

Yes, I am listening to you. *...(Interruptions)...* Yes, you please meet the Chairman.
...(Interruptions)...

श्री राजीव शुक्ल: सर, केबिनेट भी collective responsibility से चलती है। किसी बहस में कितने भी मंत्रियों को बुला लो *...(व्यवधान)...*

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Let all the other Ministers be present at 2 o'clock.
...(Interruptions)... Let the Parliamentary Affairs Minister convey this to the Government and bring other Ministers by 2 o'clock. *...(Interruptions)...* We will listen to him at 2 o'clock.
...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned for ten minutes.

The House then adjourned at twenty-six minutes past twelve of the clock.

The House re-assembled at thirty-six minutes past twelve of the clock,

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) in the Chair.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN): The House is adjourned to meet at 2.00 p.m.

The House then adjourned at thirty-six minutes
past twelve of the clock.

The House reassembled at two of the clock,

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

On situation arising out of present agrarian crisis resulting in suicides in the country

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Sir, we are thankful that the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs has conveyed it to other Ministers in the Government and finally the Finance Minister, the Commerce Minister, the Power Minister and other Ministers are there. It is not because of any false prestige or anything. We wanted them to understand the seriousness of the situation. I only request them to sit through the debate and then intervene at the end and answer if there are any queries.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Member, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, for raising the issue of farming community and particularly the problem which is agitating the minds of all of us, that is, about farmer suicides. I am also grateful to all the Members who have participated in the debate and given very valuable suggestions. I recollect, in the last Parliament Session in Lok Sabha and even in this House, on many occasions, we had discussed the issue of price rise particularly of essential commodities, but hardly once or twice we had discussed the problem of the farming community, particularly agriculture. There was no specific discussion on this subject. Whenever the prices of essential commodities, particularly agricultural produce have gone high, whether it was onion for a temporary period, or potato for some specific period, these issues were raised in the House and on some occasions there was a serious discussion too. But I am extremely happy about one thing this time that the whole House was eager to discuss the problems of the farming community which they are facing day-to-day, which ultimately affects the productivity and also production. I need not explain the importance of agriculture, which takes care of the food security for millions of people; provide jobs to more than 58 per cent people of this country and 62 per cent population depends on agriculture. There are a number of issues which are creating problems. Some of the issues are such where we will not be able to get the answer immediately. For example, the hon. Member, Shri Venkaiah Naidu, has mentioned that day by day agriculture is becoming unviable. I fully agree with him because the average holding in the country as a whole has come down to 1.2 hectares per family and 82 per cent farmers have less than 2 hectares of land. When the average comes to 1.2 hectares per family, that means a family of five persons has to look after their day-to-day needs with such a small holding. Out of that 60 per cent agriculture in this country is totally dependent on erratic monsoon. See the figures of last year. Last year, more than 140 districts of this country were facing drought. So if this type of situation happens in any Tehsil, any block, any village, any district, it does affect the farming family substantially. The second issue, which we are observing nowadays, is that already when there is pressure of population on land, there is also onslaught of urbanization on the agricultural land. In 1947, when we got independence, the population of this country was 35 crores, and out of 35 crores, 80 per cent population was depending on agriculture. Today, we have crossed one billion, and out of more than 1 billion, 62 per cent depend on agriculture. Cities are expanding. I recollect, in the city of Mumbai, when we took a decision to develop a new city, twin city, called Navi Mumbai, more than 60,000 hectares of land were acquired in those days, and the entire paddy land has now been converted to build one of the major cities. Now, it is the case not only of Mumbai, but it is also

happening in every city; it is happening even in villages. If you have to construct school building in villages, you have to convert agricultural land. If you have to construct any public institution, you have to convert agricultural land into non-agricultural land. A lot of programmes are being undertaken for construction of new roads, national highways and autobahns. And, all these require agricultural land. And, we see a similar situation in the case of industrialization as well. So, day-by-day, the agricultural land is shrinking on the one side and, on the other hand, the pressure on agricultural land is going up. That, itself, is creating a serious problem for the farming community, particularly, their families.

The next problem, which our farmer is facing, is the problem of low productivity, as compared to other countries. In the last two years, certain decisions had been taken; the State Governments have co-operated; the farming community has worked like anything, and we have succeeded to resolve the problem of food security in this country. But, when I compare India with China on a number of crops; or, compare the production of paddy with France, the per hectare yield is quite low in our country. Even, in sugarcane, when we compare the per hectare yield in South Africa and Australia vis-a-vis India, the position is not very encouraging in our country. So, low productivity is one of the important issues which our country is facing. So, these are the basic reasons why agriculture has become unviable to many, why unhappiness is there among some sections of the farming community, and why we are also witnessing some cases of suicides in many States. The hon. Member, Shri Venkaiah Naidu, has said that nowadays there is a growing feeling among the farming community to leave this profession. I tried to collect information from the NSS. About 40 per cent of those distracted from farming were asked the reason for their disaffection. At the All India level, forty per cent of those who distracted from farming include twenty per cent, who did not find farming profitable, eight per cent thought it to be too risky and two per cent distracted from farming because of lack of social status. These are the general information which we got from the NSS Report. But there are also sizeable sections of farmers who like farming, and the percentage of people, who like farming, is also more than 60 per cent. But there are some States, which we have to take serious note of, where a sizeable percentage of population feels that farming is not profitable. In Bihar, 36 per cent of farmers feel that it is not profitable; In Haryana, it is 30 per cent; Jharkhand, 30 per cent; Karnataka, 28 per cent; Orissa, 34 per cent; Maharashtra, 29 per cent; and West Bengal, 36 per

cent. Also, if we compare the all-India figures, 27 per cent of the farming community feels that it is not at all profitable. And that is the reason. There is a growing feeling in a certain section that they should think about some other profession. One of the important issues has been raised by many hon. Members, about the incidences of suicide committed by the farming community. All of us are worried about the issue of suicide by the farmers and the reason is agrarian crisis. But, I am getting an altogether different information from the States. In fact, I would like to take the entire House into confidence. I think, the time has come for all of us to go into details. First of all, we should try to understand the report and break up of the National Crime Records Bureau, whose figures always disturb this House and many other offices. I will give an example and take you to just one year. Let us take the year 2010. What this National Crime Records Bureau says? The total number of suicides in India is 1,34,599. It is not just about the agriculturists, but of all. Of which, the number of suicides that came from the farming community, from the profession of agriculture, is 15,964.

Now, let us see the categorisation by profession. During 2010, as per the NCRB, the number of suicides by the self-employed and others was 28,152. Housewives—25,058. Others—20,658. The number of suicides by students is 7,379; unemployed—10,033. Then, the figure of suicides by farmers due to agrarian reason that are reported by the State Governments is altogether different.

In fact, I could not understand one thing. The National Crime Records Bureau is giving one figure, which all of us are discussing, on which all of us are worried. When I tried to contact the State Governments and tried to collect the information from them, I get an altogether different information. To tell you on the information that I got from the States, some of the State Governments have accepted on it and said, 'Yes, there are suicides.' But, the number of States that are saying this are going down. For instance, take the case of Andhra Pradesh. For 2006, the total number of suicides due to agrarian reason, reported by the State Government, is 556; for 2007, 493; for 2008, 469; for 2009, 277; for 2010, 188; for 2011, it is 71. So, the trend the Andhra Pradesh Government is reporting is going down.

