1. How can progressive land reforms contribute towards faster economic growth? Analyse.

Approach

Define what is land reform and contextualise to progressive aspect of land reforms.Further write how land reforms leads to faster economic growth and suggest some further measures for land reforms.Make a future oriented and positive conclusion.

Introduction

land reform means the distribution of surplus land to small farmers and landless tillers, accrued as a result of the implementation of the ceiling on agricultural holdings. More broadly, it includes regulation of ownership, operation, leasing, sales, and inheritance of land.Land reforms measures has been adopted by majority of the countries over the world and India as well for better economic growth and social equity.

Body

Progressive land reforms leads to faster growth as follows:
- Improve condition of farmers by generation of more income. This was one of the primary aim of land reforms. Firstly the removal of intermediaries led to land to the tillers which reduced extreme poverty.Further the ceiling and tenancy acts provided tenants lands as well as certainty which led to greater income generation.
- Help in preventing exploitation of farmers.Farmers which constituted 70 percent of the workforce at the time of independence were the most deprived section.This led to extreme backwardness in villages.With land reforms this scenario changed and farmers were ensured more dignity.
- Create better linkages with agro processing and other industries.This has increased the value output in farming sector .Schemes like mega food processing plants and SAMADHAN scheme have worked in this direction.This has decreased food wastage and increased renumeration to farmers.
- As land acquisition is the biggest road block in infrastructure projects, land reforms can fast forward the process. The new Land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement act 2013 has made land acquisition easy as well as given farmers adequate rights.This gives a major push to infrastructure sector.
- Prevent the alienation of tribals from their lands. This is necessary as land reforms are not just to create prosperity for any one section of society but rather each community should have its fundamental right to livelihood protected.Land reforms ensure this which reduces friction in society in long run.
- Helps in commercialisation of farming which increases the overall output in sector and also make credit available trough formal sources.This has positive effect on overall rural economy.

- Maintain food security and in turn help in keeping a healthy workforce. Food security is one of the basic aim in land reforms.India trough green revolution in 1960's achieved food security.
- Land reforms leads to better land records and titles being registered easily.The new SWAMITVA scheme focuses in this direction.It ensures ease of sale and purchase of land.

All these reforms from 1950's to 2021 have helped in gradually empowering the citizens of India and gave constant push to Indian economic as well as social growth.

Further Steps that need to be taken for progressive land reform:

- Government regulation should phase out eventually so that farms can directly sell in the market and let the market forces govern the prices of farm produce. Ex: Model APMC act given my NITI Ayog
- Provision of sufficient loans and capital to the actual tiller of land. Ex: Instant credit of 15000 through KISAN CREDIT card suggested by ECONOMIC SURVEY 2018
- Promoting land leasing and contractual farming. Ex: Model land leasing act prepared by NITI Ayog
- Implementing Forest rights act in true spirit by all the states.
- If acquisition of land is done for commercial purpose, farmer should be made a stakeholder in the growth rather than providing a menial job to one of the family member.
- Second phase of land consolidation should be done. This will improve land productivity.

Conclusion

Land is the most important factor of production hence every single sector in economy depends on land.Thus Land reforms will help in proper maintenance of land as well as in easy transaction. This is necessary for India to achieve its growth target, attract foreign investment, increase ease of doing business as well as ensuring rural growth and well being.

2. Can you discuss some of the most significant technology-based reforms undertaken by the government in the area of public distribution of food? Is there further potential of ramping up the public distribution system through technological interventions? Suggest

Approach

In introduction define what is PDS system and what is its role. Then mention what are the technological reforms undertaken by the government over the years.In last part suggest some reforms for future.In conclusion try to balance with need to ensure that technology doesn't leads to exclusion of eligible beneficiaries.

Introduction

The Public Distribution System (PDS) evolved as a system of management of scarcity through distribution of food grains at affordable prices. Over the years, PDS has become an important part of Government's policy for management of food economy in the country.It works towards distributing basic food and non-food commodities to the needy sections of the society at very cheap prices. Wheat, rice, pulses etc. are a few major commodities distributed by the public distribution system.

