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Q- Doubling farmers' income is not just a necessity for farmers but a crucial driver for India's economic growth.

The Indian Constitution is not just a legal document but it is a moral promise to ensure justice, equality and dignity for all citizens. The preamble envisions a nation where social, economic and political justice prevail, where every individual has the right to live a dignified life. Our Directive Principles of State Policy also talks about reducing income inequalities and ensuring right to livelihood. Despite these ideals, Indian farmers who form the backbone of our economy, who are our annadata struggle with low incomes, market uncertainties, financial distress. Those who feed the entire nation struggle to afford a dignified life for themselves. Ensuring that farmers earn a remunerative income is not

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just about economic growth but it is also about upholding justice and fairness. Doubling farmers' income is not just a necessity for rural prosperity but a prerequisite for fulfilling the promise of a just, inclusive and dignified society.

Agriculture has been the backbone of Indian economy for thousands of years. The Indus Valley Civilisation had advanced irrigation systems, food granaries. During the Mauryan and Gupta period rulers supported farmers by building canals, providing tax incentives. During the medieval period also, agriculture remained important. The Mughal rulers introduced tax reforms to ensure fair taxation while considering fluctuations in agricultural output like Zabt system introduced by Akbar. However, the agricultural production increased but the wealth did not reach to the farmers because of intermediaries and land lords. The most devastating

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period for Indian farmers was British rule. The Britishers forced them to grow cash crops like cotton and indigo instead of food crops. They introduced the Zamindari system where landlords collected high taxes from farmers leaving them in debt and poverty. Famines became frequent and the policies of Britishers created more problem during this period as evident in case of Bengal famine.

After India gained independence food production was a major challenge. The Green Revolution of the 1960s introduced high yield seeds, fertilizers and irrigation techniques. This helped in increasing the food production making India a food sufficient nation from a food deficient economy. However, while food production increased and we became self-sufficient still our farmers were struggling with low income.

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A country's economy grows when people earn more, spend more and invest more. Since farmers make up nearly half of India's population their income directly impacts the Indian economy. If farmers earn more, they will spend more on food, clothes etc leading to increase demand for goods. A good example of this is PM-KISAN scheme which provided direct financial support to farmers. After its implementation, the sale of motor cycles in several India increased sharply. This shows us how farmers' income can boost industrial growth. When farmers earn less their spending power decreases. This affects the growth of industries and slows down economic growth.

Investing in better irrigation, cold storage, food processing, direct market connections can help farmers earn more. A report suggests that countries adopting smart irrigation can conserve water by 50% and increase yield by 25-30%. Stronger agricultural

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policies will ensure fair prices and reduce financial risks for farmers. In the book - "~~the~~ The Mystery of Capital - why Capitalism triumphs in the West and fails everywhere else" it is suggested that right financing, infrastructure and market access will empower rural economy and boost rural demand.

The struggles of farmers are linked to many social problems in India. Low farm income means that farmers cannot afford nutritious food, proper ~~income~~ healthcare facilities. This results in malnutrition, stunted growth, child wasting. India ranks 105 out of 127 countries in Global Hunger Index which tracks hunger levels on indicators of undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting and child mortality. Also, rural areas still follow old power structure where landlords and moneylenders hold economic control. This keep small farmers dependent and unable to come out of poverty trap. If farmers will be

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connected with digital banking and agri
fintech solutions then problem of credit
can be solved. The book "Mystery of
Capital" by Hernando De Soto suggests
that if farmers get cheap loans and
financial support their land will be more
productive leading to increased income
and improved economy. Due to low
income many people leave villages and
move to cities in search of work. This
leads to overcrowding, unemployment and
poor living conditions in slums. We should
focus on creating non-farm employment
opportunities. Rural MSMEs and SHGs
convergence can help a lot in this
regard. We should promote food
processing, dairy and rural handicrafts.
China's Township and Village Enterprises
model created millions of jobs leading
to significant reduction in distressed
migration. India can also adopt
this model to boost farmers' income
and improve overall economy.

Many farmers unable to
repay their loans are forced to sell

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their produce at extremely low prices or even take their own lives. When farmers don't get fair prices they demand government subsidies and reservations. While temporary aid is helpful, the real solution is to create a strong agricultural economy where farmers earn enough and don't rely on government support.

John Rawls, a famous philosopher believed that a just society is one where the weakest members are protected. His "Theory of Justice" states that economic policies should benefit the poorest sections of society first. He says that social and economic inequalities are only justified if they benefit the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society. We can see that farmers are among the most disadvantaged groups in the country. While industries and urban areas have grown rapidly, farmers' income has remained low. They continue to struggle with deep debt, low

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and unfair prices, uncertain markets. If farmers continue to suffer while industries and cities flourish then the constitutional promise of justice is not being fulfilled. A prosperous nation is not built by neglecting its farmers but by ensuring that they get a fair share in country's economic growth.

For farmers to prosper India must modernise and strengthen its agricultural sector. The Minimum Support Price should be well regulated so that farmers don't have to sell crops at loss. Farmers should be able to sell directly to buyers without middlemen reducing their profits. There are many products which have high potential but lag behind due to lack of branding and standardisation like fennel. As per IBF report 2023, with right branding and standardisation India can capture market of \$5 bn in world superfood market. The Union govt has recently announced in its budget to setup Makhana Board

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in Bihar ~~to~~ so that farmers get fair and remunerative price for their produce with right branding, standardisation and exports. Also, our farmers are small and scattered groups. It is necessary to integrate farmers with Farmers Producer Organisation to increase their negotiation power. As per World Bank report 2023, countries where farmers ~~are~~ integrated with cooperative and collective business model their agricultural income increases by average 30% leading to improved economic growth.

India cannot progress unless its farmers prosper. If farmers earn well the entire economy benefits. It leads to increase in demand, expansion of industries, employment generation, improved economy. But if they continue to struggle poverty, migration and economic slowdown will continue. Doubling farmers' income is not just about money & rather it is about justice, equality, dignity and national progress. If India wants

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to become a global economic power it must empower those who feed its people. In Indian tradition, farmers were respected as Annadata - the providers of food. Our festivals, prayers, customs all celebrate the importance of farming. We must restore the dignity of farmers and they should not be treated as charity cases but as entrepreneurs who contribute to the economy. Mahatma Gandhi believed in Sarvodaya and Gram Swaraj emphasising that India's progress depends on its farmers. Strengthening agriculture and rural development is not just economic necessity but also a step towards realising Gandhi's dream of an inclusive and self-reliant India.

"FARMERS' DIGNITY, NATION'S PROGRESS"

"RURAL STRENGTH, NATIONAL GROWTH"

"FARMERS WIN, INDIA LEADS"

"EMPOWERED FARMERS, UNSTOPPABLE INDIA"