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ROLE OF COMMERCIAL BANKS AND FARM CREDIT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India has forever been an overwhelmingly agrarian country. The farming records for almost 1/fifth of the public pay and is the chief method for help for the populace. As per the 2011 Evaluation, out of the absolute provincial specialists in the country, 76% were utilized in agribusiness (58% of the aggregate labor force was utilized in farming). In every one of the States, more than one half to north of three fourth of the provincial labor force was utilized in farming. As indicated by the 60th Round of NSS Study, 56% of agrarian families had land property somewhere in the range of 0.4 and one hectare. Agriculture is a dominant sector of our economy and credit plays an important role in increasing agriculture production. Availability and access to adequate, timely and low-cost credit from institutional sources is of great importance especially to small and marginal farmers. Along with other inputs, credit is essential for establishing sustainable and profitable farming systems. Most of the farmers are small producers engaged in agricultural activities in areas of widely varying potential. Experience has shown that easy access to financial services at affordable cost positively affects the productivity, asset formation, income and food security of the rural poor. The major concern of the Government is therefore, to bring all the farmer households within the banking fold and promote complete financial inclusion.

KEYWORDS

farm credit, sources of the loan.

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INTRODUCTION

The word agriculture is gotten from the Latin word agricultura, Ager, implies a field and cultural, implies development and in the severe sense of the word, culturing of the dirt. Agribusiness alludes to the development of food and goods through cultivating and ranger service. Agribusiness was the key advancement that prompted the rise of development, with the cultivation of tamed creatures and plants, the making food overflows that empowered the extension of additional thickly populated and separated social orders. Agriculture includes a wide assortment of strengths and strategies, including ways of extending the terrains reasonable for plant ascending by digging water channels and different types of water system. India has forever been a dominantly agrarian country. The agribusiness represents almost 1/fifth of the public pay and is the chief method for help for the populace. As per the 2011 Statistics, out of the complete rustic specialists in the country, 76% were utilized in agribusiness (58% of the aggregate labor force was utilized in agriculture). In every one of the States, more than one half to north of three fourth of the country labor force was utilized in farming. As per the 60th Round of NSS Study, 56% of farming families had land possessions somewhere in the range of 0.4 and one hectare. The fact that the typical pay from makes it also detailed agriculture was well underneath the non-farming normal. For a long time, it has been contended that ranchers are under-special, experiencing below returns than are delighted in by non-ranch families. The per capita pay of land-claiming cultivators is close to half of the non-agrarian normal. Farming has forever been India's most significant monetary area. In the mid of 1990's, agribusiness gave roughly 33% of the GDP (Gross domestic product) and utilized approximately two third of the populace. Since Autonomy, the portion of agribusiness in Gross domestic product has declined in contrast with the development of the modern and administration areas. In any case, agriculture actually gives the main part of merchandise expected by the non-farming area as well as plentiful unrefined components for industry. Moreover, the immediate portion of agribusiness and partnered area in absolute product is near 18 per cent. When the indirect share of agriculture products in total exports is taken into account, the percentage is much higher.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The prime objective of the study is to examine the role of commercial banks and farm credit in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the secondary data collected through various books, journals, website and other unpublished sources.

ROLE OF AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

The Indian agriculture is gifted with fertile land and abundant availability of water resources. It had a long history of fertile plains irrigated by natural rivers. The prosperity of India is based mainly on the development of agriculture because majority of the population is engaged directly or indirectly in agriculture. Hence the development of agriculture would mean the development of the rural masses and development of India. Further the increase in agricultural productivity depends on the adoption of new farm practices such as high yielding variety seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, farm machinery and assured irrigation facilities. The adoption of these practices depends on the availability of large amounts of finance. The creation of adequate and requisite credit avenues is therefore essential for agricultural progress. It represents mobilization of savings by financial intermediaries or Government from the people and through such credit operations, financial savings is transferred into capital. Credit plays an important role for the agricultural development.

NEED FOR FINANCE IN THE AGRICULTURE

The finance in agriculture is an important instrument of development. The advanced technology inputs can be purchased and used by the agricultural farmers only if they have money. But their own money is always scarce and they need outside finance or credit. The basic requirement for the development of agriculture is the infusion of the much-needed credit at reasonable rates of interest. The demand for capital in agricultural development arises, the main causes are need for land and its enhancement; need for agricultural apparatus, machines and livestock; the essential inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, pesticides, etc.; need for food, clothing and asylum to maintain the farmer and his family and need to meet emergency needs. The availability of adequate credit has been one of the major handicaps of Indian agriculture. The Indian agriculture is going through a major crisis because of the emergence of second-generation problems associated with the Green Revolution such as global economic recession, lack of crop diversifications. At the same time, many new opportunities are also emerging in this sector because of the opening up of the global market. The modern technologies like the genetic engineering, the green house mode cultivation and food processing have also come into force, which have the potential to transform the Indian agriculture forever. However, all this requires the capital investment which, an average farmer, can't afford.

