



Ms. Shobha Karandlaje, Member of Parliament

“Centre is ready to help. State government must be willing to cooperate!”

Ms. Shobha Karandlaje is a politician from Karnataka and is currently a member of the Lok Sabha representing the Udupi-Chickmagalur constituency. She was earlier a cabinet minister in the Government of Karnataka.

What are the main problems in Karnataka agriculture today?

Main problem we are facing in agriculture is water. We need proper water management. Karnataka is blessed with many rivers, from Bhima to Kaveri. In between Tungabhadra and Sharavati we have many rivers but there is no proper use of the available water in these rivers. First concern is to use that water optimally. Secondly the available water has to be used to irrigate all the farmland by using the proper channels.

Another problem is power. Many of our districts are suffering by drought. In drought prone area, we are not providing proper electricity. There is scarcity of drinking water, paucity of fodder. It is difficult to lift water from bore wells. Bore wells are not recharging. We don't have that capacity. Third problem faced is providing farmers with good seeds and fertilizers. Sometimes fake thing are sourced due to which farmers suffer.

Finally, we don't have cold storages to export our farm produces. In Kolar, farmers will produce tomatoes and throw it in the street because they don't have facility to store the produce. We don't have proper planning for crop cultivation. The farm produce can't be retained for a long time. As time passes it perishes and has to be thrown away. All these aspects need to be planned namely irrigation, electricity, utilizing rain water, rain water harvesting and also the production. Karnataka also has many tanks, but we are neither (de) silting our tanks nor the dams. The dams are fully silted hence water will not stay. We could also not use the Alamatti Narayanpura dam fully because of prevailing water dispute. We are not even using the allocated water properly.

This is why our farmers are really suffering. Government must plan for the proper channels. Congress has said “Congress in nadige Krishneya kadege” – we are walking to Krishna to give water for that area. But in last two years they have failed in that. They are not allocating fund for the same and even work has not started. These are the problems faced by the farmers.

What were your main big achievements when you were Rural development and Panchayat Raj minister in Karnataka?

First I had transparency in the department. I appointed PDOs because our Gram Panchayat Secretaries were not educated. Attenders, watermen were promoted as secretaries. In reservation category people became president of the Gram Panchayat. They too were not educated hence could not see the files and process related things. That is

why I thought if Gram Panchayati President and Secretary both are of same cadre it will be really difficult to manage. Therefore in each Panchayat, a Panchayat Development Officer was appointed who was a degree holder. That I did. I cancelled piece work in Gram Panchayat because if a Gram Panchayat gets Rs. 5 Lakhs and there are twenty members they used to share the money amongst them. Money could not be used and gets wasted. That is why I cancelled 'Piece Tender'.

I planned Swarna Grama for rural development that means for each Panchayat we used to give Rs. 1-2 crores depending on its population. Concrete roads were made in all the areas along with good drainage. I also made one Samudaya Bhavan like committee hall. During my tenure we developed 5,000 villages in Karnataka.

We planned for rural roads, rural drainages and proper drinking water in villages.

Do you think the present government is continuing the work you started?

They are not continuing Suvarna Gramas. They are not giving money. They are not continuing the Suvarna Bhumi Yojana.

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