

Farmers seeking suicide clearance in Maharashtra

*36. SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of the incident of several farmers in Wardha district of Maharashtra approaching district authorities to obtain a "suicide clearance", effectively seeking Government's permission to commit suicide, due to the alleged failure of Government to redress their grievances and provide adequate compensation for crop failures;

(b) if so, the measures being taken to provide adequate assistance to these farmers, economically, socially and psychologically; and

(c) whether Central Government is planning to set up any mechanism to detect and prevent cases of farmers' suicides in various States of the country?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) As reported by the Government of Maharashtra, in Wardha District, 102 farmers of Waghoda Village of Tehsil, Karanja, 6 (six) farmers of Wadad village of Tehsil, Wardha and 1 (one) farmer of village Antora (New) of Tehsil, Ashti had given application regarding permission to obtain suicide clearance. Further, the State Government has reported that these applications are due to low yield of Kharif crops, and not due to failure of Government to redress their grievance and provide adequate compensation to crops.

(b) Government of Maharashtra has also reported, that in case of farmers of Waghoda village, they are demanding debt relief as there is failure of Kharif crop; that the Tehsildar and his team visited this village and counselled them; that in the case of farmers of Wadad village, they are demanding assistance for loss of Kharif crop of 2014. The State Government has further reported that, an assistance of ₹ 28350/- was provided to these farmers. In the case of Shri Sheshrao Thakare, the farmer of the village Antora (New), Tehsil Ashti, the Tehsildar and his team personally visited him and counselled him. It is also reported that in Wardha District, a scheme of assured health service is being implemented which includes provision of psychological help desk at District Hospital; that Health Department is also implementing Prerna Project which includes survey of farmers by Aasha Workers through which Aasha Workers are identifying the psychologically depressed farmers and also the farmers suffering from chronic illness; and that these farmers are being provided with medicines and counseling.

(c) During the year 2015-16 (including Kharif 2015), the State Government of Maharashtra has submitted a memorandum seeking financial assistance for drought

from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), amounting to ₹ 4002.82 crore. The Central Government has approved an amount of ₹ 3049.36 crore for Maharashtra under NDRF.

Apart from the above, the Government of India is implementing a number of schemes to help the farmers in increasing their productivity by reducing cost of cultivation, achieving higher yield per unit and realizing remunerative prices. Some of the important new initiatives in this context are:

- (i) Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme by which the farmers can know the nutrient status of their soils and undertake judicious use of fertiliser application and thus save on cost of cultivation. The balanced use of fertiliser will also enhance productivity and ensure higher returns to the farmers.
- (ii) Neem Coated Urea is being promoted to regulate use of urea, enhance its availability to the crop and reduce cost of fertilizers application. The entire quantity of domestically manufactured urea is now neem coated.
- (iii) Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is being implemented with a view to promoting organic farming in the country. This will improve soil health and organic matter content and increase net income of the farmer, so as to realise premium prices.
- (iv) The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) is being implemented to expand cultivated area with assured irrigation, reduce wastage of water and improve water use efficiency.
- (v) In addition, the Government is also implementing several Centrally Sponsored Schemes - National Food Security Mission (NFSM); Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH); National Mission on Oilseeds and Oilpalm (NMOOP); National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA); National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET); Unified National Agriculture Markets; and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).
- (vi) Government has recently approved a new crop Insurance scheme namely Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) to replace National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified NAIS (MNAIS) from Kharif 2016 season. PMFBY has addressed all the shortcomings in the earlier schemes and would be available to the farmers at very low rates of premium. This scheme would provide insurance cover for all stages of the crop cycle including post-harvest risks in specified instances.

Salient features of the PMFBY are:

- (a) Farmers have to pay the lowest ever premium rate.

- (b) There will be a uniform premium rate for farmers for entire country- 2% maximum for Kharif food and Oilseed crops, 1.5% maximum for Rabi food and Oilseed crops and 5% maximum for Annual Horticultural/ Annual Commercial crops.
 - (c) The remaining financial burden will be borne by the Government.
 - (d) Farmers will get full insurance cover—there will be no “capping” of the Sum Insured and consequently, claim amount will not be cut or reduced.
 - (e) For the first time, inundation has been included under localized risk cover, in addition to hailstorm and landslide. Individual farm level assessment of crop loss will be done for this.
 - (f) For the first time, post harvest losses arising out of cyclones and unseasonal rains through out the country have been covered.
 - (g) For the first time, emphasis has been given to mobile and satellite technology to facilitate accurate assessment and quick settlement of claims.
 - (h) Crop Insurance Portal has been launched. This will be used extensively for better administration, co-ordination, dissemination of information and transparency.
 - (i) Coverage of areas to be increased from 23% (at present) to 50% in 2 years.
- (vii) The Government undertakes procurement of wheat and paddy under its ‘MSP operations’. In addition, Government implements Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities not covered under the Minimum Price Support Scheme on the request of State/UT Government. The MIS is implemented in order to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop when the prices tend to fall below the economic level/cost of production. Losses, if any, incurred by the procuring agencies are shared by the Central Government and the concerned State Government on 50:50 basis (75:25 in case of North-Eastern States). Profit, if any, earned by the procuring agencies is retained by them.

**Compensation under national crop income
insurance scheme**

*37. SHRI K. K. RAGESH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of farmers, who have applied for claims for insurance benefits under National Crop Income Insurance Scheme during the financial year 2015-16, State-wise; and