

AS INTRODUCED IN THE RAJYA SABHA
ON THE 5TH DECEMBER, 2025

Bill No. XCIV of 2024

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WELFARE OF
SUGARCANE FARMERS AND WORKERS BILL, 2024

A

BILL

*to provide for the constitution of a National Commission for Welfare of
Sugarcane Farmers and Workers and for matters connected
therewith and incidental thereto.*

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of
India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

- 5 **1.** (1) This Act may be called the National Commission for Welfare of
Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Act, 2024.
- (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by
notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Short title and
commencement.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:—
- (a) 'appropriate Government' means in the case of a State, the Government of that State and in all other cases, the Central Government;
 - (b) 'Commission' means the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers constituted under section 3; 5
 - (c) 'Fund' means the Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Welfare Fund constituted under section 14;
 - (d) 'member' means a Member of the Commission and includes the Member-Secretary; 10
 - (e) 'prescribed' means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
 - (f) 'sugarcane farmer' means a farmer engaged in cultivation of sugarcane and has no income from any source other than cultivation of sugarcane; and
 - (g) 'sugarcane workers' means a skilled or non-skilled person engaged in sugarcane cultivation. 15

CHAPTER II

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WELFARE OF SUGARCANE FARMERS AND WORKERS

Constitution of the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers.

3. (1) **The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute a Commission to be known as the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the functions assigned to it, under this Act.** 20
- (2) **The Commission shall consist of the following, to be nominated by the Central Government, in such manner as may be prescribed—** 25
- (a) **a Chairperson, committed to the cause of sugarcane farmers and protection of their livelihood and welfare;**
 - (b) **five members, from amongst persons of ability, integrity and standing, who had experience in sugarcane farming, understanding the plight of sugarcane farmers, sugar pricing and international issues, social justice, law or legislation and are committed to the welfare of sugarcane farmers;** 30
 - (c) **Vice-Chancellors of all Agricultural Universities, as members *ex-officio*;** 35
 - (d) **a Member-Secretary, who shall be —**
 - (i) **an expert in the field of management, organizational structure on sugarcane issues, or**
 - (ii) **an officer who is a member of a civil service of the Union or of an All-India Service or holds a civil post under the Union Government with appropriate experience, as may be prescribed, or** 40
 - (iii) **an expert who has done research on agriculture especially on sugarcane and holding a post equal/equivalent to the post of Professor in a college or a university.** 45
- (3) The Commission shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract, and shall, by the said name, sue or be sued. 50

(4) **The head office of the Commission shall be at such place in New Delhi, as may be notified by the Central Government.**

(5) **The Commission may, with the approval of the Central Government, establish offices at other places in the country, as it may deem necessary, for the efficient discharge of its functions as assigned under this Act.**

4. (1) The Chairperson and every member, except *ex-officio* members, shall hold office for such period, not exceeding three years, as may be specified by the Central Government in this behalf.

Term of office, conditions of service, resignation and removal of the Chairperson and members.

(2) The Chairperson or a member (other than the Member-Secretary who is a member of a Civil Service of the Union or of an All-India Service or holds a Civil post under the Union Government) may, at any time, by writing under his hand addressed to the Central Government, resign from the Office of Chairperson or, as the case may be, of the member and on such resignation being accepted, such person shall be deemed to have vacated his office.

(3) The Central Government shall remove a person from the office of the Chairperson or a member, as the case may be, if that person—

(a) becomes an undischarged insolvent;

(b) gets convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which in the opinion of the Central Government involves moral turpitude;

(c) becomes of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court;

(d) refuses to act or becomes incapable of acting;

(e) without taking leave from the Commission, absent himself from three consecutive meetings of the Commission; and

(f) in the opinion of the Central Government, has abused his position of Chairperson or a member so as to render his continuance in office detrimental to public interest:

Provided that no person shall be removed under this sub-section unless he has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in the matter.

(4) A vacancy caused under sub-sections (2) and (3), shall be filled within one month from the date of occurrence of the said vacancy.

(5) **The salaries and allowances payable to, and other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson and members shall be such as may be prescribed.**

5. (1) **The Central Government shall provide such number of suitable officers and employees to the Commission, as may be required, for its efficient performance under this Act.**

Officers and employees of the Commission.

(2) **The method of recruitment, the qualifications and experience, salaries and allowances payable to, and other terms and conditions of service of officers and employees shall be such as may be prescribed.**

6. (1) The Commission may, for efficient discharge of its functions, constitute such number of Committees, as may be necessary, for dealing with or studying issues that may be taken up by the Commission from time to time.

