



Parliamentary Standing Committee recommendations on MSP, debt waiver

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Context:

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing** tabled its report, which included several crucial recommendations aimed at improving the welfare of farmers in India. These recommendations were presented in the context of ongoing farmer protests over issues like **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, debt distress, and environmental concerns related to crop residue burning.

1. Legal Guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP):

- The committee has recommended the implementation of a **legally binding MSP**. This would provide farmers with a **stable income**, reduce market volatility, and alleviate **debt burdens**.
- A **legal guarantee** for MSP would stabilize the prices of foodgrains, ensuring that farmers can sell their produce at a price that covers their costs, thus contributing to **national food security** and promoting rural economic growth.
- The committee suggested that the **Ministry of Agriculture** should lay out a **roadmap for implementing MSP legally** and also table a report in Parliament detailing the number of farmers who sold their produce at MSP and the gap between MSP and actual market prices after each crop season.

1. Compensation for Stubble Disposal:

- To tackle the **environmental crisis** caused by the burning of paddy stubble, the committee recommended that farmers should be **compensated for managing and disposing of crop residue**. This measure aims to reduce the pollution caused during winter months, particularly around the National Capital Region (NCR).
- The **Punjab government** has proposed a bonus of **₹2,000 per acre** to farmers for stubble disposal, with the Centre being asked to share the cost.

1. Increasing Financial Support under PM-KISAN Scheme:

- The committee has proposed doubling the annual monetary support under the **PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi** from **₹6,000 to ₹12,000**. This is aimed at providing more financial relief to farmers, especially given the rising costs of living.
- Additionally, it recommended extending the benefits of this scheme to **tenant farmers** and **farm labourers**, who are often excluded from such assistance.

1. Debt Waiver for Farmers:

- To address the rising distress among farmers due to increasing debt, the committee recommended introducing a **debt waiver scheme**. This would help alleviate the financial pressures that lead to farmer suicides and reduce the growing number of rural families dependent on loans.
- According to the **NABARD Survey** on rural financial inclusion, the proportion of rural families taking loans has increased, highlighting the growing debt burden on agricultural households.

1. Increasing Budgetary Allocations:

- The committee called for **higher budgetary allocations** to support the implementation of these welfare measures, ensuring that adequate funds are available to improve farmers' conditions.

The report was tabled amidst ongoing **farmers' protests** at **Khanauri** and **Shambhu**, which border Punjab and Haryana, with **farmers' organizations** demanding a legal guarantee for MSP and other welfare measures. These recommendations, if implemented, are expected to play a key role in addressing the **economic struggles** faced by farmers and contribute to **long-term agricultural sustainability** in India.