

Speech of Shri Radha Mohan Singh Hon'ble Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister on the Inauguration of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, West Tripura

Posted On: 19 MAR 2017 5:22PM by PIB Delhi

Dr. S.V. Nagchan, Director of ICAR- National Research Centre for North Eastern Region, Barapani, Dr. P.K. Pandey, Dean College of Fisheries, Dr. B.C. Dekka, Director ATARI, Zone 6, the Scientist community present on this occasion, Friends from Media, ladies and gentlemen,

Today, on this occasion of the Inauguration of the KVK, West Tripura, I am very pleased to be with you in this Holi land blessed by Goddess Tripureshwari. As you all know, Tripura is the second smallest state of the country after Sikkim with 73.8 percent of the population of the state living in the villages. Nearly 60 percent of the state is under Forest cover and another 59.9 percent is hilly area and only 24 percent of the total land area is cultivable. Of the cultivable land area also only 42 percent is irrigated. This means that the village based agricultural activities and the promotion of cottage industries is the only viable means of livelihood of the people of this state.

The Government of India is committed to the growth and development of the entire North Eastern region of the country and we firmly believe that the second green revolution will have to come from the eastern region of the country in which the north-eastern states will have to play a key role. Only then, the all-round development of the country in general and the agricultural development in particular shall be possible.

Today, I am very pleased to inaugurate this Krishi Vigyan Kendra, in western Tripura. The Government has sanctioned 7 KVKs for the state of Tripura of which 5 are already functional and with this inauguration today 6 KVKs will become operational in the state and one more will also be operational soon. In addition, the site selection committee is also visiting the state for the selection of site for the 8th KVK. With this, all the districts in the state shall have a KVK each. I am confident that all the KVKs will realise their responsibilities and the staff working in them will work hard to fulfil the mandates of the KVKs and fulfil the aspirations of the people of the state. The KVKs are expected to discharge the following responsibilities;

- 1) To demonstrate the latest agricultural technologies to the farmers as well as extension workers of State Departments of Agriculture/Horticulture/ Fishery/ Animal Science/ NGOs to reduce the gap between the technology generation and its adoption by the farmers.
- 2) To test and verify the technologies under prevailing socio-economic conditions of the farmers with a view to study the constraints and to modify the technologies to make them appropriate for the specific locations.
- 3) Training and capacity building of the practising farmers/ farmwomen, rural youth and field level extension functionaries in various dimensions by following the methods of "Teaching by doing" and "Learning by doing".
- 4) To establish knowledge bank of the agricultural technologies and related information, taking full advantage of the Information and communication Technologies (ICT), involving extension media, radio, and television, mobile APPs, SMS and Agricultural Information based portals.

All these have now become part of the Extension activities of the KVKs, which have the greatest responsibility of realising the dream of the Government and the Honourable Prime Minister of the Country, to double the income of the farmers by 2022 for which all of us are committed.

The Government is committed to provide at least 1 KVK in all the districts of the Country. The total number of KVKs in the country have now become 668, which was 637 about 2.5 year ago. Our Government have opened 31 KVK's in last 2.5 years. There are 78 KVKs in the north-eastern states all of which have very important role to play in ensuring rapid development of the agricultural sector of the entire region.

With these objectives in mind, the Government has created 3 new ATARIs in the country, thus taking the number of ATARIs from 8 to 11. Three new ATARIs have been created with the headquarters in Pune, Patna and Guwahati.

During the Union Budget this year it has been decided to equip the 648 KVKs of the country with mini soil test labs. All the KVKs have already been provided by the soil test kits by the Government.

The staff strength of the KVKs has been increased from earlier 16 to 22 at present.

KVKs are playing a pioneering role in the area of front line Extension in the Extending various Agricultural Technologies amongst farming community and the state line departments. During past year (2016-17) as many as 48,983 training programmes were organized through which 13.21-lakh farmers and extension personnel benefitted.

Skill-oriented vocational training courses organized for 1.74 lakh rural youth.

Capacity development programmes were conducted for 1.042 lakh extension personnel, out of which 22,889 (22%) were women participants.

