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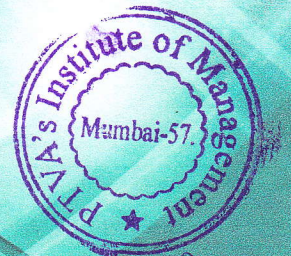
MULTI DISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

SUSTAINABILITY IN A GLOBALISED WORLD



Director
PTVA's Institute of Management
Chitrakar Ketkar Marg,
Behind M. L. Dahankar College,
Wile Parle (E), Mumbai - 400 057.



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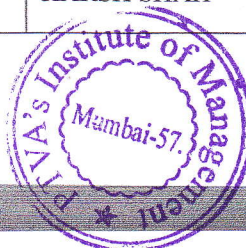
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INDEX

SR. NO.	TITLE OF THE PAPER	NAME OF THE AUTHOR	PAGE NO.
1.	A STUDY ON SUSTAINABILITY OF CURRENT FARMING SYSTEM OF INDIA	DR. SUCHETA PAWAR	01
2.	A CASHLESS ECONOMY: AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF PAYTM, INDIA	DR.(CA) SEEMA GOSHER	06
3.	A NEED OF WASTE MANAGEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO VENGURLA DUMPING GROUND IN KONKAN'S SINDHUDURG DIST.(CASE STUDY)	SUMITA VISHWAS MADAV	14
4.	A STUDY OF THE LEADERSHIP CULTURE OF TATA SONS-WITH RESPECT TO SUSTAINABILITY IN A GLOBALISED WORLD	DR. SUDHA SUBRAMANIAM	22
5.	A STUDY OF THE MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY SMALL RETAIL STORES IN SOUTH MUMBAI TO SUSTAIN COMPETITION FROM BIG RETAIL STORES (WITH REFERENCE TO KIRANA STORES AND SUPERMARKETS)	DR HASINA SAYED MEET ASHOK MEHTA	27
6.	A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF DATA SCIENCE IN CHANGING THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SCENARIO	SHAMAL PARAB BAGWE	36
7.	A STUDY OF THE TRIBAL PEOPLE OF ANDAMAN ISLANDS AND THEIR SURVIVAL	DR. MOUSUMI S. MANNA	39
8.	A STUDY ON COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL MARKETING AND TRADITIONAL MARKETING	SARVESH KAREKAR ISHAN NAGWEKAR OMKAR KENI	44
9.	A STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF TOOLS OF PROMOTION ADOPTED BY LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES IN INDIA	ALPESH MEHTA DR. NEELA NAIR	50
10.	A STUDY ON EMERGING TRENDS IN MARKETING AND ADVERTISING	VARSHA .B. SINGH	55
11.	A STUDY ON ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT IN BANKS WITH REFERENCE TO MUMBAI CITY	MRS.BABITA A. KANOJIA	58
12.	A STUDY ON HOW PRIORITY SECTOR LENDING HELPS SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF INDIAN ECONOMY	MUGDHA M. KULKARNI PRIYAL VINOD BHOSLE	64
13.	A STUDY ON IMPACT OF E-STORES ON RETAIL SECTOR IN MUMBAI	MRS. REENA H. VORA	69
14.	A STUDY ON ONLINE SHOPPING AND ITS IMPACT ON RETAIL STORES	ANJALI ATIPAMULA HARSH SHAH	74

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A STUDY ON SUSTAINABILITY OF CURRENT FARMING SYSTEM OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Double digit food inflation, growing poverty and indebtedness among farmers are the socio-economic problems that need to be addressed by taking steps towards solving the problems once for all. Root cause of the problems might be existing farming technology. If the farming system itself is not sustainable, all other measures taken by Government to solve the problems are going to be ineffective. Thus it is essential to evaluate the existing farming system, called as conventional farming. The paper tries to evaluate conventional farming system on the basis of trends in yields per hectare & per capita food availability over the period of 1950-51 to 2015-16. The paper also examines returns to scale experienced by Indian farming. The study is based on secondary data taken from publications of Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. Trends in yield and per capita food availability is analyzed by using simple percentage method. Whereas returns to scale are examined with the help of Chi-square test. Both yield per hectare and food availability have shown declining trend and conventional farming was found to be receiving diminishing trends.

Key-words: Sustainability, Conventional Farming, Returns to Scale

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

India, the 'agrarian economy' where 54.6% of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities, had been fighting problems like food insecurity, food inflation, requirement of large amount of agrarian subsidies and poverty of agrarian community (farmers) since independence till the date. These experiences raise questions on 'sustainability' of Indian farming system or farming technology that became popular as green revolution technology in 1970's. The new agrarian system which is known as 'chemical farming' or 'conventional farming' need to be examined for sustainability. Government expenditure/subsidies can only be temporary solutions to the problem which has its own socio-economic costs for the country. Poverty and hunger are the problems to be addressed immediately and eradicated permanently. What the country needs to do is solve the problem forever by either making current system sustainable or replacing it with more sustainable one. The paper revolves around the research questions –

- 1) Has conventional farming improved yield per hectare?
- 2) Has it increased per capita food grain availability in the country?
- 3) What kind of returns to scale Indian agriculture is experiencing currently?

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Per capita food and nutritional availability secondary data analysis by Shiva and Jalees (2009) says that every fourth Indian is hungry. According to their study per capita availability of food has declined from 177 kg per person per year in 1991 to 152 kg in 2003. Daily calorie intake has dropped to 2150 cal/day from 2220 cal/day.

Shiva and Singh (2011) in their book have spoken about two crises that India is facing – first one is agrarian crisis where growing farming cost and falling farm productivity have increased food insecurity, food prices and reduced farm profitability. Another crisis observed by them is public health crisis that intensive conventional farming and conventional food had created in the form of malnutrition as well as increased various health issues among people of India. The study suggests shift in agrarian technique from conventional to organic farming to improve health per acre at less cost of production.

Nair (2010) analyzed the causes of high inflation experienced in 12 food commodities between January 2008 and July 2012. According to the analysis, majority of commodities were subject to inflationary pressures due to domestic supply side constraints.

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