

**Miserable condition of farmers**

1297. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the condition of farmers in the country is very miserable and a number of farmers are committing suicide every year;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken by Government for improvement of their financial condition;
- (c) whether heavy floods and drought are a major factor for poor financial condition of farmers; and
- (d) if so, whether Government has any plan for tackling such natural calamities, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KUNDARIA): (a) and (b) According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Report, 2014, 5650 farmers committed suicides during the year 2014. The causes of farmers suicides reported by NCRB include bankruptcy/ indebtedness, family problems, farming related problems, illness, drug abuse, poverty, marriage related problems, property dispute, fall in social reputation etc.

The primary responsibility for development of agriculture sector and welfare of farmers lies with the State Governments. Government of India supplements the efforts of States through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support. Several steps have been undertaken to revitalize the agriculture sector and improve upon the condition of farming community on sustainable basis by increasing public investment, improving farm practices, rural infrastructure, 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 forging appropriate backward and forward linkages.

Other measures taken by the Government for the benefit of farmers include enhancement in minimum support prices of agricultural commodities, increase in institutional credit flow to agriculture sector, post-harvest loan for six months to eliminate distress sale of agricultural produce by farmers, debt waiver/relief, interest subvention

on crop loans, revival package for strengthening Short Term Rural Cooperative Credit Structure, etc.

(c) and (d) Natural Calamities such as flood and drought cause loss to crops for which relief is distributed through SDRF and NDRF. The State Government is primarily responsible for taking necessary relief/measures in the wake of natural calamities. Government of India supplements efforts of State Government with financial assistance and logistic support. For undertaking relief measures, funds are available with the State Government in the form of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). Additional financial assistance, over and above SDRF, is considered from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for natural calamities of severe nature and is approved on the basis of Memorandum of State Government received from State Government in accordance with established procedure keeping in view items and norms in vogue for assistance. In addition compensation of crop damage is provided through insurance of crop.

All State Governments have already been advised to initiate advance remedial action e.g. Constructing water harvesting structures under MGNREGA and other such schemes, promoting agronomic practices for moisture conservation, promoting cultivation of less water consuming crops and restoring irrigation infrastructure by desilting canals, energizing tube-wells, replacing/repairing faulty pumps. Chief Secretaries of States have also been requested to ask APC/Principal Secretary (Agriculture) to carry out periodic assessment of preparation for kharif crops, particularly contingency crops and also investment made in water conservation structure under various schemes like Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) to verify their utility in harvesting the rainfall.

DAC through ICAR-Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) has prepared detailed crop contingency plan for 600 districts in the country. A Crisis Management Plan (CMP) for Drought has been in place and is available at the website of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture. The plan has also been updated recently in consultation with Stakeholder Ministries/Departments.

Meetings were held with Agriculture Secretaries/Senior Officers of 18 States on June 2 and 3, 2015 to review preparedness of Kharif season, contingency plan and the availability of seeds, etc. Availability of these inputs is being monitored/reviewed on a continuous basis in the weekly Crop Weather Watch Group (CWWG) Meetings being held in the Department. Weekly video conference with States is also being held to get first-hand information about State's preparedness and to advise States appropriately whenever needed.