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National Horticulture Mission

*77. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry is implementing National Horticulture Mission for holistic development of horticulture;
- (b) if so, the major objectives of the scheme;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that one of the objectives of the scheme is creation of market infrastructure for fruits and vegetables; and
- (d) if so, the targets fixed and achieved during the last five years?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) for the holistic development of horticulture in the country with the following major objectives:—

- (i) Provide holistic growth of horticulture sector through area based regionally differentiated strategies, which include research, technology promotion, extension, post harvest management, processing and marketing, in consonance with comparative advantage of each State/region and its diverse agro-climatic features;
- (ii) Enhance horticulture production, improve nutritional security and income support to farm households;
- (iii) Establish convergence and synergy among on-going and plan programmes, for horticulture development;
- (iv) Promote, develop and disseminate technologies for horticulture development, through seamless blending of traditional wisdom and modern scientific knowledge; and
- (v) Create employment generation opportunities for skilled and unskilled persons, especially unemployed youth.

(c) and (d) One of the objectives of the scheme is creation of market infrastructure for marketing of horticulture produce including fruits and vegetables. During last five years (2006-07 to 2010-11), 225 Rural Markets, 100 Wholesale Markets and 7 Terminal Markets were targeted in

project mode for their development by the State Governments. Out of these, Government of India has sanctioned 219 Rural Markets, 85 Wholesale Markets and 2 Terminal Markets.

Suicides by farmers

*78. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of farmers are committing suicide because of poverty and debts;
- (b) the number of suicides committed by farmers during the last three years, State-wise; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to prevent such suicides?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Reasons of suicide by farmers, as reported by State Government concerned, are manifold which, *inter-alia*, include indebtedness, crop failure, drought, socio-economic and personal. Number of suicide committed by farmers due to agrarian reasons, year-wise and State-wise during last three years, as reported by State Government, is given in the Statement (*See below*).

(c) Government of India has taken a number of steps to prevent suicide by farmers, which include implementation of:—

- (i) Rehabilitation Package announced in 2006 initially for 3 years, covering 31 districts in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra, to address problems of agrarian distress. An Amount of Rs. 19910.70 crore has been released under this package till June 30, 2011. The period for implementation of non-credit components of the package was extended upto September 30, 2011.
- (ii) Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 benefited about 3.69 crore farmers, involving Rs. 65,318.33 crore, as per provisional figures.
- (iii) Interest subvention for timely repayment of crop loan upto Rs. 3 lakh was enhanced during 2011-12, which resulted in lowering of effective rate of interest to 4% per annum for such farmers, who repay their crop loan on time.
- (iv) Substantial enhancement of Minimum Support Prices of major cereals during last 5 years to benefit farmers.

Further, in order to revitalize agriculture sector and to improve conditions of farmers on sustainable basis, other measures taken by the Government, *inter-alia*, include significant increase in public investment in agriculture sector through implementation of various schemes such as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, National Horticulture