NEEDS FOR AGRICULTURE CREDIT FOR THE FARMERS

Now a day the agricultural credit needs rise due to the new farm technology and inadequate personal property of the agriculture farmers. The adequate and timely credit at reasonable rates is essential for the widespread use of improved and developed agricultural methods. The financial requirements of farmers can be classified on the basis of timeframe for which the funds are required. The period-wise agriculture loans classified into three types are the short-term loans (Crop loans); the medium term loans and the long-term loans. The importance of agriculture credit as a critical input to agriculture is reinforced by the unique role of Indian agriculture in macro-economic frame work and its role in poverty alleviation. Recognizing the importance of agriculture sector in India's development, the Government and RBI have played a vital role in creating a broad based institutional framework for catering to the increasing credit requirements of the sector. In India, a multiagency approach comprising Co-operatives Banks, Scheduled Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks has been followed for purveying credit to agriculture sector. The importance of agricultural credit in a country like India, which is essentially rural in nature, hardly needs elaboration. The economic development of the rural areas hinges upon the availability of credit to rural economy. The agriculture credit and rural funding play a significant role in the growth of Indian economy. The rural credit and finance problems are caused by a combination of imperfection of rural credit market and the specific transaction problems, such as macroeconomic in stability, institutional reforms, low profitability in agriculture, high risk and uncertainty and general enforcement problems. Even though the Government provides more importance to the agriculture sector, the plan allocation declined from the First Plan to current plan.

FARM CREDIT PACKAGE

The Government of India has initiated several policy measures to improve the accessibility of farmers to the institutional sources of credit. The emphasis of these policies has been on progressive institutionalization for providing timely and adequate credit support to all farmers with particular focus on small and marginal farmers and weaker sections of the society to enable them to adopt modern technology and improved agricultural practices for increasing agricultural production and productivity. The Policy lays emphasis on augmenting credit flow at the ground level through credit planning, adoption of region-specific strategies and rationalization of lending Policies and Procedures. These policy measures have resulted in the increase in the share of institutional credit of the rural households. The recent past witnessed a healthy growth in the flow of agriculture credit, particularly since the introduction of the policy of doubling of agriculture credit by the Government of India. Agriculture credit grew at an overwhelming rate of 35 per cent per annum during the doubling period (2004-05 to 2006-07). For the period from 1999-2000 to 2019-20, compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of agriculture credit was 19.81 per cent. However, ground level credit (GLC) increased by only 10.81 per cent during 2019-20 over the previous year. In terms of outreach of credit, during 2019-20 around 13.59 crore agricultural accounts had been financed as compared to 12.55 crore financed by all the agencies taken together during 2018-19. The main objective of the study is to analyse the trends and patterns in agricultural credit, issues and concerns for district-wise disparities and suggest measures to overcome these constraints.

Government of India in its Farm Credit Package announced in June 2004, advised banks to double credit to agriculture sector in three years, i.e., by 2006-07. In the subsequent annual budgets, Government of India announced targets for credit to agriculture to ensure adequate credit flow to the sector. The flow of agriculture credit since 2003-04 has consistently exceeded the target. Agriculture credit flow has increased from Rs. 86981 crores in 2003-04 to Rs. 468291 crores in 2010-11. The target for the 2011-12 was fixed at Rs. 475000 crore and achievement as on 31.03.2012 is Rs. 511029 crores (as per provisional figures given by NABARD) forming more than 107% of the target. The target of credit flow for the year 2012-13 has been fixed at Rs. 575000 crore and achievement as on October, 2012 is Rs. 308025 crores. The agriculture credit target will be increased to Rs 20 lakh crore with focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries." The agricultural credit target is Rs 18 lakh crore for the current 2022-23 fiscal. The government has been increasing the credit target for the farm sector every year

INTEREST SUBVENTION TO FARMERS

Government of India announced an interest subvention scheme in 2006-07 to enable banks to provide short term credit to agriculture (crop loan) up to Rs. 3 lakh at 7% interest to farmers. Further, to incentivise prompt repayment, in the Union Budget for 2009-10, Government of India announced an additional interest subvention of 1% to those farmers who repay their short-term crop loans promptly and on or before due date. This was subsequently raised to 2% in 2010-11 and 3% in 2011-12 and 2012-13 also. Thus, farmers, who promptly repay their crop loans, are now extended loans at an effective interest rate of 4% p.a. As proposed in the Union Budget 2013-14, Interest subvention scheme for short-term crop loans to be continued scheme extended for crop loans borrowed from private sector scheduled commercial banks.

The banking system in India is, at present, geared more to financing the traditional crops like cereals. However, it needs to reorient itself to meet the changing requirements of commercialising agriculture. Credit requirements would go up due to purchased-input intensive and heterogeneous production cycles of the new areas of agriculture. This would also call for designing innovative schemes and products which recognise the differing nature of agri-business and supply chains for different products. Newer forms of credit assessment and risk management systems may also have to be put in place, besides upgrading skills and changes in attitudes and mind-sets. The rural credit system has been bypassed by the revolution in information technology. The banking system may also have to address the problem of 'financial dualism', characterised by faster modernisation of urban financial markets compared with their rural counterparts and the 'digital divide' which separates those using modern computers and communication technologies from those who do not. Financial dualism could result in large farmers, agri-business and rural industries obtaining financial services from modern urban financial institutions, while small and marginal farmers and landless laborers may have to depend on micro finance and personal savings. Information technology has to be used to facilitate transformation in various processes of rural credit. In this regard, it is suggested that each bank should form a special task force to look into the entire gamut of credit in the context of the agricultural transformation. The best results could be obtained if these task forces are staffed with enthusiastic young bankers with penchant for innovation.

