

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) and (b) The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs compiles and disseminates information on suicides, in its publication titled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ADSI). These Reports on suicides upto 2015 are available at its website. As per ADSI Reports for the year 2015, suicides by farmers in the State of Maharashtra and Telangana are 3030 and 1358 respectively. As per ADSI Report, 'Bankruptcy or Indebtedness' and 'Farming Related Issues' are reported as major causes of suicides among farmers/cultivators. The other prominent causes of farmers/cultivators suicides were Family Problems and Illness etc.

(c) and (d) The National Commission for Farmers had recommended that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) should be atleast 50% more than the weighted average cost of production. This recommendation was not incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers 2007 because MSP is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) on objective criteria considering variety of relevant factors. Hence, prescribing an increase of atleast 50% on cost may distort the market. A mechanical linkage between MSP and cost of production may be counter-productive in some cases. Further, it is stated that MSP is notified for both Kharif and Rabi crops based on recommendations of the CACP. The Government has also declared bonus on pulses for Kharif 2016 over and above the approved MSP. Even during the last year, Government offered bonus over and above MSP in case of pulses.

Farmers' suicides

1137. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there has been an increase in farmers' suicide by 42 per cent;
- (b) the reasons for this dramatic increase in farmers' suicide in 2015, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is aware that most of the farmers who committed suicide due to debt had taken loans from banks;
- (d) the reasons Government did not intervene with the banks and ensure that debt pressure did not force farmers to commit suicide; and
- (e) the steps being taken by Government to reduce the incidents of farmers' suicide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) to (c) The National

Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs compiles and disseminates information on suicides, in its publication titled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ADSI). As per ADSI Report of 2015, the number of suicides by farmers/ cultivators has gone up from 5650 in 2014 to 8,007 in 2015, registering an increase of 41.7%. Suicides by agricultural labourers have however, come down from 6,710 in 2014 to 4,595 in 2015. Thus, total number of suicides in Farming Sector increased by 2% in 2015 over 2014. Further, as per this Report, 'Bankruptcy or Indebtedness' and 'Farming Related Issues' are reported as major causes of suicides among farmers/cultivators. Other prominent causes of farmers/cultivators suicides are family problems and illness etc.

Out of 8,007 farmers/cultivators suicides in 2015, 3,097 suicides are reportedly due to Bankruptcy or indebtedness as the cause, with break-up of cases of loan taken from financial institutions like Bank/registered micro financial institutions, loan taken from money lenders/non-financial institutions and loan taken from both financial institutions as well as money lenders/non-financial institutions as 2,474, 302 and 321 respectively.

(d) 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 loan to farmers.

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.

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, *inter alia*, facilities of one-time documentation, built-in cost escalation in the limit, any number of drawls within the limit, etc.

Reserve Bank of India has revised the criteria of crop loss in their Master Circular dated 01.07.2015 keeping in view the GoI notification dated 8.4.2015. RBI has allowed State Level Bankers' Committee/ District Level Consultative Committees/ Banks to take view on rescheduling of loans if the crop loss is 33% or more. Banks have been advised to allow maximum period of repayment of upto 2 years (including the moratorium period of 1 year) if the crop loss is between 33% and 50%. If the crop loss is 50% or more, the restructured period for repayment is extended to a maximum of 5 years (including the moratorium period of 1 year). The Banks have further been advised that all short-term loans eligible for restructuring are converted into term loan. In all cases of restructuring, moratorium period of at least one year is granted. The existing term loan instalments are rescheduled.

(e) Agriculture is a State subject and the State Governments take appropriate measures for development of agriculture in the State. State Governments are primarily responsible for the growth and development of agriculture sector in their respective States. However, the Union Government is according high priority for its progress and improving the welfare of the farmers and agricultural labourers. Government of India has taken several steps to revitalize agriculture sector and improve economic condition of farming community on sustainable basis by increasing investment, improving farm practices, creating rural infrastructure and delivery of credit, technology and other inputs, such as, extension, marketing, etc. The Government supplements the efforts of States through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support. To this end, Government of India has taken several steps, which, *inter alia*, include schemes, such as, Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme, Neem Coated Urea, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), National Agriculture Market scheme (e-NAM) and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).

Further, Minimum Support Price (MSP) is notified for both Kharif and Rabi crops based on the recommendations of the Commission on Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP). The Commission collects & analyses data on cost of activation and recommends MSP. The Government has also declared bonus on pulses for Kharif 2016 over and above the approved MSP. Even during last year, Government offered bonus over and above the MSP in case of pulses.

The Government also 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 MSP 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.