

Agriculture in India: Institutional Structure and Reforms

Kartik Prasad Jena

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The use of modern methods of production is conditioned by the institutional framework of a production sector. If the institutional set up is exploitative, it will discourage the adoption of efficient technology. Unfortunately, in India, the

institutional settings of the farm/agriculture sector are not congenial for the use of modern agricultural techniques. Although the zamindari system - a system of landholding and revenue collection - was abolished soon after India's independence in 1947, it continues to exist in a different form. Land reform laws have proved ineffective and therefore many large landlords still rule the roost in rural areas. As a result of population growth, there is tremendous pressure on available land. This has led to overcrowding and, hence, the sub-division and fragmentation of holdings. Small-sized and scattered holdings imply wastage of time and labor, difficulties in the use of modern techniques, and quarrels and litigation among farmers. As well, the institution of money lending is the greatest curse for India's poor and illiterate rural citizens. The exploitative practices of the moneylenders are no secret. This book examines the institutional framework of Indian agriculture, and reforms thereof, pertaining to land management, land reforms, agricultural credit, marketing of agricultural produce, public procurement of agricultural produce, and related areas.