There is a similar situation in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala. But, there are some other

States; in fact, there are 26 States where the Bureau says that there are instances of suicides. Out of 26, there are 16 States which have communicated to me in writing; in those States, there is not a single case of suicide. I could not understand whom to depend. The Bureau is saying, 'Yes, there are cases in Uttar Pradesh.' The Bureau is saying, 'Yes, there are cases in Punjab.' The Bureau is saying, 'Yes, there are cases in Orissa.' But, the State Government is communicating in writing, 'There might be suicides, but not because of agrarian reason.' Therefore, whatever has appeared or reported is not uniform. I tried to collect the information at least from those States who have accepted that there are cases of suicides to know what the reasons are. The reasons of the suicide by the farmer, reported by the State Government, are manifold. That includes indebtedness, crop failure, drought, social, economic and personal reasons. Considering distress of farmers in some parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, certain decisions were taken by the Government of India and the State Governments. All of you are aware, in 2007, the Government of India took a decision and introduced a rehabilitation package for Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra where the Government of India had provided an amount of Rs.16,979 crores, to be allotted to all these States and these States had taken certain decisions to improve the situation. They had taken certain decisions, like, providing debt relief to farmers, interest waivers, improved credit flow, completion of major and medium irrigation projects, completion of minor irrigation projects, seed replacement programme, check-dams, watershed development programme, rainwater harvesting schemes, minor irrigation, macro irrigation, horticulture development, extension services and so on to improve subsidiary incomes of farmers. These type of programmes have been taken up and implemented by the States where the Government of India has provided such a big amount. The States themselves also have taken up some of their own schemes. Take the case of Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra had announced a package where they had provided an amount of Rs.1433 crores only for those four-five districts where these type of incidents had been taking place. Similar action was taken by the Andhra Pradesh Government. Similar action was taken by the Government of Odisha. Similar action was taken by the Karnataka Government as well as the Government of Kerala. So, the Government of India provided the money and the State Governments had also provided the money. And efforts are being made to improve the overall situation of the farming community. In Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala,

कृषि क्षेत्र में सुधार लाने के लिए जो कदम उठाए गए, उसी तरह से नैशनल लेवल पर भी कुछ करने की आवश्यकता है। यह बात यहां भी बार-बार उठाई गई है, and I recollect that we had appointed a Commission headed by Dr. Swaminathan, the eminent agricultural scientist. This was the National Commission for Farmers. We had received its report in October, 2006. After getting the report, the Government of India had sent copies to all the States and prepared a draft of the National Policy for Farmers which had also been communicated to all the State Governments. We had taken their views and, ultimately, we have now announced the National Policy for Farmers. Sir, this was for the first time in the history of this country that a special meeting of the National Development Council had been convened only to discuss the problems being faced by Indian agriculture. All the Chief Ministers had participated in that conference. I am extremely happy to inform you that in that meeting on the 29th of May, 2007, there were many constructive suggestions that had come from the Chief Ministers and the Government of India had taken many decisions and introduced various programmes and schemes. One was the Rashtriya Kisan Vikas Yojana for which Rs.25,000 crores had been provided. This scheme is a scheme where choice has been given to the State to decide as to where the money should be utilised. The scheme is quite flexible and I have been observing for the last four years that practically each and every State has been taking advantage of this scheme and there has been some improvement in certain sectors. Simultaneously, we have taken up many other schemes like the National Horticulture Mission. The National Rainfed Authority has been set up. You have the National Bamboo Mission. The National Fisheries Development Board has been set up. There is a scheme for the revitalisation of crops. Then, there is the National Food Security Mission, the National Mission on Micro-irrigation, improvement of institutional credit to the agriculture and so on. So, not only just one or two, but a series of decisions were taken to improve this condition and substantial money has also been provided. And I am seeing some change in all these areas. Sir, when I say about improving the flow of institutional credit, it is the crop loan which is the most important thing. Why the farmer is going to the private money lender because he is unable to get financial support from the financial institutions, particularly cooperative and nationalised banks. There was a sizeable section among the farming community who himself was defaulter, and just to help them, certain decisions were taken. But the major decision which was taken by this Government is this. I just give one figure here. In the year 2004-05, the total agricultural credit which was provided as a crop loan to the farming

community in the entire country was Rs.46,000 crores; that has reached to rupees four lakh and forty-seven thousand crores in the year 2010-11; and the target for 2011-12 has been rupees four lakh and seventy-five thousand crores. So, we have jumped from rupees forty-six thousand crores to rupees four lakh and forty-seven thousand crores. We have not stopped there. We have made these arrangements, and the farming community has accepted it. Along with this, we have also taken the decision to issue ten crore Kisan Credit Cards up to March, 2011, and that programme is also successfully implemented. We have not stopped there also. We have given a serious thought how to bring down the interest. One of the issues which was raised in the House as an experience of some of our hon. Members is this. When they approach a bank, they receive a communication from the bank that the bank is ready to give money to purchase a car at a rate of interest of eight or nine per cent. Yes, that was the situation. It is true that the crop loan was up to 12 per cent. It was brought down to 11 per cent by the previous regime. From 11 per cent, it was brought down to seven per cent. The Finance Minister is sitting here. In his regime, the rate of crop loan ultimately has been brought down by three per cent in the year 2011-12, and the effective rate for those who pay in time is four per cent, and the amount is up to Rs.3 lakh. This is happening for the first time that the farmer of this country is getting the crop loan up to Rs.3 lakh at the rate of four per cent. So, this is the major decision taken by this particular Government.

(THE VICE-CHAIRMAN, PROF. P.J. KURIEN *in the Chair.*)

Sir, hon. Members have raised many other issues. One of the important issues raised was about the Minimum Support Price for farm produce. We have taken many decisions about this also. It is true that the cost of cultivation was creating problem for the farmers and that is why actually farming was becoming uneconomical. Serious thought was given to it. Practically, every year, there is an improvement in it.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I would just like to add only one point. I took this decision yesterday in the meeting of the Chief Ministers of the Southern Zone, and just a week before that, in the meeting of the Chief Ministers of Eastern Zone that banks have been instructed to provide Kisan Credit Cards to all eligible farmers. Currently, it is 10.4 crores, but the gaps which exist are to be covered. So far as the rate of interest is concerned,

the demand was that it should be brought at four per cent. Yes, we have not been able to bring it universally, but those farmers who are paying in time are entitled to have four per cent rate of interest for this year. Many other issues connected with the economy I have already replied when I tried to respond to the queries of the hon. Members in my response to Supplementary Demands debate, in my response to debate on inflation. The Agriculture Minister is responding. If you permit me as the Agriculture Minister is responding and if you can allow me on some other occasion, we can make an effective intervention if it is called for.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, I am happy the Finance Minister has come and he is intervening. But my only request is why it should be 4 per cent only this year. This 4 per cent interest rate should be given to farmers universally. This is number one. Number two, Sir, if the farmers are in a good shape, they will definitely pay and will make prompt payment. They are in a bad shape. That is the reality of the situation. So, please allow 4 per cent interest rate because that will go a long way for the farmers. ...*(Interruptions)*... It should be done as a policy. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Let us not enter into a debate, Sir. Only one point I would like to submit most respectfully is that the banks' money is depositors' money. The minimum rate on which we are borrowing money from the borrowers is at an average rate of eight-and-a-half per cent. We are providing interest subvention through various schemes and one such scheme is short-term crop loan up to Rs.3 lakh where we are providing 4 per cent rate of interest. We are providing concessional rate of interest from the banking institutions to export sector, to small, medium and micro enterprises with 4 per cent interest rate of the total lending of the banking system under DRI. We are also providing lower interest rate to certain socially disadvantaged sections. What you are talking of, maybe, is an ideal situation. But you have to keep in mind today's fiscal position. This is to provide CRR at the rate of 24 per cent, and SLR of the total amount which they are getting. If you add the cost of borrowing and cost of lending, you will appreciate that it would not be possible at this juncture of the economy to make it universal. But as we have been able to do it from higher percentage, as Agriculture Minister has indicated, we have brought it down to 7 per cent and for short-term crop loan up to Rs.3 lakh we have brought it down to 4 per cent for regular paying

