

Budget 2021: Govt committed to farmers' welfare, MSP system strengthened, says Sitharaman

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NEW DELHI: Asserting that the government is committed to farmers' welfare, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the MSP regime has undergone a "sea change" to assure price at least 1.5 times of production cost.

Presenting the Union Budget in Lok Sabha, Sitharaman pointed out that agricultural procurement has increased steadily and resulted in a substantial increase in payment to farmers.

Even as the opposition continued to raise slogans against the new farm laws, Sitharaman reiterated the Modi government vision of doubling farmers' income.

The government's achievements in the agriculture sector has witnessed a jump in the procurement of crops like paddy, wheat, pulses and cotton in the last six years, she said. Sharing the procurement data and amount paid to farmers under MSP operation, Sitharaman said: "In case of wheat, the total amount paid to farmers in 2013-14 was Rs 33,874 crore. In 2019-20, it was Rs 62,802 crore."

In 2020-21, she said the amount paid to farmers is over Rs 75,000 crore.

"The number of wheat growing farmers that were benefited increased in 2020-21 to 43.36 lakh compared to 35.57 lakh in 2019-20. That much of an increase within one year," the finance minister said.

For paddy, Sitharaman said the amount paid in 2013-14 was Rs 63,928 crore. In 2019-20, this increased to Rs 1,41,930 crore. Even better in 2020-21, the minister said this is further estimated to increase to Rs 1,72,752 crore.

Number of paddy farmers benefitted increased from 1.2 crore in 2019-20 to 1.54 crore in 2020-21.

In pulses, Sitharaman said Rs 236 crore was paid to farmers in 2013-14. "In 2019-20, this was increased to Rs 8,285 crore. Now in 2020-21, it is at Rs 10,530 crore, more than 40 times increase from 2013-14."

Similarly, Rs 90 crore was paid in 2013-14 to cotton farmers while Rs 25,974 crore has been paid in 2020-21 as of January 27.

Sitharaman also announced that a portion of the agricultural fund will be allocated to APMC for furthering their infrastructure.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/union-budget-govt-committed-to-farmers-welfare-msp-system-strengthened-says-sitharaman/articleshow/80627498.cms>