When we look into overall legislations of agriculture, mainly there could find 'Land legislation and reforms', 'Legislation reforms of input management', 'Labour laws in agriculture', 'Legislation on agricultural marketing', 'Legislations in livestock sector', 'Legislation of agriculture credit and finance' and 'Legislation in co-operative sector' (https://icar.org.in). During the British period i.e., pre-independence period three predominant revenue systems are found viz., Zamindari system, Ryoywari system, and Mahalwari system.

**Land Legislations and Reforms**

Zamindari system came into force in 1793 through an act called 'the permanent settlement act' the person behind this was Lord Cornwallis. It was introduced to overcome the corruption problems of the 'annual bidding system' that existed before. In this system the East India Company recognized zamindars and were given the right to collect tax from farmers. This system was found in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and Varanasi provinces and it covered 19 percent of British India. They earned revenue by creating a rich class in the society called zamindars. Zamindars used to have 10 years of the agreement with East India Company to collect revenue. The agreement used to be with the renew system and zamindars’ children had inherent right from their parents to continue revenue collection. The amount payable to East India Company was termed as ‘Peshwash’. Here the farmers were the real sufferers and overexploited by the zamindars, as the right to fix the amount of revenue to be collected was in the hands of zamindars (http://dialogue.hubpages.com).

Ryotwari system came into force in 1820, it was an idea of Thomas Munro who was a district collector of Rayalaseema of Andra Pradesh. This system removed the middlemen (rich class created by British for collection of tax viz., zamindars) in between farmers and East India Company. It was found in Madras, Bombay, some parts of Assam and Coorg provinces. Here, farmers were made as owners of lands. But, it was also the worst system and only means of revenue to East India Company. British brought this system, because in those provinces, where it was introduced were with dry spell lands. Also no such people were found by the British to create zamindars in those provinces. The poor farmers were overexploited by the corrupt tax collection officers in place of zamindars. Situations were worse in these dry spell areas than the provinces occupied by the zamindari system. The additional exploitation of money lenders made farmers fall into a debt trap. The revenue percentage was high i.e., 50 percent in dryland areas and 60 percent in irrigated land areas. It covered almost 52 percent of British held territories (https://hubpages.com).

In 1883, Warren Hastings introduced the Mahalwari system. It spread to almost 29 percent of British held territories. Here the revenue was fixed and collected by the village committee, based on the 'Mahal' (which is village or group of two or three small villages). The land ownership rights have remained with farmers. In this system also there were problems like threatening money lenders and excessive revenues charged by the British government. The dominance of this system was found in Central Province, North-West Frontier, Agra, Punjab, Gangetic Valley, etc., (https://hubpages.com).

The exploitation of peasants was very common in all these systems and these are all just a means or source of income to East India Company. Even with the lack of social justice and welfare of farmers, the contributions were not negligible to the present developments. They also serve as links to the development of modern agricultural legislation since primitive stages of its origin.

**Post-Independence Period**

This is the time from where the true efforts were started in a real sense of social justice to all citizens of the country. Immediately after the independence, the country was in a high level of poverty. Unemployment, low productivity levels with issues of food insecurity and a thick population made situations even worse. The following major actions were made to taken care of all problems.

In 1955, the abolition of intermediaries those who played a role in between the actual cultivator and the government (for example zamindars) were made. This step was taken by the government to remove them and made available the lands to real cultivators. The states formulated the legislative measures to abolish such kinds of tenures and made actual cultivators have direct contact with the government. This made a burden to the government as the compensation and pension schemes that need to be formulated to take care of landholders. The positive effects were found, like the direct connection of farmers with government, increased revenue collection from rural areas, and improved employment. It also found a hike in productivity and production levels in the agricultural sector (https://www.economywatch.com).

The tenancy reforms are made to protect the tenant farmers from the landlords (money lenders). The tenant farmers were losing their properties due to the higher interest rates which made them fall into indebtedness and poverty. Then the common problem was found that the land was a scarce resource. But there was more number of farmers who were willing to cultivate as per the report of the committee headed by professor D. R. Gadgil. This institutional problem was a threat to agricultural progress and social justice. To solve this, the ceiling on agricultural land holdings was made with an intension to remove very clearly visible inequality in society. Also to meet the land needs of landless people for cultivation thereby increasing the self-employment of rural people. The ceiled limits for landholding were 9 acres for fully irrigated land with public irrigation source facility for three seasons (entire year) for annual or perennial crops, 18 acres for irrigated lands with public irrigation source facility for two seasons for two crops, 27 acres for irrigated lands with public irrigation source facility for one season for one crop and 54 acres for completely unirrigated land (http://www.legalserviceindia.com).

