

# *Budget 2019 is dubbed Farmers' Budget for its welfare schemes*

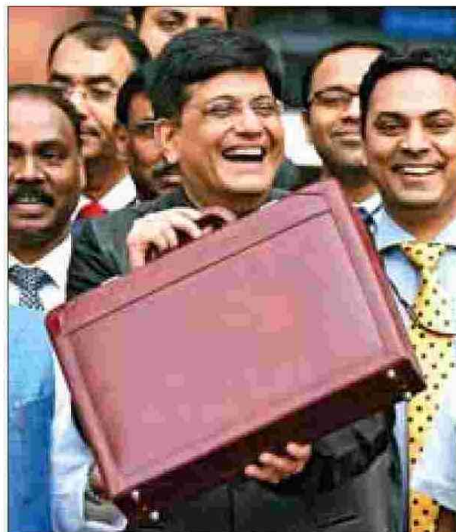


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The Central government, which has been continuously working on the motto of 'Sabka Saath - Sabka Vikas', has once again, with Budget 2019, reaffirmed its commitment to the all-round development of the agriculture sector and enhancing the income of farmers. The budgetary allocation of the Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Ministry has been raised by around 2.5 times from Rs 58,080 crore in 2018-19 to Rs 1,41,174.37 crore in 2019-20. In fact, the budgetary allocation of Rs 1,41,174.37 crore in 2019-20 is 16.6 per cent more than Rs 1,21,082 crore during UPA (2009-14). That is why, the government in accordance with its philosophy of increasing both agriculture production and farmers' income, has created history in Budget 2019 by making provision of income support and other

schemes with a focus on rural India. To provide an assured income support to the small and marginal farmers, the government has launched a historic programme 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)' entailing an annual expenditure of Rs 75,000 crore. Under this programme, vulnerable landholding farmer families, having cultivable land upto 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of Rs 6,000 per year to ensure their investment and other needs. This income support will be transferred directly into the bank accounts of beneficiary farmers, in three equal installments of Rs 2,000 each. This programme will be fully funded by the Government of India. It will also protect farmers from the clutches of moneylenders and ensure continuity in their farm activities.

This programme will be made effective from December 1, 2018, and the first installment for the period up to March 31, 2019 would be paid this year itself after identifying eligible farm-



ers. A sum of Rs 20,000 crore has been proposed for 2018-19 for this.

The Rashtriya Gokul Mission has been started for the first time by the Modi government to promote the country's cattle and buffaloes, to preserve their genetic resources in a scientific

and holistic form and for continuous growth in the productivity of Indian bovine. Considering its importance, the allocation of Rs 250 crore in Budget 2018-19 has been raised to Rs 750 crore.

India is the second largest fish producing nation in the world, accounting for 6.3 per cent of global production. The fisheries sector contributes 1 per cent to GDP and provides livelihood to about 1.5 crore people at the primary level. The sector registered an average annual growth of more than 7 per cent in recent years and the total production during 2017-18 was 12.61 million tonnes. During 2017-18, the revenue from exports was estimated at Rs 45,106.89 crores, which shows an average annual growth rate of approximately 11.31 per cent in recent years. To provide sustained and focused attention towards development of this sector, the government has decided to create a separate Department of Fisheries.

Through the Kisan Credit Card, the government provides institutional

credit at cheap rates to farmers. This not only helps in increasing agricultural production but also productivity. In the interest subvention scheme, farmers are given short-term loan of up to Rs 3 lakh per annum by banks on timely payment of loan at the rate of 4 per cent.

In the last Budget, our government announced the facility of extension of Kisan Credit Card scheme (KCC) to Animal Husbandry and Fisheries farmers: 2 per cent interest subvention to the farmers pursuing the activities of animal husbandry and fisheries who avail loan through Kisan Credit Card will also be provided. Further, in case of timely repayment of loan, they will also get an additional 3 per cent interest subvention. Now, livestock farmers and fishermen will be able to avail loans at concessional rate of 4 per cent.

Presently, the crop loans are rescheduled for such affected farmers and they get benefit of interest subvention of 2 per cent only for the first year of the rescheduled loan. Now, all farm-

ers affected by severe natural calamities, where assistance is provided from National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF), will be provided the benefit of interest subvention of 2% and prompt repayment incentive of 3 per cent for the entire period of rescheduling of their loans.

At present, there are about 7 crore active KCC, which means that almost 50 per cent of the farmers are still out of the institutional credit system. To ensure provision of easy and concessional credit and to bring all farmers under KCC fold, Government has decided to initiate a comprehensive drive with a simplified application form.

It is clear from these provisions and Budget 2019 that the government has taken all steps to ensure the development and income of our farmers. The fixing of minimum support price and providing income support will be helpful in doubling the income of farmers by 2022.

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