



## Doubling Farmers Income Policy Challenges and Economic Strategies

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### INTRODUCTION

Imagine a farmer who works day and night preparing the land, sowing seeds, watering crops, and protecting them from pests and weather. After months of hard work, he finally harvests the crop. But when he sells it, the income is often not enough to support his family comfortably. This is the reality for millions of farmers in India. Recognizing this challenge, the Government of India announced an ambitious goal in 2016 to double farmers' income. This goal was not just about increasing production, but about improving farmers' overall earnings and quality of life. Doubling farmers' income means ensuring that farming becomes profitable, sustainable, and attractive, especially for the younger generation.

### What Does Doubling Farmers' Income Really Mean?

Many people believe that doubling farmers' income simply means doubling crop production, but this is not entirely correct. Farmers' income depends on several important factors such as crop yield, the price they receive for their produce, the cost of cultivation, and their access to markets where they can sell at better rates. In addition, income from allied activities like dairy, poultry, fisheries, and horticulture also contributes significantly to total farm income. Therefore, farmers' income can be increased not only by increasing production but also by getting better prices, reducing input costs, and adding new income sources through diversification. In this way, income growth is the result of a combination of multiple economic strategies rather than just higher production alone.

## Why Doubling Farmers' Income Is Necessary

### 1. Low Income of Farmers

Many farmers earn less compared to other professions. Rising costs of fertilizers, seeds, labour, and machinery reduce profit.

### 2. Rising Cost of Living

Farmers need better income to provide quality education, proper healthcare, and good housing for their families. It also ensures social security and financial stability, helping them live a safe, healthy, and dignified life.



### 3. Youth Leaving Agriculture

Young people are leaving farming due to low profit. Increasing income can attract youth back to agriculture.

### 4. Food Security

Farmers' prosperity ensures national food security.

### Major Policy Initiatives for Doubling Farmers' Income

The government introduced several schemes.

#### 1. PM-Kisan Scheme

Farmers receive financial support directly into their bank accounts through government schemes. This direct transfer provides timely income support, helps meet cultivation expenses, and reduces financial stress.

#### 2. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

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#### 3. Soil Health Card Scheme

The Soil Health Card Scheme provides farmers with detailed information about the nutrient status of their soil.

**Benefit:** It helps farmers use the right fertilizers in the correct amount, improving fertilizer efficiency and crop productivity.

### 4. Promotion of Irrigation

Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana promote efficient irrigation methods such as drip and sprinkler systems.

**Benefit:** It ensures proper water supply to crops, improves water use efficiency, and increases crop productivity.

### 5. Promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) encourage farmers to work together in groups for production and marketing.

**Benefit:** It gives farmers better bargaining power, helping them get higher prices and reduce marketing costs.

### Policy Challenges in Doubling Farmers' Income

Despite many efforts, several challenges remain.

#### 1. Small and Fragmented Land Holdings

Most Indian farmers have small and fragmented land holdings, which create several challenges. These include low production, limited income, and difficulty in using modern machines. Due to small farm size, mechanization becomes costly and inefficient, and farmers cannot fully benefit from advanced technologies. As a result, their productivity and overall income remain low.



## 2. Rising Cost of Cultivation

Input costs for farming are steadily rising, including essential expenses such as seeds, fertilizers, labour, and fuel. These increasing costs directly reduce farmers' profits. As a result, even if crop production improves, the overall income of farmers may not necessarily increase, because higher expenses can offset the gains from higher yields.

## 3. Price Fluctuation

Market prices for crops often fluctuate, and farmers sometimes have to sell their produce at very low prices. Such price volatility directly reduces their income, making it difficult to achieve stable and sustainable earnings.

## 4. Poor Market Access

Farmers often sell their produce through middlemen, which means they receive lower prices for their crops. Meanwhile, the middlemen capture a larger share of the profit, leaving farmers with reduced earnings despite their hard work.

## 5. Climate Change

Climate change leads to extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and heat stress, which negatively affect crop production. These disruptions reduce yields and, consequently, farmers' income, making agriculture more unpredictable and risky.

