

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS**Corporate investment in agriculture sector**

†400. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to encourage corporate investment in agriculture sector;

(b) if so, the expected positive impact of the same in agriculture sector; and

(c) whether it would not adversely affect the marginal farmers alongwith the steps that would be taken in view of their interests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Government has been taking several policy initiatives to encourage corporate investment in agriculture sector. The investment envisaged from corporate sector is in the development of marketing infrastructure, contract farming, procurement of agricultural commodities directly from the farmers' fields, promotion of scientific storage capacities in rural areas, food processing industries and agri-business development etc. The impact of these investments comprises of;

- (1) Catering to post-harvest requirements of production.
- (2) Reducing risk of deficient market demand and adverse price fluctuation and that of non-availability of desired quality raw materials.
- (3) Establishment of direct purchase centres, promotion of public-private partnership in the management and development of agricultural markets.
- (4) Strengthening and modernization of agricultural markets.
- (5) Meeting the requirements of farmers to store their inputs, farm produce etc. against loss and wastage.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

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RAJYA SABHA

- (6) Prevention of distress sale by providing facilities of pledge loan and marketing credit etc.
- (7) Encouraging farmers to diversify to high value crops.

Further, to protect the interests of the small and marginal farmers, the Government is encouraging farmers' groups cooperatives/self-help groups to assist in contract design and its implementation. In addition, the Government announces each season Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for major agricultural commodities.

Assistance to Orissa Under National Horticulture Mission

401. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Orissa Government has requested for Central assistance for fourteen districts which are not covered by the National Horticulture Mission;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the time-frame within which it would be considered and the State Government would be apprised of the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of Orissa had submitted a project proposal for taking up horticultural programmes in fourteen districts not covered under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) during 2006-07, to be implemented in accordance with the norms of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro Management in Agriculture. The proposal was examined by the Ministry. Since all the Horticulture Development Programmes of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation were subsumed under NHM and since 16 districts were already included under the mission based on the potential and marketability, the State Government was informed in April 2006 about the inability to agree to their proposal. However, based on their Annual Action Plan (AAP) for the year 2006-07, three more districts viz. Phulbani, Dhenkanal and Ganjam have been included under NHM and the State Government have been intimated accordingly in July 2006.