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Government of Bihar
Department of Disaster Management Department

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**Bihar Scheme for Assistance to Farmers in Farm
Distress
Notification**

Over 80 percent of Bihar population lives in the rural areas and most of them are dependant for their livelihood on agriculture. The number of cultivators in Bihar owning small and marginal landholdings outweighs the number of big farmers but the landholding ownership is skewed towards big farmers. Since very few big farmers directly cultivate their own land, they rent out their farms to the small and marginal farmers or to the sharecroppers for actual cultivation. This phenomenon presents a diverse agricultural situation where small and marginal farmers as well as sharecroppers though not holding much land bear the consequences of farm distress. The farm distress in Bihar occurs mostly due to crop failures on account of natural disasters and manmade disasters, lack of credit, no institutional credit support to the sharecropper or farmer tilling the land taken on rent, increased input costs, adverse market conditions for farm produce and inequitable agrarian relations etc. In several States in India farm distress has caused large scale farmer suicide, but such tragic incidents so far had not taken place in Bihar. However, one instance of farmer suicide arising out of farm distress has been brought to the notice of the State Government recently.

The issue of farm distress and its likely consequences require proactive solutions. The State Government, therefore, considers it expedient to take preventive measures to address the factors causing farm distress and provide ex gratia and extend other benefits to the family of the farmers committing suicide. In the opinion of the State Government the family members of farmers committing suicide should be covered under safety net and being vulnerable have entitlement to the State's resources.

Hence, a scheme titled "Bihar Scheme for Assistance to Farmers in Farm Distress, 2015" is formulated here as under to provide assistance to such families and take measures to prevent farm distress:

"Bihar Scheme for Assistance to Farmers in Farm Distress, 2015"

1. Extent and Commencement of the Scheme

This scheme shall extend to the whole of rural areas in the State of Bihar and also applicable in case of agricultural activities undertaken in the near vicinity of urban areas. The scheme shall be effective from First April, 2015.

2. Definition:

In this scheme, unless the context otherwise implies,

- (i) **“Additional Collector”** shall mean the officer as such designated by the State Government to discharge the functions of Additional Collector in a district.
- (ii) **“Agriculture Production Commissioner”** shall mean the officer as such designated by the State Government.
- (iii) **“Anchal Adhikari”** shall mean the officer designated as such by the State Government.
- (iv) **“Block Development Officer”** shall mean the officer as such designated by the State Government.
- (v) **“Civil Surgeon-cum-Chief Medical Officer”** shall mean the officer designated as such by the State Government.
- (vi) **“Disaster Management Department”** shall mean the Disaster Management Department of the State Government.
- (vii) **“Department of Agriculture”** shall mean the officer designated as such by the State Government.
- (viii) **“Department of Animal and Fisheries Resources”** shall mean the Department of Animal and Fisheries Resources of the State Government.
- (ix) **“Department of Cooperation”** shall mean the Department of Cooperation of the State Government.
- (x) **“Department of Revenue and Land Reforms”** shall mean the Department of Revenue and Land Reforms of the State Government.
- (xi) **“District Magistrate”** shall mean the District Magistrate and Collector of a district.
- (xii) **“District Agriculture Officer”** shall mean the District Agriculture Officer of the district concerned.
- (xiii) **“Farmer”** shall mean a cultivator who works on his own farm land or on the farm land taken on rent or a sharecropper, and shall include every member of the family of such cultivator or the sharecropper who works with him on such farm lands.
- (xiv) **“Farm Distress”** shall mean loss or failure of crop due to natural or man-made disasters, indebtedness of the farmer directly connected to his agricultural activities, loss of productivity of the farm produce due to increased input costs or adverse market conditions affecting sale of farm produce of the farmers or conditions of distress arising out of inequitable agrarian relationships. This list is, however, illustrative and not exhaustive.
- (xv) **“Mukhiya”** shall mean the person working as mukhiya of a gram panchayat under the Bihar Panchayati Raj Act.
- (xvi) **“Superintendent of Police”** shall mean the Superintendent of Police of the district.
- (xvii) **“State Government”** shall mean the Government of Bihar.

Policy to pay Ex-Gratia and other benefits to the family of farmer committing suicide due to farm distress

3. The next-of-kin of a farmer committing suicide due to farm distress shall be entitled to receive an ex-gratia and other benefits as provided under the Scheme.
4. It shall be the duty of the Mukhiya, Sarpanch and ward members of the local Gram Panchayat to report any such case of farmer suicide occurring within the territorial

jurisdiction of the concerned Gram Panchayat due to farm distress promptly and without delay to the local police station, Anchal Adhikari and Block Development Officer.