Committees of the Commission.

(2) The Commission may appoint such members, as it may deem fit, on Committees constituted under sub-section (1):

Provided that the members of the Committee who are not members of the Commission shall not have the right to vote on matters of the Commission.

(3) The allowances payable to the members appointed to the Committees shall be such as may be prescribed.

Procedure to be regulated by the Commission.

7. (1) The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure with regard to transaction of its business in order to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the functions assigned to it, under this Act. 5
- (2) The Commission shall meet as and when necessary and at such times and places as the Chairperson may deem fit for the efficient discharge of the functions assigned to it under this Act.
- (3) All orders and decision of the Commission shall be authenticated by the Member-Secretary. 10

Vacancies etc. not to invalidate the proceedings of the Commission.

8. No act or proceeding of the Commission shall be invalid or be questioned merely on the ground of existence of any vacancy in or any defect in the constitution of the Commission or any defect in the nomination of a person as Chairperson or member of the Commission or any irregularity in the procedure of the Commission not affecting the merits of the case. 15

Chairperson, members, officers and employees to be public servants.

9. The Chairperson, the members, officers and employees and members of the Committees of the Commission shall be deemed, when acting or purporting to act in pursuance of any of the provisions of this Act, to be public servants within the meaning of sub-section (2) of section 28 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. 20

45 of 2023.

Salaries and allowances to be paid out of grants.

10. **The salaries and allowances payable to the Chairperson and members and the administrative expenses, including salaries, allowances and pensions payable to the officers and employees, referred to in section 5 and allowances payable to the members appointed to the Committees of the Commission, referred to in section 6, shall be paid out of the grants referred to in sub-section (1) of section 16.** 25

CHAPTER III

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

Functions of the Commission.

11. The Commission shall perform all or any of the following functions, namely— 30
- (a) **undertake annual income surveys of sugarcane farmers and sugarcane workers across various categories, including different crops and landholding sizes;**
- (b) make policy suggestions to ensure that minimum income accrues to sugarcane farmers and workers across various categories; 35
- (c) design periodically an income security framework for various categories of farmers, *inter alia* including market interventions, compensation, subsidies, reduction in cost of production, mechanization, capacity building, credit enhancement, strengthening supply chains or any other tool that the Commission deems fit; 40
- (d) review, from time to time, various schemes of the appropriate Government pertaining to agriculture and income of sugarcane farmers;
- (e) make recommendations to the appropriate Government for effective implementation of policies and schemes ensuring that the minimum income accrues to sugarcane farmers and workers; 45
- (f) **formulate a scheme for payment of old age pension at the rate of at least five thousand rupees per month to every sugarcane farmer and worker, who have attained the age of sixty years and is unable to perform his job on account of infirmity and incapacity;** 50

(g) call for special studies and investigations into problems arising out of agrarian distress, and make timely recommendations to the appropriate Government for appropriate action;

5 **(h) undertake promotional and educational research to ensure minimum incomes for farming households, enhancement of income of farmers and productivity in agriculture;**

(i) take *suo moto* notice of matters relating to—

(i) sugarcane farmers' distress particularly sugarcane farmers' suicides across the country;

10 (ii) non-implementation or poor implementation of policies or schemes of farmers; and

(iii) non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines and instructions taken for farmers.

15 (j) evaluate the status of livelihood of sugarcane farmers across various regions in the country;

(k) make periodic reports to the Central Government on any matters pertaining to sugarcane farmers and workers;

(l) ensure payment to sugarcane farmers within a week after delivery of sugarcane to sugar mills;

20 (m) ensure payment of interest at the rate of fifteen per cent. for the delay in payment by sugar mills;

(n) impart training on modern and mechanised agricultural practices, use of fertilizers, crop management and other issues related to sugarcane farmers and workers;

25 (o) ensure subsidized loan for fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, equipments, labour and transportation cost to the sugarcane farmers;

(p) ensure compensation to sugarcane farmers in case of loss of crops on non-acceptance of sugarcane by sugar mills;

30 (q) receive grievances or complaints from sugarcane farmers and workers or their representatives regarding deprivation of their rights, exploitation or violation of any of the provisions of this Act and investigate into complaints so received from them; and

35 (r) take up any other matter related to sugarcane cultivation, farmers and their welfare, that may be referred to it by appropriate Government.

12. The Commission shall, while investigating any matter referred to in clause (q) of section 11, have all the powers of a Civil Court trying a suit and, in particular in respect of the following matters, namely, —

Commission to have powers of a Civil Court.

