

# Grain output up five times despite climate change: ICAR

'India exporting rice worth ₹40,000 crore annually due to scientific application'

STAFF REPORTER  
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India is exporting rice worth ₹ 40,000 crore annually and other food products despite facing massive adverse impact of climate change, said Trilochan Mohapatra, Secretary in the Department of Agriculture Research and Education.

Mr. Mohapatra, also the Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, said the massive upswing in food production was possible due to application of science in the agricultural field.

He was delivering the keynote address at the 4th Convocation of SOA University recently.

"The country is facing a situation where the water table has declined as also rainfall by more than 100



Trilochan Mohapatra

mm compared to the 1950s; the minimum temperature has risen by 1.6 degrees Celsius and 102 out of the 140 million hectares of cultivable land lies degraded, but food production has increased manifold to feed a population of 1.25 billion people," Mr. Mohapatra said.

"It is frightening to note that land is more than 80% deficient in nitrogen, more than 70% deficient in phos-

phorous and more than 20 to 25% deficient in many micro-nutrients. We lose 16 tonnes of soil per hectare per year through land erosion," said the agricultural scientist.

Despite these limitations, India's grain production had increased five times, milk production by 8.5 times, egg production by 43 times and fish production by 13 times since the 1950s. The country's horticultural produce had gone up three times since the 1990s, Mr. Mohapatra said.

"This was made possible because we applied science to agriculture which ushered in the green revolution making us self-sufficient and self-reliant. It is a huge growth in the face of all these adversities. We applied the science of genetics to grow the

largest basmati rice which is being exported and it had made us self-sufficient in wheat now," he said.

## Food basket

Mr. Mohapatra said a pomegranate farmer in Gujarat was earning a net profit of Rs. 10-15 lakh per year through cultivation of the fruit which had been made possible because of scientific application in agriculture and it indicated as to how India's food basket was diversified.

He emphasising on integration of research, education and dissemination and application of new knowledge -- the main source of agricultural growth in future.

The SOA University conferred the honoris causa on Mr. Mohapatra on the occasion.