Body

Technology-based reforms undertaken by the government in the area of public distribution of food:
- Automation of Fair Price Shops: Department of Food & Public Distribution prescribed the guidelines and specifications for use of PoS at FPS. At present 2,04,162 FPSs out of 5,26,377 have PoS.This reduces the time to disburse snd also avoid malpractices.Further it leads to better tracking of inventory.
- Direct Benefit Transfer (Cash): Under this food subsidy is directly credited to the account of the beneficiaries.This has reduced corruption is distribution by huge scale.Further this has reduced the role of intermediaries and has empowered the citizens.This has also provided a much needed push for financial inclusion.
- Aadhaar Seeding in PDS: To weed out duplicate/in-eligible/bogus ration cards and to enable rightful targeting 77.56% i.e. about 17.99 crore ration cards have been Aadhaar seeded.This avoids over inclusion and weed out bogus beneficiaries.It helps to save essential financial resources which can be diverted towards other social schemes.
- Depot Online System: To bring all operations of FCI Godowns online and to check leakages and automate operations at depot level, a "Depot Online" system was launched.
- Smart cards: Ration cards are being replaced with smart cards that can track food doled out through the PDS system.This leads to digitisation of the whole distribution process with ensuring digital records.

- GPS tracking: The government of Chattisgarh initially started this which has been adopted by many states .This leads to avoid diversion of food grains from intended beneficiaries.
- One nation one ration card : One Nation One Ration Card System is an important citizen centric reform. Its implementation ensures availability of ration to beneficiaries under National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes, especially the migrant workers and their families, at any Fair Price Shop (FPS) across the country.

Further potential to revolutionise public distribution system:
- Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS): For implementation during 2018-19 and 2019-20. The key objectives of the scheme are to integrate the existing PDS systems/portals of States/UTs with the Central Systems/portals, introduction of National Portability of ration card holders to lift food grains from any fair price shop (FPS) across the country, and also National level de-duplication of ration cards/beneficiary.
- End-to-end technology solution for digitisation of Public Distribution System: digitisation prevents possibilities of corruption, on the other side; the mobile platform offers an opportunity to the government to provide incentives to fair price shop owners to make use of the flexible system to operationalise additional functions.
- Social audit: It can be done using technology to weed out ghost beneficiaries and help the needy people.It can be done with interviews trough internet and inspection on sites by use of cctv cameras.
- Card System: Machine Readable Cards, Biometric Cards, Visual Crypto Cards (Grid Cards), Iris Technology. These can be used for further authentication to help beneficiaries.
- Using ICT: Ration Card Management, Supply-Chain Management, Transparency & Grievance Redressal, computerisation can be included.
- Ware houses: Food Corporation of India (FCI), Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs) can use Information Technology right from the time of purchase of food grains till its distribution will help in increasing the overall efficiency of the entire process, while maintaining transparency and curbing corruption.

Conclusion

Public distribution system is an essential method to provide food grains to the needy and also ensure fair renumeration to farmers.Thus the technological advancement are necessary to weed out bogus beneficiaries and avoid economic losses to the state and also reach out to all the intended beneficiaries.But this focus on technology should not lead to eligible beneficiaries being neglected due to lack of digital and technological literacy.Therefore government needs to educate and impart empathy in all stakeholders dealing with the public distribution system.

3. What are the unique features of Odisha's disaster mitigation strategy? What lessons can be learnt from it? Discuss.

Approach

The candidate needs to first contextualise in introduction on the Odisha's recent successes in handling disasters. In next part mention what are unique features of Odisha's strategy and then write what can be learnt from it.make a summary type conclusion at the end.

Introduction

The eastern state of Odisha in India, situated along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, frequently suffers from cyclones, floods and occasional tsunamis. Hence it has often been referred to as the 'disaster capital' of the country. It faced its severe disaster in 1999 when a super cyclone struck the state which led to loss of 10,000 lives and crores of economic assets.Thereafter Odisha took dedicated efforts to avoid loss to such catastrophic events and this has bore results visible in recent cyclonic events such a Phailin in 2013, Hudhud in 2014, Titli in 2018, Fani in 2019, and Yaas 2021 where in all cumulatively hardly 200 lives were lost.

