

as drought affected and submitted a memorandum seeking central assistance from NDRF. The Government of India has approved of Rs.1962.99 crore from NDRF in the wake of drought.

Suicide by farmers due to damage to their crops

†1411. SHRI NAZIR AHMED LAWAY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of farmers who committed suicide due to damage to their crops, as on date, State-wise;
- (b) the details of the assistance provided or proposed to be provided by Central Government to the families of the victim farmers, State-wise; and
- (c) the plan of Government to provide employment or other assistance to such families?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA) : (a) The State Governments of Maharashtra and Punjab have reported 3 (three) and 5 (five) cases of farmers' suicide respectively, due to damage to their crops. State Government of Rajasthan has also reported 1 (one) case of farmer suicide in the year 2015.

(b) and (c) Agriculture is a state subject under the Constitution and therefore, State Governments take appropriate measures for development of agriculture sector and welfare of farmers. Amount of compensation to the family of farmers who commit suicide is decided by the respective State Government including payment of compensation to the bereaved families of farmers affected by suicide.

Government of India supplements the efforts of States through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support. Several steps have been taken to revitalize the agriculture sector and improve condition of farming community on sustainable basis by increasing investment, improving farm practices, rural infrastructure and delivery of credit, technology and other inputs, extension, marketing, etc. Various programmes/schemes for the development of agriculture sector are being implemented in a decentralized manner with flexibility to State Governments to formulate and implement appropriate projects to suit their specific requirements. The focus of Government is primarily on increase of farm income, creation of non-farm income opportunities, improvement in productivity of rainfed agriculture, increasing coverage of farming areas under protective irrigation and forgoing appropriate backward and forward linkages.

Other measures taken by the Government for the benefit of farmers include

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

enhancement of minimum support prices of agricultural commodities, increase in credit flow to agriculture sector, debt waiver/relief, interest subvention on crop loans, revival package for strengthening Short Term Rural Cooperative Credit Structure, etc.

Amendment in APMC Act

1412. SHRI AJAY SANCHETI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether State Governments have been advised to amend their APMC Act to exclude fruits and vegetables so that farmers have wider selling choice;
- (b) if so, how many States have amended their APMC Act; and
- (c) the reasons for not amending the act by other States, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA) : (a) Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC) has advised States/ Union Territories (UTs) to deregulate marketing of fruits and vegetables when traded outside the market-yard while continuing regulation on trade transaction taking place inside the market yard so as to provide farmers wider choices to sell their fruits and vegetables, wherever they get better prices.

(b) As per information available as on date two States (Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka) have made amendments in their Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Acts while Nine other States (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, West Bengal) and Delhi have issued notifications to either cease the regulation or de-list fruits and vegetables from the Schedule of APMC Act by amending it or exempt or reduce the market fee on fruits and vegetables by exercising the powers conferred in their respective APMC Acts.

(c) Agricultural marketing is administered by the State Governments/UTs as per their respective marketing regulations and the decision to amend the Act is of the State/ UT Governments.

Reducing the number of people engaged in farming activities

1413. SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has plan to reduce the number of people engaged in farming activities; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA) : (a) Government has no specific plan to reduce the number of people engaged in farming activities.