40 (a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;

(c) receiving evidence on affidavits;

(d) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;

45 (e) issuing commission for the examination of witnesses and documents; and

(f) any other matter which may be prescribed.

Appropriate Government to consult the Commission.

13. The appropriate Government shall consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting the interests of sugarcane farmers and workers.

Constitution of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Welfare Fund.

14. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute a Fund to be known as the Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Welfare Fund for carrying out the purposes of this Act. 5

(2) The Central and State Governments shall from time to time, after due appropriation made in this behalf by the Parliament or the respective State Legislature by law, contribute such sums of money to the Fund in such proportion, as may be provided.

(3) The Fund shall be administered by the Commission in such manner as may be prescribed. 10

CHAPTER IV

FACILITIES TO THE SUGARCANE FARMERS AND WORKERS

Facilities to the sugarcane farmers and workers.

15. The appropriate Government shall provide the following facilities, in such form and manner as may be prescribed, to the sugarcane farmers and workers, namely— 15

(i) implement the Scheme formulated by the Commission for payment of old age pension to every sugarcane farmer and worker, who have attained the age of sixty years and is unable to perform his job on account of infirmity and incapacity; 20

(ii) subsidized healthcare facilities to the sugarcane farmers and workers and dependent family members at Government and other designated hospitals;

(iii) subsidized education facilities including supply of books, uniform, writing materials, transportation and hostel facilities for the children of sugarcane farmers and workers; 25

(iv) free insurance cover to sugarcane farmers and workers; and

(v) subsidized housing loan to sugarcane farmers and workers.

CHAPTER V

FINANCE, ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT 30

Grants by Central Government.

16. (1) The Central Government shall, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, provide to the Commission by way of grants such sums of money, as the Central Government may think fit, for being utilized for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Commission may spend such sums, as it thinks fit, for performing the functions under this Act, and such sums shall be treated as expenditure payable out of grants under sub-section (1). 35

Accounts and Audit.

17. (1) The Commission shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form, as may be prescribed by Central Government in consultation with Comptroller and Auditor-General of India. 40

(2) The accounts of the Commission shall be audited by Comptroller and Auditor- General of India at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Commission to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India. 45

(3) The accounts of the Commission, as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor- General along with the audit report thereon shall be forwarded annually to the Central Government by the Commission.

18. The Commission shall prepare once every year, in such form and within such time as may be prescribed, an annual report giving a true and full account of its activities during the previous year, and copies thereof shall be forwarded to the Central Government. Annual Report.
- 5 19. (1) The Central Government shall cause the annual report and the audited annual accounts of the Commission along with an explanatory memorandum on the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations contained therein and the reasons for non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations to be laid, as soon as may be, after the reports are received, before each House of Parliament. Annual report and audit report to be laid before Parliament.
- 10 (2) Where any such report, or any part thereof relates to any matter with which any State Government is concerned, a copy of such report shall be forwarded to the Governor of that State, who shall in turn, cause it to be laid before each House of the Legislature of the State, where it consists of two House, or where such Legislature consists of one House, before that House, along with an explanatory memorandum explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations related to the State, and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations.
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- CHAPTER VI
- 20 MISCELLANEOUS
20. (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may make such order or give such direction, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may appear to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty. Power to remove difficulties.
- 25 (2) Every order made under this section shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament.
21. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force and, in case of any inconsistency, the provisions of this Act shall have overriding effect on the provisions of any such law to the extent of the inconsistency. Act not in derogation of any other law.
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22. (1) The Central Government may by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act. Power to make rules.
- 35 (2) The Commission may, with the approval of the Central Government, by notification in the Official Gazette, make regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder, to provide for all matters for which provision is necessary or expedient for the purposes of giving effect to the provisions of this Act.
- 40 (3) Every rule and regulation made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or regulation or both Houses agree that the rule or regulation should not be made, the rule or regulation shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule or regulation.
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STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The sugarcane farming sector is a vital part of India's agricultural landscape, providing livelihood to millions of farmers and their families across the country. Sugarcane is a major cash crop, contributing significantly to the country's rural economy and supporting industries such as sugar production, ethanol, and bioenergy. However, despite its importance, sugarcane farmers face numerous challenges, including delayed payments, volatile market prices, high production costs, and lack of adequate support during crop losses. These issues lead to financial insecurity and distress among sugarcane farmers, affecting their quality of life and sustainable livelihood.

