

(b) if so, the percentage of small holdings in the total agricultural lands in the country;

(c) whether it is a fact that due to small land holdings we have to develop our own separate production techniques; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARUN YADAV): (a) and (b) As per the latest Agriculture Census 2005-06, small holdings (operated area below 2.0 hectares) constitute 83.29 percent of total holding with 41.14 percent of operated area.

(c) and (d) A large number of equipment and technologies including hand tools, animal drawn equipment and power operated implements and machinery have been developed by Agricultural Engineering Research Institutes under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), keeping in view the predominance of small farm holdings in the country.

Suicide by farmers

†941. SHRI RAMCHANDRA PRASAD SINGH:

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that farmers still commit suicide due to the fact that agriculture is non-profitable;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the news of those incidents are coming from such States which are considered advanced in agriculture; and

(d) if so, the reasons for such steps being taken by farmers and speedy redressal measures being taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARUN YADAV): (a) to (d) Incidents of suicide by farmers due to agrarian reasons were reported during 2009 and 2010 by Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala and Punjab.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Reasons for suicides by farmers are manifold which, *inter-alia*, include crop failure, indebtedness, drought, socio-economic and personal reasons.

With a view to ensure that farming activity becomes more viable and the economic condition of farmers is improved on a sustainable basis Government has approved the National Policy for Farmers, 2007.

In order to revitalize agriculture various measures have been taken by the Government which, *inter-alia*, include significant increase in public investment in agriculture sector through various schemes such as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, National Horticulture Mission, Mission on Micro Irrigation, Integrated development of 60,000 pulses villages in rain-fed areas, scheme for extending Green Revolution to Eastern India, watershed Management and soil health etc.

Additional measures announced for agriculture sector in the Budget 2011-12, *inter-alia*, include bringing 60,000 hectares under oil palm plantation, initiative on vegetable clusters, promotion of higher production of nutri cereals, and launching of National Mission for Protein Supplements.

The Minimum Support Prices of major cereals have been increased substantially during the last 5 years to benefit the farmers.

The Government of India approved a Rehabilitation Package in 2006 covering 31 districts in 4 States viz., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra initially for a period of 3 years to address the problem of agrarian distress. The period for implementation of the non-credit components of the package was extended by 2 more years i.e. up to September 30, 2011.

The interest subvention for timely repayment of crop loans up to Rs.3 lakh was enhanced from 1% to 2% for the year 2010-11, thereby reducing the effective rate of interest for such farmers who repay their crop loan on time to 5% per annum. The Union Budget 2011-12 has proposed further enhancement in interest subvention from 2% to 3%, which would lower the effective rate of interest for such farmers who repay their crop loan on time to 4% per annum.

The Government also implemented the Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 benefitting about 3.69 crore farmers involving an estimated amount of Rs.65,318.33 crore, as per provisional figures.