5. The concerned Anchal Adhikari and Block Development Officer along with the Officer-in-Charge of the local police station shall visit the family of such farmer immediately upon receipt of information from Mukhiya, Sarpanch, ward members of the concerned Gram Panchayat or from any other source and enquire whether such suicide has been committed due to farm distress and if so, what has been the specific nature of the farm distress.
6. If the farmer suicide has occurred due to farm distress, the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police shall be informed promptly by the Anchal Adhikari, Block Development Officer and Officer jointly followed by the joint formal enquiry report. This information shall also be sent to the concerned Sub divisional Officer and the Sub Divisional Police Officer.
7. Upon receipt of such information formally or otherwise, the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police shall immediately visit the family of the farmer committing suicide and enquire about the causes of such death. If such death has occurred due to farm distress, the State Government shall be informed accordingly.
8. The District Magistrate, if he thinks desirable, shall cause an in-depth enquiry made about the facets of the farm distress causing such death.
9. A standing committee headed by District Magistrate to consider all cases of the farmer suicide due to farm distress promptly shall stand constituted in all districts of Bihar under these Rules. Superintendent of Police, Civil Surgeon-cum-Chief Medical Officer, District Agriculture Officer and Additional Collector shall be the members of the standing Committee and Additional District Magistrate dealing with Disaster Management shall be the Member-Secretary.
10. If the standing committee after due consideration of the reports received or visits made by the senior officers is satisfied that the farmer suicide has occurred due to farm distress, following benefits shall be extended to the next-of-kin of the deceased by the District Magistrate:
 - (i) To mitigate the sense of economic insecurity and tide over the immediate financial distress, monetary assistance under the extant provisions of "Family Benefit Scheme" of the State Government shall be promptly extended.
 - (ii) The widow of the deceased farmer shall be sanctioned pension under the extant provisions of widow pension scheme of the State Government.
 - (iii) An ex-gratia of Rs 4 (lakh) shall be deposited in the name of the next-of-kin to create a fund with a Nationalized Bank under a scheme which should provide monthly interest to the account holder as a financial relief.
 - (iv) Loan settlement upto a ceiling of Rs one lakh as one time settlement to the creditors.

11. The amount of ex-gratia and loan settlement shall be allotted to the concerned District Magistrate from the budgetary allocation of the Disaster Management Department.
12. The amount of ex-gratia shall be deposited with that Nationalized Bank which provides best deal to the next-of-kin of the deceased farmer.
13. The standing committee shall examine the documents and other evidence to determine the amount of loan settlement and come to a definitive conclusion before the loan is settled with the creditors. The mortgage deeds, if any, executed by the deceased with the creditors shall be returned forthwith to the next-of-kin by him and a deed of redemption shall be executed by him before the loan settlement.
14. The benefits under these Rules, if applicable, shall be extended to the distressed family within a period of one month from the date of receipt of the information of the suicide.

Policy of Rehabilitation of the farm distressed families

15. The standing committee in general and the District Magistrate in particular shall ensure that the officials of Revenue and Land Reforms Department as well as Agriculture Department work with the distressed families for at least one year or as long as it would be necessary to bring the families out of distress. The officials would assist the families in accessing agriculture credit, crop insurance benefits, agriculture technology, input use, diversification of agriculture, procurement of produce facilities etc. and address land issues affecting them.
16. The standing committee in general and the District Magistrate in particular shall ensure that the distressed families are covered under various development programs of agriculture and allied departments including Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM), etc.

Measures to Prevent Farm Distress

17. The platform of State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) and District Level Bankers Committee (DLBC) shall be used to vigorously pursue the promotion, extension and monitoring of institutional credit to the farmers in accordance with district credit plan and also for making such credit accessible to every eligible farmer.
18. The Agriculture Department shall ensure that benefits under Krishi Road Map of the State Government and other State and Central Government schemes related to agriculture are implemented in a focused manner in such areas which are vulnerable to farm distress on account of agro climatic and other socio-economic factors.
19. At the State level a High Level Standing Committee to suggest measures to the Government and concerned Departments to prevent farm distress and monitoring of its implementation shall be constituted under Agriculture Production Commissioner. The Secretary/ Principal Secretary of the Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Resources, Cooperation, Environment

and Forest and Revenue and Land Reforms shall be the members of this committee. Director of Agriculture shall be the convener of the committee.

Interpretation and Removal of difficulties

20. If any difficulty arises in the interpretation of any of the provisions or implementation of this Scheme, the Disaster Management Department shall be competent to interpret it and issue directions for its implementation. The decision of this department in all such matters shall be final and binding.

By the Orders of the Governor of Bihar


(Vyas Ji)

**Principal Secretary
Department of Disaster Management**