farmers, let us stick to that. As and when situation improves, things could be considered. Thank you, Sir. *...(Interruptions)...* It will be very difficult. *...(Interruptions)...* Excuse me, I am an old parliamentarian. I know the practice. You allowed me only in my case to intervene. *...(Interruptions)...* I requested the LOP because I have an urgent meeting to attend. This has never been the practice even in this House where one Minister is on his legs, the other Minister is asked to spsak. And when he clarifies, and if he is to answer what is the question, then the whole debate gets derailed. It is not the practice.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: If the Finance Ministry reduces the interest rate, I have no objection. *...(Interruptions)...* What I was trying to tell that in the previous regime of NDA Government led by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the interest rate was brought down from 11 per cent to 7 per cent. And this regime of UPA led by Dr. Manmohan Singh's has brought it down to 4 per cent. We have not stopped there only. But those who were really defaulters and were unable to get money because they were defaulters — everybody is fully aware — a major scheme has been implemented which is about the waivers, debt waivers which benefited about 3 crore 60 lakh farmers involving debt waiver and relief of Rs.65,313 crores. That is the latest information.

So, particularly about the crop loans, series of decisions have been taken for the last four years. The second issue which was raised here was about the Minimum Support Price. Here also, a number of decisions have been taken on practically every crop. Now, take the case of wheat. In 2004-05, the Minimum Support Price for wheat was Rs. 640 per quintal, in 2005-06 it was Rs. 700, in 2006-07 it was Rs. 850 raised by Rs. 150. In 2007-08 it was Rs. 1000, in 2009-10 it was Rs. 1100 and in 2011-12 it was Rs. 1285. So, practically, in six years' time period we have doubled the agricultural wheat price by certain decisions. Similarly, take the case of rice, paddy. In 2004-05, it was Rs. 560 per quintal, in 2006-07 it was Rs. 620, in 2007-08 it was Rs. 745, in 2008-09 it was Rs. 900 and in 2011-12, it is Rs. 1080. These decisions are not restricted to only wheat and rice. It is also applicable for — and similar decisions were taken for oil seeds, pulses, cotton and sugarcane. So, in one way, we tried to provide a good price to each and every item which has been produced by farming community. Also, one important point has been raised here about the fertilizers prices and availability. Till last year that problem was not there. I have to accept this year that the problem day by day is getting serious. I am getting a lot of complaints from the farming community and even from the Agricultural Ministers of different States because of non-availability of fertilizers. On quite a big

quantity of fertilizer, whether it is urea, whether it is DAP, whether it is MOP or whether it is Complex, we have to depend on import, and unfortunately, there are four or five countries which are producing MOP and DAP and they have practically set up a sort of cartel and they have practically dictated 100 per cent more price at all levels. But there was no choice. Fertilizer is a major requirement of the farming community. If you have to increase the productivity and production we have no alternative. That is why ultimately, Government of India has decided to pay higher price and the fertilizer subsidy, from year to year, the change is shown upwards. In 2006-07 it was Rs. 65,000 crores, in 2007-08 it was Rs. 90,000 crores, in 2008-09 it was 1,15,000 crores, in 2009-10 it was Rs. 80,000 crores and in 2010-11 it was Rs. 95,000 crores. Government of India has taken such type of financial burden and tried to provide fertilizers to the farmers. But, this year I have to accept one thing. There is a shortage. Availability is limited but we are trying our level best to purchase under Ministry with the help of State Government, to provide a sufficient quantity to the State Governments as per their requirement. Only there were some delays and that is why certain sections of the farmers are taking advantage of this situation but I am sure we will take corrective action about this also.

श्री एम. वेंकैया नायडु: आप क्या करने वाले हैं, यह बताइये।...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: There is no choice. Ultimately, we have to import further. In fact, we have sold to a few other organisations, then, they had to give additional orders and Government of India will provide whatever the subsidy and losses to them. There is no third alternative and that is why certain decisions have been taken. Then, availability of electricity was also a problem but I have to accept one thing. Practically, each and every State Government is providing subsidized electricity for agriculture. It is true that there are certain Governments which are not in a position to provide for 24 hours. But actually, for eight to nine hours, most of the Governments are supplying power at a cheaper rate to the farming community. Sir, hon. Member, Shri Dhindsa, has said that Punjab has been neglected. I am sorry to hear this. But, I have to accept one thing that Punjab, Haryana, Western UP, Andhra Pradesh are some of the States which always help to this nation to resolve the problem of food security. Substantial quantity of procurement is essentially made in these States. That is why we also take a positive approach towards all these States.

I recollect, about two years back, just to save crop, Punjab and Haryana Governments had to spend more money. There was a serious problem with regard to availability of water and power. So,

they bought power from outside and paid more money. When we heard this and when we got this information, for the first time, the Government of India had taken a decision to contribute heavily to these States. And, Sir, the Government of Haryana was provided, in 2009-10, Rs. 400 crores just to meet the additional cost which it had incurred for power. The Government of Punjab was paid Rs. 800 crores grant only for that purpose. And, similar decision was taken for the State of Bihar for diesel. So, these types of decisions have been taken by this Government.

Sir, States of Punjab and Haryana have been producing wheat and rice for years together and helping the nation to resolve the problem of food security. But, the continuous rotation of wheat and rice cropping in these States has affected the productivity of Punjab and Haryana agriculture land. The water level has also affected. So, the Government of India has decided to concentrate on the Eastern India for rice production. Sir, Eastern UP, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam and West Bengal have been selected and a special scheme for the improvement of productivity and production has been introduced in that belt. I myself have taken it up at my level in the Chief Ministers meeting. I myself have taken a series of meetings with Agriculture Ministers of all the States, a number of things have been provided to them and we will see that the Second Green Revolution programme which we would like to take it up in the Eastern India is getting good response. I am sure, in a year or two, we see, along with Punjab, Haryana and the Western UP, these States also supply sufficient quantity of foodgrains, particularly rice, to the country.

Sir, one more issue has also been raised here that we are not spending sufficient money on research. Sir, the Indian Council for Agriculture Research is the prime organization which is essentially working in the area of research in agriculture sector and also agriculture education. It is true that previously limited funds were provided to it. But unless and until we give a tremendous strength and support to research and develop new varieties, new technology and see that it reaches to the farmer, we will not be able to improve the productivity and production. And, that is the reason why we have provided more money to the ICAR. In the year 2007-08, the total money provided to the ICAR was Rs. 1,434 crores. In the year 2011-12, it has gone to Rs. 2,800 crores. This is the Plan allocation. As far as Non-Plan allocation is concerned, for 2007-08, we had given Rs. 903 crores and this year it is Rs. 2,151 crores. So, these types of a number of decisions have been taken in the last

few years. And, that is the reason why we have seen some change in the production and productivity. All these pro-active decisions taken by the Government of India, with full co-operation from the State Governments and hard working by the farming community, agriculture growth rate — Mr. Shivanand Tiwari said that it is less than 2 per cent; unfortunately, his information is not correct — in the first four years of the Eleventh Plan was 3.2 per cent and this year it has crossed 6.2 per cent.

