

"the help in making  
the land more



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“ The main reason behind not switching over to diversification of crop is irregular payments to the farmers for the sugarcane crops. In case the government makes proper arrangements the marketing of products, there is no reason that the farmer may not shift to other crops which would rather help in making the land more fertile for the next crop”, expressed a progressive farmer Darshan Singh, member SGPC. When contacted, Gurdip Singh, former director of Markfed, repeated the same story of diversification.

He, however, added that the untimely rains in Punjab are likely to affect the standing crop and in case there are no sunny days to dry up the standing water in the fields, it has to be pumped out to save the crop. Giving the glaring example of non-shifting of the farmers to crop diversification, during the last year, a good number of farmers had taken the produce of chilies and because of no arrangements of its marketing by the government at the reasonable rates, the same were available for Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per kg. Whereas, during the current year, only few farmers had gone for produce of chilly and due to less production, it is now available at Rs. 35 per kg., he added.

As per the sources, in the three important departments concerning farmers welfare - soil-conservation, agriculture and horticulture - 1123 posts are lying vacant against the total sanctioned 1934 posts. In soil-conservation department 159 posts, in agriculture 866 and in horticulture 98 posts are vacant. In fact, none of the government has bothered about the filling up of vacant posts in these departments. A draught relief of Rs. 5, 113 crores has been demanded from the central government but to give a practical shape to the various suggestions, for sowing wheat and paddy, there are no employees.

In the absence of technical staff in the three departments, the farmers cannot be given the expert advice and motivated for diversification of crops, which could help to solve farmer's related problems. One can well understand the uncertain weather conditions and draught like situation but keeping the posts vacant in three important department, is not digestible and beyond farmer's understanding. The condition of farmer is deteriorating day by day but centre and state governments are in the race of making numbers for giving financial assistance in the draught like situation in Punjab . Punjab Government must take up the matter with the central government for the interests of farmers in Punjab and should not shirk its own duties because the filling up the posts in the departments especially Agriculture for taking care of the farmers, is the responsibility of the state government because the agriculture department is the back-bone of Punjab and the posts in this department should be filled-up on priority.

By Harish K. Monga