Recognizing these challenges, the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Bill, 2024 seeks to establish a dedicated Commission focused on the welfare and economic empowerment of sugarcane farmers and workers. The primary objective of the Bill is to create a structured and permanent mechanism to address the unique issues faced by sugarcane farmers and workers, propose policy recommendations, and ensure that adequate financial, technical, and institutional support is provided to this sector.

The establishment of the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers will allow for continuous monitoring of the welfare conditions of sugarcane farmers and workers and the overall health of the sugarcane industry. The Commission will be empowered to make timely interventions, recommend policy measures, ensure implementation of welfare schemes, and take proactive steps in addressing agrarian distress specifically affecting sugarcane farmers. This structure will be instrumental in bridging the gap between the needs of farmers and the assistance provided by the Government, ultimately leading to an enhanced standard of living and more secure income for sugarcane farming communities.

This Bill is expected to have a transformative impact on the sugarcane farming sector. The establishment of a dedicated Commission will bring much-needed focus to the sector's unique challenges, enabling targeted interventions that are currently lacking. By addressing payment delays, providing financial support, and ensuring social security, the Bill aims to reduce the economic vulnerability of sugarcane farmers and workers and improve their standard of living.

The Bill's provisions for a Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Welfare Fund will allow for immediate and effective financial interventions, helping farmers manage risks associated with market fluctuations and crop losses. Furthermore, the mandated seven-day payment schedule and interest on delayed payments are intended to improve cash flow stability for farmers, allowing them to plan and invest in their crops without financial stress. This framework will empower sugarcane farmers with a reliable support system, reducing the distress that has long plagued this community.

Overall, the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Bill, 2024, will provide a holistic approach to tackling the economic and social challenges faced by sugarcane farmers, paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable sugarcane sector in India. This legislation will also set a precedent for other crop-specific welfare commissions, potentially leading to further sectoral reforms in India's agriculture sector.

Hence this Bill.

IRANNA KADADI.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for constitution of the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers with headquarters at New Delhi and also provides that the Commission with the approval of the Central Government may set up regional offices anywhere in the country as may be deemed necessary. Clause 4 *inter alia* provides for the salaries and allowances to be paid to and other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson and members of the Commission. Clause 5 provides that the Central Government shall provide such number of suitable officers and employees to assist the Commission and for the salaries and allowances payable to them as well as their terms and conditions of service. Clause 6 provides for constitution of Committees by the Commission for dealing with or studying issues that may be taken up by it and for the appointment of such number of members to such Committees and the allowances payable to them. Clause 10 provides that the salaries and allowances of the Chairperson and members of the Commission, the administrative expenses of the Commission including the salaries, allowances and pensions payable to the officers and employees and allowances payable to members appointed to the Committees of the Commission shall be met from the grants provided by the Central Government. Clause 11 stipulates the functions of the Commission which *inter alia* includes undertaking annual income surveys of sugarcane farmers and sugarcane workers across various categories, including different crops and landholding sizes as well as promotional and educational research to ensure minimum incomes for farming households, enhancement of income of farmers and productivity in agriculture, conducting special studies and investigations into the problems arising out of agrarian distress and imparting training on modern and mechanized agricultural practices, use of fertilizers, crop management and other issues related to sugarcane farmers and workers. Clause 14 provides for the constitution of the Sugarcane Farmers and Workers Welfare Fund. Clause 15 of the Bill provides that the appropriate Government shall provide certain facilities to the sugarcane farmers and workers including implementation of a Scheme for payment of old age pension; free insurance cover; subsidized housing loans to them as well as subsidized health care and educational facilities for the families and children respectively of sugarcane farmers and workers. Clause 16 provides that the Central Government shall provide adequate funds to the Commission. Clause 17 provides for payment of expenditure incurred in connection with audit of the annual accounts of the Commission.

The Bill, therefore, if enacted, would involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is estimated that a sum of one thousand crore rupees will be involved as a recurring expenditure per annum from the Consolidated Fund of India. A non-recurring expenditure of fifty crore rupees is also likely to be involved.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 20 of the Bill empowers the Central Government make such provisions through an order for removing any difficulty that might arise in giving effect to the provisions of the Bill. Clause 22 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules and the National Commission for Welfare of Sugarcane Farmers and Workers, with the approval of the Central Government, to make regulations, for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. As the matters in respect of which rules or regulations or orders may be made are matters of procedure and administrative detail and it is not practicable to provide for them in the Bill itself. The delegation of legislative power is, therefore, of a normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

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BILL

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(Shri Iranna Kadadi, M.P.)