

mechanism against mutual guarantee. The JLG mode of financing serves as collateral substitute for loans to be provided to the target group *i.e.* small, marginal, tenant farmers, oral lessees, share croppers, etc. As on 31.03.2016, the total number of 17.20 lakh JLGs have been financed with ₹ 16,856 crore (cumulative).

Access of farmers to institutional credit

2281. DR. PRABHAKAR KORE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether inadequate access to institutional credit is one of the major factors in farmers' suicides in the country;
- (b) whether Government, in consultation with State Governments, is taking all necessary steps to ensure that agriculture credit reaches small and marginal farmers;
- (c) if so, the details of steps taken by Government in this regard; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA): (a) to (c) Government has taken several measures to provide agriculture credit to all farmers including small and marginal, particularly keeping in view the fact that farmers are indebted to both institutional and non-institutional sources of credit. Borrowing from non-institutional sources is the major reason for debt related farmers' distress which is one of the reported reasons for farmers' suicide in the country. In order to bring more and more farmers within the institutional fold, the Government is providing, through institutional sources (commercial banks, cooperative banks and regional rural banks), short term crop loans and medium/ long term loans to farmers. Government announces annual agriculture credit target. The agriculture credit target for 2016-17 has been set at ₹ 9.00 lakh crore. The agency-wise targets for short term crop loans and medium/long term loan are also fixed. In addition to the above, the Government has taken several initiatives to provide credit to farmers and the brief details are as follows:

- Short term crop loan of upto ₹ 3.00 lakh is provided to farmers at an interest rate of 7% per annum. Farmers, who promptly repay their crop loans as per the repayment schedule fixed by the banks, get the benefit of interest subvention of 3%. Thus, the effective interest rate for the short term crop loan is 4% per annum.
- In order to discourage distress sale by farmers and to encourage them to store their produce in warehouses against warehouse receipts, the benefit of interest

subvention scheme has been extended to small and marginal farmers having Kisan Credit Card for a further period of upto six months post harvest on the same rate as available to crop loan against negotiable warehouse receipt for keeping their produce in warehouses.

- The limit of collateral free farm loan has been increased from ₹ 50,000 to ₹ 100,000.
- In order to ensure that all eligible farmers are provided with hassle-free and timely credit for their agricultural operations, the Government has introduced the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme, which enables them to purchase agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. and draw cash to satisfy their consumption needs. The KCC Scheme has since been simplified and converted into ATM-enabled debit card with, *interalia*, facilities of one-time documentation, built-in cost escalation in the limit, any number of draws within the limit, etc.
- Joint Liability Group (JLG) is an informal group comprising 4 to 10 individuals coming together for the purpose of availing bank loan on individual basis or through group mechanism against mutual guarantee. The JLG mode of financing serves as collateral substitute for loans to be provided to the target group *i.e.* small, marginal, tenant farmers, oral lessees, share croppers, etc. As on 31.03.2016, the total number of 17.20 lakh JLGs have been financed with ₹ 16,856 crore (cumulative).

(d) Does not arise.

Opening of Jan Aushadhi Stores in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

2282. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that not even a single Jan Aushadhi Store (JAS) is functioning in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry;

(b) if so, the reasons for not opening even a single store in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry;

(c) whether it is not a fact that the original plan was to open at least one JAS in each district of the country;

(d) if so, the reasons for not following the plan; and

(e) by when Government would open JAS in each of the Government hospitals in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI HANSRAJ GANGARAMAHIR): (a) and (b) Jan Aushadhi Yojana