

# 13th National Farmers' Convention

Presidential Address by Shri B. Rachaiah

Agriculture Minister, Mysore

It is of utmost importance that all of us who are connected with the problem of agricultural development in the country should seize every opportunity to understand the various problems that Indian Agriculture as a whole and the farmer in particular is confronted with and try to find ways and means of meeting those problems. In this direction, nothing would be more appropriate than the farmers, the planners and the administrators meeting together to exchange their views and evolve measures which should improve the conditions of the farmer and increase the agricultural output in the country.

Increasing the Agricultural Production is a must to feed the growing population and to meet the rising standards of living. In order to achieve higher production there needs to be a radical change in the outlook on farming, from the traditional and subsistence farming to the modern and commercial farming. Various factors are involved in bringing about this change. However, it is the farmer who has to change to achieve the desired results. The role of farmers in this process around whom all developmental activities are centered, is vital.

## Farmers Education

The most important aspect that is not adequately thought of in this transformation is the educational aspect. Farmers need to be educated to adopt the improved practices. This includes technical know-how, latest and better skills and change in outlook. The farmers are to be taught better methods of cultivation,

proper use of machinery, better seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation etc.

The skill is involved in the use of the newer inputs, further, farmers' attitude towards the newer products, efforts to consume them in place of the older products to which they are accustomed has to be built up. For this, emphasis has to be laid on educational aspects in addition to the supplies and services. We have gone through a lot during the last ten or fifteen years. The decade in particular was one of losing faith in our agricultural capabilities. The seasons were bad and farm production was low. The targets for the output of inputs like fertiliser and seed were also nowhere near realisation.

## Baseless Misgivings

We had our own misgivings regarding our abilities. There was a feeling about 5 to 6 years back that the target of one million tones of nitrogen fixed for the third plan was excessive and unrealistic. The extension staff of both the agricultural and Community Development Departments were targets of ridicule, without any appreciation of their dilemma in having little to extend either by way of knowledge or inputs. It was in the midst of such pessimism that the high-yielding varieties programme had its birth in 1965. It was greeted with cynicism and criticisms by some of planners, statisticians and economists, who felt that the fertilizer doses recommended for the new varieties of wheat, rice, maize, sorghum and bajara were not correct either from the viewpoint of profit or maximum production.

But after two annual plans, the mood of the Country is different now. Foreign experts and others discovered that our farmers are not as fatalistic, conservative and resistant to change as they thought him to be all these years. Farmers, who had no interest in buying seeds five years back, are now prepared to pay fantastic prices for new strains. The availability of Nitrogen even at the level of 1.2. million tonnes does not fulfil the needs.

## New Pattern

How did this happen? What might motivate the farmers to adopt a totally new pattern of agriculture was only a very marked rise in the yield and income from food crops. A difference of 10 or 20% which would be considered a marked improvement in industry would be of no avail in enthusing the farmer. It is the developing of new hybrids and high yielding varieties that yield 100% over the best yield obtained earlier that made a dramatic impact on the minds of the farming community. As a result a whole set of changes in technology have set in. And now there is an air of self-confidence in our agricultural capabilities.

The spectrum of change covers all aspects of farming, from sowing to marketing and consumption. New land use and crop use pattern are being developed so as to stabilise production, utilise the enormous unutilised cattle wealth and convert agriculture into a potent instrument of rural prosperity. The huge unirrigated areas, are being harnessed to produce more through better seeds, better moisture conservation practices and improved agronomic aspect.



### **Integrated programme**

In developing a parity of income among farmers, helping the unirrigated areas to adopt a new technology, rather than retarding the progress of irrigated areas, should be the approach. All this can be achieved only by converting the "Intensive Agricultural Development Programme" into an "Integrated Agricultural Development Programme" where, man, plants and animals can live in a new symbolic balance. Advantage should be taken of the large farmers for training extension workers and farmers. An extension worker who has not himself produced six tonnes of wheat per hectare cannot teach a farmer how to produce this much. Similarly, irrigation, drainage and crop production cannot be developed in isolation, if we are to derive proper returns from the investments in these fields.

