



## Shri K. S. Eshwarappa, Former Deputy Chief Minister, Karnataka

**For Karnataka agriculture – one problem is nature, another problem is government**

### What are the main problems in Karnataka agriculture today?

When there is no proper rainfall many crops fail in Karnataka. When the crops fail the state government should take immediate action to safeguard the farmers interests. But this is not happening. At present the central government has increased crop insurance from Rs 9,000 per hectare under the UPA government to Rs 13,500 per hectare under the BJP government. From state government we demanded crop insurance of Rs 25,000 per hectare. But the state government has given farmers only Rs 11,500 per hectare from their side – and including the insurance amount from the central government Rs 13,500 per hectare – our farmers have received crop insurance of only Rs 25,000 per hectare. Even this amount has not been properly distributed.

This is why our farmers face a lot of financial burden in agriculture. They are unable to lead a normal life. When it becomes very hard for them they resort to suicide. This is the problem now. The state government has not given any hope to the farmers – they must at least say – we are here to help you, do not worry, we will help your family etc. But this government is not communicating with the farmers. Nobody has gone to the farmers homes. They are nearly 450 farmers in Karnataka who have committed suicide but the state government has given only 80 of these families the insurance money. That is why farmers are unhappy all over Karnataka now.

### What are your views about sugar cane farmers payment dues?

The state government announced the rate of Rs 2,650 per tonne but they are unable to give that price. The farmers have started to agitate and we also raised this issue in the house – Vidhan Soudha and Vidhan Parishad – and also outside. Till date the sugar cane farmers have not been given the full amount of Rs 2,650 per tonne. This is the reason why farmers are suffering with sugar cane crop in a major way.

### Are sugar cane payment dues the government's problem or the sugar mill's problem?

The state government initially announced we will give the price. Then the government said we will collect the amount from the sugar factories. But the sugar factories are not ready to give the amount. The government then said we will seize the sugar factory, we will sell the sugar in the market and give the amount to the farmers. These are all only announcements from the government. They are still no activities. This is why our sugar cane farmers are suffering.

### There is this perception that BJP is still urban party and not a pro-rural or pro-farmer party. What are your thoughts on this?

No, this perception is wrong. Throughout the state in rural assembly constituencies we have won a major share of the vote and seats in the elections. It is not just in Bangalore, Hubli-Dharwad, Mangalore, Belgaum we are winning elections. The same time we win the rural constituencies also. They are saying we are a pro-city party etc. Congress and opposition parties are saying like this. There is no question of urban or rural. In both places BJP already has got the organisation structure in place.

### If BJP forms the next state government in Karnataka how will the farmers benefit?

When our government ruled Karnataka earlier we concentrated on farmers problems. We announced an 'agriculture budget'. Throughout the nation it was only the BJP government in Karnataka that announced an agriculture specific budget. When farmers faced problems we waived loans up to Rs 25,000 and we waived the complete interest. We extended various facilities for the farmers. In Karnataka the farmers think BJP is only the farmers party. We understand the problems of farmers. In the future we will solve the problems of farmers.

To know more about Shri K. S. Eshwarappa please visit:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K.\\_S.\\_Eshwarappa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._S._Eshwarappa)

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