

# Seeds for transformation sown, says Green Revolution architect

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**CHENNAI:** The renewed focus on agriculture in the budget presented by Union finance minister Arun Jaitley came in for praise from renowned agronomist Professor MS Swaminathan who expressed happiness over Jaitley's announcement to give income orientation to farming.

After the slowdown in agriculture assumed alarming proportions, the emphasis on income generation of the farming community is highly commendable, said the father of the Green Revolution.

The National Commission on Farmers (NCF), which he had headed, had recommended agriculture should be measured by the growth in real income of farmers and not just by gross production of commodities.

Swaminathan gave a five-point formula to achieve the objective set out by the finance minister:

➤ The budget has tried to be as pro-farmer as possible subject to the limitation of resources. Seeds have been sown for agricultural transformation and for attracting and retaining youth in farming.

PROF MS SWAMINATHAN,  
renowned agronomist

“To achieve income enhancement, we need, in my view, at least five major steps. First, higher productivity of small farms leading to larger marketable surplus; second, knowledge, skill, credit and land ownership empowerment of women farmers who carry out over 60% farm work; third, substitution of low-value crops with high-value ones such as fruits, vegetables and flowers

as well as animal products; four, promotion of biomass utilisation so that every part of the plant is utilised to prepare value-added products through initiatives such as Rice BioPark and finally, the procurement prices should be based on the NCF proposal namely, C2 plus 50%,” he said in a detailed reaction to the budget proposals related to agriculture and farming sector.

Points that give top credits to the finance minister, he said, included creation of a long-term irrigation fund in Nabard, 100% FDI in marketing food products made in India, import of 10 million tonnes of pulses, re-orientation of MNREGA to issues such as soil conservation, watershed management and groundwater harvesting.

On the whole, said Prof Swaminathan, “The budget has tried to be as pro-farmer as possible subject to the limitation of resources. Seeds have been sown for agricultural transformation and for attracting and retaining youth in farming.”