

को प्राप्त हो गई हैं। पहली बार यहां के लोगों के सामने पर्वतीय क्षेत्रों में कृषि उत्पादन शून्य होने की स्थिति निर्मित हुई है। प्रचार की परिधि से दूर-दराज के इस क्षेत्र के लोगों ने कठिनाइयों से पूर्ण इस क्षेत्र के कारण यद्यपि अपनी कृषि पर निर्भरता पहले ही कम कर दी है, लोग अपनी आवश्यकता के चार-छः माह का अन्न ही पैदा कर पाते थे, इस वर्ष उसके भी न होने से उन्हें एक नई स्थिति का सामना करना पड़ेगा। सबसे बड़ी कठिनाई पीने के पानी तथा वनों में असमय आग से घास के जल जाने से उत्पन्न हुई है जिससे पहली बार बड़ी मात्रा में मैदानों के जानवरों के सौदागर औने-पौने दाम पर बड़ी मात्रा में पशुओं को मैदानी भागों की ओर ले जा रहे हैं। यहां के सौलह हजार से अधिक ग्रामों के मैदानी क्षेत्रों में ऐसी स्थिति उत्पन्न होने पर घारा आदि पहुंचाना सहज कार्य नहीं है। इससे चारे एवम् पेयजल की समस्या वर्षात तक और भी जटिल होने की संभावना है।

केन्द्र सरकार को चाहिए कि वह इस नव-सृजित राज्य की विशेष मदद करे और अन्न से कार्य योजना चलाने के लिए दस हजार मीट्रिक टन अनाज की आपूर्ति, ऐसे ही अन्य प्रान्तों की तरह, शीघ्र उपलब्ध कराए तथा पेयजल की आपूर्ति अप्रैल, मई, जून में बनाए रखने के लिए अभी से उपाय करने में प्रदेश सरकार को योगदान दे। धन्यवाद।

Distress Sale of Paddy, compelling Orissa farmers to commit suicide

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA (Orissa): The farmers in Orissa might have paddy, rice, but there are no takers. They are not able to sell their paddy. The farmers are forced to resort to distress sale of their paddy, in the absence of direct procurement of paddy by the FCI or the State Government, thereby ensuring the minimum support price. Mill-owners are procuring paddy at throw-away prices, i.e. Rs.250/- to Rs.300/- per quintal, although the Government price is Rs.520/- to Rs.540/- per quintal. The FCI is expressing its inability to procure more rice due to shortage of space in their godowns, but rice from different parts of the country continues to come regularly to Orissa for being stored in FCI godowns. Even if a farmer has rice, that is not enough for his family. Farmers have sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. They require money for their clothing, food and education. In a family where nobody is employed and no outside income is there, all family members are fully dependant on cultivation. But, in a situation when farmers fail to sell their paddy, they are unable to fulfill the requirement of their families, and, hence, they are compelled to commit suicide.

Farmers are also seriously perturbed and harassed because of damage to their crops due to cyclone, floods and drought. But farmers in chronically drought-affected areas are at a disadvantage while claiming the benefit under the Crop Insurance Scheme, since crop loss is computed on the basis of the average yield in the last three years. The affected farmers do not get the insurance claim. This is the reason for their mental

breakdown and psychological breakdown, irritation, frustration and mental disorder, leading to their committing suicide. So, I urge upon the Government to devise remedies for stopping this distress sale and to provide crop insurance for the farmers.

SHRI BIRABHADRA SINGH (Orissa): Sir, I associate myself with the hon. Member.

Closure of N.T.C. Mills

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (Kerala): Sir, today, in Kerala, the Central trade unions are on strike against the anti-labour policies of the Government. This has been especially mentioned in the recent Budget proposals. Sir, I would like to mention a very important factor, which requires the urgent attention of the Government.

The Parvathy Mills, Kollam, is a unit of the NTC (APKK&M) Ltd., which was started in 1984. It is one of the oldest industries of Kollam. The mill has now an installed capacity of 25,400 spindles, 180 looms and 40 air-jet looms, with 4,200 kg. of cloth processing capacity, producing both cotton and blended yarn and cloth. This is the only public sector composite mill presently working to its full capacity in Kerala. Around 1,100 workers and their families are purely depending on the survival of this mill.

The unit has become sick mainly due to the imbalanced financial structure. If the financial restructuring is permitted with a 1:1 ratio of equity capital to long-term loans, the mill will become viable. Recently, as per the directions from the NTC, the South Indian Textiles Research Association (SITRA) has conducted a detailed study of the viability of the running of the Parvathy Mills, Kollam, and it is learnt that the SITRA has submitted a report stating that the Mill is viable, subject to certain conditions, including modernisation.

But, surprisingly, the BIFR, in its order dated 29-12-2000, has decided to wind up the company, namely, M/s. NTC (APKK&M) Ltd. and has issued a show-cause notice for the closure of the Mills. The final hearing on the said matter is posted for 30-3-2001 at 11-30 a.m. before Bench-II of the BIFR.

If the mills are wound up, thousands of workers and their families will be thrown into the streets, causing untold hardships. Hence, the urgent intervention of the Ministry of Textiles in the matter is required and