KVKs organized 4.69 lakh extension programmes with 198.67 lakh participants for creating awareness among farmers about improved technologies and to provide timely advisory.

I am very happy to inform you that the Government of India is giving special focus on the adoption of **Integrated Farming Systems (IFS)** model of Agricultural Development in the country and that this model is already working very well in the north-eastern states including Tripura.

Rubber, Kathal (Jack Fruit) & Litchi are very commercial crops of Tripura. In the area of Fisheries, also Tripura has done very well. Tripura is able to meet 75% of the demand of the fish on its own. I am sure, in coming years, the state will not only meet its own demand but will also become surplus in many agricultural commodities.

Government is committed towards doubling the farmers' income in next 5 years' period. To achieve this goal, the union budget this year has laid major focus towards integrated agricultural development. Key focus areas of the Government are; making available agricultural credit at easier terms to the farmers, ensuring availability of the quality seeds and other essential inputs, creating irrigation infrastructure, improving soil health through distribution of soil health cards, creating market network through E-NAM and ensuring remunerative price for the farmer's produce.

I am happy to inform you that, the total area sown under wheat this year is higher by 7.71 percent, pulses by 12.96 percent and oilseeds by 10.65 percent as compared to previous year for which major credit goes to our farmers.

I am pleased to inform all of you that, due to the favourable monsoon this year, according to II Advance Estimates, we are set to achieve highest ever food grain production this year (271.89 Million tonnes) which is 6.94 million tonnes higher than the previous best of 265.04 million tonnes achieved during 2013-14. The production this year is higher by 14.97 million tonnes as compared to the average production of previous 5 years (2011-12 to 2015-16). As compared to last year, which was a drought year, the total agriculture production is higher by 20.41 million tonnes.

To make sure that the benefit of the developments in science reach our farmers, a new scheme **Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav** was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of the country. Under this scheme, the scientists of all ICAR Institutes have been linked with the farmers. Teams consisting of 4 scientists adopt 5 villages each and share the new agricultural technologies and knowledge with the farming community. During last 1 year our scientists visited 10,712 villages and provided advisories to the farmers. Our scientists like our defence forces are giving dedicated service to the nation by reaching out to the farmers even in the remote locations.

India is a village-based country with over 6.38 lakh villages. We have nearly 138 million households with 85 percent being marginal (67%) and small (18%) households. **Over 96 percent of the Tripura farmers are marginal and small farmers.** Such farmers are more vulnerable and need the correct technical information on the agricultural technologies the most. Even though, most of the technologies developed by our scientists are scale neutral, yet, **I would ask my scientists to give higher priorities to develop appropriate technologies for the benefit of the farmers of these vulnerable categories.**

Our scientists through their dedicated efforts have been able to bring, green revolution, white revolution and blue revolutions in the country. Our food grain production since 1951 has increased by 5 times, horticultural production by 9.5 times, fish production by 12.5 times, milk production by 7.8 times, egg production by 39 times. This has affected our food and nutritional security favourably. These achievements of our agricultural scientists have earned wide national and international recognition.

Under the Soil Health cards scheme of the Government, the target set for Tripura was 0.32 lakh samples per year during 2015-16 and 2016-17 which has been achieved by the state. A total 1.81 lakh soil health cards were to be distributed among the farmers of the state of which only 0.78 lakh soil health cards could be distributed so far. The Govt. of India had allocated Rs. 100.30 lakhs for the activity of which only 41.09 lakhs could be utilised by the state government. **An outstanding Rs. 59.21 lakhs still needs to be utilised by the state Government.** The Government of Tripura is requested to take urgent steps to utilise this amount also and distribute remaining soil health cards among the farmers of the state on an urgent basis.

Under the soil health management scheme, an amount of Rs. 78.80 was provided for the establishment, during last 2 years, of 1 mobile lab, 1 stationary lab and 5 soil portable testing units. Although the amount has been utilised by the State, the progress report on the establishment of these labs has not been submitted by the state government to the central government. During the year 2016-17 the state government was allocated a budget of Rs. 356.93 lakhs to establish 1 mobile lab, upgrade 2 stationary labs, establish 100 additional mini soil testing units and train 32 state govt. employees in these aspects, of which only Rs. 78.8 lakhs has been spent by the state. I again urge the state government to expedite the activity so that the farmers of the state are benefited from the activity.

