

'Freebies and subsidies only destroy agriculture and production'

If farmers are charged for electricity it will help improve efficiency



Planning a must:Kulandaisamy at his farm in Thanjavur.

“It is a well known fact that the rural agricultural economy is in dire crisis today. Whether the government is aware of this or is deliberately ignoring farmers’ issues is a million dollar guess,” says Mr. R. Kulandaisamy a leading farmer and owner of Tari Bio-Tech, Thanjavur.

Prices plummet soon after harvest and traders refuse to buy the produce due to high stocks and volatile price fluctuations.

Price fluctuation

“The fluctuation in price or absence of buyers is mainly due to excess production of a single commodity. For main cereals such as paddy and wheat the government fixed a minimum price but today they are not able to purchase the entire quantity from farmers at that price,” says Mr. Kulandaisamy.

“If the farmer cannot sell the produce how can he get back his investment? A sugar factory is aware of its cane requirement and plans planting only for that requirement. Similarly Government must decide on its annual food grain requirement and decide to what extent crops need to be cultivated. But sadly that never happens,” he says.

The State agriculture department must select the most suited districts or taluks in terms of soil, water availability, and climate.

Based on this, each area must be provided a target area of cultivation and season of cultivation.

“If this can be adopted then our resources will be saved – for instance Tiruvarur district, Tamil Nadu is suited only for paddy. But we find Ramnad farmers also growing paddy in spite of severe water shortage. Instead, these farmers can try to cultivate pulse or ground nut and get two harvests in a year,” explains Mr. Kulandaisamy.

Pay attention to price

While fixing the price, the Government should pay attention to the extent crops need to be grown. “If they do this, there will not be excess production and consequently any marketing problem,” he reasons.

Similarly each and every cropping pattern needs to be planned by the government before permitting farmers to cultivate. Even today a general belief exists that there is a shortage of cultivable lands.

“If the cultivable land availability is more, then the government needs to look at export market and fix a rate at least close to the international rate for the produce as well as the cultivation cost involved for a reasonable profit,” asserts the farmer.

One of the main reasons for declining produce is the freebies and subsidies. They are destroying agriculture and our lives, according to Mr. K. Tharsius his son.

Since power and water are provided free, a farmer does not feel the need to plan nor devise any improvised method to minimize their usage.

Abolish free power

“If farmers are charged for electricity it will help improve their efficiency in minimizing this scarce resource,” says Mr. Tharsius.

Another impediment is the availability of fertilizers and chemicals. India is dependent on other countries and hence rates are increasing day by day.

There are chances of these chemical fertilizers getting exhausted.

The permanent solution is only through some renewable sources such as bio-fertilizers and organic manures, according to Mr. Kulandaisamy.

Act pro- actively

“It is high time the Government seriously starts thinking in proactive measures to revamp our agriculture system. The negative trend in agriculture today is bound to create adverse impact on the overall health of our nation’s economy.

“We need to find new avenues to keep farmers on the farm, attract new people to take up farming, and make agriculture profitable since it is the backbone of our country,” says Mr. Tharsius.

Mr. R. Kulandaisamy and Tharsius can be reached at email:tari_hitech@yahoo.com, website: www.tarigroup.com, mobiles: 98430-59117 and 98434-39909.

Source: web.thehindu@thehindu.co.in Copyright © 2012, The Hindu
