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The Telangana government has decided to set up a special cell for turmeric farmers which would help in bringing qualitative changes for cultivating turmeric as a commercial crop. The state government decided on this initiative as the central government turned down its request for setting up a national turmeric board on the lines of Coffee Board or Rubber Board. The primary demand of turmeric farmers of Telangana for the past 30 years is to form separate national turmeric board for addressing various issues regarding the pre and post harvest practices of turmeric as a crop.

Primarily, the production of turmeric has been fluctuating since last decade where the production has come down to 3 lakh metric tonne from 7 lakh metric tonne. "This is primarily due to lack of proper research and no market intervention support from the consecutive governments. Turmeric is categorised as a commercial crop so there is no minimum support price that is another deterrent in discouraging farmers," said Kalvakuntla Kavita, MP, Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS). "After a separate board for both silk and rubber was formed, the cultivation practices worked out to be good, export also increased which gave a boost in terms of trade to the country. On similar lines, we requested for a separate National Turmeric Board for the farmers at the national level," she said.

There was a dire need to introduce Minimum Support Price for turmeric crop to alleviate the distress of farmers. A ban on import of turmeric and a minimum support price will help farmers get a better price for the produce, she added. India is the largest producer of turmeric and also the highest consumer. Out of the whole turmeric produce in the country, only 6% is exported because the facilities for creating special economic zones (SEZs) for promoting turmeric have not been created. “Another effort made by the state government is to give a better variety of turmeric. We are currently working on available breed of turmeric ACC78,48, PTS 10, sailum are the varieties now used in Telangana but the ones that are in demand are the sonalika variety which gives about 4.8% of levels of curcumin,” she added.

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