OVERALL GROWTH AND OUTREACH OF AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

During 2019-20, the institutional credit flow to the agriculture sector in India was to the tune of Rs. 13.93 lakh crore against the target of Rs. 13.50 lakh crore, including Rs. 8.25 lakh crore of short term credit and Rs. 5.68 lakh crore of long term credit (Table 3). The agricultural credit disbursement in 2020-21 was Rs. 15.22 lakh crore (Provisional) against the target of Rs. 15.00 lakh crore. The agriculture credit target for the year 2021-22 has been fixed at Rs. 16.50 lakh crore (Union Budget 2021-22). It may also be observed from the table that the share of Cooperative Banks, RRBs and Commercial Banks (CBs) under crop loans was 19.08 per cent, 10.65 per cent and 70.24 per cent, respectively during 2008-09. However, the share of Cooperative Banks and CBs has declined to 17.97 per cent and 65.30 per cent in 2019-20 and that for RRBs had improved significantly (16.73%) in 2019-20. The share of short term credit decreased significantly from 69.71 per cent in 2008-09 to 59.25 per cent in 2019-20. The share of long term credit in total institutional credit flow to agriculture has been rising steadily, and exceeded 40 per cent mark in 2018-19. The share of long term credit which stood at 22.48 per cent in 2011-12 has increased to 40.75 per cent in 2019-20. During the period 2008-09 to 2019-20, the long term credit, which adds to the capital formation in the primary sector, increased at a faster rate (CAGR 18.9%) as compared to the short term credit (CAGR 13.4%). During this period, total agricultural credit grew at the CAGR of 15.17 per cent. With the concerted efforts of Rural Financial Institutions, operationalization of Small Finance Banks, refinance support from NABARD under Long Term Rural Credit Fund (LTRCF) to RRBs and Rural Cooperative Banks, Area Development Scheme of NABARD, etc., the investment credit/long term credit in agriculture sector has been exceeding the targets for the past four consecutive years. Among the agencies, highest growth was witnessed under RRBs followed by CBs and Cooperative Banks.

CONCLUSION

Agricultural credit has played a vital role in supporting agricultural production in India. The Green Revolution characterised by a greater use of inputs like fertilizers, seeds and other inputs, increased credit requirements which were provided by the agricultural financial institutions. Though the outreach and the amount of agricultural credit have increased over the years, several weaknesses have crept in which have affected the viability and sustainability of these institutions. Furthermore, antiquated legal framework and the outdated tenancy laws have hampered flow of credit and development of strong and efficient agricultural credit institution. To begin with, expert teams will have to be formed for each agro climate zone focusing on the relevant activities there. These teams can then design

the package that needs to be put together in each place. The basic ingredients of each package can be similar: provision of technology inputs, infrastructure, extension services, arrangements for the supply of inputs and the corresponding credit model. A key difference in approach would have to be the much greater involvement of region-specific market participants, and of private sector suppliers in all these activities, and credit suppliers ranging from public sector banks, cooperative banks, the new private sector banks and micro-credit suppliers, specially self-help groups. The total institutional credit to agriculture sector has increased more than 4 times during 2008-09 to 2019-20 in the Uttar Pradesh. In total credit the ratio of crop loans remains high as compared to term loan, crop loan increased from 67.51 per cent in 2008-09 to 88.29 per cent in 2019-20. As per the NAFIS Report 2016-17, the share of non-institutional credit, institutional credit and both the sources in 2015 was 55.7 per cent, 39.3 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively. It was found that the households with higher landholdings carry higher debt burden as compared to the households with lower landholdings in the state. The credit disbursed per hectare of GCA was only Rs. 43718 at the state level as compared to Rs. 70697 at all India level. The per hectare credit flow indicates that at the state level there was an impressive increase from Rs. 15431 in 2011-12 Rs. 43718 in 2019-20. However, there exists wide inter-district disparities as are indicated by the range of Rs. 13862 per hectare in Banda district to Rs. 186787 per hectare in Meerut district. Only 34 districts out of the 75 had per hectare credit flow above the state figure. The accessibility of institutional credit is higher in the districts in the western region where the level of agricultural development is also higher. It is a vicious cycle operating in less developed districts. Less availability of credit influences adversely the adoption of modern farming techniques and private capital investment, which in turn lowers the productive capacity of the agricultural sector and results in lower productivity and production, and also pushes the farmers to borrow from the informal sources. Consequently, the demand for agricultural credit for short and long term purposes is dampened. Thus, the inter-district disparities across the State in the disbursement of agricultural credit by the RFIs is very significant. Therefore, it warrants attention of the policy makers for mitigating regional and inter-district disparities.

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