So, I think, it is the result of these series of actions. The agricultural sector, the farming community of this nation, over the years, has demonstrated influential global strength of the growth in agricultural production. Their yields have tripled and food production has achieved 245.57 million tonnes last year, which was 51 million tonneG in the year 1951. So, we have seen that there is definitely a change.

The one thing, which I am observing nowadays, is that for numbers of years when the question of food security and food basket came we have always been thinking about Punjab, Haryana and Western U.P. But, now, new States are coming forward. Today, the State of Chhatisgarh is day by-day becoming a major supplier of rice to the country's kitty. Today, Orissa is also becoming one of the major suppliers of rice to the country's kitty. The State of Madhya Pradesh is also daybyday becoming a major supplier of wheat, like, Punjab and Haryana to the national kitty. I am observing similar situation in West Bengal also. If we improve our procurement system, I am sure that other States will also provide quite a big quantity of foodgrains to the national kitty.

One of the points, which has been raised by many hon. Members, is regarding the MSP. At many places, farmers have to sell their agricultural produce below MSP. The farmers of Punjab and Haryana never complain that they have to sell their produce below MSP. One of the reasons for this is that the substantial procurement in the States of Punjab and Haryana is managed by the State Corporations. The Food Corporation of India has certain limitations. The Food Corporation of India is unable to procure from each and every village. These types of responsibilities will have to be taken by the State Governments. Whatever be their acquisition cost, the" expenditure for these acquisitions will be borne by the Food Corporation of India, and, ultimately, by the Government of India. That's why I do appeal to all the Chief Ministers of all the State Governments that they should take initiative and they should try to purchase at the minimum support price, they should provide some machinery

where there should not be distress sales of the farm produce. And, if the States are going to take this responsibility, I am sure, we will see that the situation is going to be altogether different and farmers will get MSP for their produce.

As I said, the foodgrain production has been substantially improved. I am stopping there. If you study the cotton, the production of cotton has gone up to 42 million bales, the production of sugarcane has gone up to 339 million tonnes, the second highest in the world. For years together, our total production of pulses has been 14 million tonnes. We have practically been importing about 4 million tonnes of pulses, which were costing about Rs. 18,000 to 20,000 crores. But last year, we have produced 18 million tonnes of pulses and, I am sure, this year also we will be able to maintain the production of 18 million tonnes, which is the requirement of the nation. There is quite an improvement in the production of oilseeds also. Today, the production of wheat is the highest in India. The production of fruits, vegetables, cotton, and sugar is second highest in the world. We have not stopped there. We have produced and we have started entering in the international market. In the year 2011-12, the Government of India has allowed to export two million tonnes of non-basmati rice, out of that 13.57 lakh tonnes have already been exported. In the year 2010-11, 21.83 lakh tonnes of basmati rice was exported and the Government of India also allowed export of two million tonnes of wheat, out of that 2.53 lakh tonnes wheat has been exported. The Government of India also allowed export of two million tonnes of sugar and out of that certain quantity has already been exported. Unlimited quantity of onion was allowed to export. India is also exporting mangoes, bananas, grapes, pomegranates, and India is becoming one of the important players in the area of export in the agricultural produce. The Government of India also allowed 65 lakh bales of cotton last year. This year, I am grateful to my colleague, the Minister of Commerce, that she has allowed us to export unlimited quantity of cotton. 20 lakh bales of cotton have already been exported this year. One of the major issues which the whole world is facing and our country is also facing is the problem of climate change. We have to work in this area. We have to continue our research. For that purpose, we have more than 18 institutions of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research where more than 5,000 scientists are working. We have given a mandate to them that they should concentrate on the subject of the impact of climate change on the Indian agriculture — on animals, on crops, everywhere. We have also provided them with infrastructure and equipments. Whatever their requirement for research is, the Government of India is ready to provide them. We have not stopped

there. We have decided to set up some new institutions. One of the points raised here was that the Government of India is giving too much importance to some of the foreign seeds. Dr. Vorlage issue was raised. Dr. Vorlage, an eminent scientist and one of the recipients of the Nobel Prize, was responsible to resolve the problem of the food security of the world. His association with India was quite intimate. Dr. Vorlage was such a scientist that he was a personal acquaintance of many farmers in Punjab And Haryana and some other States. So, Dr. Vorlage always tried to help India to improve its production and after his death, the Government of India has taken a decision to set up a Vorlage Institute for South Asia for Research in Wheat and Maize. The Headquarter of this Institute will be near Ludhiana, in Punjab. There will be two other institutes under this Institute. Their centre will be at Pusa in Bihar, concentrating on the Eastern India. The third institute will be in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, for concentrating on the needs of the Central India, particularly, wheat and maize growing belt of the country. So, this year, we have decided to set up these two institutes along with the National Institute for Biotic Stress Management in Raipur, Chattisgarh. That decision has also been taken. The National Institute of Abiotic Stress Management will be set up in Malegaon, Pune District. The Indian Institute for Agricultural Biotechnology will be set up at Ranchi, Jharkhand. I am extremely grateful to all the State Governments, whether it is Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra or Punjab. All of them have provided a piece of land at a nominal cost and all other infrastructure for these institutions. I am sure that these institutions will, definitely, show a new path and save the farming community from the impact of the climate change on the Indian agriculture. Sir, I do not want to take more time. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, when he quoted about Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and rightly, he reminded us that everything else can wait but not agriculture. This has been the Government's approach, it is today's approach and it will be 'today's approach.' Thank you.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, operation successful but the patient died. The Minister has given a very exhaustive reply; I must accept it, but he did not answer the questions. The questions are: How do we meet this challenge? What are the new ideas? What are the new plans? Sir, with regard to the general demand of the special Session ...(*Interruptions*)... the hon. Minister did not respond. This is number one. Secondly, with regard to the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations about the support price, adding 50 per cent to the cost of production, and then deciding on the MSP, there is no response from the Minister. Thirdly, about fertilizers, the Minister is expressing his helplessness. About stopping the suicides, he has no idea. About my question

regarding the Agriculture Income Insurance Scheme, he did not mention anything. The issue of expansion of the rural godowns, cold storage chains, also did not find a place in the Minister's response. Sir, increase in infrastructure, is the need of the hour. The very purpose of my requesting for the presence of the Finance Minister, the Commerce Minister, the Power Minister and other concerned Ministers was not to see their pretty faces. I have been seeing it every day. The issue was, we thought that they will understand the seriousness of the situation and after applying their mind in their respective departments, they will try to push the reforms wherever they are necessary. That is the purpose of requesting all of them to be here.

