

70 years of Independence**Special Feature – I-Day 2017****Self reliance in food – Green and White revolution****With special reference to North East India*****Dr. Prarthana Rajkumari**

This is an era of 'Partivartan' – time for some revolutionary changes! Our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi has started campaigning for a multicolour revolution referring to a second green revolution with protein-rich pulses, a white revolution with cattle and livestock, a saffron 'energy' revolution with solar energy, and a blue revolution on clean water and the welfare of the fishermen. Among these, Green and White Revolution have already influenced the life of the Indian to a great extent. As far as food security is concerned, India cannot compromise on food self-sufficiency and there has to be a number of short-term as well as long-term initiatives to be taken. Shri Modi's attention to the sufferings of farmers during election campaign has raised a lot of hope among the under-privileged community.

Green Revolution was aimed to increase the production of food-grains that resulted in a drastic reduction in imports. Because of this Green Revolution we are now self-sufficient in food-grains and have sufficient stock in the central pool and sometimes in a position to export food-grains also. Green Revolution brought a large scale farm mechanisation which created demand for different types of machines and requisite for chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, weedicides, etc. also increased considerable. Subsequently, an agro based industry has come up creating a large number of employments in the country.

It seems that North East, though rich in natural resources, has lagged behind since Independence. Prime Minister said that the second Green Revolution should start from the East and if that happens, it will begin from Assam. Accordingly, the Ministry of Agriculture has included Assam in the list of eastern states to be covered by the second Green Revolution. Among the eastern states, Assam has received the best performance award for National Food Security Mission (NFSM) – rice in 13 NFSM districts. The mission aims to increase the production and productivity of rice.

With so much water, fertile land and hardworking farmers North East has the potential to contribute immensely in achieving the target of doubling the farmers' income by the year 2022. As the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in Gogamukh, Assam, it can be expected that it will impact the entire region in a positive way and agriculture needs will be developed in line with the requirements of the 21st century. Farmers will get benefitted from the changing technology as well.

The North East can excel in the field of organic farming as well. Diverse agro-climatic conditions, varied soil types and abundant rainfall have endowed the region with promising horticulture and value added products that can be marketed within the country and abroad. The diverse agro-climatic situations in the region offer excellent scope for growing different horticultural crop groups like fruits, vegetables, spices, medicinal and aromatic plants. A wide range of tropical, sub-tropical and temperate fruits such as lemon, mandarin, pineapple, passion fruit, banana, ginger, turmeric, and vegetables, both indigenous and exotic, are grown in the region. In terms of its contribution to the national production, the region accounts for about 5.1% (fruits) and 4.5% for vegetables.

Moreover, a unique advantage the region has that it is gifted with suitable agro climatic condition very different from rest of country due to its climatic diversity, meandering altitudes and production of varied crop groups. In fact, the uniqueness of North Eastern market is that one can enjoy fresh off-season crop groups in one state from the neighbouring states where its season has just started due to this climatic diversity.

White Revolution is the concerted efforts on a cooperative level to increase milk supply through which Indian Dairy Industry has grown to the extent that milk output has not only topped the world, but also represents sustained growth in the availability of milk and milk products. The dairy sector is now the largest contributor in the agricultural sector to the nation's GDP.

National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) formed in 1965 to promote, plan and organise dairy development through cooperatives launched Operation Flood in 1970 which is considered to be the world's largest dairy development programme. Under this programme professionals were employed for marketing and application, and science and technology to link the rural producers with urban consumers.

But if we talk about North East India, consumption of milk and milk products is much lower due to divergent food habit and less availability of milk. Assam is the largest producer of milk followed by Tripura. In recent times a notable increase in milk production is seen in Tripura mainly due to improvement in milk breed. Prompt financial assistance from government and constructive motivation in form of training engrossed the state to become successful in this field.

The country's market leader, Amul, has started operations in the state giving a tough competition to the West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited (Wamul) that sells its products under the brand name Purabi, which has become a household name and has met with some success in recent years. According to Economic Survey of Assam, the Dairy Development Department has been focussing on increasing milk production as well as creating processing facilities for economic uplift of rural dairy farmers.

To make the country self-reliant in agriculture and food security, instead of providing a particular amount of food grains every month, the focus should be on making the villages take care of their own needs which may help in removing hunger in the long term. Strategic planning and implementation is necessary to develop agriculture and make region marginally, if not significantly, surplus in food production by integrating research, extension and education duly supported by a time bound reforms in land tenure system in each state.

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Views expressed in the article are author's personal.

(This feature has been contributed by PIB Guwahati)

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