One of the important inputs in increasing production is water. In order to see that farmers utilise the available water efficiently the technical know-how, credits and other inputs required by them should be provided. Drought has been one major problem in this unhappy land of farmers from time immemorial. Last year we were in the grip of drought. The great drought of Bihar in 1966-67 practically wiped off in one stroke all that we had claimed as progress in food production during the last three plans. As I was telling the other day, only last year we had a sense of pride for the so called break through in Tanjore delta with ADT 27 paddy, for safeguarding which harvests, mechanical drying equipment had to be rushed with the aid of Ford Foundation. But curiously enough we find Madras State passing through an unprecedented drought at present, already necessitating rush of foodgrains from the Centre. Our memories seem to be very short of all these calamities. While droughts and scarcities are having their tragic impact on some parts of our Country, Floods, Cyclones and pests affect other parts, while still other parts are claiming that they are passing through the "Green Revolution". We have to be

scientific; and unless [we plan to achieve balanced progress we may continue to face those paradoxes of bumper harvests and scarcities.

### **Role of Science**

The transformation of traditional agriculture into modern, scientific farming is only possible through the role of sciences and technology. This transformation is impossible without research with our crops, on our lands, with our water and under our seasonal conditions. A great deal of importance has to be given to research, for we cannot prosper with borrowed technology. Without research work our advisory work to farmers becomes futile. Without it we cannot fight drought and promote balanced growth. The future of our agriculture is therefore what our research holds out to us.

In all agricultural programmes, the farmers have to be actively involved. If they remain passive, none of the programmes are likely to produce the desired results. In a commercial type of farming the economic aspects are more important. The farmers have to learn to identify the costs of inputs and the prices of their output and plan a programme to secure the most with a given piece of land, available labour and capital. Thus, a farmer should know his needs resources and prepare a cropping or animal production plan for himself. The other agencies including extension service, cooperative organisation and gram panchayats should help in planning. A ready made of stereotyped plan may not be acceptable or suitable to his needs. It is only when the farmers are involved in this progress the desired results are likely to be produced.

In India about 70% of the labour force is employed on the farm and this was the cause with U.S.A. the advanced country about 150 years ago. But now in U.S.A. there is only 7% of [the labour force on the farm. One farmer supplies food and other agricultural products for 29 people at home and abroad. But with so much labour force we have not been able to become self-sufficient in food. To find production employment for the unemployed and the under

employed is the major problem of our Indian Agriculture. This can be done by using the labour force for raising agricultural out-put per acre through intensive cultivation; until the idle labour is absorbed for production activity in Industrial Sector. We must infuse in the mind of the farmer a creative "Will" In change over the 'Will' to develop is of great importance. Unless the farmer develops this 'Will' we will not be able to achieve better results.

### **Incentive to farmers**

In order that the farmers play an active role, their interests have to be protected and sufficient incentives have to be provided. In order to protect the interests of the farmers, price incentives, adequate facilities for storage of their produce, marketing etc., need to be provided. The policies need to be stable over a period of time. The fear with the farmers that if they produce more the prices will come down should be removed by suitable price policy. Adequate storage and proper marketing facilities will help in getting maximum returns for their efforts. Similarly, the crop insurance. In India the need for crop Insurance is great because of the instability and uncertainty of Agricultural Production as the cultivator is exposed to great risks due to vagaries of monsoons etc. This needs utmost consideration.

When agricultural development takes place on the scale that is being witnessed now, many more things need to be over and above the supply of seed, fertilisers and know-how. On the other hand, enormous capital will be used up at this stage when traditional farming gets transformed into a commercial farming. This is required for land development, irrigation facilities, utilisation of new inputs and managerial work. Since most of the agriculturists do not readily possess this capital with them, they will have to borrow this from outside. In the recent years enormous funds have been pumped into agriculture through the co-operative structure and the commercial banks. While what has been done is not

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# 13TH NATIONAL FARMERS' CONVENTION

was Inauguarated  
on 8th May, 1969 at 4.00 P.M.

