



Speech of
Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh
Sri Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
at
The programme to launch the Book on 'Crop
Holiday' by Dr. Yalamanchili Sivaji on 11th
Novembef, 2019

Guest on dais, Ladies and Gentlemen. ANDARIKI NAMASKARAM.

I am happy to be here amongst you all on the occasion of the programme to launch the book on 'Crop Holiday', a compilation of essays written by Dr. Yalamanchili Sivaji.

Here, I would like to say a few words about Dr. Sivaji. Dr. Sivaji had been a Member of the Rajya Sabha from 1988 to 1994. Even though Dr. Sivaji did his graduation in medicine, he went on to study Economics at the prestigious London School of Economics in UK. So, I consider Dr. Sivaji as a doctor by education but an Economist at heart. Dr. Sivaji has penned many books on the economy and his present book on 'Crop Holiday', I think is also a part of his endeavour in that direction. I also feel that agrarian economy and agrarian crisis seems to be the subjects close to his heart.

Apart from being a writer, Dr. Sivaji has also been a political activist and has many firsts to his credit. Apart from popularising the concept of 'Crop Holiday, he persuaded the then Union Finance Minister Choudhary Charan Singh in 1978, to abolish excise duty on tobacco crop. When the cotton prices fell in the domestic market, he led a movement of the farmers and brought pressure on the government to allow export of cotton. He was also instrumental in persuading the Central govt to waive farm loans benefiting lakhs of small farmers.

Coming to the book on 'Crop Holiday', the book highlights the factors that led to the historic decision of the farmers of Andhra Pradesh in the year 2000, to declare a crop holiday, which no doubt is a milestone in the farmers movements in the country. This decision of crop holiday by farmers resulted in two-fold effect. One is that it was a wake up call to the policy makers that they cannot remain indifferent to the agrarian crisis and farmers distress and the other one is that farmers themselves realised

the power of their unity and how they could come together as a group and bargain for better price for their commodity.

This movement has also led to governments coming forward and taking necessary corrective measures to declare market support price (MSP) for various agriculture crops from time to time and also setting up of market stabilisation funds.

India ranks second in overall agrarian production next only to China. Farming sector is of great importance to our country's economy and poor performance in agriculture can lead to instability in economic development. Farmers distress and unrest could impact the well being of the people of the country.

In spite of the steps taken from time to time to make farming profitable and save farmers from undue economic distress, the agrarian crisis continuing leading to widespread occurrence of farmer suicides.

It is pertinent to mention here the recommendations made in the Draft National Policy by the National Commission on Farmers, headed by Dr. Swaminathan, that government should take steps:

- to improve the economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of farmers, and to ensure that agricultural progress is measured by advances made in their income;
- to provide opportunities in adequate measure for non-farm employment for farm households;
- to introduce measures which can help to attract and retain youth in farming.

If implemented, these measures can go a long way in ensuring income security to farmers.

With the crop insurance schemes implemented by the government, farmers are insulated from financial distress due to crop losses.

Agriculture sector is the major livelihood industry in our country and it is our duty to safeguard the interests of small farmers.

As the well known saying goes - "If agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right in the country."

Jai Hind