Bhoodan or Gramdan movement was initiated by Acharya Vinoba Bhave in 1950 and spread over different states of the country. The intention is to collect the lands from the landowners who had excess and to distribute the collected land to the landless peasants in that particular village. To facilitate this process 'Bhoodan Board' is established. The Bhoodan board had its fund and started to collect land donated by any state or central government, private sector or any individual to distribute to landless. Then the state passed an act called Bhoodan or Gramdan Act, to distribute the collected land legally. With this law the ownership rights of 18 lakh hectares land were given to the landless peasants. (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in).

Administration of Land Acquisition Act 1894 amended many times and the land acquisition (amendment) bill 2007 was passed in the Lok Sabha in the year 2009. Industries are important to boost up the economy and to improve capital investments. Often agricultural lands were acquired from the poor farmer to establish industries by dominant business class. Therefore, this bill was passed to protect the interest of farmers. This act ensures the rehabilitation to the individual or families who are affected by any public or private projects while acquiring land to set up industries (https://dolr.gov.in).

**Legislation Reforms of Input Management**

The quality and adequate availability of inputs are very essential for good production and productivity. To regulate the manufacture, availability, facilitating easy distribution of quality inputs to the farming community and to remove hurdles, the legal procedures and laws are made and passed by the government. It includes ‘Fertilizer legislations’, ‘Seed legislations’, ‘pests and pesticide legislation' and 'plant quarantine legislation’.

The fertilizer use was high in the green revolution period. It was necessary to control and regulate the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of modern input of agriculture. Therefore, the government of India passed some laws to serve the purpose. The Fertilizer Control Order (FCO) came to force on 15$^{th}$ may 1957 even though it was issued in 1937. The main intention was to ensure the availability to farmers at the right time and right quantity by keeping an eye on the quality of fertilizers. This was done by regulating the price, quantity of fertilizer distribution, and sales. Based on the central government framed ‘FCO review committee’ report about ‘FCO, 1957’ the revised FCO was passed in 1985. It is called as ‘FCO, 1985’. Revised FCO is well structured with rules and regulations for FCO certification and quality maintenance. Provisions were made to punish violations under the Essential Commodities Act (https://icar.org.in).

Further for fair distribution of fertilizers among different states of country, the Fertilizer Movement Control Order (FMCO) was passed on 31$^{st}$ December 1960. The responsibility of proper implementation was given to state governments. Further, it was revised in the year 1967 and issued another FMCO (1973) which was passed in 1973. FMCO completed a total of 15 amendments and in 2001 the last amendment was made. Under this order, there is a prohibition to export fertilizer from one state to another without authoritative permission. There is also provision for punishment for violations under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (https://icar.org.in).

The allocation order came to distribute the quantity of fertilizer required by each state. Under which, estimation of quantity required for a season and quantity to be manufactured has been done by the central government. Based on that the process of manufacturing and distribution activities are carried out by each state. The order is renewed by the Central government once every six months, it's called "Essential Commodity Act Allocation Orders”. To ensure to meet the quality of fertilizer needs of farmers, the movement of fertilizers across the states and within the country has been regulated (https://icar.org.in).

The quality seed is such a strong tool with enormous potential to change the scenario of agricultural productivity and it’s already proved (Scheeren, B. R., et. al., 2010). Therefore it's very important and essential to have laws to control seed quality and their use in a proper way. The government made few laws to get control and regulate the seed marketing viz., Seeds Act, Seed Rules, Seed Control Order, Seed Bill and Protection of Plant Varieties, and Farmers' Rights Act.

The need for the law came to reality in 1966 in the form of the Seeds Act and Seed Rules in 1968. Sufficient infrastructure has been established by the central government all over the nation. Seed Certification Agencies, Seed Testing Laboratories, and Seed Law Enforcement Agencies have been created with the funds of the Central Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. The chief legislation authorities of this act are Central Seed Committee, Central Seed Certification Board, and its sub-committees. In 2005, the National Seed Research and Training Centre (NSRTC) established to play the role of the central seed testing lab as well as a referral lab for any court issues in the country. Under this act, there are proper prescriptions regarding the quality parameters of varieties, their labeling. There is even provision for punishments and penalties for any violations. Seed inspector appointed by the state government was responsible to ensure and regulate the seed quality (https://icar.org.in).

