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POSTED ON JANUARY 30, 2020 BY EDITOR

Budget Expectations of Dr. Malini Saba, Founder & Chairman, Saba Group Holdings & Saba Family Foundations
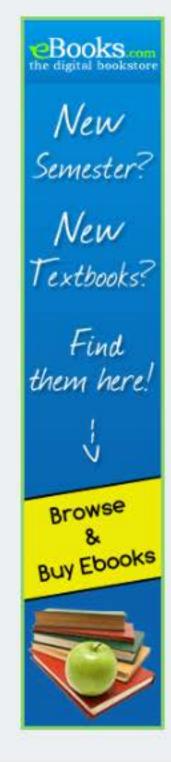
Dr. Malini Saba, Founder & Chairman, Saba Group Holdings & Saba Family Foundations says: ''The agriculture sector employs 50% of the Indian workforce and contributes 17–18% of the country's GDP. It means that any government is required to pay heed to the well-being of this sector and make it sustainable through policies that make it healthy. I expect the FM to remove GST from all farm and agriculture inputs (which is 12% on Machinery & 28% on fertilizers), reintroduce crop insurance and policies that focus on farmer welfare along with structural reforms.

Agritech policies with proven capability of using less water and increasing productivity from the same land usage, while also limiting the use of pesticides and harmful chemicals should be incentivized for research and development, and adoption. This will also help generate employment and increase productivity, efficiency, and output across the agriculture business value chain, and thus help farmers grow better and healthier produce.

Last year, the government had shown trust in women entrepreneurs and this year too the spirits are high. The government should introduce new ideas to empower women, provide them with a violence-free and similar socioeconomic environment to encourage their hard work which is not only going to benefit the government but also the country's economy at large. The Nirbhaya Fund created for the protection of women in the budget should be properly utilized. Along with this, the income of housewives should be kept outside the purview of tax.

In order to ensure gender justice, all policies should be allocated adequate budget and strict implementation should be undertaken. The union budget should have the highest focus upon girl's education, healthcare, anti-bullying, discrimination, and violence as well as investment in job-oriented skills for women– all pointing towards gender disparity, which is known to hamper economic growth''.

INTERVIEWS AND FEATURES