Body

The turnaround in Odisha's disaster preparedness has beee due to its conscious efforts over the years.It has successfully started community-level warning, built multi-purpose cyclone shelters under National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project and built an Early Warning Dissemination System with last-mile connectivity. The capacity to deal with natural disasters has increased tremendously at the community level. If there is a model of preventing large scale deaths in disaster, we can call it the Odisha model.

Unique features of Odisha's disaster mitigation strategy:
1. Community focused response.
- Odisha has a great community outreach system through which people are being reached on time. It now has a network of 450 cyclone shelters and there is a robust mechanism for the maintenance of the cyclone shelters—each cyclone shelter has a maintenance committee where youth have been involved and trained for search and rescue, first aid medical attention, and for providing cyclone warnings.
- Through a network of these shelters and committees and training, the state has involved the entire community; it is now fairly easy to disseminate warnings and move people into safe cyclone shelters.
- The state's disaster management systems are monitored twice each year, given the propensity of natural disasters in the state.Odisha has managed to create a sense of community during such disasters that other states can also emulate.
2.Cyclone forecasting.

- In October 1999, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issued cyclone warnings three days before the cyclone struck the Odisha coast. Compared to that, the prediction for most of the cyclones has been at least 5-6 days prior to its landfall giving adequate time to the administration to take necessary steps.
- Cyclone warning by the IMD comes is pretty early and accurate with least deviation and observed path and predicted path almost going on the same line. This has not just inspired confidence among the people on the ground but also the officials. This has also prevented a large number of unnecessary evacuation.

3.Early warning dissemination system.

- In April 2018, Odisha become the first Indian state to have an early warning system in place for natural disasters such as cyclones and tsunami for people living along its 480 km-long coast.
- The EWDS(Early warning dissemination system)is a full-proof communication system to address the existing gap in disseminating disaster warning by strengthening the emergency operation centres in the state.
- At present, as many as 1,205 villages from 22 blocks in the coastal districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam have been covered under the EWDS. As part of the system, watchtowers have been set up at 122 locations within 1.5 km from the coastline for dissemination of cyclone or tsunami warning through sirens and mass messaging.

4.Cyclone shelters for evacuation.

- The specially designed multi-purpose cyclone shelters built on high stilts have also ensured that loss of lives is minimal even during sea surges and persistent water-logging. It now has a network of over 870 cyclone and flood shelters that can house 1000 people each.
- Over 450 cyclone shelters have maintenance committees where youth have been involved and trained for search and rescue, first aid medical attention, and for providing cyclone warnings.

5.Disaster specific Administration.

- Apart from the decentralised governance institutional set-up, Odisha also has a disaster-specific institutional mechanism. It has established 16 district-level disaster management planning committees which reach out to 155 block-level disaster management planning committees and 22,000 village-level disaster management committees.
- The state has raised 20 units of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) that comprises highly trained personnel with multi-disaster tackling capabilities. Equipped with 66 types of sophisticated equipment required for disaster management, including road clearing equipment.

6.Disaster proof construction.

- Twenty-two years ago, there were not many pucca houses along the coast compared to 2021 when the state government has converted a large number of these houses to pucca ones under state-specific schemes like Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana, Mo Kudia or central schemes like Pradhan Mantri Grameen Awas Yojana. In 1999, the panchayats did not stock basic rations like rice, pulses,

jaggery and kerosene while in subsequent disasters all panchayats stock basic rations

Lessons to be learnt from Odisha model:
- Community response need to be at heart of disaster management as over centralised systems fails to relay timely information and further delayed commands can hinder quick response.
- Capacity building of community is equally important as it empowers the last mile disaster victim.
- A separate disaster specific administrative machinery need to be created especially in most disaster prone states of India such as Uttarakhand, Westbengal, Maharashtra .
- Early warning system is a must for every disaster prone state. This needs to be the focus as timely and precise warning is great asset in an event of disaster.
- There needs to be equal focus on making disaster proof housing and infrastructure to avoid future economic loss to the state and nation all together.

Conclusion

In the 21st century the intensity and frequency of the natural disasters has been on constant rise and to tackle this there needs to be high level of disaster preparedness and rehabilitation strategy.Odisha has shown the path on how the disaster preparedness can be achieved if there is will to achieve in community and administration .Therefore this example needs to be emulated all over India to avoid loss to both human lives and economic assets.This will help India achieve and adhere to Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction.