

Post-harvest infrastructure

*171. SHRI KIRANMAY NANDA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that more than 30 per cent fruits and vegetables get wasted every year due to unavailability of post-harvest infrastructure and facilities; and

(b) if so, whether Government has any plan or programme to improve post-harvest infrastructure, including storage, transportation and marketing of fruits, vegetables and flowers, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH) : (a) and (b) A Study published in 2012 by Central Institute of Post Harvest Engineering and Technology (CIPHET), Ludhiana, estimated overall quantitative losses in fruits and vegetables during operations such as harvesting, cleaning, sorting/grading, packaging, transportation, storage channels, weight loss in storage etc. to be in the range of 5.8 to 18%.

Under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), assistance is available for post harvest management including cold chain, refrigerated transport, processing and marketing infrastructure for which credit linked assistance of the admissible cost is available at the rate of 35% in general areas and 50% in hilly and scheduled areas.

Compensation for kin of farmers committed suicide

*172. SHRI AVINASH PANDE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the kin of 50 per cent of farmers who committed suicide in Maharashtra have been denied relief of compensation of ₹ 1 lakh each due to loopholes in Government rules;

(b) if so, the reasons for the failure of Government to compensate these bereaved families living in distressed socio-economic conditions;

(c) whether any steps have been taken by Government to remove such impediments, enhance amount of compensation and ensure that the kin of such farmers are promptly and adequately compensated and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH) : (a) to (d) Agriculture is a State subject under the Constitution and therefore, State Governments take appropriate measures for development of agriculture sector and welfare of farmers, including payment of compensation to the bereaved families of farmers affected by suicide.

Government of Maharashtra has reported that they provide compensation of ₹ one lakh in eligible cases *i.e.* to the family of those farmers who commit suicide due to crop failure, debt and inability to repay loan. Compensation is provided to the bereaved families after scrutiny of cases by a district level committee headed by the District Collector and comprising of Chief Executive Officer of Zila Parishad, Superintendent of Police, a representative of farmers and a non-government member of a social organization. Government of Maharashtra has also informed that there is no proposal under consideration for enhancement of amount of compensation.

Setting up of washing plant (laundry) for washing bedrolls

†*173. SHRI MOTILAL VORA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the High Court of Madhya Pradesh has directed all railway divisions to set up their own washing plant (laundry) within six months for washing bedrolls, if so, the steps taken by Government in this direction;

(b) whether Railways also propose to use disposable bedrolls; and

(c) if so, whether Government would also formulate policy to dispose such disposable bedrolls so that they could not be reused and if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) In the Railway Budget speech 2015-16, it has been announced that facility of online booking of disposable bed roll is being extended to all passengers through Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) portal on payment basis.

(c) Formulation of policy for disposal of disposable bed rolls to preclude its probable reuse would depend upon the terms and conditions for sale.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.