

Climate change may lead to sharp decline in agricultural production

'Yield Could Decline By As Much As 25%'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Aurangabad: Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Agricul-

tural University vice-chancellor **B Venkateswarlu** on Tuesday said that India could

witness a considerable dip in agricultural production for a longer period due to the impact of climate change.

Quoting official data, he said that the agricultural yield could decline by as much as 25% due to ill effects of climate change.

Because agriculture makes up roughly 15% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), nearly 4.5% to 9% loss of production could translate into loss of approximately 1.5 GDP per year, the VC said while addressing the media here on Tuesday.

Venkateswarlu, who has taken an initiative to orga-

nise an international conference on the theme of climate change here from Thursday, said the unprecedented changes in weather condition could impact wheat production in the country.

For every degree of increase in temperature during the season, the production of wheat in the country may reduce by 4 million tonne to 5 million tonne. Also, rain-fed rice yields in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and eastern Madhya Pradesh are likely to decrease due to rise in temperatures during Kharif season, the VC said.

Venkateswarlu, who had served with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for over 35 years in different capacities before joining Parbhani-based state agricultural university, also said that total rainfall may increase slightly but the number of rainy days were projected to decrease, causing heavy rainfall on a few days and long-dry spells.

Besides the direct effects on crops, climate change impacts natural resources like soil and water. Increased rainfall activity causes more soil erosion, leading to land degradation. Increased temperature will also increase crop water requirement. The irrigation requirement in arid and semi-arid re-

gions is estimated to increase by 10% with every 1 degree Celsius rise in temperature, he said.

Venkateswarlu said that the three-day conference aims to address the urgent need to evolve climate resilient technologies.

Titled "Global Climate Change: Implications for Agriculture and Water Sectors" --- the conference will be attended by scientists and scholars from India as well as international experts from the US, the UK, Australia, Germany, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Nepal, among other countries.

NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) director-general David Bergvinson, and ex-director general of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Padmabhusan awardee R S Paroda, among other noted personalities, have confirmed their participation.

To be organised in association with the Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI), the three-day event will have 12 concurrent sessions on various themes of the conference along with a special session aimed at garnering feedback from farmers.

