

KVKs and agricultural scientists have an important role to play in overseeing agricultural development in the country

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A three-day zonal workshop of the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh was organized from 29th - 31st July 2020. Addressing the plenary session of the workshop, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar said that agriculture and rural sectors have the inherent capabilities of lifting the country out of any crisis. Expressing satisfaction at the good harvest and kharif crop sowing operations despite the coronavirus pandemic, Shri Tomar said that in future also, rural India and the farming community will play a leading role in achieving Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's goal of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat. History is witness to the fact that the country's farmers and rural economy have never succumbed to any adversity. The slogan given by the Prime Minister "Vocal for Local" is also deeply connected with rural development.

The Union Agriculture Minister said that KVKs and agricultural scientists have an important role to play in overseeing agricultural development in the country. It is important that agricultural production increases and the youth are encouraged to take up agriculture as a means of livelihood. KVKs must guide the small and marginal farmers on agricultural practices that help them to get maximum profit even from small landholdings. ICAR and the KVKs should develop area-wise models of agricultural development that appeal to the farmers.

Stressing the importance of organic and natural farming, Shri Tomar said that these are essential not just for the health of humans and animals, but also for a healthy soil and clean environment, and to increase exports and make agriculture profitable. Maintaining soil health and dealing with climate change are important challenges before the scientists. Pointing out that there are large tribal populations in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh who are already practising natural farming without use of chemical fertilizers and

pesticides, the Minister exhorted the agricultural scientists to help them in improving this practice so that organic farming is promoted further and animal rearing is made profitable.

Shri Tomar said that the recently promulgated ordinances help to promote cluster farming and facilitate the farmers in selling their produce anywhere at remunerative prices. Laying emphasis on private investment for agricultural and rural development, he said the government has also announced the Rs. One lakh crore Agri Infrastructure Fund which will help in achieving the target of a self-reliant India. Guidelines have been issued for formation of 10000 Farmer Producer Organizations, who will be given handholding by the Government from sowing to selling of crops. Efforts should be made to bring maximum number of small farmers under this scheme.

Director General, ICAR, Dr Trilochan Mahapatra, Deputy Director General, Agriculture Extension, Dr A.K.Singh, Zonal Incharge ADG (Ag. Extn.), ICAR, Dr. V. P. Chahal, Vice Chancellors of SAUs, Directors of ICAR Institutes, awarded farmers, Farm Innovators, Agri-preneurs, KVK Heads in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh participated in the workshop through video-conferencing.

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