The deleberations of the 13th National Convention of Farmers started at the National Agriculture Fair grounds, Bandra, Bombay on 8th May, 1969 at 4.00 p.m. Shri B. Rachaiah, Minister of Agriculture, Mysore presided over the function. He said about the sad and sudden demise of our late President, Dr. Zakir Husain. The meeting observed two minutes silence by standing as a mark of respect to the departed soul. Shri Rachaiah read out the resolution which was passed unanimously. (See Resolution on cover page 2)

This meeting of the 13th National Convention of Farmers sent its heartfelt condolence to the bereaved members of his family."

Welcome address by Shri S.N. Mushran

Shri S.N. Mushran, Chairman in his welcome address said :

Shri Mushran welcomed both the guests. He said that Dr. Deshmukh had a desire that one agriculture fair should be held in the city of industrialists and businessmen like Bombay. These people should feel the importance of farmers and their role in the making of the country's economic structure. This is why Samaj has organised this Fair in Bombay.

The land for this exhibition has been spared free of charge by the Maharashtra Govt. We are very much grateful for this help and cooperation. Our farmer knows the importance of agriculture in the development of industries and various trades. He sends raw material for industries. We want to show him the development in various sectors for which farmers are playing an important role.

You enjoyed the deliberation of our Seminar and discussions on its recommendations in the Council meeting. The passed resolutions will be sent to the concerned Depart-

ments and Universities in the States and Central Govt.

After the speeches of Shri Madhukar Chaudhri and Shri B. Rachaiah few farmers spoke in the Convention and Dr. Bholay read out secretary's report, published separately.

Smt. Shakuntala Pundrikakash from Meerut (U.P.) spoke quite funny and interesting. She admired the farmers exchange programme and supported its expansion upto the far east countries. She announ-

## Presidential Address

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very near what is required to be done, the fact cannot be overlooked that a substantial progress have been made in this direction.

Similarly, agricultural inputs, like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and implements are required in large quantities in modern agriculture. It is heartening to note that many of the agro-industries that provide inputs to farming and use farm products as raw materials are developing. Many more new ventures are likely to come up in the near future. Fertilizer production for instance, which is being done to limited extent at present, is being stepped up through factories that are contemplated to be established in the next few years.

### Competent Staff needed

Competent men in agriculture are required to man age the vast and rapid agricultural development efforts. Men are required for the agricultural organisations in the States, for research, teaching, and extension work, and also for the commercial banks and agricultural Universities in the country have to play a major role.

With the concerted efforts of the various agencies of the Central

ced two prizes of Rs. 5,000 each to the highest paddy and wheat growers amongst the members of the Samaj. She said it will be a sort of incentive to high-yielders. She opposed the proposal of tax imposition by the Union government.

Shri Motilal Yadav (U.P.) said that prices of foodgrains immediately slumped down as the produce comes in the market. Our farmers are facing heavy shortage of compost and organic manure. We are only depending upon the fertilizers. Water is the main problem. The prices of sugarcane and potatoes are quite low. Our plans

and State Governments, the Agricultural Scientists, and above all, the willing cooperation of the farmer to subject himself to new ideas and practices and a determined optimism on his part, I am sure before long we would reach our goal of self-sufficiency in food production and agricultural prosperity. But let us not become complacent over some of the successes we have achieved here and there. The task ahead of us is stupendous which needs a sustained efforts by all of us. With a determined will-power, we can always raise up to this task.

At Thomas Jefferson the Third President of United States put it "Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God. If He ever had a chosen people". Our late Prime Minister Shri Lal-bahador Sastriji put it as "Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan". I think it is better to give the first place to Kisan because the Nations survives by his efforts only.

I thank you again, ladies and gentlemen, for enabling me to share my thoughts with you and for giving me this opportunity of participating in this essentially important convention.