

Agriculture sector not part of the growth story

Advance Estimates pegs a decline of 4.5% in agri and allied sectors in 2015-16

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After presenting the budget in the Assembly, Telangana Finance Minister Eatala Rajender proudly says that the per capita income of Telangana is 50 per cent more than the national average of ₹93,231 as the State's economy grew by 11.7 per cent in 2015-16.

Primary sector in crisis

But the reality is somewhat different. The primary sector, which supports 60 per cent of the population, is in a serious

crisis. They are not part of the growth story. Figures shown in the Economic Survey titled Re-inventing Telangana – The Way Forward presents a stark reality in the rural sector gives a peek view into the crisis.

Serious problem

Advance Estimates pegs a decline of 4.5 per cent in the agri and allied sectors in 2015-16, while the growth of secondary sector is estimated to be at 8.6 per cent as against 3.8 per cent in the previous year.

That about 60 per cent of the

workforce in seven out of the 10 districts depend on agriculture for livelihood shows the enormity of the problem. If the primary sector shows a decline, it will lose its ability to support the people depended on it.

No relief to farmers

Though the government proposes to invest ₹26,000 crore on the irrigation sector, which will help build irrigation sources, there's no major push in the budget to provide immediate relief and provide succour to the farmers.

"Within the primary sector, agricultural crops were adversely affected due to the drought and is estimated to record a

negative growth (read decline) of 13.3 per cent at current prices. There was a decline in the area under foodgrains from 26 lakh hectares to 20.50 lakh hectares," the survey said.

Rabi, kharif failure

As a result, the foodgrains production fell by a third from 72 lakh tonnes in 2014-15 to 49 lakh tonnes in 2015-16.

If the kharif season was a failure, the rabi was a complete disaster, with only half of the 10 lakh hectares was cultivated.

The deceleration in the primary sector had led to about 1,300 suicides in 2015, though the government played down the number.