

crop insurance scheme: SC gives government six months to show results of PM's crop insurance scheme

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday gave the [central government](#) six months time to demonstrate the gains of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana on the ground level as it observed that a serious issue like this could not be dealt with overnight.

The bench of Chief Justice Jagdish Singh [Khehar](#) and Justice D.Y.Chandrachud said: "We are of the view that a serious issue like this can't be dealt with overnight, it will take time to implement it (PMFBY)."

The top court gave six months as Attorney General [K.K.Venugopal](#) sought a year's time to see the gains of the scheme.

Urging the court to close the matter, he said: "Why should the court interfere when government is doing all to help the [farmers](#)."

He said the scheme that was launched just a year ago has covered 5.3 crore farmers, or 40 per cent of the country's 12 crore farmers and covered 30% of the total crop area in the country.

However, Chief Justice Khehar refused his demand, saying: "We are not going to close the matter."

"Whatever needs to be done has to be done, not on paper. We are not going to close. We are keeping ourself in the loop to know what is going on. You may be doing a good thing."

Pointing out that inability to pay loans was the major cause of farmers suicide in the country, Chief Justice Khehar said: "Inability to pay the loans is the major cause of farmers' suicide. If all of them have been covered, then how can you say that only 40 per cent have been covered?"

At the outset of the hearing, Chief Justice Khehar called for some alternatives to address the farmers woes observing that paying compensation to the famers was no solution.

"Don't worry about the directions, tell us what are you doing (to address the issue of farmers suicide)," the bench said as Attorney General referred to earlier directions issued by the court.

Suggesting an insurance policy with low premium, the bench said that there must be something to soften the impact if a farmer was not able to discharge his loan liabilities.

Asking Venugopal to tell what the government was doing and how it was doing, the bench said: "First you decide what you are taking from the farmers. Rest will be divided between you and the states."

Appreciating the crop insurance policy, senior counsel Colin Gonsalves appearing for the petitioner NGO Citizens Resource and Action and Initiative (CRANTI) said that the Madhya Pradesh and other state governments were not fixing minimum support prices and as a consequence, the farmers were selling their agriculture produces at throw away prices.

Rejecting the government's description of the NGO's suggestions as something in the "in air", he said that they were based on the expert reports including one by noted agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan.

CRANTI is seeking compensation to the families of the debt-ridden farmers who had committed

suicide because of serious financial difficulties.

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