Recommendations of NCF

Why in news?

\n\n

As India marks 50 years of green revolution, a look at the report of National Commission on Farmers becomes essential.

\n\n

What is NCF?

\n\n

\n
- The National Commission on Farmers was chaired by Prof. M. S. Swaminathan.
\n
- It submitted five reports through the period December 2004 - October 2006.
\n
- The report focused on causes of famer distresses and the rise in farmer suicides.
\n
- It proposed "faster and more inclusive growth" as the goal.
\n

\n\n

What are the major recommendations?

\n\n

\n
- **Land reforms** - Distribute ceiling-surplus and waste lands.
\n
- Prevent diversion of prime agricultural land and forest for non-agricultural purposes.
\n
- Grazing rights and seasonal access to forests to tribals and pastoralists, and access to common property resources.
\n
- National Land Use Advisory Service to link land use decisions with ecological, meteorological and marketing factors.

\n
- **Irrigation** - Increasing water supply through rainwater harvesting and making recharge of the aquifer mandatory.
\n
- "Million Wells Recharge" programme, specifically targeted at private wells should be launched.
\n
- Substantial increase in investment in the irrigation sector.
\n
- **Productivity** - the per unit area productivity of Indian agriculture is much lower than other major crop producing countries.
\n
- A national network of advanced soil testing laboratories with facilities for detection of micronutrient deficiencies is recommended.
\n
- Promotion of conservation farming to conserve and improve soil health, water quantity and quality, and biodiversity.
\n
- Increase in public investment in agriculture related infrastructure such as irrigation, drainage, land development, water conservation, research development, etc to ensure increased productivity.
\n
- **Credit and Insurance** - Expanding the outreach of the formal credit system and reducing the rate of interest for crop loans with government support.
\n
- Establishing an Agriculture Risk Fund to provide relief to farmers in the aftermath of successive natural calamities.
\n
- Cover all crops by crop insurance with the village and not block as the unit for assessment.
\n
- Developing an integrated credit-cum-crop-livestock-human health insurance package.
\n
- Creating a Rural Insurance Development Fund to take up development work for spreading rural insurance.
\n
- Institutional development services by strengthening producers' organisations such as self-help groups and water user associations can be taken up.
\n
- **Food Security** - the decline in per capita foodgrain availability and its unequal distribution have serious implications for food security in both rural and urban areas.
\n

- Eliminating micronutrient deficiency induced hidden hunger through an integrated food cum fortification approach.
\n
- Formulating a National Food Guarantee Act and continuing the useful features of the Food for Work and Employment Guarantee programmes.
\n
- **Farmers' Suicides** - State level Farmers' Commission with representation of farmers for ensuring dynamic government response to farmers' problems.
\n
- Low risk and low cost technologies to provide maximum income to farmers to cope with the shock of crop failure.
\n
- Price Stabilisation Fund in place to protect the farmers from price fluctuations.
\n
- Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) to serve as guidance centres on all aspects of agricultural and non-farm livelihoods.
\n
- Public awareness campaigns to make people identify early signs of suicidal behaviour.
\n
- **Agricultural competitiveness** - Promotion of commodity-based farmers' organisations such as Small Cotton Farmers' Estates.
\n
- This will combine decentralised production with centralised government services for leveraging institutional support and facilitating direct farmer-consumer linkage.
\n
- State Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee Acts [APMC Acts] should work for the development of domestic and international markets for local produce, and move towards a Single Indian Market.
\n
- **Employment** - Despite structural change in the workforce, agriculture still provides the bulk of employment in the rural areas of India.
\n
- Creating productive employment opportunities and improving the quality of employment in several sectors such that real wages rise through improved productivity.
\n
- The "net take home income" of farmers should be comparable to those of civil servants.
\n
- Emphasizing on relatively more labour intensive sectors.
\n

- Encouraging non-farm employment opportunities by developing particular sectors and sub-sectors.
  \n
- **Bioresources** - Rural people in India depend on a wide range of bioresources for their nutrition and livelihood security.
  \n
- Preserving traditional rights of access to biodiversity and encouraging community-based breed conservation.
  \n
- Finally, the NCF recommends that Agriculture which is under the State List be inserted in the Concurrent List of the Constitution.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: PRS India

\n

