

Charge market rate for power to big farmers: ASSOCHAM

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Once the most prosperous states of the country, Punjab today is lagging behind in industrial and economic growth. The sluggish growth in various sectors is pulling the state behind. To address the problem, a joint vision paper for Industrial and economic growth in Punjab has been prepared by Apex industry body, ASSOCHAM and Thought Arbitrage Research Institute (TARI), said ASSOCHAM National Secretary General D S Rawat and Kshama V Kaushik, Director, TARI. Talking to 'Yugmarg', D S Rawat said they have submitted the new vision



paper of ASSOCHAM to Punjab Chief Minister and a few other ministers and MLAs a week ago. "The Punjab government was very receptive to the suggestions," said Kshama V Kaushik, Director TARI. ASSOCHAM vision paper has suggested that Punjab policy on providing free

power to farmers must be changed. Free power should be provided to only small and marginal farmers, while power to middle and big farmers could be charged at market rates (or slightly subsidized). Free power to farmers has proved to be a big financial drain for states providing them. ASSOCHAM also suggested that the new policy should focus on activities relating to top reservation, farm products, horticulture, livestock products like milk and other dairy items, cotton and textiles etc. which have strong backward and forward linkages in the state's economy. According to the paper, Punjab needs to promote less-water guzzling crops like pulses, oilseeds, cotton, maize, millet, vegetables and fruits – by providing improved seeds and ensuring that farmers get a fair price for these crops through a market support mechanism.