

Farmers' Manifesto

What farmers want from the governments?

Andhra Pradesh is passing through a serious agrarian crisis in spite of the several initiatives taken by state and central governments in the last five years. This calls for a paradigm shift in the policy support to farming. Especially, there should be an unequivocal commitment to make small and marginal farmers viable, and a clear focus on enhancing real incomes.

1. Provide Income Guarantee to farmers that ensures a fair living standard. Establish Income Commission for Farmers to assess farmer incomes every year and implement income guarantee through a combination of the following mechanisms

- Fair and Remunerative Prices:
 - MSP determination should be transparent and linked to rising inflation
 - Implement Swaminathan commission recommendation of (C2+minimum50%)
 - MSP should be announced before the crop season begins
 - Price Stabilization Fund to enable market intervention in all crops
- Labor wage support to farmers
 - Higher wages and shortage of labor have impacted farmers. Government should offer input subsidy in the form of labor wages for agricultural operations.
 - This could be done by extending NREGS for another 100 days for farm labor, or through a separate scheme. AP govt has used NREGS for CLDP and horticulture
- Improve Rural Employment Opportunities
 - Post-harvest operations and value addition at the village level can create more income generating opportunities at the village level and increase the farmers' net income
- Livelihood Security payments to small/marginal farmers:
 - Input subsidies & price mechanisms alone fall short of providing living income
 - The shortfall should be assessed every year by the Income Commission and made up in the form of direct cash payment
 - Should be a fixed amount per cultivator family including tenant farmers
 - About one crore families would be eligible in AP and if Rs. 10000 per annum is given it would cost Rs. 10,000 crore per year
 - The extra money going into the rural economy through this program will have positive economic consequences by increasing the purchasing capacity, and by enabling investments by farmers.

2. Promote Self-Reliant and Sustainable Agriculture

- Government should promote sustainable agriculture to maximise the local resource use and provide support to the farmers
- Farmers adopting organic/ecological farming should receive financial support for purchasing or producing their own organic inputs, at an equal level as subsidies for chemical fertilizers and seeds
- Special package should be announced for dry-land/rain-fed agriculture to encourage and sustain appropriate cropping patterns and cultivation methods
- Implement restrictions on Genetically Modified Crops and chemical pesticides

3. Create appropriate support systems

- Increase the access to cheaper credit and easy insurance
 - Extend and continue cheaper interest loan (Pavala Vaddi) to farmers. Strengthening PACS, using SHG Federations, creating new Farmers' Organisations should be explored.
 - Government should stand guarantee for the crop loans to farmers and all farmers (including tenant farmers) should have access to required credit.
 - Government should establish Credit Guarantee and Insurance Corporation with 100 crore corpus which manages the risks of non repayments and extend insurance to farmers.
- Create Marketing facilities at the village level
 - Create value addition, processing infrastructure at the village level
 - Support/Remunerative prices (currently MSP) to be extended to all the crops
 - announced before the season and
 - organise procurement at the village level
- Organize farmers into Federated groups like Women SHGs
 - planning and managing their resources and livelihoods
 - Capacity building, sharing knowledge etc
 - For delivering financial support instruments like subsidies, loans etc
 - Marketing operations and increasing collective bargaining power
- Provide institutional support to organic farming
 - 50 % of the research investments in agriculture institutions should be earmarked to organic farming
 - 50 % of the demonstrations by department of agriculture should be on organic farming
 - public institutions like APSSDC should be revived and decentralised with transparent functioning and accountable to farming community
 - Farmers training centres should be equipped to run courses on organic farming and experienced farmers should be used as the resource persons

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