

# CONCERTED EFFORTS ARE REQUIRED TO DRIVE AWAY THE AGRARIAN DISTRESS: VICE PRESIDENT

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Vice President's Secretariat

## Concerted efforts are required to drive away the agrarian distress: Vice President

**Infrastructure development is one of the key factors to improve agriculture sector;**

**Irrigation, infrastructure, investment and insurance sectors need to be strengthened to support farmers;**

## Addresses an interactive meet of Farmers and Scientists

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that concerted efforts are required from every stakeholder to ensure that there is no agrarian distress in the country.

He was addressing the gathering at an interactive meet of farmers and scientists organised by Swarna Bharat Trust in association with Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, in Swarna Bharat Trust, Atkur, Vijayawada today.

The Vice President said that the foremost need in the country is to double the income of the farmers by making agriculture resilient, sustainable and profitable. "We need to introduce structural changes and both the Centre and various States need to accord the highest priority to this aspect", he added.

Emphasizing upon the important role played by infrastructure empowering the farmers, the Vice President said that improving rural road connectivity, setting up more godowns, cold storage facilities, ensuring assured water and electricity supply are some of the key measures which have to be implemented. Providing timely credit to farmers is equally important, he added.

Shri Naidu said that the farmers should also be educated on the need to diversify crops and take up allied farm activities. A study by MANAGE has revealed that there were no suicides in the families of farmers, who took up allied activities, he pointed out.

The Vice President said that the agriculture sector needs a big push in India and in other parts of the world. It is obvious that a concerted, coordinated action is needed on a number of issues that impact the growth of agriculture sector and the quality of life of people who depend primarily on this sector, he said. The Government, Private Sector, Agricultural Universities, KVKs, Scientists and farmers must come together and address the pressing issues of farmers, he added.

Shri Naidu said that irrigation, infrastructure, investment and insurance sectors need to be strengthened to support farmers. We need a multi-pronged approach to address the complex interrelated issues in current agriculture scenario, he added.

Earlier, the Vice President inaugurated an Exhibition on Agriculture and went around the same and interacted with the Farmers.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am extremely happy to participate in this interactive meet of farmers and scientists organised by Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University today.

Agriculture is very close to my heart. Farmers and people living in rural areas are always in my mind when I deliberate on any developmental issue. After becoming the Vice President of India, I have been holding national consultations to change the face of agriculture and improve the income of farmers.

Dear friends.

In India, agriculture has traditionally played a vital role in economic development and continues to do so even till this day. Agriculture, along with fisheries and forestry, is one of the largest contributors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The current challenge is to make it more profitable and ecologically sustainable. Being the second largest country in the world in terms of agricultural output, India must take the lead in reforming the sector.

The foremost need in the country is to double the income of the farmers by making agriculture resilient, sustainable and profitable. We need to introduce structural changes and both the Centre and various States need to accord the highest priority to this aspect. Concerted efforts are required from every stakeholder to ensure that there is no agrarian distress.

Infrastructure development is one of the key factors to improve agriculture sector and empower the farmers. Improving rural road connectivity, setting up more godowns, cold storage facilities, ensuring assured water and electricity supply are some of the key measures which have to be implemented. Providing timely credit to farmers is equally important. Of course, as the economy improves interest rates have to be reduced further. The crop insurance scheme should be made more attractive and implemented effectively.

I have always been stating that loan waivers and providing free power supply are not going to help the farmers in the long run. They provide only short term relief. It should be realized that the farmer does not need freebies but proper marketing conditions to sell his produce. There is a need to remove restrictions on movement of agri produce and free export should be allowed.

The farmers should also be educated on the need to diversify crops and take up allied farm activities. A study by MANAGE has revealed that there were no suicides in the families of farmers, who took up allied activities.

I feel that the farmers should be encouraged to grow horticulture crops as also cultivate cereals

and pulses.

The extension officials should be made to spend more time with the farmers. Similarly, it should be made mandatory for students of agriculture to visit fields and stay with the families of agriculturists to understand firsthand the problems of farmers.

Our farmers are not being able to sustain on agriculture as the profession has become non-profitable and non-viable. Non profitability of agriculture often results in financial distress as it increases the debt burden on farmers. It often leads to migration towards urban areas for work and widens the urban rural divide.

Farming or Agriculture contributes about 16% of total GDP and employs nearly 50% of the total workforce in India.

The agriculture sector needs a big push in India and in other parts of the world. It is obvious that a concerted, coordinated action is needed on a number of issues that impact the growth of agriculture sector and the quality of life of people who depend primarily on this sector.

It is a matter of concern that the number of people engaged in agriculture as a percentage of total employment has been steadily going down all over the world. From 43% in 1991, it is now a mere 26% in 2017. In India also, while nearly 64% of the total workforce was engaged in agriculture in 1991, it was down to 44% in 2017.

The Government, Private Sector, Agricultural Universities, KVKs, Scientists and farmers must come together and address the pressing issues of farmers.

We need to have a positive bias in allocating resources to rural areas and help in developing a second income source for those who are solely dependent on agriculture income.

Dear friends, we should also focus on developing climate resilient crops as climate change is impacting every aspect of our life.

Irrigation, infrastructure, investment and Insurance sectors need to be strengthened to support farmers. We need a multi-pronged approach to address the complex interrelated issues in current agriculture scenario.

Jahind!"

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