

During Rabi-2012-13, Government of Kerala has declared drought in 14 districts of the State and sought central assistance of Rs. 492.80 crore for mitigating drought situation. An Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) has visited the State and assessed the situation.

#### **Insurance of fish ponds**

4036. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would impress upon the insurance companies to insure the fish ponds; and

(b) whether Government would give status to fisheries at par with Agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. CHARAN DAS MAHANT): (a) The existing Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Scheme of Welfare of fishermen" does not cover insurance of fish ponds and there is no proposal to include insurance of fish ponds during the Twelfth Five Year Plan.

(b) The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture had requested Ministry of Finance to consider treating Aquaculture at par with Agriculture so that the subsidy, income tax benefits and other incentives available to agriculture could be extended to Pisciculture. The Ministry of Finance has informed that the income from fisheries does not qualify as agricultural income under the Income Tax Act, 1961 and hence is subject to income tax. However, some incentives are available for cooperatives and enterprises for fisheries activities under section 80P, 80-IB (11A) and 35 AD of the Income Tax Act, 1961. In respect of provision of loans at low interest rates, it has been clarified that the provision of interest subvention is available for crop loans upto Rs. 3 lakhs to the farmers. Loans for the purpose of fisheries sector are not covered under this scheme at present.

#### **MSP of paddy**

4037. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state whether Government would consider to enhance MSP of paddy due to increase in cost of fertilizer, power, labour and seeds for the current marketing season 2013-14?