Under the scheme **More Crop per Drop**, the Government had provided an amount of Rs. 2 crores to the State Govt. to create basic infrastructure for irrigation in 444 ha area. For this activity also, the state Government is yet to submit the progress report. Pending the receipt of the progress report and the utilisation certificate, it may not be possible to release further amount on the account to the state.

Under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (**PMKSY**), the state was provided an amount of Rs. 1.55, crores during 2015-16 also which are year to be spent by the state neither any intimation has been submitted to the Union Government in this regard. Due to the lack of application of the concerned state department, the benefit of such an important scheme is not reaching the farmers I would like to draw the attention of the Government on this vital aspect. As regards the Rajya Krishi Bazar (State Agriculture Market), also the state has to amend its Mandi Act appropriately.

Under Paramparagat Krishi Yojana (**PKY**), amounts worth Rs. 356.90 and Rs. 32.12 lakhs respectively were released to the state during 2015-16 and 2016-17 out of which the state is yet to spend an amount of Rs. 10-2.94 lakhs due to which the progress of the scheme is not as expected.

For the implementation of the E-NAM scheme, the state governments are required to make necessary amendments in their Mandi Acts and incorporate certain new provisions. These provisions include, electronic trading, unified levying of Mandi fee and issuing integrated licence to the traders. The Tripura Government has not made these amendments so far neither any proposal to link the state Mandis under E-NAM scheme has been received from the state government. Due to this reason, none of the Mandis from Tripura has so far been able to link with E-NAM.

Government of Tripura can join the E-NAM scheme by incorporating these amendments, which can work as catalysts in doubling the income of the farmers of the state.

Fisheries Development:

In Tripura, 18000 hectares inland area is covered under water, It has 1200 KM river and canal length, 5000 big ponds and 13000 hectares small ponds. As such, state has great scope of fish cultivation. Though, fish production in this state has grown at the rate of 26 % during year 2007-08 but, during last 2 year it has gone down to below 2 %. The national average of fish growth is around 6.2 %. Therefore, the state has to make serious efforts to increase the growth in fish production atleast upto national level.

Under various schemes of the Fisheries Department of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, the state of Tripura was provided Rs. 241.24 lakhs during 2013-14, Rs. 54.89 lakhs during 2014-15 and Rs. 361.16 lakhs during 2015-16 and again Rs. 867.88 lakhs during 2016-17. It is hoped that the Fisheries Development activities pick up the desired pace and the farmers of the state are benefitted adequately from the scheme.

Agriculture is the state subject. The commitments of the state government towards agriculture development is essential. Our combined efforts in this direction will help us to realise the **Lab-to-Land** initiative of our Hon'ble Prime Minister. Since Tripura is a predominantly forest driven economy, the cooperation of the forest ministry is also key in this regards.

- i) This state inhabits 266 species of medicinal plants, which needs to be exploited for their medicinal and economic benefits.
- ii) The productivity of the rice, wheat, maize, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, jute, oilseeds and potato is very good in the state of Tripura. Potential fruit species are mango, pear, orange and jackfruit, coconut etc.
- iii) There is huge potential for fisheries development in the state.
- iv) Livestock farming is an integral part of the agricultural economy of the region. Efforts are required to develop the indigenous animal resources for developing in to organic based production systems.
- v) Despite being large producer of Litchi, the benefits of Litchi farming do not reach Tripura farmers. The Litchi produced in Tripura goes to Bangladesh for processing and the juice is imported into the country, which needs urgent correction.

It is my firm belief that our KVKs will take more serious efforts to take the new agricultural technologies amongst the farmer's field, which will not only enable us to achieve the food and nutritional security of our people and double the incomes of our farmers in the targeted manner but also help the country in becoming a major exporter of the agricultural commodities. I would urge the KVKs to upload all the essential and required information on the KVK portal which could be used by the farmers to solve their problems and improve their incomes. Let's us work unitedly to make our country a prosperous nation together.

Jai Hind

VKS/UD

