

**Demand to give financial assistance and address other problems
being faced by onion growers of Maharashtra**

SHRI MAJEED MEMON (Maharashtra): Sir, I would like to raise a serious matter pertaining to onion farmers, who are getting a very low price for their produce, in Maharashtra. Some farmers had set their onions on fire since they were not getting even their basic input cost. This year, onion prices in Maharashtra have touched a five-year low. The average price that farmers have been able to fetch for a quintal of onions is ₹ 450.

Sir, farmers are not getting even the basic cost per quintal, while it is being sold in the open market at not less than ₹ 20/- per kg. This year, we have had a bumper crop of onions and needed, at least, 40 wagons to transport onions to other parts of the State and the country. But, to our dismay, they are getting only 15-18 wagons, which has resulted in non-clearance and piling up of the stock in *mandis*. I have information that the Railways have agreed to give more wagons for transporting onions, but this being the peak harvest season, inflow of the produce is not slowing down. It is hoped that in March the produce would slow down and prices would stabilize, giving some relief to farmers who have already had an accumulated loss of about ₹ 200 crore.

I would, therefore, urge the hon. Minister of Railways, through this august House, to provide the maximum number of railway wagons for clearing the piled-up stock of onions and transportation of onions to other parts of Maharashtra and the rest of the country immediately and save the growers from the financial crisis. I would also like to urge the Government to take a serious note of the situation and offer some financial assistance to the farmers which may, *inter alia*, include loan-waivers for their survival.

**Demand to make Constitutional provisions to give reservation to
dalits in employment in the private sector**

श्री पी. एल. पुनिया (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, देश की विशाल अर्थव्यवस्था में दलितों का भी पूरा-पूरा योगदान है, लेकिन फिर भी उन्हें देश की मुख्य धारा में लाने के लिए कोई प्रयास नहीं किया जा रहा है। सरकारी नौकरियां लगातार कम होती जा रही हैं और अनुसूचित जाति का बैकलॉग बढ़ता जा रहा है।

विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में दलितों को रोजगार इस प्रकार से है:— 3.95 प्रतिशत सरकारी नौकरी, 0.93 प्रतिशत सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र, 2.42 प्रतिशत निजी क्षेत्र, 2.19 प्रतिशत घरेलू कामगार, 18 प्रतिशत कृषि कार्य, 1.05 प्रतिशत गैर-कृषि कार्य, 13.6 प्रतिशत सूक्ष्म, लघु और मध्यम उद्यमी तथा 83.5 प्रतिशत दलित परिवारों की मासिक आय मात्र 5,000 रुपये से कम एवं 67 प्रतिशत दलित परिवार दिहाड़ी मजदूरी पर निर्भर हैं।