

Macro Management of Agriculture Scheme in Maharashtra: An Evaluation

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The Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA) Scheme was one of the major centrally sponsored schemes formulated by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation in 2000-2001. This paper evaluates the impact of three schemes under MMA that are implemented in Maharashtra – Integrated Cereal Development Programme, Sustainable Development of Sugarcane-based Cropping System, and Integrated Pest Management under Balanced Integrated use of Fertilizers. There has been an increase in net income as well as yield of generally all the sample farmers as compared to the earlier years. The study however underlines the need for strengthening the extension machinery of the government to improve the outreach of the extension officers and for proper training of the resource persons. It is important to provide basic infrastructure to the farmers which will help them in reaping the benefits of the schemes.

I Introduction

Growth of the agricultural sector is important not only for ensuring food security and reducing poverty in rural areas, but also for sustaining the growth of the economy. Growth of two non-farm sectors, viz., the secondary and tertiary sectors can be sustained only when the agricultural sector grows so as to provide adequate demand and market for them. The growth rate of the agricultural sector, however, has remained low throughout the plan period. It decelerated from over 3.5 per cent a year between 1981–1982 and 1996–1997 to around two per cent between 1997-1998 and 2004-2005. During the 10th Five-Year Plan (2002-2003 to 2006-2007), the average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth from agriculture was 2.47 per cent whereas the overall GDP grew at the rate of 7.77 per cent. This pattern was observed in almost all the states and covered almost all the major sub-sectors within agriculture. Consequently, growth of agricultural GDP has been well below the target of four per cent set in both the Ninth and Tenth Plans (www.planningcommission.nic.in). Hence, it becomes important to step up the growth rate of the agricultural sector through productivity increase.