Sir, I have a figure with me. In a reply given to the House by the Finance Minister, he has said, 'the amount of concessions given to industry is Rs. 4,14,000 crores and the agriculture subsidies provided is of Rs. 1,40,000 crores.' It means, 62 per cent of the population is getting Rs. 1,40,000 crores. He did not mention the percentage of population dependent on industry. I am not against industry. But, at the same time yardsticks should be applied to agricultural community. These are the important issues on which the Minister did not respond. I hope the other Ministers would intervene and say something about export and import also.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): My request to the Members is, please only put questions.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, the Minister gave a very exhaustive reply. I would like to thank him for that. But, as my senior colleague, Shri Venkaiah Naidu, has raised many points, I don't want to repeat those points.

Sir, the issue is of agrarian crisis or what I would describe 'distress'. How do we get out of it? There are various measures that the Minister has outlined. They are good measures. If they succeed, there will be some improvement. But is that adequate? Sir, we had also requested the Finance Minister's presence, the Commerce Minister's presence. I am happy, and I want to thank them for being here. The issue is, unless you are able to increase your public investments in agriculture in a big way, unless you are able to augment irrigation in a big way, unless you are able to provide the storage facilities and the marketing infrastructure to the farmers, this crisis and this distress cannot be seriously addressed. Now, Sir, I think, the entire House will agree with me that there is something

that we will have to address, and, if that has to be addressed, it has to be a multi-pronged approach, a multi-disciplinary approach, with all the Ministries involved. We would like to know from the Agriculture Minister, with all his vast experience, etc., as to what are the suggestions and recommendations his Ministry has made. You are now discussing the Twelfth Plan. Much of the discussion is over on it and it is already coming into operation. What are the outlays asked for increase in public investments in agriculture? How are we doing it? That is the first question.

The second question is this. The hon. Minister has himself answered a question in this House and that was on the 30th of November, 2007. It was Starred Question No. 238 where he had used the data provided by the NCRB for the farm suicides in our country. Today, he has talked of the data that is provided by the State Governments. Now, Sir, the NCRB data somehow, after November 2007, is not being used to give this data at all while this Government uses the same NCRB data for other issues like suicides of students, suicides of others, etc. Now, Sir, as per the NCRB data, 15,964 farmers committed suicides in 2010 alone; and if you take the figure from 1995 to 2010, 2,56,913 farm suicides have taken place. Sir, the point here is, not to wait for the family to get an autopsy done for which the family has to pay. They would rather say it is not a suicide and not pay that money for autopsy. Unless you do that, it is not recorded as a distress suicide.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Yechuryji, please put the question.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: My question, therefore, Sir, is that let us not quibble over the figures. The point is, it is a serious matter if such a large number of farmers are committing suicides. Now, I come to my third question. Mr. Minister, you have yourself mentioned that you now have roughly around 600 lakh tonne of rice and wheat in your Central godowns. This works out to more than one-and-a-half times the buffer norm for this period. Now, you have this extra stock. We know from our experience that there is extra stock that has been rotting, say, in Andhra Pradesh; about five lakh tones of rice are rotting there. Now, the hon. Minister knows it better than me that three-fourths of the food subsidy goes towards storage. You are spending a huge amount of money on storage. Instead of spending that money on storage, save the money on subsidy, release the extra foodgrains to the States at BPL prices, strengthen the Public Distribution System and help the people.

I hope the hon. Minister would be replying to these three queries that I have raised.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Now, Shri D. Raja. Put only questions.
...(Interruptions)...

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir I would like to raise a question.
...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): No, there cannot be a discussion again.
...(Interruptions)... Mr. Raja.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I wanted to raise this question in the presence of the Finance Minister but he has left the House. Nevertheless, let me put the question.

Sir, the biggest problem in our agriculture, or the biggest reason for the agrarian distress, is the substantial decline in public investments. When Mr. V.P. Singh was the Prime Minister, it was at one of its highest. I understand that it was 14-plus per cent. I may be corrected by the Minister if I am wrong. Now, some Members have asked for a separate budget for agriculture. If this cannot be accepted, I would request the hon. Minister to explain that. In principle, we have agreed that six per cent of GDP could be spent on education and two-three per cent of GDP in the health sector. In the same manner, is the Government contemplating fixing a benchmark, a certain substantial percentage of GDP, to be spent for increasing public investments in agriculture?

Secondly, when we talked about the Green Revolution, it was not all about hybrid seeds or inputs; it was about the State intervention. The State, at that point of time, had intervened to create market access, to provide seeds, to provide institutionalized credit to farmers. Now, the State intervention is also declining and it is talking about the PPP model. The State is placing the farming community at the mercy of multi-national corporations, and that is what the Minister had indicated. This is a very serious issue.

3.00 P.M.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please, put the question.

SHRI D. RAJA: Our farmers cannot be placed at the mercy of Monsanto and Cargill. It is a question of State intervention. Does the State have the political will to intervene in the situation and safeguard the interests of the farming community?

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY (Odisha): Why are you not taking particularly the name of ... (Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please, sit down, Mr. Pany. ... (Interruptions) ... Please, take your seat, Mr. Raja. You are not supposed to reply to that.

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: वहां किसान मर रहे हैं। ... (व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): बैठिए। ... (व्यवधान) ... पाणि जी, बैठिए। गर्म मत होइए। आप बैठ जाइए।

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं कृषि मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देता हूँ कि जो सवाल उठाए गए थे, उन्होंने बहुत विस्तार से उनका जवाब देने की कोशिश की है। मैं माननीय एम. वेंकैया नायडु जी के इस प्रस्ताव से सहमत हूँ कि एक स्पेशल सेशन खेती की समस्या के बारे में विचार करने के लिए बुलाया जाए। माननीय मंत्री जी ने बताया कि 26 परसेंट किसान ही खेती को छोड़ना चाहते हैं, बाकी लोग खेती करना चाहते हैं। महोदय, प्रतिशत के हिसाब से 24 परसेंट कम लग रहा है, लेकिन अगर संख्या के दृष्टिकोण से आप देखेंगे तो लगभग 17-18 करोड़ किसान खेती को छोड़ना चाहते हैं। इस प्रकार यह एक बहुत बड़ी समस्या है, यह कोई साधारण समस्या नहीं है। ये लोग खेती को क्यों छोड़ना चाहते हैं, इसके बारे में आपने जानकारी नहीं दी। महोदय, आज 26 प्रतिशत किसान खेती को छोड़ रहे हैं, आगे इनका प्रतिशत बढ़ सकता है।

इसलिए आपके जवाब से यह लगता है कि खेती के सामने बहुत भारी संकट है। आपने यह भी बताया कि एक समय 86 हजार करोड़ रुपया हम दे रहे थे, अब चार लाख करोड़ से ज्यादा पैसा हम उसमें दे रहे हैं, तो उसकी उपलब्धि क्या हो रही है, यह हम जानना चाहते हैं? मनरेगा या बाकी दूसरी योजनाओं को भी आप खेती के काम में लगा रहे हैं। उससे क्या एसेट्स क्रिएट हो रहा है और कितना लाभ मिल रहा है? तीसरी बात, मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि भ्रष्टाचार, किसानों की हालत के लिए एक बहुत बड़ी जवाबदेही है। उसको spurious बीज मिल रहा है, उसको

spurious खाद मिल रही है, इसके अलावा जो सरकारी एजेंसीज हैं, किसानों के लिए जो आप योजनाएं चला रहे हैं, उन योजनाओं का भी लाभ उनको नहीं मिल पा रहा है, बीच में ...(व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): तिवारी जी, प्रश्न पूछिए।