## 6. Lack of Storage Facilities

Farmers sell immediately after harvest due to lack of storage. Prices are lowest at that time. Storage can help farmers sell later at higher prices.

## 7. Lack of Value Addition

Farmers often sell their produce in raw form, but processed products usually have a much higher market value. For example, tomatoes sold as fresh vegetables earn less compared to tomatoes processed into tomato sauce. By adding value through processing, farmers can significantly increase their income.

## Economic Strategies to Double Farmers' Income

There are many effective economic strategies.

### 1. Crop Diversification

Farmers should focus on cultivating high-value crops such as fruits, vegetables, flowers, and spices, as these crops generally offer higher market prices. Growing such crops can substantially increase their income compared to traditional low-value crops.

### 2. Allied Activities

Farmers can diversify their activities by adopting allied enterprises such as dairy farming, poultry farming, goat rearing, and fish farming. These activities provide additional sources of income, supplementing earnings from crop cultivation and improving overall financial stability.

### 3. Reducing Cost of Production

Farmers can reduce their cultivation costs by using techniques such as drip irrigation, organic farming, and integrated nutrient management. These practices lower input expenses, improve resource efficiency, and ultimately increase overall profit.

### 4. Value Addition

Farmers can increase their earnings by producing processed products such as pickles, juice, and

jam. These value-added products fetch higher market prices compared to raw produce, thereby enhancing farmers' income.

### 5. Direct Marketing

Farmers can boost their income by selling their produce directly to consumers through channels like farmers' markets or online platforms. Direct selling helps them obtain better prices by reducing the share taken by intermediaries.

### 6. Use of Technology

Technology can help farmers increase production, reduce costs, and improve the quality of their crops. Tools such as mobile apps, smart irrigation systems, and precision farming

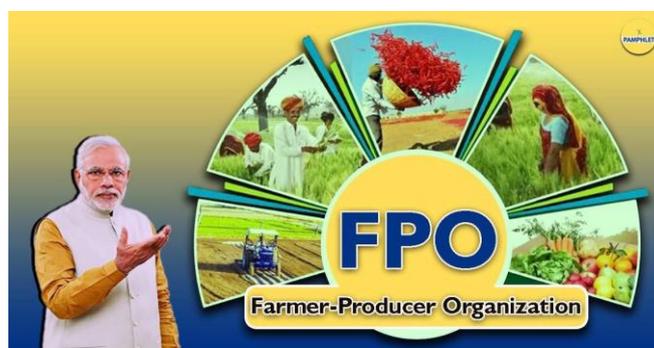
techniques enable more efficient and productive farming practices.

### 7. Protected Cultivation

Polyhouse farming enables higher crop yields and better-quality produce. As a result, farmers' income increases significantly compared to traditional open-field cultivation.

### 8. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) help farmers by enabling them to sell collectively, secure better prices, and reduce production costs. This collective approach ultimately leads to an increase in their income.



### Role of Government and Policy Makers

Government must focus on:

- Better market access
- Infrastructure development
- Storage facilities
- Training programs
- Credit support

These improve farmers' income.

### Role of Private Sector

Private companies can help in:

- Contract farming
- Food processing
- Export

This increases income.

### Role of Young Farmers

Young farmers can adopt:

- Modern farming
- Technology
- Entrepreneurship

They can increase income significantly.

### Real-Life Example

Many farmers are increasing income by:

- Growing exotic vegetables
- Adopting dairy farming

- Selling directly
- They are earning lakhs per year.  
This shows doubling income is possible.

### Future Outlook

Doubling farmers' income is challenging but achievable.

It requires:

- Policy support
- Technology adoption
- Market reform
- Farmer awareness

Agriculture can become profitable.

### CONCLUSION

Farmers are the backbone of the nation, and doubling their income is not merely an economic objective but also a vital social and national goal. Achieving this will ensure farmer prosperity, promote rural development, strengthen food security, and contribute to overall national growth. With effective policies and well-planned economic strategies, farmers' income can increase significantly, making the dream of prosperous farmers a tangible reality.