The Seed Control Order has been passed in 1983 by the ministry of civil supplies by declaring seeds as essential commodities and as per the order of the Supreme Court, it came into force with effect under state governments in 1994. As per this, dealers must get a license from the licensing authority by fulfilling or satisfying the certain terms and conditions prescribed. Based on the level of fulfillment of terms, an authority may or may not provide a license. Even the license holders need to maintain the quality prescriptions, violations found during the inspection may lead to the cancellation of the dealer's license (https://icar.org.in).

The Seed Bill has been passed in the year 2004 by the Central government as per the suggestions of the 'Seed Policy Review Committee'. As per the bill, it’s compulsory to register seed variety to ensure quality in terms of proper regulations in performance trials of varieties, maintenance of the national register of varieties, self-certification, and accreditation of private seed testing labs along with regulating the export and import of seeds. There is a provision for penalties and punishments in case of any violations. The essence of this act is farmers are excluded. They can save exchange or sell their seeds without any brand names and regulations as applicable to commercial companies or agencies (https://icar.org.in).

Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers’ Rights Act was passed in 2001 to stimulate investment in research and developments on new plant varieties. Under this act, an authority called “plant varieties and farmers’ rights protection authority” was established. It is to ensure high-quality seeds to farmers through facilitating the growth of seed companies. Farmers are excluded from the act but farmers cannot sell the branded seeds of protected varieties on a commercial scale. In this act, there is a provision for researchers to register the varieties that they bred. They can use the existing different crops as sources of genes to breeding programs. Here, researchers have to share the profits with those communities who keep on saving those varieties, used as sources or parents for breeding programs. There is a provision for registering the distinct and stable varieties of crops that are saved by farmers for a long time through cultivation practice (https://icar.org.in).

Pesticides are important inputs for crop protection and are equally dangerous to human and animal health. Therefore, it is a serious responsibility to manage them effectively. To make sure pesticides serve the intended purposes by avoiding the negative aspects, and to take care of environmental safety, the Insecticides Act, Destructive Insects, and Pests Act and Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order have been passed. It has started with the enforcement of the Insecticides Act in 1968 and Insecticides rules in the 1971 Amendment again done in 2000 and known as Insecticides (Amendment) Act, 2000. Under this act, there is a well established infrastructural network to deal with pesticide rules and regulations. The 49 State Pesticides Testing Laboratories and 2 regional pesticide testing laboratories located all over the country functioning to take care of the proper implementation of the act. The central insecticides laboratory is fulfilling the statutory role of referral analysis (https://icar.org.in).

There are two statutory bodies established under the Pesticide Act. 'The Central Insecticides Board' with advisory function to central and state governments in technical matters. 'Registration Committee (RC)' which registers the pesticides which prove their self-efficacy and safety conditions. Under this act, it's compulsory for any individual or company to register the pesticide and to fulfill the efficacy and safety parameters fixed as per the standards. License from competent authority is compulsory to manufacture and sell any pesticides. within addition, there will be a review of the licensed pesticide effect on the environment. Any pesticide which found to be hazardous is subjected to be banned by an authority. For example, ban of Endosulfan due to its detrimental effects (https://icar.org.in).

Labeling to the containers is mandatory to sell any pesticide as per this act. The information that must be there in labels and leaflets are as follows: "(i) name of the product, (ii) chemical composition, (iii) name of the manufacturer, (iv) symptoms of poisoning, (v) first-aid measure, (vi) cautionary statements, (vii) directions concerning usage, (viii) restrictions (if any), (ix) instructions for storage, (x) information regarding disposal of used packages, (xi) application equipment, and (xii) waiting period" (https://icar.org.in).

It's necessary to restrict the movement of harmful insects and diseases across the countries and even within the country across the states (Barba, M., & James, D., 2017). To serve this purpose, the Destructive Insects and Pests Act came into force in 1914. This necessary measure was needed to control endemic and huge losses due to the spread of destructive pests and diseases. The Plant, Fruits, and Seeds (Regulation of Import into India) Order undergone revision based on the WTO agreements. Finally, led government of India to make the Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order in 2003 came in to force from 1st January 2004 to enforce the agreements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. The responsibility is with the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine, and Storage (DPPQS) to enforce rules and regulations of quarantine. With the help of infrastructural support of 35 plant quarantine stations and 41 inspection authorities, DPPQS across the country quarantine inspection and disinfestations of agro-commodities is going on. The DPPQS also developed 21 phytosanitary standards for importing the agricultural commodities (https://icar.org.in).

