

Campaign for adequate price of agriculture products

Rajasthan is primarily an agricultural state where 65% of the population is dependent on agriculture as the primary source of livelihood. Faced by drought every third year, the proportion of groundwater here is just one percent. Out of the 249 blocks in the state, only 40 are secure while the fall under the dark zone. In addition to the challenges of scanty and patchy rainfall, receding levels of groundwater and indiscriminate application of chemical fertilizers, farmers in Rajasthan have been constantly victimized by the existing patterns of market practices. The rising inflation accompanied by extremely low prices for food crops has mentally alienated farmers from agricultural activities. Where diesel costs have increased 13 times since 1989-90, food grains have barely been able to acquire even double of the previously existing prices. The potential shift from agriculture to other occupations due to its non-profitability might have severe repercussions in terms of food security of the country. Despite agriculture being the backbone of Indian economy, it is not a priority sector of the State and questions raised in the Assembly hardly cover agricultural concerns. Promotion of Multinational Seed Corporations and systemic alienation of farmers from the process of seed production has led to the State suffering from little or no seed sovereignty. The current practice of diverting agricultural land for industrialization has far reaching consequences for food security of the State.

With this background, the Kisan Seva Samiti Mahasangh organized a rally in Jaipur on February 3, 2012 to draw attention of the State on these issues.

Before that a series of meetings with small and marginal farmers, women and other stakeholders were organized over a period of two to three weeks in order to discuss, debate and deliberate on the current pattern of victimization of farmers on the part of the State. The issues that emerged from these discussions Minimum Support Price, Seed Production and Seed Sovereignty and Compensation package.

In each of the five blocks, i.e. Chaksu, Phagi, Newai, Malpura and Shahbad, memorandums were developed to draw attention of the State to these issues. Kisan Seva Samitis and Village Development Committees of these blocks conducted campaigns in each village to mobilize different stakeholders including small and marginal farmers and women.

Outcome

After organizing a big Dharana and rally on the issue of MSP state government took a positive decision of increasing Rs. 100 on the MSP of wheat and also declared to open more than 60 buying centers for Bazra.