

FARMERS' CHARTER OF DEMANDS

Joint Charter of Samyukta Kisan Morcha and 14 All Farmers' and Agricultural Workers' Organisations of Karnataka

The farming community has been left in a state of despair and deep distress. Where agriculture has been battered and farmers are left as a deeply-worried lot, these elections are being held. We are putting forward the following demands before all the political parties in the election fray in the upcoming elections, especially the major parties like BJP, Congress and JD(S). Farmers' organisations are asking that these political parties address the following demands and solutions placed by farmers through steadfast commitment, by incorporating them in their Manifestos immediately and by specifying their stand on all of them through public statements and commitments.

15 Key Demands of the Farming Community

1. The anti-farmer laws enacted by the BJP government in 2019-2020, despite strong opposition from farmers, such as the Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, the APMC Amendment Act and the 'Prevention of Cattle Slaughter Act' should be repealed as soon as the new government is formed.
2. Electricity supply and services should not be privatised. The power subsidy given to the farmers should continue. Even if the central government brings in a law on privatisation of the sector, the state government should not implement it. In fact, the state should fight for its constitutional authority in this sphere for pro-farmer and pro-citizen policy making.
3. A new law to legally guarantee the realisation of remunerative prices by all farmers for all agricultural commodities should be enacted. The reports of KAPC under the Chairpersonship of Dr Prakash Kammardi should be debated with the farmers' organisations, revised as needed, approved and implemented.
4. Farmers should be adequately compensated for the various losses being suffered due to numerous disasters through effective disaster relief and crop insurance mechanisms set up by the government. A fund of at least Rs. 10,000 crores should be kept available at all times to deal with the farmers' crop losses from natural disasters.
5. The state government should enact an effective "Farmers' Freedom from Indebtedness Act", to ensure that the farmers and agricultural workers do not experience distress under the weight of debts and commit suicides due to agricultural losses. The government should also waive off all outstanding farm loans of farmers given that the government policies are the main reason for such losses incurred by farmers. Further, farmers who do not have land titles but are actual cultivators should also be entitled to avail the institutional agricultural loans.
6. Women farmers in all farm suicide families should be issued ID cards for proper rehabilitation of the families, and all outstanding debt should be waived off so that the families can start their lives afresh.
7. Bagair Hukum lands should be allotted to poor tillers with immediate effect. The plots of houses built by the poor on government lands should be allotted to them immediately. A policy should be declared and implemented for proper housing for every family. Housing should be the first priority for allotment of the government land. The high-level committee set up by the government in 2018 but made defunct by the BJP government, should be re-constituted and policy implemented.
8. Stop the arbitrary distribution of government lands to companies, politicians, powerful people, institutions and ashrams / religious entities of government's choice. The land being transferred from the forest department to revenue department should not be diverted to planters / plantation houses. It should be reserved and allotted to dependent families and landless households. The amendments brought in by the BJP government to the Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Act (LARR) 2013 should be scrapped. No land should be acquired against the wishes of farmers. Even if the government acquires land due to unavoidable reasons, the ownership of the farmers should not be cancelled and regular income should be made available to the farmer's family.
9. There should be proper implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006, in full letter and spirit. No forest dependent families should be evicted on any pretext which are, in fact, only anti-people schemes or reports or projects, or a result of lack of proper implementation of FRA 2006.
10. The NREGA scheme should be strengthened and implemented in full measure, in the most friendly and accessible manner possible for the workers in the scheme. A welfare board should be appointed for the development and social security of agricultural labourers.

11. Pending irrigation projects should be completed immediately and projects like Yettinahole, Mekedatu etc. should be implemented.
12. Karnataka government should stop promoting hazardous technologies in agriculture (toxic pesticides or Genetically Modified Organisms), to protect the health of eco systems, producers and consumers. Corporate takeover of seeds through GM technology should be stopped and farmers' seed sovereignty upheld.
13. Farming communities of Karnataka have been peace-loving, and take pride in the harmonious social fabric of the state, irrespective of caste, ethnicity and religion. One of the key demands of farmers is therefore against Hate Politics disrupting our society, and destroying our frail livelihoods.
14. Farmers also seek a corruption-free government, where governance related to agriculture is transparent and fair with the involvement of farmers in policy formulation and decision-making processes along with all regulations in favour of farmers to primarily protect the interests of farmers and not corporates.
15. On several matters pertaining to agriculture, farmers demand that the state government ensure its constitutional authority over the subject, and resist any takeover by the Union Government.

Immediate and Special Demand : The state government should immediately drop the anti-farmer measures of merging Nandini with Amul or allowing Amul to compete with Nandini in Karnataka. Nandini is a conglomeration of more than 15 thousand Milk producers' cooperatives involving more than 60 lakh farmers' families. Government should not venture to help the giant corporate company of Ambani.