**Labour Laws in Agriculture**

Labour is one of the significant among the factors of production and very essential. This is because of the ability of humans to manage the remaining factors of production efficiently and effectively. As a living and emotional being, labors also affected by many other complex parameters. So they need to be treated with dignity along with necessary safety measures. To protect them from exploitation, several labor laws have been passed by the government and many of these apply to agricultural laborers as rural communities contribute a larger part for the labor pool.

The minimum wage act was passed in the year 1948 to provide justice to laborers by fixing wages rates. The power has been given to the states under state governments to fix the minimum wages to their respective states. Hence laborers should be paid the wages above that fixed levels. In the case of agriculture, it's not justifiable to compare with other sectors due to the complexity of weather parameters of production (https://icar.org.in).

Another law like The Abolition of Bonded Labour System Ordinance was made in 1975 to relive the bonded labor. National Policy on Skills Development was approved in the year 2009 and another policy National Policy on Safety, Health, and Environment at Workplace was approved in the same year 2009 to provide basic required needs at working places.

Some other labor legislation applicable to agriculture is as follows:

- Payment of Bonus Act passed in 1965 applies to all agricultural labors
- Employees' Provident Fund and Family Pension Act passed in 1972 and the Payment of Gratuity Act passed in 1972 applicable to workers who work in plantations and orchards
- The Industrial Disputes Act passed in 1947 applies to labors in commercial agricultural firms
- The Trade Unions Act passed in 1926 applies to registered agricultural workers unions
- The Workmen's Compensation Act passed in 1923 applies to tractor drivers or other types of machinery operators in farm
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) passed in 2005 is also applicable to agricultural labors (https://icar.org.in)

**Legislations on Agricultural Marketing**

The market is the most unpredictable when it comes to agriculture. Better management of the marketing process is very essential for agricultural commodities. Therefore, laws and legislation require at the macro level to provide a well-organized marketing service. The efforts to improve infrastructure in the agricultural marketing sector got the foundation in the year 1935 through the establishment of Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI). The Agricultural Produce Market Act, The Weights and Measures Act, The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act etc., were passed by the government to improve the process of agricultural marketing.

Agricultural Produce Market Act came into force in 1939. The well-established marketing infrastructure came to reality through the establishment of regulated markets and the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs). There are 7418 agricultural produce markets are established to protect farmers from exploitation by middlemen. This act is in force all over the country except in Kerala and Manipur. In the case of UTs, it's not implemented in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Lakshadweep and Daman, and Diu (https://icar.org.in).

The Weights and Measures Act was passed in the year 1976. It is to ensure the use of only standardized, tested, and stamped weights and measures in the nation. The uniform metric system introduced in 1958 was made it easier by removing varied different weighing and measurement systems (https://icar.org.in).

The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act came into force in 1937. Under this act, the agricultural produce is defined as "to include all produce of agriculture or horticulture, and all articles, food or drink, wholly or partly manufactured from any such produces, and fleeces and the skins of animals" (https://icar.org.in). Under this act 119, grading and marketing rules covered almost 181 commodities. This acts as a certifying agency. There are well-defined standards and guidelines for grading of food products that have to be followed and given the certification popularly known as 'AGMARK'. Through this government acts as a third party that certifies and assures the quality of commodities. No need for cross-checking by both seller and buyer as AGMARK guarantees the quality. Hence AGMARK becomes a symbol to describe the quality of commodities (https://icar.org.in).

As recent developments, on April 14th, 2016 the central government initiated e-National Agricultural Market (e-NAM intending to integrate 585 APMC (Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee) mandis or wholesale markets across 16 states under a common electronic platform. In the first phase, 20 mandis launched across the eight states. Later, the intended goal was achieved i.e., reached 585 APMCs. There are about 7566 APMC mandis that exist across the country. However e-NAM would be a good platform to bring transparency in trading with competitive e-auctions (www.enam.gov.in).

The model act got many reforms to make out defects and to bring feasible changes so that farmers could get a better share in consumer's rupee. Like the Model Act, 2003/ Model Rules, 2007 and later Model Rules, 2010 and a very recent one came in 2017. In these reforms, the government started to create a conducive environment for direct marketing by farmers, contract farming, and also encouraging setting up of private markets (Reddy, 2016).