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी: भ्रष्टाचार को रोकने के लिए राज्य सरकारों के पास साधन नहीं हैं, उनके पास लैब्रटरी नहीं हैं कि वे बीजों का टेस्ट ठीक से कर सकें, खाद सही है या नहीं इसका भी टेस्ट कर सकें। जब तक आप नीचे स्तर तक इस सभी सुविधाओं से लैस नहीं करेंगे तो जो spurious बीज, spurious खाद उनको मिल रही है और दूसरी चीजें उनको मिल रही है, उनकी जांच नहीं कर सकते हैं।

मैं अन्तिम बात कहना चाहूंगा कि आप कई तरह का कानून बनाने जा रहे हैं। इसमें जो लोग किसानों को ठग रहे हैं, उनको नकली बीज दे रहे हैं, जिसकी वजह से सब फसल मारी जाती है और उनको आत्म हत्या करनी पड़ती है। अगर आप उनकी सजा का पूरा प्रावधान नहीं करेंगे और यह अधिकार आप राज्यों को नहीं देंगे तथा केन्द्र के हाथ में रखेंगे तब तक इस समस्या का समाधान कैसे होगा? इसलिए खेती के सामने आज जो चुनौती है और देश के सामने जो चुनौती है उस पर विस्तार से चर्चा करने के लिए मैं भी मांग करता हूँ कि एक विशेष सत्र बुलाया जाए। मैं माननीय कृषि मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करूंगा कि इस पर अपनी सहमति प्रदान करें।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल, सिर्फ एक ही प्रश्न पूछें।

श्री विक्रम वर्मा (मध्य प्रदेश): सर, यह बहुत गलत बात है। जब डिबेट में हिस्सा ले रहे हैं तो आप इससे क्यों इंकार कर रहे हैं कि एक ही पूछेगा। As a Member, I have the right to ask the question. ...*(Interruptions)*... As a Member, it is my right. ...*(Interruptions)*...

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, माननीय कृषि मंत्री जी ने बहुत विस्तार से जवाब दिया है। इस पर माननीय सदस्यों के सवाल काफी सही थे। आत्महत्या के कारणों पर तो विस्तार से बताया गया है लेकिन उसके निवारण का एक भी तरीका नहीं बताया कि यह आत्म हत्याएं कैसे रोकें। मेरे छोटे-छोटे से सवाल हैं। जो लोहा पैदा करता है वह अपनी कीमत तय करता है, सीमेंट पैदा करने वाला अपनी कीमत तय करता है। लेकिन कृषि उपज पैदा करने वाला कीमत तय नहीं कर पाता, जो सबसे ज्यादा परेशानी है। गेहूँ का मिनिमम सपोर्ट प्राइस है, चावल का है, दलहन का है, तिलहन का है, लेकिन कच्ची फसलों का कोई भाव सरकार के द्वारा तय नहीं हो सकता है और उसी का आप पूरा फायदा उठा रहे हैं। जैसे टमाटर है, प्याज है, आलू है, हरी सब्जियां हैं। यह सरकार की जिम्मेदारी है कि खाद्य प्रसंस्करण का तरीका बढ़ाएं, कोल्ड स्टोरेज बढ़ाएं, वह आप नहीं बढ़ा रहे हैं। आप यह सुविधा भी नहीं दे रहे हैं कि वे उसका प्रोक्योरमेंट कर सके...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): प्रश्न पूछिए।

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: सर, मैं बहुत इम्पोर्टेंट बात कर रहा हूँ, मैं बिल्कुल ग्राउंड रिएलिटी की बात कर रहा हूँ। इसलिए मजबूरी में टमाटर का सुबह का भाव दूसरा होता है, दोपहर का भाव दूसरा होता है, शाम का भाव दूसरा होता है और रात का भाव दूसरा होता है। मेरी कंस्टीट्यूंसी में इस समय आलू सत्तर पैसे किलो बिक रहा है। लेकिन जो आम गृहणी दिल्ली की है यह आलू को 9 से 11 रुपए से कम पर नहीं खरीद रही है। वहां पर आलू किसान परेशान है और यहां पर आलू खरीदने वाली महिला परेशान है। प्याज पैदा करने वाला नासिक में परेशान है और वहां आत्महत्या कर रहा है, लेकिन प्याज खरीदने वाली महिला यहां दिल्ली, मुम्बई, कोलकाता और चेन्नई में परेशान है। संतरा पैदा करने वाला किसान उधर परेशान है, यहां खाने के लिए स्वाद ही नहीं पता कि उसका क्या स्वाद है। अंगूर वाला किसान हिमाचल में परेशान है, लेकिन यहां गरीब लोग अंगूर का स्वाद नहीं ले पा रहे हैं तथा खरीद नहीं पा रहे हैं। मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि ...**(व्यवधान)**...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): यह स्पीच का टाइम नहीं है, आप प्रश्न पूछिए।

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: यदि एक किसान के यहां पांच लोग रहते हैं, किसान के यहां ...**(व्यवधान)**...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): मैंने जो टाइम दिया है उसका मिस-यूज मत कीजिए।

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: आप मनरेगा में 120 रुपये दे रहे हैं, अगर घर में केवल पांच लोग हैं और पांचों खेती में काम कर रहे हैं, तो वे 600 रुपये रोज़ का अपने खेत में काम कर रहे हैं। महीने में 18000 रुपये का तो वे अपने खेत में काम कर रहे हैं। ...**(समय की घंटी)**...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): What is this, Mr. Baghel? आप प्रश्न पूछिए नहीं तो, I will say, "Nothing will go on record". Please ask the question.

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: अगर कोई 70 साल का किसान है तो उसे ट्यूबवैल पर सुलाया जाता है जिससे कि चोरी न हो पाये, उसे खलिहान में सुलाया जाता है कि कहीं आग न लग जाये। अगर किसान का 7 साल का बच्चा है, तो उससे भी काम लिया जाता है कि वह खेत पर रोटी लेकर आये।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): I did not call you to make speech.

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: किसान के घर में जितने लोग हैं, अगर एक परिवार में केवल पांच लोग हैं, अगर वे खेत में काम कर रहे हैं।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): I have not called you to ...**(Interruptions)**...

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: वे लोग 18000 रुपये की तो मजदूरी कर रहे हैं। उनकी 18000 रुपये महीने की इन्कम ही नहीं है। अगर 18000 रुपये महीने की इन्कम हो, तो वे खेती का काम ही नहीं करें।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): This is taking undue advantage. It is not correct.

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: क्या आप कच्ची फसलों के लिए खाद्य प्रसंस्करण का, कोल्ड स्टोरेज का इंतजाम कर रहे हैं?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Now, please conclude. You ask the question; that's all. Now, Shri M.V. Mysura Reddy.

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: दूसरी बात यह है कि जब तक किसान की फसल घर में नहीं आ जाती है तब तक...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): आप बैठ जाइए। This is not going on record.

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: *

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): What is this?

