

Dryland Farming under the Changing Source Environment : A Case Study of Gujarat

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Despite technological stagnation, development of dryland agriculture bears certain special advantages. A balanced approach is therefore, essential with a significant role of dryland farming in attaining the future growth of farm production. The present analysis of Gujarat's agricultural sector, indicates that dryland farming not only contributes a significantly large share in the total agricultural output, its performance in terms of productivity is also quite encouraging. Nevertheless, the major problem is instability of growth in the dryland region.

At present, a substantially large untapped potential exists in both the sub-systems which could be tapped through better extension support for improving the adoption of fertiliser and other agronomic practices. However, stability of yield in rainfed agriculture would require large scale investments for introducing comprehensive soil and moisture conservation programmes. Given the budgetary resource constraints therefore, the policy thrust in the short run should be on (a) tapping the existing yield potential especially in irrigated crops and (b) allocating increasing amount of resources towards yields stabilising technologies for dryland crops. In the long run, emphasis may have to be on creating additional potential where expansion of irrigation would play an important role.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Context

There has been a revival of concern over the lopsided development of India's agriculture in the wake of increasing awareness about environmental issues and budgetary resource crunch in the recent past (Lakdawala, 1992). This calls for revalidation