

# Agriculture and Sustainable Development Goals: An Overview and Issues

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## **Abstract**

Since long, poverty, hunger and malnutrition have attracted considerable attention of policymakers, academicians and civil society organizations across the world. The latest initiative, in the form of sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the United Nations Development Program built on the success of the millennium development goals (MDGs), is a global call to act towards ending poverty, hunger and undernourishment and bringing peace and prosperity to all by 2030. Of the total 17 SDGs, seven are directly linked to agriculture. For example, the goals of ‘no poverty and zero hunger’ depend heavily on the performance of agriculture, which is directly influenced by technological change, markets, institutions, climate change and policies. It is, thus, meaningful to assess the contribution of agriculture and allied activities towards achieving these goals.

The theoretical perspectives on poverty hypothesise that agricultural growth is essential for poverty reduction, especially in a country like India where a large proportion of poor live in rural areas and depend on agriculture directly or indirectly for their sustenance. The efforts towards improving agricultural productivity through application of various techniques and technologies have quantifiable benefits of reducing the need to ratchet up cultivated area to feed the growing population. In this background, the Agricultural Economics Research Association (India) decided to organize its annual conference around these issues. The response was overwhelming; a total of 178 research articles were received from India and abroad. Salient observations and issues emerging from these are summarized below around five broad themes: (i) poverty, food insecurity and inequality, (ii) technology adoption and mechanisation, (iii) agricultural markets, prices and value chains, (iv) sustainable resource use and risk management, and (v) policies and institutions.