प्रो. एस.पी. सिंह बघेल: *

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): मैं क्या करूं।...(व्यवधान)... आप बैठ जाइए।...(व्यवधान)... यह रिकार्ड में नहीं जा रहा है। श्री मैसूरा रेड्डी।...(व्यवधान)... आप बैठ जाइए।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री किन्नम वर्मा: सर, आप मुस्करा कर बोलेंगे, तो वे बैठ जायेंगे। आप गुस्से में बोलते हैं, तो वे कैसे बैठेंगे।...(व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी.जे. कुरियन): वर्मा जी, आप बैठ जाइए। श्री मैसूरा रेड्डी।

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, the main cause for the agricultural crisis is the insufficient income required to meet the consumption needs of the farmers. That is why, ...(Interruptions)... the farmers are insisting and demanding also that whatever the expenditure is there, for that, 50 per cent profit should be added. That is also there in the Swaminathan Committee's report. That Committee was also appointed by the same Government. What steps were taken in this regard? Because of this thing, there is a gap between rural and urban income and there is a gap between agricultural and non-agricultural income. To bridge this gap, they are demanding that there should be a remunerative price for their produce. What steps were taken by the Government on recommendations given in Swaminathan Committee's report regarding the remunerative prices? I want the hon. Minister to reply on this point.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

DR. ASHOK S. GANGULY (Nominated): I just wanted to ask one question. What is being done in terms of allocation for additional silo storage, cold storage, block level weather forecasting and ground water replenishment expenditure?

श्री मंगल किसन (उड़ीसा): सर, बाढ़ में और सूखे में किसान की जो फसल नष्ट होती है, तो एग्रीकल्चरल डिपार्टमेंट उसकी भरपाई करने के लिए कोई व्यवस्था करता है या नहीं करता है?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Nominated): Sir, given that the focus of this discussion was on farmer suicides, most of which are taking place among cotton farmers in the Vidharbha region and the regions adjacent to Vidharbha, in the otherwise extremely wide-ranging and informative reply by the Minister, there was almost no mention of the cotton sector and the reasons for which, people are dying in the cotton sector and what steps the Government proposes to take in the cotton sector, may I request the Minister to add to our wide knowledge of Indian agriculture by telling us specifically of what is happening, or, what you proposes to do about the cotton sector which is responsible for almost all the farmer suicides in this country?

श्री विक्रम वर्मा: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी इस बात से बहुत अच्छी तरह से परिचित हैं कि जब किसान प्राइमरी सोसाइटी से चाहे शार्ट टर्म लोन लेता है या लॉग टर्म लोन लेता है, तो उसके इश्योरेंस का पैसा सोसाइटी से कट जाता है। जब किसान 4 per cent पर कमर्शियल बैंक से क्रेडिट कार्ड द्वारा लोन लेता है, तो वहां पर भी उसका इश्योरेंस का पैसा कटता है। यह इश्योरेंस पॉलिसी ऐसी है, जिसके कारण किसान को क्रॉप फेलियोर का रिटर्न नहीं होता है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या मंत्री जी इस प्रकार की किसी इश्योरेंस पॉलिसी के बारे में पूर्ण विचार कर रहे हैं ताकि जो किसान का individual क्रॉप फेलियोर पर पैसा कटता है, वह इश्योरेंस का पैसा उसको मिल सके?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN): Now, the last clarification by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan. Others can send their questions in writing to the Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*... What can I do? There is no time. ...*(Interruptions)*... Yes, yes. I will call you. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please.

PROF. M. S. SWAMINATHAN (Nominated): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has covered extensively, and, has also mentioned that for the first time, either in the colonial India or Independent India, we have a National Policy for Farmers, which was placed in Parliament in October, 2007. I would like to suggest if we can have time, in the coming Session, for a detailed

discussion on the National Policy on Farmers. Many of the questions, in fact, have been printed, but, I am sorry to say, things are yet to be implemented. (*Interruptions*) One of the important suggestions, which I would like the Minister to consider some time, and, which we recommended also, is that the 'Krishi Bhawan' should be renamed as Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in order to make everybody sitting in that building aware of the fact that they exist for the farmers' well being. That mindset change has to be done. For example, 10.4 crore Kisan Credit Cards have been issued. We asked as to how many such cards have been issued to *mahila kisans* because, increasingly, there is womanization of agriculture in our country, particularly in the hills. They have no gender desegregated data except they said, women are not given these cards because they don't have patta of land in their names. There are so many issues of this kind, which we should discuss in detail. But I would like to compliment the Minister for his comprehensive analysis. Thank you.

सरदार सुखदेव सिंह ढिंढसा: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने इस विषय पर बोलते हुए अपने भाषण में भी कहा था कि मिनिस्टर साहब बहुत एक्सपीरिएन्सड आदमी हैं और स्वयं किसान हैं। मंत्री जी ने बहुत अच्छा जवाब भी दिया, लेकिन मैं उस बात को नहीं दोहराना चाहता हूँ, जो वेंकैया जी न कही है कि बहुत से ऐसे सवाल पूछे गए थे, जिनका जवाब नहीं दिया गया है। पहली बात तो यह है कि आप जो MSP फिक्स करते हैं, उसे फिक्स करने का क्या साइंटिफिक तरीका है? आपने यह तो बता दिया कि इस साल में इतनी हुई है और इस साल में नहीं हुई। मैंने उस दिन भी पूछा था कि क्या आप डॉ. स्वामीनाथन की रिपोर्ट को लागू करेंगे या नहीं करेंगे? आपने इसका कोई जवाब नहीं दिया है। मेरा एक प्रश्न और था कि जब किसान की फसल पूरी तरह से तबाह हो जाती है, तो आप उसको 1500 रुपए पर एकड़ देते हैं, इसके बारे में आपने बिल्कुल नहीं कहा कि आप इसको और बढ़ा रहे हैं या उसका क्या तरीका है?

मैं एक और प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ, जिसके बारे में सदन के दूसरे माननीय सदस्यों ने भी पूछा है। सर, आपने ठीक कहा है कि खासकर पंजाब और हरियाणा में पानी का लेवल बहुत नीचे चला गया है। मैंने उस दिन भी कहा था कि उसके लिए डायवर्सिफिकेशन की बात चलती है। अगर आप MSP दूसरी क्रॉप्स पर, कमर्शियल क्रॉप्स पर फिक्स नहीं करेंगे, तो डायवर्सिफिकेशन नहीं हो सकती। आप आलू की बात ही ले लीजिए, पंजाब में कोई भी आदमी आलू नहीं खरीद रहा है, लोग सड़कों पर आलू फैंक रहे हैं। वहां पर कोई आदमी एक रुपए किलो के भाव से भी आलू नहीं खरीद रहा है, तो फिर किसान आलू की बुवाई क्यों करेंगे? आपने इस बारे में भी कोई हल निकालने की बात नहीं कही है कि आप इसका क्या हल निकालेंगे?

SHRI D. BANDYOPADHYAY (West Bengal): Sir, just one question. There is serious depletion of groundwater level. Groundwater is going down very severely. The tubewells are the source for

most of the water for the irrigation. Is there any specific plan of the Government of India for recharging of the depleted underground Aquifer?

