

4. Construction, Erection, Commissioning or installation of original works pertaining to post-harvest storage infrastructure for agricultural produce including cold storages for such purposes are exempted from Service tax.
5. Capital investment in the creation of modern storage capacity has been made eligible for viability gap funding scheme of the Finance Ministry. The cold chains and post-harvest storage has been recognized as an infrastructure sub-sector.

Development of food processing sector

2271. SHRI D. KUPENDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the food processing sector is still at a nascent stage in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and whether inadequate infrastructural facilities, access to credit, food safety laws, etc. are the main reasons therefor; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/being taken by Government to address these issues and for developing the food processing sector to the level of other developing countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SADHVI NIRANJAN JYOTI): (a) and (b) As per the "Vision 2015: Strategy & Action Plan for Food Processing Industries in India" prepared by Rabo India Finance in April, 2005, the level of processing in India is very low and varies from sector to sector and is estimated at 2 per cent in the case of fruits and vegetables. It is very high in developed countries (80% in USA, 70% in France) and in many developing countries as well (80% in Malaysia, 30% in Thailand). Lack of efficient supply chain infrastructure, inadequate processing capacity and access to affordable credit are some of the important causes of slow development of food processing sector in the country.

(c) For promotion and development of food processing sector in the country, Government is implementing Central Sector Scheme for Development of Infrastructure for Food Processing having components of (a) Mega Food Parks (b) Integrated Cold Chain, Value Addition and Preservation Infrastructure and (c) Setting-up/Modernization of Abattoirs (subsumed in NMFP *w.e.f.* 01.04.2014); Scheme of Technology Upgradation/Establishment/Modernization of Food Processing Industries; Scheme for

Quality Assurance, Codex Standards, Research & Development and Other Promotional Activities; Scheme for Human Resource Development and Scheme of Strengthening of Institutions.

Further, during the Twelfth Five Year Plan the Government has launched Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'National Mission on Food Processing' (NMFP) which is being implemented through the State Governments/Union Territories. The Schemes included in the NMFP are (i) Technology Up-gradation/Setting up/Modernization of Food Processing Units, (ii) Cold Chain, Value Addition and Preservation Infrastructure for Non-Horticulture Products, (iii) Setting-up/Modernisation of Abattoirs (*w.e.f.* 01.04.2014), (iv) Human Resource Development, (v) Promotional Activities, (vi) Creating Primary Processing Centres/Collection Centres in Rural Areas, (vii) Modernisation of Meat Shops and (viii) Reefer Vehicles. All the State/Union Territory Governments have been empowered to receive the applications, sanction and release grants-in-aid to the eligible beneficiaries under NMFP. State/Union Territory Governments also have the flexibility in identifying sectors for special focus and selection of location of projects as well as beneficiaries to harness the potential of value addition by using locally grown raw material including fruits and vegetables for setting up food processing industries.

A special fund of ₹ 2,000/- crore has been created in National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for providing affordable credit to entrepreneurs for setting up of food processing units in designated Food Parks.

Voting rights to NRIs

2272. SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government proposes to give voting rights to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs);
- (b) whether Election Commission of India has made any recommendations to this effect;
- (c) if so, the details of the recommendation made by the Election Commission;
- (d) whether Government has examined security angle in this respect; and
- (e) whether any demand to this effect was made by NRIs during PM's visit to USA or otherwise, the details thereof?