The model APMC act is based on seven pillars. They are as follows; "(i) Allowing the direct sale of farm produce to contract farming (ii) Setting up of special markets (iii) Allowing private persons, farmers, and consumers to establish new markets outside the established APMCs (iv) Single levy of market fee on the sale of any product within the notified area (v) To replace license with registrations (vi) Facilitate the direct sale of farm produce and (vii) Creation of market infrastructure from revenue earned by the APMC" (Reddy, 2016).

**Legislations in the Livestock Sector**

The livestock sector is the most promising sector which provides employment and income all over the year. The government of India has taken many measures to develop the livestock sector, important among are; The Livestock Improvement Act, Glanders and Farcy Act, and Milk and Milk Product Order. The Livestock Improvement Act was passed in the year 1898. As per this act, measures had been taken to eradicate the defective breeding bulls by compulsory castration. The act had been amended in 2001 to regulate the import of livestock. Quarantine stations have been set up to import livestock from abroad through the Animal Quarantine and Certification Services (AQ&CS) (https://icar.org.in).

In 1899, another act came into force called Glanders and Farcy Act. Intended to prevent, control and eradicate some infectious and contagious diseases of livestock. Some other acts like Cattle Trespass Act came in 1871 and amended in 1921. It is to check the stray cattle damages to crops. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act came in 1890 and amended in 1960. Under which the Animal Welfare Board has been established and the actions have been taken to reduce or prevent unnecessary damages, pain, and sufferings caused to livestock (https://icar.org.in).

The very important law in this sector is the Milk and Milk Product Order passed by the government in the year 1992. Under this, the milk was considered under essential commodity. Also, a step has been taken forward to the de-licensing of the dairy sector. This decision indirectly pushed the production and productivity of fresh liquid milk and milk products as per the objective of this order. However, there are rules and regulations to maintain the quality of dairy products and health safety measures (https://icar.org.in).

**Legislations of Agricultural Credit and Finance**

India is dominated by small and marginal farmers. Agriculture demands some investments to carryout crop cultivation but they are resource-poor. For them, finance is always a challenge to carry out the agricultural production activities. Overexploitation by the moneylenders with very high-interest rates besides, monsoon failures led them to fall into indebtedness. To overcome these problems, the government took many policy measures to empower farmers with easier access to institutional credit.

The Deccan Agriculturist Relief Act was the first attempt found in this sector. It came into force in 1879 in Bombay province. Through this act, measures had been taken to regulate and to control the money lenders. Licensing and registration of the money lenders were made mandatory. The maximum levels of interest rate that can be charged by the moneylender have been fixed. Through these measures of this act, the government tried to prevent farmers from overexploitation (https://icar.org.in).

**Legislations in the Cooperative Sector**

Cooperative societies made tremendous changes in credit accessibility to farming communities. Also, they are fulfilling the need for input requirements along with marketing facilities for agricultural produce. India is the country with 5.49 lakh various types of cooperative societies. Coverage reached almost 100 percent of villages and about 75 percent of rural households. The National Policy on Cooperatives was framed to facilitate the all-round development of cooperatives all over the nation (https://icar.org.in).

Some other acts governing this cooperative sector are as follows; “(i) Multi-unit Co-operative Societies Act passed in 1942 to govern multi-state cooperatives activities (ii) National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC) Act came in 1962 by replacing the National Cooperatives Development Board (iii) RBI Acts, 1934 passed and amended in the year 2006 to keep the expert employees and to coordinate activities of commercial banks in lending agricultural loans and to maintain its connection with cooperative banks (iv) RRBS Act passed in the year 1976 through which Regional Rural Banks were established all over the country (v) Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation Act -1963 and (vi) Central State Warehousing Corporations, 1956 through this act Warehousing Corporations were established” (https://icar.org.in)

## CONCLUSIONS

The legislation is very essential to regulate activities of the democratic society. Through proper legislation better development along with an intention of welfare and wellbeing of the country could be achieved. The same is true when it comes to the agriculture sector also. India has well established and well-structured agrarian legislation framed with accumulated experience and ideas since the historical period. However, glancing of these agricultural laws gives complete understanding along with bringing updates to knowledge. The agrarian legislation needs to be understood since its origin until today. Its evolution path gives enormous opportunities to bring future changes more fruitfully. Our existing Indian agrarian legislation is providing social justice to all stakeholders without discriminating against anyone. Being aware and understanding of these laws is the responsibility of everyone to take needful advantage of them whenever the situation demands.

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