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (West Bengal): Sir, I have a small question. Credit is very important for farmers.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Since he has yielded, you put the question immediately.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Yes, Sir. Only 32 per cent kisans are getting timely and adequate credit and others are forced to go to the moneylender's house. This is one of the biggest problems being faced by the farmers throughout the country. You are giving Kisan Credit Cards, but kisans are facing this problem. Please address this issue. Only 32 per cent kisans are getting the institutionalized credit and others are forced to go to the moneylenders.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: One of the important points which hon. Member, Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, has raised is about the suicides, and essentially the suicides in cotton-producing areas. It is true that Vidarbha is a major cotton-producing area in the country. Practically, the largest cotton area in the country is in Vidarbha, Khandesh, Marathwada. If you see per hectare yield of cotton in Vidarbha and per hectare yield of cotton in Gujarat, Gujarat produce about six quintals per hectare and Vidarbha produce about 1.2 quintal per hectare on an average. The main reason is, it is the rain-fed cotton. It requires at least two to three watering. If you succeed to provide them two to three watering, you will definitely get very good yield. But the entire Vidarbha, it is rain-fed cotton and that is why the yield is not up to the mark. The solution is that the farming community from that area has to shift from cotton to some other crop. The State Government is trying to convince them and introducing some scheme where they would like to see that the farmer is shifting from cotton. Yes, if water is there, he should definitely go for cotton. There are no two opinions about it. But if insufficient rain is there, availability of water is not there, cotton is a very very risky crop. It requires a lot of investment, and if you don't get good returns, it will be difficult to survive. As I said, in Gujarat, for instance, if today the market price is 4,200 rupees per quintal, the Gujarat farmer is getting 4,200 x 6 quintals and the Vidarbha farmer is getting 4,200 x 1.2 quintal. So, definitely, his gross income is not

up to the mark. The cost of cultivation is somewhat near to that and that is why I think such a serious situation is developing there. The solution is that we have to convince the farmer from that area to shift to some other crop. That type of a programme the State Government is going to start.

Mr. Naidu has raised many issues. It is true that I have not said about the cold-storages; it is true that I have not said about the warehouses. There are schemes. In fact, the Food Ministry has introduced a scheme. I have just not got the figures with me. My colleague is sitting here, he will be able to tell. In many cities, massive programme of construction of warehouses has been taken up on PPP model and there is a very good response except in the States of Gujarat and Maharashtra. We have gone in detail as to why there is no response in Gujarat and Maharashtra and the reason is that the cost of land is very high and that is why there was no proper response from these States. But from rest of the country, there has been a good response and good work is going on. I am absolutely sure, in two to three years' time, the availability of warehouses will not be the major problem. So, we have already started implementing that type of a programme.

Secondly, about the cold-storages, there are some schemes under the Horticulture Mission where we provide some financial support to the entrepreneurs who want to set up the cold-storages. Similarly, we are also providing some money from the Food Processing Ministry for those who want to set up the cold-storages. Cold-storages are quite successful in some of the States like Uttar Pradesh. For instance, their occupancy is more than 90 per cent. But there are some States also where the occupancy is below 40-45 per cent. There, the viability of the cold-storages is in a difficult situation.

Power is an equally important issue as far as cold storage facility is concerned. Power is not available 24 hours in most of the States. That is why cold storage is not that successful. But we have no choice. If we have to save the losses, especially post-harvest losses, we have to encourage cold storage. These types of schemes are already under implementation.

Another issue, which has been raised here, is what exactly we are doing for marketing and what we will do if there is drought. A point was raised by Mr. Yechury regarding the data of the NCRB. We have taken a different approach. All this information will definitely take a lot of time. As far

as the issue of figures, which the NCRB is communicating to all the State Governments, is concerned, it has communicated it till last year. It is not correct that it has not been communicating every year. It is communicating every year. The State Governments are saying that they are communicating it in writing. Yes, there are cases of suicide. But it is not because of distress. The State Governments say that there is some other reason. It might be family reason or it might be crop failure. I think crop failure causes distress.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: But it is definitely not because of happiness.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I got it one by one from 16 States. I have a letter with me. They have said that there is not a single case of farmer's suicide in their State. I have to ultimately depend on States. I should not say that agriculture is a State subject. I have to depend on State Governments. I cannot say no to them. On the one hand, the NCRB says that it is 15,900. On the other hand, the State Governments say that it is 800. There is such a vast difference. My appeal to the Chair and to the House is that let us appoint a House Committee of both the Houses. Let us visit States.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, I support it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We support it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Everybody is supporting it.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, we would like to thank the hon. Minister for making this suggestion and, through the Chair, we would like you to please convey to the Government that we accept the Minister's suggestion. Let the House Committee be appointed to actually investigate and find out the real situation on the ground. I am formally proposing it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): I think the whole House agrees.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I am very happy to accept this suggestion. In order to try to understand their problem, we have to visit villages and families. I am not saying that we should go and visit each and every family. Let us select a committee and come to conclusion. ...*(Interruptions)*... Ultimately, these recommendations will be useful to improve the agriculture sector of the nation. It will be a great service to the country. That is why I am ready to accept this suggestion. I do not know its formality.

One point, which has been made here, is that in case of drought the Government is not giving compensation. In fact, there is a difference between "compensation and assistance. It is difficult for any Government to accept each and every point of whatever the loss is. Recently, the Government of India has taken some decision to improve the aid to the farmers who are in distress. I think that will be communicated to them.

About separate budget for agriculture, this issue was raised on many occasions. In fact, there are some practical difficulties. Today, we are providing some money, some budgetary provision, for generation of power. It is difficult to tell the Power Minister that I am providing separate budget for that and it will not be part of that particular Ministry. Take the case of irrigation project. While implementing it, water is used for drinking purpose. It is used for cities. It is used for villages also. How to differentiate which percentage is going for agriculture and which percentage is going for drinking water purpose. That is why it is practically difficult to provide a separate budget for Agriculture like Railways. This is the position.

One more issue, again and again has been raised is about the M.S. Swaminathan Commission recommendations and 50 per cent crop cost.

This recommendation made by the NCF was not accepted by the Government due to the reason that Minimum Support Price recommended by the CACP from the objective criteria considering the variety of factors and hence prescribing and increase of, at least, 50 per cent on the crop may disturb the market mechanical linkage between MAC and cost of production, and it may be counter-productive in some States. That is the reason that this recommendation has not been accepted.

I do not want to take more time of the House. There are certain issues which have been raised by the hon. Members. I am available to them for any discussion. If they want, I am ready to communicate with them in writing also.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, one minute. The Swaminathan Commission's recommendation with regard to support price is the main issue. About the special session to discuss the agrarian crisis, he did not respond. About lowering interest rate also, he did not respond. As a protest, we are walking out of the House.

(At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber)

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: The Agriculture Minister did not respond to the question of availability of credit at lower rate of interest rates and also about the money lenders. Therefore, we are also staging a walk out.

(At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber)

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक (उत्तर प्रदेश): हम भी आपसे सहमत नहीं हैं, इसलिए हम लोग भी वॉक आउट करते हैं।

(इस समय कुछ माननीय सदस्य कक्ष से बाहर चले गए)

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2011

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I move:

That the Bill further to amend the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

This Bill further to amend Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 is going to herald a very significant transformation in the Broadcasting Industry. Honourable Members may be aware that the process of digitalization of analogue network has already been undertaken by many countries in the world like the USA, the UK, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, etc. Digitalisation will ensure several benefits for every stakeholder. The most important benefit flows to the common man, viewer, who is the most important stakeholder. Digitalization will enable the consumer to exercise a la carte selection of channels, get better picture quality, access to Value Added Services. For the Broadcasters and Cable Operators, who are both Service Providers, the system will ensure transparency, fairness and allow complete addressability resulting in increase in subscription revenue and reducing their dependence on TRPs.

Honourable Members will be very happy to know that we have charted out a detailed road map for this process of digitalization to be completed by 31st December, 2014. It shall be implemented in the country in four phases.